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### ***The CEE Tourism Coordination Centre in Hungary***

Hungarian PM Viktor Orbán and Chinese PM Li Keqiang came to an agreement in November 2013 in Bucharest to establish and operate a Tourism Coordination Centre in Budapest within the framework of the China-CEE partnership policy. Within the partnership project, the main objective of the Hungary-based tourism pillar is to present the Central and Eastern European region in a more efficient way, as a common destination, at the increasingly competitive Chinese tourism market. The three Baltic states, the Visegrád Four (Hungary, Slovakia, Poland and the Czech Republic), the six Balkan countries, Bulgaria and Romania constitute the bloc with six sectoral centres, of which Budapest represents one.

Under the partnership project, some of the region's countries assumed responsibility for the coordination of the following fields: Poland for cooperation between chambers of commerce, the Czech Republic for cooperation between the local governments of provinces and counties, Romania for higher education cooperation, Bulgaria for agricultural cooperation, and Serbia for cooperation in the field of infrastructural projects.

#### **The Tourism Coordination Centre of Budapest**

The tasks of the Budapest-based Tourism Coordination Centre, which is to be opened as the first among regional centres, are as follows:

- formulating and promoting joint tourism packages (cultural heritage, gastronomy, healthcare- and active tourism);
- composing thematic trips;
- organizing joint online promotion and social media campaigns;
- organizing field trips to the CEE region for Chinese tourism professionals and the press;
- organizing joint exhibitions (e.g. CTM Shanghai);
- and organizing tourism forums for member countries.

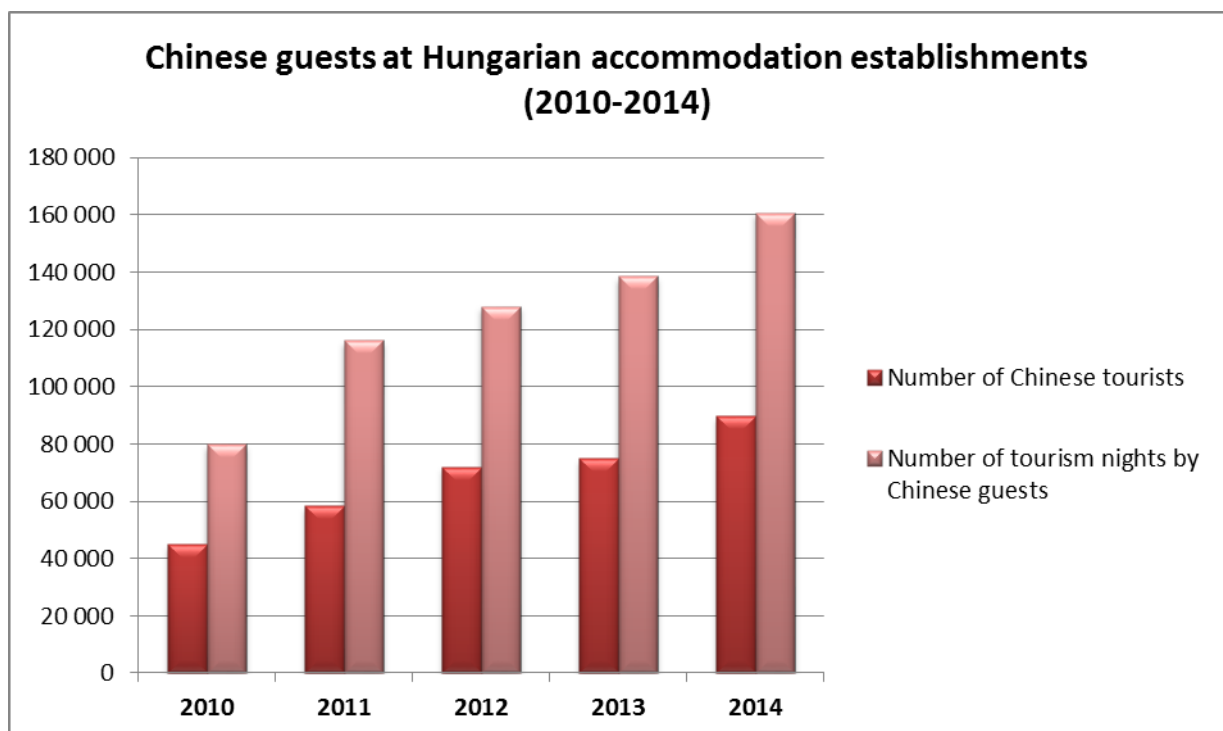


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On 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> December 2014, at the project’s annual summit in Belgrade, China’s PM announced as recognition of Hungary’s role that 2015 is to be the year of China-CEE tourism promotion. At the tourism cooperation conference held in Budapest on 25<sup>th</sup> -27<sup>th</sup> March 2015, some concrete measures were also revealed, of which the most significant is that a Budapest-Beijing flight is to be launched as of 1 May 2015. The Air China flight between Beijing and Budapest via Minsk, scheduled four times a week, is expected to add momentum to Hungarian-Chinese tourism relations.

**The number of tourism nights by Chinese guests grows dynamically**

The number of Chinese tourists visiting Hungary has grown year after year and this has generated large growth in the turnover of accommodation establishments. **Between 2013 and 2014, massive increase was recorded in foreign arrivals, when the number of Chinese guests visiting the country was also up by 19.8 percent.** As far as the number of tourism nights by Chinese guests is concerned, China was even ahead of Japan (with 160 000 people in 2014).



*Source: Hungarian Tourism Ltd*



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Thanks to the centre's activities, the countries of the region can present themselves in a coordinated way as a special "brand" on the increasingly significant Chinese market, the tourists of which typically visit a destination as part of a travel package. Attracting more Chinese tourists to Hungary is an important task not only in light of available statistics but also in view of forward-looking indicators.

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) called China the number one sending country in terms of foreign arrivals already in 2012, when guests from this Far Eastern country spent USD 102bn abroad. Last year, overseas spending by Chinese tourists totalled an estimated USD 164.8bn. According to the estimation of Credit Lyonnais Securities Asia (CLSA), the number of trips by Chinese tourists will double by 2020 and thus reach 200 million.