

## **POTENTIALS AND PRIORITIES FOR INTEGRATED AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT OF DANUBE TOURISM DESTINATIONS IN SERBIA**

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### **Abstract**

*Key tourist resources in the Danube tourism destinations in Serbia (DTDs) are identified for integrated and sustainable tourism development. Based on the attractiveness of these tourist resources, the paper proposes a differentiation of the tourism destination into three high-level tourist areas. The paper proposes criteria and priorities for activating and achieving the integrated and sustainable development of tourism on the Danube. The paper points out that priority should be given to improving the presentation and development of the interpretation of tourist resources in order to achieve the potential level of their attractiveness, as well as developing a wide range of activities, integrating and diversifying the tourist offer of DTDs, and increasing the accessibility of DTDs. As the existing institutional arrangements are among the causes of the unattractive and undeveloped tourist offer, improvements in the management of the DTDs are proposed.*

**Key Words:** *Danube tourism destinations, attractiveness, differentiation, integration, criteria, institutional arrangements*

**JEL classification:** *O2, O3*

### **Introduction**

The Danube is pan-European corridor VII, the only European water transport corridor, and its section through Serbia, the international waterway E-80 (588 km, or a quarter of the total length of the waterway

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of 2,415 km), has significant and little exploited potential, with the most attractive nautical section on the whole of the Danube that is completely unused. The tourism resources offered by the Danube and its coastal belt classify it as one of the primary tourist areas in Serbia – the Danube tourist destinations (DTDs). Its importance increases the potential of this tourist area to integrate the three tourist clusters (Vojvodina, Belgrade and southeastern Serbia), that is, to connect a number of destinations with different involvement in the all-year-round tourist offer. Corridor VII, i.e. the Danube with its coastal belt, belongs to the Danube Development Axis of the Republic of Serbia.

The paper begins with a short review of the significance of the Danube to the development of tourism based on planning established at the national and provincial level of governance, in the domain of spatial planning and sectoral planning for the development of tourism. Key tourism resources are identified, first and foremost the Danube's water surface and the natural and cultural heritage in the coastal area. Starting from the FAS methodology of UNWTO, the attractiveness of the Danube's tourism resources and its coastal belt are evaluated.

The results of the evaluation indicate that their potential attractiveness to tourists has not yet been achieved. One of the reasons for the relatively low level of attractiveness for tourism is that the significance of the presentation and interpretation of tourism resources for the enjoyment of visitors has been neglected.

Starting from the planning basis and an evaluation of the key tourism resources from the aspect of their potential attractiveness in the development of tourism, a differentiation of the Danube and its coastal belt into three high-value interconnected zones is proposed. Criteria are proposed for determining priorities, on the basis of which the priorities are identified for the activation and establishment of the sustainable tourism development on the Danube.

The concluding considerations indicate the key problems with the institutional arrangements applied, which should be changed in the process of improving the management of sustainable tourism development in the primary tourism destinations of the Danube through Serbia.

## **Analysis of the Danube's tourism potentials**

### **The planning basis for the tourism potentials**

The paper analyzes only the planning basis established at the national and provincial levels of management in the domain of spatial planning and sectoral planning in the development of tourism.

*The Law on the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia from 2010 to 2020* (2010) singles out the Danube, and its tributaries the Sava, Tisa, and main DTD canal as international navigable touring routes for tourism. The following are among Serbia's primary tourism destinations along the length of the Danube: the Upper Danube, Fruška Gora, Deliblatska Sands and the Lower Danube (destinations with a smaller share of the all-year-round tourism offer) and the city tourism centres of Belgrade and Novi Sad (destinations with a complete tourism offer throughout the year), while Kladovo is classified as a town of international importance to tourism, Sombor as a town of national importance to tourism, and Junaković spa as a place with potential for spa tourism of national importance. The following were set apart as priorities for the spatial development of tourism by 2014: Belgrade's riverfront, Fruška Gora with Novi Sad and Sremski Karlovci (rehabilitation of the national park and tourist sites) and touring along the route of corridor VII – the Danube (equipping it for navigation, nautical tourism and themed routes/tours).

More detailed consideration of the activation of tourism resources and development of tourist attractions on the Danube and in its coastal area are presented in the *Regional Spatial Plan of AP Vojvodina* (RSP APV, 2011). The news regarding the tourism products determined by the *Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia, the Strategy for the development of tourism in the Republic of Serbia and the Marketing strategy for tourism in Vojvodina* is the anticipated development of the tourism product of ecotourism, first and foremost in the area of protected natural assets (RSP APV, 2011:138, 139). Starting with tourism resources, *the Marketing strategy for tourism in Vojvodina* (2009) proposes a detailed and supplemented portfolio of tourism products. *The Strategy for the development of tourism in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2016-2025* (2016) ranks nautical tourism and cruise trips as middle priorities among Serbia's 10 tourism products, and in this way the real significance of the Danube and DTDs for the sustainable tourism development in Serbia is not acknowledged. On the list of various tourism destinations is

the Danube, with four destinations (the Upper Danube, Lower Danube, the Middle Danube with Belgrade, and Novi Sad with Fruška Gora and Sremski Karlovci).

None of the aforementioned planning documents show the problem of the insufficient attractiveness of key tourism resources in Serbia, which is generally still a factor; instead of them attracting tourist demand, these areas are not even confirmed priorities for activities related to developing a tourist presentation and interpreting the natural and cultural heritage in primary tourism destinations along the Danube.

The existing spatial and sectoral planning framework (in tourism) and numerous studies on the Danube and its coastal area should be analyzed and integrated into the Spatial Plan for the Special Purpose Area and the Strategic Master Plan for the Development of Tourism for the Danube development axis/belt in Serbia. They should be used to define action plans and implementation programmes for the sustainable tourism development in potentially the most attractive zones and localities on the Danube (Maksin-Micic & Milijic, 2001). Good examples of the sustainability and compatibility of planning solutions and priorities are the Spatial Plan for the Special Purpose Area of Djerdap National Park and the Master Plan for the Development of Tourism in the Lower Danube (Maksin et al., 2014; Nenković-Riznić et al., 2016).

### **The Danube's key tourism resources**

In this paper the following key tourism resources along the Danube and its coastline are identified:

- the Danube water surface with its islands and permanent estuaries represents a potentially very attractive resource for sailing recreationally along the Danube, and with the distributaries and morpho-hydrological elements of the inundation plane it is a powerful ecological corridor of international rank, which enables people to become familiar with, study and interpret biodiversity and the existence and migration of different populations from the natural world;
- natural heritage, with 35 protected areas and 19 areas in the process of or being planned for protection, which cover around 77 km<sup>2</sup> of the water area and around 230 km of the Danube coast;
- cultural heritage from archaeological sites from the Neolithic period (Starčevo, Vinča, Lepenski Vir etc.), the Roman road and bridge in

Djerdap, the Roman Limes and fortifications (Viminacium, Diana and others), medieval fortifications (Bač, Petrovaradin, Belgrade, Smederevo, Golubac, Ram, Fetislam) and other material and non-material cultural heritage;

- diversity of its natural and cultural areas (from cultural areas close to natural areas to urban areas) along the coast.

From the aspect of developing tourism, the route of the international waterway is of prime importance for international tourist (cruising) boats and for yachts and boats of all categories. The special advantage of the Danube on its course through Serbia is the possibility of freeing international waterway from the presence of recreational vessels by establishing "small waterways", that is, "waterways for recreational sailing" that can be adapted and developed alongside the international waterway. This avoids possible conflicts and incidents on the international waterway, and tourists who are sailing for recreation are directed towards the most attractive coastal zones of the Danube.

On the sector of the Danube through Serbia four basic types of aquatic area can be seen: the river surrounded by wetlands; the water surface with river islands and sandbanks downstream from Futog, among which the biggest archipelago of islands is between Belgrade and Pančevo; the lake between Moldova and Golubac, where the Danube is at its widest; and Djerdap Gorge. These different types of areas favour the development of nautical tourism, different outdoor activities and special interests (fishing, hunting, bird watching, etc.), and in certain sections the development of bathing tourism, primarily in the so-called "Danube Riviera" from Beška to Golubac and in the Lower Danube (in Donji Milanovac, Kladovo and Mihajlovac). The wider protection belt of the international waterway with its coastal area (up to the defensive embankments) is of prime importance for locating marinas, harbours and anchorage, as well as for placing beaches, fishing and cycling trails and for other types of tourist use (Spatial Plan for the Special Purpose Area of the International Waterway E-80 – the Danube, 2015).

There are 17 protected areas of natural value in the Danube coastal area in Serbia: two national parks (Fruška Gora and Djerdap), two nature parks (Tikvara and Begečka Jama), one area of exceptional qualities (Great War Island), five special nature reserves (the Upper Danube, Karadjordjevo, Bagremara, Kovilj-Petrovaradin Wetlands and Deliblatska Sands) and 25 natural monuments. Four areas are waiting for their declaration of protection (one special nature reserve – Titelski Breg in the municipality

of Titel and three monuments of nature), while 15 areas are planned for protection (Ibid.).

The Danube waterway with the coastal belt is an ecological corridor of international importance. Areas with international protection status or candidates for obtaining this status are: *Important Bird Areas* (IBA) – Upper Danube, Karadjordjevo, Fruška Gora, Titelski Breg, Kovilj Wetlands, Dunavski Lesni Odsek, Sava Estuary, Labudovo Okno, Deliblatska Sands, Djerdap and Mala Vrbica; *Important Plant Areas* (IPA) – Upper Danube, the Slatinska area around Doroslova, Fruška Gora, Kovilj-Petrovaradin Wetlands, Titelski Breg, Veliko ratno ostrvo, Šalinački Lug, Deliblatska Sands, Djerdap and Kladovo–Radujevac; *Prime Butterfly Areas* (PBA) – Upper Danube, Fruška Gora, Deliblatska Sands and Djerdap; *Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest* (ASCI) – Upper Danube, Tikvara, Fruška Gora, Kovilj-Petrovaradin Wetlands, Pančevo River Islands, Šalinački Lug, Deliblatska Sands and Djerdap; Ramsar sites – Upper Danube and Labudovo Okno, and Kovilj-Petrovaradin Wetlands and the Lower Danube are candidates for enrollment on the list of Ramsar sites (*List of Wetlands of International Importance of the Convention on Wetlands*); biosphere reserves – areas planned for establishment as biosphere reserves according to the UNESCO programme *Man and the biosphere* (MaB) are the Upper Danube, Deliblatska Sands and Djerdap; Carpathian areas, areas of the application of the *Objective convention on the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians in Serbia* – Djerdap; World Heritage Sites – Djerdap National Park and Deliblatska Sands are on the *Tentative List* for placement on the UNESCO *List of World Heritage* and areas for cross-border cooperation – Upper Danube (on the formation of the Dunav-Drava-Mura cross-border Biosphere Reserve), Fruška Gora, Deliblatska Sands and Djerdap (on the establishment of common natural assets/a cultural area that will include the Djerdap National Park on the Serbian and *Portile de Fier* Natural Park on the Romanian side).

The cultural heritage of the Danube belt is an integral part of European cultural heritage, which should be the starting point for its presentation, interpretation and inclusion in the European routes of culture and the Danube tourist offer. In the coastal belt of the entire Danube through Serbia 1,186 objects and remains have been confirmed or presumed to have the character of cultural assets. So far, only 140 immovable cultural assets have been categorized (11% of the total) and 374 assets (31,5%) have been registered, 31 immovable cultural assets of exceptional

importance (national importance) and 89 assets of great importance (regional importance) have been categorized. On the *Tentative List* of UNESCO of world heritage sites are the city of Bač and its surroundings, Smederevo Fortress and the Roman Limes. The development of the European Danube Cultural Corridor is foreseen along the length of the Danube, as well as the cultural route of *Fortresses on the Danube* (Bač Fortress, Petrovaradin Fortress, Belgrade Fortress, Smederevo Fortress, Ram Fortress, Golubac Fortress and Fetislam Fortress). Plans for the cultural route the *Roman Emperors route in Serbia* are in their initial stages; the route includes the following localities along the Danube: Singidunum, Vinča, Viminacium, Golubac fortress, the Roman limes, Trajan's route, bridge and sign, Lepenski Vir and the Diana Fortress. Of all of these localities, only Viminacium Archaeological Park and Lepenski Vir have been prepared for tourists (Ibid.).

The advantage of the Danube is that it can include tourist offers at a distance of 100 km from a port, harbour or marina if an attractive enough tourism product is prepared for travelers on the Danube and its coastal belt. The key question is: how many tourism resources have become attractive to tourists and are they included in the Danube tourist offer (see more: Maksin, 2010)?

The basic feature of tourism in Serbia is the diversity and the number of natural and cultural tourism resources over a relatively small area, on one hand, and the low level of their activation and attractiveness for tourists, on the other. This imbalance is particularly pronounced throughout the course of the Danube and on its coast. It is well known that the Danube has the highest number of tourists on river cruises in the world, but in 2009 only 13.4% or 51,000 tourists arrived at the international ports in Belgrade, Novi Sad and Donji Milanovac, a number which rose to around 120,000 passengers in 2016 (Port governance agency, 2017, eKapija 07.08.2017).

We believe that the key problems are neglecting the significance of presenting and interpreting tourism resources for the enjoyment of visitors and establishing their potential attractiveness, as well as neglecting the development of a wide range of activities and integrating the Danube tourist offer.

### **Assessment of the attractiveness of the Danube's key tourism resources**

According to the FAS methodology of UNWTO (2010), there are tourism attractors, factors and support. Attractors are natural, cultural and created or built (man-made) tourism resources that continuously attract a significant number of tourists. Tourism factors are natural tourism resources that attract a small number of tourists in relation to their potential attractiveness, as they are not yet adequately prepared for inclusion in the tourist offer of a destination. They also include human (cultural traditions, knowledge and skills, the wages and working conditions in tourism, technological development) and capital factors (accessibility of loans, development of entrepreneurship and infrastructure, capital attraction) that are necessary in order to activate the potential of the natural tourism resources. Support includes complementary services, transport (availability of tourist attractions and natural factors) and tourist facilities that contribute to the attractiveness of tourism resources and destinations.

According to the FAS methodology, each attractor is assessed according to the attractiveness it achieves for tourists on a scale of 1 to 5 points (qualitative assessment of the number of visitors, beauty of the locality/site, tourist value achieved, etc.) and according to its potential to attract tourists in the future on a scale of 1 to 5 points (qualitative assessment of possible improvements, a future growth or decline in the number of tourists, a possible increase in accessibility etc.). The assessment of attractors is a median score of the current attractiveness of tourists and the potential to attract tourists in the future (Table 1). Natural factors are assessed qualitatively on a scale of 1 to 5 points according to their beauty, biodiversity and potential to attract tourists in the future.

In this paper only attractors and factors of priority importance for the development of tourism along the whole course of the Danube through Serbia are identified, while a more detailed list of attractors and factors should be established for each of the destinations along the Danube. The problem in terms of the evaluation of the attractors is the incomplete data on the number of visitors to these tourism resources.

Two key natural attractors are identified – Djerdap Gorge and Fruška Gora National Park, which are considered in terms of nature preservation, and the characteristics of unique natural elements along the course of the

Danube (Djerdap Gorge) to have great potential for attracting tourists in the future. The average score of 3.5 reflects the high attractiveness of these natural attractors, which must be improved in terms of interpretation, activity and accessibility.

Six cultural attractors are identified. The best example is the Viminacium Archaeological Park, which with excellent presentation, a developed tourist interpretation, numerous events and access to cruisers (the port) from the Danube has become a cultural attractor on the Danube throughout the year. Lepenski Vir has excellent presentation; it is developing its tourist interpretation and has the potential to become one of the biggest cultural attractors when it secures access to cruisers on the Danube and develops its planned offer of activities. Fruška Gora monasteries with Sremski Karlovci and all of the fortresses on the Danube (including the Petrovaradin and Belgrade Fortresses, which are the only ones included in the tourist offer) must develop a presentation, tourist interpretation and offer of activities for tourists. The average score of 3.7 reflects the high attractiveness of these cultural attractions, which must be further improved.

Built attractors are least developed in the territory of Serbia. Junaković Spa was only conditionally included in the built attractors, since the number of tourists in the municipality of Apatin in the period 2009-2016 was less than 10,000 (Municipalities of the Republic of Serbia, 2010; Municipalities and regions of the Republic of Serbia, 2017). Traditional crafts/trades are being organized, restored and presented to tourists in the municipalities of Sombor and Kladovo, but they are not well promoted. For this reason, the score of 1.25 indicates the significant underdevelopment of this type of attractor and the priority to develop various created and built attractors on the Danube (spa and health centres, aqua parks, golf courses, nautical centres, traditional trades/crafts etc.).

Table 1: Scores for the attractors using FAS methodology

| A. Natural attractors |                           | Score | B. Cultural attractors |  | Score |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|-------|------------------------|--|-------|
| 1.                    | Djerdap Gorge             | 4.0   | 1.                     | Viminacium Archaeological Park               | 4.0   |
| 2.                    | Fruška Gora National Park | 3.0   | 2.                     | Lepenski Vir                                 | 3.5   |
| Total                 |                           | 3.5   | 3.                     | Fruška Gora monasteries and Sremski Karlovci | 3.0   |
| C. Built attractors   |                           | Score | 4.                     | Fortresses on the                            | 3.25  |

|                   |                     |              |   |               |     |
|-------------------|---------------------|--------------|---|---------------|-----|
|                   |                     |              |   | Danube*       |     |
| 1.                | Junaković Spa       | 1.0          | 5.  | Exit festival | 4.0 |
| 2.                | Traditional crafts  | 1.5          | 6.  | Beer fest     | 4.5 |
| Total             |                     | 1.25         | Total   |               | 3.7 |
| <b>Attractors</b> |                     | <b>Score</b> | * The fortresses in Bač and Smederevo are on the UNESCO World Heritage <i>Tentative List</i> ( <a href="http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/state=rs">http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/state=rs</a> ).<br>Note: scores range from 1–5, a score of 1 is for low, and a score of 5 is for high attractiveness. |               |     |
| A                 | Natural attractors  | 3.5          |   |               |     |
| B                 | Cultural attractors | 3.7          |   |               |     |
| C                 | Built attractors    | 1.0          |   |               |     |
| Total             |                     | 2.7          |   |               |     |

Table 2: Scores for natural factors using FAS methodology

| Natural factors |                            | Score |
|-----------------|----------------------------|-------|
| 1.              | Djerdap National Park**    | 5.0   |
| 2.              | SRP Upper Danube           | 3.5   |
| 3.              | SRP Deliblatska Sands**    | 3.5   |
| 4.              | Ramsar sites* and wetlands | 3.0   |
| 5.              | Danube                     | 5.0   |
| 6.              | Sava                       | 4.0   |
| 7.              | Tisa                       | 4.0   |
| 8.              | DTD canals                 | 2.5   |
| 9.              | Climate                    | 2.0   |
| Total           |                            | 3.6   |

\* The Upper Danube and Labudovo Okno are on the Ramsar list, and the Kovilj-Petrovaradin Wetlands and the Lower Danube are candidates for the list. ([www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/document/s/library/sitelist.pdf](http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/document/s/library/sitelist.pdf)).  
 \*\* Djerdap National Park and Deliblatska Sands are on the *Tentative List* for the UNESCO *World Heritage List*.

Nine natural factors of priority importance for the development of tourism on the Danube were identified (Table 2). Because they are potentially the most attractive factors, and there is an expected increase in their accessibility (planned development of nautical and other transport infrastructure), the Danube and Djerdap National Park are the best-ranked natural factors. The remaining factors are the Sava River, the Tisa and its canals, the wetland habitats on the Danube and a unique natural asset in Europe – Deliblatska Sands, whose potential attractiveness is highly ranked. Worst ranked is the climate, with a relatively unfavourable summer tourism climate index which will increasingly manifest in the future (see: Maksin et al., 2011).

The results of the FAS methodology indicate that the exceptional resources for the development of tourism on the Danube and its coastal strip are still insufficiently activated and insufficiently attractive.

Arranging, presenting and especially developing the interpretation of natural and cultural tourism resources are the first priority for making the Danube more attractive to tourists and for the development of tourism. The exceptional tourist potential of the Danube and its coastal belt can only be fulfilled by means of well-designed and properly implemented interpretation. And other tourist resources, which do not possess significant tourism potential, can become attractive as a result of their strong interpretation (see more in: Maksin et al., 2011). In addition to a significant improvement in attractiveness, it is necessary to increase the accessibility and integrate the offer of tourism resources together with the primary tourism destinations determined by the national spatial plan, different thematic routes (cultural routes, the pathway of Tesla's industrial heritage, wine routes, Danube wetlands, towns on the Danube, life and customs on the Danube and others), nautical, cycling and pedestrian routes.

### **Priorities for the development of sustainable tourism on the Danube**

From the aspect of potential attractiveness for the development of tourism, the Danube and its coastal belt can be divided into three specific tourism spatial units which interact and differentiate according to their dominant characteristics – the Upper, Middle and Lower Danube. Both in the Upper and Lower Danube, and in certain sectors of the Middle Danube, there are areas with protected typical flora and fauna (ornitho and ichthyo), which are the dominant "ecological zones of the Danube", and they are a tourism resource which can also satisfy the toughest demands of the European tourist clientele.

In the Upper Danube, as a predominantly ecological zone (in the Beždan–Beška–Novi Sad sector), development should primarily be based on the tourist valorisation of biodiversity. This zone represents the preserved authentic Upper Danube, rich in wetland zones, tributaries, canals and water surfaces covering significant areas. In this zone, a portfolio composed of the following internationally competitive tourism products will be developed: a nautical and ship touring complex; special interests; rural tourism of coastal villages and farms with a multi-ethnic tourist offer; health (spa, wellness) tourism in Junaković Spa; city tourism in the immediate surroundings (Apatin, Sombor, Novi Sad, Sremski Karlovci); events (Exit Festival), MICE and mountains with lakes (part of Fruška Gora National Park). The key point in this sector, at the entrance of the Danube from Hungary to Serbia, is a zone made up of – Baračka winter

harbor with possible anchorage, a harbour and a marina, the entrance to the Large and Small Canal of the DTD hydraulic system, the bridge over the Danube – the connection between Bezdan and Batine in Croatia and and the exceptional architecture of the Battle of Batina Museum building, which could also accept the role of being the priority visitor center (welcome center) of the Danube at this entrance to Serbia. More serious development of tourism in this sector is possible only in conjunction with the Croatian wetland zones of neighbouring Kopački Rit and the Danube-Drava National Park in Hungary.

The Middle Danube Region, as a predominantly urban and industrial zone (in the Beška-Novi Sad-Golubac sector), should develop tourism based on the so-called "Danube Riviera of Serbia" (extending for a total length of 220 km along the Danube). Water and coastal traffic (water and bus) could contribute to this sector of the Danube being attractive to larger cities and settlements (in particular by activating regular local and regional boats that could gain the status of being a "small white fleet"). In terms of tourism, the Middle Danube Zone is characterized by: a) on the right bank of the Danube, weekend-tourist settlements in attractive locations, which are interwoven with rural settlements from Čortanovci to Golubac, within which Silver Lake is situated; b) on the left bank of the Danube, except for Titel, Novi Sad and Pančevo, village settlements with rural and environmentally attractive zones such as: Kovilj Wetlands, the Island of Krčedin, the Tisa estuary with forelands towards the Danube, the canal connection between the Danube and Tamiš and others; c) numerous river islands, small recreational waterways, and cycling routes along both banks of the Danube.

The development of tourism in the Lower Danube region, as the most attractive historical (in the Golubac–Timok estuary) and ecological zone, should be based on natural and cultural heritage. In terms of tourism the zone of the Lower Danube region is characterized by:

- a) Djerdap Gorge with Djerdap National Park;
- b) The hydropower and navigation systems Djerdap I and Djerdap II;
- c) Numerous archaeological sites – Lepenski Vir, the remains of the Roman Limes, Trajan's Plaque, Trajan's Bridge, the Diana Fortress, the Byzantine-Serb fortified cities of Ram, Golubac and others;
- d) The lake environment of the Djerdap Lake which provides full safety of navigation to all nautical water vessels and is the most attractive nautical and recreational zone on the Danube;

- e) The possibility of connecting with the attractive tourist offer in the immediate surroundings of the Danube (such as wineries in the Negotin region, monasteries and caves in Homolje, the Roman Emperors Route from the Limes through Gamzigrad to Niš and others).

The development of tourism in this zone should be carried out in conjunction with Romania – with the *Portile de Fier* Natural Park on the Romanian side (concept from the Spatial Plan for the Special Purpose area of the International Waterway E-80 – the Danube, 2010).

In order to initiate the basic nautical route along the Danube through Serbia, the first step should be to define the criteria for selecting the locations of nautical points, which are related to the stages of developing tourism:

- Criteria for phase I: travel time; support from the infrastructure of urban areas, organized existing services of interest for the passengers, and already established tourist offers; distance in relation to the journey time for most vessels at medium speed (20–30 km/hour); journey time in relation to the characteristics of the waterway – speed and type of watercourse (river, lake) and the hydrological regime in relation to the season (high, normal or low water); the tourist offer in the surroundings (wetlands, river islands, sand banks, hunting grounds, fishing zones, traditional farms and houses, winter resorts, marinas, cultural and historical sites, traditional events, cities – culture, entertainment, trade/craft, history);
- Criteria for phase II: the attractiveness of the tourist offer of the coast and the aquatic area, which can be defined by means of dedicated "packages": culture-historical (from prehistory to the present day), environmental and research (from photo-safaris to research stations), sport and recreational (from competitions to entertainment events), ethno-gastronomic (from traditional happenings to the grape harvest and wine tours), hunting-fishing (from high trophy game to ducks and sport fishing with competitions);
- Criteria for phase III: the motivation of potential clients will be determined based on visitors' surveys, which will directly influence the design and development of competitive offers at numerous localities. From the aspect of motivation boat passengers will have one of two preferences: first – transit through the Serbian waters of the Danube towards further destinations, like the Danube Delta or passage towards the Black Sea, Kiev or the Northern European nautical route;

second – targetted arrivals in the Serbian waters of the Danube to visit Djerdap Gorge as the primary phenomenon on the Danube, visits to protected natural assets, wetlands or cultural heritage such as Lepenski Vir, Vinimacijum, Vinča and others.

The criteria for differentiating settlements and localities on the Danube coast, according to their importance for developing nautical tourism and nautical infrastructure are, as follows:

- Transit points, which are acceptable facilities for nautical tourism that rely on the infrastructure of coastal cities that function as half-way/time stops – staying for 1 night/day;
- Transit destination points, which are large city or towns on the coast that have welcome facilities for nautical tourism, because in addition to the availability of these facilities, boat passengers want to get to know the city, people, culture and traditions (a 2–4 day stay);
- Target safari zones, which are areas of special interest that can be the destination of a trip (stay for a few days).

Based on the above criteria, the following most attractive settlements and locations of nautical and tourist points on the Danube and its coastal belt can be distinguished:

- The 10 most important locations on the Danube from the aspect of nautics – Baračka (the entrance and exit to the Danube in Serbia, the connection with the DTD canal network and Sombor); Prahovo (the entrance and exit to the Danube in Serbia, the Timok Estuary); Beška (crossing corridors VII and X); Novi Sad (provincial center, crossing corridors VII and X, the connection between the Danube and the DTD); Belgrade (the capital city of Serbia, crossing the Danube and the Sava, the airport, *Rent a Boat* and others); Pančevo (Tamiš Estuary); Smederovo (crossing the Danube and Morava); Stara Palanka (connection of the DTD canal with the Danube–Karaš, contact with the Nera River and the Romanian border); hydroelectric power stations Djerdap I and Djerdap II (locks);
- Complexes of cities and towns – representatives of the people, culture and history: Novi Sad–Petrovaradin–Sremski Karlovci, Belgrade–Zemun–Pančevo and Smederevo–Veliko Gradište–Golubac;
- Nautical tourist points – 18 cities and towns in the immediate coastal zone of the Danube: Apatin, Bačka Palanka, Novi Sad, Petrovaradin, Sremski Karlovci, Titel, Zemun, Belgrade, Pančevo, Kovin, Grocka,

Smederevo, Kostolac, Veliko Gradište, Golubac, Donji Milanovac, Kladovo, Brza Palanka and Prahovo;

- Potential nautical tourist points – 11 settlements with a urban-like character (Čeverić, Beočin, Sremska Kamenica, Stari Slankamen, Batajnica, Dubravica, Dobra, Tekija, Dobrovo, Mihajlovac and Radujevac) and 46 village settlements in the immediate coastal zone of the Danube.

At locations with the most attractive and most important natural and cultural tourism resources along the Danube, the priority is the construction of new and the equipping of existing harbors with the appropriate infrastructure to receive tourist boats, in: Bogojevo (entrance to the Upper Danube Special Nature Reserve), Bačko Novo Selo (access to Bač fortress and settlement and Karadjordjevo), Titel/Slankamen (Tisa Estuary, access to Carska Bara), Pančevo, Vinča, Kostolac (near the Viminacium archaeological site), Golupac (in the immediate vicinity of Golubački Grad), Lepenski Vir (access to the archaeological site) and Brza Palanka.

The choice of location for marinas in the first phase of making the basic nautical route along the Danube should be based on the following criteria: distance between places from the aspect of daily travel/navigation, the possibility of supplying vessels with fuel (petrol, diesel, gas) and meeting other needs of the vessels and crew/tourists, as well as the tourist offer of the surroundings in a radius of 20-30 km from the actual reception point. Fuel supply (according to Austrian experience) is acceptable for 5-7 hours of driving, or a distance of 130-160 km between fuel pumps (at a speed of 20-30 km/hour). Starting from these criteria, the priority in the first phase should be the marinas: Bačka Palanka, Novi Sad, Čenta-Karaš, Hotel Jugoslavija (Belgrade), Kovin, Ram, Stara Palanka and Donji Milanovac/Poreč bay.

## **Conclusion**

The Danube is the primary international navigable tourism destination for touring in Serbia, on which there are four primary tourism destinations and two primary city tourist centers, with many tourism resources which have international protection status or are candidates for obtaining this status. In addition to this, only six cultural and two natural attractors have been identified with an average score of 3.7, that is 3.5. These scores indicate their high attractiveness, which must be further improved. Least

developed are built or created attractors (score of 1.25). The potential attractiveness of nine natural factors is highly ranked (3.6). Therefore, priority is given to improving the presentation and development of the interpretation of tourism resources for the enjoyment of visitors and achieving the potential level of their attractiveness, as well as developing a wide range of activities, integrating the tourist offer on the Danube and increasing its accessibility. Along the entire Danube through Serbia, only the Viminacium Archaeological Park stands out as the most attractive cultural tourism resource, and the attractiveness of Lepenski Vir is growing, precisely because of its attractive presentation and tourist interpretation. The priority is the development of various created/built attractors on the Danube (spa and health centers, aqua parks, golf courses, nautical centres, traditional crafts etc.).

From the aspect of the potential attractiveness for the development of tourism, there are three specific tourism spatial units which are interconnected but are differentiated by their dominant characteristics – the Upper, Middle and Lower Danube. The Upper and Lower Danube can accelerate competitive and sustainable tourism by means of cross-border cooperation with Croatia / Hungary and Romania. In order to develop and connect the Danube tourist offer, the priority is the regulation of the international waterway and the phased arrangement and equipping of the small nautical routes on the Danube. In order to increase the accessibility of the sites with the most attractive and most important natural and cultural tourism resources along the Danube, it is necessary to build new and equip existing harbors with the appropriate infrastructure to receive tourist boats. The priority in the coastal belt should be the sustainable and competitive development of tourism in the complexes of cities and towns that represent the historical development and intercultural influence of several nations, such as the complexes of Novi Sad–Petrovaradin–Sremski Karlovci, Belgrade–Zemun–Pančevo and Smederovo–Veliko Gradište–Golubac, and then other urban centers and rural settlements in the primary tourism destinations. The advantage of the Danube is that it can include a tourist offer at a distance of up to 100 km from the port, harbor or marina if an attractive enough tourism product is prepared for passengers traveling along the Danube and its coastal belt.

One of the key reasons for not executing existing master plans (but only partially implementing individual projects) for the Upper Danube, Lower Danube and the Roman Emperors Route in Serbia, or other planning instruments (spatial and urban plans), which are the planning basis for the

sustainable development of the Danube tourism destinations, is the existing system of managing the development of the international waterway, developing tourism, and regulating and protecting the natural and cultural heritage.

Until there is improvement in the system of managing sustainable development, establishment of adequate institutional and organizational arrangements in the tourism sector and other sectors and until there are mechanisms for coordinating actors in the public and private sectors, we will continue to talk about potentials, instead of establishing the attractiveness of the Danube for domestic and foreign tourists.

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