

AN OVERVIEW AND COMPARISON OF DATA DESCRIBING CROATIA AND SLOVAKIA AND EUROPEAN UNION REGARDING THE INFLUENCE OF TOURISM UPON EMPLOYMENT

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Croatia being above EU average in direct contribution to GDP can serve as a best practice for countries such as Slovakia. However, best practices is sometimes not easy to follow due to differences in the fundamentals of countries' potential such as forest, numbers of castles or caves and the like. Paper provides modest overview of the potential of the two destinations and then provides reader with comparison of data regarding employment and GDP.

Key words: sustainable development, tourism, employment.

Prikaz i usporedba podataka o utjecaju turizma na zaposlenost između Hrvatske i Slovačke te Europske Unije. Kako je iznad prosjeka Europske Unije u izravnom udjelu bruto nacionalnom proizvodu, Hrvatska može poslužiti kao dobar primjer zemljama poput Slovačke. Nije ipak ponekad lako moguće slijediti najbolje prakse ako se imaju u vidu bitne razlike u potencijalima pojedine zemlje, kao što su šume, broj dvoraca ili pećina i sl. Rad nudi skroman pregled potencijala dviju destinacija te nudi čitatelju usporedbu podataka koji se odnose na zaposlenost i bruto nacionalni dohodak.

Ključne riječi: održivi razvoj, turizam, zaposlenost.

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable behaviour of tourists is being discussed in respect to relationships and digital social capital or in respect to initiatives taken by residents or another perspective is supply-side applications. Residence perspective is important in sustainable tourism development, however each site and its researchers have to develop its own indicators for tourism's sustainability. [1-3] In order to do this in form of composite indicator one has to look at existing data or to compare existing situation. Employment can be considered as a direct impact of tourism on residents, who may search new job opportunities. In this respect their attitude towards tourism can be positive. Another example can be indirect

impact, if a destination is successful government will be more willing to improve infrastructure and invest more into the region. Thus the redistribution of GDP can be in favour of residents of a given region. Such a redistribution contributes towards poverty alleviation and tourism carried on in sustainable way also contributes to such redistributions [4]. Useful overview of global monitoring tools was prepared and published by authors from Netherland [5], who distinguish economic, environmental and social tools. In between these three there exist overlaps: liveable, viable, equitable, which create the total overlap of Venn diagram in sustainable. Limitations to this paper are given by complexity of topic itself.

TOWARDS METHODOLOGY AND DATA

The post-transitional phase differs from each other depending on the country. The process of *touristification* proceeded at different pace, but some authors may point out similarities of post-socialism and post-colonialism [6]. Croatia is dependent on tourism, whereas Slovakia is dependent on automotive industry. [7] This is why this paper addresses two questions: can the central Croatia (Kontinentalna Hrvatska) be used as a best practice for Slovakia? Or is it better to see Croatia as whole and consider it a best practice from *touristification* in the post-socialism areas? Paper applied descriptive statistics and comparison of Croatia, Slovakia and as a benchmark European countries. Starting point for creating own site indicators is to search existing ones. Most indicators need a good

quality of data. This paper aim is to provide a limited overview of one portion of data which are planned to be in use of information system – Destination Business Information System - DBIS. The Destination BIS project proposes the process of solving on the principle of a global trend in tourism based on mutual cooperation between academia, public authorities, and the private sector. Cooperation within the proposed platform Destination BIS is a new form of cooperation for the time being in Slovakia.

Slovak Republic has potential in tourism. This situation in SR can be compared in Europe, Slovak Republic results are under the EU's average. There is a positive trend that number of overnight stays is increasing. In the table below (Tab. 1) one can see data from year 2015.

Table 1. Main data about tourism and tourism contribution to GDP in Croatia, Slovakia comparing to Europe total

Tablica 1. Glavni podaci o turizmu i njegovom udjelu u brutto nacionalnom proizvodu u Hrvatskoj i Slovačkoj u usporedbi s Europom u cjelini

Data in year 2015	Croatia*	Slovakia**	Europe, Total***
population	4 280 000	5 400 000	893 800 000
number of visitors	14 343 000	4 330 000	608 600 000
<i>number of visitors per inhabitant</i>	3,4	0,8	0,68
number of overnights	71 605 000	12 350 000	2 690 000 000
<i>number of overnights per inhabitant</i>	16,73	2,28	3,01
GDP total (in billions of US\$ - nominal prices)	50,8	90,3	19 800
<i>GDP total (in US\$) per inhabitant</i>	12 095	16 722	22 152
tourism - direct contribution to GDP (in billions of US\$ - nominal prices)	5,0	1,8	691,9
<i>tourism - direct contribution to GDP (in US\$) per inhabitant</i>	1 168	333	774

Source: *Ministry of Tourism Republic of Croatia: Tourism in figures 2016; **Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic; ***World Travel and Tourism Council; Eurostat

CROATIAN AND SLOVAK TOURISM FUNDAMENTALS

The paper provides a limited comparison in order to find out in what respect can the central Croatia or the whole Croatia be used as a best practice for Slovakia.

First, 40% of Slovakia's territory is covered with forests. In Croatia it is 46%. Slovakia's forests contain a wide biodiversity; animals include brown bears, wolves, foxes, wild boars, muskrats, chamois and lynxes. More on this in National Forests Inventories [8]. There are hardly any mountain ranges and areas not under some form of protection in Slovakia. The highest form of protection is a National Park; there are 9 of them in Slovakia: Tatra National Park, Low Tatras National Park, Low Fatra National Park, High Fatra National Park, Murán Plateau National Park, Pieniny National Park, Poloniny National Park, Slovak Karst National Park, Slovak Paradise National Park. There are 8 national parks in Croatia: Brijuni National Park, Krka National Park, Kornati National Park, Mljet National Park, Paklenica National Park, Plitvice Lake National Park, Sjeverni Velebit National Park. Following this there are 5 categories (numbers are in brackets) of protected areas in Croatia, i.e. nature monument (85), regional park (2), park forest (28), park architecture monument (121) and significant landscape (85).

Second, Slovakia has the highest number of castles per capita. The best known castles are Bojnice Castle, Spiš Castle (the largest fortified castle in Europe, on the UNESCO list), Orava Castle, Bratislava Castle, and the ruins of Devín Castle. Čachtice Castle used to be the home of the world's most prolific female serial killer, the 'Bloody Lady', Elizabeth Báthory. Third, Slovakia is also a European leader in the number of caves per capita. Caves are mostly located in the karst areas. Thirteen

caves are open to the public, the longest one is 9 km long. Some of them have been proclaimed UNESCO's World Heritage Sites. Among them, Ochtinská Aragonite Cave is one of three aragonite caves in the world. As for the caves in the case of Croatia, there is an advantage of submerged caves that are still under research [9]. Further potential of Croatia was evaluated by [10].

In Slovakia, the conditions for skiing and other winter sports are perfect thanks to the mountainous topography of Slovakia and the fact that much of these mountains are covered by snow from late October till late March / April. On such a small territory there are more than 1000 ski-tows, 40 ski-lifts and more than 50 ski resorts can make artificial snow in case it is not snowing. Many of the ski slopes comply even with the international criteria for ski competitions. The most known ski centres are situated in The High Tatras mountain (ski resort Tatranská Lomnica – Lomnické sedlo offers the highest elevation in Slovakia (1308 m) and also the longest ski slope in Slovakia (5500 m). The altitude of the highest point is 2 196 m.) and in The Low Tatras mountain (with the largest ski resort in Slovakia – Jasná which offers 44,5 km of ski slopes). High peaks and deep valleys provide opportunities for hiking and walking tours in many countries [11].

After visiting natural attractions, sport and recreation is the sixth motive to visit Croatia [12], while health reasons is ninth. An interesting combination of sport and spa tourism is already present in Croatia [13]. Golf tourism support can help spas and regional areas to achieve again the number of visitors from year 2008 or to have overnights at the level of 2008. It is encompassed in the Croatian National Strategy of 2013 as well. Slovakia has

numerous mineral springs and spas where people can relax or have health treatments: Climatic spas, Balneological spas, mixed spas. It could be of a benefit to help to restore some of spas, e.g. Korytnica or Herľany, with similar approach as in Croatia.

TWO STEP COMPARISON OF DATA OF EMPLOYMENT AND GDP

Next the paper tries to answer why is it better to see Croatia as whole and consider it a best practice from *touristification* in the post-socialism areas. The reasons that were presented here are only two variables which were the paper's focus.

Issue of a relationship between tourism sector and GDP growth is on the rise. Among top ten destinations, there are six from Europe. [14] Dogan and Asian studied three variables: domestic product, energy consumption and tourism. Recommendations of their results were to focus on environmentally-friendly transport and technology. Authors mentioned bicycle oriented tourism. Similarly, Bezić and Nikšić Radić [15] examine FDI-led tourism growth hypothesis. This hypothesis was concluded with the importance of degree of countries' development ("for example, the level of training of tourism staff, the stage of life cycle of tourist destination" etc.). This is why in this paper the tourist destination was described as fundamentals for Slovakia and Croatia.

In addition, this paper and its data show that direct contribution to the gross domestic

product (GDP) in Croatia was higher than EU average, while Slovakia's GDP is below, see figure 1. Similar trend is there for employment. Around year 2008 Croatia experienced decline in tourism contribution to employment, but Slovakia an upswing, see figure 2. Explanation of this occurrence can be that Slovak inhabitants started to visit own country instead of Croatia (being considered a country of Slovakian sea). This change in preference was reflected by an increase of employment contribution in Slovakia.

- **Direct contribution to GDP** = GDP generated by industries that deal directly with tourists, including hotels, travel agents, airlines and other passengers transport services, as well as the activities of restaurant and leisure industries that deal directly with tourists.
- **Direct contribution to employment** = the number of jobs generated directly in the travel and tourists sector.

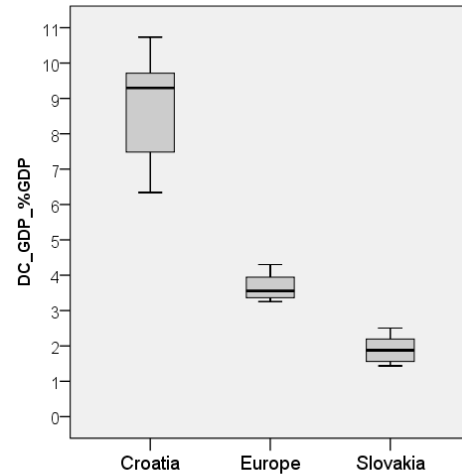
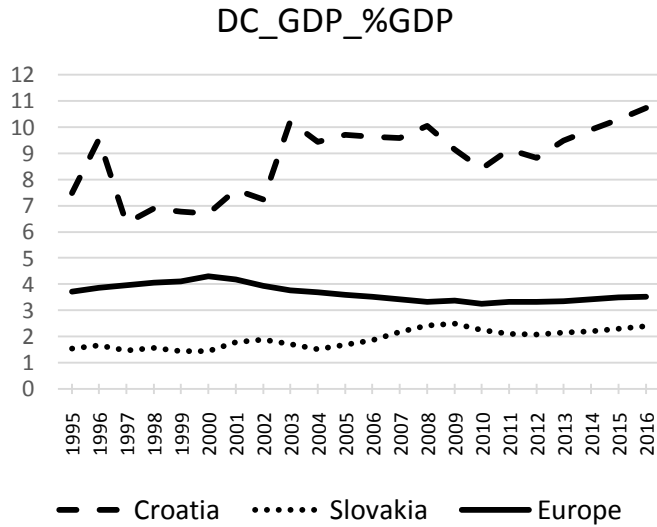


Figure 1. Direct contribution to GDP in % of GDP
Slika 1. Izravan udio u GDP-u u % GDP-a

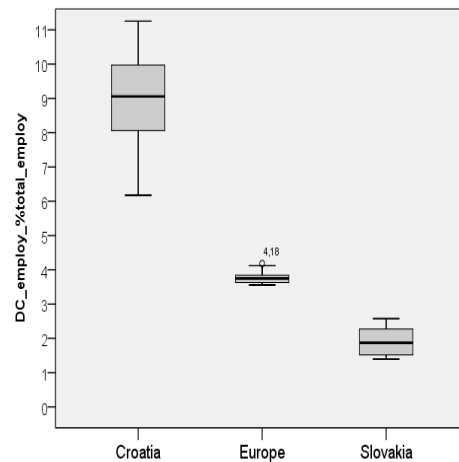
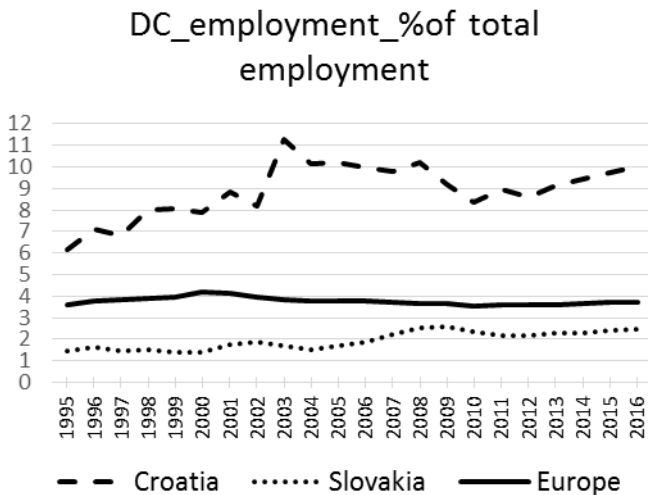


Figure 2. Direct contribution to employment in % of total employment
Slika 2. Izravan udio u zaposlenosti u % ukupne zaposlenosti

CONCLUSION

A composite indicator to be formed for regions in Slovakia can follow already mentioned indicators for tourism's sustainability, adding up Tourism Climatic Index or Index of Tourism Activity [16,

17].and adding up other composites of new index suited for a site.

Croatia being above EU average in direct contribution to GDP can serve as a best practice for countries such as Slovakia. However, best practices are sometimes not

easy to follow due to differences in the fundamentals of countries' potential such as forest, numbers of castles or caves and the like. Paper provides modest overview of the potential of the two destinations and then provides reader with comparison of data regarding employment and GDP.

The project DBIS implemented at the Technical University of Kosice (Slovakia) approaches the issue of shortage of relevant data about destinations and their target

groups through the development of a Destination Business Information System for the support of complex decision making and planning in tourism market conditions [18]. As for recommendations DBIS can help to collect data and analyse them but some composite indicator may provide information of better quality. Despite having lots of information on tourism the image [19] is quite important today and it is something that can influence results in statistics.

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