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IV INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND PRACTICAL CONFERENCE «TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY: CURRENT STATE AND DEVELOPMENT TRENDS»

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содержит материалы IV Международной научно-практической Книга конференции «Туризм и индустрия гостеприимства: современное состояние и тенденции развития» по тематикам «Мировая практика туризма: тенденции и приоритеты», «Инновационные подходы к развитию внутреннего и въездного туризма», «Актуальные направления развития индустрии гостеприимства», «Молодежь: повседневная жизнь, общественное настроение, культура досуга», «Актуальные социальные технологии в "обществе знаний"». Для публикации наиболее теоретическими были отобраны работы актуальными исследованиями, практическими результатами инновационной И направленностью.

Для исследователей, преподавателей, аспирантов и студентов, практических работников образовательных и социальных учреждений и общественных организаций.

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Часть 1

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RESPONSE OF THE SERBIAN TOURISM POLICY CREATORS TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract. Tourism policy includes all measures, instruments and mechanisms of direct or indirect state influence on the tourism economy, with the aim of growth and development, improvement of competitiveness and successful positioning of a country's tourism on the international market. Effective and consistent tourism policy in regular, or flexible tourism policy in the period of crisis is a prerequisite for the tourism development. The aim of the paper is to present to the academic community the challenges facing the tourism policy of the Republic of Serbia during the Covid-19 pandemic, but also to propose measures to help and support the development of Serbian tourism in the coming period. By studying the relevant literature and using secondary data in the paper, valid conclusions about the researched issue are drawn.

Keywords: tourism policy, tourism economy, Covid-19 pandemic

INTRODUCTION

Tourism policy is "the starting point of the thought process in tourism" [4, p. 29]. The thought process in tourism begins and ends with tourism policy. Tourism policy implies any form of state interventionism in tourism. In particular, it is the activity of the state consciously aimed at activating all economic and non-economic functions of tourism [5], i.e., tourism policy means the attitude of the state towards tourism.

Until recently, tourism policy in the Republic of Serbia was not given adequate importance. According to Ubavić [4], "tourism has not been a serious topic of the development policy of the Republic of Serbia" (p. 24). Consequently, the level of development of the tourism sector was not at the satisfactory level due to the

previously inadequate, short-term, spontaneous and ineffective tourism policy of the Republic of Serbia. In recent years, progress has been made, such as the introduction of tourist vouchers for subsidized vacations in the country and financial incentives for investments in the hotel industry, where the transformation of the political attitude towards tourism is of particular importance.

In view of the abovementioned, the aim of the paper is to point out the importance of tourism policy and the challenges it faces during the Covid-19 pandemic, using the example of the Republic of Serbia. The intention is to present the response of tourism policy makers to the pandemic, but also to propose future direct and indirect measures to support the development of Serbian tourism.

THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON TOURISM ACTIVITY IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

The Covid-19 pandemic is a health-economic crisis of global proportions [2] that has left strong consequences for the world economy for the third consecutive year. Among economic activities, tourism [1] showed particular sensitivity, due to the imposed travel restrictions and the fact that tourism activities satisfy higher-level needs. The tourism of the Republic of Serbia itself did not resist the impact of the pandemic, as evidenced by the following data [6]: 1) the share of tourism in the GDP of the country decreased from 5.9% in 2019 to 3.7% in 2020, i.e. 3, 6% in 2021; 2) the share of tourism in total employment decreased from 6.3% (137.6 thousand employees) in 2019 to 5.5% (121.2 thousand employees) in 2020, i.e. 5.4% (123.3 thousand employees) in 2021; 3) in 2020, there were 51% fewer arrivals and 38% fewer overnight stays of tourists compared to 2019, while in 2021, a slight increase in tourist traffic was recorded (Figures 1 and 2).

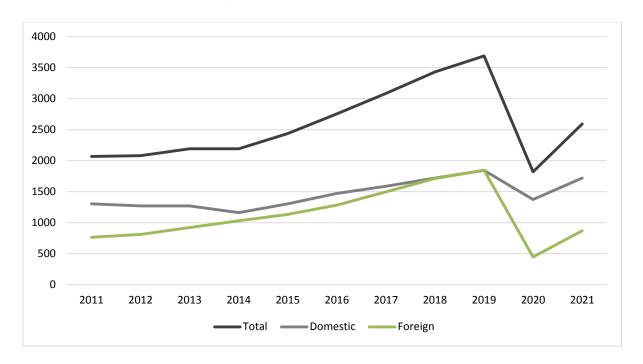


Fig. 1. Tourist arrivals in the Republic of Serbia 2011-2021, in thousands *Source:* Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Serbia, 2014, 2018, 2020, 2021

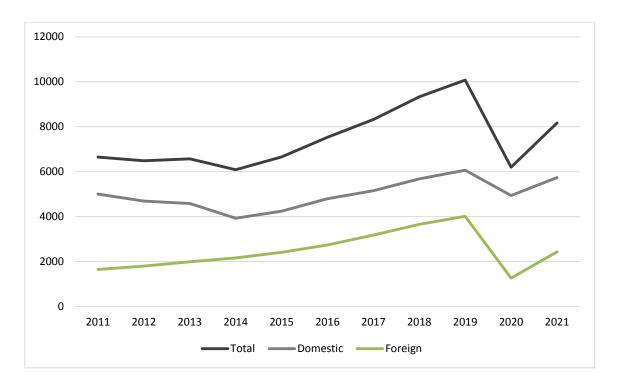


Fig. 2. Overnight stays of tourists in the Republic of Serbia 2011-2021, in thousands. *Source:* Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Serbia, 2014, 2018, 2020, 2021

The presented data unambiguously indicate the negative impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the tourism industry of the Republic of Serbia, which would have been even stronger if the state had not taken measures to support the tourism sector, which will be discussed below.

THE RESPONSE OF THE TOURISM POLICY MAKERS AND THE PROPOSAL OF FUTURE MEASURES TO SUPPORT THE TOURISM SECTOR

In order to mitigate the negative impact of the pandemic and provide support to the tourism sector, the following tourism policy measures have been taken in the Republic of Serbia:

- granting favorable loans to tourist companies (5-year repayment term, 2-year grace period and 1% interest rate);
- payment of the minimum wage for employees in tourism;
- financial support for workers who lost their jobs in the tourism sector;
- approval of additional 400,000 tourist vouchers (total of 560,000 vouchers) in 2020 with an individual value of 5,000 RSD;
- increasing the value of tourist vouchers from 5,000 to 15,000 dinars. and the approval of 300,000 value-added vouchers in 2022;
- approval of subsidies to hotels (350 euros per bed and 150 euros per accommodation unit in 2020);
- subsidies for the organized visits of groups of guests from the country and abroad;
- introduction of replacement travel;

- issuance of "safe travel" and "clean and safe" certificates and labels.

In addition to the abovelisted measures to support tourism development, for the future improvement of tourist infrastructure and superstructure, it is important to: simultaneously increase the level of public and private investments in tourism (domestic and foreign), improve the business and investment climate, create an investment catalog and promote investment opportunities in tourism, organize tourism-related investment conferences, determine financial incentives for investment in the tourism sector. Also, the opportunity for accelerated development of tourism should be sought in more intensive cooperation between the public and private sectors (public-private partnership), the reduction of the VAT rate in tourism from 20% to 10% and the reduction of the tax on the profits of tourist companies.

CONCLUSION

Tourism policy is a variable category that does not have a universal character. The above means that tourism policy changes over time with changing circumstances (economic, social, political), as well as that there is no universal tourism policy for all countries, but that each country, taking into account its comparative advantages, specificities and differences, should design its own, customized tourism policy.

Tourism policy is especially important in crisis conditions such as the current Covid-19 pandemic. Thanks to the tourism policy measures taken, the negative effects of the pandemic on the tourism industry of the Republic of Serbia have been mitigated, thus creating the conditions for a faster recovery of tourism in the post-Covid period. A carefully designed, future-oriented tourism policy based on comparative and competitive advantages is a prerequisite for tourism development.

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