

# STRENGTHENING THE TOURISM OFFER – CASE STUDY BRANIČEVO DISTRICT

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**Abstract:** *The Braničevo District possesses outstanding natural and social potentials for the development of tourism. Such are various forms of relief, hydrography, caves, river springs, historical monuments and churches, archaeological sites and other resources. Most of them are „waiting” to be valorized and included into tourism offer. A special value is given by folklore of the Vlach people, which can be successfully implemented in tourism programs and promotion of ethno-social values of the Braničevo District. In this paper, an analysis of all the above-mentioned values is applicable, as well as a presentation of the proposals for strengthening the tourism offer of this part of the country. Also, there is recommendation for analyzing a desire on the appearance of demand for something new, for new markets and new ways of spending leisure time. Because of that destinations have to adapt and begin to develop specific forms of tourism*

**Keywords:** *Strengthening, Tourism offer, The Braničevo District, natural and social values of the destination.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Braničevo District abounds with the richness of different types of tourism motives. It is characterized by various forms of relief, such as the mountainous landscapes of Homolje and Zvižd, as well as the plains in the regions of the Danube, Morava, Mlava and Stig. However, the subterranean forms of relief are disregarded, such as caves and pits partially put in order or completely unprepared for tourist purposes, gorges, river and lake water surfaces, archaeological sites and numerous cultural and historical monuments. Unfortunately, the extraordinary potentials of this part of our country are not valorized in the tourism offer of Serbia, as it should be. This is also one of the reasons why the authors of this work have opted for this topic. The aim of this paper is to analyze the tourism potentials of the Braničevo District, which are present in various written data and their segmentation, which implies the emphasis on strategic and planning activities, which are certainly significant for the tourism market. This district of Serbia presents a real treasure trove of the unique natural and anthropogenic motives, which are the key basis for tourist valorization and positioning of the Republic of Serbia on the domestic and foreign tourism market. This paper analyzes natural and anthropogenic resources of the Braničevo District, such as various surface and underground forms of relief, hydrographic values, traffic connections and social characteristics, which individually or collectively represent an important potential for the future development of this tourist destination.

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## **2. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH**

A tourist destination is a basic element of tourism development and tourist traffic. A tourist destination means certain space which has different attractive attributes in the role of attracting visitors. It can be considered as a complex system of individual products that exist in a natural environment. Such an environment can be modified by the work of people and in this case we talk about a created tourist destination, i.e. about the destination enriched with certain values. The most picturesque example of such a destination are entertainment parks or destinations with various cultural and entertainment contents. The basic elements that make up a tourist destination are: attractiveness, accessibility and conditions for stay. Attractiveness includes a mix of various elements of natural attractiveness (climate, flora, fauna, geographical position, hydrography, etc.) and social attractiveness (cultural and historical heritage, anthropogenic factors such as folklore, melos-melodies, gastronomy, etc.). Accessibility also means both, geographic and economic distance. In the first case, it refers to the distance or proximity of the trip, and in the second to the higher or lower costs that are needed to reach the destination. At the same time, accessibility implies an overall development of the transport infrastructure between the demand and the destination, as well as the quality of traffic in the destination itself. The conditions for stay include all the elements that make up the tourist offer such as accommodation, food, entertainment, leisure, recreation, etc. [1]. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines a tourist destination as: „a space that has physical and administrative boundaries, defined by the management, with the image and perception of defining the competitiveness market. It is a set of private and public offerings of tourist services with clear boundaries” [2].

Not all destinations can be equally attractive for various categories of tourist demand. Tourist destinations vary by location, available resources, climate, the size of cultural heritage, even by concerning economic factors. In addition to these, there are other characteristics of a tourist destination such as: geographical area with clear boundaries, possession of lodging and accommodation facilities for tourists, various contents for visitors, created pictures and image of a destination, the existence of the role of different participants in destination management, etc. [3].

## **3. NATURAL AND GEOGRAPHIC FEATURES**

Natural and geographic features mostly form a complete appearance and way of life of a certain region, including tourism activities. All the activities in a tourist destination are closely related to the basic features and characteristics of the area and are grouped as natural and geographic features. The position of a certain area, the relief and composition of the land, climate, hydrography and biogeography are basic preconditions for the formation of the main features of tourist destinations, which differ according to these elements. The Braničevo District as a tourist destination has very attractive natural and geographic characteristics, which make it a significant tourist destination.

### **3.1 Tourism and geographical position**

The Braničevo District is located in the northern part of eastern Serbia. In the north, the entire length of its border is the Danube River, over which it adjoins Vojvodina i.e. the South Banat District. In the northeast, the Danube borders with Romania. In the south it extends to the mouth of the Resava into Velika Morava (southwest) as well as to the highest mountain peaks of Beljanica (1,339 m) and Crni Vrh (1,043 m) in the southeast. In the west, The Velika Morava

separates the entire Braničevo District from Šumadija and the Danube Basin. In the east, the Braničevo District extends to the peaks of the Homolje Mountains and North Kučaj, separating it from Timočka Krajina and the Bor District [4].

The Braničevo District occupies 4.37% of the total territory of the Republic of Serbia. It covers 8 municipalities: Požarevac, Veliko Gradište, Golubac, Petrovac-on-Mlava, Žagubica, Kučevo, Žabari and Malo Crniće [5]. Through the data analysis it can be concluded that the Braničevo District has a very favorable geographical and tourism position, which is reflected in: the vicinity of the main administrative center of Belgrade, good traffic connections with all major city centers, vicinity of the main roads connected with the south of Serbia and Mediterranean, favorable importance of the Danube navigability and the vicinity of Vojvodina and Romania.



Map 1 - The Braničevo District [6].  
Scale 1: 366,000

### 3.2 Geological and geo-morphological tourism features

The Braničevo District covers two relief mesocells: a part of the Pannonian Basin – a lowland area and part of the Carpathian range, or the mountainous area. The Pannonian (lowland) Basin extends to the northwest of the district, which starts from Golubac, then along the Danube to Velika Morava in the west of the district. Then it descends south along the Velika Morava to the final boundary of the municipality of Žabari, as well as south along the entire length of the Mlava to Homolje. This indicates that this part of the district is predominantly lowland and it includes: The Morava, Stig, Mlava and Pek Basins, which are located along the same rivers.

Regarding the highland, the following units, are distinguished: the Morava Basin, which includes a part of the mouth of the Resava into Velika Morava, to the mouth of the Velika Morava into the Danube; Stig – a wide plain from the mouth of the Mlava to the Danube up to Gornjak gorge; Pek – a plain in the Pek River Valley; Zvižd, which is bounded by the North Kučaj in the north, the slopes of the Homolje mountains in the south and west, and the slopes of Mali Krš

mountain in the east. Homolje is the highest mountain plateau of the district surrounded by the Homolje mountains from the north (the highest peak is Štubelj 940 m high), Beljanica (1,339 m) and Crni Vrh (1,043 m) from the south side, and the slopes of the mountain Veliki Krš from the east, and Gornjak gorge and Morava Basin from the west [7]. Special attraction belongs to underground karst forms of relief – caves. They are abundant with stalactites, stalagmites, pillars, corridors and halls. In the area of the Braničevo District there are Ceremošnja, Ravništarka, Dubočka Cave, etc.

For tourism Ceremošnja is the most important cave. It was put into operation in 1980 for these purposes. It is located at the foot of Homolje, 15 km from Kučevo. The total length of the cave is 755 m, and a trail 486 m long was made for the observers. The cave is adorned by three halls [8]. Ravništarka was arranged for visitors in 2006 and the second part in 2007. It is located in the area of Ravnište village. The main cave canal is 501.5 meters long, while the total length of all cave canals is 589 meters. The length of the tourist path through the cave is 560 meters. Like the Ceremošnja Cave, Ravništarka was also proclaimed a Natural Monument in 2007, by the Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia, as a geomorphologic and speleological facility, classified in the third category as a significant natural resource. According to the IUCN classification of protected natural areas, this resort is well suited to the third category: Category III - Natural monument/ Natural Landmark. Dubočka Cave is one of the longest in Serbia (2,275 m). It is located near the village Duboka, 8 km from the main road Kučevo-Majdanpek. Although the cave has not been adequately arranged for tourist visits yet, it is easily accessible. The entrance is especially impressive, 30 m wide and 25 m high. The main cave canal, in its initial part gigantic in size, is up to 40 m wide and up to 31 m tall [9]. In the area of the district there are many other partially explored or unexplored caves, such as Brnjička cave near Golubac, Velika and Mala Strogina and Ledena Cave on the northern rim of Beljanica. The presence of a large number of caves gives the opportunity for the development of speleological tourism. Tourist organizations of the cities Požarevac and Petrovac-on-Mlava have implemented these values in their tourist offer and have promoted them as a significant tourism and educational potential of this part of the country.

Gorges, which also occur in limestone terrains or in terrains exposed to radial movements, are certainly also considered to be attractive forms of the relief for tourism. They draw attention to very steep and high sides. In the area of the Braničevo District, Golubac gorge on the Danube and Gornjak Gorge on the river Mlava should be highlighted. Golubac Gorge is the first in Đerdap Gorge on the Danube. Its length is 13.5 km. Steep rocky sides rise up to 300 m above the river. In this part of the Danube bed there is a lot of underwater granite walls, where the underwater channel „Stenka” was dug through [8]. Gornjak Gorge on the Mlava River is 16 km long and it makes four large meanders [10]. In addition to the above mentioned there are Osanica and Velika Tisnica Gorge.

Special geomorphologic curiosity is a natural stone bridge Samar in the eastern part of Beljanica in the valley of the small river Perast. The range of its arch is 15 m and it is 14 m high. In addition, there is another natural stone bridge in Homolje – Osanica Bridge (both are protected by law as exceptional natural rarities) [11].

All the mentioned relief forms represent the remarkable tourism potential of the Braničevo District. Mountain forms of relief also enable different types of tourism, among which stationary summer and winter tourism, special interest tourism, sports-recreational and health tourism, excursions and other forms of tourism lead the way.

### 3.3 Hydrographic features

The Danube forms the whole northern border of this district in the length of 96 km. The flow of Velika Morava along the Braničevo District is 90 km in the west. The Mlava and Pek whose basins occupy 2,782.8 km<sup>2</sup>, flow through central part accounting for 72% of the total area of the region. The total length of the Mlava from the Žagubica springhead to the mouth of the Danube is 144 km. The length of the Pek is 112.4 km. The Danube is navigable along the entire length in the district within 12 months, which represents a significant nautical potential. That is why the following ports were built: Kostolac, Veliko Gradište and Golubac, as well as smaller ones: Dubravica, Ram and Dobra [5].

As tourism potentials on the territory of the district, the strongest karst springheads are: Žagubica springhead, Krupaj springhead, Belosavac springhead, Šetonjsko springhead, the springhead at Krepoljin, the springhead near Rakova Bara, Suvodol and Lopušnja springhead. Žagubica springhead is a remarkable peculiarity. It is located below the northern slopes of Beljanica at 325 m above sea level. The springhead covers the area of 655 m<sup>2</sup> [10]. It has the shape of a lake surface 25 m in diameter, and so far 80 m of its depth has been investigated. Divers have not descended deeper, so the real depth is unexplored. The water is extremely clear and the temperature is from 9.3 to 11°C. The specific yield is 0.9 m<sup>3</sup>/cm. The flow of this springhead is 150 m long and it joins the Tisnica River, where the river Mlava is formed [12]. The Krupaj springhead comes out on the west side of Beljanica, at a height of 240 m, in the area of Krupaj village. Hydrological natural monument (of the first category) Krupaj springhead was protected in 1979, with an area of 9 hectares. It is one of the largest and most abundant springheads in Serbia. Both of these springheads are protected by the Republic as the monuments of nature of national importance [13].

Surface waters such as rivers and lakes are of great importance for the development of tourism; therefore, they provide good conditions for the development of bathing, excursions, fishing, sports as well as recreational, nautical and other forms of tourism. In order to enable this, it is necessary to provide access to their coasts. Thermal and mineral springs are the basis for the development of spa, health and excursion tourism. Such springs are characteristic for Ždrelo village, southeast of Petrovac-on-Mlava. The water is used to treat many diseases. As regards hydrological potential of the district, it is necessary to carry out the evaluation of all the mentioned elements.

## 4. SOCIAL FEATURES

The consideration of mutual influence of natural and social factors contributes to better understanding of the developmental stages of a certain space. Unlike natural and geographic features, social characteristics are more susceptible to frequent changes and are related to the population, economy and history of settlements.

### 4.1 Population

In addition to natural factors, anthropogenic factor is one of the most important for the development of settlements. According to the 2011 census, 183,625 inhabitants live in the Braničevo District, which makes a population density of 47.50 inhabitants per a square kilometer [14].

### *Gender and age structure*

Gender and age structure of a local community plays an extremely important role in the development of tourism in a particular region, locality, etc. Older persons are less likely to be involved in tourist traffic. The reason is that certain periods of life give different views on the ideas of tourism development. Typical examples are the elderly in Homolje, who already have their long-established principles, attitudes and habits, which even a professional tourist animator cannot modify. Males make 48.57% or 89.205 of the total population of the Braničevo District, while females make 51.42% or 94.420. According to the 2011 data, the highest age group of the population is between 50 and 54 years of age in men and 70-74 years of age in women, followed by categories from 45 to 49, from 25 to 29 etc. [14]. This can be seen in Chart 1.

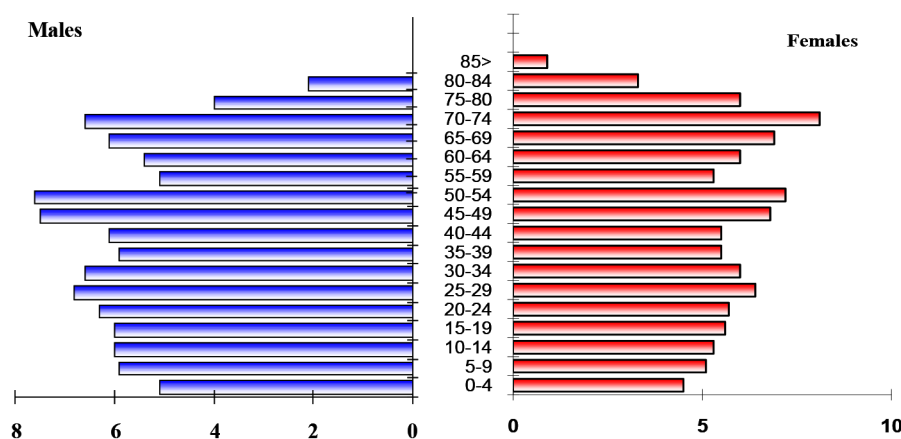


Chart 1 - Age pyramid of the population of the Braničevo District according to the 2011 census [14]

### *Ethnic and religious structure*

According to the national commitment, multiculturalism and a large share of the Vlach population are present in the district. Such a national and religious structure, where the majority of the population is made of Serbs, Vlachs, Roma and Romanians, is a good precondition for the development of tourism. Such multiculturalism is of great importance in planning and development of tourism in the whole Braničevo District, and it represents a significant potential.

## **5. Anthropogenic tourism values**

Anthropogenic resources are mainly related to „cultural” tourism, which represents only one segment of these resources. Without considering the adequacy of the term cultural tourism, it should be noted that this form of tourism also includes both material and spiritual dimension of culture. Taking this definition into consideration, it can be concluded that cultural tourism includes all those movements towards the material or non-material aspects of the culture of a destination, which are partly or entirely the reason for the arrival of tourists in that destination [15]. One of the essential differences within a tourist destination refers to the concepts of tourism resources and attractions. Tourist resources represent the possibility, the potential for tourism development and the achievement of complementarity with other elements of a tourist destination. Tourist attractions arise from the transformation of tourism resources, the operation of means and labor, and the designed development policy [16].

Since the Braničevo District has always had enormous natural values, various civilizations were interested in settling in this area, which influenced the creation of various forms of construction whose remains can still be found through the richness of archaeological sites and other types of resources.

The Roman period in these areas dates from the first decades of our era. The Romans left behind rich archeological sites. The Danube was a *limes*, i.e. a border of the Roman Empire on which fortifications and military camps were built. Thus, Viminacium near Kostolac was formed in the second half of the first century AD. It emerged on the territory of the Celtic tribe Scordisk. In the first half of the second century it gained a city status. Around 117 it became a municipium called *Viminacium Aelium Hadrianum*. The legendary Roman legion (*legio VII Klaudia pia fidelis*) was stationed there. Over the last 25 years of research on this site, over 13,500 graves have been found, and more than 40,000 items of exceptional value have been deposited into museums. This site covers an area of 450 ha and there is aqueduct in the vicinity nearly 10 km long, late antique basilicas, agricultural properties of Roman veterans, rustic villas, Roman roads that connected Viminacium with neighboring towns, as well as many undiscovered excavations. Viminacium was placed under the state protection in 1949, as a cultural monument – an archaeological site. In 1979, the Serbian Parliament declared Viminacium an exceptional cultural asset [17].

The significant monumental values located in the Braničevo District are Laderata near Ram, with the Ram fortress „Caravanserai”, then „Pinkum” near Veliko Gradište and Kupa near Golubac. The fortress „Caravanserai” was built by Sultan Bayezid in 1483. The site is located 20 km from Veliko Gradište [17].

Golubac Castle is an exceptional legacy of a military building from the Middle Ages. It is located on the right bank of the Danube, 5 km east of Golubac. It is one of the 11 specially protected facilities in the National Park Djerdap. This fortress was first mentioned by the Hungarians in 1337 [17].

Monasteries and churches of the Braničevo District should certainly be included among the monumental and artistic values. The Church of Holy Archangel Gabriel near Veliko Gradište was built in the period from 1855 to 1856. It has classical-romantic features. The wall frescoes were painted by Jovan Isajlović and Dimitrije Posniković. In the vicinity of Petrovac the monastery Vitovnica is situated together with the church of Virgin Mary; although the church is older, it was mentioned in 1557 for the first time. Then, the Gornjak Monastery in Gornjak gorge near Petrovac-on-Mlava with the church of the Presentation, are the endowments of Prince Lazar built in the period from 1376 to 1377. The church has the concise trefoil base and the dome rests on the columns. It was burnt down in 1788 during the Turkish-Austrian War and was restored in the mid-nineteenth century [18].

## 6. RECEPTIVE ELEMENTS

In larger cities like Požarevac and Veliko Gradište there are reception facilities such as hotels and motels, while in other parts the receptive base is made up of rural households which are increasingly involved in rural tourism.

In Požarevac the major hotels can be singled out as follows: the Fenix, Danube, Royal Menex Apartments, B & B Boem, Konak Inn, then the facilities such as Mamma Mia, hostel „Požarevac”, „Adela” apartments and other smaller facilities [19]. In 2017, the city of Požarevac disposed of 318 beds [14].

Petrovac-on-Mlava possesses the capacities for the development of spa tourism, where Ždrelo Spa has primacy. Recreational Hospitality Center „Ždrelo”, popular as Ždrelo Spa, is located at a place where the fertile Stig plain miraculously runs through Gornjak gorge and rises to the Homolje mountains. It is located on the 11<sup>th</sup> kilometer from Petrovac – Žagubica road, at the foot of the two dominant Homolje peaks Vukan and Ježevac. Ždrelo Spa operates under the name RHC „Ždrelo”, it disposes of outdoor and indoor swimming pools, aqua park with warm water, wellness center, massage salons with healing mud, sea water, saunas, solarium. Then, there is „Ždrelo” hotel with over 100 beds, a restaurant and other amenities [20].

Žagubica has somewhat larger accommodation in rural households because this part of the Braničevo District intensively promotes the untouched nature of Homolje and the ethnocentric values of Vlach inhabitants. The exact number of beds in this sector is not available. Other important facilities are: Kafana with the lodging „Vrelo”, a former motel built on the very spring-head of the Mlava. The facility now has 70 beds, in nicely decorated double and triple rooms. In the area of Žagubica there is also a restaurant with lodging in Krepoljin, which possesses over 30 beds and ethno village „Trška”, on the Mlava bank. Both promote local cuisine of this part of Serbia [21].

By analyzing the above-mentioned data, the conclusion is drawn that the Braničevo District disposes of a very small number of accommodation capacities, and this number does not exceed 500 beds. The tourism valorization of this part of the country cannot be fully supported in the development of tourism with a material base. There are hotel accommodation facilities in the territory of Požarevac and Petrovac-on-Mlava. Very few accommodation capacities are on tourists' disposal. The number of beds in rural households does not correspond to the actual situation for various reasons. Surely, rural households can help in tourism development and promotion. Regional and local authorities and private sector must plan higher investments in the receptive base, because this part of the tourist offer of the Braničevo District is at a very low quantitative level.

Changing a potential into a tourist destination depends on many factors, in terms of both quality and quantity. Very often if it is not identified which causes inadequate development of a tourist destination, that often leads to its disappearance from the tourist market. Changes in tourist market and significant impact of tourism on the local communities, made it necessary to explore the real possibilities of future development with regard to the crisis that has left extremely negative effects on tourism [26].

## **7. TOURIST TRAFFIC**

Tourist traffic in tourist destinations represents an important parameter for determining tourism and economic achievements. The values expressed regarding this matter point to the state and prospects of tourism development. The paper also analyzes and observes the period of tourist traffic from 2012 to 2016, and it is shown in Table 1.

Analyzing the data in Table 1 we come to the conclusion that the number of tourists who have visited the Braničevo District is in relative increase. Compared to 2012 when the smallest number of tourists was registered, in 2016 visits were increased. In 2015, the highest number of tourists was recorded. The largest number of domestic tourists was recorded in 2016, while



the largest number of foreign tourists in the observed period was recorded in 2015. In the same period, the highest average number of domestic tourists' overnight stays was recorded in 2015 and 2016, with a total of 2.4 nights, while the highest average number of foreign tourists' stays was recorded in 2012, with 2.7 overnight stays.

Year	Number of Tourists			Number of Nights			average number of tourist nights	
	Total	Domestic	Foreign	Total	Domestic	Foreign	Domestic	Foreign
<b>2012.</b>	30,490	25,861	4,629	65,673	53,057	12,616	2.1	2.7
<b>2013.</b>	32,569	28,231	4,338	70,840	62,624	8,216	2.2	1.9
<b>2014.</b>	39,885	33,186	6,699	86,159	69,769	16,390	2.1	2.4
<b>2015.</b>	45,154	37,857	7,297	106,524	89,766	16,758	2.4	2.3
<b>2016.</b>	44,955	39,041	5,914	109,520	94,793	14,727	2.4	2.5

Table 1: Tourist traffic in the Braničevo District from 2012 to 2016

source: [22], [23], [24], [25], [26].

The responsibility for tourist destinations management is mainly shared by many different public and private organizations, known as destination management organizations. These include the Ministry of Tourism and its sectors, chambers of commerce, tourist organizations, hotel associations, environmental organizations and many others [27].

There are tourist organizations in the territory of the Braničevo District that promote district tourism values. Such are tourist organizations of Požarevac, Petrovac-on-Mlava, Žagubica, Žabar, Mali Crnić, Kučevo and Golubac.

## 8. SWOT ANALYSIS

The area of the Braničevo District shows significant potentials for the development of tourism, which can be concluded through the analysis of the data in this paper. In order to create a tourism development strategy and implementation of tourism, it is necessary to analyze the significant values of this destination. A good model is presented by SWOT analysis in Table 2.

Through the analysis of the stated values and the obtained results of the SWOT analysis, it is determined that significant potentials are not sufficiently valorized and that management systems can be largely supplemented, modified and improved. It is necessary to locate weaknesses and to reinforce the areas such as: construction of the receptive facilities, enriching the existing tourist activities with new forms of tourism that can bring profit, boosting and revitalizing cultural, sports and leisure facilities, as well as adaptation and improvement of the existing infrastructure values. The most important strengths are the position and traffic connections, the richness of natural and cultural motives, events and very interesting folklore of the Vlach population.

The comparative analysis of the SWOT results obtained in Table 2 shows that this destination disposes of a large number of potentials for tourism development. Certain values are not suffi-

ciently utilized or implemented in tourism activities; therefore, their values need to be improved through the management plan and development strategy. Likewise, it is important to direct activities towards elimination or minimization of negative values or indicators of bad impact on the destination. The presence of a large number of positive values indicates that the Braničevo District is an extraordinary area for creating a quality destination, whose promotion can achieve significant economic and socio-cultural benefits.

<b><i>Strengths</i></b>	<b><i>Weaknesses</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the existence of natural values;</li> <li>• built communications;</li> <li>• tourist events;</li> <li>• accessible caves and other forms of karst relief;</li> <li>• rich flora and fauna, important for scientific and research activities;</li> <li>• significant mineral resources and the possibility of developing SPA forms of tourism;</li> <li>• numerous monasteries;</li> <li>• vicinity of Belgrade;</li> <li>• proximity of the Danube and Sava, possibility of nautical tourism development;</li> <li>• other rare hydrographic potentials;</li> <li>• folklore of the Vlachs;</li> <li>• favorable climate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• poor construction of receptive facilities and tourist centers;</li> <li>• educational tourist activities;</li> <li>• lack of support and assistance facilities in some parts of the district (toilets, waste disposal facilities);</li> <li>• absence of significant ethic codes for tourism users;</li> <li>• insufficient forest revitalization;</li> <li>• lack of eco-trails;</li> <li>• insufficient presence of signposts;</li> <li>• insufficient implementation of the legislation on the protection and improvement of natural and cultural values of the Braničevo District.</li> </ul>
<b><i>opportunities and possibilities</i></b>	<b><i>threats and risks</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inclusion of special and sport-recreational forms of tourism in the tourism offer of Serbia;</li> <li>• availability of tourism development projects by the state;</li> <li>• accessibility to EU projects;</li> <li>• rich ethno-social values of the peoples of this region;</li> <li>• branded products (wine, honey, local national cuisine);</li> <li>• connection of social and natural aspects;</li> <li>• strong contraction zones of tourists;</li> <li>• existence of ethno-villages or settlements;</li> <li>• controlled use of resources;</li> <li>• ecological, economic and socio-cultural benefits;</li> <li>• certification in tourism.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• insufficient role of the local community in the system of destination managing and protection;</li> <li>• lack of accommodation capacities;</li> <li>• absence of positive economic impacts of tourism;</li> <li>• low investments in infrastructure maintenance;</li> <li>• endangerment of plant and animal species;</li> <li>• uncontrolled hunting, curling;</li> <li>• devastation of forest ecosystems;</li> <li>• non-renewable use of resources;</li> <li>• pollution in various forms.</li> </ul>

Table 2: SWOT analysis of the tourist destination Braničevski district  
 Source: Prepared by the author

The folklore in the tourist offer of the Braničevo District represents the main segment for the development of various forms of tourism in this part of eastern Serbia. The costumes, typical Vlach customs which accompany the entire life of an individual from his birth to death, original folk melos and diet, are unique to this district. Other complementary tourism motives, such as various forms of relief, water surfaces, cultural and historical monuments and other forms of motives, represent an additional form in the organization and realization of a trip [28].

In the Braničevo District current forms of tourism are event, excursion, spa and relatively poorly developed stationary forms of movement. Sport and recreational form of tourism is present on a very small scale, e.g. during certain fitness preparations of sports teams, which are in transit through the Braničevo District. The reason for this is a lack of adequate sports facilities and terrains. Also, special interest tourism is not sufficiently developed. We should work on improving riding, speleological, cultural, eco-tourism, scientific-research, lake, nautical, tourism of rare and extreme sports, gastronomic tourism, wine, rural, religious and other forms of tourism.

In order to determine the *strengthening* and conditions of the existing forms of tourism and their improvement, the basic postulates must be:

- through tourism affirmation the awareness of local community is raised that tourism is a part of modern trends, that as a final outcome an economic effect occurs through all forms of spending and employment, and that the most pronounced impact is manifested in rural areas;
- folklore involved in the tourism offer of rural areas remains sustainable;
- an analysis of the possibilities for organizing and promoting various animation programs and thematic events that would promote ethno-social and natural values should be performed and thus a mutual and circular effect would be created;
- through certain programs, new, both cultural and natural tourist motives are intensively activated;
- folklore provides an exchange of experiences between two or more cultures of different nations;
- ethno-social motives can be a basic element of event and cultural tourism, while all other forms of tourism movements are affirmed and held simultaneously;
- through tourism strengthening a large number of different experts primarily of local population would be employed, both from the sphere of tourism and from other industries [28].

## 9. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE STRENGTHENING THE TOURISM OFFER AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

So far numerous spatial units, such as the Silver Lake and some Braničevo caves have been undervalued, which still represents a starting point in the development of many tourism forms. Tourist movements and visits to the Braničevo District should be designed and organized so that tourists take advantage of exceptional natural and cultural motives. In cooperation with local authorities, tourist agencies and residents, tourism programs can be an extremely attractive subject of tourism development in this part of Serbia. The economic effect would be of great importance for revitalization of the existing facilities, which would be available to tourism. The development of new facilities and terrains would be promoted, the local population would be employed, folk culture would promote local home-made products, rural tourism would come to life, which would result in mass tourism traffic of domestic and foreign tourists. So, the country itself would have benefits.

Certain Vlach crafts, such as making the best quality embroidery and carpets, producing wooden musical instruments, processing and producing Homolje honey, cheese, peasant shoes and others, can be the main motives for the program organization and realization. These programs can be organized in addition to all other natural and cultural-historical facilities, in order to emphasize their importance in the tourism development. Many performances and programs would

be realized in caves, on curiosity springheads such as the Žagubica and Mlava springheads, on the Danube at the very beginning of the Đerdap gorge near Veliko Gradište, on Silver Lake, in museums with various relics, in addition to archaeological sites such as Viminacium, and in exceptional villages and settlements of all municipalities, among which the villages of Homolje, Zvižd and Pek dominate for these occasions. Consequently, rural, event and cultural tourism would be the drivers and initiators of the development of all other forms of tourism.

The tourism development would strengthen other economic sectors such as transport, electricity and water management, wood and metal processing industry, processing and production of food, trade, telecommunications, hotel and catering industries, and all other productive and non-productive activities. From such an organized system, in addition to local communities, the state itself would also benefit through all forms of consumption and multiplier effects of money supply.

Ethnographic values available to certain tourist destinations are the most important factor in the process of uniting tourism with tradition, history and local cultural identity. Realization of an effective and efficient exploitation of the potential values of individual destinations, including rural ones, is a permanent task of local and regional tourism organizations [29].

When creating a program of ethno-social character, for tourists the most important aspects are: workshops of traditional instruments, folk dances, melos, gastronomic festivals, folk costumes, competition skills, handicrafts and local crafts, as well as the possibility to be present at certain customs. The tourist offer of the Braničevo District can be characterized by the following forms of tourist programs with socio-cultural character:

- production of traditional instruments; those that can be made relatively quickly and those which tourists themselves can produce. Such instruments are flutes, instruments made from pumpkins, small flutes, instruments from willows and others which Braničevo is famous for;
- workshops for sewing very recognizable folk costumes; Tourists could actively participate in the design of parts of Vlach costumes, which can later serve as souvenirs. They could also dye the produced fabrics. Knitting of hand-made fabrics, towels, etc. would also be organized;
- Musical programs that would include potential competitions of vocal and instrumental songs in which tourists would also participate. In addition to learning how to listen to music, visitors would be taught notes and how to play some specific instruments of a traditional character;
- Homolje painting and art programs. For these programs, animators – students or graduates of art academy and members of local communities are desirable. The program would include a school of painting or sculpturing in which these skills would be studied and learned about the social heritage of the Braničevo District. Since they would last for several days, they would include familiarization with painting and sculpturing techniques, and methods, visits to art galleries such as Milena Pavlović Barili Gallery in Požarevac, visits to museums and similar facilities. The vicinity of city centers makes this possible. The target group would be tourists of all ages. Cultural and event tourism would include the above mentioned animation models [30];
- schools of folklore. These types of programs should contain elements of this district folklore. The program itself would also include visits to music events and concerts for individual instruments. Also, the concerts would be organized with musical compositions typical for the Braničevo District, with local musicians of folk instruments char-

acteristic for Braničevo social community and other forms. The target group would be tourists of all ages;

- programs of hobbyist activities. They would include tourist structures of all ages. These models of the program would be based on the organization of different hobbyist and skill schools. These would be: the producing various items of wood, and clay, making ikebana from natural cut and field flowers, cooking school for traditional dishes and delicacies of the Braničevo District, which can have a very significant character. According to the research of European Traveler Association, 70% of tourists opt for gastronomic travel motives; they also opt for schools of particular crafts and many other programs based on the folklore of this part of Serbia. Cultural and event tourism would include the aforementioned animation models;
- attendance at various customs and rituals that take a significant part in collective celebrations. Such an event that needs to be popularized and enriched by the contents and promoted in more adequate ways is „Evenings of Homolje” with motives of the same name. Then there is the celebration of “Shrovetide” whose ceremony much resembles the ritual customs of the Indians, with fire and ritual games, which should be followed by various programs in the intact Homolje nature. The most massive celebration of “Shrovetide” takes place in Stig, the Danube Basin, Morava Basin and in some villages of the Mlava region. Significant models of the program can also be related to haymaking, harvesting, farming and other custom activities such as hunting and fishing.

## 10. CONCLUSION

Rarity natural features of this region, representatives of flora and fauna, cultural and historical monuments, nature monuments, which are characteristic for the Braničevo District, represent valuable elements of tourism valorization in the inclusion of this part of eastern Serbia into the tourist trends of the country. These tourist motives can be combined with each other and on that occasion a unique tourist offer would be formed, which would result in mass tourism. Primarily, local community makes profit from this kind of traffic through the inclusion of its products, employment and benefits of the infrastructure constructed for the tourism needs which they can have at their disposal. The second in this series who gain benefits are local organizations, societies, associations and various institutions earning profit by charging their fees and taxes. The third in a row that benefits from economic flows is the state itself.

Since the inhabitants of this district are aware of the appropriateness and benefits of development of tourism, they are hospitable, smiling, religious and cooperative people; thus, the development of all forms of tourism should not have its natural barriers. The only obstacles can be incompetence, lack of information, lack of loyalty, being out-of-date, disorganization, lack of education and other bad qualities of management and marketing in tourism, or the problem of human resource engagement.

When analyzing all the data presented in the paper, we come to the conclusion that the Braničevo District represents a significant tourist destination. By using the motives from this part of eastern Serbia for tourist purposes, high quality tourist programs can be created, which can be successfully placed on the international market with the help of local tourist organizations, the Tourist Organization of Serbia, outbound and inbound travel agencies. In this way, with the networking of all stakeholders, we can strengthen the tourist offer of this region.

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