

RECENT TRENDS CONCERNING THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL TOURISM

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Abstract

Tourism is one of the largest economic sectors in the world. The rapid development of international tourism arises from the diversification of tourist services, modernisation of the means of transportation, easier international travel and the increase of disposable income for tourists in emerging countries. This research offers a quantitative analysis regarding the current state of tourism with its trends and challenges. The study includes statistics from World Tourism Organization and Eurostat regarding the recent developments in the tourism sector. These statistics can help explain the forces that have driven the tourism sector to become such a major contributor to the world economy and what forces will drive it going forward.

Key words: *tourism, international tourism, tourism development, World Tourism Organization.*

JEL Classification: *Z30, Z32*

I. INTRODUCTION

The tourism sector has grown exponentially in the last decade. The increase of the available spare time, the tourism services and the competitive transport services have determined a positive evolution of the tourism sector (Brînză and Butnaru, 2020). The tourism sector is one of the most important and most developed socio-economic sectors, contributing to the present economic growth and helping millions of people to escape poverty and improve their standard of living (Baker, Bradley et.al 2002). The tourism sector has a considerable positive impact and contributes, directly and indirectly to the economic development of regions and countries. The most important positive economic effects are the contribution to foreign currency reserves, income and value added tax contributions, business opportunities and employment (Siscan, 2016)

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) estimated that the tourism sector has become one of the main sectors in international trade and is at the same time one of the main sources of income for many developing countries (UNWTO, 2020). In addition to being a source of economic income, the cultural exchange process between the host population and tourist visitors is often considered a potential source of social benefits (Armenski, Marković et al. 2011). Today's tourists are increasingly interested in art,

architecture and the experimentation of different cultures (Brînză and Butnaru, 2020).

International tourism is growing and this trend is more and more obvious. In a study UNWTO, through Tourism Towards 2030 Global Overview (2011), estimated that the total number of international arrivals will reach 1.4 billion in 2020 and reach 1.8 billion in 2030. This means an increase in absolute terms of 43 million tourists per year during the 2010-2020 period. Although these figures seemed optimistic in 2011, they were exceeded, and in 2019 there were 1.5 billion international arrivals (UNWTO Barometer, 2020).

This study is intended to contribute to a better understanding of recent history and trends in the tourism sector and the role of international institutions in promoting sustainable and beneficial tourism for both the tourist and the destination visited. The content of this article is structured in a concise manner, in the following sections: introduction, presentation of recent history and current statistics on tourism and a brief presentation of the main trends. The work ends with the section of conclusions and discussions regarding the present and future of the tourism sector.

II. STATISTICS IN INTERNATIONAL TOURISM

Both international and domestic tourism is rapidly growing in emerging countries (Gribincea, 2016). Thus, tourism has become the third sector in

terms of export value, after the petroleum and chemical products sectors. The magnitude of tourism in global trade is shown in table 1.

Table 1. Top five industries by export value

World	2015 (in billions USD)	2016	2017	2018
Fuels	1,799	1,476	1,976	2,408
Chemicals	1,844	1,816	1,985	2,237
International tourism (travel and transportation)	1,445	1,469	1,590	1,717
Automotive products	1,330	1,365	1,466	1,547
Food	1,330	1,352	1,474	1,532

Source: UNWTO Tourism Highlights (2019)

In 2019, tourist arrivals increased by about 4%, reaching up to 1.5 billion international arrivals. The largest increases were in the Middle East (+ 8%) and Asia-Pacific (+ 5%). In 2019 international arrivals grew by 4% in Europe, a slightly below average growth and negatively influenced by Brexit. In Americas this growth was lower, respectively 2%. In Africa, the increase in international arrivals was 4% (UNWTO World Barometer, 2020).

According to the statistical data provided by UNWTO (2019), international tourist arrivals in all regions have seen a visible increase over time (figure 1).

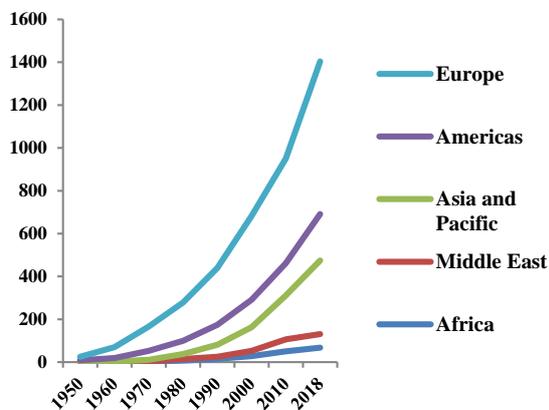


Figure 1 – International arrival between the years 1950-2018

The travel sector has evolved a lot, so in 1950 it registered a total of 25.2 million international tourist arrivals. In 1960, compared to 1950, the number of arrivals increased by 44.2 million, in 1970 against 1960 by 96.4 million, in 1980 against 1970 by 112.3 million, in 1990 against 1980 by 160.3 million, in 2000 compared to 1990 with 242.7 million, in 2010 compared to 2000 with 268.7 million and in 2018 compared to 2000 with 449.2 million.

By 2020, UNWTO has predicted an increase in international arrivals of about 3 to 4%, but as a result of the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, these

numbers are under question. Table 2 shows the outlook for International Tourist Arrivals.

Table 2. Outlook for International Tourist Arrivals on continents

	Change (%)				Average year (%)	2020 Projection (issued January 2020) from
	2016	2017	2018	2019		
World	3.8	7.2	5.6	3.8	5.1	3% - 4%
Europe	2.5	8.8	5.8	3.7	4.6	3% - 4%
Asia and Pacific	7.7	5.7	7.3	4.6	7.1	5% - 6%
Americas	3.7	4.7	2.4	2.0	4.6	2% - 3%
Africa	7.8	8.5	8.5	4.2	4.4	3% - 5%
Middle East	-4.7	4.1	3.0	7.6	2.7	4% - 6%

Source: UNWTO World Tourism Barometer (2020)

In 2019 Europe was the most visited region in the world. Within it, arrivals increased by 4% compared to 2018. The demand for travel was manifested in several regions of Europe, so in the southern part the most visited countries were Spain and Italy. In Western Europe the top destinations were France and Belgium. In Asia and the Pacific, arrivals increased by 5% The solid growth is mainly due to China, the Republic of Korea and Australia. Tourist arrivals in America increased by 2%, due to South and Central America. In the Middle East there is a strong increase of international arrivals, with 7.6% year over year. However, the results obtained in 2019 come after several years of modest growth, caused by fears about personal safety. Figure 2 shows the international tourist arrivals by region according to their level of contribution.

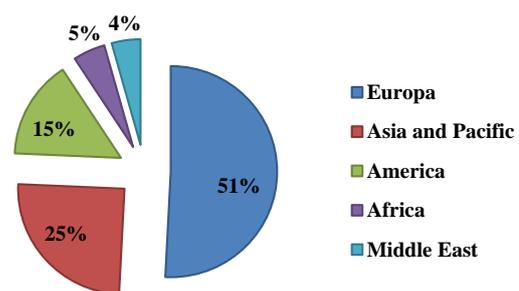


Figure 2 – International tourist arrivals in 2019, by regions

The development of tourism has been largely facilitated by new and better means of transportation. According to UNWTO (2019), the most frequent transportation for tourists is by air (57%). Car transportation is in the second position (37%), followed by naval (4%) and rail (2%).

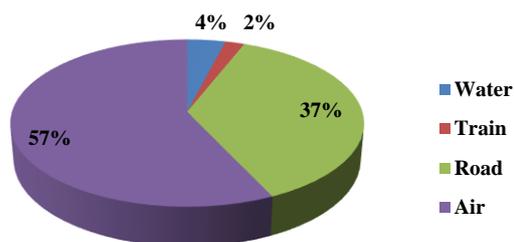


Figure 3 – International arrivals by the means of transportation

The development of international tourism was also facilitated by the relaxation of the visa regime. If in 1980, 75% of the world's population needed a visa to visit the desired destination, this percentage dropped to 53% in 2018 (UNWTO, 2019). This is shown in Figure 4.

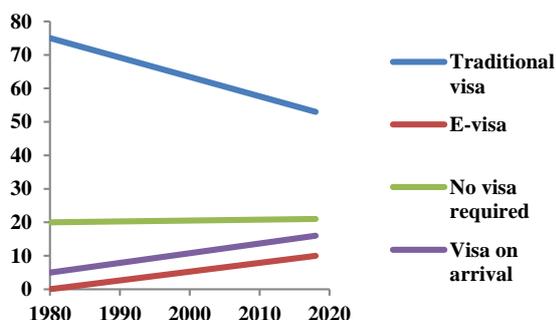


Figure 4 – Share of population affected by visa regime

Tourism, through its role and content is constantly evolving but people have continued to travel. According to Eurostat, more than 60% of the residents of the European Union (EU) made at least one trip in 2017, and one of the factors that underpinned the development of tourism is the increase of population incomes, which allows people to travel. In figure 5 we show the average number of trips per tourist.

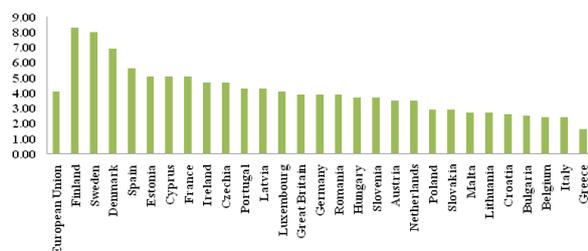


Figure no. 5 – Average number of trips per tourist (above 15 years old), EU28, 2017

One of the main strengths of the spectacular growth of international tourism has been the increase of

disposable income in many countries. However, it is worth mentioning that, for the year 2018, at EU level more than 50% of the people in Romania have stated that they cannot afford a vacation of at least one week. By comparison, in some northern European countries like Sweden only about 10% of the population has the same problem. This is shown in Figure 6.

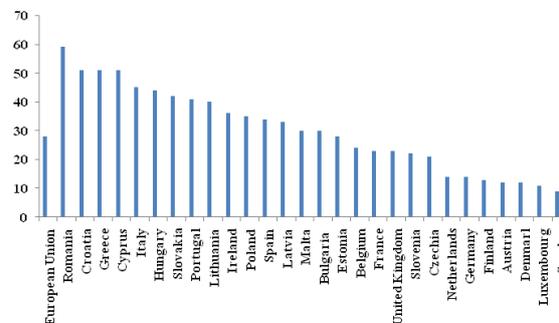


Figure 6 - Share of the EU population unable to afford paying for one week annual holiday, 2018 (%)

According to Eurostat data (2016), the number of employees in the tourism industry in the EU was over 13 million, the number of female employees being higher than those of males. 13% of the employees in the tourism industry were young workers, while 9% of the young people were employed in the field of services and non-financial economy. The demand for jobs is an essential priority of each country, thus, in Greece 23.9% of the number of people employed were in the tourism industry, while in Poland this percentage is much lower - only 4, 1% (Figure 7).

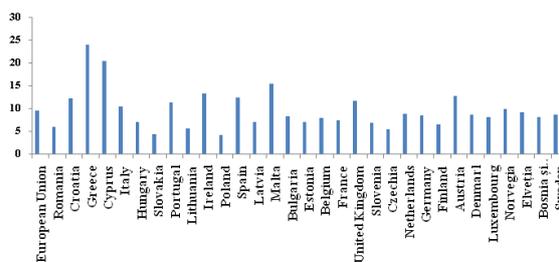


Figure 7 - Persons employed in total tourism industries as share of those employed in total non-financial business economy, 2016 (%)

In a study at the EU level, financial concerns were the most frequently reported reasons for not traveling. The highest weight was recorded in Greece (75%), Portugal (66%) and Croatia (62%). Lack of interest or motivation to travel was a common reason in Sweden (60%), Slovakia (57%) and Portugal (53%), followed by Belgium (44%), Austria (38%), Germany and Finland (both 35%). In the Czech Republic (40%) and Germany (39%) health problems were the main reasons for not traveling. Work or study commitments were most frequently mentioned in Portugal (31%),

Belgium, Germany and Austria (all 25%). Figure 8 shows the main reasons for not going on a tourist trip.

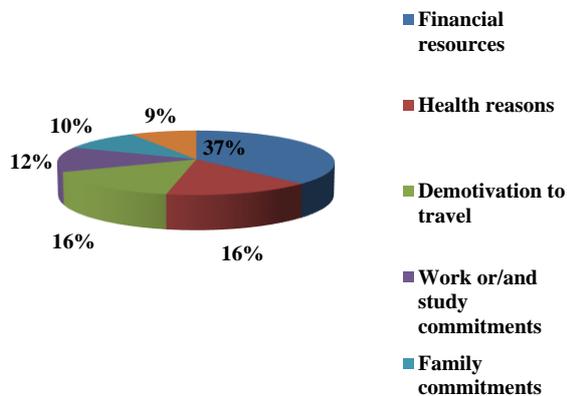


Figure 8 - Main reasons not to travel, EU study 2015 (% of the population 15 years or over)

The development of tourism also takes into account the evolution of touristic units with accommodation function. Thus, a significant increase of the nights spent in the tourist accommodation structures in the EU is observed. Starting with 2009, there is a constant increase in the number of nights spent in the tourist accommodation units in the EU, especially due to the nights spent by the non-residents of the visited country. According to the statistical data provided by Eurostat (2019) regarding the nights spent in the tourist accommodation structures within the EU28 for the period 2000-2018, Spain recorded a number of 467 million nights, (-0.9%) compared to 2017, France 444 million (+ 2.4%), Italy 429 million (+ 1.9%) and Germany 419 million (+ 4.3%). However, the number of nights spent in tourist accommodation units in 2018 increased in almost all member states, with considerable increases being registered in Latvia (+ 8.3%), Lithuania (+ 7.7%) and Malta (+ 6.5 %), followed by Poland (+ 5.8%), Romania (+ 5.5%) and Belgium (+ 5.4%). In contrast, there were decreases in Luxembourg (-4.3%) and Ireland (-1.5%). Figure 9 shows the number of nights spent in the accommodation structures of residents and non-residents in the period 2000 - 2018.

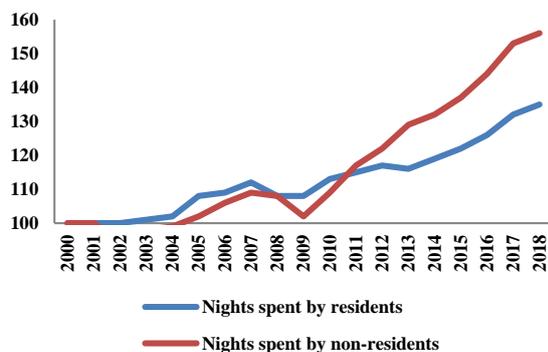


Figure 9 - The evolution of the nights spent in the tourist accommodation structures of the EU28 in the period 2000-2018

According to Eurostat (2019) more than half (58%) of the total nights spent by non-residents in the EU were recorded in Spain, Italy and France. In 2018, there were 301 million nights spent in tourist accommodation units or 23% of the total EU. A percentage of 64% of EU residents made at least one personal tourist trip in 2018. Figure 10 shows the nights spent in tourist accommodation units for the year 2018 in, depending on the tourist destination.

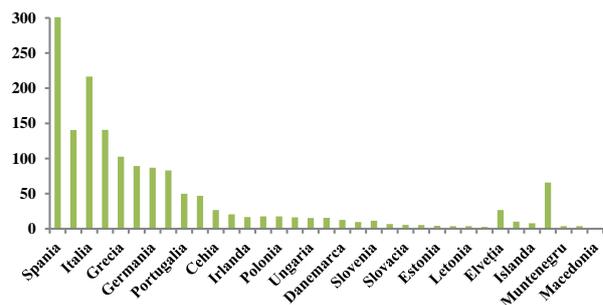


Figure 10 - Nights spent in tourist accommodation units in the EU28 in 2018

The development of tourism can also be measured by the number of tourist accommodation units in a certain region. Among the countries with the largest number of hotels and similar accommodation units are: Germany, Italy, Spain, France, Austria and Greece (Eurostat, 2018, 2019). Table 3 presents all the accommodation units for each region. In general, at the EU28 level, the number of hotels and similar accommodation units has stagnated in the last two years, but it can be observed that in the less developed regions of the EU28 there is an upward trend in the number of hotels (ex: Romania, Hungary, Poland, Croatia, etc.).

Table 3. Hotels and similar accommodations

Country	Total number of hotels and similar accommodations, 2017	Total number of hotels and similar accommodations, 2018
EU-28	201522	201676
Belgium	1517	1536
Bulgaria	2110	2102
Czechia	5967	6277
Denmark	559	565
Germany	32749	32433
Estonia	422	418
Ireland	-	-
Greece	9772	9910
Spain	19630	19657
France	18424	18090
Croatia	1037	1065
Italy	32988	32898
Cyprus	794	800
Latvia	349	342
Lithuania	411	387
Luxembourg	225	-

Hungary	2184	2357
Malta	183	194
Netherlands	3636	3760
Austria	12153	12003
Poland	4064	4179
Portugal	2538	2407
Romania	2766	2867
Slovenia	698	-
Slovakia	1471	1599
Finland	787	788
Sweden	2025	2057
UK	-	-

Source: Eurostat (2018, 2019)

The development of tourism can also be measured by analyzing the proportion of the incomes generated by international travel in relation to GDP. In 2016, the highest share of GDP in tourism revenues at the EU level was generated by: Croatia (18.6%), Cyprus (13.7%) and Malta (13.2%). The highest incomes from international tourism were registered in Spain, France, the United Kingdom, Italy and Germany. The highest level of net tourism income was achieved by Spain and the highest level of international tourism spending was recorded by Germany, which also recorded the largest deficit (-38267 million euros), followed by the United Kingdom. (-20983 million) (see data provided in table 4).

Table 4. Balance of payments for the tourism sector, 2016

Country	Income (millions euro)		Spending (millions euro)		Balance (2016)
	2011	2016	2011	2016	
EU-28	86767	112299	87031	99054	13246
Belgium	9154	10492	14804	17614	-7122
Bulgaria	2669	3285	647	1227	2.058
Czechia	5822	5703	3435	4447	1256
Denmark	4887	6373	7209	8283	-1910
Germany	27930	33818	61686	72085	-38267
Estonia	897	1345	579	1048	297
Ireland	3010	4685	4817	5619	-934
Greece	1050	13207	2266	2006	11201
Spain	44711	54660	12493	17437	37223
France	39334	38301	32029	36464	1837
Croatia	6608	8627	632	853	7774
Italy	30891	36358	20584	22547	13811
Cyprus	1835	2489	942	1061	1428
Latvia	553	783	549	628	155

Lithuania	943	1090	616	913	177
Luxembourg	3497	3669	2715	2545	1124
Hungary	4243	5121	1781	1954	3167
Malta	911	1307	239	369	938
Netherlands	9230	12697	14836	16336	-3639
Austria	14267	17400	7531	8799	8601
Poland	7680	9908	6055	7204	2704
Portugal	8146	12680	2974	3849	8831
Romania	1019	1568	1408	1930	-362
Slovenia	1974	2190	818	854	1337
Slovakia	1745	2483	1567	2023	460
Finland	2745	2467	3502	4692	-2225
Sweden	7316	11407	10048	13083	-1676
UK	27610	37413	40065	58396	-20983

Source: Eurostat (2017)

III. CONCLUSIONS

Over time, the tourism activity has grown a lot, becoming one of the main components of the world economy. The evolution of tourism is due to the influence of economic, social, demographic and political factors. International tourism developed due to the increase of income in the emerging countries, the expansion of travel habits, the change of population preferences, as well as the progress in the field of transportation, people's desires to visit new countries, to learn about other civilizations, cultures, customs, as well as to gain new experiences.

International organizations, such as UNWTO, have the role of contributing to the development of a sustainable tourism sector. Their actions can have economic scopes (increase of income, diversification of activities, enhancing of development), social scopes (poverty alleviation, protection of the cultural and social heritage) and ecologic scopes (protection and conservation of the biodiversity).

Tourism should be encouraged and supported by authorities and institutions. Tourism has the potential to contribute to employment and the development of rural and underdeveloped areas. Moreover, tourism can bring in external revenues, contributing to the development of the national economy. Given these characteristics, it is necessary for the phenomenon of tourism to be understood. This research attempts this.

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