

Inbound Tourism in some European Countries

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Abstract

Contemporary society is more and more service-oriented, with more and more opinions claiming that it is a service society, with a steadily increasing tertiary sector. Tourism has become one of the most important economic activities due to the income from European tourists. It is also one of the main sources of jobs in many countries. Though Romania has an extraordinary tourism potential, tourism services it supplies and high prices compared to the quality of the services have not turned Romania into one of the most desirable places to go to in Europe; therefore, income from tourism are much lower than income from tourism in Hungary, The Czech Republic, Poland, or Bulgaria.

Keywords: arrivals, Europe, incomes, tourists.

1. Introduction*

Tourism market is very sensitive, and tourism demand is determined by both market forces (fluctuations, conjectures, offer, and distribution of tourism products) and the numerous exogenous factors with no direct link to tourism and whose impact is determining.

Compared to other economic sectors, tourism has a number of features resulted from both general policies and tourism establishments' management. The policies should take into account numerous exogenous variables such as demographic and social mutations, economic and financial situation of tourist-source countries, variations of foreign currency, politic, legislative, and regulating mutations, technological progress, evolution of commercial relationships, transport infrastructure, travellers' safety, and environmental protection. Among these policies, the most important are demographics, sojourn duration, holiday rationing, and market segmentation [1, 2].

The evolution in time of the demographic and social structure in the developed countries is a determining factor of tourism demand increase. Specialists estimate that the age group 35-45 years that benefit from rather high incomes will have the quickest growth, which is favourable to tourism expansion. The age group above 65 years that benefit from rather high incomes and from lots of spare time allows a prolongation of the tourism season beyond holiday periods. This phenomenon is an important phenomenon in industrialised countries.

As for the duration of the paid vacations, there are high differences between European countries, ranging between 15 days in Norway and 8 weeks in France. One of the consequences of prolonging vacation duration is their fractioning, particularly when the vacation is longer than 4 weeks. Fractioning and multiplying vacations lead to mutations on the tourism market, which asks for the development of new tourism products to meet the demands of each tourist segment. Tourists are more and more interested in the traditional rest and holiday tourism with the family: this is why tourism development should adapt to the new market conditions.

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2. Materials and methods

Services mean human activities with specialised content resulting in useful immaterial, intangible effects destined to meet social needs. At the same time, services are self-content activities, autonomous in the process of deepening of social division of labour and are organised distinctly in the tertiary sector of which tourism, whose services are not pure ones due to their complex feature, is part. This is why, after documenting data from the National Institute of Statistics and of the World Tourism Organisation, as well as information from other sources, we have studied the number of tourists and the income from tourism activities in a few European countries, establishing a top of the preferred destinations and of the preferences for a certain city or entertainment park.

3. Results and discussion

Tourism services should, due to their content, ensure active rest of the tourist, a component that is more and more important in the life of humans particularly after the shortening of the week days and with the increase of the spare time; at the same time, it is a modern and efficient way of relaxation, of treatment of negative health states because of unfavourable conditions and of nervous breakdown. To do so, tourism managers should diversify traditional agreement to increase tourism activities attractiveness by developing tourism holidays with multiple active rest choices. The countries that have diversified their tourism offer by supplying special products in 2009 had a higher number of visitors and obtained significant income from tourism activities [3, 4].

Romania attracts five times less foreign tourists than Bulgaria and obtains three times less money from tourism, the differences being even higher if compared with other countries such as Hungary, The Czech Republic, or Poland.

Foreign visitors in Romanian accommodation structures reached 1.275 billion US \$, and the payment balance in tourism points out 1.2 million US \$ for 2009.

Bulgaria was visited, during the same period of time, by 5.739 billion tourists who spent 3.72 million US \$, while Hungary was visited by 9 million foreign visitors who spent 5.63 billion US \$.

The Czech Republic managed to attract, due to its tourism products, in 2010, 6 million tourists, gaining from this tertiary activity 6.5 billion US \$. Croatia cashed in 8.88 billion US \$ from the 9.3 million foreign tourists, while Poland cashed in 9 billion US \$ from its 11.89 million foreign tourists during the same period of time.

France was the most visited European country with 74.2 million foreign tourists, who spent in this country 49.4 billion US \$.

Over 52 million tourists visited Spain and spent there 53.0 billion US \$, while Italy cashed in 40.25 billion US \$ from 43.2 million foreign visitors in the same period.

Austria welcomed, in 2009, over 21 million tourists who spent 19.4 billion US \$.

Greece consolidated its economy with 14.5 billion US \$ due to the about 15 million foreign tourists who visited it.

Ireland and Belgium attracted 7 million foreign tourists each and cashed in 4.9 and 9.8 billion US \$, respectively.

Holland cashed in over 12 billion US \$ from over 10 million foreign visitors in 2009.

Sweden cashed in 10 billion US \$ from 4.8 million foreign tourists during the same tourist year [6].

Switzerland, due to its tourism products, managed to persuade 8.3 million foreign tourists to visit it and cashed in from them 14 billion US \$.

With the present economic crisis, 42% of the Romanian gave up the idea of spending their holidays, while other 26% chose to spend their holidays abroad. The countries preferred by these 26% Romanian tourists are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Holiday destinations preferred by Romanian tourists in 2009

Nr.	Destination country	Share (%)
1.	Greece – littoral	19
2.	Bulgaria	18
3.	Spain	14
4.	Italy	13
5.	France	7
6.	Germany	5
7.	Hungary	3
8.	Austria	3
9.	England	2
10	Ireland	1

The European cities most preferred by foreign tourists are presented in Table 2, the figures representing the satisfaction index concerning the

trip, the facilities, the services, and hospitality on a scale from 0 to 100, ranking based on a questionnaire to which responded the participants to a study carried out by Reader's Travel Awards [5].

Table 2. The European cities most preferred by foreign tourists in 2009

Rank	Cities preferred	Satisfaction index
1.	Venice	93.87
2.	Non European cities	-
3.	Paris	92.35
4.	Rome	91.39
5.	Non European cities	-
6.	Barcelona	89.49
7.	Florence	88.72
8.	Non European cities	-
9.	Seville	86.41
10.	Non European cities	-
11.	Non European cities	-
12.	St. Petersburg	83.55
13.	Non European cities	-
14.	Non European cities	-
15.	Non European cities	-
16.	Berlin	80.01
17.	Non European cities	-
18.	Prague	78.05
19.	Copenhagen	76.94
20.	Madrid	76.71

As we can see, neither Bucharest, nor any other Romanian city is among the first 20 European cities preferred by foreign visitors to Europe.

4. Conclusions

To attract as many foreign visitors as possible to Romania, we need to develop a country brand, to diversify traditional tourism products by increasing their attractiveness, by developing sports, cultural, artistic active holidays, by enhancing such hobbies as painting, sculpting, handicrafts, and local gastronomy, etc.

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