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## SOME ASPECTS REGARDING TOURISM AND YOUTH'S MOBILITY

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**Abstract:** To many countries of world, youth tourism represents the movement of the youth, that have a higher education, which represents an important income, source for that countries. Very important is the relationship between the tourism and various operational exchange programmes for students, as SOCRATES and ERASMUS for Europe or the European Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for intercultural exchanges between the students.

Beginning from the Antiquity, wealthy young people had the privilege to discover the world and to aquisition new knowledge over practicing tourism abroad, the educational tourism being in the centre of the interest for the high society with high incomes.

Since the end of the Second World War, a big number of politicians, more or less young, promoted the traveling idea as a factor of permanent education, and the governmental organizations with attributions in the field regarding the young people have promoted the young's mobility, first, at national level, the first mobility actions for young people of "Knowledge..." type being addressed to large number of people. In a short time, the governments of different countries have established protocols and bilateral accords within which lots of programs permitted to the young people, teachers, professors and animators to have abroad trips.

In the last period, the most utilized concept is that of mobility, of intercultural learning, of recapture, of study traveling, all these referring to the young travelers, in this case supporting being essential, at national or at European level, which is exemplified by the professional level mobility or at educational level.

*Key words:* youth tourism, youth mobility, educational programs.

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## INTRODUCTION

The creation of some facilitating organizations for the young people mobility (such as the Franco – German Youth Office – F.G.Y.O. – which reached the age of 40 in 2003, the France - Quebec Youth Office – O.F.Q.J) represented the apogee of an informal educational politics by traveling.

Once the paid vacations became a common thing, tourism in contemporary society reached a development that puts it in the industry category. This field of activity is more important from an economic point of view than from an instructive one, and this context raises the question on whether there is youth tourism or not. For some experts, tourism is just an economy branch, while for others what comes first in youth tourism is the word “youth” on which the development of this form of tourism is based.

In their journey young people are detached from the family protection and thus are exposed to risks specific for their inexperience. For this reason young people must turn to certain organisms and institutions that will satisfy their needs and that propose “a young label” which will guarantee security norms for transportation, accommodation, meals and leisure activities, but especially for cultural, sportive and social events.

### 1. EUROPEAN YOUTH MOBILITY INSTRUMENTS

Extended Europe (January 1<sup>st</sup> 2007) has 75 million young people with ages between 15 and 25<sup>2</sup>, young people who have or will have the possibility to travel for academic, professional or sportive reasons or just for rest and relaxation. Considering a big part of the youth can travel for financial reasons, it is essential that international organisms' representatives and the governments of the E.U. members take action to insert youth travel in their policies.

In the growth of youth mobility at European Union level an important role is played by youth travel through its social, educational and economic dimensions. The fact that for the first time the European Union's Constitution includes an explicit reference about tourism is another stimulus for the development of youth travel at European level.

The European Commission states: “encouraging youth to travel, to acquire new knowledge and to democratize youth travel are major issues for all those who build a new Europe<sup>3</sup>”.

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<sup>2</sup> The European Community Commission, The European Commission White Paper “A new Impetus for European Youth”, Brussels, 2001. The term youth is considered as being the period between 15 and 25 years old, by analogy with the period established by the European Parliament and the European Council for the Youth programme. Extended Europe means the 27 state members.

<sup>3</sup> Genève, M., Le tourisme, secteur délaissé par les dispositifs européens pour la mobilité des jeunes, Cahier Espaces 77– Tourisme des jeunes, 2003

Still, youth travel doesn't seem to be a direct concern for the European institutions because no precise actions were proposed or put into practice, with the exception of a better youth informing. In a larger context, the different youth mobility programs were applied both at the European Council level and at the European Commission level. These programs allow young European people to have broadened access to travel and international exchanges.

After the year 2000, a new generation of programs and actions were proposed within a 7 years time frame under the guidance of the European Commission's Directorate-General Education and Culture. These actions and programs contribute to education, shaping, culture, sport, which are the themes preferred by young people and by the adults with whom they interact. The most important programs are: Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci, Youth for Europe and Tempus.

All these programs have many common points and aim objectives that are specific to youth: they encourage European cooperation and sustain the quality of ideas, persons and technologies exchanges. In order to support education they allow a more obvious closeness to youth travel from an educational and cultural point of view. Thanks to these programs the financial support can be granted to tourism developing programmes and at the same time they offer concrete mobility developing opportunities.

The programs are often organised around two directions: one tied to the youth mobility and the second one to assimilating cultural and linguistic knowledge. With the help of these programs the European Union creates a European mobility pattern which brings out the usefulness of tourism as a practise associated with pleasure and relaxation and which seems to grow on its own.

The facility system which mainly refers to organizing the departure and to the accommodation of the future employees to the exigency of the free person's movement is focused on inter-cultural learning, on discovering and changing the environment. Youth mobility must be understood as a real way of life and not as an adventure.

These facilities are not a help for tourism in the sense of subsidizing vacations, they are mobility assistances and mobility is the main shaping factor on the course of a lifetime and travels must allow the access to other cultures and to other ways of life.

When it comes to the connection with tourism, youth mobility means a travel with the purpose the accumulate knowledge, education, culture etc.

By travelling, youth can have an important contribution to consolidating the connections between the European Union members. The European Commission's YOUTH Programme aims to stimulate youth and student travel by offering opportunities to participate to the social life and to the cultural programmes of other countries, while academic and work exchange programmes like SOCRATES (including here *Erasmus*, *Grundvig* and *Lingua*), LEONARDO and the new generation of programmes – *Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013*, *Youth in*

**Action** and **Erasmus Mundus** – offer yearly to over 10.000 young people and students the opportunity to travel inside the European Union.

Even if youth represent about 16% of the European Union's population, in Europe this segment was ignored for a long time and specific European programmes were limited to student exchanges with the purpose to learn foreign languages.

The main European youth mobility programmes are:

### **SOCRATES**

- *Objectives*

This programme comprises the education sector and aims to promote the European dimensions and to improve the education's quality by encouraging cooperation between the 31 participant countries. The programmes complete the national actions carried out by the member countries in respect of education, organizing the education system and cultural and linguistic diversity.

- *Legal basis:* Article 149 and 150 from the EC treaty and decision 253/2000/EC of the European Parliament and European Council
- *Budget:* 1.850 million Euros for a 7 years time period
- *Activities that might be considered interesting for youth travel*

Socrates includes eight actions, three describe three stages of life: school, university and life long learning, the other five are transversal.

Out of these actions three present a special interest for youth travel because they favour the trans-national shaping and mobility of young people:

- The **Erasmus** action favours student mobility in their field of study on a period of 3 to 12 months in another participant country. Apart from the scholarship from the university, the students receive another one for the possible additional expenses that might occur while studying abroad. The ERASMUS programme's structure is as follows:
  - *Activity 1* – European inter-universities cooperation;
  - *Activity 2* – mobility grants for students and teaching staffs, mobility organisation and the European transferable credits system;
  - *Activity 3* – theme networks.
- The **Grundtvig** action aims to consolidate the European dimension in the education field and to apply the lifelong learning principle and thus contributing to improving the access of all those who wish to accumulate new knowledge, capacities and abilities no matter how old they are.
- The **Lingua** action is devoted to teaching and learning foreign languages and to promoting linguistic diversity within the European Union and other countries associated to the Socrates programme.

**ERASMUS MUNDUS** is a new cooperation and mobility programme between the institutions from EU members and non-European countries. The programme takes place between 2004 and 2008 and aims to increase the higher education's

competitiveness, to augment its appeal among teachers and students outside Europe and to promote inter-cultural dialog. For the 2004-2008 periods the programme has a 203 million Euros budget and 90% of this amount is destined for mobility actions.

1.2 million students benefited from mobility scholarships in the Socrates Programme – the Erasmus Action between 1995 and 2005. Out of the European countries, Spain was on first place in the preferences' top in the school year 2004/2005, followed by France and Germany. The most mobile students were the German, French, Spanish and Italian students. About 81.000 young people went to study in other EU states in the school year 2004/2005<sup>4</sup>.

Between 2000 and 2005, 12.531 Romanian students and 3.637 teachers benefited of ERASMUS mobility scholarships in 16 European countries. The top study fields were: agriculture science, architecture, art and design, economic science, education and professional training<sup>5</sup>.

### **LEONARDO DA VINCI**

- *Objectives*

This programme is destined to improve the quality of the vocational training systems and to implement similar policies in the EU states in the labour force's vocational training field. The main objectives are: facilitating work force insertion, improving training quality, abilities and aptitudes, especially for young people.

- *Legal basis:* Article 150 of the EC treaty and European Council's decision from April 26, 1999.
- *Budget:* 1.15 billion Euros for a 7 years time period.
- *Activities that might be considered interesting for youth travel*

The Leonardo Programme has five actions. One is of special interest for youth travel because it is a real support for trans-national mobility projects for persons in vocational training, especially young people, for a maximum two years period.

There are three specific activity types in this action:

- Trans-national placement projects: for people undergoing initial vocational training (pupils, apprentices), for students, for young workers with high qualification and for young high education graduates;
- Trans-national exchange projects dedicated to trainers and experts in vocational orientation, to trainers in linguistic competencies, to human resources personnel in enterprises.
- Study travels.

A statistic analysis on the Leonardo mobility programmes target groups for the 2000-2005 period revealed the following situation:

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<sup>4</sup> Mintel, Youth Travel Market (Europe), London: Mintel International Group Ltd., 2006.

<sup>5</sup> [www.socrates.ro/programe/socrates/erasmus/statistici.doc](http://www.socrates.ro/programe/socrates/erasmus/statistici.doc)

**Table 1:** The Leonardo mobility programmes target groups for the 2000-2005 period

Year	Target group	Number of approved projects	Total
2000	Pupils and students	35	73
	Young workers and young high education graduates	15	
	Trainers	23	
2001	Pupils and students	36	73
	Young workers and young high education graduates	16	
	Trainers	21	
2002	Pupils and students	47	89
	Young workers and young high education graduates	20	
	Trainers	22	
2003	Pupils and students	42	126
	Young workers and young high education graduates	60	
	Trainers	24	
2004	Pupils and students	63	107
	Young workers and young high education graduates	17	
	Trainers	27	
2005	Pupils and students	69	119
	Young workers and young high education graduates	11	
	Trainers	39	
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>587</b>

Source: <http://www.anpcdefp.ro/programe/llp/leonardo/info.html>

In the 2000-2005 periods, over 150.000 young high education graduates, people undergoing initial vocational training (pupils and students) and young workers benefited from these vocational training programmes in the EU countries. The themes covered by the mobility projects with promoters from Romania advance innovative ideas, education and vocational training methods from all fields of activity (education, health, tourism, transportation, etc.).

The carried projects had a significant impact especially for the vocational training reform in Romania, for the setting in practice of a professional education system adapted to the labour market's needs, for the linguistic competencies development, for the computer use development and especially for the accumulation of new competencies for the socially disadvantaged categories.

### ***YOUTH FOR EUROPE***

- *Objectives*

This programme is addressed to all young people and offers them the possibility to discover Europe and to participate at its construction as active and responsible citizens.

- *Legal basis:* Article 149 of the EC treaty and decision 1031/2000/CE of the European Parliament and European Council from April 13, 2000
- *Budget:* 520 de million Euros for a 7 years time period.
- *Activities that might be considered interesting for youth travel*

The ***Youth*** programme is addressed especially to the youth with ages between 15 and 25 and is a programme that tries to contribute to their education process particularly through informing them about the activities that are the object of international trades. Two of these actions are of special interest for tourism:

- The ***Youth for Europe*** action underlines youth exchange inside and outside the EU. This programme finances multilateral projects which favour the discovering of other social and cultural realities by the youth and allow the establishing of new contacts and friendships which will stimulate them to participate in other European projects. These exchanges must have a theme and must propose meeting and discovering possibilities and must emphasize the education experience and the inter-cultural learning. "Vacation travels" and "touristy exchanges" are excluded.
- The ***European Voluntary Service*** offers the youth with ages between 18 and 25 the opportunity to participate as volunteers in a local project for a 6 to 12 months period. By profiting from a training advantage, the youth can "invest" their energy, enthusiasm and creativity in practical activities which will contribute to their defining.

***YOUTH IN ACTION*** is the successor of the Youth Programme and puts in practice the legal framework for non-formal learning and will be implemented from 2007 to 2013 with a total budget of 885 million Euros. For Romania were allocated 3 million Euros per year<sup>6</sup>.

*The programme's main objectives are:*

- to promote active citizenship in general and European citizenship in particular among the youth;
- to develop a solidarity assent and to promote tolerance among the youth, in order to contribute to the social cohesion process inside the European Union;
- to support mutual understanding among the youth from different countries;

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<sup>6</sup> [www.anpcdefp.ro/programe/llp](http://www.anpcdefp.ro/programe/llp)

- to contribute to the improvement of the supporting systems' quality and to the youth organisations' capacities;
- to promote European cooperation among the youth.

*The programme's priorities* are: European citizenship, active youth participation, cultural diversity, the inclusion of the youth with limited opportunities.

The objective and priorities mentioned above will be reached through the operational programmes: *Youth for Europe, the European Voluntary Service, Youth in the world, Youth Support Systems and European Cooperation in the youth field.*

The "homo europeanus" term means a "nomad" who is able to travel often, to meet other people and work with them; this term doesn't refer to the strict meaning from tourism. Because the existent programmes are not exploited to the maximum, we can think that a bigger flexibility and a larger opening for the diverse touristy movements could lead to a growth of these programmes' importance.

## **2. THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS IN PROMOTING YOUTH MOBILITY**

The Barcelona declaration from the Euro-Mediterranean Conference in 1995 states that "youth exchanges must be means that will prepare future generations for a tighter cooperation between the Euro-Mediterranean partners by respecting the human rights and the fundamental rights principles". The Helsinki Charter offers the legal basis for the steps that must be taken in order to stimulate the youth travel's development. Youth travel is defined as a phenomenon in its own right, not just as a "younger version" of tourism.

The provisional evaluation reports of the present Youth Programme and the public consultation concerning the future activities of the European community in the fields of education, training and youth, show a powerful and growing need regarding a continuing cooperation and mobility in the youth field at European level.

Important roles in promoting youth mobility at European level play the international youth travel organisations, from which we will present the most important.

### **2.1 The Federation of International Youth Travel Organisations (F.I.Y.T.O.)**

F.I.Y.T.O. was founded in France in 1950 by a Frenchman with a large vision, Jean Barraud, who after the Second World War decided that him and his colleagues will promote the peace and understanding ideas for all the travelling students. Thus, nine organisations from Denmark, Italy, Germany and France created the Federation of International Youth Travel Organisations (F.I.Y.T.O.).

Today F.I.Y.T.O. has approximately 450 organisations from 70 world countries, from which 68% are European with approximately 296 members in the federation.

Inside the F.I.Y.T.O. are represented all the sectors of youth travel, like: companies with tradition – hotels, food units – travel agencies, experts in youth travel products, different trainers (specific trades, foreign languages, etc.).

The original mission of the federation in 1950 was to promote peace and understanding for young travellers. This mission is still in centre, but as the industry developed more objectives were added to the mission, like: promoting youth mobility and protecting the identity of young travellers (young people who travel through F.I.Y.T.O. programmes are under the influence of an academic, educational or cultural spirit).

*The main objectives<sup>7</sup> of the federation are:*

- to promote educational, cultural and social travel among young people (according to F.I.Y.T.O. the young people are the ones with ages between 12 and 26);
- to encourage understanding and collaboration among all members;
- to develop relationships between national youth travel organisations in any way, including by convening conferences, seminars and meetings and by providing facilities for exchange of information;
- to offer expertise in order to develop youth travel organisations in countries where there are no such organisations or are less developed;
- to promote youth travel inside unspecialized organisations, like U.N.E.S.C.O. and other similar international organisations, including international tourism organisations.

The future strategy of this organisation will emphasize student and youth travel, the importance of the members' identity and the offering of facilities for them regarding communication, exchange opportunities and marketing activities. The problems specific for youth mobility are not only those of European citizens, but also of non-European citizens who meet obstacles when trying to enter Europe (visa problems).

The costs of visas can go as high as 150 dollars in some countries, a cost much too high for young people who wish to travel to broaden their cultural and educational horizons. The visa problem is a real problem, and it is not only about the right to a visa, but also about the immigration rules and about the difficulties that young people face when they want to travel.

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<sup>7</sup> www.fiyto.org

## **2.2 International Student Travel Confederation (I.S.T.C.)**

I.S.T.C. is an international organisation founded in 1949 by students who associated; its mission is to develop international collaboration by promoting tourism and opportunity exchange among students, young people and the academic community.

The I.S.T.C. network has over 5.000 offices in 110 countries and serves about 10 million students and young travellers every year<sup>8</sup>. The mission of this organisation is to improve cooperation between student travel offices, between them and other international tourism organisms, to offer diverse facilities, to promote tourism among youth and to extend the network's territory. Over 60 organisations worldwide are members of this confederation, the most important being five specialized youth travel associations: International Student Identity Card Association (I.S.I.C.) - which offers international identity cards for students, International Association for Students Insurance Services (I.A.S.I.S.) – for insurance services, Student Air Travel Association (S.A.T.A.) – offers fly transportation services for students, has 70 million flies every year, International Association for Educational Work Exchanges Programmes (I.A.E.W.E.P.) – for study and work exchange programmes and International Student Surface Travel Association (I.S.S.A.) – offers students terrestrial transportation services.

## **2.3 International Youth Hostel Federation (I.Y.H.F.)**

I.Y.H.F. in an international organisation founded in 1909 by the German professor Richard Schirrmann who developed the idea of a hotel network for the youth in Germany under the name the International Association of Youth Hostels. This idea was later spread in all the corners of the world and is presently in full expansion.

In 1912 the first Youth Hostel was opened in the Altena castle (Germany), and in 1919 the German Youth Hostel Association was founded. On the occasion of the first international conference in Amsterdam in 1932 the International Youth Hostel Federation was founded. Presently I.Y.H.F. is a non-governmental organisation and a recent partner of U.N.E.S.C.O. in different programmes for promoting peace and cultural youth exchange in different parts of the world.

Article 2 of the I.Y.H.F. Constitution emphasized the philosophy of the Hostelling International movement: *“Hostelling International must promote the education of all young people of all nations, but especially of young people of limited means, by encouraging in them a greater knowledge, love and care of the countryside and an appreciation of the cultural values of towns and cities in all parts of the world, and as ancillary threto, to provide hostels and other accommodation in which there shall be no distinctions of race, nationality, colour, religion, sex, class or political opinions and thereby to develop a better understanding of their fellow men, both at home and abroad”*<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> [www.istc.org/sisp/index.htm?fx=student\\_travel](http://www.istc.org/sisp/index.htm?fx=student_travel)

<sup>9</sup> [www.hihostels.com/pdf/HistoryPhilosophy.pdf](http://www.hihostels.com/pdf/HistoryPhilosophy.pdf)

Housing young people in hostel type accommodation spaces and in I.Y.H.F. youth hotels, offers them the possibility to gather in a family environment, to exchange experiences, to learn more about themselves, about others and about the environment that surrounds them.

The Hostelling International network has over 4.500 youth hostels, is spread on five continents, in over 80 countries, gathers 60 national hostels associations and collaborates with governmental organisms and volunteers agencies all over the world. Yearly there are registered approximately 35 million sleepovers in these accommodation structures that are adapted to the specific needs of young travellers, but not exclusively, with limited travel possibilities.

There are other organisations which have as main activity youth mobility, like: Association of Tourism and Leisure Education (A.T.L.A.S.), International Student Identity Card (I.S.I.C.), European Youth Card Association (E.Y.C.A.), Social Tourism International Office (S.T.I.O.), European Union Federation of Youth Hostel Associations (E.U.F.E.D.), etc.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion it must underlined the importance of maintaining and developing the existent community programmes which target the youth, because they are essential for the cooperation's development between EU members in the youth and youth travel fields.

Youth travel is stimulated by the young people's desire to enter in contact with other cultures and to make new friendships, which proves that this form of tourism has the necessary potential to contribute to peace and understanding among nations.

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