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SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE RURAL **AREAS**

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Guest Editorial

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ABSTRACT. The development of the sustainable tourism is the core policy for many developed and developing countries. The paper aims to assess the connections between agriculture and tourism by enhancing sustainable development in both tourism and rural communities and agriculture sectors. The principles of sustainable economic development are analysed and priorities of sustainable tourism development in EU are provided. The framework of indicators for connection of sustainable rural tourism with rural sustainability is given by providing empirical data for five new EU member states: Romania, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Poland and Hungary.

KEYWORDS: sustainable development, sustainable tourism, rural areas, sustainable rural development.

IEL classification: Q01, Q10, Z38.

Introduction

Both productive sectors, agriculture and tourism seem to offer a lot of opportunities for inclusive economic growth in Europe (Bowen *et al.*, 1991) and therefore the promotion of linkages between tourism and agriculture should help create economic opportunities (Torres, 2002; 2003; Torres, Momsen, 2004; Survila *et al.*, 2017), build strength in the communities from rural area and enhance development in tourism sector but also in agriculture. Agriculture is, for most countries, the main source of livelihood for most of the people, but its contribution to economic value added decreased overall in the last decade, while in the same period the tourism sector registered a significant increase.

A challenge for policy-makers is both to ensure that sustainability of tourism growth (Russo, van der Borg, 2000) and that the benefits generated by the increase in the number of visitors are maximized in country's added value and that any increase in wealth is fair poorer communities. Strengthening links and creating synergies between tourism and agriculture should help capitalize on the tourism dollar to achieve sustained and equitable growth goals (Phillimore, Goodson, 2004).

It is known that tourism is one of the largest industries in the world (Ko, 2005). With about 30% of the total food costs, creating links between tourism and agriculture has an

important potential as a sustainable development mechanism at the village level. This is particularly true for the developing countries with large rural populations dependent on traditional farming (Ashley *et al.*, 2001).

The importance of creating back links between tourism and agriculture (Tregear *et al.*, 2007) enjoys a growing recognition among tourism researchers. Most research in the field of tourism and agriculture focused primarily on food procurement models and does not address the main driving force of the hotel purchase - consumption and tourism food preferences (United Nation Environment Program / World Tourism Organization (UNEP/WTO, 2005). While the tourism and agriculture literature refers frequent anecdotal to tourist consumption models - the differences by nationality and type of tourist - there is little empirical data available (UNEP / WTO, 2005)

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the main aspects of the tourism in rural areas and to develop a framework of indicators for the linking tourism and agriculture for sustainable development of the rural tourism and agriculture.

In the first section of paper the principles of sustainable economic development are presented; in second section - priorities of sustainable tourism development in EU are dealt with; in third section - the framework of indicators for connection of sustainable rural tourism with rural sustainability is given by providing empirical data for five new EU member states: Romania, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Poland and Hungary.

1. Sustainable Development Principles in Economic Sectors and Tourism

The development is the economic growth which satisfies the needs of society in terms (UNEP and UNWTO, 2005) of well-being in the short, medium and long term, with the need to meet current needs without endangering those of future generations (FAO). This notion conciliates the environment and the economy, representing a development that sustains human progress for the entire planet and for a long-term future (Budowski, 1976). Within this approach, we are pursuing the compatibility interaction of the economic, human, environmental and ecological systems, in order to meet the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development strategy includes simultaneous progress in all four dimensions (Andrei *et al.*, 2012; Streimikiene *et al.*, 2016a, Streimikiene *et al.*, 2016b).

The concept of sustainable development was born 30 years ago (Telfer, Wall, 1996), as an answer to the emergence of environmental issues and the natural resources crisis, especially those related to energy. Practically, the Environment Conference in Stockholm, on 5-16 of June 1972, is where it is recognized that human activities contribute to the environmental damage, which threatens the future of the Planet.

In 1987, in the WCED (1987) report from Brundtland, the main definition of sustainable development is formulated: "Sustainable development is the one that pursues the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs".

Anyway, the "sustainable development" term has become very popular just after the Conference "United Nations Rio de Janeiro on Environment and Development" in the summer of 1992, known as the "Earth Summit". This has led to the elaboration of several conventions on climate change (reduction of methane and carbon dioxide emissions), biological diversity (conservation of species) and the cessation of mass deforestation. The sustainable development support plan - Agenda 21 has also been developed.

World Summit for Sustainable Development took place in Johannesburg at August 26 - September 4 2002. In this Summit the Heads of State and Government attended, numerous representatives of the major industry and trade groups. A number of partnerships made progresses towards improving environmental protection, social and economic development, three important pillars of sustainable development at global, national, regional and local level. From an institutional point of view, it has been required to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations bodies, international financial institutions and environmental funds. States also need to encourage partnerships, progress in formulating national sustainable development strategies and start their work before 2005.

Starting with 1990, a series of debates regarding sustainable tourism development were presented only in theory (Bramwell, Lane, 1993; Hunter, 1995a, 1995b; Green, 1995; Archer, 1996). The researchers analysed sustainability in certain specific tourist destinations and their judgment about sustainable tourism development was presented without reference to any specific criteria supported by measurements or assessments (Farrell, 1992; Klemm, 1992; Owen *et al.*, 1993; Gilbert *et al.*, 1994; Mak, Moncur, 1995; Driml, Common, 1996; Haukins, Cunningham, 1996; Knight *et al.*, 1997; Tosun, 1998; Griffin, 2000). Some scholars argued that concept of sustainable tourism means more an aspiration, instead of an objective that can be measurable or achievable (Ko, 2005). Therefore, the application of the concept of sustainable development as an achievable and practical objective for tourism has not yet matured (Ko, 2005).

2. Sustainable Tourism Development Priorities in the European Union

Sustainability is a primary objective of the European Union. The aim of the approach is to continuously improve the life quality and welfare of current and future generations through an integrated approach between environmental protection and social justice.

Quality of life and welfare of current and future generations through an integrated approach between economic development, environmental protection, social justice and economic development.

At EU level, sustainable development has become a target since 1997 when it was included in the Maastricht Treaty. The Goteborg Sustainable Development Strategy was adopted in 2001, which was added to the external dimension in 2002 in Barcelona and in 2006 adopted the Sustainable Development Strategy of the EU. More than 300 people, were involved at all the levels in supporting the European Union rural development sector, unanimously decided that it is time for the rural area to have a better life for its inhabitants, for which, after 20 years (5-6 September 2016), a second Cork statement (Cork 2.0) was initialed, unfortunately without the support and contribution of the Romanian side.

In addition, the document originators of Cork 2.0 requires politicians to invest in rural communities identity in the growth potential of the sector and generate policies aim at making rural areas attractive to people so they can live and work in different life stages. Last but not least, Cork 2.0 proposes that the 10-point program (similar to its predecessor, Cork 1 position paper) be sustained and its vision and guidelines to be incorporated into the future development of European sectoral policies:

- > Promoting the Prosperity of Rural Areas;
- ➤ Investing in rural vitality and viability;
- > Preservation of the environmental quality in the rural areas;
- ➤ Natural resources management;

- > Encourage actions on the environment;
- ➤ More attention to innovation and specialized knowledge;
- ➤ Intensify governance in rural areas;
- > Development of supply and simplifying policies;
- > Improving performance and fund management.

The European Union's (EU) long-term growth policy gives a prominent role to research-based innovation. Initially, the Lisbon Strategy aimed for a competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy. Its successor, the Strategy of Europe 2020, has targeted sustainable and smart growth. In Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, commonly referred to here to current member states eastern EU, agriculture is economically relatively more important than elsewhere in the EU, but its performance regarding the productivity and spatial and social equity could be considerably improved.

The member states, for the Rio+20 Conference, decided to start a process in order to enhance a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The United Nations General Assembly adopted, on 25th of September 2015, the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable, Integrated and Transformable Development, alongside with 17 sustainable development objectives.

The most important from the set of 17 sustainable development objectives are the following ones:

- ➤ Eradicating poverty The European Union focus on Least Developed Countries and Low-Income Countries where the poverty is mostly concentrated;
- ➤ Completion of hunger, food security and promoting sustainable agriculture the European target is economic growth but in the same time promoting sustainable agricultural practices;
- > Providing a quality education and promotion of opportunities for lifelong learning;
- > Creating a resilient infrastructure, stimulating innovation and promoting sustainable industrialization:
- ➤ Ensuring the inclusion, safety and sustainability of cities and human settlements the EU policy for urban territories focuses on supporting access to water, urban mobility;
- Ensuring sustainable patterns of consumption and production;
- > Strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

The tourist's favorite destination in the last years, Europe, was a new political framework for tourism adopted by European Commission in 2010. Four key priorities have been identified in new tourism development strategy:

- Stimulating competitiveness in tourism;
- Promoting the sustainable and high-quality tourism;
- Consolidating Europe's image as a sustainable and high quality destination;
- Maximizing the EU financial potential for the development of tourism.

However, there are several important challenges of sustainable tourism development in

EU:

- safety and security: safety of food and accommodation and socio-cultural threats related to sustainability;
- economic competitiveness –the difficulty in choosing and keeping skilled staff;

- technological keeping abreast of developments in IT due to globalization and progress in information technology (IT tools for booking holidays, social media advising on tourism services, etc.)
- markets and competition –the growing demand for personalized experiences and new products.

There are close linkages between sustainable tourism and sustainable rural development. These linkages are provided in following section of the paper.

3. Sustainability in the Rural Areas – Rural Tourism in Connection with Rural Sustainability and Tourism Sustainability

The OECD's activity identifies several indicators that can be applied in a general framework for the country's competitiveness. The OECD's approach is to create a set of sensitive and robust indicators in order for the governments to evaluate and measure tourism competitiveness in their country over time. The goal frame is to provide a tool guide for tourism competitiveness and inform policy, not to produce an index or a ranking of the most competitive countries (World travel and tourism council, 2014).

With different words, decision makers need reliable information for tourism development impact and operations on the environmental and socio-cultural conditions of destinations (Kuo *et al.*, 2005; Fominiene, 2016).

In order to see if the tourism contributes to the sustainable development, the tourism industry should measure it. A standard is needed to measure the progress towards (or regress away from) sustainable tourism development, as the assessment of progress cannot be judged and determined unless a standard is provided. The assessment necessarily demands comparison between the previous and current state of system quality (Ko, 2005).

Quantitative or qualitative data can be used to produce information for the standard for sustainable tourism development assessment. Anyway, quantitative data may have more advantages than qualitative data for a tourism sustainability assessment. Quantitative and qualitative data are complementary, and both incorporate merits and demerits. Perceptual studies, administered through questionnaire surveys or other surveys are also suggested for quantitative data as official statistics is very limited (Ko, 2005). A perception studies are already used widely in other areas to measure the socio-economic impacts of tourism and the quality of service and products. These types of perceptual studies are helping in evaluating the sustainability of a particular tourist destination, where technical data for tourism activities is not available. By trying to produce quantitative data with the perceptual studies, different rating scales can be used. A typical quantitative scale for data is range from 1 to 5 but the 10-point rating scale can be introduced.

In the context of sustainable tourism development, indicators are sets of information selected for a periodic use to measure assets and issues changes (Velikova, 2001) and management of a given destination. Indicators are measures expressed in single numbers, percentage or ratios, qualitative descriptions or existence/non-existence of certain elements concerning environmental, social and economic issues. They are signals of current issues, emerging situations or problems, need for action and results of actions.

Further, some of the sustainable tourism indicators are analyzed: the number of tourists, tourism contribution to employment, tourism expenditure, capital investments and tourism share of GPD for certain countries. These indicators were chosen because they are the most important economic indicators for sustainable tourism. Analyzing the indicators below,

we can see in the same time the impact on economic growth and the competitiveness in mostly South-Eastern countries and Lithuania.

In *Table 1* the set of indicators of sustainable tourism development are presented based on statistical data provided by EUROSTAT. There are other important indicators linking tourism with economic development however these indicators are not provided in EUROST therefore comparison and assessment of countries is not possible.

Table.1 Indicators of sustainable tourism development

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Indicators	Countries	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
No. of tourists (milion)	UE	-	-	220,437,204	219,039,715	209,379,321	207,807,749	205,373,415	210,421,835	-
	Romania	-	-	-	1,800,237	1,819,627	1,795,490	1,744,979	1,770,499	1,593,251
	Lithuania	1,036,580	839,440	890,202	975,708	624,272	682,718	711,835	701,600	710,490
	Poland	11,747,000	11,841,000	10,766,000	10,227,000	10,860,000	11,880,000	4,250,086	4,293,217	4,418,247
	Bulgaria	1,125,775	1,468,080	1,085,735	1,117,119	708,617	898,328	1,048,103	1,340,724	1,580,236
	Hungary	2,866,220	4,364,776	3,838,292	2,663,136	2,972,789	2,883,016	2,932,883	3,066,132	3,156,207
Contribution of tourism to employment (thousand)	UE	222,875.50	218,952.20	216,121.30	216,218.50	215,811.30	215,421.80	218,333.20	220,829.50	224,172.60
	Romania	9,369.10	9,243.50	8,712.80	8528.2	8605.1	8549.14	8,613.70	8,535.40	8,448.80
	Lithuania	1,427.10	1,317.40	1,247.70	1,253.60	1,275.70	1,292.80	1,319.00	1,334.90	1,361.40
	Poland	15,799.80	15,868.00	15,473.10	15,562.10	15,590.70	15,568.00	15,861.50	16,083.90	16,196.90
	Bulgaria	3,360.70	3,253.60	3,075.30	2,965.20	2,934.00	2,934.90	2,981.40	3,031.90	3,016.80
	Hungary	3,848.30	3,747.70	3,732.40	3,759.00	3,827.20	3,892.80	4,100.80	4,210.50	4,351.60
Tourism expenditure (milion EUR)	UE	-	-	-	-	405,433	408,306	411,210	420,081	-
	Romania	1,896	1,993	2,016	2,097	2,109	2,295	2,109	2,176	2,636
	Lithuania	655	6,819	-	-	-	8,595	8,823	900	908
	Poland	5,894	6,372	7,029	8,561	9,100	8,882	9,129	9,132	9,540
	Bulgaria	1,672	1,858	-	-	-	1,189	1,230	1,382	1,459
	Hungary	2,721	2,873	2,916	2,985	2,897	3,048	2,457	2,526	2,718
Capital investments (bilion EUR)	UE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Romania	10.1	10.5	10.8	11.1	11.9	11.8	13.1	14.2	14.7
	Lithuania	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3
	Poland	9	9.4	9.8	10.1	10.7	10.8	12.3	12.8	12
	Bulgaria	1	1.2	1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.4	1.3
	Hungary	208	206.4	205.9	202.3	205.8	224.1	255	268.7	245.5
Tourism share of GDP (%)	UE	6.9	-	-	-	-	8.5	8.9	9.7	9.8
	Romania	-	6.20	4.90	4.9	5	4.8	5.10	5.30	5.20
	Lithuania	4.7	5.7	4.3	4.2	4.1	4.1	4.2	4.3	-
	Poland	-	4.8	4	4.1	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5
	Bulgaria	-	25	13.3	12.9	12.4	13	13.1	12.3	12.8
	Hungary	-	10.8	10.8	10.8	10.5	9.7	10.1	10.4	10.5

Source: own compilation based on Eurostat.

As one can see from information provided in *Table 1* the highest share of tourism in GDP is in Bulgaria, following by Hungary. Lithuania and Poland distinguish with the smallest share of tourism in GDP. However, the highest number of visiting tourist, tourism expenditures and contribution to employment are in Poland following by Hungary. Hungary distinguishes with the highest capital investments in tourism. According to all provided indicators Lithuania is the least advanced country in the development of the sustainable tourism. This is related mainly to the territory and population of Lithuania. Poland is the biggest country in terms of territory and population therefore this country has the best conditions and diverse rural territories for tourism development and therefore is able to achieve the best results in sustainable rural tourism development.

Conclusions

The agriculture is so important because it provides a level of food safety and sustainability of environmental resources. If promotion of agricultural development would enhance the tourism development, then public tourism policy could be stimulated to actively pursue the development of agricultural sector.

High income tourism facilitates from tourism revenue and all the countries should determine the allowed balanced level of leakage by promoting ecotourism and cultural tourism.

Trade and investment follow each other. The business travel benefits for international trade also encourages firms of national and foreign direct investors. Foreign direct investments (FDI) resulting from business travel introduces technology, capital, people, skills, know-how, demand for the national economy and improvements in trade balances.

Tourism has strong links with several industries in national economies and can have an impact on the expansion of many industries, acting as an effective tool for the development of the broader economic, especially for rural and low income areas.

Measuring the impact of tourism through the use of indicator frameworks is useful in planning sustainable tourism as a guide in developing strategies to achieve the positive side of these indicators. Qualitative or quantitative data can be used for producing information for the standard of sustainable tourism development assessment.

Indicators framework linking sustainable tourism development with sustainable rural development was created by applying it to five new EU Member States. Though Bulgaria has the highest share of tourism in GDP, Poland distinguishes with the highest number of visiting tourists, highest tourism expenditures and highest contribution to employment. According to all provided indicators Lithuania is the least advanced country in sustainable tourism development among analyzed countries however this is related mainly with the size of territory and population in Lithuania as the smallest one. As Poland is the biggest country in terms of territory and population among analyzed countries, it has the best conditions and diverse rural territories for tourism development and therefore is able to achieve the best results in sustainable rural tourism development.

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DARNAUS TURIZMO VYSTYMAS KAIMO TERITORIJOSE

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SANTRAUKA

Darnus turizmo vystymasis yra viena svarbiausių tiek išsivysčiusių, tiek besivystančių šalių politikų. Straipsnio tikslas yra apibrėžti turizmo bei žemės ūkio plėtros ryšius per darnaus turizmo ir darnios kaimo plėtros prizmę. Straipsnyje išanalizuoti darnaus vystymosi principai bei darnaus turizmo plėtros prioritetai ES. Autorės pateikė rodiklių sistemą, sujungusią darnaus kaimo turizmo bei darnios kaimo plėtros prioritetus. Remiantis EUROSTAT statistiniais duomenimis, buvo išanalizuotos darnaus turizmo plėtros tendencijos penkiose ES šalyse narėse: Rumunijoje, Bulgarijoje, Vengrijoje, Lenkijoje ir Lietuvoje.

REIKŠMINIAI ŽODŽIAI: darnus vystymasis, darnus turizmo vystymasis, kaimo plėtra, darni kaimo plėtra.