A NEW STRATEGY FOR RELAUNCHING TOURISM IN EUROPE

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ABSTRACT: Globalisation, the demographic changes and the evolution of transportation are decisive factors for the rapid evolution of the tourism industry in Europe. Approximately 2 million travel agencies have almost 4% of the European workforce total employed, this representing 8 million work places. Although Europe is the most visited region in the world, the number of tourists records a lower rate than the world average. Due to the appearance of the new tourist destination, of the global competition, the Commission has planned a proposal that should improve, together with all the interested factors, the competitiveness of the tourism industry. Due to the fact that more and more tourists see Europe as the only destination, the Commission has launched a new web portal as well, "Visit Europe", in order to promote the destinations of the European Union.

KEY WORDS: crises; strategy; relaunching; sustainable tourism; globalisation; policy

JEL CLASSIFICATION: L8, L83, L12, Q01

1. INTRODUCTION

On the occasion of the Conference of the Ministries of Tourism from the level of the European Union "Tourism - the key to economic growth and increase of the work places number", organised in Wien, the Vice-president of the European Commission, the Chairman Gunter Verheugen has declared: "Europe is the world leader of the tourist destinations. But we must do more than that in order to preserve our competitiveness. Our proposals add value to the efforts made by the Member States. These proposals shall help us promote, more efficiently and coordinated, the European Union as a unique tourist destination."

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2. NEW POLICIES IN EUROPEAN TOURISM

The main elements of the new policy are:

1. The better coordination of the policy. In order to ensure that the initiatives which affect tourism do not impede the competitiveness in this sector. The Member States and the persons interested in tourism shall be regularly consulted; for instance, on the near Green Card on the maritime affairs that cover the maritime tourism and the coastal tourism.

2. The improvement of the use of European viable financial instruments. Tourism shall continue to benefit from the financial support offered by the European financial instruments in force.

3. "A European agenda for tourism". In order to promote its sustainability: The Commission shall present a proposal for Agenda 21 on the tourism field until the end of 2010 based on the findings received from the Group for sustainable development in tourism, made up of representatives of all the ones involved in tourism.

4. A better regulation of the legislation items on tourism.

5. The intensification of the understanding of the importance of tourism by supplying the quality data by the ones who take the decisions.

6. A better promotion of the European destinations. Globalisation has opened new opportunities to attract tourists on new markets like China, Russia, India, which are capable of offering high quality holidays. In order to contribute to the promotion of Europe, the European Commission has financed the creation of a portal which includes practical information about Europe, like trip planning (transport, weather, calendar), recommendations "where one can go" and "what one can do", as well as the links to other national sites. This portal is in the care of the Commission of European travels. The SMEs from tourism shall be involved in the hosting of cultural and sports events in Europe.

7. The improvement of the tourism visibility. The European Commission shall continue to work in close connection with everyone involved for promoting the visibility of this important industry through the events organised by the President of EU at the Annual Forums for Tourism. For the practice of this policy, the Commission shall develop a partnership with the Member States authorities and with the ones involved in tourism. The partnerships must be a central component of the actions on all levels (European, national and local - public or private). As a general rule, the policy of tourism must be complementary to the policies unfolded in the Member States.

Tourism represents a connecting sector with an impact on many other sectors, like transportation, constructions, trading and other sectors which produce holiday souvenirs or offer services related to the free time or the business travels. Although many large international companies contribute to this sector, it is dominated mainly by the small and medium sized companies. According to a very strict definition, the tourist industry creates more than 4% of the GDP of the European Union. When we take into account the connections with other sectors, the contribution of tourism to the GDP is estimated at 11% and offers work places for more than 24 million people (12% of the workforce total).
8. **Transport and tourism.** Transport and tourism are closely related, and infrastructure is especially essential for the success of any tourist destination, the European policy in the field of transportation occupying a special place.

9. **The measures of liberalisation within the air transport.** The air transport sector have lead to more connections with destinations considered inaccessible, becoming more expensive because of their inaccessibility. Another beneficial element in the unfolding of the tourist phenomenon is the elimination of the restrictions referring to the acquisitions of charter flights - understanding that a loyal competition in this field shall bring lower prices and better products for all the tourists who prefer and buy such flights (the cost of the transport being a determining part of the global cost of the tourist product). Judged by some terms of quality, safety and profitability, the means of transport may condition the type of the holiday and the chosen destination for the holiday.

10. **The promotion.** Being no exception to the saying “the ad is the soul of commerce”; the tourist product sells and buys easier if it benefits of a proper publicity. This task belongs to the professionals in the field, to the researchers and to the professional stakeholders.

These are the persons who have a complex set of actions to perform among which we state:

- the request that the role of tourism should be acknowledged in politics;
- the reintroduction of the word tourism in the new article 15.2 from the new Constitution of Europe;
- the creation and the fortification of mechanisms against the eventual threats for tourism from the side of the Community’s politics and from the measures adopted in other sectors and fields;
- the improvement of the safety measures and the security measures for the tourist destinations and in the transportation sector;
- the enhancing of the role of the Consultative Committee in Tourism and the continuous organization of the European Tourism Forum in order to promote a better interface in the tourist industry and among the groups of stakeholders;
- to offer special attention to the implementation of the Satellite Account in Tourism in order to provide a correct evaluation of the importance of tourism in the general economy and to request assistance for the new countries in which the CST is not introduced;
- to intensify the accessibility in order to make the tourism available for everyone (different social groups, unemployed, old people, disabled people etc.);
- to create a common set of tourism indicators durable within the Agenda 21 for the European Tourism which includes the economic indicators, of the environment, social and institutions indicators, so that they can evaluate and monitor the development process with the purpose of encouraging the durability and the competition of European tourism;
- to create an open network of research, of dissemination of information and the transfer of the most adequate knowledge, as well as of the best technologies used in the sustainable tourism;
to ease the usage of information technology as an important means of developing the tourism sector regarding the management systems of quality, the applications from marketing and distribution, the facilities and the intensification of tourism.

With the 500 million inhabitants, EU has become one of the largest markets in the world (including the tourist market). EU offers the member states the possibility to express and develop the democracy, the sovereignty, the justice, the independence, as well as the possibility to protect these values.

Due to the fact that the tourist potential is a part of the resources category whose consumption can be achieved only "in situ", its integration in the social and economic circuit of values constitutes a process of superior revaluation of the existing potential, as well as an important factor in the economic development and the organisation of the respective space. In time the close correlation between the localisation of the tourist resources and the tourism development, between the diversity of these resources and the forms of tourism practised, between the dimension of the tourist phenomenon and the shaping of the tourist areas, respectively the prosperity of the local population is achieved.

At present, the following are more than necessary:

- the fitting of the existing tourist spaces by modernising and expanding the accommodation basis, its diversification;
- the introduction in the tourist circuit of new areas with valuable potential;
- the development of the rural tourism and of the agrotourism, as a new form of tourism, connected to the traditional activities of the population.

It is obvious that besides the investments and the modernisations, the tourist sector has to adapt quickly the level of the human resources, in order to cope with the European market competition: "a new managerial class is necessary, in order to understand that not only the clients' loyalty, individually or that of the corporations, is important, but also the loyalty of the personnel, the only one capable to recognise the faithful clients" (Gandul newspaper, Jan 24, 2009). The Romanian tourism shall benefit of structural funding in the value of approx. 710 million EUR, in the period 2007-2013, money that shall be allocated for 2 Operational Programs of the Romanian Government (see Annex 4 - Priority Axis 5 from P.O.S 2007-2013).

The recognition and the introduction on the European and international tourist market of the new member states shall push forward the development of tourism in these countries, in parallel with the increase of the attractiveness of the destinations of these countries (the effect of the "new members of the European family").

The only risks of the perspective evolution that can be recorded by these new destinations shall manifest in:

- the negative impact on the environment;
- the degradation (by exploitation) of the tourist resources;
- the loss of identity and of the local specific;
- the changes in the life style of the local communities from the respective geographical space.
3. CONCLUSIONS

The trips with luxurious or ecological tendencies or having the simplicity that make us think of grandmother's house shall increase in 2010. A top of the tendencies, drawn up by the chief - editor of Mr. and Mrs. Smith Magazine, Juliet Kinsman, suggests that the offers from tourism in 2010 shall still be affected by the economic crisis, but the consumers shall prefer the customised offer when they plan their holiday.

Considering itself as a unique market, the European Union has the most developed economy from the sector of Travels and Tourism, now representing a share of approximately 40% of the world market. Obviously, its share has grown significantly during the last few years, according to the EU extension beyond its initial borders to the current 27 member states.

The EU dimension and its importance in the economy of Travels and Tourism explains why the World Travels and Tourism Committee (WTTC) has remained very active in the region, intensifying as well its activities in the whole Central and Eastern Europe in the last 12 months, in close collaboration with industry and individual government in order to try and increase the operational environment for Travels and Tourism. The activities include the promotion of members and the consolidation of the unfolding relations with industry and governmental leaders.

The demand for Travels and Tourism in Europe in general is expected to grow with a relatively modest share of 2.3% in 2010, although this region masks the average growth which varies from country to country. Montenegro anticipates a powerful grow, of 14.2%, followed by Romania with 8.9%.

The sector of Travels and Tourism is an inseparable part of the world we live in, having an essential contribution to the world economy, as well as to the quality of life of its citizens. This divides the achievement of the universal aspirations, of unifying friends and families, the stimulation of the trading beyond frontiers, the creation of sustainable work places and the minimisation of the climate changes.

Or, the sustainable and responsible economic growth may be achieved only by overcoming all the inequalities regarding the welfare and opportunity, the increase of the international understanding, as well as the balance of the use of resources with their availability.

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