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TOURISM IN FUNCTION OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

Spa Tourism in Serbia and Experiences of Other Countries



**THEMATIC
PROCEEDINGS**

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**UNIVERSITY OF KRAGUJEVAC
FACULTY OF HOTEL MANAGEMENT
AND TOURISM IN VRNJAČKA BANJA**



BALNEOLOGICAL VALUES IN FUNCTION OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Naume Marinoski¹, Ivanka Nestoroska²

Abstract

The Republic of Macedonia is characterized by relief and geological structure that allows the presence of significant thermal forms. Their value is based on curiosity, recreational and health component. Related to these values, thermal components of the mineral springs are particularly important which bind spas as tourist centers. Their importance for tourism development in the Republic of Macedonia has crucial characteristics because it is a potential that can successfully promote and be a factor in spatial, economic and social development. The analysis of balneological values determines the place and function of this segment of potential tourism products in relation to tourism development and specific types of tourism activities, through quantitative and qualitative research in this paper. Therefore the projected research is related to the identification of indicators that reflect the balneological characteristics, parameters that determine the level of development and opportunities for quality improvement through the approach of possible development projection.

Keywords: spas, tourism development, spa tourism, balneological values.

Introduction

Among the natural resources in the Republic of Macedonia thermal springs have high potential for inclusion in tourist offer because of their special features. They are usually tourist motives that attract tourists with their hydrological characteristics expressed primarily through chemical or

1 Dr. Naume Marinoski, Full Professor, Faculty of tourism and hospitality - Ohrid, Kej Makedonija 95, 6000 Ohrid, Republika Makedonija, +38970237817, naumemarinoski@yahoo.com

2 Dr. Ivanka Nestoroska, Full Professor, Faculty of tourism and hospitality - Ohrid, Kej Makedonija 95, 6000 Ohrid, Republika Makedonija, +38971260703, ivanka.nestoroska@uklo.edu.mk

mineralogical composition and thermal characteristics as well as the abundance of springs that provide minimum requirements for their use. Thus, the dominant role of thermal springs occupy the recreational characteristics. These characteristics are incorporated within the possibilities for their utilization, such as the health benefits through different forms of prevention, therapy and rehabilitation.

On the territory of the Republic of Macedonia, that covers 25,713 km², there are numerous hydrographic resources. Among them are thermal springs with total number of more than 65. Thermal springs are dispersed throughout the country, with great potentials for spa tourism because of the quality of the water (Marinoski, 2005). Possibilities for the development of spa tourism are closely related to those localities that are included in tourist offer with established accommodation and spa facilities. Those spas are: Spa Banjishte, Spa Kosovrasti, Katlanovska Spa, Kumanovska Spa, Kochanska Spa, Spa Kezhovica, Spa Bansko, and Negorska Spa.

The development of spa tourism is connected to the development of tourism in the Republic of Macedonia (Petrevska & Nestoroska, 2015) within the last two periods:

Tourism development after the II World War till the independence. It was a period when the development of tourism in the Republic of Macedonia was within the development of tourism in Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRJ) as its republic. During the 1960's Macedonian tourism started with an organized development in order to reach better economic effects. The intention was not only many-sided economic development but also presenting our tourist values abroad. Although in the beginning tourism was modestly developed, in time its positive effects have been reflected leading to modernization of tourist services and capacities, defining new ideas towards tourism development, improving service quality scope of arrivals.

An attention was paid to tourism development by using and developing tourist offer's factors – attractive, communicative and receptive. Especially the last one was of a great interest in terms of modernizing the accommodation capacities from the point of their comfort, hygiene, good location, enriched and conceived content of stay which besides food and accommodation offers different activities that contribute to complete fulfillment of tourist's leisure time (swimming pools, playgrounds for

volleyball, handball, basketball, mini golf, tennis, children playgrounds, diving schools, water-skiing, sailing, children and adult animators etc.). Spas were also included in this phase of development and equipped accommodation and service facilities, with main intention to provide the visitors with medical-spa services, and with main focus on medical treatments for health-recovering, pensioners and recreation. Recreation service was the least used and least interested motive to visit the spas.

The share of foreign tourists in spas in the country was very low, because the dominant offer of spas were medical services for domestic visitors as already mentioned.

Tourism development since its independence from 1991. As an independent country the Republic of Macedonia went through a difficult period related with disintegration of SFRJ, the Yugoslav wars, sanctions, blockades, the period of transition and socioeconomic restructuring. This is a period when tourism development was facing many challenges and problems that were related to the happenings in the neighbouring countries during the period 1992-2001, strong competition of neighbouring countries and the region, and high decrease of tourist flows as a result of recommendations of foreign countries to their citizens not to visit this region as a not safe one. A continuous tourists flow decrease expressed by decline of tourist arrivals and tourist nights, both in domestic and foreign visitors, with low changeability without causing any changes was evidenced in spas, too. Even more it was a period when spa tourism experienced very bad conditions for any kind of activities, because of the turbulent political and socio-economic changes that were reflected in almost every economic activity of the country, as well as tourism. Particularly spas were challenged with the situation of neglecting spa capacities. This situation indicates a decreasing tendency in foreign as well as domestic tourist flow which is more expressed compared to foreign. Apart from political situation and instability, other reason for domestic tourist flow decrease was current economic situation that reflects payment abilities of population (Petrevska & Nestoroska, 2015).

Balneological values of spas in the Republic of Macedonia

The scope of the research includes classification and differentiation of spa tourist resorts with their content-related features and tourist values. Spas play important role in the overall tourist offer in the Republic of Macedonia, because each of them has specific tourist values. This implies

the question and the need to research and differentiate specific characteristics of spa tourism.

Diversification of mineral springs in the country is very favourable, with an exception of Pelagonija region, where there are pretty cold mineral springs. Spas have a favourable position towards the settlements, because there are one or more urban settlements in the vicinity of each spa. Thermo-mineral areas have very good climate conditions and abundance of vegetation, that makes them very different to urban areas, and many are suitable for recreational activities as well. Also, spas possess attractive anthropogenic values that determine the cultural dimension of these tourism potentials. Considering the possibilities for tourism development, the spas are very different, so they will be analyzed separately.

Spa Banjishte

Spa Banjishte is located at the foothills of the mountain Krchin at an altitude of 870 meters within a mountainous area. In its vicinity is the regional road Skopje - Debar - Ohrid. Physical and chemical characteristics of the water in Spa Banjishte are basic attractive value. It has three springs: New Captage, Upper Pool and Lower Pool. These springs are all different in the abundance of springs, water temperature and the radioactivity of the water. Highest temperature of the water is in the spring Lower Pool with 39.3⁰C. The lowest water temperature is in the spring Upper Pool with 36⁰C, while the New Captage spring has 38.8⁰C.

The abundance of New Captage is 51 l / sec, in the Lower Pool 35 l/sec, and the Upper Pool 5.2 l / sec (Stojmilov, 1971). According to these indicators, the average water temperature is 38⁰C, and the abundance of water about 91 l/s. The water has anions of sulfate, chloride, carbonate, hidroborit and hidroarsenate, cations of calcium, magnesium, sodium, potassium and iron, colloidal dissolved oxides of manganese dioxide and silica, dissolved gases carbon dioxide, hydrogen sulphide ammonia and sulfur dioxide, then the elements lithium, cesium, ribidium and fluorine, and free of hydrogen sulphide gas, carbon dioxide, oxygen and hydrogen.

The spa provides successful treatment of many diseases like: all kinds of subacute and chronic inflammatory rheumatism; degenerative rheumatism of all wrists and rheumatism in the spinal column; all forms of rheumatic diseases (in particular sciatica); all extra-articular rheumatism; muscle

weakness after trauma to joints and bone fractures; partial stiffening of joints (if non-tuberculous origin); conditions after children's paralysis; chronic inflammation of the ovaries and other gynecological diseases; primary and secondary sterility; skin diseases, eczema, psoriasis, fungal skin diseases; chronic stomach disease and regulation of gastric acids; inflammation of the urinary tract; inflammation of the respiratory organs etc. But, except for the treatment, the water is used for recreational, rehabilitation and prevention purposes.

The surrounding area is interwoven with numerous view sights that can be used for observation of the picturesque relief and landscape values in the valley of the river Crni Drim, which allows full restitution. Moreover, Mediterranean influences in the climate of this area and various floral elements are very suitable for hiking. The arrangement of the paths and view sights for such purpose should be a basis in the use of the spa area for more recreational and tourist activities. There are remains from the old spa that was used during the Turkish - Ottoman period and they are complemented with new facilities.

Spa Kosovrasti

Kosovrasti is one of the most attractive spas in the country, due to the hydrological features of the water, the surrounding spa area, traffic connection and local infrastructure. Additionally, this spa is very well equipped for medical and recreational treatments. It is located at the exit of the gorge of the river Radika, or to its western coast. Its location next to the regional road Skopje - Debar - Ohrid indicates its excellent connectivity. The position near the Ohrid tourist area allows a combination of activities with the use of wider geographical area.

This spa is characterized by favourable chemical-mineralogical and thermal features. The water temperature is 48⁰C, with chemical composition of sulfur - carbonate. The amount of water provided by the springs in the spa area is 120 l/sec which is the largest amount compared to the other spa locations, and it is characterized with especially highlighted features.

Chemical - mineralogical features of the mineral water, as well as other hydrological features, are bases for medical treatments of Kosovrasti Spa. Thus, rheumatic diseases can be treated, women's diseases and various skin diseases. Medical treatment features of this spa are very similar to

those of Spa Banjishte, because they are very close to each other. The water in this spa is used for bathing, inhalation, drinking (Marinoski, 2005). Equipped spa complex, enables the use of other types of therapy, mostly medical, with different modern physical methods.

The location of the spa in the gorge of the river Radika and next to Spilje Lake provides opportunities for walks within the spa surrounding area. In addition, there are excellent conditions for sports-recreational activities in the complex that would enable more activities for the visitors. Research indicates that this spa was known even in the Roman Period.

Katlanovo Spa

Katlanovo Spa is located in the southeastern part of Skopje valley at the foothills of Crn Vrv (758 meters). The spa is located above the village of Katlanovo in the lower reaches of the river Pcinja, the place where this river has etched its course in Banjski Rid (Marinoski, 2005).

The geographical position of this spa is very favourable. It is located just 2.5 km from the international road E - 4, through which the Northern, Western and Central Europe is connected to the Aegean Sea. This position enables possibility to include this complex in transit tourist flows. The spa is located between three major urban centers in the country, which means that it has high potentials for recreational activities for the residents of the cities of Skopje, Kumanovo and Veles.

In the spa area there are fissures, and all springs are directly or indirectly related to the fissures. Prof. Dr. Alexandar Stojmilov (1969) indicates that "... nowhere in the Balkan peninsula, and possibly in Europe, thermal phenomena are not so accessible to observe such a phenomenon, and nowhere the link between water and fissures is very strong as here ...". Some researchers consider that Katlanovo springs are actually fumaroles. Such particularities express rare attractive tourist component. At the same time it can be used for educational purposes by promoting this phenomena through realization of excursions for students and researchers.

However, tourism development of Katlanovo Spa is based primarily on hydrological, chemical - mineralogical and thermal properties, as well as on the abundance of the springs. This spa is supplied with water from several thermal springs which vary among themselves (table 1).

Table 1: *Capacity and water temperature in major thermal springs of Katlanovo Spa*

Name of the spring	L / sec	Temperature in °C
New spa spring	1,50	40,5
Spring of thermal fissure	0,50	50,0
Spring Fontana	0,06	38,0
Hot mineral water	0,50	26,0
Cold mineral water	0,02	14,0

Source: *Stojmilov, A., "Katlanovo Spa", Macedonian Geographical Association, Skopje, 1969*

This means that the scope of water springs is relatively low, which may be a limiting factor in the development of the spa complex. The presentation of the water temperatures in table 1, indicates that these springs are with hyper-thermal features, with relatively low appearance of hypo-thermal and cold water, and with relatively favourable circumstances for the use of these waters. According to the chemical composition of the water it should be noted that springs in Katlanovo Spa can be classified into three groups: sulfur, alkaline and carbonic acid.

Treatment opportunities of numerous diseases are based on the chemical-mineralogical composition and thermal characteristics of water. Among them are the diseases of various types of rheumatism and stomach and intestines diseases, female genital diseases, nerve diseases, chronic kidney and urinary tract, diseases of the blood vessels, skin diseases, diseases of metabolism, and some diseases of the respiratory tract and cardio - vascular system. The therapy includes bathing, drinking, or inhalation, depending on the disease.

The picturesque and wooded gorge of the river Pcinja, where this spa is situated, holds an impressive landscape values. The whole area is forested, with acacia forest, hornbeam, hazel, and oak which is an attraction in this area and enable recreational activities complemented with the aesthetic value in the spa complex. This spa also has a famous tourist - attractive features. The Katlanovo Spa was used by ancient Romans, as it is testified by numerous findings in this area. The Spa was also used during the Turkish –Ottoman Empire for which there is evidence. Such values certainly enrich the tourist offer in this area.

Kumanovo Spa

Kumanovo Spa is very often mentioned in literature (Marinoski, 2005) as Proevska Spa after Proevce village, near which it is located. This spa is located about 4 km east of the city of Kumanovo. It is in proximity to the international road E - 4 and has very good traffic connections. It is situated at an altitude of 305 meters, surrounded by hills and the pine forest, refined areas with parks and greenery, and has accommodation facilities. The spa is very often visited for recreation and medical services, as well as the visits to the area for outdoor recreation.

The water temperature is 30⁰ C, which means that it is hypothermal water. In the chemical - mineralogical composition there are magnesium, calcium, sodium, hydrocarbons, cobalt, zinc and other minerals. The Spa is visited for the treatment of nerve diseases, diseases of the digestive organs, diabetes and others. The olympic swimming pool and other sports facilities provide various activities. Lack of this spa is the quantity of water that is 6 l / sec. This means that opportunities for the development in this regard are limited.

Kocanska Spa

Kocanska Spa is located 6 km west of Kocani, in the village Banja , at an altitude of 340 meters. Thermal springs in Banja are characterized by specific hydrological, chemical - mineralogical and thermal features, and with the abundance of water that rises in this area. The abundance of thermal mineral water is over 65 liters per second.

The water temperature is 64⁰ C, which means that it is a very suitable value for hyper-thermal water. According to the chemical composition this spa belongs to the group of slightly mineralized thermal waters with prevailed hydrocarbons, it is slightly alkaline and with low level of radioactivity. Most of the cations include sodium, potassium, calcium and magnesium, and anions of chloride, sulfate, hydrocarbons, siliciumoksid, aluminum oxide, iron and others. It owns rare minerals, such as lithium, cesium and ribidium. These physical - chemical features of water in Kocani Spa are the basis for treatment of numerous diseases. It is very convenient for healing all the types of rheumatic diseases, diseases of the biliary tract and gall bag, diseases of urinary, gynecological diseases, inflammation of the nerves, diseases of the stomach and duodenum, conditions after injuries to the skeletal system and other ailments.

Moreover, the low radioactivity of the water has positive effects on catarrhal diseases and diseases of the respiratory organs.

Although nowadays this spa is still not used with the full potential, it should be emphasized that it is a spa that dates from the Roman period. During the Ottoman rule in this region, the spa was actively used, also, which indicates that the spa has a long tradition. Near Kocanska Spa, near the village of Dolni Podlog, from a 318 meters deep borehole mineral water with capacity of 95 liters per second and a temperature of 80 °C was discovered which may be the basis for building health spa and recreational facilities.

Kezovica Spa

The Kezovica Spa is situated near the city of Shtip, and it is located on the right bank of the river Bregalnica, just 2 km away from the city at an altitude of 263 meters. The proximity of this city allows the spa site to be used for picnic - recreational purposes. Hydrological values relating to the abundance of the sources, temperature and chemical composition of water, represent properties that include preventive and rehabilitative function of the spa. The total amount of water in the spa was 20 l / sec which is relatively good potential for health - recreational purposes. In addition to the spring, there are six others with a total capacity of 6 liters per second. The water temperature ranges from 57°C to 69 °C, which indicates that it is hyper – thermal water.

Based on these qualities, the water in the spa is used for the treatment of chronic inflammation of the joints, rheumatism, women's diseases, stomach diseases and chronic diseases of respiratory organs. Thermal water from the spa can be used by bathing, drinking and inhalation. There are indications that the spa was used by the Turks in the period of their rule in this area, which points to the long tradition of the spa and in tourism manner, too. However, the potential of this spa is not sufficiently exploited.

Spa Bansko

Bansko Spa is situated at the foothills of Belasitsa Mountain in Bansko at an altitude of 270 meters. The city of Strumica is 12.5 km away. The spa is located in a very picturesque area, from which extends a magnificent view of the Strumica Valley on one side and to the mountain Belasica,

covered with dense forest on the other side. The influence of the Mediterranean climate gives opportunity for higher promotion and inclusion of recreational qualities within the spa offer. Lake Dojran is located near the spa, and it is a very convenient location for combining spa and lake tourism as region's tourism offer.

Traffic communication to the towns of Veles, Stip and Radovis via Strumica and Gevgelija, and Dojran and Berovo enables Spa Bansko to be an important picnic site in the wider region. The spa is in the vicinity of the cross border Novo Selo to the Republic of Bulgaria, which gives it transit character as well.

Hydrological characteristics of thermal water in the spa area are very interesting with 13 springs differentiated by their chemical - thermal characteristics thermal and differences in the temperature. The highest water capacity has Parilo spring 40 liters per second. The total amount of water in the spa complex is 54 liters per second. The spring Parilo has the highest water temperature. It is 72 °C, which determines Bansko as a spa with the highest temperature in the country. The highest temperature is curiosity tourist value.

The relatively large amount of water that occurs in this area, and high water temperatures represent a very important potential for the development of spa tourism. Chemical composition of water in Bansko is very rich and diverse. It is a sodium - sulphate type of water with anions of sulfate, chloride, carbonate, hydroboric, hidroarsenat, and cations of calcium, magnesium, sodium, potassium, and iron, then colloidal dissolved oxides of manganese dioxide, silicium dioxide, aluminum oxide, dissolved carbon dioxide gases and oxygen, trace elements of lithium, cesium, ribidium, fluorine and carbon dioxide, free gases such as oxygen and nitrogen. Also, although in very small amount, spa water is radioactive.

Bansko Spa is used in the treatment of numerous diseases such as: all types of degenerative rheumatism; gastro-intestinal diseases and disorders; inflammation of the gall bladder and bile bag; diseases of the heart and blood vessels (conditions after a heart attack); traumatic injuries of bones system; hormonal disorders and allergies; essential hypertension; anemia; inflammation of the ovaries and other gynecological diseases; inherited blood disorders; condition after malaria, etc. Spa water can be consumed differently, depending on the treatment need: drinking,

inhalation or for Fango therapy. Based on this chemical - mineralogical composition and thermal characteristics of the water, this spa is very appropriate for recreation, prevention, rehabilitation and medical treatment. The surrounding area is suitable for sports - recreational activities.

Negorska Spa

Negorska Spa is located in Gevgelija Valley, 4 km. north of the town of Gevgelija at an altitude of 60 meters in forested and green area. It has very good transit position because it is near the highway Skopje – Thessalonica. Thermal water in the spa has specific thermal and chemical - mineralogical characteristics. There are more springs in this area, among which particularly important are Ladna Banja, Topla Banja and Nova Kaptazha. The water temperature in these springs varies from 36 °C in Ladna Banja, to 43 °C in Nova Kaptazha. Such temperature indicates that relatively cold water prevails. Chemical composition of the water is composed of anions of sulfate, chloride, carbonate, hydroboric and carbonate, cations of calcium, magnesium, sodium and potassium, colloidal dissolved oxides mangandvooksid, siliciumdioxide and aluminiumdioxide, dissolved gases of hydrogen sulphide, nitrates and oxygen, trace of elements as lithium, cesium. ribidium, fluorine, antimony, free gases such as hydrogen sulphide, oxygen, hydrogen and carbon dioxide. The radioactivity of water is relatively low.

Negorska Spa is the only of all spas in Macedonia that has a thermal mud. In other spas the mud for Fango therapy is artificially created. This gives the spa special importance in recreational curiosity sense. The natural thermal mineral mud is present over a larger area around the spa. Based on such characteristics of water and mud Negorska Spa is visited for a treatment of the following diseases: all kinds of rheumatic and degenerative diseases of the joints; posttraumatic diseases of the locomotor system; postoperative conditions; inflammation and painful conditions of peripheral nerves; inflammation of the female genital organs; diseases of the urinary tract; disorders of the prostate; disorders of the cardiovascular system; various chronic rheumatic diseases; conditions after fractures and operations of bones, joints and soft tissues; some neurological disorders and other diseases. The spa has a modern specific amenities for the treatment of patients.

The proximity of Lake Dojran allows a combination of activities as is the case with spa Bansko. In the vicinity of this area, on the slopes of Mount Kozuf, there is a termomineral spring Smrdлива Voda with high potential for tourism development.

Tourism potentials of spas in the Republic of Macedonia

The abundance of natural and cultural values represents a significant potential for tourist offer in the Republic of Macedonia. Their appropriate inclusion and diversification is essential for the tourist offer creation. Also, very important issues are Macedonian comparative advantages and disadvantages as well, in relation to its competitors, which are mostly the neighboring countries. Many of *natural values* are tourism potentials and motivational factors that contribute to tourist visits to destinations. In tourism development of the Republic of Macedonia, many of the natural values are incorporated in tourist offer: geomorphologic, climate, hydrographical, bio-geographical, and tourist landscape values. Most of tourist geomorphologic value is based on the numbers of prevalent forms and, their heterogeneity is important tourist potential (Marinoski, 1999). From the surface relief forms particularly place have mountains, gorges, canyons and volcanic forms, and from the ground are many caves.

Hydrographical potential for tourism development in Republic of Macedonia is composed of rivers, lakes and spas, among which Ohrid, Prespa and Dojran Lake are the most valorised, as the biggest natural lakes in the country with highest registered volume of tourist and recreational activities (Table, 2). Favourable water temperatures in summer, insolation, and translucency of water enable sunbathing activities, fishing, diving and sport activities. Bio-geographic tourist values represent a symbiosis of flora and fauna and together with other factors have important role for tourism development particularly for hunting/ fishing activities, bird watching, herbs collecting, camping, student educational camps, etc.

Although with high quality mineral water components, Macedonian spa resorts are still not enough valorized for tourism purposes. Their participation in tourism flow within the period 2004-2013 of about 4% is rather unsatisfactory. They do not absorb satisfactory number of visitors that will make them competitive to other tourist destinations. It is mostly related to the lack of appropriate equipment of accommodation capacities, infrastructure and human resources in favour of new orientation of tourist

offer for health care, wellness and selfness tourism. Exceptions are Banjishte and Kosovrasti Spa that can be taken as example for orientation to modern spa offer of Macedonian Spas. The higher concentration of spa resorts in Macedonia in Southwest Region, Eastern Region and Skopje Region gives opportunities for creation of complex tourist offer with selective forms of tourism that can enrich the existing offer (Petrevska, & Nestoroska, 2015).

Table 2: *Distribution of tourism flows by tourist places, 2004-2013*

Year	Skopje	Spas	Mountain places	Other Tourist places	Other places	Total
2004	94,672	19,030	42,282	255,833	53,198	465,015
2005	107,997	21,293	43,371	271,402	65,643	509,706
2006	108,635	19,680	40,089	264,305	66,764	499,473
2007	119,634	20,280	33,216	279,385	83,158	536,212
2008	134,051	22,965	43,165	305,793	99,346	605,320
2009	127,266	21,369	52,484	283,430	103,221	587,770
2010	126,327	28,574	71,457	263,278	96,605	586,241
2011	141,386	27,441	71,309	279,695	127,737	647,568
2012	152,412	27,430	68,809	280,375	134,607	663,633
2013	168,623	28,405	68,745	300,540	135,481	701,794

Source: *State Statistical Office of Republic of Macedonia, 2005, 2008, 2012*

Spas are valuable potential in the country with great possibilities for improved tourism development, but yet the participation of spa facilities in total accommodation capacities is very low with only 1.73%, and stagnation for longer period (table 3). As shown in table 3, hotels have the most remarkable participation in the structure of total capacities in Macedonia. The number of beds in hotels in 2013 was 14,724 representing 20.95% of total bed capacities. The presence of eight spas (Banjiste, Kosovrsti, Katlanovska Banja, Kumanovska Banja, Kocanska Banja, Kezovica, Bansko and Negorska Banja) is characterized with high quality composition of mineral waters, not only in national but also in international frames. Findings from such analysis (Nestoroska, 2007) indicate that their potential still is not sufficiently exploited, and just a small segment of visitors go because of recreation in which the number of foreign visitors is minor.

Table 3: *Accommodation capacities by types of accommodation facilities, 2009-2013*

Number of rooms					
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
TOTAL	69,561	69,102	69,737	70,287	70,297
Hotels, total	11,307	12,374	13,317	13,884	14,724
Hotels*****	1,288	1,251	1,488	1,680	1,740
Hotels ****	2,748	3,150	3,715	3,833	4,170
Hotels ***	1,507	2,072	3,474	3,730	3,806
Hotels **	3,264	3,565	2,393	2,684	3,092
Hotels *	2,500	2,336	2,247	1,957	1,916
Boarding houses, total	75	71	71	115	109
Boarding houses **	17	17	17	17	17
Boarding houses *	58	54	54	98	92
Motels, total	359	406	371	670	673
Motels*****	-	-	-	59	59
Motels***	-	-	-	109	177
Motels**	304	362	327	344	279
Motels*	55	44	44	158	158
Overnight lodging houses	163	195	184	195	238
Spas	1,091	1,217	1,217	1,217	1,217
Mountain lodges and houses	60	60	60	44	41
Workers' vacation facilities	4,501	4,056	3,996	3,993	3,851
Children and youth vacation facilities	7,272	6,668	6,668	6,674	6,596
Youth hotels	48	48	48	48	48
Camps	8,726	8,971	8,971	9,011	9,011
Houses, vacation apartments and rooms for rent, total	25,134	26,132	26,132	26,232	26,032
Temporary lodging facilities	632	1,537	1,692	1,584	1,371
Sleeping cars	1,680	384	384	384	384
Uncategorized accommodation establishments	8,513	6,983	6,626	6,236	6,002

Source: *State Statistical Office of Republic of Macedonia, 2014*

The reason for this situation is because accommodation capacities are not equipped good enough to meet the visitors' needs in recreational meaning. Instead of this most of them still work as rehabilitation centers and there are only few spas that meet needs for recreation not only for rehabilitation (e.g. Spa Bansko and Kosovrasti). According to the balneological features of spas in the Republic of Macedonia, and

geographical position in areas with excellent climatic conditions, their future development should be considered towards new concept of offer with the main aim to attract visitors not only for medical treatments and posttraumatic and disease recovery, but also for recreation and health-care tourism. There is broad scope of services that can be provided within the packages for health-care tourism, ranging between health treatments (medical examinations, vitamin treatments, special diets, acupuncture, and hydrotherapeutic treatments) to relaxation treatments, wellness and selfness (exercise treatments, beauty treatments, spa treatments, sauna packages, cellulite packages, etc.).

Current situation in spa resorts is related to the conditions of the amenities and human resources, as main milestones for their appropriate inclusion in tourist offer creation. Nowadays spa tourism in the Republic of Macedonia is facing a major milestone with taking activities for improved development of spa facilities and adjustment to tourist demand for this type of tourism. The practiced concept in previous development showed that spas are not only for medical treatments, but even more for recreation along with wellness, selfness, and health-care activities.

Conclusion

The existence of spas in the Republic of Macedonia is closely related to the prospects of spa tourism development. High quality of thermal springs with the level of temperature, and chemical- mineralogical features are great opportunities for future development. Special attention should be taken to further improvement, maintaining and modernization of the existing accommodation and recreation facilities, with emphasis on the quality of their content (interior design in accordance with space ergonomics, food quality, animation activities, sports and spa activities and entertaining) and staff (professionalism, job positioning, and responsibility).

According to the research, the Republic of Macedonia has great potentials and opportunities to improve and develop spa tourism, because thermal and chemical - mineralogical characteristics of waters are with high quality that makes them attractive to visitors.

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