

# DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOURIST POTENTIAL IN SERBIA IN THE LIGHT OF TOURIST FREQUENCY AND ACCOMMODATION CAPACITIES

Milan Počuča<sup>1</sup>   
Jelena Matijašević<sup>2</sup> 

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31410/tmt.2020.301>

---

**Abstract:** *In the last several decades, tourism registers continuous growth on the global level. The subject of analysis of this paper is the ratio of the number of arrivals and overnight stays of tourists in general, as well as the number of arrivals and overnight stays of tourists by regions for the chosen three-year period 2017-2019. Also, this paper establishes and analyses both the total and quantitative indicators of the accommodation capacities by regions, also for the chosen reference three-year period. The last analysis refers to the survey of accommodation capacities by types of tourist resorts and facilities in the year 2019. This paper is methodologically based on the theoretical analysis of the relevant contemporary standpoints in theory, normative analysis of legislative sources and quantitative analysis of statistical indicators in the field of the subject of research. The research is based on official statistical data of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia. The goal of the presented analyses and conclusions regarding the obtained results, and in the light of the frequency of tourist and accommodation capacities, is the emphasis on the importance of the tourist turnover at a certain tourist destination, which is one of the basic components of the development of the tourist potential.*

**Keywords:** *Tourist potential, Arrival of tourists, Overnight stay of tourists, Accommodation capacities, Republic of Serbia.*

---

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The development of tourism in a certain area is determined by many factors. Nevertheless, a good foundation for tourism development are certain predispositions which a certain area disposes of and which can be determined by natural values a certain location disposes of, or even be the result of man's endeavour to develop and promote the competition of the tourist offer in a certain area. In this sense, the development of the tourist potential is certainly determined by a series of natural attractions, as well as the territorial diversity of natural potentials, on the one hand, and the achieved level of accommodation and other capacities, as well as the actual interest of tourists to visit certain locations which is primarily reflected in the frequency of visits of a certain area. In this sense, important indicators are certainly the number of arrivals and overnight stays of tourist service users in a certain area, during the whole year or in certain periods of the year.

Despite the above-said, one should not disregard the fact that the development of the tourist economy mainly depends on the level and state of the development of a country's total economy. In this sense, the development of tourist potentials of a region is determined by national capacities which the economy of a state can put aside and offer for the development of tourism as an important economic branch.

---

<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Law for Commerce and Judiciary in Novi Sad, Geri Karolja Street no. 1, Novi Sad 21000 Serbia

<sup>2</sup> Faculty of Law for Commerce and Judiciary in Novi Sad, Geri Karolja Street no. 1, Novi Sad 21000 Serbia

On the other hand, the frequency of users of tourist services and the occupation of accommodation capacities is under a strong influence of the seasonal character of the tourist economy as the highest percentage of their use is recorded during certain months. The seasonal character of the tourist economy, together with the potentially accessible stimulus which tourism, as an economy branch, can achieve from the total economic potential of the state, considerably stipulates numerous other aspects. Thus, the above-said has a direct impact not only on the quantitative aspects of the tourist offer, in the sense of the number and diversity of tourist services, but also on the quality of offered tourist services, which again is manifested in the gradual increase or decrease of the interest of users of tourist services on a certain location.

In the last few decades, tourism records continuous growth on the global level. With such a trend, the positive effects of tourist development in various systems have become evident, too, starting with the field of finance, employment, development of technology, traffic and communications, etc. Accordingly, it can be said that in the area of the Republic of Serbia in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> and at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, tourism experiences a strong expansion and is hence permanently developing every year.

In principle, and referring to the above-said, the need of people to travel in order to rest, recover, develop the business segment or even for medical or sport reasons, has created the possibility for tourism to find its role in the satisfaction of many people's needs. Thus, it is of crucial importance that the destinations, for which there is interest of the users of tourist services, improve and use their total tourist potential.

Bearing in mind the significance and stated advantages of tourism, and understanding the importance which tourism has for a modern society, it seems necessary to overview certain quantitative indicators of development of the tourist potential in the Republic of Serbia which are reflected, inter alia, in the light of the frequency of users of tourist services (arrivals and overnight stays), then in the number and quality of accommodation capacities, and accordingly, it is necessary to consider and analyse the available parameters in this field. In this context, it is especially interesting to overview the ratio of the number of arrivals and overnight stays of tourists in general, as well as the number of arrivals and overnight stays by regions for the chosen three-year period – 2017-2019, based on available official statistical data. It is also important to establish both the total and the quantitative indicators of accommodation capacities by regions, also for the chosen reference three-year period (2017-2019). Finally, an overview of accommodation capacities by types of tourist resorts and facilities in the year 2019 has been given.

The paper is, in terms of methodology, based on the theoretical analysis of relevant modern standpoints in the theory, normative analysis of legislative sources and quantitative analysis of statistical indicators in the field of the scope of research.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Tourism can be primarily stipulated in the sense of a voluntary migration of users of tourist services, "where their motives, needs and striving are established by the type i.e. form of tourism" (Počuča & Matijašević-Obradović, 2019, p. 493). As Camilleri stipulates, „tourism is considered as all activities of tourists at the occasion of visits of certain locations, regardless of their duration" (Camilleri, 2018, p. 4). Thus, tourism is included in the voluntary movement of people to various sites, both one-day visits and outings lasting several days (Cooper, 2008: Holoway & Taylor, 2006).

According to Cvijanovic and associates, „a methodical approach to the development of tourism is the backbone of its successful development” (Cvijanović, Vuković & Kljajić, 2011, p. 11). Accordingly, the economic development of a certain region or area is, inter alia, significantly established by tourist activities” (Karampela, Kizos and Spilanis, 2016, p. 161). In this context, Zhenhua (2003) states that in less developed regions the local community can have very significant economic-social benefits from tourism (pp. 465-466), and the development of this economic branch can be a significant milestone for the further development on the local level. This spirit is followed by Gašić and his associates (2015), who assumes the attitude that „tourism, by its multiplicative effects, is expected to give an impulse to the development of this economically backward region, offer a permanent basis of existence for the population, stop the migration and activate the development of the agriculture, private entrepreneurship, trade and other activities” (p. 494).

In the field of development of tourism, it is important to emphasize the concept of sustainable development, as a „contemporary development concept” (Matijašević-Obradović & Škorić, 2017, p. 283). As emphasized by Šimkova (2007), an important characteristic of modern society is precisely the directing of the primary attention to sustainable development (p. 236). According to Ristić (2013), sustainable development is a „contemporary development concept which coordinates social, economic and ecological interests of present and future generations” (p. 229), and the continuous development of contemporary aspects of tourism can result in „a new relationship among environment, work and leisure, in the sense of sustainability of all, and especially rural regions” (Fagioli, Diotallevi & Ciani, 2014, p. 166). In the above context, Matijašević-Obradović & Kovačević (2016) state that sustainable development as an integral approach is the basis of all development policies of EU countries today, whose membership Serbia is striving for (p. 493).

As an economic branch, tourism has proved to be significant in the sphere of development of rural areas. Namely, according to Ćirić, Počuča & Raičević (2014), „on the one hand, tourism has a big impact on the development of rural areas, but on the other hand, the significance of tourism is reflected in the creation of a market for agricultural products, considering that they are important inputs for hotels and restaurants” (p. 26). Thus, although sustainable development of rural tourism can be economically justified, it also must contribute to the preservation of natural, social and cultural characteristics of the tourist destination (Počuča, Matijašević-Obradović & Drašković, 2017, p. 1252). The authors also state the essential difference between „tourism as a phenomenon and man’s endeavour to research new locations and changes”, which consists of „organized travelling and change of sites, which hints at the conclusion that the difference between travelling for the change of sites, amusement and new understandings, on the one hand, and the tourist travelling, on the other hand, actually lies in the organization itself” (Gržetić, Favro & Saganić, 2007, p. 23).

Namely, a very important area in the field of tourist business is the process of deciding of users of tourist services on certain tourist services, destinations, etc. A very large number of factors influence the behaviour of consumers in general, and they are basically classified according to the following categories: psychological factors, social and economic factors, physiological factors, group stimulus and purchase factors, and others. As Cooper (2008) emphasizes, the process of decision-making of tourists is very dynamic concerning destinations, types of services, modes of travel, accommodation types, prices and other crucial factors.

In this sense, it is necessary to emphasize that the tourist market is one of the indicators of economic development in the country. As Popescu (2002) states, “the tourist market is defined as a

set of supply-demand relations in the sphere of services and goods that serve to meet the tourist needs in a certain area” (p. 16).

The potential of the tourist market is certainly conditioned by certain specifics on the side of the tourist offer, as well as on the side of the tourist demand, which in principle conditions the offer and emphasizes the seasonal character as one of the more important characteristics. Also, tourist demand is conditioned “by the income of the holders of tourist needs, the prices of tourist services and advertising content” (Radović, 2016, p. 26).

When analysing the tourist market, we actually determine in which direction the needs and motives of tourists are moving when choosing a particular destination. In that sense, it is very important to consider some of the parameters of the development of tourist potential in Serbia - the number of tourist arrivals and overnight stays, indicators of accommodation capacities by regions, as well as an overview of accommodation capacities by types of tourist places and facilities.

According to Hamović and associates (2009), „the tourism of special interests and different aspects of movement is especially developed, which also determines the possibility of development of special forms of tourism. We would like to list only some that are mentioned most often: alternative tourism, sustainable tourism, green tourism, cultural tourism, heritage tourism, business tourism, manifestation tourism, congress tourism, nautical tourism, religious tourism, tourism for seniors, city tourism, sports tourism, local community tourism, wine tourism, gastronomic tours, festivals and customs, ethical tourism, seasonal tourism, spa tourism, hunting tourism ....” (pp. 58-66).

Vujović and associates (2012) emphasize the conditions which a special form of tourism has to meet in order to become competitive in the tourist market. Namely, „for a specific tourist product to be competitive on the tourist market, it is very important to know its characteristics: strength, weaknesses, threats and its potentials. The selective forms of tourism are developed in countries that possess attractions and qualities for the development of its forms and which have understood that this is the future of the development of tourism. Besides, for the development of all forms of tourism human resources are required which could recognize the chances for development of certain forms of tourism and develop them according to the qualities of tourist destinations. The tourist offer of specific forms of tourism has its unique values which can be used” (p. 52).

As tourism represents an economic branch that not only depends on the total economic potential of a state or region but also contributes to the total socio-economic development, many countries have directed considerable resources to the development of strategic tourist potentials. However, what Ilić and associates (2017) emphasize, that parallel to the large impetus in development, tourism „has also shown a considerable vulnerability at moments of economic crises, various political unrests (terrorist attacks, wars), but also at moments of other upheavals (as a result of pandemics, climatic disasters) .... etc., which occurred in this period” (p. 160). Still, as the authors further stress, „tourist trends very quickly return to their long lasting increase trajectory. What is, however, necessary, even at moments of a weak tourist turnover, is to keep the tourist economy fit for the performance of its activities, i.e. to preserve the assets of tourist companies so that their business could be successful in the long term” (Ilić, Ivanov & Stefanović, 2017, p. 160).

In connection with the above-said, Gašić and associates (2015) emphasize that „accommodation and catering capacities are one of the most necessary bases of tourist travels so that they have to be taken into account with the establishment of the degree of development of tourism” (p. 494).

Establishing tourism in the sense of organized travel will satisfy the needs of tourists for rest, amusement and other, in Art. 3 of the Tourism Law („Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia”, no. 17/2019) the relevant concepts in this field have been stipulated. Thus, „the tourist activity is offering of services of travel agencies, tourist profession services and offering of other services” (Art. 3, item 30 of the Tourism Law), whereas the tourist destination comprises the „destination of a tourist travel which, by its facilities, makes possible the accommodation and stay of tourists” (Art. 3 item 3a of the Tourism Law). The tourist product represents a „group of interdependent elements which, in practice, are organized as a special chain of values which consists of material products and services, natural values and cultural goods, tourist attractions, tourist superstructure and tourist infrastructure” (Art. 3 item 39 of the Tourism Law), and the tourist travel is stipulated as a „combination of two or more tourist services (transportation, accommodation and other tourist services), which have been established or prepared by the travel organizer independently or at the passengers’ request, in duration exceeding 24 hours or in a shorter duration if it includes one overnight stay, as well as one or several overnight stays which include only the service of accommodation on a certain date or in a certain duration which is sold at a uniform price” (Art. 3 item 42 of the Tourism Law).

Besides the legal aspect, equally important is the strategic aspect of the regulation of the field of tourism in the Republic of Serbia. In this sense, one should mention the importance of the Tourism Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia, for the period 2016-2025 (Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications, 2016).

Namely, considering that the needs, motives and endeavours of tourists in the last years are surveyed more realistically in terms of marketing and placed into primary determinants; according to the regulations of the Tourism Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia the following three groups of new trends in the promotion and development of tourism are stressed. These trends are 1.) new trends in the manner of promotion and booking, 2.) new types of accommodation, as well as 3.) contemporary travelling motives on the global tourist market (Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications, 2016, p. 20).

According to the regulations of the Strategy, „in the field of promotion and booking new communication and promotion tools have been developed which are based on the e-marketing technology for communication with consumers and which strongly increase the efficiency of marketing activities” (Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications, 2016, p. 20), whereas in the field of „accommodation, contrary to large international chains, which also experience a transformation adapted to the destination authenticity, small family accommodation capacities are developed which facilitate the organization of stay and rest at own choice, as well as meeting of ever more expressed requirements of modern tourists for contact with nature and local culture and environment” (Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications, 2016, p. 21). In the field of contemporary motives for tourist travelling, the following determining motives can be set apart: intensive holiday, acquisition of new experiences, introduction to cultural heritage, organization of active fitness and sport travels, wellness holidays, introduction to gastronomic specialties, etc. (Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications, 2016, p. 22-23).



### 3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The scope of the analysis in this paper, as was mentioned in the introduction, is the ratio of the number of arrivals and overnight stays in general, and of the number of arrivals and overnight stays of tourists by regions for the chosen three-year period – 2017-2019, based on available official statistical data. It is also important to stipulate both the total and the quantitative indicators of accommodation capacities by regions, also for the chosen reference three-year period (2017-2019).

Finally, an overview of accommodation capacities by types of tourist resorts and facilities in 2019 has been given.

This paper is methodologically based on the theoretical analysis of relevant contemporary standpoints in theory, normative analysis of legislative sources and quantitative analysis of statistical indicators in the field of the scope of research. The research is based on official statistical data of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia.

### 4. RESEARCH RESULTS

The research part of this paper included the analysis of the relevant data for the three-year period which comprises the years 2017, 2018 and 2019.

As stated in the current Statistical Yearbook (2020), „The total number of tourists in 2019 was 3,690,000. Of this number 1,843,000 were national tourists, which is 7.6% more than in 2018, whereas the number of foreign tourists who visited our country totalled 1,847,000, which is 8.0% more than in 2018” (p. 347). Further, the „achieved number of overnight stays of all tourists who used accommodation capacities totalled 10,073,000 and was 7.9% higher than in the previous year. National tourists had 6,063,000 overnight stays (an increase of 6.8% in comparison with 2018), whereas the number of overnight stays of foreign tourists was 9.6% higher and totalled 4,010,000 overnight stays” (Statistical Yearbook, 2020, p. 347).

The Statistical Yearbook also states the detail that „the largest number of foreign tourists who visited the Republic of Serbia in 2019 came from China (145,000 arrivals, 269,000 overnight stays), Bosnia and Herzegovina (136,000 arrivals, 294,000 overnight stays), Turkey (108,000 arrivals, 228,000 overnight stays), Germany (104,000 arrivals, 203,000 overnight stays) and Croatia (104,000 arrivals, 199,000 overnight stays)” (Statistical Yearbook, 2020, p. 347).

On this occasion, the relevant research terms in this field have been stipulated.

Thus, „a tourist is every visitor who in the place of visit spends at least one night in an accommodation facility, whereas a visitor is every person who travels outside their usual surroundings, during a period which does not exceed 12 consecutive months, and the main purpose of the travel is not the performance of an activity which is paid by the place of visit” (Statistical Yearbook, 2020, p. 347, Statistical Yearbook, 2019, p. 339, Statistical Yearbook, 2018, p. 342).

Thus, „the term arrivals means the number of tourists who stay for one or more nights in an accommodation facility in the observed period. This includes children, regardless of their age. This does not include persons with permanent residence in the facility (facility personnel, fa-

cility owner and members of their household, and similar), nor persons who have the status of refugees. The above-said implies that the number of arrivals does not coincide with the number of tourists. One person can travel several times during a year; also, one person can, during one travel, visit several places, and each time their arrival is registered in the accommodation facility where they stay. Accordingly, the statistics record the number of arrivals of tourists, and not the number of tourists” (Statistical Yearbook, 2020, p. 347, Statistical Yearbook, 2019, p. 340, Statistical Yearbook, 2018, p. 342).

Also, „the country of origin is stipulated based on tourist’s country of residence, whereas the tourist resort is the organizational and functional unit with a formed tourist offer, natural values, cultural goods and other tourist attractions of importance for tourism, public utility, transportation and tourist infrastructure, as well as facilities and other contents for accommodation and stay of tourists” (Statistical Yearbook, 2020, p. 347, Statistical Yearbook, 2019, p. 340, Statistical Yearbook, 2018, p. 342).

Consulting the Statistical Yearbooks for years 2017, 2018 and 2019 of the Republic Institute for Statistics, the following Table 1 will show the number of arrivals of tourists with total annual values and by regions: Region of Belgrade, Region of Vojvodina, Region of Sumadija and Western Serbia, Region of South and East Serbia, Region of Kosovo and Metohija, and then Table 2 will show the number of overnight stays of tourists, also with total annual values, and by regions.

**Table 1.** Number of tourist arrivals with total annual values, per region, for the period 2017-2019

Republic of Serbia						
Total	Region of Belgrade	Region of Vojvodina	Region of Sumadija and Western Serbia	Region of Southern and Eastern Serbia	Region of Kosovo and Metohija	
Tourist arrivals						
Total						
2017	3,085,866	1,035,205	496,625	1,086,264	467,772	-
2018	3,430,522	1,160,582	538,472	1,184,051	547,417	-
2019	3,689,983	1,258,348	561,657	1,259,685	610,293	-
National tourists						
2017	1,588,693	172,043	269,025	835,074	312,551	-
2018	1,720,008	188,640	278,516	890,187	362,665	-
2019	1,843,432	201,770	287,419	950,289	403,954	-
Foreign tourists						
2017	1,497,173	863,162	227,600	251,190	155,221	-
2018	1,710,514	971,942	259,956	293,864	184,752	-
2019	1,846,551	1,056,578	274,238	309,396	206,339	-

**Source:** Statistical Yearbook, 2020, p. 349, Statistical Yearbook, 2019, p. 341, Statistical Yearbook, 2018, p. 343

The following table shows the number of overnight stays of tourists with total annual values, per region, for the observed three-year period.

**Table 2.** Number of overnight stays of tourists with total annual values, per region, for the period 2017-2019

Republic of Serbia						
Total	Region of Belgrade	Region of Vojvodina	Region of Sumadija and Western Serbia	Region of Southern and Eastern Serbia	Region of Kosovo and Metohija	
Overnight stays of tourists						
Total						
2017	8,325,144	2,190,474	1,159,845	3,664,283	1,310,542	-
2018	9,336,103	2,480,516	1,314,968	3,926,783	1,613,836	-
2019	10,073,299	2,696,832	1,384,344	4,173,466	1,818,657	-
National tourists						
2017	5,150,017	432,335	684,394	3,005,592	1,027,696	-
2018	5,678,235	469,767	756,832	3,183,718	1,267,918	-
2019	6,062,921	524,529	774,143	3,369,471	1,394,778	-
Foreign tourists						
2017	3,175,127	1,758,139	475,451	658,691	282,846	-
2018	3,657,868	2,010,749	558,136	743,065	345,918	-
2019	4,010,378	2,172,303	610,201	803,995	423,879	-

**Source:** Statistical Yearbook, 2020, p. 349, Statistical Yearbook, 2019, p. 341, Statistical Yearbook, 2018, p. 343

Consulting the Statistical Yearbooks, in the following table, accommodation capacities with total values are shown for two regions – Serbia North and Serbia South, also for the chosen reference three-year period 2017-2019.

**Table 3.** Accommodation capacities in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2017-2019

	Republic of Serbia					
	Total		Serbia North		Serbia South	
	rooms	beds	rooms	beds	rooms	beds
2017	44,813	106,029	17,049	36,252	27,764	69,777
2018	48,190	114,771	19,225	40,665	28,965	74,106
2019	50,110	121,289	20,055	42,671	30,055	78,618

**Source:** Statistical Yearbook, 2020, p. 356, Statistical Yearbook, 2019, p. 348, Statistical Yearbook, 2018, p. 350

Finally, in the last table, an overview of accommodation capacities per type of tourist resorts and facilities in 2019 is shown.

**Table 4.** Overview of accommodation capacities per type of tourist resorts and facilities in 2019

	Total	Thereof:			
		Spa resorts	Mountain resorts	Other tourist resorts	Other resorts
<b>Rooms</b>					
<b>Total</b>	<b>50,110</b>	<b>11,671</b>	<b>9,138</b>	<b>11,681</b>	<b>4,274</b>
Hotels	17,131	2,106	3,016	4,011	944
Motels	216	–	17	146	53
Apartments	1,860	99	1,181	242	15
Tourist settlements	253	53	74	48	20
Boarding houses	98	–	61	–	37
Guest houses	4,696	733	845	1,728	950
Inns	1,049	130	114	544	234
Garni hotels	3,242	186	106	1,045	20



DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOURIST POTENTIAL IN SERBIA  
IN THE LIGHT OF TOURIST FREQUENCY AND ACCOMMODATION CAPACITIES

Apart hotels	513	–	513	–	–
Spa resorts	1,992	1,912	–	80	–
Climatic health resorts	733	422	311	–	–
Mountain lodges and houses	215	–	190	16	9
Workers' resorts	283	72	211	–	–
Children's and youth resorts	1,378	101	877	240	160
Hostels	2,690	66	113	902	–
Camps	311	150	92	42	–
Campsites, camping resorts	2,178	13	70	292	303
Private rooms	8,609	4,445	871	1,630	1,301
Private houses	1,852	1,159	269	318	94
Rural tourist households	644	19	207	362	56
Sleeping and dining car	45	–	–	–	–
Hunting houses and huts	35	5	–	–	30
Other	87	–	–	35	48
			<b>Beds</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>121.289</b>	<b>28,486</b>	<b>26,815</b>	<b>27,826</b>	<b>11,461</b>
Hotels	34,238	4,552	7,842	8,169	2,092
Motels	482	–	33	329	120
Apartments	5,453	319	3,511	583	53
Tourist settlements	446	76	116	106	32
Boarding houses	240	–	155	–	85
Guest houses	11,937	1,839	2,542	4,284	2,4319
Inns	2,542	316	296	1,303	538
Garni hotels	6,953	435	296	2,331	57
Apart hotels	1,970	–	1,970	–	–
Spa resorts	4,168	3,988	–	180	–
Climatic health resorts	1,915	1,265	650	–	–
Mountain lodges and houses	760	–	638	72	50
Workers' resorts	837	222	615	–	–
Children's and youth resorts	5,429	452	3,496	917	564
Hostels	8,124	140	213	2,711	–
Camps	823	300	328	168	–
Campsites, camping resorts	5,049	26	195	876	952
Private rooms	23,303	11,729	2,814	3,944	4,027
Private houses	4,282	2,756	571	722	202
Rural tourist households	1,732	61	534	534	143
Sleeping and dining car	220	–	–	–	–
Hunting houses and huts	70	10	–	–	60
Other	316	–	–	137	167

Source: Statistical Yearbook, 2020, p. 357

## 5. DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

Consulting the Statistical Yearbooks for the observed three-year period (2017-2019), the first two tables present data for parameters - the number of tourist arrivals with total annual values, also by regions for the period 2017-2019, and the number of tourist overnight stays with total annual values, and by regions for the period 2017-2019.

The values of total arrivals were observed, then the parameter of domestic tourist arrivals, and finally the parameter of foreign tourist arrivals. Analysing the data from Table 1, the following conclusions were drawn.

In the domain of all three observed parameters (total arrivals, arrivals of domestic tourists, arrivals of foreign tourists) there is a progressive numerical growth by years, i.e. in all three parameters, the number of arrivals increases with years (total arrivals: 2017 - 3,085,866, 2018 - 3,430,522, 2019 - 3,689,983, arrivals of domestic tourists: 2017 - 1,588,693, 2018 - 1,720,008, 2019 - 1,843,432, arrivals of foreign tourists: 2017 - 1,497,173, 2018 - 1,710,514, 2019 - 1,846,551).

By observing the parameters by regions, it is realized that the Region of Sumadija and Western Serbia has the largest number of total tourist arrivals (2017 - 1,086,264, 2018 - 1,184,051, 2019 - 1,259,685) and the largest number of domestic tourist arrivals (2017 - 835,074, 2018 - 890,187, 2019 - 950,289). Regarding the parameters of foreign tourist arrivals, the highest values are recorded in the Region of Belgrade (2017 - 863,162, 2018 - 971,942, 2019 - 1,056,578).

Within the parameters of total arrivals, the lowest frequency has the Region of Southern and Eastern Serbia in 2017, and the Region of Vojvodina in 2018 and 2019. In the category of domestic tourist arrivals, the lowest frequency of tourists is recorded in the Region of Belgrade in all three observed years, while in the category of foreign tourist arrivals, the lowest frequency of tourists is recorded in the Region of Southern and Eastern Serbia, also in all three observed years.

By analysing the data from Table 2, the following conclusions were drawn:

In the domain of all observed parameters (total overnight stays, overnight stays of domestic tourists, overnight stays of foreign tourists) there is a progressive numerical growth by years, i.e., in all three parameters, the number of overnight stays increases with years (total tourist nights: 2017 - 8,325,144, 2018 - 9,336,103, 2019 - 10,073,299, domestic tourist overnight stays: 2017 - 5,150,017, 2018 - 5,678,235, 2019 - 6,062,921, foreign tourist overnight stays: 2017 - 3,175,127, 2018 - 3,657,868, 2019 - 4,010,378).

By observing the parameters by regions, it is realized that the Region of Sumadija and Western Serbia has the largest number of total tourist overnight stays (2017 - 3,664,283, 2018 - 3,926,783, 2019 - 4,173,466) and the largest number of domestic tourist overnight stays (2017 - 3,005,592, 2018 - 3,183,718, 2019 - 3,369,471). Regarding the parameters of overnight stays of foreign tourists, the highest values are recorded in the Region of Belgrade (2017 - 1,758,139, 2018 - 2,010,749, 2019 - 2,172,303).

Within the parameters of total overnight stays, the lowest frequency has the Region of Southern and Eastern Serbia in 2017, and the Region of Vojvodina in 2018 and 2019. In the category of domestic tourist overnight stays, the lowest frequency of tourists is recorded in the Region of Belgrade in all three observed years, while in the category of foreign tourist overnight stays, the lowest frequency of tourists is recorded in the Region of Southern and Eastern Serbia, also in all three observed years.

If we compare the numerical values of the number of tourist arrivals with total annual values, and by regions, and the numerical values of the number of tourist overnight stays with total annual values, and by regions, in the observed three-year period, it is noticed that the frequency of total overnight stays and domestic and foreign tourists' overnight stays is much higher than the frequency of tourist arrivals with all three parameters. Also, the frequency of overnight stays by regions (total, overnight stays of domestic and overnight stays of foreign tourists) is higher than the frequency of tourist arrivals by regions with all three parameters.

Consulting the Statistical Yearbooks regarding the accommodation capacities, Table 3 presents the total values, and the values for two regions – Serbia North and Serbia South, also for the selected three-year period 2017-2019.

Namely, the total accommodation capacities with both parameters - rooms and beds, show progressive numerical growth over the years. The total accommodation capacities with the room parameter record the following values by years: 2017 - 44,813, 2018 - 48,190, 2019 - 50,110. The total accommodation capacities with the parameter beds record the following values by years: 2017 - 106,029, 2018 - 114,771, 2019 - 121,289. Progressive numerical growth by years in the domain of accommodation capacities is evident in two regions – Serbia North and Serbia South.

By comparing the accommodation capacities of the two regions, it can be noticed that the region Serbia South has better accommodation capacities both with the room parameter and with the beds parameter. The accommodation capacities with the room parameter for all three years are: 2017 - 27,764, 2018 - 28,965, 2019 - 30,055, while accommodation capacities with the bed parameter for all three years are: 2017 - 69,777, 2018 - 74,106, 2019 - 78,618.

The last table, based on the data from the Statistical Yearbook, presents an overview of accommodation capacities by types of tourist places and facilities in 2019. The analysis of numerical values related to tourist places and tourist facilities is classified into two categories - the category of rooms and the category of beds. The analysis includes the following tourist places: spa resorts, mountain resorts, other tourist resorts and other places. The analysis also includes the following tourist facilities: hotels, motels, apartments, tourist resorts, boarding houses, guest houses, inns, Garni hotels, Apart hotels, spa resorts, climatic health resorts, mountain lodges and houses, workers' resorts, children's and youth resorts, hostels, camps, campsites, camping resorts, private rooms, private houses, rural tourist households, sleeping and dining cars, hunting lodges and huts.

If the parameter of the room is observed, we can single out the following conclusions. Having in mind the total value (for all tourist places), the most represented tourist facility is a hotel, with the value of 17,131 rented rooms. If we separately analyse the representation of tourist facilities by tourist places, we see that with spa resorts the most represented tourist facilities are private rooms (4,445 rented rooms), then, that with mountain resorts the most represented tourist facilities are hotels (3,016 rented rooms), further, that with other tourist places the most represented tourist facilities are also hotels (4,011 rented rooms), and finally, with other places, the most represented tourist facilities are private rooms (1,301 rented rooms). If we compare tourist places with each other, and according to the criteria of rented rooms, it can be concluded that the places with the highest frequency are spa resorts (11,671 rented rooms) and other tourist places (11,681 rented rooms).

If the bed parameter is observed, we can draw the following conclusions. Having in mind the total value (for all tourist places), the most represented tourist facility is a hotel, with values of 34,238 rented beds. If we separately analyse the representation of tourist facilities by tourist places, we see that with spa resorts the most represented tourist facilities are private rooms (11,729 rented beds), then with mountain resorts the most represented tourist facilities are hotels (7,842 rented beds), further, that with other tourist places the most represented tourist facilities are also hotels (8,169 rented beds), and finally, with other places the most represented tourist facilities are private rooms (4,027 rented beds). If we compare tourist places with each other, and according to the criteria of rented beds, it can be concluded that that the places with the highest frequency are spa resorts, with 28,468 rented beds.

## 6. CONCLUSION

One of the basic goals of the strategic approach in the field of the tourism development is a sustainable concept in tourism development, as well as planned activities in this domain. Tourism is an economic branch which is in a highly interactive relationship with both natural and social values. Namely, on the one hand, users of tourist services are increasingly insisting on the inclusion of „untouched” natural resources in the tourist offer, while on the other hand, tourism is often a factor in disrupting and degrading the elements of the environment. In that sense, a sustainable, i.e. „responsible” concept in the development of tourism is an approach that enables a responsible attitude of tourism towards the natural environment, which is at the same time one of the most important levers in the further development of tourism itself.

The importance and characteristics of tourism as an economic branch were discussed in more detail in the theoretical part of the paper. What should be mentioned once again in the conclusion, and in the context of the topic of the paper which refers to the analysis of the development of tourist potential, in light of the frequency of tourists and accommodation capacities, is the importance of tourist traffic at a certain tourist destination.

In this sense, the strategic goals of tourism development for the future should be stated, bearing in mind that tourism is of great importance as a „potential for economic growth and development, creating new added value and new employment possibilities” (Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications, 2016, page 37). Thus, the goals of tourism development until 2025 can be defined in the following sense: “1) increase of the share of hotel and similar hospitality facilities for accommodation in total accommodation facilities to 50%; 2) reaching the total occupancy of accommodation capacities (accommodation units) of 30%; 3) increase of tourist traffic by 2025 up to three times, i.e. by at least 50%; 4) increase in tourist consumption per unit (per night) by 50%; 5) increase of the share of foreign overnight stays to 45% by 2020 and 55% by 2025; 6) double increase of the direct share of tourism in the gross domestic product of the Republic of Serbia; 7) increase of the number of directly employed persons in tourism by at least 50% and increase of the number of employees in tourism and complementary activities up to three times; 8) increase in direct investments (Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications, 2016, p. 38).

Also, according to the Strategy (2016), it is necessary, in addition to the already mentioned, to achieve the following goals: “1) establishment of an efficient system of tourism development management with strengthening of public-private partnerships; 2) improvement and harmonization of methodology and procedures for collection and processing of statistical data with international standards and practices; 3) establishment of the Tourism Register based on legal grounds; 4) reduction of the gray economy in tourism ”(p. 38).

In order to provide a closer overview of the situation in the Republic of Serbia in the field of tourism potential, the research part deals with the analysis of the number of tourist arrivals and overnight stays in general, and the number of tourist arrivals and overnight stays by region for the selected three-year period - 2017-2019, based on available official statistical data. Also, quantitative indicators of accommodation capacities by regions were analysed, also for the selected reference three-year period (2017-2019). Finally, an overview of accommodation capacities by types of tourist places and facilities in 2019 was singled out.

A summary of the research results is as follows. By analysing the data on the number of tourist arrivals with total annual values, and by regions, as well as the number of tourist overnight stays with total annual values, and by regions for the period 2017-2019, the following conclusions were drawn. In the domain of all three observed parameters (total arrivals/overnight stays, arrivals/overnight stays of domestic tourists, arrivals/overnight stays of foreign tourists) there is a progressive numerical growth by years, i.e., with all three parameters, the number of tourist arrivals/overnight stays increases with years.

By observing the parameters by regions, it can be seen that the Region of Sumadija and Western Serbia has the largest number of total tourist arrivals and the largest number of domestic tourist arrivals. As for the parameters of foreign tourist arrivals, the Region of Belgrade has the highest values. Within the parameters of total arrivals, the Region of Southern and Eastern Serbia in 2017, and the Region of Vojvodina in 2018 and 2019 have the lowest frequency.

Also, by observing the parameters by regions, it can be seen that the Region of Sumadija and Western Serbia has the largest number of total tourist overnight stays and the largest number of domestic tourist overnight stays. As for the parameters of overnight stays of foreign tourists, the Region of Belgrade has the highest values. Within the parameters of total overnight stays, the lowest frequency has the Region of Southern and Eastern Serbia in 2017, and the Region of Vojvodina in 2018 and 2019.

Total accommodation capacities with both parameters - rooms and beds, record a progressive numerical growth over the years. The progressive numerical growth by years in the domain of accommodation capacities is evident in two regions – Serbia North and Serbia South. By comparing the accommodation capacities of the two regions, it can be noticed that the region Serbia South has better accommodation capacities both with the room parameter and with the beds parameter.

The last table analysis refers to the overview of accommodation capacities by types of tourist places and facilities in 2019.

If the room parameter is observed, the most represented tourist facility is a hotel, with the value of 17,131 rented rooms. If we analyse the representation of tourist facilities by tourist places, we see that with spa resorts the most represented tourist facilities are private rooms, then, that with mountain resorts the most represented tourist facilities are hotels, further, that with other tourist places the most represented tourist facilities are also hotels, and finally, that with other places the most common tourist facilities are private rooms. If we compare tourist places with each other, and according to the criteria of rented rooms, it can be concluded that the places with the highest frequency are spa resorts and other tourist places.

If the bed parameter is observed, the most represented tourist facility is a hotel, with values of 34,238 rented beds. If we analyse the representation of tourist facilities by tourist places, we see that with spa resorts the most represented tourist facilities are private rooms, then, that with mountain resorts the most represented tourist facilities are hotels, further, that with other tourist places the most represented tourist facilities are also hotels, and finally, that with other places the most represented tourist facilities are private rooms. If we compare tourist places with each other, and according to the criteria of rented beds, it can be concluded that the spa resorts have the highest frequency.



The research in this paper is based on research data for the period 2017 - 2019. In the future analysis of the development of tourist potential in Serbia, it is necessary to take into account the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the entire tourist sector of Serbia. Then, the recommendation is that the direction of future research be focused on a comparative analysis of the frequency of tourists and the occupancy of the accommodation capacities of the tourism sector in Serbia before the pandemic and during the pandemic. It is especially interesting to focus future research on the analysis of parameters and possibilities of development of certain modern forms of tourism in Serbia, such as rural tourism, having in mind the influence of Covid-19 on the possibility of tourists moving across the border and changing tourist preferences of domestic tourists.

## REFERENCES

- Camilleri, M. A. (2018). *Travel Marketing, Tourism Economics and the Airline Product - An Introduction to Theory and Practice*, Switzerland: Springer Nature.
- The Planning and Development of the Tourism Product. Camilleri, M. A. (2019). In M. A. Camilleri (Ed.), *Tourism Planning and Destination Marketing* (1-24). London: Emerald Publishing Limited.
- Cvijanović, D., Vuković, P. & Kljajić, N. (2011). Stanje i perspektive razvoja ruralnog turizma u Republici Srbiji [=The State and Perspectives of Development of Rural Tourism in the Republic of Serbia]. In M. Milanović, D. Cvijanović & S. Vujović (Eds.), *Mediterranean days Trebinje 2011 – Turizam i ruralni razvoj - Savremene tendencije, problemi i mogućnosti razvoja* (11-21). Trebinje: Sajamski grad, Bosna i Hercegovina.
- Cooper, C. (2008). *Tourism: Principles and practice*, London: Pearson Education.
- Ćirić, M., Počuča, M. & Raičević, V. (2014). Level of customer orientation and customer protection in hotels in Serbia. *Economics of Agriculture*, 61 (1), 25-39.
- Fagioli, F. F., Diotallevi, F. & Ciani, A. (2014). Strengthening the sustainability of rural areas: the role of rural tourism and agritourism. *Rivista di Economia Agraria*, 69 (2-3), 155-169.
- Gašić, M., Ivanović, V. & Perić, G. (2015). Materijalna baza razvoja turizma na prostoru Topličkog okruga [=Material basis for Tourism Development in Toplica District]. In M. Stanišić (Ed.), *Synthesis* (pp. 494-498), Beograd: Univerzitet Singidunum.
- Gržetić, Z., Favro, S. & Saganić, I. (2007). Nautički turizam – perspektiva razvoja hrvatskog jadranskog primorja [=Nautical Tourism – Croatian Adriatic Coast Development Perspective]. *Turizam*, 11, 23-26.
- Hamović V., Cvijanović D. & Arsenijević Ž., (2009). Sustainable development in term of spa and rural tourism in Serbia, The New Economy, Challenge, Opportunities and Choices. London: Indo American Books.
- Holloway, J. C., & Taylor, N. (2006). *The business of tourism*, London: Pearson Education.
- Ilić, S., Ivanov, S. & Stefanović, D. (2017). Globalna atraktivnost turističkog potencijala u Republici Srbiji [=Global attractiveness of tourist potential in the Republic of Serbia], *Mega-biznis*, 1 (1), 159-170.
- Karampela, C., Kizos, T. & Spilanis, I. (2016). Evaluating the impact of agritourism on local development in small islands. *Island Studies Journal*, 11 (1), 161-176.
- Law on Tourism, Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No. 17/2019.
- Matijašević-Obradović, J. & Kovačević, M. (2016). The importance of the ICT for the purpose of increasing Competitiveness of Rural Areas. In J. Subić, B. Kuzman & A. J. Vasile (eds.), *Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development in terms of the Republic of Serbia Strate-*

- gic goals realization within the Danube Region - Development and Application of Clean Technologies in Agriculture* (pp. 492-509), Belgrade: Institute of Agricultural Economics.
- Matijašević-Obradović, J. & Škorić, S. (2017). Elementary Strategic and Legislative Treatment of Rural Development Policy. In J. Subić, B. Kuzman & A. J. Vasile (Eds.), *Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development in terms of the Republic of Serbia strategic goals realization within the Danube Region - Support programs for the improvement of Agricultural and Rural Development* (pp. 282-299), Belgrade: Institute of Agricultural Economics.
- Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications (2016). *Tourism Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia, for the period 2016-2025*, Belgrade.
- Popesku, J. (2002). *Marketing u turizmu* [= *Marketing in tourism*]. Beograd: Čigoja štampa.
- Počuča, M., Matijašević-Obradović, J. & Drašković, B. (2017). Correlation Between the Air Quality Index SAQI\_11 and Sustainable Rural Development in The Republic of Serbia. *Economics of Agriculture*, 64 (3), 1249-1262.
- Počuča, M. & Matijašević-Obradović, J. (2019). Analysis of Quantitative Indicators of Modern Tourism Development in the Republic of Serbia. In V. Bevanda & S. Štetić (Eds.), *4th International Thematic Monograph - Modern Management Tools and Economy of Tourism Sector in Present Era* (pp. 493-508), Belgrade: Association of Economists and Managers of the Balkans & Ohrid, Macedonia: Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31410/tmt.2019.493>
- Radović, J. (2016). *Uticaj marketinga na razvoj hotelskih preduzeća u Crnoj Gori – specijalistički rad* [= *The impact of marketing on the development of hotel companies in Montenegro - specialist paper*]. Tivat: Fakultet za mediteranske poslovne studije.
- Ristić, L. (2013). Strategijsko upravljanje održivim ruralnim razvojem u Republici Srbiji [= *Strategic management of sustainable rural development in the Republic of Serbia*]. *Ekonomski horizonti*, 15 (3), 229 – 243.
- Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (2020). *Statistical Yearbook* (D. Gavrilović Ed.), Belgrade, Republic of Serbia.
- Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (2019). *Statistical Yearbook* (D. Gavrilović Ed.), Belgrade, Republic of Serbia.
- Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (2018). *Statistical Yearbook* (D. Gavrilović Ed.), Belgrade, Republic of Serbia.
- Šimkova, E. (2007). Strategic approaches to rural tourism and sustainable development of rural areas. *Agricultural Economics*, 53 (6), 263–270.
- Vujović, S., Cvijanović, D. & Štetić, S. (2012). *Destinacijski koncept razvoja turizma* [= *The Destination Concept of Tourism Development*]. Beograd, Republika Srbija: Institut za ekonomiku poljoprivrede.
- Zhenhua L. M. (2003). Sustainable tourism development: A critique, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 11 (6), 459-475.

