
DEVELOPMENT OF SPA TOURISM - POSSIBILITY OF RECONSTRUCTION OF LEMEŠKA SPA IN THE SYSTEM OF CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION BETWEEN SERBIA AND HUNGARY

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Abstract: With the development of medicine and awareness of the value of medicinal thermal waters, the trend of spa and medical tourism was gaining enormous proportions after the Second World War. New tourist places are being introduced and built, thus becoming centers of cultural events, sports competitions, scientific and professional gatherings. As for Vojvodina, this trend did not have an upward trend. There was no interest from social and economic organizations to invest more in tourism. For this reason, spas survived only by joining health care facilities and obtaining the status of their ward. Visitors were no longer satisfied with the standard offer placed on the market. It was no longer enough to say that water and mud were healing, the spa became the seat of social tourism. The authors of the paper presented a part of their many years of research related to the possibility of rebuilding the Lemeška Spa in cooperation with the state of Hungary, which has been out of operation for many years. More specifically, only part of the study of the feasibility and research of the authors is presented. The aim of the paper is to show the importance of reconstruction of the spa facility, both for Vojvodina itself and for the wider tourist market.

Keywords: wellness, spa tourism, development, Vojvodina

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1. INTRODUCTION

Spa tourism, both worldwide and in Serbia, has a long and rich tradition. The roots of the spa tourism product date back to the Roman Empire and their good knowledge of water features. This type of tourist movement, both in the world and in Serbia, has a long and rich tradition. In Serbia, spa tourism began to develop intensively after the First World War, with the best results achieved between 1935 and 1940. The prosperity of spa tourism has been interrupted by war events in the territory of the former Yugoslavia since 1991 (Cvijanovic et al., 2018). The decline in tourist traffic lasted until 2002, when there were some improvements. The spas can be characterized as complex natural motifs, the development of which is based on the following elements: thermomineral springs, noble gases and medicinal mud (peloid), clean air, climatic elements with pronounced stimulating and calming effect, thus preventing the strengthening of the human body, and various vegetation as a significant recreational and aesthetic attribute of spa tourism motives (Станковић, 2009). Wellness tourism is an expanding niche market globally, providing specific business opportunities through products that promote or maintain health (Kelly, 2012). The spas are considered to be sites offering therapeutic services mainly based on the application of thermal and mineral water. These services are provided by qualified staff in a professional, equipped facility and in a comfortable relaxing atmosphere (Pyke et al., 2016). However, as in addition to the health-healing function of the spa, which causes longer tourist stays, other types of tourism are developing in recent times, the length of stay in these tourist places is decreasing. It is for this reason that tourists are willing to take more short trips during the year, which is in line with world tourism trends (Bushell et al., 2009). The authors gladly presented part of their long-standing research, as well as part of a feasibility study they produced for the purpose of rebuilding Lemeška Spa, in collaboration with Hungary. The purpose of the study, as well as the presentation of its parts in this paper, is to point out the possibilities and importance of the restoration of the spa complex, as well as the possibility of placing the spa tourism of Vojvodina on the wider tourist market and supporting cross-border cooperation between the two countries (Premović, 2016). The paper used primary and secondary documentation, as well as a large number of

historical publications, all with the aim of collecting as much data as possible, since the Spa has not been in operation for many years. Several market analyzes will be presented, indicating the basic values of the spa.

2. RESEARCH AREA - BASIC CHARACTERISTICS AND SIGNIFICANCE OF RENOVATION

In the territory of the town of Sombor, in the Western Bačka District, there is the Lemeška Spa, in the area of the settlement Svetozar Miletić. It was founded in 1885 and was widely visited according to the then. It is located at an altitude of 93 m, in the area of Bačka Lesna (Diluvial) terrace, the western edge of Bačka (Telečka) woodland. The Royal Chemical Laboratory in Belgrade conducted a water analysis in 1929, and it was then determined that water and peloid (medicinal mud) were extremely medicinal. Water quality has been a topic of research in the past, and it has been confirmed that Lemeška Spa has healing water sites. In order to secure concessions and for exploitation purposes, chemical analysis of water quality will be required, while pharmacological testing will be crucial for obtaining the status of a spa (Hall, 2015; Cvijanovic et al., 2018). In the planned development of the settlement of Svetozar Miletić, the town of Sombor and its surroundings, the construction of the spa-recreational center Lemeška Spa will represent one of the most significant undertakings in this process. Although the need for revitalization and construction of this center existed much earlier, no financial, nor strategic conditions for its reconstruction and further development have been achieved. With its tourist offer, Lemeška Spa needs to meet the needs of segmented consumer groups. Placing on the tourist market of Lemeška Spa can be achieved by adequate valorisation and presentation of all the natural beauties of the environment, specific elements of quality that are sought to be achieved, by providing a diverse range of tourism products, such as top-notch recreation, as well as achieving economic benefits for the local population, thus for all municipalities in the surrounding area (Cohen et al., 2008; Gajic et al., 2018). Creating ideal marketing, it is necessary to attract tourists, but primarily by highlighting the implications of the product created on the psychophysical and health, as well as the recreational value of the stay (Hall, 2015). Given that Lemeška Spa is a very complex area, for strategically positive and economically justifiable tourism development, it will be necessary to involve many entities in the development process. The providers of the development of the tourist offer, as well as the development of the tourist destination, must be foreseen by a feasibility study. This involves organizing management, which will be responsible for the overall development and coordination of strategic development, and will link all interested parties in the development of the Spa into a synchronized business (Connell et al., 2006; Kim et al., 2015). Social justification: the revitalization of the spa will lead to direct and indirect employment of the local population as well as the residents of the surrounding local communities; launching the development of other economic sectors, then the launch of all potential tourism products on the tourist market of strong competition will inevitably begin (Carniero et al., 2015). It will increase agricultural, craft production, as well as activate small family farms and associations. Involvement of the public and private sectors in the development of all forms of tourism and complementary activities (Camfield et al., 2008; McLeod et al., 2010). Economic justification (Chen et al., 2016): increasing the economic utilization of all natural and anthropogenic resources of the municipality of Svetozar Miletić and wider spatial units; generating additional income through the development of tourism products; generating revenue through the launching of complementary businesses. Direct and indirect employment of local people and seasonal workers; starting up a domestic handicraft and women's association, as well as small farms, and generating income through promotion and sales.

3. ANALYSIS OF THE MARKET VALUES OF THE SPA AREA

In this paper, the authors have highlighted some of the analyzes of the market values of the Lemeška Spa area, in order to see the value of the resource base as an attractive opportunity to market to the wider tourist market.

Table 5. Indicators related to the attractiveness of Lemeška Spa and factors important for the programming of spa tourism as a tourist product - the Hillary du Cros and Olga Hadžić method

Indicators	Lemeška Spa	Ukupno
Degree of recognition	3	
	2	3
An avocative component	5	
	5	5
Attractions spa for special needs	5	
	5	5
Existence of natural and cultural complementary goods	5	
	5	5
Access to the Spa	5	
	5	5
Spa distance from major broadcasting centers	5	
	4	5
Service amenities	2	
	2	2

(Source: author's research, 2019)

Table 2. Subindicators related to the management of Fruška Gora and Vršac mountains - the Hillary du Cros and Olga Hadžić method

Subindicators	Lemeška banja	Ukupno
Stage appeal and experiential component	5	5
	4	
The influence of the natural good on the social development of the local community	5	5
	5	
Educational and scientific significance	4	4
	3	
A rarity of the natural good	3	3
	3	
Representativeness for the destination	2	3
	3	
Sensitivity of the natural good	2	2
	2	
Management of natural resources Irregular monitoring	2	2
	1	
Possibility of negative impact of large number of visitors	4	4
	3	

(Source: author's research, 2019)

In addition to the degree of recognition, another indicator speaks about the current state of spa tourism, which are service amenities. The existence of parking lots, restaurants, information centers, well-marked roads and trails, guide services, service stations and various other amenities is one of the important factors in demand for a tourist product. Table 1 shows that the ratings given for service benefits are very low, so that the average rating of the current situation, according to these subindicators, ranges from 2 to 2.5, which is a negative image. All other subindicators that have been evaluated indicate the potentials of Lemeška Spa, that is, indicate that the spa may be the future leading destination for spa tourism in Vojvodina. In some localities, besides only sports and recreational activities, interesting cultural events can be held. It is this possibility that represents the appeal of a natural good for special needs. Bearing in mind the richness of anthropogenic values of space, then clear high marks were given to these subindicators. The existence of complementary natural and cultural assets enables the formation of tourist routes in isolated zones that can provide a high quality experience for tourists over a longer period of time and therefore also

enable greater economic profit for the local community from tourism development. As there is a good example of complementarity of natural and cultural goods in this area, this is a good guideline for all tourism decision makers to become the backbone of spa tourism development in Vojvodina and therefore a well recognized brand in the whole country. The spa is accessible, and with just a little extra organization, this situation could be applied to almost all sites of importance for tourism. Attractiveness is one of the important factors for the demand for a tourist product, which includes a visit to natural attractiveness. Considering the proximity of Fruška Gora and the Danube Route, which is one of the most important cycling transversals in Europe, it is clear to what extent this information should be favorable for the development of spa tourism first in Lemeška Banja and then to all other interesting destinations and localities in land (table 2).

Table 3. SWOT analysis of the Lemesz Spa spas and market values

ADVANTAGES	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Favorable tourist-geographical position. A large part of the roads were reconstructed. - Natural environment - no pollution, noise, stress, untouched nature, proximity and richness of rural areas. - Existence of natural healing factor (water and peloid), richness of mineral springs. - Traditionality of all tourist products on offer. -Traditional, healthy and quality rural gastronomy. -Cultural-historical heritage. -The existence of cultural manifestations. -Different offer of excursion activities. - Hospitality of the local population. - Positive attitude of the local population on the development of tourism. - Awareness of the importance of tourism development and support for the development of Sombor and other municipalities. - Interest of households in tourism and contribution to development. - Initiatives for new basic and additional tourism products. -Awareness of the problems in the development of the spa, with the local population and other participants in the development. -Developed basic telecommunications network. -Existence of awareness on the development of environmental protection systems. -Continuous energy supply of electricity and water. -Increasing demand in the spa tourism market. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate connectivity to the most important traffic hubs, despite its good location. -Low market projection. - There is no adequate cooperation with tourism organizations in order to jointly solve the current problems of the Spa. -Insufficient investment for restoration and construction. -Very bad communication of local economy with potential investors. - Outdated water and sewage network. -Technological obsolescence of electricity distribution capacities. -Inadequate, nonexistent and outdated tourist signage. -Lack of parking space. - Non-implementation of laws and penal policies (protection of the living environment). -Not maintaining the remaining resources. -Lack of space under the state protection system. -Lack of planning measures for spatial-urban development of Banja. -The initial infrastructure for building certain capacities is non-existent. - Existence of wild construction in the surrounding spatial units. -Drawing of all accommodation capacities and very low stability of nearby facilities. -Low marketing of all existing tourist activities and attractions. -Management system underdeveloped. - Poor economic awareness of the importance of development. -Lack of educated staff for occupations in the tourism industry. -Lack of involvement of households in the development of tourism and complementary activities.
CHANCES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High ranking among the spas of Vojvodina. - Close and good connectivity to broadcast areas. -Various complementary tourist values that complement the tourist offer of Lemeska Spa. -Opportunity to invest in private equity. - Conservation of nature in accordance with the principles of sustainable development. -Hiring experts in the field of tourism with a university degree. -Interest for investing in infrastructure. - Applying a novelty in the tourism business. - Interest of the city of Sombor, the state of Hungary and all municipalities in the area for tourism development. -Expectation from tourism is high by the locals and all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Uncertain economic flows. - Lack of incentive funds. -Lower the payment power of the wider social classes. -Lack of local sources of financing for infrastructure and transport. -Lack of standards in service quality. -Decaying locations for tourism development. -Fastly develop competition for spa destinations. -Lack of professionally crafted product. -Low growth of complementary activities. -The level of awareness of the population towards public goods and interests is very low. -Difficulties in agreeing on development priorities.

stakeholders. - Market segmentation: more frequent and shorter vacations. -Fast privatization and stability of tourism companies. -Conditions for the development of a large number of tourism products. -Formation of a recognizable tourist brand with modern tourist offer - Implementation of European labor regulations and employment policies. - Internet accessibility. -Education of personnel.	-Lack of public-private partnerships in tourism business and development. - Undeveloped cooperation of tourism actors in the wider environment.
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(Source: author's research, 2019)

4. CONCLUSION

Lemeška Spa was opened in 1925, when both the spa and catering facilities were erected in a beautifully landscaped park. There were no traces left of the facility. There are claims that the facility at the time had 12 baths, that water and peloid were used to treat rheumatism. Due to a lack of maintenance and a small number of visitors, the spa facility was abandoned during 1969, and in 1978, during a storm, this facility collapsed, replacing the now-in-service toilet.

The State Chemical Laboratory has concluded that water can be used in balneotherapy for bathing as an adjunct to treatment as part of medical rehabilitation for the following chronic diseases: chronic, inflammatory, degenerative and extraarticular rheumatism, as well as the consequences of trauma. The authors of the paper aimed to present part of their long-standing research for the purpose of developing a feasibility study in collaboration with Hungary. All available primary and secondary documentation was used, and several analyzes of the market values of the Spa were done to show the basic characteristics and values of this tourist product. Lemeška Spa has a rich resource base for renovation and re-commissioning and marketing of the tourist market. The construction of the spa will stimulate the development of other zones in the city, which should enable the development of an economy based on the application of knowledge, utilization of available resources and improvement of value chains, increasing the competitiveness of small and medium-sized entrepreneurship, reducing unemployment and increasing living standards in general. The number of factors influences the consideration of the suitability of the site, where the shortest could be stated: demographic (labor, customers), construction (soil geomechanics, spatial expansion of production), state - strategic (legislation and incorporation into plans of general and detailed regulation, permits for construction, environmental approvals, taxes and fees), interest - ownership (volume of initial and total investments, profitability), infrastructure (proximity and quality of access roads, electricity and other energy supply, water supply, wastewater, atmospheric and process water network), competitive (proximity to market, price and security of raw material supply), location prices, production needs (value of facilities and equipment), etc. Awareness of the environment and sustainable development is on the rise, and destinations that highlight sustainability are in demand. This results in an increased need for security and protection, and aversion of tourists to destinations that are considered unsafe. Increasingly important are water quality, tourist protection and the ability to file complaints. When it comes to spa tourism product, the great advantage is that it directly affects the extension of the tourist season. This is a great success for spas that have institutes, institutes and rehabilitation centers, where they can work all year long. Lemeška Spa had a limited supply, with insufficient investment funds to expand the offer. The only option for attracting more tourists is to enrich the offer, extend the season, organize cultural and sporting events. There are some wanderings about the realization of the health and tourist function of the spa, as well as their harmonization, that is, highlighting and developing one at the expense of the other. There is inevitably a misunderstanding between healthcare professionals and tourism professionals. Mostly medical experts try to subordinate the entire offer of the spa to the health function and the contents that enable its realization, while the supporters of exclusive tourist orientation of the spa want to reduce the spa treatment to one of the services in tourist traffic. However, looking at the experiences of European spas, it can be concluded that the spa will still retain its healing function to a greater or lesser extent.

One of the better and more efficient moves of Lemeška Spa could be to organize the conditions for the reception of sports teams that are preparing or to hold various sports competitions, which would be a huge plus for the development of sports and event tourism. There is a need for well-designed and purposeful programs to bring the supply level of Lemeška Spa to a higher level. Since there is rarely an attempt in our spas to design and offer complete sports and recreation programs in which creations of experts from different specialties are involved, this provides a unique opportunity for Lemeška Spa to be among the first of its kind. The spa would offer quality and

attractive programs on the market, not only for healing, but also for sports and cultural recreation and various other events.

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