

A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO THE KEY MODERN TOURISM TRENDS IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

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Abstract: *One of the most important measures in creating a more competitive position in the tourism market is the adoption of the appropriate planning documents in the field of tourism and tourism development, in particular the adoption of a clear and responsible Strategy of tourism development, as well as defining the key strategic goals and directions of tourism development. The current Strategy lays particular emphasis on the key modern tourism trends: in the promotion and booking methods, in the field of accommodation, and with regard to contemporary motives for travel in the global tourism market. Besides the relevant issues regarding tourism, special emphasis is placed on the strategic approach to the key modern tourism trends in the Republic of Serbia.*

Keywords: *Tourism development strategies, the key tourism trends, competitiveness, the Republic of Serbia*

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism has frequently been launched as an alternative which potentially can contribute to more positive development that attracts visitors, in-migrants and investments, thus creating new employment and income opportunities [1].

As a branch of industry, tourism is a mass socio-economic phenomenon with multiple positive effects, which has in recent years recorded a continuous growth.

In regard to the aforesaid, it is stated in theory that “tourism is one of the most efficient ways to valorize the preserved natural entities (lakes, rivers, mountain views and landscapes, etc.), as well as the cultural heritage (archeological sites, monasteries, etc.). Bearing in mind that tourism is a specific kind of “space user”, without being an irreparable consumer of natural elements, a controlled development of tourism can bring about the development of a particular region as well” [2].

As stated in [3], “the consequences of globalization in tourism, as it has progressed so far, have been a growing typification of the tourism offer, a high degree of alteration and very often degradation of the natural environment, of attractive tourist sites and numerous cultural-historical locations. A process going on in the opposite direction brings into focus the property of uniqueness of the local and its basis is the valorization of authentic tourist attractions. At the same time, it is associated with the spreading of social awareness of the crucial importance of preservation of the natural environment and the cultural-historical heritage”.

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This kind of raised environmental awareness relating to tourism has been shaped into the concept of sustainable tourism [3].

In recent years conditions have been created in the Republic of Serbia for developing the tourism industry and tourism capacities, relying on the advantages of Serbia in this area.

According to [4], within the European Union tourism represents “one of the main sectors of economy with 9% employees and 9% share of consumption. In addition, it is one of the first five export categories in 83% of all the world countries, and the main source of foreign currency earnings in almost 38% of countries. As a result, tourism plays one of the main roles in the economy of many countries, as a source of employment and a way to fight poverty”.

Besides the relevant questions with regard to tourism in Serbia (the concept and kinds of tourism, the elements of effects of globalization processes on the global trends in tourism, tourist needs and experiences, etc.), in this article we will particularly address the strategic approach to the key modern tourism trends in the Republic of Serbia.

The principal source for analysing the key tourism trends in the Republic of Serbia is the Strategy of Tourism Development of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2016 – 2025 [5].

2. A THEORETICAL REVIEW OF THE RELEVANT ISSUES IN THE FIELD OF TOURISM

Tourism is frequently viewed as a purposeful, planned and motivated behaviour, where the expectations of the traveller play the most important role in travel decision-making. It is therefore that the needs, views and motives of tourists are decisive in this respect [6].

As it has been pointed out in the introduction, and confirmed by [7] and [8], “tourism plays a key role in local economic development”.

In less developed regions, the local community may derive significant economic-social benefits from tourism [9], so that [10] state that “tourism may be primarily viewed as a branch of industry which simultaneously promotes economic growth and equality, by including the use of local inputs – local commodities, as well as the involvement of the local manpower”.

Finally, according to the definition of the World Tourism Organization, “*tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes*”. [11].

The current legislation [12] defines the relevant concepts in the sphere of tourism. In this work we shall focus on the concepts of tourism activity, tourism destinations, tourism product and tourism travel.

Article 3, item 14a) provides a definition of tourism activity, in terms of providing the services of tourism agencies, the services of tourism-related professions (tourist guide, travel companion and tourist animator) and providing other services [12].

Item 15) of the same article offers the definition of tourism destination which, in terms of the legal definition, represents the endpoint of a tourist travel which, owing to its amenities, provides the accommodation and stay of tourists [12].

The tourism product is defined in item 22), and it represents a set of interdependent elements which are in practice organized into a specific value chain comprising material products and services, natural values and cultural heritage, tourist attractions, the tourism suprastructure and the tourism infrastructure [12].

Item 25) provides a definition of tourist travel, which is a combination of two or more tourism services (transportation, accommodation, and other tourism services), defined and prepared by the travel organiser independently or on the travellers' request, in the duration of over 24 hours, or in a shorter duration, provided that it includes one night, or a stay of more than one day which only includes the service of accommodation in certain periods of time or duration, which is offered for sale and all sold at one price [12].

In view of the impact of globalization processes on global tourism trends, we can say with certainty that the world has entered a phase of most dynamic changes.

According to certain authors [13], "the end of the twentieth, and the beginning of the twenty-first century has resulted in intensive development of production forces, which brings about a direct improvement in the living standards. This phenomenon has directly encouraged changes in behaviour, and in the structure of tourism demand compared to the previous period. The improved living standards have resulted, among other things, in more massive tourist movements, and a rise in tourist consumption, and in turn a rise in the revenues realized from tourism. The conducted study, which was carried out by surveying experts, led to the conclusion that changes with regard to tourism demand primarily motivated the commencement of the globalization processes, with the emerging necessity of internationalization of tourism activity carriers, with a view to finding the best possible answers to accumulated expectations in the tourism demand".

The globalization processes have, among other things, greatly contributed to a change of social relations, which is primarily reflected in the sphere of labour. A progress in the field of leisure, along with education, the health status, and information and communications, have recently become generators of development in the developed countries [13].

Given the fact that globalization is not a one-way process, the local-global relation in tourism has been observed in the following ways:

- through the two aspects of the relation of these closely related and interlinked phenomena, and
- through changes in their meanings across different time horizons [14].

It is also stated in [14] that "in the first case the local is only reduced to space, in terms of the location of specific tourist attractions, making it easy to speak of their delocalization. This excludes the perception of the local in terms of peculiarity – all the local elements (the local population, life, culture, customs) which are the truly valuable and interesting motives in a tourist offer, or they are largely reduced to casual and superficial information".

"In the second case, the local is recognized as a complex system immanent to a specific point, or location, irreplaceable, and as such a valuable and interesting "tourism product", which can

also have its exclusive tourism market value. The first aspect (in the context of globalization in tourism) moves in the direction of delocalization, the shaping of a “global village” and the globalization of local products; the second trend promotes getting in touch with the local, asserting the local distinctiveness and the importance of the local products. We could say it is the second form of globalization (the reverse side) which includes interconnections between different cultures, thus contributing to the heterogenization of the modern world” [14].

The characteristics of the effect of globalization processes on the global movement of tourists have their primarily observable aspects in terms of the concepts of innovations in tourism and the competitiveness of the tourism destination.

It is therefore stated in [15] that “innovation in tourism is the introduction of a new, or the improvement of an existing component with a view to realizing tangible or intangible benefits for tourism workers and the local community, promoting the value of the tourist experience and the primary competences of the tourism sector, as well as increasing competitiveness and tourism sustainability. Innovation in tourism may be associated with various areas such as the tourism destination, the tourism product, technological and other processes, organizational and business models, skills, architecture, services, tools and procedures for management, marketing, communication, quality assurance and pricing”.

It is also explained in [15] that “the competitiveness of a tourism destination is the destination’s ability to efficiently use its natural, cultural, human, artistic and capital resources in developing and offering high-quality, innovative, ethical and attractive tourism products and services”.

This is done with a view to achieving sustainable growth within its comprehensive vision and strategic goals, increasing the added value of the tourism sector, improving and diversifying its market component, and optimizing its attractiveness and benefits for the visitors and the local community [15].

The following table provides an overview of different types of tourism and a summary of the descriptive characteristics of each individual form of tourism:

- Cultural tourism,
- Ecotourism,
- Rural tourism (agritourism),
- Adventure tourism,
- Health tourism,
- Business (congress) tourism,
- Gastronomic tourism,
- Nautical tourism,
- Mountain tourism,
- City tourism,
- Faith (religious) tourism,
- Naturism,
- Spa tourism,
- Educational tourism,
- Sports tourism.

<i>N^o</i>	<i>Tourism type</i>	<i>Descriptive characteristics</i>
1	Cultural tourism	<p>Cultural tourism is a form of tourism in which the visitor's main motivation is to learn, discover, experience and visit material and immaterial cultural attractions and products in the tourism destination.</p> <p>These attractions and products comprise a set of recognizable material, intellectual, spiritual and emotional attributes of society. Those attributes include art and architecture, historical and cultural heritage, culinary heritage, literature, songs, creative industries, and living cultures with their lifestyles, value systems, beliefs and social traditions.</p>
2	Ecotourism	<p>Ecotourism takes place in undisturbed natural areas and represents a form of tourism which aims to preserve the environment, improve the quality of life of the local population, and educate the visitors. The focus is on learning of the natural and cultural resources of an area.</p> <p>Ecotourism includes various activities, such as travelling through different natural regions, visiting unique ecosystems, observing the animal world, etc.</p>
3	Rural tourism (agritourism)	<p>Agritourism represents a combination of two different business activities – tourism and agriculture. Agritourism is most often based on relatively small farms, which found their business activity on the tradition of the local area.</p> <p>Rural tourism activities take place in non-urban (rural) areas with the following characteristics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) low population density, 2) predominance of agriculture and forestry, 3) a traditional social structure and way of life.
4	Adventure tourism	<p>Adventure tourism is a form of tourism which takes place in a natural environment. Adventure tourism focuses on activities performed in nature and involves a physical challenge. The authors classify it into adventure tourism with a low risk level, and adventure tourism with a high-risk level. This sphere of tourism requires the hiring of well-trained guides.</p>
5	Health tourism	<p>Health tourism implies a temporary change of residence for the purpose of medical prevention, rehabilitation, the use of various wellness treatments, as well as some most complex medical procedures. On that basis, there have gradually been distinguished, in relative terms, three groups of users of the services who, in their different ways, most often satisfy their medical needs.</p> <p>The first group consists of consumers of the traditional medical tourism associated with natural environment factors (the medicinal properties of waters, mud, waves, climate, etc.).</p> <p>The second group are the clients of wellness tourism, which is a set of procedures aimed at achieving physical and mental wellbeing through the use of natural factors and other kinds of activities, while the third group includes patients with serious health-related problems who require complex medical treatments which in turn require the services of specialized medical institutions and the top medical professionals.</p> <p>In view of the aforesaid, according to the level of medical services used by the clients, we can, in relative terms, distinguish as separate forms of health tourism the treatment by natural factors (balneotherapy, climatotherapy, thalassotherapy, etc.), wellness and medical tourism [16].</p>
6	Business (congress) tourism	<p>Business tourism is a form of tourism in which visitors travel for professional and/or business reasons to destinations outside their place of work and residence, for participating in a meeting, business activity, or event. The key elements of business tourism are meetings, professional conferences, exhibitions, etc.</p> <p>In terms of content, they can be scientific, professional, economic, political, etc. With regard to participants, they can be of local or international scope, etc.</p>

<i>N^o</i>	<i>Tourism type</i>	<i>Descriptive characteristics</i>
7	Gastronomic tourism	Gastronomic tourism is a form of tourism which is characterized by the visitor's experiences in connection with food and related products and activities in the course of travel. Besides the activities relating to authentic, traditional or innovative culinary experiences, gastronomic tourism may also include other related activities, such as visits to local manufacturers, participating in food festivals and attending cooking workshops.
8	Nautical tourism	Nautical tourism is the movement of tourists in vessels across seas or rivers, including their landing in ports and the necessary infrastructure required for the realization of this kind of tourism. The authors most often classify it into two main subgroups: 1.) nautical tourism connected with the sea and seaside activities, 2.) nautical tourism connected with still waters and still-water-related activities.
9	Mountain tourism	Mountain tourism includes winter and summer holidays as a form of tourism activities. The related product forms are: skiing, Nordic skiing, sledging, skating, snowboarding; tracking, cycling, walking, horse riding, etc.; activities on lakes and rivers (rafting, fishing, etc.); paragliding etc.; athletes' preparations, family holidays; team building activities in a natural setting; children's picnics and workshops, etc.
10	City tourism	City tourism is a form of tourism which takes place in urban environments the economy of which is based on administration, industry, trade and services, so that they represent busy hubs. City destinations offer a broad and varied palette of cultural, architectural, technological, social and nature-related experiences and products for entertainment and business activities.
11	Faith (religious) tourism	Religious tourism focuses on visiting religious places (sites), attractions and destinations, with the principal aim of engaging the participants in strengthening a particular religion. To be able to speak of religious tourism travel, it must be primarily motivated by religious reasons. However, this kind of tourism is not easy to define.
12	Naturism	Naturism is a cultural and political movement based on the idea of promoting and supporting social nudism in private and in public. In recent times, nudist beaches and other kinds of anonymous nudist activities are provided for those who want to participate in naturism.
13	Spa tourism	Spas are characterized by their predominant health-recreational functions, owing to the abundance of different natural elements (thermal mineral springs, noble gasses, peloid, climatic elements, vegetation), thanks to which this kind of places has for a long time raised a lot of interest within tourism demand.
14	Educational tourism	Educational tourism is a form of tourism in which the visitors' main motivation is their involvement in and experience of learning, self-improvement, intellectual development and skill development. Educational tourism includes a broad range of products and services connected with academic studies, skill improvement, school excursions, sports education, career-development courses, language courses etc.
15	Sports tourism	Sports tourism is a form of tourism where the visitor's experience relates to participating in, or following a sports event, which generally includes both commercial and non-commercial activities of a competitive nature.

Table 1: Tourism types and a summary of their descriptive characteristics [15]

In the field of tourism, it is essential to acknowledge tourist needs and tourist experiences, as analysing the motivation for travel is one of the starting points in studying the social factors of tourism. It follows that one of the key questions in tourism is: what inspires (motivates) a person for tourism movements?

It is stated in [17] that "the tourism industry deals with the sale of experiences. The experiential value of a tourism product or service is the dominant factor which affects the consumer's decision-making. Tourists look for emotional experiences, and travel memories are their most important characteristic. While goods are tangible, and services intangible, experiences are remembered, i.e. impressed on the memory. With this in mind, we can say that tourist attractions are the main generators of tourist experiences and memories".

Tourism is often characterized as an area which provides a wide “choice of pleasures”, or an area in which people seek a new “content” and quality of life [18].

According to some authors [19], “the purpose of tourism travels is the satisfaction of various needs. Tourist needs are part of the overall needs, which are characterized by certain specific qualities. In the hierarchical order of the overall human needs, tourist (secondary) needs may be regarded as needs of a higher order, which only arise when the existential (primary) needs are met. However, considering the importance of restoring the mental and physical fitness for productivity of work, tourist needs are, to a certain degree, close to existential needs”.

As stated in [20], tourist needs represent a sum of the individual needs that, when combined, satisfy an individual and a group of people in their wish to get rest and recreation outside the place of their permanent residence, for restoring their mental and physical fitness. In view of this, tourist needs are formed at the place of residence, and satisfied outside that place, whereby tourist movements are produced.

For realizing tourist travels, besides the factors of tourism demand and supply, and intermediation factors, it is essential that the person should make the decision to travel. In order to make the decision on a tourist journey, the person has to feel the need and be motivated to satisfy the need. Tourist needs, as any other needs, have a historical, physiological and cultural basis. Tourist needs include:

- the tourist needs for changes,
- the tourist needs for respect and self-affirmation,
- the tourist needs for rest and recreation,
- the tourist needs for socializing,
- the tourist needs for learning,
- the tourist needs for play,
- the tourist needs for security [20].

3. A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO THE KEY MODERN TOURISM TRENDS IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

As stated in [21], “the Serbian tourism potentials have not been sufficiently valorized so far, because tourism has never been an important subject of the Republic of Serbia development policy”.

Despite a great tourism potential, Serbian tourism products have not been adequately developed, or commercialized in the global tourism market. So far, the Republic of Serbia has failed to achieve any business results comparable to the competitive countries [22].

With a view to establishing better positions of the Republic of Serbia in the global tourism market, [12] stipulates a set of planning documents which have been adopted and applied with the aim of tourism planning and development, as set out in article 5. This includes the following planning documents:

- The Republic of Serbia Tourism Development Strategy;
- The Strategic Master Plan;
- The Strategic Marketing Plan;
- The programme of tourism product development;
- The tourism development programme;
- The programme of promotional activities.

In view of the aforesaid, is it essential to consider the strategic approach to the key tourism trends in the Republic of Serbia [5].

Considering the significance of the Republic of Serbia Tourism Development Strategy, [12] provides the essential determinants and elements of this umbrella document (in article 7).

Thus, according to provisions of [12], the Republic of Serbia Tourism Development Strategy is passed for the Republic of Serbia territory.

The Strategy defines the long-term objectives of tourism planning and development in line with the overall economic, social, environmental and cultural-historical development.

In particular, the Strategy includes:

- an analysis of the current situation and the degree of tourism development so far;
- a comparative analysis of tourism in the competitive countries;
- the advantages and disadvantages of tourism in the Republic of Serbia;
- the tourism development objectives;
- the tourism development vision;
- a selection of priority tourism products;
- a proposal of priority tourism destinations;
- the analysis of the influence on the cultural heritage and natural resources;
- the proposal of a tourism development policy;
- a proposal for investments;
- a competitiveness plan;
- the Action Plan.

Along with an annual growth in the number of tourists, there are significant changes in their behaviour and motivation which will certainly be affected by climatic changes, the depletion and shortage of resources, a shortage in time compared to money, the will and motivation to visit some “old” destinations. Anyone with the ability to recognize the aforesaid changes and put them to good use will have a great chance to win the tourist market game. The marketing “war for future tourists” and destinations in the market will no more be primarily waged based on prices, accommodation, infrastructure, transportation and facilities, but based on tourists’ feelings and positive experiences [5].

In that regard, three groups of new trends are considered:

- the new trends in the promotion and booking methods,
- the new trends in accommodation,
- the contemporary motives for travelling in the global tourism market.

3.1. The new trends in the promotion and booking methods

In the field of promotion and booking, new communication and promotion tools have been developed based on e-marketing technology for communicating with consumers, which powerfully increase the efficacy of marketing activities. Digital channels are the core of the communication strategy in efficient marketing. Nowadays destinations and companies reach consumers directly through a number of shared digital platforms. All this is happening owing to the high movability of consumers. The mobile devices owned by consumers enable their access

to numerous platforms, and virtual communication with tourism suppliers, as well as among consumers themselves [5].

A revolution in promotional messages has been introduced by 3D technology, which stimulates impressions and emotions, and in turn adrenalin. In addition, information-communication technologies and social media offer a special opportunity for developing countries to get in touch with modern trends and be more efficient in the market, without the need to invest large amounts of funds, as well as a chance for inaccessible destinations to communicate with the tourism market [5].

The sharing economy and the virtual intersector information platform, as well as communication among consumers following the “peer to peer” model is becoming a characteristic of the new situation in the tourism business. In addition, according to the UNWTO recommendations, the e-marketing technology for communication with consumers should also be accessible to persons with disabilities, as well as facilities and other amenities being promoted, which should be marked by accessibility symbols, the so-called pictograms [5].

All this is happening as a result of the remarkable movability of consumers. The mobile devices available to consumers enable them to access numerous platforms, to virtually communicate with tourism suppliers, and with other consumers as well [5].

3.2. New accommodation types

With regard to accommodation, in contrast to large international hotel chains, which are also undergoing a transformation tailored to the authentic features of the destination, there is the emergence of small family accommodations which allow the visitor to organize their stay and rest as they choose to, as well as catering for the ever-growing needs of contemporary tourists to get in touch with nature, and the local culture and environment [5].

A highly rising trend is recorded for “glamping – glamorous camping”. Glamping originated in England, USA and Canada, the countries which are, according to statistics, traditionally inclined to camping. While the predominant stereotype in our part of the world is that camping is a form of “necessity tourism”, as well as “youth tourism”, the situation in the West is different [5].

The importance of accepting the experiences and trend of using glamping and including it in the accommodation supply of the Republic of Serbia lies in the following facts:

- 1) the prices of stay in this kind of accommodation range from 80 to 460 EUR/day;
- 2) investments into this kind of accommodation go up to 350 EUR/m² for the most luxuriously equipped accommodation;
- 3) considering that the facilities concerned are of a mobile and temporary nature, and do not have an invasive effect on the surroundings, the installation of the facilities requires no complex planning or infrastructure procedures;
- 4) the Republic of Serbia has a large number of destinations which are attractive for this kind of offer;
- 5) this concept is ideal for the promotion and development of tourism areas without great investments into the infrastructure and facilities, with the responsibility of highly professional management of the logistics and supply of high-quality tourism products and services (suitable regions for implementation – the Lower Danube region, Golija, Uvac, Vlasina Lake, Tara...) [5].

3.3. The contemporary motives for travelling in the global tourism market

With regard to the motives of contemporary tourists, [5] distinguishes the following ones:

- 1) an intensive holiday – most tourists expect to be guaranteed a rewarding and totally content-filled time spent on holidays. These tourists enjoy sharing their holiday experiences and are guided by the “effort for rest” idea, combining visits with multiple events, celebrations, and activities which result in additional benefits on coming home with newly acquired skills such as cooking or painting. This way of thinking is expected to take root in most tourists’ expectations of holiday benefits. Short visits to cities which can offer different activities can also benefit from this trend. Cruises will be popular, enabling people to visit a large number of destinations in the course of one holiday;
- 2) trying something new – in the last few years, as demonstrated by studies, many tourists have been planning to explore new destinations; over one third (35%) think they will go for holidays to countries they have never visited before. Tourists who like to keep to the proven and reliable destinations also intend to try something new, and almost a half (48%) will most probably or almost certainly visit another resort or city in a country they have been to, e.g. visit Verona instead of Venice, or Majorca instead of Malaga;
- 3) living like the locals – has become a fad which has “grown on” many tourists. They seek more authentic experiences on holidays and many companies now offer tourists an opportunity to enjoy the hidden gems along with the traditional tourist attractions. Blogs and social networks are, like travelling, an interesting way to discover the hidden hot spots with more intense authentic experiences;
- 4) it is also essential to emphasize the rise in visits to the most important segments of movable (museums, libraries, archives, galleries), immovable (archeological sites, urban cores, protected spatial cultural-historical units, monuments of folk construction, fortifications, battlefields, places of execution) and intangible (saint’s day, St George’s Day; the “Sirogojno – Old Village” Outdoor Museum) cultural heritage;
- 5) a rise in group visits to important celebrations and events – a growth in the number of group visits to places of significant celebrations and events. In 2014 and 2015 there was a rising number (19%) of group and family visits to important institutions and cultural monuments, military memorials and places of suffering, as well as to areas of significant events. Groups of tourists are increasingly choosing to visit places of celebration of significant events from the world wars, the fields of important battles, areas known for traditional weddings, harvests, family visits to places which revive memories of attractive places from their childhood and youth;
- 6) without a break in short city visits – the demand for city visits has exceeded beach holidays as the most popular form of holiday in 2014, and it is expected to keep the leading position in 2015 with 43% (compared to the 42% planning beach holidays). The rise in the number of tourists in cities is probably the result of a rise in low-budget flights to different destinations, with a broad range of people finding this kind of holiday more attractive. Cities are most popular among people of 25 to 44 years of age, with this age group opting for them as an option of short leaves from work. The most popular destinations are Amsterdam, Paris, Berlin, Rome, Barcelona and Dublin;
- 7) fitness and sports – according to the research of the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA) (UK), 6% of people are planning a sports holiday in 2015, and 5% go for adventurous or other challenging content on their holidays, while 4% are planning on travelling abroad to attend great sports events. This trend which includes fitness and other sports activities and events will have a significant rise among people in the middle age group;

- 8) wellness holidays – wellness and spa holidays are also showing a rising trend which is continuing in 2015. The Global Wellness Institute has recently published that the sector is worth 494 billion USD at the global level (the 13% growth in one year has launched Great Britain into the top ten wellness holiday countries). Wellness holidays include a broad range of activities: spa, yoga, detoxification, fitness and stress relief. They are particularly popular among business people who seek a total recovery on holidays. Wellness programmes are popular with individual travellers. The most expensive destinations are those with natural beauties regardless of remoteness, such as Oman, Arizona, Costarica and Indonesia;
- 9) gastronomic tourism – a new trend in modern tourism. Gastronomic tourism is a spreading phenomenon, as over one third of tourism consumption is spent on food, according to the World Tourism Organization. According to the EUROSTAT data, 22% of Europeans state that their main reason for travelling is the cultural experience, which includes cooking. The same source states that Bulgarians spend almost 40% of their travel budget on gastronomic products. As a result, the local cuisine is an important factor with regard to holiday quality. One of the most often used definitions of gastronomic tourism is: gastronomic tourism “is travelling to regions rich in gastronomic resources, which can generate relaxing experiences or have the purpose of entertainment, including visits to primary or secondary manufacturers of gastronomic products, gastronomic festivals, fairs, events with demonstrations of food preparation and tasting, or any other food-related activity”;
- 10) tourism and technologies – broadband Internet have already changed the communication and electronic culture and it directly affects the way of annual holiday (self-)organization. Mobile phones become personal travel organization devices, artificial intelligence software’s will take on the role of personal tour operators. However, the ubiquity of technologies and telecommunication networks has resulted in a rapidly rising trend (which should be included in the local offer) – when on holiday, guests are increasingly seeking detoxification from online communication.

4. CONCLUSION

Despite its high development potential, Serbia has not so far achieved any significant results in its tourism development.

In this respect, one of the most important measures involved in establishing a better competitive position in the tourism market is the adoption of the appropriate planning documents in the domain of tourism and tourism development, in particular the adoption of a well-defined and responsible Strategy of Tourism Development in Serbia, as well as defining the key strategic goals and directions of tourism development in it.

The current Strategy which will be applied until 2025 is particularly focused on the key modern tourism trends in the Republic of Serbia. Namely, there are three groups of new trends: new trends in the promotion and booking methods, new accommodation types, and contemporary motives for travel in the global tourism market.

According to some views in theory [23], the competitiveness of tourism destinations is closely related to their comparative advantages in the tourism market. Comparative advantage is based on the abundance of production factors (natural resources, human resources, knowledge, capital and infrastructure). With regard to tourism, i.e. tourism destinations, historical and cultural

resources should be considered as a special category of comparative advantages, while infrastructure should be supplemented with suprastructure.

With that in mind, it is stated in [24] that it is essential to identify “the main difference between the comparative advantage and the competitive advantage of a tourism destination. While the comparative advantage refers to the resources available at the destination, the competitive advantage is reflected in the destination’s ability to use its resources efficiently and effectively over a long period of time, by attracting tourists and in turn increasing the destination’s prosperity and general wellbeing”.

In view of the aforesaid, an appropriate strategic approach to the new trends in promotion and booking methods, the new trends with regard to accommodation, and paying close attention to contemporary motives for travel in the global tourism market, are a secure path to an ever better competitive advantage of Serbia in the field of tourism, and most certainly to an ever-better tourism development in general.

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