

Even golf affected by recession

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The global recession marked negatively the economy of most golf courses. Golf Benchmark Survey 2010, prepared by KPMG, shows that the highest decrease in sales (8 %) was seen in the golf “industry“ in Western Europe, on the contrary the Eastern Europe region as a whole marked a growth in “golf“ income by 6 %.

Nevertheless, Czech greens also have problems especially in connection with the decline in tourism. “We marked a year-on-year fall of visitor rate by 8,5 % in Czech accommodation facilities.“ Lenka Vostrá from Czech Tourism agency said this at Stavební fórum discussion meeting called “About golf while playing golf“. The lower willingness to spend is visible worldwide, however, it is not the only obstacle in golf development (and the connected property development) in the Czech Republic. “Lack of time, financial demands, prejudices against the sport all play a role,“ says L. Vostrá. The example of golf resort Grund in Mladé Buky in the Podkrkonoše region shows, there are ways and methods to exceed these limits. Examples are fee adjustment for “shorter“ play or sponsoring of golf training at primary schools.

However, it is obvious that the actual green cannot be economically self-sufficient in our conditions. Its construction usually means an investment of tens of millions crowns. The developer therefore has to offer accommodation and catering capacity and the widest possible spectrum of freetime activities. Especially massive contribution to the economy of golf resort is sale of suites. (Paradoxically, KPMG survey shows that mainly large golf resorts have been affected by the crisis while 59 % “solo“ courses have not experienced negative changes.) Nevertheless, local banks are not too much in favour of financing such projects. “We did not want to invest in construction of golf courses due to our experience in financing freetime activities,“ said Jindřich Kronbauer from Česká spořitelna (provider of financial loan for the hotel project), at the discussion meeting.

There are 90 golf courses in the Czech Republic and 45 000 active players today. The domestic golf association would like to double their number in the near future.

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