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AGROTOURISM AS A GENERATOR OF REGION DEVELOPMENT

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Summary

Agrotourism is a part of contemporary tourism and presents an essential factor of rural tourism in a rural environment, including all activities that occur with respect to tourism. It is based on the competitive advantage of the area, tradition, specificity of agriculture and people. The totality of these elements makes a complete tourist product, which provides the following services to the tourists: accommodation, rest on the farm, also various specific agricultural contents: getting the children acquainted with the farm animals, the presence during agricultural works, food production: bread, wine, brandy, food for winter, collecting medicinal herbs, tea, mushrooms, snails, as well as adventurous contents: riding, driving in horse-drawn carriages, teaching traditional crafts: production of cloth (weaving), crochet, embroidery, production of tools and similar. What is essential for an agricultural destination is its uniqueness and distinctiveness with regard to the competition. Bosnia and Herzegovina is very specific for it offers many different contents on a geographically narrow area which can be combined into a tourist product. As it becomes more attractive tourist destination, neglected agriculture is a factor that can significantly support the development of tourism in the entire region.

Key words: *tourism, agrotourism, rural tourism, agricultur*

Actuality of Bosnia and Herzegovina for tourism in the region

The geographical location of Bosnia and Herzegovina (and RS) in the region is very favorable for the development of tourism, especially the rural one. As the agro-tourism is a generator for rural tourism development, the image of BiH² is determined by its elements, in particular the following ones: a healthy environment and still untouched nature, unexhausted land that is able to provide a source of healthy food for a longer period of time, diversity of

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2 In further work, we will use usual abbreviations:BiH-Bosnia and Herzegovina and RS-Republic of Srpska.

climate, terrain, demographics, historical factors in a small space, as well as the gastronomy and the genuine hospitality of the people³. All these factors are the key factors of the interest for a modern tourist, which provide perspective and increased interest of tourists to the region. The data show an increasing movement of tourists towards the Balkan region, and predictions of global tourism trends fully support this tendency.

The advantages of global trends and global changes are evident and positive when it comes to tourism and agrotourism: the economy is becoming "world category", so we, like it or not, become a part thereof. The high degree of development of information technologies and their applications in agriculture, agribusiness and tourism, the transition processes in the region where we belong, breaking the barriers that previously separated some countries, are the processes that lead to the opening of our region to the world. Tourist market has become a "world one" in all respects and for all kinds of activities, namely tourism has become the largest factor in breaking the limits: historical, ethnic, cultural, religious, demographic ones. Such an orientation is confirmed by the datum that since 1950 until the end of 20th century (ie. for 50 years!), the number of international travel increased by 20 times, while the income from tourism increased by about 140 times.

Obvious movement of tourists toward underdeveloped countries of Asia and Australia, as well as loss of interest for the tourist offer in Europe and America in the last century. Designers of the management processes need to see this causes of the shift, and on the basis of this research to create a future tourist policy and tourism development of their countries. Comparison with these countries, discovering our competitive advantages and converting them into attractive tourist products is the main task of local managers and all other stakeholders of tourism. In this process, very important is that many benefits of globalization do not reflect negatively on tourism in developing regions, as noted in Milocers Economic Forum, 2008, because: „*Putting on global uniforms is not the only chance for small countries*“.⁴

Internationalization and globalization as the factors of development of agrotourism in BiH

Internationalization is the model, method, goal, necessity, and a fad in the business of modern economy. Tourism in these processes is leading due to several obvious indicators of internationalism: today's citizens and tourists are very well-informed, broadly educated, highly mobile, work less and have more free time. Modern tourists go on holiday more often, stay on holiday for a shorter period of time, are more concerned about health and require more contents during the holidays. Average citizen – tourist in BiH also “suffers” from these characteristics, which makes him a part of the global tourism system, which facilitates understanding of the changed interests of tourists, according to which tourist policy in the region should be

3 Even famous Bosnian writers Mesa Selimovic and Ivo Andric wrote about the specificities of a man from this area, who receives guests with pleasure.

4 Milocerski ekonomski forum 2008, Kuća štampe plus, Zemun, p. 343-353.

directed. The economy of Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot survive or develop in isolation and without linkage to the region and international organizations that offer a range of benefits and advantages, such as the OECD, UNWTO and the European Union. In them there is business security, which is crucial on otherwise uncertain tourist market. These organizations offer a range of other benefits and aid in business: the maximum economic growth in a sustainable manner, creating opportunities to increase employment in member countries, a variety of other ways to raise the living standards of each member country, promoting and encouraging economic development of new members, improvement of working conditions in tourist industry.. However, we live in a space and time of limiting factors of internationalization, which means that we cannot just wait for its advantages, but we must look for other mitigating and accessible elements of international business. Cross-border cooperation with neighboring countries in the Balkan region, linking of complementary economies and tourist potential and creation of a unique tourist product in the region, are the ways that the countries of the region become a system, destination, location or tourist product that appears on the global tourist market. Creation of unique and entire tourist product ie. destination, is the cheapest way that small countries in the region sell their attractiveness, distinctiveness and diversity. It is wrong to wait for the effects of globalization and internationalization, because tourism is an area where much can be done independently of the major countries and systems, just insisting on the diversity, uniqueness and isolation. Globalization, like any other process, brings someone a benefit and someone a detriment. Users of tourist offer enjoy in it: they have a wide range of offer, lowest prices, best service. Capable producers also enjoy: they have access to world consumers have easier access to foreign funds, effectively allocate their products on global markets. States easier perform on the world market, globalization does not diminish their power, only leaves them less room for error, which, often, smaller countries do not understand. Besides mentioned advantages, it is necessary to point to several negative consequences of internationalization and globalization, to which attention should be paid by designers of management processes in tourism of our region: the polarization of the rich and the poor, the prevalence of large international companies, the loss of individuality and fitting into the broader code of conduct from the economy to politics. However, small and underdeveloped countries in transition can create their own tourism policy by insisting on the separation and isolation, ie. a diversity which has become a huge competitive advantage in modern tourism. Along with a sound and unused nature, agricultural resources, the gifts of nature such as spas, beautiful rivers, mountains, villages and towns rich in history and culture, and special people, they can be fully competitive in the global market. Problem in this process is that the eyes of most small countries in the world are focused on the magic attraction of the small number of highly developed and technologically advanced countries and because the strategy of their politicians is only one: "We want to go with you, accept us."

Agrotourism as the generator of tourism development

Agrotourism is a part of tourism which is closely related to agriculture and agricultural production. Therefore it is a necessary part of rural tourism in which agrotourist offer is fundamental: food on the farm estate, attending various events around the food

production, accommodation in traditional buildings, and all of this in every village or rural setting is original, authentic, unique. In this environment, the customer is not just a number, or a room key, but part of family communication, friendship, he goes hunting, participates in the production of food and drinks, gets acquainted with domestic and wild animals and becomes a player in a variety of religious and folk events. Guest participate in making various items of work in the traditional way or in the works that represent each area: the old crafts, garment manufacturing, weaving, crochet, sewing, knitting, canning production, brandy, wine, and the like. The guests on the farm have the opportunity to learn, to socialize, to feed on the original product, also to buy them and and carry them home. In addition to explore the surrounding destinations, rich cultural and historical contents, use of religious sites, health, sports tourism, the customer has the opportunity to experience the full atmosphere of travel, to take it with him and to remember it, and to recommend it. And this is the point in rural tourism and agrotourism as its basic part.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, for this type of tourism has all the resources: fertile lowlands (Lijevce and Popovo Polje), a plateau for all types of cattle-breeding (Livno, Glamočko, Nevesinjsko polje), the world-known tourist recognized rivers (Una, Vrbas⁵, Bosna, Drina, Neretva, Tara, and Trebisnjica), famous spas (Laktasi Kulasi, Seher, Mljecanica Teslic, Slatina, Kiseljak, and Rogatica). If we add to these gifts of nature the world-famous center of sports tourism (Jahorina⁶, Bjelasnica, Kupres, Vlasic, Kozara), famous centers of religious tourism (Medjugorje, St. Ivo, birthplace of St. Vasilije Ostroski), we can conclude that we live in a region of great tourist potential of agrotourist and tourist potentials.

However, agriculture and rural tourism are low productive areas, from the standpoint of capital, and it is necessary to find less expensive options for inclusion in the processes of regional tourism and the wider tourism offer. The path to integration leads through networking with the similar or completely different, in order the offer to be packed into one complete system of offer at a certain location, where the clusters are one of the possible and very acceptable models⁷. The advantages of linking or networking are: cheaper creation of target groups, improvement of productivity and lower costs of promotion, advertising, brand. Further benefits of linking are better division of labor among organizations dealing with rural tourism and better allocation of human resources in terms of expertise and competence. Clusters are able to facilitate: lobbying in the authorities at the local and state level, in international organizations and financial institutions, can facilitate the access to modern knowledge and experience without investigating what has already been investigated but to use experiences from the environment. Competition is, in a system

5 In May 2009, on the Vrbas, the World Championship in rafting on Wild Waters was held.

6 On Jahorina and Bjelasnica, Winter Olympic Games were held in 1984.

7 In the R. of Croatia there are the clusters but also other forms of networking supported by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fishing Industry and Rural development, providing the funds from IPARD program for accomplishment of the rural development plan 2007-2013. [http:// www.hgk/ wps/portal/15.04.2010](http://www.hgk/wps/portal/15.04.2010). In R. Of Serbia, there are positive experiences in cluster formation in wood industry which should be used in BiH.

of clusters, specific and represents a delicate mix of rivalry and cooperation, and basic values of collaboration are: trust, team spirit, transparency and cooperation in the interest of greater profit, regardless of the competition. High-quality enterprises cooperation within the cluster reduces transaction costs and further increases the competitiveness of each enterprise, villages, agricultural sites and tourist destinations.

For small, transitional and underdeveloped countries, such as the Balkans region countries, important is also social capital, or social entrepreneurship, which has been emphasized by Drucker (1992), giving it a number of advantages over traditional entrepreneurship. The need for social businesses arises from the inability and the incapacity of many governments to, through the humanitarian activities, meet social expectations and improve the standard of the majority of population. Social entrepreneurship is a combination of best-practices of profit and non-profit sectors, where very important is the role of entrepreneurs whose characteristics are creativity, innovation and willingness to risk, and not profit. Therefore, the aim of this entrepreneurship is creating new social values, and if they accomplish more or less profit no one takes it but it is used to achieve the mission of social entrepreneurship which is opening of new work places and employment of disadvantaged groups. In order to accomplish this mission, very important is a key figure - the entrepreneur, who must have the positive personality traits: a passion for business, focus on product and consumer, perseverance despite failure, executive intelligence and innovation, creativity and willingness to take risks, along with a rich and modern management practices.

So, in order that BiH tourism (and tourism in our region) is being developed in these directions and to follow mentioned (favorable) global and international trends, it is necessary to create a new tourism policy that will cover some important novelties such as:

- To develop a strategy for tourism development and rural tourism at the level of the States⁸,
- State action in terms of networking, training of tourist managers, lending, promotions and branding, strengthening rural infrastructure and social entrepreneurship,
- Using positive experiences from neighbouring countries (Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia).

By these measures of the state, rural tourism would be tied to agrotourism and would become not only complementary but the main activity, which would change the entire ambience of village life and thereby the village would become a new tourist destination. Some improvements in the functioning of the state are on the horizon, which is supported by the data on increasing agricultural production in RS, return to the village, reviving agriculture and arranging of old traditional houses for accommodation. Ethno villages, resorts, sports facilities,

8 Republic of Srpska in 2010 completed the Tourism Development Strategy. New Act on Tourism was passed, Strategy of Rural Tourism Development was made.

hiking and biking trails, rafting and other forms of tourism are being developed and have the perspective to network tourist offer and create sustainable development for a longer period. There are some incentives for the development of agriculture and opening of access to EU funds, and keeping the favorable policies in terms of breaking the political barriers (visa regimes, customs, etc.). With these measures of the state, along with other complementary forms of tourism: health, religious, adventure, sports, the agrotourism becomes a generator of growth in all forms, because no matter what the future tourists will put to the forefront: holiday, fun, adventure, entertainment, recreation, sport he must first meet the basic material needs (food, drink, accommodation), and there is a chance of agrotourism.

Additionally, it is necessary to recognize the importance of training of staff for the needs of tourism that will recognize these global trends in tourism and agro-tourism and direct all the actors of tourism in this direction. Since the development of information and other technologies has created unexpected communication opportunities for expansion of knowledge, which quickly becomes obsolete, it is necessary to work on its modernization, and in particular to work on the concept of constant life-long education. It is therefore necessary to change the cultural environment of education, in order to reach an educational system that can respond to demands of modern tourist trends, which are much more dynamic than in other areas.

Conclusion

Knowledge management in the tourist sector should fight that knowledge is put in the necessary place that it becomes a key resource and the evaluation criterion, because only in this way we will have safer future and more open world. It is possible to go along this path only if educational institutions come closer to organizations that educate the staff, if a close and fruitful collaboration between them is created⁹. Therefore, it is necessary to redesign the education system, which needs to adapt to modern trends and demands of tourism, which apparently is going to strengthen rural tourism, agrotourism and complementary forms of tourism, or in the direction of the return of a man to "mother-nature" and natural unity with it.

As mass tourism has not been accepted in the third world countries, it is considered to be destructive and a new form of colonialism which destroyed their culture and values, rural tourism can be only real alternative. Along with it, there is agrotourism as its integral part, as a generator and connection of all other forms of tourism. It is important that people realize that the small-scale rural tourism has smaller and limited benefits. For longer time it will be an additional source of income, and only with time it can become the dominant economic activity, which will, perhaps, keep it from the superpowers that turn everything into "mass" and "global". Agrotourism is the area of originality, authenticity and diversity of each locality, region or destination and it should be insisted on that in the fight against the negative elements of globalization.

9 Here also we see progress in BiH: stimulation of the state for return to village, benefits in agriculture and opening of Faculties for Tourism in several cities of BiH.

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