

## Changes and adaption of the touristic sector after the political turn of 1989/90 in Northern Germany

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The Pomeranian Way of St. James as an example of a way through the rural areas of the South Baltic historical region of Pomerania, including areas in Poland and Northern Germany, is based on several changes since the political turn of 1989/90 in the former states of the Warsaw Pact.

That political turn was crucial for the countries to face numerous political, social and economic transformation processes. The aftermath of the declining USSR and the fall of communism in Europe forced these eastern countries to make various attempts to adapt western standards and norms. A process of reorganisation was accompanied by serious problems and indecisiveness which impact is noticeable till today.

In the meantime, the post-war tourism sector, on which the adjustments had to be based, has undergone a rapid development towards one of the most important dynamic global sectors. The transformation process of the former Warsaw Pact countries also affects rural heritages and Pilgrim ways in Eastern Europe. Despite strong growth in the gross of

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the GDP (gross domestic product), the transformation process is still not finished yet and the impact on the current travel market is appreciable.

Based on that, the tourism along the Pomeranian Way of St. James has developed to a not negligible economic factor. According to the example of the Pomeranian Way of St. James it will be shown by the authors, that this revitalised pilgrim way is one of the new touristic offers in the South Baltic Area. There will be given an analysis which will use different methods to outline the possible impact of the touristic usage of the Pomeranian Way of St. James as a cultural route through the South Baltic Area. The framework of the way will be explained in a short way as well as a short analysis of the touristic location potential of the South Baltic Route.

In addition to the socio-economic characteristics of the region, the touristic aspects of the route will also be discussed.

The southern Baltic Sea region in particular is not the focus of a broad target group in terms of pilgrimage tourism. The analysis of the socio-economic conditions of the region will show that a large development potential can be exploited with regard to the development and establishment of a broad network of theme-specific offers. The use of existing tourism structures, such as the accommodation facilities along the southern Baltic Sea coast, in combination with existing cultural tourism offers represents added value for the entire southern Baltic region. Highlighting and demonstrating this potential is an important step in analysing the changes and adaptations of the tourism sector since the political turnaround of 1989/90 in northern Germany.