

## ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE AS A CROATIAN TOURIST TRADE SUPPLY ELEMENT

### CESTOVNA INFRASTRUKTURA U SLUŽBI TURISTIČKE PONUDE HRVATSKE

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#### Summary

Roads as an integral part of social and economic life of Croatia play an important role in the sphere of balanced development of all segments of reproduction process. An inadequate treatment during the process of their construction and maintenance can result in a number of negative implications reflecting upon the overall functioning of economics and community life and their segments.

The paper deals with the interdependency of development and the existence of the roads in the process of assessment of tourism potentials of Croatia. It also refers to the fact that the inadequate policy of road construction and maintenance, of overall road infrastructure and accompanying services is currently the element of limitation for tourism services users.

Key words: Traffic, Adriatic orientation, road infrastructure, economics, Croatia,

#### Introduction

For the sake of efficient and reasonable functioning of the traffic system, an overview analysis of the most important factors within the traffic, process, that is, of traffic infrastructure has to be performed. Among other factors, it also consists of road infrastructure (roads and various facilities along them).

Traffic infrastructure has the central position in development of the complex body of all sorts of activities forming the traffic system of our country. This makes a significant impact on roads, because since the ancient times roads have been an important element of connection of all kinds of human activities.

Fundamental reasons for building roads consist of a range of essential factors. The most crucial ones are as follows: preservation of territorial, social, national, and political integrity of a country (and its establishment), as well as of the population within its internationally recognised state borders; economy and marketing; military and religious reasons; establishing of a unique traffic system and its subsystems, and so on.

#### 1. Service Provided in Traffic Infrastructure Facilities - Segment of a Croatian Tourist Offer

Among other things, modernisation of the roads infrastructure means equipping it, above all, with traffic signs and with a system for all sorts of aid needed while on the road with accompanying services and facilities, for the sake of safety of all involved in the traffic. In addition, it is also necessary to provide: parking lots, rest areas situated along the roads (with toilets, running water, catering facilities and other accompanying services), petrol stations (filling stations), shops selling goods that might be needed on the road, repair shops, exchange offices, restaurants, camps of a certain category (with shower, running water, toilet, food supply, etc.), hotels, tourist agencies and traffic offices, and, most of all, an introduction of adequate tourist and traffic signs. The whole complexity of the above mentioned items (apart from the series of standardised roads signs) is called "roads infrastructure". Our roads infrastructure shows a certain discrepancy between the actual offer and the demand after the subject. There is also another problem of non existence of a unique criterion, for instance of categorisation of particular facilities situated along the road. The solution will have to be found by the next tourist season.

Tourist signs along the road are not introduced to a satisfactory extent. Their aim is to draw attention of all those involved in the immediate vicinity of the road, within a particular transit area, there are certain facilities providing refreshment, rest, or seeing the sights of a certain cultural and historical monument.

In order to find a solution to this inconvenience, it would be advisable to take part in the already existing information systems like, for example, DRIVE (Dedicated Road Infrastructure for Vehicles Safety in Europe) - the computer operated system for reinforcement of traffic safety in Europe PROMETHEUS - EUREKA - the project regulating vehicle traffic through a satellite, and others. The above mentioned information systems should be of great help in quicker customs and other formalities by passing a country border, redirecting vehicles in a parallel directions to avoid a possible traffic jam, and in provision of an adequate traffic security on our roads.

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## 2. Roads Infrastructure Modernisation in the Assessment of Tourism Potentials in Croatia

An adequate road network is a significant factor in economy development and in the evaluation of tourism potentials throughout Croatia. It becomes even more relevant if one takes into consideration the attractive belt of Croatia islands and the coastline, which is touristically, the most developed area since it realises the biggest share of (domestic and foreign) tourist circulation. This is also what the process of propriety restructuring with more sophisticated forms of presentation to European tourism clients is all about. One should disregard development of mass tourism with socialistic connotations. It welcomed a dominion of non market criteria without the need of a service presentation, depending on the capacity of paying under the well known "sea and sun" slogan. Surely, one can not consider this to be a starting point in the process of restructuring of Croatian economy. On the contrary, the process has to be based upon a synchronous interaction of all the segments of the traffic system, an adequate information system, hotel and catering facilities network, and upon provision of tourist and all kinds of other accompanying services.

At the moment, the Croatian traffic network with its technical and exploiting features can not satisfy fully the contemporary challenges which are present more or less in all means of traffic. This is why we still right now have to resolve the accumulated negative impact of a long term neglect of the assessment of Croatian Adriatic orientation.

This crucial issue is also our only chance if we want to take part in the trends of European economics and traffic. The basic impact of modernising a part of traffic infrastructure - a road network is a synthesis of all transportation and other expenses - can be seen as a functional state of the road. The impacts manifest themselves in: shorter distance of transport, improvement of roads' elements, state of exploitation, existence of accompanying facilities along the full length of the road, an adequate and convenient information system, etc.

A transportation fee can be analysed from a customer's point of view and from a transportation service provider's (usually an organisation dealing with passenger, that is, tourist transportation) point of view.

The analysis of transportation expenses from a customer's viewpoint includes all the expenses during the process of transportation regardless whether they accumulate during the very process or they just concern themselves with the initial and final operations alone. This is of great importance in a transportation of goods, but can also have an impact on various forms of passenger transportation and on individual transportation by a car. Technical and exploit condition of roads is one of significant issues which every person involved in traffic has to regard as an expense due to covering certain distance. This also considerably influ-

ences a customer's choice of a traffic service. There crops up another relevant feature, namely, the time of transportation, which, too, depends upon the condition of the road network. Another essential component when departing for a certain locality is surely the issue of saving time, since it makes strong impact on variable expenses which have to be paid by a motorised tourist.

These variable expenses can be seen in smaller or greater consumption of petrol, the length of transportation between the departure and arrival point, unplanned expenses for loading. In the case of transportation by bus, the changeable expenses can denote a bigger or a smaller number of drivers' travelling allowance, a shorter time the vehicle spends on the road, which raises the cost of transportation and therefore direct the potential consumers of a tourist offer-tourists - to the localities where the negative emission of the expenses is minimal. Finally, conducting negative elements to the level on which a tourist during his travel and stay in a certain destination can not feel them or where they are not of a strong intensity, is the basis of existence and of expectations of relevant foreign currency impacts in every subsystem of tourism.

## Conclusion

The analysed elements in this paper are a part of an integral entity, therefore they can be neither viewed nor analysed partially. They have to be regarded as a constituent part of the Croatian national economy system in the whole. It is very valuable that they can be achieved through road modernisation, that is, through modernisation of traffic infrastructure in its totality providing that already recognised objective scientific methodology is applied in the process. Thanks to the usage of the corresponding methods, one gets the elements having undoubtedly great effects on the assessment of tourism potential, raises the level of traffic service and traffic and geographical estimation of Croatian soil, along with taking into consideration the questions aroused by activating the TEM (Trans European Road Network), TER (Trans European Railway project) and TEL (Trans Europeline) project. This has already raised some crucial questions concerning traffic connections of Croatia with the countries of middle and eastern Europe, and also of western and south-eastern Europe. Therefore, activities of Croatia in that direction are inevitable, since in that way the forming of traffic interest of Croatia and its adjustment to interests of neighbouring countries can be fulfilled.

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