

TOURISM – FACTOR OF INTEGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF EUROPEAN CONTINENT *

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Abstract. *Owing to numerous positive development trends, tourism has placed itself among the most dynamic and most propulsive economic work areas with manifold multiplication effects. On one hand, it creates numerous possibilities of involving subjects into the world economy, and on the other, it becomes a factor of development on national, regional and local level. Tourism is the pioneer of integration on the level of macro region. Tourist integrations are different from economic-political ones since they are not based solely on economic-political developments in Europe, but also on the existence of natural attractiveness of European macro regions and their integral evaluations. The authors pay a special attention to future trends of tourist integration processes on the European continent starting from the existing natural and anthropogenic values.*

Key Words: *Tourism, Tourist integration, EU, Economic development.*

INTRODUCTION

1. Tourism originated on the European continent. Out of its crib, Europe spread onto other continents as well. Although tourism has intensively developed in certain states of American and Asian continent, Europe kept its dominant participation in the world tourism market and represents a leading tourist region in the world with developed receptive tourism and great emission markets. In 2008, Europe had a market share of 53%, realizing 489 million international arrivals. Tourism significantly contributes to economic, social and cultural development of Europe as well as its socio-economic integration.

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2. Not only is tourism a factor of growth and development of world economy, but it is also a means of communication, which opens new areas of cooperation. In the world, during the last years, special attention has been paid to enactment and application of measures which enable a more liberal flow of tourist demand (administrative, customs and border formalities are being decreased). The European Union is the best example of how and how much the stated payment facilities contribute to tourism development. For several years in succession, it has been possible to travel within the EU without visas and with a unique currency - Euro since January 2002.

1. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EU TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

1. As an economic activity, tourism occupies a more and more important place in the world economy. This trend continues year after year and income participation obtained from international tourism in the overall revenue realized in the world has been increasing. It should be noted that the income share from tourism in the structure of GDP is neither the same in every region of the world nor within the regions of certain countries.

Contemporary Europe is characterized by an enhanced process of integration which can be seen from the fact that the majority of its countries have formed a community called the European Union as a result of their economic interests and needs. The EU is the family of democratic European countries which create a unity by setting common institutions by means of which they delegate one part of their sovereignty, so that decision making on specific joint issues happens on the democratic European level [1, pg. 269]. European Union represents a typical example of a developed region when observed as a receptive and initiative region from the point of view of international tourism development. In order to view its place within the international tourism development comprehensively, and tourism in general, it is necessary to include its initiative role, i.e. travel expenses of EU citizens abroad, international tourism income and degree of tourism development within the EU.

2. The European Union represents the second most visited region in the world, after the USA, and it also represents the greatest generator of tourist demand in the world. When observing its initiative role in the international tourism development, it is noticeable that the EU deposits significant funds for its citizens' travelling outside the EU.

The EU has become the most important generator of the demand for tourism development in many countries of the world. The EU spent 94.2 billion in 2007, 72.3 billion in 2006 and 65.7 billion Euros in 2005 for this purpose. (Figure 1 shows the movement of tourism expenses and income from the international tourism of the EU in the period between 2004 and 2007).

The EU generated revenue from international tourism in the amount of 75.6 billion Euros in 2007, 72.3 billion Euros in 2006 and 65.7 billion Euros in 2005. Tourism balance deficit was increased from 15.4 billion Euros in 2006 to 18.6 billion Euros in 2007.

In 2007, revenues generated from international tourism represented almost 22.7% of overall EU service export whereas the participation of tourism expenses in export of the EU amounted to 25.1% [7]. Revenues generated within the EU (191 billion Euros) were more significant than the tourism revenue generated from the countries outside the EU. Residents of EU member countries spent 166.4 billion Euros for tourist traveling within the EU.

Mediterranean countries: Spain, Italy and France represent leading tourist countries of the EU and the world, whereas Germany and Great Britain stand out when it comes to tourists who travel abroad.

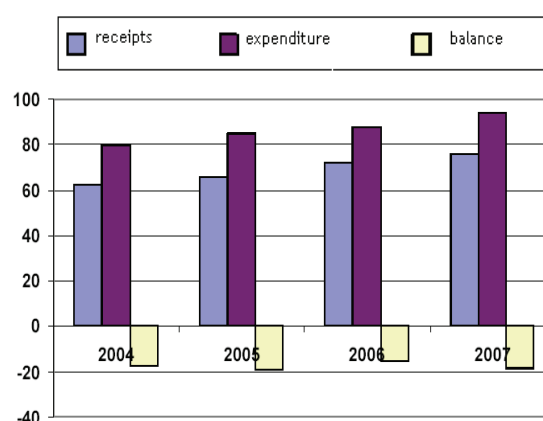


Fig. 1 Tourism expenses and income from international tourism of the EU in the period from 2004 to 2007 (in billion euros)

3. During the last decades, the EU has been paying special attention to the application and development of instruments and measures with the view to developing tourism continually and steadily. For the purpose of determining the role and function of the governments of some countries within the domain of providing support to tourism development, the following guidelines are suggested:

(1) General regulative function of governments which relates to decisions connected to the duration of working week, duration of paid holiday, currency exchange rate, and customs regulations;

(2) Direct engagement of government in managing tourism resources, especially in the countries where tourism is treated as a priority;

(3) The role of government is important in the domain of market research function;

(4) On this level, general tourism propaganda and other promotional activities of national importance are organized and financed;

(5) Permanent reference to the responsibility of building and maintaining infrastructure necessary for tourism development;

(6) Activities connected to the use of various types of facilities which stimulate tourism flow such as simplified customs control for foreign and domestic tourists, unique passports for all residents of EU members;

(7) Application of various measures with the aim to de-season tourism demand;

(8) Through specialized institutions, the Union directly participates in the regional development of tourism;

(9) Special attention is paid to the protection of environment by the use of proper regulations, protocols and laws [2, pg. 207].

4. Common tourist activities were initiated on the level of the EU in 1982 when the Council of the European Union adopted the document "Initial guidelines for the development of Community tourism politics". In 1986, the EU formed a counseling body (the EU Counseling Committee) with the aim to exchange information more effectively, have consultations and initiate cooperation between member countries.

In all the documents of the Counseling Committee, tourism is marked as one of the sectors which is of greater importance for the European Union, with the following reasons being stated to support this attitude:

(1) Tourism is an economic area, which secures a significant solution to problems of unemployment within the EU with relevantly small capital investment (9 million employed work directly in tourism or about 6% of overall number of the employed);

(2) Tourism is an important sector in the development of economy in general. Its function in expediting faster development of undeveloped regions and areas is specially emphasized;

(3) Tourism plays an important role in ecology and protection of natural and cultural environment;

(4) Tourism abolishes borders and reinforces European identity, which means that it is a factor which contributes to further unification of Europe;

(5) Tourism within the framework of the EU represents the most appropriate and important homogenizing factor in realizing its goals of economic and social development in general [8].

(6) In order to realize one of its basic goals of tourism development, that is to say of forming a common market of tourism, the EU applies and develops different methods and procedures by stimulating the inflow of private as well as state capital.

2. IMPORTANT TOURISM INTEGRATIONS WITHIN THE EUROPEAN UNION

1. The largest developmental-tourism integration is the EU, which is a tourist leader in relation to other tourism integrations in the world. The EU treats tourism as an attractive economic profession which enables generating revenue through the so-called invisible export.

2. Contemporary trends influenced the creation of various tourism integrations within the EU, the most important being:

(1) The Mediterranean region,

(2) The Alps tourism region,

(3) Regional tourism integration of Nordic countries and

(4) Countries of Central Europe – developmental tourism clusters.

2.1. The Mediterranean Region

1. On the Earth's surface there is not a geographic entity such as the Mediterranean one, with that large concentration of natural and cultural-historical facilities for tourism development [4, pg. 135]. Although some natural and cultural-historical facilities for tourism development are more favorable in other parts of the world than in the Mediterranean region, they do not possess such a concentration of conditions for tourism development as this region does. Namely, this region is a unique natural ambient characterized by

diverse herbal and animal kinds and it represents a world treasury of cultural-historical creative art of people. Warm sea, sandy beaches and forests, which decorate rich scenery, create rocks and are favorable for treating respiratory organs, whereas numerous historical monuments provide excellent possibilities for tourism development [6, pg. 139]

Table 1 shows registered number of overnight stays of tourists and available number of beds in basic accommodation capacities in the EU-27 in the Mediterranean countries which were members of the EU and the Mediterranean Partner Countries in 2006.

In 2006, overall tourism turnover of 182,2 million from overnight stays in MPC was realized, whereas in the Mediterranean Member Countries of the EU they realized 796,2 million overnight stays. Average annual growth rate of overnight stay number in the period from 2000 to 2006 was significantly more favorable in MPC than in the Mediterranean EU member countries. In 2006, the number of overnight stays registered in basic accommodation capacities in the Mediterranean Countries - EU members was 52,2% of overall number of overnight stays, whereas for Spain, France and Italy it amounted to 46,7%.

Based on the WTO data, we can conclude that three Mediterranean countries – Spain, Italy and France have been among ten touristically most visited countries in the world for as long as the last 50 years, which best demonstrates the importance and role of tourism in economic development of these countries.

Table 1. Key indicators of tourism development in MPC and EU - 27

	Number of overnight stays in basic accommodation capacities		Number of beds in basic accommodation capacities	
	2006 (in thousands)	Average annual growth rate in the period from 2000 to 2006	2006 (in thousands)	Average annual growth rate in the period from 2000 to 2006
MPC ¹	182.781	8,4	1.577	6,1
EU-27	1.524.991	1,0	11.536	1,8
Mediterranean EU member countries ²	796.190	1,2	5.806	2,0

Source: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>

2. European part of the Mediterranean region, which occupies three large peninsulas (Iberian, Apennine and Balkan), has become the most attractive region in the world within which about one third of the overall international tourism income is realized. Tourism demand within the Mediterranean region has an emphasized seasonal concentration since in the summer period it realizes 40% of the overall annual revenue [4, pg. 149]

¹ MPC = Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey.

² Greece, Spain, Italy, France, Cyprus, Malta and Slovenia.

With the view to increase the level of used capacities in this period, it is necessary to enrich the offer with different happenings such as manifestations, counseling, fairs and the like.

WTO experts predict that further development of tourism in the Mediterranean countries which are members of the EU will not be intensified as it has been the case during the last decades, i.e. that the number of tourists who visit them will not be larger than 400 million and their participation in overall tourism revenue in the world will be reduced.

In order to preserve basic tourism activities, the observed states created their own tourism integration, which pays special attention to the improvement of the quality offer with the preservation of natural and anthropogenic values.

2.2. The Alps Tourism Region

1. Regarding its attractiveness, the Alps represent a unique tourism region that is characterized by a somewhat longer average stay in relation to other mountain regions in Europe. Although the greatest part of tourism revenue is realized in the Alps during summer months due to a great number of picnickers and transit tourists with a short duration of stay, the economic effects of tourism in winter season are more important due to larger number of foreign tourists, their greater purchase power and longer stay. In the Alps countries, winter tourism has a significant part in their national revenue.

Up to 1960, tourism on the Alps was organized in the several areas that were accessible by road. The development of Alps tourism was intensive all the way to the second half of the 80s in the 20th century when the stagnation and mild decline of tourism income set in within this mountain macro region as a consequence of degradation as well as competition increase on the market. In order to protect further development of this region, Germany, Switzerland, France, Austria and Italy initiated multilateral as well as bilateral arrangement discussions. Special attention was directed to the preservation of natural environment as a basis of further tourism development [5, pg. 435].

2. The Alps were visited by 30 million foreign tourists in 2006, which represents 4% of the international tourism flow and 7% of tourism flow realized in Europe [9]. The development of tourism put a halt on the migration of Alps citizens into urban areas, contributed to the increase of employment in service sector accompanied with the constant reduction in primary sector. Tourism represents an increasingly crucial point of economic development of the Alps whereas the importance of traditional activities is reduced. This is confirmed by the evaluation that tourist-recreation value of mountains is ten times bigger than the value of forest trees used for processing [4, pg.103].

2.3. Regional Tourism Integration of Nordic Countries

1. Historically connected Nordic countries created a special form of tourism development based on valorization of cultural-historic inheritance and protection of natural environment.

2. The implementation and development of joint strategy with the aim to realize sustainable tourism development represents a significant challenge. The countries concerned are those very developed ones (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden), which develop forms of tourism such as: city, congress, cultural-manifestation and adventure tourism directed to polar areas.

2.4. Developmental Tourism Clusters in the Countries of Central Europe

1. Having formed the basis for quality city tourism development, the countries of central Europe are trying to find their place as developmental-tourism clusters of European tourism through their involvement in European associations, unions and organizations [5, pg. 436].

Tourism clusters represent a geographic concentration of mutually connected companies and institutions in "tourism industry" and, as a suitable mechanism, they enable the introduction of small and medium sized companies into a greater market, and from the aspect of tourism they are of special importance. Since the companies are mutually connected, they represent the basis of strategic approach of MSP to major goals on the market. Through joint engagement and with the support from public institutions, it is possible to secure funds necessary for successful development of tourist destination.

The support of clusters should, simultaneously, be connected to the creation of brands that would be recognizable even abroad. Owing to joint action, MSP may reach economics of greater scope and higher level of investments in basic funds necessary for the brand development.

2. Countries of central Europe are trying to find their place as developmental clusters of European tourism by developing forms of tourism such as spa and health tourism. Almost in every country of East and Central Europe, tourism played an important role during the transition. Such a case was especially visible in Hungary where tourism contributed to creating competition and open economy, stabilizing balance of payment, opening new work positions which engaged the surplus of employees during structural changes in industry. [3, pg. 25].

CONCLUSION

1. Not only is tourism the factor of world economy growth and development, but it is also the founder of integration on the level of macro-region. Tourism integrations differ from economic-political ones since they are not based solely on economic-political development trend in Europe, but also on the existing natural attractiveness of European macro-regions and their integral evaluation.

2. The European Union represents a typical example of a developed region when observed as a receptive and initiative one from the point of development of international tourism. Contemporary trends influenced the creation of different tourism integrations within the EU. By their foundation and through their development, the stated tourism integrations wish to preserve their specific values as motives for future tourism flow.

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TURIZAM - FAKTOR INTEGRACIJE I RAZVOJA EVROPSKOG KONTINENTA

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Zahvaljujući brojnim pozitivnim razvojnim trendovima, turizam se svrstao među najdinamičnije i najprospulzivnije privredne delatnosti, sa višestrukim multiplikativnim efektima. Naime, turizam, na jednoj strani, stvara mogućnosti za uključivanje brojnih subjekata u svetsku privredu, a na drugoj strani, postaje faktor razvoja na nacionalnom, regionalnom i lokalnom nivou. Turizam je začetnik integracija na nivou makro regiona. Turističke integracije se razlikuju od ekonomsko-političkih, jer se ne zasnivaju samo na ekonomsko-političkim kretanjima u Evropi već i na postojanju prirodnih atraktivnosti evropskih makro regiona i njihovom integralnom vrednovanju. Autori posebnu pažnju posvećuju budućim trendovima turističkih integracionih procesa na evropskom kontinentu polazeći od postojećih prirodnih i antropogenih vrednosti.

Ključne reči: *turizam, turističke integracije, EU, privredni razvoj*