

PANORAMA

O F S L O V A K I A



Hunting and fishing

Welcome to the Slovak forests!

The territory of Slovakia lies in the West Carpathian massif, which determines its natural features. Its forests are Slovakia's greatest natural wealth. They spread over an area of almost 2 million hectares (almost 5 million acres), which is nearly 40% of the republic. Thanks to systematic care and protection, the Slovak forests have kept their natural character with mostly the original woods, of which 59% are broad-leaved deciduous and 41% coniferous. The forests have several important roles to play. They provide timber, catch and regulate the flow of water in the region, prevent soil erosion and produce oxygen, while being a striking feature of the landscape and providing favourable conditions for rest, sport and recreation. Our forests are rich

in fauna and flora, providing a habitat for many rare kinds of plants and animals, including, for example, the bear, wolf, lynx and wild cat, as well as the chamois, black grouse, woodcock and European bison. The variety of the natural wealth and beauty to be found in Slovakia can be seen in the relatively dense network of protected areas: 9 national parks, 14 protected landscape areas and 600 nature reserves. Together they provide suitable conditions for tourism and recreation. In the hilly Slovak forests there is indeed plenty to see and discover. Foreign tourists come here not only for holidays and sightseeing, but also for hunting. Hunting is not just the chase, but above all it is the protection of animal life and the natural

environment. Tourism combined with hunting and forestry offers further possibilities to get to know Slovakia – to visit its historical and natural sights, learn about the cultural history of the region, the traditional crafts and culinary specialities.



Good hunting!

Thanks to its natural conditions, Slovakia is a popular destination for hunting tourism. In Slovakia you can shoot 6 main species of animals (roe deer, red deer, fallow deer, moufflon, wild boar and pheasants), as well as 10 other kinds of game. Hunting grounds are to be found in almost all the mountain ranges of the Western Carpathians in Slovakia: from Záhorie in the west up to the Eastern Carpathians and from Palárikovo in the south to Orava in the

north. All this guarantees that our hunting visitors will have a wide choice of hunts and memorable hunting experiences. In our hunting grounds we can arrange for hunting activities throughout the whole of the hunting season, traditionally starting in spring with watching the fighting of woodcocks or the behaviour of rare capercaillie cocks during mating time in the mountains. However, the real hunts begin on 16th May with roe deer hunting. During summer holidays it is also possible to hunt wild boar, which has an attraction of its own, especially on moonlit nights. In the first days of September the unforgettable drama of the stag rutting season begins even in the valleys of the Slovak Carpathians. Our visiting hunters are particularly interested in permits to hunt the Carpathian red deer in the magnificent scenery of the mountain forests, where the hunter can experience a real adventure. This is when the hunting season gets into full swing and the rutting of the red deer is followed by that of the fallow deer, when trophies carrying 200 points are occasionally to be found in some of our reserves. In autumn there are exciting hunts for brown bears in the forested hills of central Slovakia. Many hunters have grown fond of group hunts for wild boar and it is not even unusual to bag a strong male. For pheasant shooting we can prepare interesting walk-up shoots or driven hunts in pheasantries with plentiful game-bags. Apart from the game species we have already mentioned, you can also hunt chamoix, grouse, badgers, pheasants, wild turkeys, foxes and hares. The state enterprise Lesy

Slovenskej republiky (Forests of the Slovak Republic) arranges hunts, including accommodation and all other services, over an area exceeding half a million hectares. To do so it cooperates with renowned travel agencies specializing in this sphere. Slovakia's joining the EU has greatly simplified the arrangements for hunters who wish to come here from abroad. When bringing a hunting firearm through the border all that is needed is a European arms licence and an invitation to hunt.

Contact
Lesy Slovenskej republiky
(Forests of the Slovak Republic)
Námestie SNP 8
975 66 Banská Bystrica
Slovenská Republika
tel.: 00421-48-434 41 35
00421-48-434 41 36
fax: 00421-48-434 41 91
e-mail: polovnictvo@lesy.sk

www.lesy.sk

There are several travel agencies in Slovakia that offer services connected with hunting, including the organization of the actual hunt (e.g. CS-Tour, Tatralov, Montravel). The best-known hunting travel office in Slovakia is Tatralov, s.r.o. Bratislava. It provides a wide range of opportunities for lovers of nature, hunters and anglers to go in search of new experiences and adventures. Tatralov works in close cooperation with the largest international organization, SCI (Safari Club International), which has branches in developed countries and whose members like to hunt anywhere in the world where the hunting preserves are of a good standard.

Contact
TATRALOV, s.r.o.
Jégeho 8
821 08 Bratislava
Slovenská republika

tel.: 00421-2-55 42 32 50, 62 80 26 52
mobil: 00421-903-404 090
fax: 00421-2-55 42 32 50, 62 80 26 52
e-mail: hunting@tatralov.sk





Levice's Hunting Days

In the eleven years of its existence, this originally regional event has grown into a recognized international gathering of hunters and ecology fans. The main topics of this specialized conference are the improvement of the life of the fauna and making agriculture ecologically viable. The full professional programme is accompanied by interesting events – exhibitions on the topic of the natural world around us, a “Hubertlov-Levice” video film contest on the theme of hunting and nature. The largest trophies in Slovakia are on show and judged by a C.I.C. international evaluation commission. It is also worth mentioning the fact that the idea of founding the C.I.C. world hunting organization was born in 1928 in Slovakia – in Nové Zámky and Palárikovo.



Hunting dogs

The breeding and training of hunting dogs has a long history in Slovakia, going back over 85 years. This can be seen in the large number of clubs, as well as in the competitions for hunting dogs. One of the best known is the Josef Kadlec Memorial, which has already been in existence for four decades. The competition includes forest, field and water disciplines and the breeds usually most successful are the shorthaired pointer, Czech schnauzer, poodle pointer or Gordon setter.



Hunting exhibitions

Hunting and Nature – a national exhibition with international participation is held every five years at the Agrokomplex trade fair in Nitra. The main organiser is the Slovak Hunters' Union.

www.spz-ustredie.sk

Hunting and Recreation

Hunting and Recreation – an international event that takes place every year at the end of January in Bratislava. The organiser is the Incheba Expo Bratislava exhibition and congress centre.

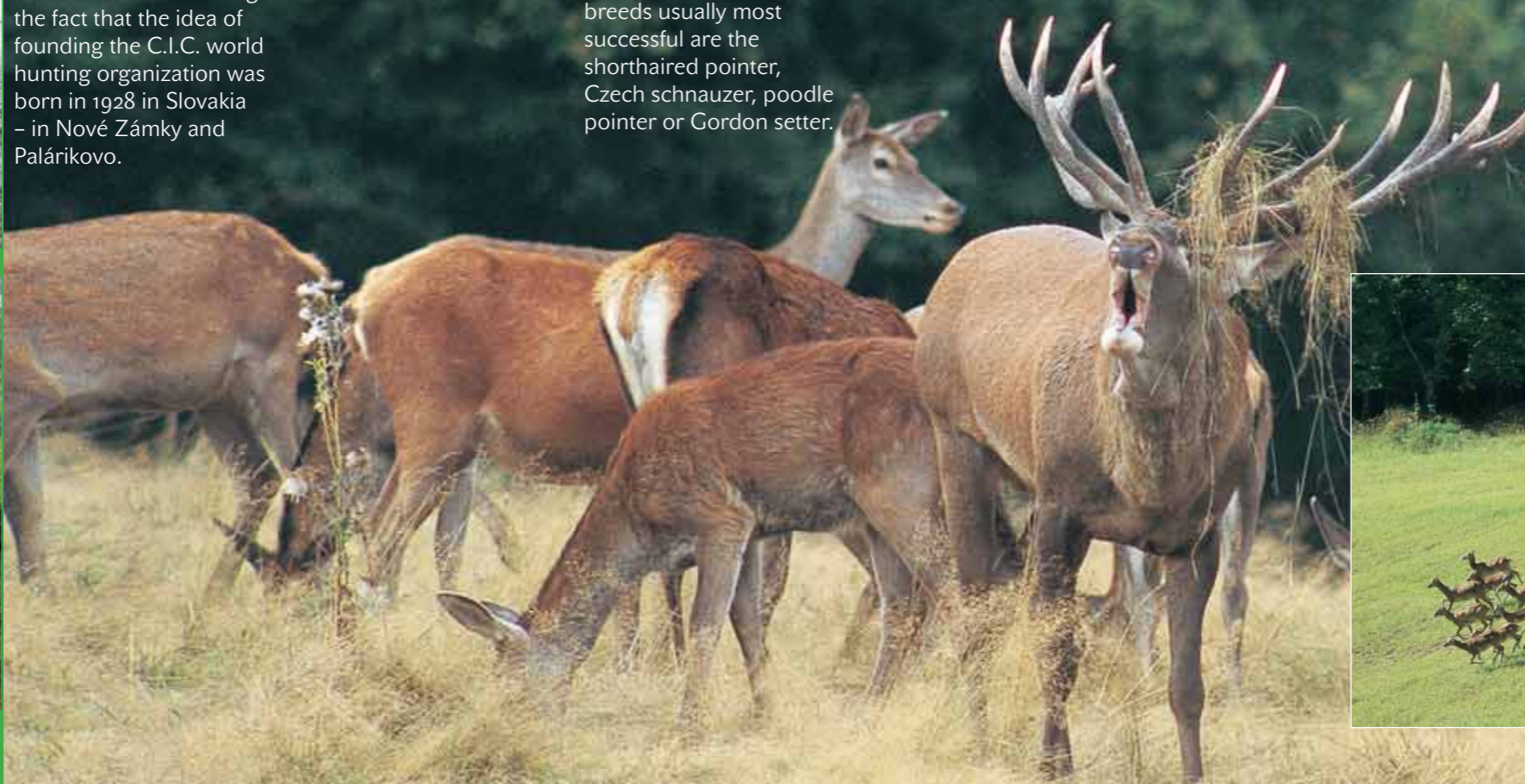
www.incheba.sk



Wildlife reserve in Gemer

Covering an area of almost a thousand hectares around Teplý vrch, a hill near Rimavská Sobota, you can find the oldest wildlife reserve in Slovakia. It was established in the 18th century and has fallow deer, moufflon and roe deer. A three-kilometre nature trail runs through

the reserve and visitors can see the feeding places and observation blinds, while there are resting places, as well as other things of interest, such as Blh castle, which affords a beautiful view over the Gemer region.





Game should not only be hunted, but above all protected and its importance in the natural world understood...

It was this message left by St Hubert, the legendary patron of all huntsmen, that inspired the initiators of the idea to found a Hunting and Forestry Museum in Svätý Anton, which has become a highly-prized exhibition in Slovakia.

The Late Baroque and Classical chateau in the village of Svätý Anton, not far from Banská Štiavnica has become known not only as a valuable national cultural monument, but also as the seat of an exceptional museum. The interior of the chateau is

interested in the Mirror Salon, the Emperor's Salon with hand-painted wall hangings, the Golden Salon, a wedding gift from Maria Theresa to her youngest daughter Marie Antoinette and the hunting dining room with the Cobourg coat-of-arms on the cutlery. The hunting exhibition

365 windows. After the last building alterations in the 19th century the symbolism was disturbed. This splendid aristocratic residence is surrounded by an extensive landscaped park with lakes, a cascading stream and an artificial cave.

Night tours of the chateau are a great attraction for tourists and during the summer months there is also a Festival of Beautiful Music, but the highlight is an event known as the Days of St. Hubert in September, when festivities are organized in Sv. Anton for hunters and nature lovers from all over Slovakia.

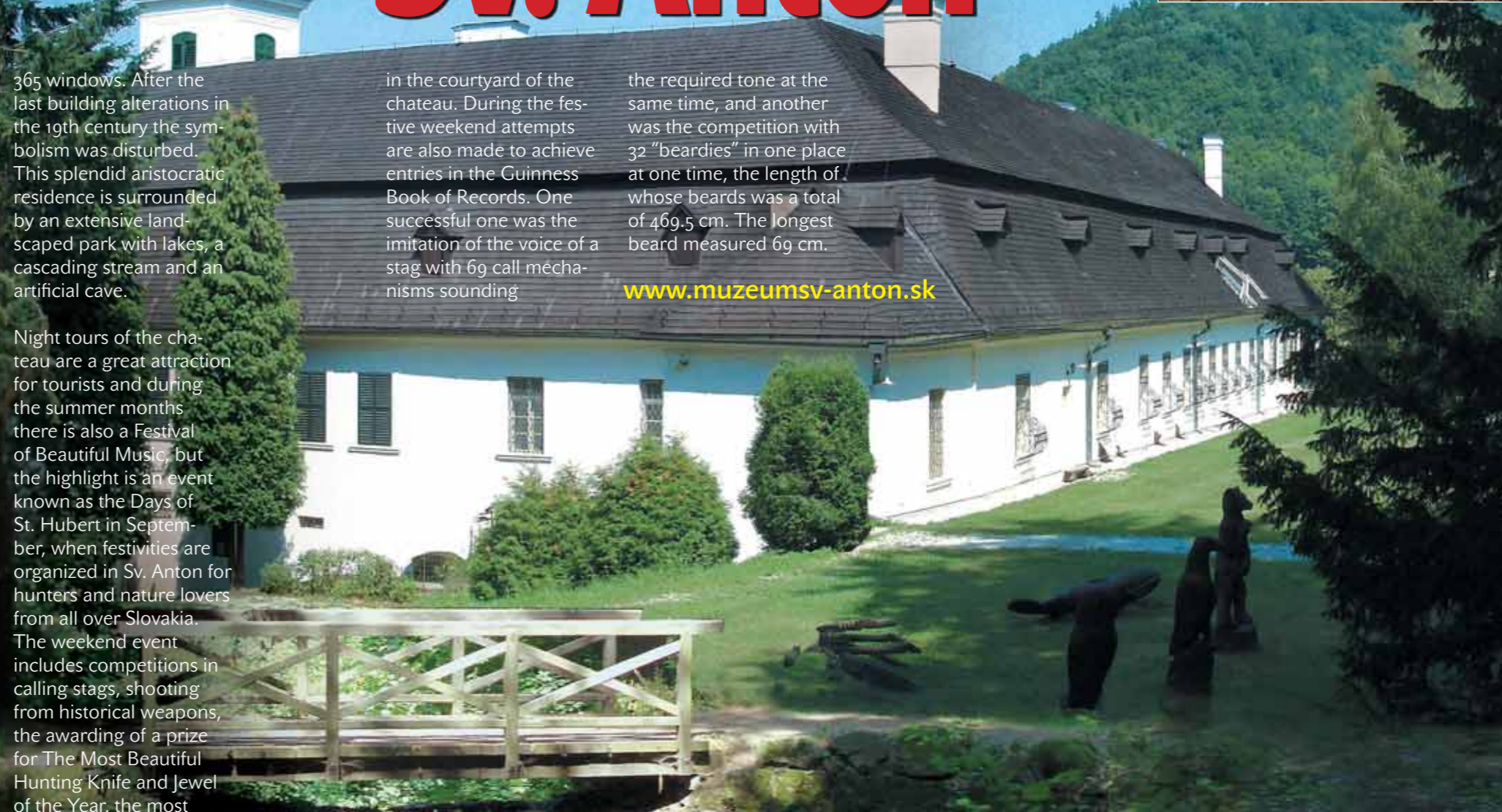
The weekend event includes competitions in calling stags, shooting from historical weapons, the awarding of a prize for The Most Beautiful Hunting Knife and Jewel of the Year, the most beautiful decoration of a hunting hat, attractive angling with the opportunity to taste fish specialities, a Hubert Ride in the park, a hunting dress fashion show and the sale of hunting accessories. The celebrations come to a ceremonial close with the annual St. Hubert's mass held

The Hunting and Forestry Museum in Sv. Anton

in the courtyard of the chateau. During the festive weekend attempts are also made to achieve entries in the Guinness Book of Records. One successful one was the imitation of the voice of a stag with 6g call mechanisms sounding

the required tone at the same time, and another was the competition with 32 "beardies" in one place at one time, the length of whose beards was a total of 469.5 cm. The longest beard measured 6g cm.

www.muzeumsv-anton.sk



Sv. Anton

Opening hours

Summer season
May – September
Tuesday – Sunday
8.30 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Winter season
October – April
Tuesday – Saturday
8 a.m. – 3 p.m.

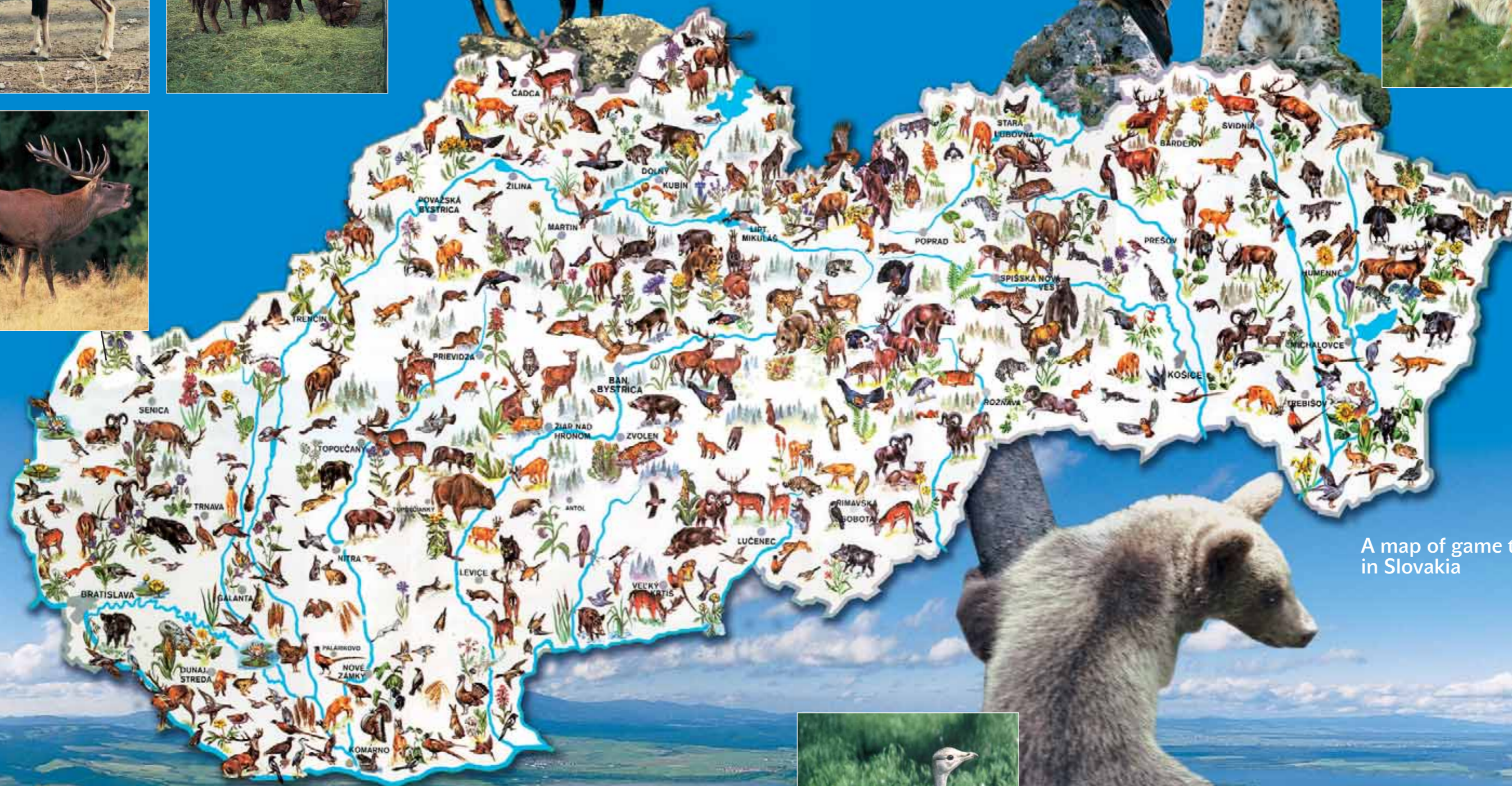
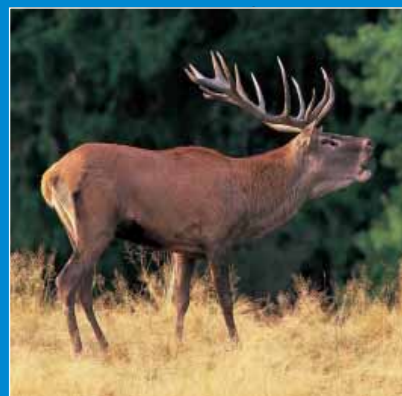
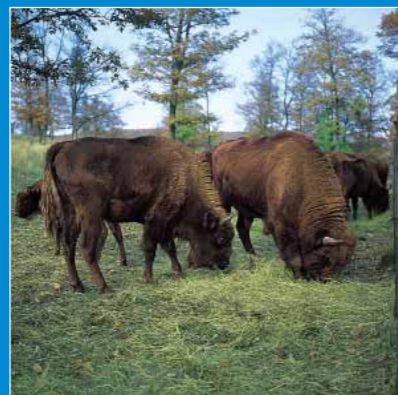
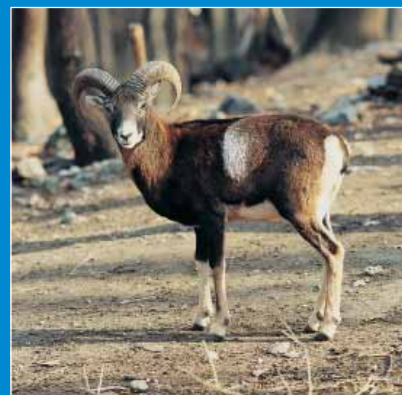
Closed on Mondays and bank holidays

decorated with hundreds of trophies of game from home and abroad, hunted by the former owners of this luxury residence, the Koháry family, and by its last owner, the Bulgarian Emperor Ferdinand of Cobourg, who was a passionate hunter and nature lover. The magnificent original interior of the chateau has also been preserved and its valuable contents are on show on the first floor. The visitor will be

fills 12 rooms covering the topics of the historical development of hunting, hunting weapons and ammunition, beasts of prey on our territory, hunting hounds, hunting in art, the preparation of hunting trophies.

Today's chateau was built in 1744 on the site of a small Gothic castle and its architecture symbolized the calendar year – it had 7 arcades, 4 gates, 12 chimneys, 52 rooms and





A map of game to be found in Slovakia





Tichá Chalet, Oščadnica



Morské oko Manor



Topolčianky, Hunting Lodge

Forest tourism

Throughout the year Nature enchants us in a way we are often unaware of – the rustle of leaves, the song of birds, the fragrance of the trees, peace and quiet... All this can be found in Slovak forests. For over 400 years foresters have been making sure that the forests keep their natural beauty and value. They are places where

likely in Banská Bystrica, which owns over three hundred establishments. Elegant hunting lodges and chateaux offer the highest standard, but less demanding tourists also enjoy holidaying in simple log cottages in the middle of mountain forests. The most frequent visitors are not only hunters, but also families with children and nature lovers in search of peace and quiet, interested in picking the fruits of the forest, walking through the woods and observing animals living in the wild.

The Baroque chateau Palárikovo, situated in the middle of a landscaped park, has an eventful hunting past. With its sumptuously furnished rooms and apartments in Baroque style it is now a museum of period interior furnishings. The chateau's kitchens offer specialties from venison and its relaxation centre takes care of physical regeneration. There are many opportunities for sightseeing and walks in the environs, as well as for angling and horse riding. Thermal pools are available in Podhájska and in Nové Zámky. In 1752 a pheasantry of world renown was established in Palárikovo that is still in operation today. An impressive hunting lodge with period furniture

stands in a large park belonging to a manor house popular with tourists in Topolčianky. In the past it served for official state occasions. The National Stud Farm with steeplechase and race courses is another special feature of this locality and in nearby Lovce the European Bison Reserve, the only one in Slovakia, makes an interesting attraction. It was established in order to save the European bison from extinction, there being only 150 surviving specimens in the world at the time of its foundation in 1958.

In the well-known little spa town of Turčianske Teplice accommodation is available in a large hotel called Lesník and thermal waters or farm tourism can enhance your stay, as well as visits to castles and manor houses within easy reach – Zniev, Blatnica, Sklabiňa, Orava, Bojnice and others. The mountain hotel Pusté pole under Kráľova hoľa hill near Telgárt, the exclusive Antonstal hunting lodge in a peaceful setting near Nemšová, Donovaly chalet in the skiing centre of the same name and many other establishments will take maximum care of your comfort and privacy during the time you spend in Slovakia.



Palárikovo Manor



protected fauna and flora can be seen, as well as being an essential part of the scenery of our country and of our national heritage. Forest tourism appeals to all those who appreciate relaxing in the countryside and at the same time it is an excellent opportunity to get to know Slovakia's wonderful green secluded spots. The widest range of opportunities for forest tourism are provided by Lesy Slovenskej repub-



www.lesy.sk



Antonstál Hunting Lodge

Fishing, or the lure of water

Some people go mushrooming, others do sports or read books. There is another group of people, however, who spend their free time on the banks of rivers and lakes waiting for a bite. It's often said that anglers are quiet madmen. Yet fishing as a sport is in fact a return to nature, it purifies and soothes the body and mind.

The population of marine species is declining from year to year and large catches of tasty, healthy seafood are gradually becoming a rare event. For this reason those interested in fishing as a sport now concentrate on freshwater areas, such as watercourses, natural and artificial lakes, reservoirs and fish ponds. With almost a thousand fishing grounds, Slovakia

is a truly ideal destination. The majority of them belong to the state, but private family enterprises are becoming more common, specializing in fishing combined with recreation. There is also an increase in the offer of guide services, advising those interested how to make a successful catch, for example in mountain torrents, how to get a rare huchen in the River Poprad, catch a wels, one of the largest catfishes, or fly-fish in lakes or reservoirs. In our country fishing is possible not only in mountainous and submontane zones, but also in lowland areas. The fishing grounds at higher elevations are trout waters, especially mountain torrents and streams, where brown

trout and rainbow trout are to be found. Grayling waters in submontane parts sustain brook trout, huchen and grayling. Most species of freshwater fish are to be found in the lowland carp waters. Apart from carp, these include wels, pike, European pike perch, huchen, barbel, eels, tench, crucian carp and others. In addition to the rivers, artificial lakes and reservoirs are also popular places for fishing. They provide a suitable combination of sport and relaxation. Leisure areas and sports grounds have been built on their banks, with hotels of varying size, guest houses and camping sites. Those that attract the largest number of visitors are Zemplínska Šírava (3500 ha), Oravská priehrada (3400 ha), Liptovská Mara (2160 ha),

Domaša (1422 ha), Sĺňava (501 ha), Ružín (390 ha), Ružiná (170 ha) and Tepľý vrch (100 ha) [ha = hectare = approx. 2.5 acres]. Those who have fallen under the spell of fishing claim that it is not just a hobby, but also a powerful drug, no matter which fishing "discipline" you indulge in. For some people it is solitude they are looking for, while others enjoy the social side of meeting other people with similar interests.

More detailed information about fishing grounds, fishing regulations in Slovakia and the possibility of buying an angling permit is provided by the Slovak Anglers' Union. This organization cooperates with Rode travel agency, which in accordance with the wishes of their clients arranges fishing breaks lasting a number of days involving the participation of professional guides, who guarantee the use of the correct angling methods. Fishing is possible throughout the year in Slovakia and for some species of fish there are no time limits.



A branch of the Malý Dunaj (Little Danube)



Contact
Slovenský rybársky zväz
(Slovak Anglers' Union)
Andreja Kmeťa 20,
010 55 Žilina
Slovenská republika
tel.: 00421-41-5073613
srzrada@srzrada.sk
www.srzrada.sk.

CK RODE s.r.o.
Račianska 109/C
831 02 Bratislava
Slovenská republika
tel./fax: 00421-2-4425 8026
mobil: 00421-903-252 401
e-mail: rodemanagers@ba.telecom.sk



Carp



The Dunajec



Rainbow Trout



Pike



On a branch of the Danube



The queen of the mountain rivers

Its majestic appearance and huge size are the reasons why the Danubian huchen is regarded as the queen of our waters. Slovakia is the country with the largest population of this salmonoid fish in Europe. It has made its home here thanks to the high level of protection of our watercourses against contamination. The huchen is only to be found in clean, cold waters rich in oxygen, in wide, fast-flowing stretches of sub-montane rivers. It is plentiful in the

Danube, Morava, Váh, Orava and Hron rivers and is stocked in the Dunajec, Poprad, Hornád and Nitra. As it is a predator, it grows faster than its other salmonoid relatives. Some specimens are up to 100 – 140 cm long and weigh 10 kg. Huchen fishing is one of the most difficult, but also most attractive kinds of fishing disciplines. One of the most difficult because this species cannot be caught just anywhere and with anything. In the best spots the current

is strong and the water is usually deep. It is one of the most attractive kinds of fishing because it takes place in the last two months of the year, when nature dresses in all the colours of late autumn. The huchen is protected by law and therefore a special permit is required and only a restricted amount can be caught.

The largest in Slovakia

The dream of many an angler is at least once in his or her life to catch the largest freshwater fish to be found in our waters – the wels [Silurus glanis]. This enormous predator with barbels and tasty flesh has been a prized trophy for as long as anyone can remember. Historical records tell us of catches in the Danube river basin weighing up to 300 kg and four metres long. The wels is still the pride of our rivers and artificial reservoirs. This solitary “whale” is fond of standing or slowly flowing waters, where it seeks shady spots near the bank or in river branches or meanders. It is an exceptionally valuable fish – not only

on account of its size, but also because it maintains the biological balance in the waters. Some of the best waters for wels are the rivers, in particular the Danube, Váh, Hron, Nitra, Žitava, Ipel, Dudváb, Tisa and Bodrog. Artificial lakes such as Slňava, Môťová, Domaša and Zemplínska Šírava also offer good catches. The best are caught in July and August and it is necessary to respect the fact that from 15.3 to 31.5 the wels is protected. Experienced anglers will tell you that they bite most often on stifling summer evenings before a storm or during a full moon. That is because the wels is a typical nocturnal preda-

tor and that is the time when it emerges from its hiding place in search of food. In modern history the record catch for a wels was recorded on the River Latorica in 1966, its weight being 128 kg and length 2.57 metres. In recent years anglers have also been lucky to catch exceptional specimens in the standing waters of Domaša and Zemplínska Šírava and the last time it was in the Latorica. The wels weighed 34 kg and was 170 cm long. It was caught using a horse leech, but only after luring it with special bait for this species of fish. The lucky angler struggled with it for a whole half hour.



Closed season by species

1st January – 15th April
– rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*),
– brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*),
1st January – 31st May
– grayling (*Thymallus thymallus*),
1st January – 15th June
– northern pike (*Esox lucius*),
1st January – 31st October
– Danubian huchen (*Hucho hucho*); in border waters
from 1st January to 31st August,
15th March – 31st May
carp (*Cyprinus carpio*) in carp waters; the closed season is not valid
from 1st May to 15th May,
when it may be caught during angling contests.

The calendar for international angling contests

1st league
May – Velké Kozmálovce
July – Malý Dunaj
September – Laborec-Humenné
2nd league
Group A
June – Váh-Šaľa
September – Váh-Hlohovec
Group B
June – Laborec-Humenné
September – Vodná nádrž Môťová-Zvolen

Cup competitions

www.onarb.sk/cips/2006/poharove_2006.htm



Danubian huchen



Wels

Vydrovo Outdoor Forestry Museum

The valley of Vydrovský potok offers an attraction you do not have the opportunity to enjoy every day. What you have to do is climb into the historical carriages of the narrow-gauge forest railway known as the Čiernohronská železnica in Čierny Balog and travel in the direction of the quiet and romantic valley of

Vydrovská dolina to a rare Outdoor Forestry Museum (Lesnícky skanzen). Something like a combination of an open-air museum and a nature trail, it concentrates in a small area everything one should know about the forest. In the setting of a thick spruce forest you will find the beginning of a three-kilometre path with 48 stops, where there are interesting exhibits, information boards, as well as benches to rest on and mineral springs to refresh you.

Wild boar offer a living attraction

and your attention is also caught by an imitation of a bear's den with harmless wooden inhabitants. The tour is crowned by a "living forest map of Slovakia", where all the different kinds of trees that grow in our forests have been planted. At the last stop a wooden glockenspiel with carved-out notes, on which visitors can play, brings the interesting trip to a suitable close.

However, the outdoor museum is not just a dead show window of Slovak forestry. In addition to the new railway station and a

timber cottage selling refreshments and souvenirs, an amphitheatre has been erected on a grassy site. In the summer tourist season cultural programmes are held here, including a "Tree Day" (Deň stromu) with a variety of accompanying events in the second half of July.

The little trains depart for Vydrovo at the top of every hour from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. from Čierny Balog station and return at every half hour from 10.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. from the stop in Vydrovo outdoor museum.

Contact
Lesnícky skanzen Vydrovo
(Vydrovo Outdoor Forestry Museum)
Švermova 417/9
Čierny Balog
Slovenská republika
tel.: 00421-48-6191324
mobil: 00421-918-333418



Čierny Balog

The outdoor museum
is open

from 1. 5 – 17. 9.

May and September

9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

June – August

8 a.m. – 7 p.m.



Slovak Tourist Board offices abroad

Slovenská agentúra pro cestovní ruch
Jilská 16, 110 00 Praha 1, Česká republika
Tel.: +420 2 249 46 082, Fax: +420 2 249 46 082
e-mail: sacrpraha@seznam.cz

Narodowe Centrum Turystyki Slowackiej
ul. Krakowskie Przedmiescie 13 pok.17
00-071 Warszawa, Polska
Tel.: +48 22 827 00 09, Fax: +48 22 827 00 09
e-mail: sacr@poczta.onet.pl

Slowaaks Verkeersbureau
WTC Amsterdam, Strawinsky/laan 623
1077 XX Amsterdam, Nederland
Tel.: +31 20 575 2181, Fax: +31 20 575 2182
e-mail: info@slowaaks-verkeersbureau.nl
www.slowaaks-verkeersbureau.nl

Словацкое управление по туризму
Посольство Словацкой Республики
Ул. Фучика 17/19, 123 056 Москва, Российская Федерация
Тел.: 007 495 251 76 31, Факс: 007 495 251 76 45
e-mail: sacrmow@comail.ru

Slovakische Zentrale für Tourismus
Prinz-Eugen-Str. 70, Stiege 2, 1.Stock
1040 Wien, Österreich
Tel.: +43 1 513 9569, Fax: +43 1 513 9763
e-mail: sacr-wien@aon.at

Slowakische Zentrale für Tourismus
Vertretung Deutschland
Zimmerstrasse 27, 10969 Berlin, Deutschland
Tel.: +49 30 25 94 26 40, Fax: +49 30 25 94 26 41
e-mail: sacr-berlin@botschaft-slowakei.de
e-mail: tourismus@botschaft-slowakei.de

Ministry of Economy SR
Governing body for the Sector Operational Programme
Industry and Services
Mierová 19, 827 15 Bratislava, Slovenská republika
e-mail: soper@economy.gov.sk
www.economy.gov.sk

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Slovenská agentúra pre cestovný ruch
Nám. L. Štúra 1, P.O.Box 35
974 05 Banská Bystrica, Slovenská republika
Tel: +421 48 413 61 46, Fax: +421 48 413 61 49
e-mail: sacr@sacr.sk, www.slovakiatourism.sk

Branch office Bratislava

Záhradnícka 153, P.O. Box 97
820 05 Bratislava 25, Slovenská republika
Tel: +421 2 507 00 801, Fax: +421 2 555 71 649
e-mail: sacrba@sacr.sk, www.slovakiatourism.sk

Regional office

Reimannova 9
080 01 Prešov
Tel./fax: +421 51 756 03 61
e-mail: presov@sacr.sk, www.slovakiatourism.sk

Editorial board

Agnesa Klimová (Chairperson)
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Editor -in-chief

Bedrich Schreiber

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Tel.: +421 2 434 153 60-62, Fax: +421 2 434 153 59
www.remark.sk

English translation

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