

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT OF KOSOVO AS A TOURIST DESTINATION

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Abstract

Managing tourist destinations is the use of tourism potential of a country for tourism development and national economy in general, requires analytical tools and policies as part of development programs. The correct understanding of structural elements and dynamic processes is a very important factor in the development of a tourist destination.

Kosovo does not have direct access to the sea but has a mountainous hilly character, has a very favorable climate and many natural resources and a rich cultural and historical heritage that are considered as the basis for further tourism development. The purpose of this research is to study the development of tourism in Kosovo and through it is intended to make an important contribution in solving the best models of sustainable tourism development in this region. The Republic of Kosovo is in the phase of change and fundamental development where tourism is considered a very important source for the development of the country's general economy.

According to ministry data, tourism has been identified as one of the most powerful sectors for economic development and a very important market for foreign direct investment.

The Republic of Kosovo pays special attention to tourism and food, due to the climatic conditions and nature that can be used for the development and promotion of tourism as well as due to the great and unparalleled cultural and historical wealth as a very important part of the country's cumulative tourist offer.

Key words: *Tourism, development, destinations, management, regions.*

Introduction

Tourism is an economic activity oriented towards the utilization of tourist potentials.

With all the difficulties and problems in different phases of Kosovo's economic development, this activity is already in harmony with Kosovo's economic development. Tourism is turning into the main sector of economic development with revenue generation and job creation. However, as one of the sectors where the country's economic growth is expected to focus on in the future, tourism is still not finding itself in sectoral development. One of the many problems facing Kosovo's tourism economy today is the identification of the tourism product development strategy, which will lead to sustainable tourism development. Culture is part of the tourist offer and has the potential to become attractive to a tourist destination and is one of the main sources of the heritage of a population. Kosovo's cultural heritage is well-known inside and outside the country and is attractive to tourists who want to see masterpieces of art and culture and learn about the evidence of prehistory, classics, Illyrian period and so on. In addition to the famous museums, there are large collections of objects in Kosovo from all aspects of life, nature, art and the like.

Research Methodology

In this research we have analyzed a number of qualitative and quantitative elements for the identification and analysis of the tourism potential of Kosovo and the importance of tourism in its economic development. The realization of the goals set in the research of this topic is based on the combination of certain methods and will most often be guided by the inductive method (by exploring the general specification where the conclusions are taken according to the facts and the existing premises in order to verify the data and operationalization of concepts) and the deductive method (exploring the general to specific). The development of this topic uses primary and secondary data, ie official data presented in all types of documents, and analyzes the most relevant data and information for confirming real-life images in the stated relationship system. Based on this data, we will try to build the right conclusions.

For phenomena for which there is no data and official information, which are important for the perception of the situation and tendencies in the field of tourism, they will be processed in a qualitative way. This research tries to analyze the behavior of participants in the tourist destination and the understanding of the dynamics of the development of the tourist destination.

A brief historical summary of the development of tourism in Kosovo

Tourism is an economic activity oriented towards the utilization of tourist potentials. With all the difficulties and problems in the different phases of Kosovo's economic development, this activity is already in harmony with Kosovo's economic development. Although it has considerable tourist potential in Kosovo, this activity is still not considered as important in the overall economy of the country. Tourism development can contribute to the country's GDP growth and thus adapt where its country is in the country's economic development strategy. The Republic of Kosovo has recently been introduced to the tourism market as a tourist destination due to the years of isolation and problems that arose due to the lack of networks and communication links. Following the development of the Adriatic highway and the Ibris motorway in 1971, Kosovo began to affirm itself as a potential tourist market. By 1970, as far as tourism was concerned, Kosovo was a very undeveloped country. Here the first place refers to the creation of accommodation facilities for tourists who are then built only for the needs of the economy (business trips), but also for the needs of the local population, such as hotel and restaurant facilities. The first assessment is that tourism development in Kosovo remains very timely, compared to the dynamics of tourism development in the then federation. This was as a result of the concept of Kosovo's economic development only for the production of raw materials and semi-raw materials.

Touristic movements up to 1990

In this period, although it is an important part of the overall economy, tourism in Kosovo cannot yet be found in a sustainable development. Kosovo is characterized by a low level of economic development due to violent economic measures and the recent war, the very slow process of privatization, small foreign investments and the like. Of course, tourism was an integral part of these negative economic and political processes. In the late 1980s and early 1990s there were major problems in the Kosovo economy (Ministry of Trade and Industry <http://www.mti-ks.org/sq/Tourism-Hospitality-and-turnover-and-historical-1989-1999>).

- Administrative constraints have been established for all hotel establishments;
- The number of employees in the tourism and hospitality sector drastically decreases;
- Legal regulations on the transformation of social capital, concessions and joint investments have been approved and through fictitious transactions the enterprises with the tourist capital receive "new owners";
- The start of investment in tourism and the maintenance of existing tourist facilities are interrupted;
- Interruption of investment in new lines in the field of telecommunications and related technologies..

Tourism in the period 1991 – 2000

If we analyze the ten-year period from 1991 to 2000, then the following tourist turnover can be noticed:

Table no. 1. Tourism turnover for the period 1991 - 2000

Year	Number of work units	Tourists		Nights		Total	
		internal	stranger	internal	stranger	internal	stranger
1991	54	130000	15000	744000	28000	145000	772000
1992	46	103498	4090	566174	9099	107588	575273
1993	46	103145	3029	432747	8857	106374	441604
1994	50	90840	2675	324136	6882	93515	331018
1995	50	88694	4676	253328	8690	93370	262018
1996	50	107231	2299	285609	4986	109530	290595
1997	50	76773	2532	269920	6934	80305	274854
1998	50	72351	2645	351842	4981	74996	356823
1999	50	38075	4974	179269	19005	43049	198274
2000	23	32610	12616	7952	55720	45226	63672

Source: State Statistical Office of Kosovo, 2001

From the data it can be noticed that:

- The number of tourists in 1991 was a total of 130000 tourists, and in 2000 this number has dropped to 32610 tourists (with the 9th fall);
- The number of foreign tourists in 1991 was 15,000 tourists, and in 2000 this number was 12616 tourists;;
- In 1991, 744,000 overnight stays were made by local tourists, and in 2000 this number dropped to 7,952 arrivals (10,000 reduction);
- In 1991, foreign tourists made 28,000 stays overnight, and in 2000 they made 55,720 nights (2 more for foreign soldiers).

The same is with the capacity to accommodate tourists, where there is a decrease in the number of rooms and beds.

Table no. 2. Number of rooms and beds in the period 1991 - 2000

Year	Number of work units	Number of rooms	Number of beds			Number of chairs	Number of employees
			permanent	aide	Total		

1991	54	3515	7329	498	7827	61291	6077
1992	46	2523	5277	492	5769	69064	5947
1993	46	2571	5277	492	5769	68660	6435
1995	50	2599	5683	423	6106	74352	6563
1995	50	2599	5683	423	6106	27856	3662
1996	50	2613	5739	407	6146	27300	3796
1997	50	2609	5728	407	6135	27004	3921
1998	50	2588	5670	403	6073	29938	3914
1999	50	2614	5885	373	6258	-	-
2000	23	938	1547	134	1681	3740	885

Source: State Statistical Office of Kosovo, 2001

According to the data in Table no. 2 it can be noticed that the number of rooms has dropped steadily over that period, from 3515 rooms in 1991, this number dropped to 938 in 2000.

The same was the situation with the number of beds, so in 1991 there were 7827 beds (7329 permanent and 498 assistants), and in 2000 this number reached 1681 (1547 permanent beds and 134 extra beds). So, from 1991 to 2000, all the categories mentioned in the table show a drastic decline in values. There is a period when the number of rooms is unchanged, as well as the number of beds. A feature of Kosovo's tourism in the mid-1990s was the opening of a number of travel agencies, although none of them met the minimum technical requirements to do business. Most of these travel agencies deal only with the sale of airline tickets or passenger transport.

In the period 1998-1999, Kosovo's total potential destruction of tourism potentials and capacities has taken place, which are so small. In this period, the mass destruction of property that has been created over the years, with which Kosovo finds itself in a devastated economy after the end of the military conflict, occurs. Immediately after the war in Kosovo, tourism has an important place in economic activation or "restart" of the country, so tourism in the country's GDP is estimated to cover 6-7%, and compared to that of the 1970s. the percentage was between 1.9-2.3%. Increasing the share of tourism in the domestic product is a result of the drastic reduction of other private and public sector activities due to well-known reasons, and now due to the changes that have occurred in the macroeconomic environment and private sector vitality in the sector hospitality and catering (The State Statistical Office of Kosovo and the Ministry of Trade and Industry Pristina 2012).

Development of Kosovo's tourism in the new century

The number of enterprises and employees in the tourism and hospitality sector in Kosovo is ranked 4th, according to local and foreign experts. Only during 2001-2002, the number of enterprises in the tourism sector increased by 862 or 55% compared to the previous years. In total employment, 237 enterprises employed 1548 workers for nine months, or 7.7% more.

The spatial distribution of tourist enterprises was almost equal for all municipalities in Kosovo, and in accordance with economic activity, so that:

- Prishtina participates with 32.1% (1373 enterprise),
- Prizreni participates with 12.4% (530 enterprise),
- Mitrovica participates with 6.7% (288 ndërmarrje),

- Gilani participates with 5.6% (239 enterprise),
- Gjakova participates with 4.6% (196 enterprise),
- Peja participates with 3.8% (165 enterprise),
- Ferizaj participates with 2.4% (102 enterprise).

According to the available data, it can be seen that in the number of employees Pristina is ranked first with 3078 employees in the tourism sector or 28.2% of the total number. After 1999, until 2002, compared with the pre-war period, it can be noticed that major changes have been made in terms of the structure of accommodation capacities of tourists and the mode of exploitation. However, the relationship between core and complementary capacities is disadvantageous as the number of basic accommodation facilities is 48.5% compared to 51.5% of additional capacity.

In the territory of Kosovo, the hotel activity is carried out over 100 hotels and according to table data it is noticed that most hotel companies are located in the regions of Prishtina, Ferizaj and Peja.

Table no. 3. Hotel capacities in Kosovo at 2017

ID Region	Region	Number of hotels	Number of rooms	Number of beds
1	Gjakovë	10	200	288
2	Gjilan	9	172	221
3	Mitrovicë	6	119	128
4	Pejë	37	635	1.265
5	Prizren	9	244	511
6	Prishtinë	51	1.588	2.090
7	Ferizaj	15	315	357
Total		137	3,273	4,860

Source: State Office and Statistics of Kosovo, 2017.

Of the 137 hotels operating in these regions, 103 hotels operate in the three areas mentioned above, or 75.18% of the total. In the three largest regions of these hotels there are a total of 2,538 rooms, respectively 77.54% and 3,712 beds, or 76.37% of the total number of registered beds (<http://ask.rks-gov.net/>).

On the other hand, the use of hotel facilities for the period 2013-2017 can be noted from the table below:

Table no. 4. Capacity utilization in Kosovo regions in percentage for the period 2013-2017

Region / year	Gjakova	Gjilani	Mitrovica	Peja	Prizreni	Pristina	Ferizaj	Total(%)
2013	1,64	3,48	2,99	3,77	4,57	18,43	12,58	6,78
2014	3,78	1,73	2,30	14,48	4,29	17,21	2,10	6,55

2015	5,44	4,51	6,53	24,33	11,67	25,05	4,93	11,78
2016	5,39	2,43	4,00	9,17	5,36	17,52	4,38	10,11
2017	3,50	5,12	9,22	9,26	13,42	15,52	5,00	11,54

Source: State Statistical Office in Kosovo, 2017.

According to the survey, the utilized capacity at the country level is 11.54%; for more see Table, which presents the use of hotel capacities in Kosovo at country level according to region. According to the survey data, we can see that the use of state-level capacities is very low, ie in 2013 it was 6.78%, in 2014 it was reduced to 6.55%, while in 2015 there is almost twice the growth capacity of 11.78 %, in 2017, is 11.54%.

The region with the highest capacity utilization for the period 2013-2017 is the region of Pristina, the second is the Peja region and the third is the Prizren region.

Number of tourists and stay at night

In recent years it can be noticed that there is an increase in the number of tourists and nights spent in Kosovo and these data are presented in the table below:

Table no. 5. Number of tourists and stay within the regions for the period 2013-2017

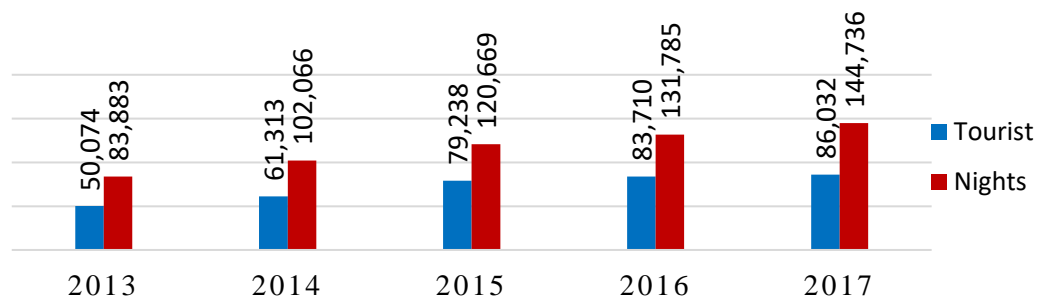
Regions	2013		2014		2015		2016		2017	
	Tourists	Nights	Tourists	Nights	Tourists	Nights	Tourists	Nights	Tourists	Nights
Gjakova	547	1.062	1.003	2.389	1.267	3.836	2.345	4.516	2,450	4.960
Gjilani	737	1.198	794	1.222	712	1.109	1.109	1.973	1.239	2.130
Mitrovica	616	692	532	532	385	414	646	745	953	1.089
Peja	1.326	3.733	5.761	9.197	12.694	17.224	12.649	18.348	10.929	24.968
Prizreni	3.799	5.521	3.520	5.694	9.779	13.947	9.101	13.044	8.792	13.942
Prishtina	42.083	70.517	49.041	82.194	53.057	82.561	56.291	90.998	59.091	94.591
Ferizaji	966	1.160	662	837	1.344	1.578	1.569	2.161	2.578	3.056
Total	50.074	83.883	61.313	102.066	79.238	120.669	83.710	131.785	86.032	144.736

Source: State Office and Statistics of Kosovo, 2017.

From the data it can be seen that the number of tourists in 2013 was over 50 thousand, which carried out almost 83.883 thousand nights.

This number increased in 2014 to 61,313 tourists, who stayed over 102.066 nights, while in 2017 we have a completely different situation, because in that year 86,032 tourists stayed and 144.736 nights were realized. Most of all regions is Prishtina, with almost 68% of the number of tourists in 2017 and over 66% of all attitudes in that year, and the situation is similar for the years to come. Graphically it looks like this:

Graphic appearance no. 1. Number of tourists and stay overnight for the year 2013 – 2017



Source: State Office and Statistics of Kosovo, 2017.

As for foreign tourists for the period 2013-2015, data on their number and attitudes realized overnight can be seen from the following table:

Table no. 6. Number of foreign visitors and their nights of stay according to the region for the period Q4 of the years 2015 - 2017

Regions	Q4 2015		Q4 2016		Q4 2017	
	Tourists	Nights	Tourists	Nights	Tourists	Nights
Gjakova	305	867	518	1.137	356	522
Gjilani	43	55	166	266	432	819
Mitrovica	51	51	125	132	231	299
Peja	1.313	2.062	1.948	4.435	1.599	4.291
Prizreni	2.369	3.429	1.407	2.130	2.271	4.557
Pristina	13.188	21.182	13.913	21.532	14.513	25.379
Ferizaji	635	644	567	894	1.130	1.406
Total:	17.904	28.290	18.644	30.526	20.532	37.273

Source: State Statistical Office of Kosovo, 2017.

According to the data from the table, in Q4 2015, 17,904 foreign tourists stayed in Kosovo and there were 28290 night stands, in Q4 2016 there were 18,644 foreign tourists and 30,526 night stands, while in Q4 2017 there were 20,532 foreign tourists which made 37,273 night stands.

Pristina region and foreign tourists and night stands are ranked first, while the Peja region has the highest growth in the mentioned years.

Foreign tourists who mainly visit Kosovo

Table no. 7. Number of foreign guests and night stays by country of origin 2013-2017

Country	2013		2014		2015		2016		2017	
	Tourists	Nights	Tourists	Nights	Tourists	Nights	Tourists	Nights	Tourists	Nights
Austria	127	139	856	1.435	451	680	500	1.320	233	1.107
Belgium	62	80	100	148	85	108	43	43	108	139
BiH	167	193	880	1.038	269	393	212	390	136	549
Great Britain	1.487	3.919	2.202	4.204	1.296	2.571	1.251	2.539	289	4.071
France	288	488	851	1.068	423	601	301	409	151	875
Germany	734	4.517	3.598	7.211	2.941	8.413	2.750	8.730	716	6.279
Greece	1.578	187	513	554	114	155	37	63	13	287
Netherlands	84	157	317	632	993	342	278	505	99	850
Italy	1.089	2.427	1.429	1.945	1.512	2.320	1.938	2.595	175	6.365
Croatia	931	1.060	1.138	2.901	950	1.752	871	1.973	298	3.344
Montenegro	166	191	350	1.434	270	2.195	181	264	51	1.099
Macedonia	1.195	1.374	1.576	5.958	935	1.284	713	969	305	977
Poland	89	97	44	24	102	143	110	150	13	142
Serbia	250	233	578	446	558	705	515	708	195	1.074
USA	2.450	5.593	3.279	5.500	1.867	4.925	1.628	3.676	624	7.670
Albania	3.213	3.311	6.313	9.511	4.152	4.540	4.050	4.733	1.436	6.395
Slovenia	1.289	1.823	1.481	3.145	1.166	2.017	1.707	4.120	461	7.085
Spain	131	138	62	106	14	18	28	40	6	84
Turkia	1.694	2.099	3.098	5.559	2.184	5.796	2.028	3.116	853	8.627
Switzerland	1.452	2.325	1.245	1.808	471	822	1.061	1.962	256	2.157
Other places	6.140	16.559	6.408	21.416	13.629	36.614	10.147	27.279	6.265	31.792

Total:	24.616	46.910	36.318	76.043	34.382	76.394	30.349	65.584	48.790	90.968
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Source: State Statistical Office in Kosovo, 2017.

In table no. 7 are represented by the number of foreign tourists and by night stay by country from which they originate, for the period 2013-2017. According to these data, the most frequent tourists visiting Kosovo come from Albania, Germany, Great Britain, Turkey and Switzerland.

According to the data, the largest number of tourists in 2017 comes from the Republic of Albania, which has also spent more nights. In 2016, tourists are also the first in Albania with 4.050 tourists, but from a standpoint in the night, tourists are from the Germany with 8.730 night stays.

In 2015, in the first place are tourists from Albania with 4.152 tourists and 4.540 night stays. The list of order includes tourists from Germany, Turkey and Switzerland.

Marketing of tourist destination

Destination marketing is now considered as a pillar for future growth and sustainability of tourism destinations in an increasingly globalized and competitive market for tourists (UNWTO. (2011). Policy and Practice for Global Tourism. Madrid: UNWTO). This argument appears today as a central element of tourism research (Fyall, A., Garrod, B., & Wang, Y. (2012), Journal of Destination Marketing and Management), closely related to the operational activities undertaken from businesses with high competition in attracting visitors to localities. Despite the marketing efforts of destinations to market the product, sustainability is critical for all target actors due to the quality of supply throughout the tourist system (Jamrozy, U. (2007) Marketing of tourism: a paradigm shift toward sustainability, International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research). Destination marketing is considered as a strategic tourism management tool that should provide a balance between the stakeholders' objectives for sustainable development in the region and to guarantee the sustainability of destination resources.

Conclusions

Tourism is one of the most essential elements in the overall goals of a particular country, such as promoting the interests of its citizens, economic development and employment, regional development, managing cultural and natural heritage and strengthening the state identity of all citizens. Quality in tourism can contribute to sustainable development by improving the competitiveness of the business sphere, meeting the needs of society and preserving the environment in which we live and act. Being successful at the same time in all areas listed at the level of tourist destinations needed is a global approach that will focus on meeting the needs of tourists. Improving the quality of tourist destinations is an essential necessity for tourists, which would contribute to increasing competition in the tourism industry and ensuring the development of tourism in a balanced and sustainable way.

When it comes to tourists and guests, meeting the needs arising from staying in a particular tourist destination depends not only on the experience gained through a particular tourist service but also on general factors such as hospitality, security, sewage, traffic and tourists management. Most of these factors have a direct impact on the perception of tourists for the declared tourist destination, the level of satisfaction and readiness to return or recommend it to empower tourists.

The boundaries of tourist destinations are created by combining the political and administrative capacities of the country with the help of complex networking of internal and external participants.

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