
PROMOTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE AND ITS IMPACT ON TOURISM DEVELOPMENT - WITH A FOCUS ON THE PRIZREN REGION

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to present a summary of knowledge on cultural heritage and its impact on the development of tourism in the territory of Kosovo, with a special focus on the Prizren region, given the great importance of these industries in economic development.

We know that methods in the social sciences are indispensable research tools that enable us to achieve new results and knowledge, or to correct existing ones. In this paper we have applied almost all the methods little by little, but we will single them out: the historical method which consists of techniques and instructions by which historians use primary sources and other data, such as: archaeological data, for to make studies on the histories of the past for the cultural heritage and the descriptive or descriptive method, through which we have described the various historical monuments, as an important part of the cultural heritage as well as as a basis for the development of tourism in the country.

People all over the world organize tourist trips with the aim of relaxing, having fun, doing various activities so that they get away from their work routine and their work responsibilities. This paper provides a theoretical approach to cultural heritage and tourism, as well as the impact of effective and efficient management in increasing the number of tourists and visitors and increasing the use of cultural heritage capacities in Kosovo.

Based on the data of the cultural heritage in the country, such as various historical monuments built centuries ago, for which local and foreign tourists show special interest to visit, through which the development of tourism in the country is enabled, Investing in the further development and promotion of these tourist products, would be of particular importance, as it would inform the public about the monuments of historical and heritage importance of our country, which should be visited.

Therefore, based on the available data on the topic in question, we can conclude that the development of tourism depends on the promotion of products, so our recommendation is that local institutions pay great attention to the strict implementation of long-term tourism development strategy, thus investing in the preservation of the rich cultural heritage that our country has and its promotion through various cultural and artistic activities, as well as informing the general population about them through the media.

Keywords: cultural heritage, tourism, historical monuments.

1. THEORY OF TOURISM

By tourism we mean the movement of people for the purpose of recreation, entertainment, healing and expansion of cultural knowledge.⁸

Kosovo, with its territorial size and small geographical area in the Balkan Peninsula in Southeast Europe, has a wide cultural heritage, including ancient cultural monuments, clothing, museums, and traditional food, as an important cultural, political and economic resource.

As a rich country in cultural and historical heritage resources, it has its own opportunities for development, which can lead to a change in the role of tourism in the economic development of the country.⁹

The territory of today's Kosovo has an ancient history of civilization that is evidenced by archeological sites, fortifications, cities, sacred and profane monuments, monuments and natural landscapes that enable the development of cultural tourism.¹⁰

⁸https://sq.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turizmi_n%C3%AB_Kosov%C3%AB

⁹ <https://www.rtklive.com/sq/news-single.php?ID=385119>

¹⁰ <https://www.rtklive.com/sq/news-single.php?ID=385119>

With its natural and human motives, Kosovo offers good opportunities for the development of several types of domestic, regional and international tourism, which makes it a very attractive and open place for all.

Although Kosovo includes a small territory, it has monuments with rich treasures that have special values of cultural and historical heritage, which can be used by its population for excursions, sports, recreation, leisure, culture, education and training. Also, this area is rich in spiritual, material and natural heritage values that reflect traces of ancient civilization and traditions, culture and way of life from the early Neolithic period to the present day creativity. Even though there is no sea, has many tourist resources that create the opportunity for the development of other types of tourism. It has rich cultural and natural heritage that create opportunities to benefit economically but also in terms of presenting cultural values, both to foreign and local visitors.

Viewed from the aspect of tourism, Kosovo is composed of five tourist areas: 1. Tourist area of the Albanian Alps, 2. Tourist area of Shari Mountains, 3. Tourist area of Prishtina, 4. Tourist area of Mitrovica (Shala of Bajgore), and 5. Anamorava tourist area¹¹.

1.1. Prizren Region



The city of Prizren has been known since antiquity, as a unique place in the Balkans, for the values of cultural heritage, civilizations and different religions. Thanks to the favorable geographical position, the harmonious interweaving of these cultures throughout history and an enviable number of monuments of all time, the city of Prizren rightly bears the epithet of "museum city", "open air museum" or even "Dubrovnik of the Balkans", to be listed as one of the most beautiful cities in Kosovo.

Located at the foot of the Sharr Mountains (which have been declared a "national park"), on both shores of Lumbardh and at the intersection of important trade routes between east and west, the city of Prizren, throughout history was known as an important cultural, economic and diplomatic center.¹²

Over the centuries, starting from the Illyrian-Dardanian, Roman and Byzantine periods, Prizren was one of the main stations on the road "Via de Zenta" that connected the Adriatic coastal cities with other centers inland.

Connecting with the southern road "Via Egnatia", which went to Thessaloniki, the ancient "Theranda" or "Prizdriana" of Byzantine times, was a bridge between the shores of the Adriatic Sea and the Aegean.

2. TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE PRIZREN REGION

2.1. Tourist chance

Thanks to the installed cultural infrastructure which tries to be in the function of preserving, cultivating and presenting the values of the material and spiritual cultural heritage, the city of Prizren projects its chance in the development of tourism as a profitable economic activity. It has an enviable potential of cultural values inherited from different historical periods. With 24 identified archeological sites, with 39 Christian cult objects, 46 Islamic sacred objects, with over 74 objects with pronounced features of folk architecture, Prizren aims to become a frequented tourist center.

¹¹ MSPNP (Ministry of Spatial Planning and Nature Protection), "Kosovo Environmental Action Plan", Prishtina, August 2005.

¹² Prizren is the cradle of cultural heritage (shqiperia.com)

2.2. Development strategy and preservation of historical character

In the strategy of development and investments in the cultural infrastructure of the city of Prizren, the restoration of the heritage objects will occupy an important place, in order to create the most favorable conditions for the development of cultural activities in them.

Due to its strategic position, cultural heritage and natural beauty, Prizren is undoubtedly one of the most important settlements in the country, thus creating very favorable conditions for tourism development. He has a sensational past that has piqued the curiosity of various guides, historians, geographers and scientists, who published many works on this well-known administrative region cultural, historical, historical, political, etc.

The region of Prizren has been inhabited since ancient times and preserves evidence and archaeological monuments from the Neolithic, Eneolithic, Bronze, Iron, Antiquity and beyond.

This is evidenced by the numerous artifacts discovered during the archeological excavations, made in a number of localities. Archaeological data prove that Prizren is one of the oldest cities in Southeast Europe and beyond.

The Municipality of Prizren with an area of 640 square kilometers (5.94% of the territory of Kosovo) is located in the southwest of Kosovo with 74 settlements and about 175,000 inhabitants. It borders the municipalities of Gjakova, Rahovec, Suhareka, Strpce, Dragash, Mamusha as well as neighboring countries Albania and Macedonia.

The most valuable wealth of Prizren is its values inherited from past centuries - the cultural heritage it has. These values are manifested with a perfect architecture and magical urban structure on the one hand and with special folk traditions on the other.

2.3. Art and Culture

Prizren is also known for the good tradition of cultivating fine arts. Numerous traditional cultural events have been organized and continue to be organized in it, such as: the Festival of the old civic song "Zambaku i Prizrenit", the Documentary and Short Film Festival "Dokufest", the good start of the work of the Professional Theater of the city, "Grape Harvest Festival" and a series of other cultural events of national and international character, make Prizren even more attractive in terms of tourism. While, to this are added the rare natural beauties of the Sharr Mountains with the famous ski center, it can rightly be said that the "mosaic of tourist requirements" is fully completed.

3. CULTURAL HERITAGE

Prizren's cultural heritage is a rare color and represents the most attractive omnibus of identities in Kosovo.¹³

Prizren is the place where different cultures and civilizations meet, whose contribution has been essential for the city today to be a value of world civilization in terms of cultural heritage. It has been known since antiquity as a unique place in the Balkans for the values of cultural heritage, different civilizations and religions.

3.1. Prizren kitchen

Prizren is known for its dough preparations, among which are: pogaqe, topli, pitajak with eggs, pite and fli. The traditional dishes of Prizren constitute the essence of Prizren cuisine, as well as cherries with meatballs, peppers with cottage cheese, Prizren casserole, stuffed-peppers, musak, beans, goulash, burjan with meat, Elbasan casserole, are the most outstanding dishes of Prizren. Also, Prizren is distinguished by different types of sweets such as: suggarcake, tespishta, baklava, sytliac, tullumba and halva, which are among the most favorite.

3.2. List of historical monuments in Prizren

Prizren, together with its historical values contributes not only to its city, but to the entire territory of Kosovo. Numerous historical monuments are the clearest evidence that this area has been inhabited since ancient times. Among the most precious values of Prizren are the monuments of material culture that are inherited from past centuries.

Prizren has developed as a place where different civilizations and cultures intertwine. This list includes a range of historical, cultural and religious monuments as well as natural monuments of the municipality of Prizren. Among the most important historical monuments and most visited by local and foreign tourists we can highlight:

- Shadervani of Prizren
- Prizren Castle
- Monumental Complex of the Albanian League of Prizren
- Shadervan Fountain
- Stone Bridge (Prizren)

¹³ <https://visit-prizren.com/rreth-prizrenit>

4. PROMOTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

4.1. Activities

Events

Prizren as a place of continuous development of art and culture, thus promoting its cultural heritage through various cultural and artistic activities, also affects the increase of the number of tourists there. Activities there are organized institutionally, and over time seeing their importance and impact in promoting tourism in the country, they have now become more traditional and annual.

They are numerous, but some of the main events in the field of tourism can be highlighted: Cultural Summer, Dokufest, Astro fest, World Tourism Day, Youth Week, Ecological Week, Earth Day, Old Timer Fest, etc.

Aims

Referring to the undeniable cultural potential, historical tradition and real opportunities for cooperation, the long-term goal remains for the city of Prizren to be included in the network of cultural roads of the Balkan region and Europe.

In this way, Prizren would be given the place it deserves in the string of pearls of world cultural heritage, as a city of tradition and historical values.

5. CONCLUSION

The state of tourism in the Municipality of Prizren is analyzed under the lens of 10 strategic flow of visitors. Each stream constitutes a certain segment of passengers, who have a certain motive and to some extent follow a similar activity.

The treatment of tourism at the level of streams, among others, enables to understand more clearly the profile of the visitor, his/her interaction with the destination, the motive and impact of the arrival, as well as in general the tourist offer with its advantages and challenges.¹⁴

Advantages and challenges may involve more than one stream of visitors. However, in order not to repeat, they have been attempted to appear only in the stream which is most relevant.

- What is the origin of the visitors?
- How old are they?
- How long is their stay?
- What are their main activities?
- What motivates them to visit the destination?
- What influenced their arrival?
- What works?
- What does not work/is missing?
- What are the challenges?

Proposed actions according to the Tourism Development Strategy 2019-2023

The actions that will be taken to address the main challenges/problems identified during the coverage of the situation have been drafted in collaboration with Directorate of Tourism and Economic Development (DTED), experts and other stakeholders. Also, it is worth noting that the actions are in line with the Municipal Development Plan, the Management Plan for the Historic Area of Prizren, the Conservation Plan and the Law on the Historic Area of Prizren. In most cases, the action involves more than one stream of visitors.¹⁵

- Construction of Zip Line around Prizren Castle
- Construction of the 'Via ferrata' path in Lumbardh Gorge
- Meeting the infrastructural conditions for autocamping
- Transforming paragliding into a tourist product
- Cooperation with accommodation/restaurants in the Sharr Mountains for opportunities to diversify their services
- Creating 'downhill biking' and other extreme sports trails
- Organizing cultural programs during summer weekends
- Organizing a market for the end-of-year holidays
- Organizing winter festivals in the Sharr Mountains

¹⁴ Tourism development strategy (rks-gov.net)

¹⁵ Tourism development strategy (rks-gov.net)

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