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DEVELOPING HUNTING TOURISM – A NEW PERSPECTIVE OF ACHIEVING COMPETITIVENESS OF RURAL CROATIA

RAZVIJANJE LOVNOG TURIZMA-NOVA PERSPEKTIVA OSTVARENJA KONKURENTNOSTI RURALNE HRVATSKE

ABSTRACT

Croatia is the owner of a larger part of hunting grounds, which are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of agriculture, forestry and water management, and are most frequently leased by various hunting societies or individuals who organize commercial hunting. In order to enable its successful positioning on the tourist market, as a destination of hunting tourism, which respects high standards of ecology and sustainability, Croatia needs to establish co-operation between the Ministry of tourism and the Ministry of agriculture, forestry and water management, and coordinate its activities with the needs of the Croatian economy, with a goal of achieving a competitive tourist product, and stronger forming of a hunting tourism brand. A proposition of standards for development of hunting tourism of Croatia is given in the paper. The purpose of the paper is to point out on unexploited resources for a quality development of hunting tourism of rural Croatia, and give guidelines for its further development. The goal of the paper is to give a presentation of characteristics of hunting tourism and its development in rural Croatia, to point out basic economic aspects of hunting tourism development, and also the limiting factors of future development of hunting tourism in rural Croatia, in order to achieve competitive advantage of this type of tourist offer in relation to the competitive tourist destinations.

Keywords: hunting tourism, sustainable development, standards, tourist offer

SAŽETAK

Hrvatska je vlasnik većeg dijela lovišta koja su pod jurisdikcijom ministarstva poljoprivrede, šumarstva i vodnog gospodarstva, i najčešće se iznajmljuju raznim lovačkim društvima ili individualcima koji organiziraju komercijalni lov. Kako bi se omogućilo uspješno pozicioniranje na turističkom tržištu, kao destinacije lovnog turizma, koja poštuje visoke standarde ekologije i održivosti, Hrvatska mora ostvariti suradnju između ministarstva turizma i ministarstva poljoprivrede, šumarstva i vodnog gospodarstva, i koordinirati svoje

aktivnosti s potrebama hrvatskog gospodarstva, s ciljem ostvarenja konkurentnog turističkog proizvoda, i snažnijeg formiranja brenda lovnog turizma. U radu se daje prijedlog standarda za razvoj lovnog turizma Hrvatske. Svrha rada je ukazati na neiskorištene resurse za kvalitetan razvoj lovnog turizma ruralne Hrvatske, i dati smjernice za njegov daljnji razvoj. Cilj rada je prikazati karakteristike lovnog turizma i njegovog razvoja u ruralnoj Hrvatskoj, ukazati na osnovne ekonomske aspekte razvoja lovnog turizma, te također ograničavajuće faktore budućeg razvoja lovnog turizma u ruralnoj Hrvatskoj, kako bi se ostvarile konkurentske prednosti ovog tipa turističke ponude u odnosu na konkurentne turističke destinacije.

Ključne riječi: lovni turizam, održivi razvoj, standardi, turistička ponuda

1. Introduction

Despite its long tradition, hunting and hunting tourism are not sufficiently developed in Republic of Croatia. Their development will enable Croatia's repositioning on the turbulent tourist market as a destination which promotes and implements the values of sustainable and environmentally aware tourist development, and at the same time, they will enable economic, state and social growth of rural areas. The paper consists of three parts. The first part gives the review of basic terms of hunting and hunting tourism and provides the legal frame of hunting in Croatia. In the second part, the authors give the review of perspectives of hunting tourism development in Croatia, with the use of statistical data from secondary sources. In the third part, a proposition of guidelines is given for hunting tourism development in Croatia, presented through SWOT analysis, and a proposition of possible standards for the development of hunting tourism are presented. At the end, a conclusion and used literature are listed.

2. Hunting tourism-definition

Taking into consideration the fact that Croatia possesses significantly preserved environment, numerous landscape particularities, and rich flora and fauna, it can be stated that it possesses significant advantages for development of hunting tourism with an objective of enrichment of total tourist offer. Starting from the ancient times, hunters were mostly people of higher purchasing power, who wanted to enjoy the intact nature, watch and hunt animals, enjoy the gastronomic specialties prepared of the same game, and experience until then undiscovered special tourist offer which differed from the usual ones. There is an excellent possibility for combining the offers of rural and hunting tourism, considering that they were the subject of the same target group which combines ecotourism. According to data from ODRAZ, Croatia has over 91.6% (<http://www.odraz.hr/media/50356/ruralni%20razvoj%20i%20leader%20u%20hrvatskoj.pdf>, 07.01.2014.) of rural and 8.4% urban areas, which are in many cases insufficiently developed, and are under strong impact of depopulation. Precisely, these areas dispose of great natural resources (various game, rich forest areas, relief particularities, climate, etc.). For example, oak woods of Slavonia and Podravina are inhabited by deer, fallow deer, wild boars and roe bucks. Moslavina is the natural habitat of roe-buck and small game (rabbit, pheasant), while the areas by the rivers of Drava and Sava are rich areas with wading birds (wild ducks and water hens). In Međimurje and Podravina exists numerous small game, and the forests of Lika and Gorski kotar are inhabited with bears and wild boars. In southern Croatia in Biokovo and Pelješac there are chamois and muflons. Almost all areas of Croatia dispose in rich fund of game, and therefore this form of tourism represents a new possibility of development of rural areas of Croatia, and a new form of a tourist product for the areas which were until now

characterized by mass tourism. Introducing hunting tourism will enable economic and demographic prosperity of rural areas, and preservation of landscape particularities. According to the article in the National Papers, Hunter is a person who passed hunting exam and conducts basic tasks of hunting: growth, protection, hunting and use of game and its parts while respecting hunting customs and ethics (<http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/290163.html> (10.01.2014.)) According to Law on Hunting, hunting is a social activity of cultivation, protection, hunting and use of game and its parts (<http://www.zakon.hr/z/422/Zakon-o-lovstvu> (10.01.2014.)). Hunting tourism represents the hunters' visitation of other counties so they could recreationally hunt game or explore new hunting territories (adaptation of Hrabovski-Tomic, 2008, 174 according to Hemmi, J. (2005): Matkailu, Ymparisto, Luonto. Osa 2. Jyvaskyla: Gummerus, 374.). After having analyzed previously mentioned definitions, the authors will try to define terms hunting tourism and hunter-tourist. Hunting tourism represents a special form of a selective tourist offer, based on sustainable tourism, while creating synergy between postulates of eco, rural and sport tourism, and it was developed thanks to hunters' passion for hunting outside of their own hunting grounds, for which they set aside significant funding, while enjoying the natural beauties of hunting grounds, walks in the nature, cultivation, feeding, watching and hunting game. Hunter-tourist is a person with strong ecological awareness, lover of nature, sports and wilderness. It's about a highly motivated tourist, usually with a higher purchasing power who is willing to set aside significant funds for satisfying its own needs. The area of hunting in Croatia is regulated by numerous laws and rule books, among which the most important are Law about hunting, Law about firearms, and Law about associations, while among rule books are pointed rule book about closed hunting seasons, use of firearms and ammunition, conditions and way of hunting, guard service, etc. (see more on <http://www.lsz.hr/zakonodavstvo.php> (20.01.2014.)). A special rule book for development of hunting tourism in Croatia is missing, a book which would, in one place, determine all legal guidelines for development of this form of tourist offer. Law about hunting governs managing the hunting grounds and game. Managing includes cultivation, protection and use of game and its parts. Jobs regarding managing hunting grounds and game have an economic, tourist and recreational function, and the function of protection and preservation of biological and ecological balance of natural habitats, game and wild fauna and flora (<http://www.mps.hr/default.aspx?id=8452> (10.01.2014.)). Activities of hunting, game cultivation, etc. are performed in the area of hunting grounds. Hunting ground is a specific land area which presents a fully rounded natural unit in which exist ecological and other conditions for cultivation, preservation, hunting and use of game and its parts, and hunting grounds can be divided according to characteristics of area in: a) open hunting ground – where undisturbed daily and seasonal migration of game is enabled; b) fenced hunting ground – minimum surface 1000 ha, fenced with natural (wide watercourses, big water surfaces, sea, etc.) or artificial (fences, buildings, and similar) obstacles which prevent or significantly reduce the possibility that the game which is cultivated, protected for hunting on those grounds, leaves the area; c) hunting ground of surface bigger than 100 ha, and less than 2000 ha of its own lands, fenced with a fence or a similar building or natural obstacles which prevents the game to leave that land area (adapted from <http://www.propisi.hr/print.php?id=710>, 11.01.2014.)). For example, the cultivation grounds in the ownership of Croatian forests, as the biggest hunting holder²¹ in Croatia are: Kunjevci where fallow deer and muflon are cultivated, Mačkovac and Kunjak where wild boars are cultivated, then Šprešhat where ordinary deer is cultivated, while in the cultivation ground

²¹ Hunting holder (in Croatian Lovoovlaštenik) is a legal or physical person (artisan who gained the right of hunting based on lease or concession, and is the owner of the hunting ground. Law about hunting NN 140/05.

Ubaš fallow deer is cultivated. Small game like rabbits and pheasants are cultivated in the cultivation ground Pesci, and in Oštrica muflon is cultivated (adapted according to <http://portal.hrsume.hr/index.php/hr/lovstvo/skrbodivljaci/uzgajalista> (14.01.2014.)). The roof institution of Croatian hunting is Croatian hunting society which operates over county hunting societies and the hunting society of the city of Zagreb, and in its membership includes over fifty five thousand hunters. The task of this society is that, through its activities, takes care about protection of nature, preservation, cultivation and proper game hunting, and it represents Croatian hunting in homeland and abroad (<http://www.lovac.info/lovacki-portal-lovac-home/linkovi/lovacki-savezi.html> 16.02.2014). Croatia can also include in its offer the promotion and exhibition of its six indigenous dog breeds: Dalmatian dog, Istrian longhaired and shorthaired Hound, Posavac Hound, Croatian Sheepdog, Tornjak, acknowledged by Croatian Kennel Club (adapted according to <http://www.hks.hr/web/index.php?str=3> (24.01.2014.)).

3. Characteristics and current state of hunting tourism offer in Croatia

Looking back in the ancient history, a human - hunter and a collector is determined. Living in nature, the man survived thanks to his hunting skills and utilities he created himself. From then, until the modern times in which people live today, the rules of survival have significantly changed. But, the need for hunting has prevailed as a form of passion, and it didn't lose its important determinants (<http://www.lovacki-psi.net/hr/linkovi/3-kinologija-i-lovstvo/3-hrvatski-lovacki-savez.html> 16.09.2014.). It started to develop in Europe between the two World Wars, especially in Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary. In that period, in Croatia it started to develop first in the Varaždin area and in Podravina, although the beginnings of hunting tourism should be searched in farther history of Croatia, for example, in Malinska in the island of Krk, where the first hotel built was named "K lovcu" or "Towards the Huntsman". The hotel was built in 1880, during the time when the island was visited by numerous wealthy Hungarian and Austrian aristocrats, among who was also the heir to the thrown Rudolf of Habsburg. They engaged in hunting of snipes and other game (Turk & Turk, 2002, 361-386). In Central Croatia and Slavonia, deer, roe deer, wild boars, martens, foxes, rabbits, pheasants, wild geese and wild ducks are hunted. In Gorski kotar and Lika there is a possibility of bear overhunting, and in Dalmatia Chamois and Muflons. Hunters from Italy traditionally arrive to hunt all sorts of small game, while Austrians come more frequently to hunt wild boars. More and more hunters arrive from Spain, and prefer individual organization and individual hunt of big game, while more numerous Czech hunters arrive in larger organized groups (adapted according to <http://www.poduzetnistvo.org/news/lovstvo-kaovelika-turisticka-prilika> (10.01.2014.)). Croatia lacks richer and more diverse offer of hunting tourism facilities, in order to improve its current structure of hunters consumption who, with around 60.000 domestic hunters, come to hunt for trophies, but spend very little on other facilities (around 90% of them hunt for small game, and only 10% hunt big and trophy game). Not only a better organization and promotion of Croatia on the world hunting tourism market is necessary, but also better conditions for hunting tourism development, because the hunter is a guest who spends up to three times more than a regular tourist. Foreign hunters in Croatia give up to 70% of their spent money for game kill, while only 30% spend on tourist services and facilities. In the world the ratios are reverse, respectively, hunter's accommodation, restaurant and extra-board services bring around 70% of income, and pure hunting represents only 30% of total profit. Hunting societies in Europe gather over 7.3 million of hunters, and average consumption of hunter in the European Union amounts around 1.500,00 Euro, respectively around 10.000 Euro per year per hunter, while the total consumption of hunters in Europe is estimated on 10 billion of Euro. Around 30% of European hunters goes to

hunting areas outside their parent country which represents an excellent potential for development of Croatian Hunting Tourism. It is being estimated that hunting in Europe employs around 100.000 employees or approximately 1 worker on 65 hunters (adapted according to: <http://www.poduzetnistvo.org/news/lovstvo-kao-velika-turisticka-prilika> (10.01.2014.)). Particularity of hunting tourism is in the fact that it represents a form of sports-recreational tourist offer, but also possesses the characteristics of ecotourism. Its development would be significant in seaside areas due to overcoming of seasonality, respectively prolonging tourist season and providing enrichment of tourist offer, while in the continental part, along with the development of rural and ecotourism, it would present an excellent mix of products and services which would enable more significant employment and economic growth of parts of Croatia which were destroyed due to Homeland war, and which still, after 20 years haven't recuperated from the war consequences. The advantage of hunting tourism is in its essence thanks to which it cannot be considered a mass phenomenon, but it is characterized by exclusivity. Offer of this form of tourism is organized on individual or group basis, and it is particularly attractive to tourists of higher purchasing power, so its development is of greater interest for service carriers as well. Along with previously mentioned characteristics, hunting tourism is also determined by geo-traffic relations of hunting tourism destination with the outbound tourist market, safety, ecological preservation, that hunting is a recognized and legally determined category (that it is legal and socially acceptable), and that besides hunting the destination also offers additional offer (accommodation, restaurant facilities, entertainment). Previously mentioned points to necessity of ensuring legal assumption for an active implementation of all postulates of sustainable development of hunting tourism, which will represent an upgrade of tourist offer in rural parts of Croatia, in a way that hunting quotas are determined in the hunting grounds which are going to be held exclusively for tourists, and that standards of offer and necessary knowledge are determined for tourists who participate in hunting. For successful promotion and placing a product of hunting tourism on the tourist market, it is necessary to ensure mutual connection between the offer and demand through creating a promotion mix of hunting tourism. Certainly, the product of hunting tourism must offer value for money and take into consideration needs of a contemporary tourist-hunter. The next table presents the list of hunting grounds in the Republic of Croatia by counties.

Table 1 Hunting grounds in Croatia, by counties

Rank	County of	Number of hunting grounds	Share of hunting grounds by counties in %
1	Osijek-Baranja	108	10
2	Zagreb	83	7,69
2	Split-Dalmatia	83	7,69
3	Karlovac	76	7,04
4	Vukovar-Srijem	73	6,77
5	Sisak-Moslavina	66	6,12
6	Lika-Senj	62	5,75
6	Bjelovar-Bilogora	62	5,75
7	Primorje-Gorski kotar	57	5,28
8	Zadar	55	5,1
9	Istra	46	4,26
10	Požega-Slavonia	43	3,99
11	Brod-Posavina	40	3,71
12	Šibenik-Knin	38	3,52
13	Virovitica-Podravina	34	3,15
14	Varaždin	32	2,96
15	Krapina-Zagorje	31	2,87
15	Dubrovnik-Neretva	31	2,87
16	Međimurje	21	1,95
17	Koprivnica-Križevci	14	1,3
18	The city of Zagreb	12	1,11
18	The rest	12	1,11
	Croatia total	1079	100

Source: Central hunting record of Republic of Croatia, https://lovistarh.mps.hr/lovstvo_javnost/Lovista.aspx (07.01.2014.)

Data presented in the previous table point to the fact that the biggest number of hunting grounds is situated in the county of Osijek-Baranja (108), following County of Zagreb and Split Dalmatia with 83 hunting grounds. According to Central hunting record of Republic of Croatia, the country has 1079 hunting grounds, out of which the majority, around 540, is owned by the Republic of Croatia, hunting surface 2.191.296 Ha. State hunting grounds are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of agriculture and Ministry of tourism, or county offices for economy; most frequently they are leased to various hunting societies, companies or individuals who organize commercial hunting (<http://www.mvep.hr/hr/o-hrvatskoj/turizam/lovni-turizam>, 20.01.2014.)). The following table presents the number of hunters in the Republic of Croatia in the period 2007-2011.

Table 2 Number of hunters in the Republic of Croatia from 2007 till 2011

HUNTERS	YEAR					INDEX			
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
Members of HLS*	54.763	55.203	56.689	56.927	61.179	100,8	102,69	100,42	107,47
Prentices	1.221	846	1.181	839	950	69,29	139,6	71,04	113,23
Hunters Total	55.984	56.049	57.870	57.766	62.129	100,12	103,25	99,82	107,55

Source: http://www.dzs.hr/Hrv_Eng/publication/2012/01-02-01_01_2012.htm (12.02.2014).

*HLS – Hrvatski lovački savez or Croatian Hunting Alliance

Data from the previous table point out to a moderate growth of members of Croatian hunting alliances in the period between 2007-2010, while a more significant growth was recorded in the year 2011 (+ 4.252 members in year 2011 in relation to 2010, respectively, 7,05%). The data for the number of apprentices point to significant oscillations, noting that in 2011 there

was a growth of hunter apprentices (+111) in comparison to 2010, however, the amount is still unsatisfactory if we take into consideration the fact that in 2009 there were 1.181 apprentices. Monitoring the total number of hunters in the Republic of Croatia, it can be concluded that there has been a moderate increase in their number. In 2007, every hunting ground in Croatia hosted approximately 7 hunters-tourists. The prices of game kill and services of hunting are known in advance and fixed, and it can't happen that after the kill, when the game falls, the hunter bargains and arranges with the master of hunt about the payment. The deficiency is in the fact that prices in hunting tourism of Croatia are not different from those in the neighboring countries, so for a higher arrival of foreign hunters, it is necessary to simplify in the greatest measure possible, the border procedure, especially regarding carrying the game out of the country. (Adapted according to: <http://www.poduzetnistvo.org/news/lovstvo-kao-velika-turisticka-prilika> (10.01.2014.)). When it comes to foreign hunters who visit Croatian hunting grounds, it is noted that their number and interest for hunting in Croatia is growing, and last year almost 6.500 foreign permits for hunting were issued (according to: <http://www.kigo.hr/tekst/1962.html> (14.01.2014.)). For example, precisely due to foreign guests-hunters, the inland of Istria has a greater possibility of hunting tourism development. Namely, in the area of Motovun woods, Truffles mushrooms, which are extremely appreciated in gastronomy, are tracked, and they are considered as an aphrodisiac. Due to that reason, already a high number of foreign guests-hunters (mostly from the neighboring Italy) arrive regularly to hunt in these areas. Interconnection of health tourism in the valley of the river Mirna, rural offer in acropolis resorts in the inland of Istria, and hunting offer, will enable total improvement of economic and tourist development of that area. Istria is also the habitat of Croatian indigenous Istrian longhaired and shorthaired Hound, and within the offer, congresses about the breed can be organized, educations, workshops for tourists, tourist-hunters, local population and similar. Stronger and stronger competition of neighbors, eastern countries such as Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Czech Republic and Slovakia (according to: <http://www.poduzetnistvo.org/news/lovstvo-kao-velika-turisticka-prilika> (10.01.2014.)), which have recognized the pattern which enables the hunting to turn into a highly profitable industry, points that it is necessary to give special attention to the branding of hunting tourism offer as soon as possible. Namely, the possibilities of offer in hunting tourism are numerous, as well as possibilities of financial effects, i.e. tourists are charged: hunting, game kill, missing the game, photo-safaris, tours of hunting grounds, while the offer can be enriched through dog exhibitions, organization of congresses about hunting, gastronomic manifestations of hunting cuisine. If an interdisciplinary approach towards strengthening and creating an offer of hunting tourism is ensured, as well as removing the weakest links of offer, it can be expected that in the future the number of foreign tourists-hunters will significantly increase. In 2008 the Ministry of tourism supported the development of hunting tourism through the program "Zelena brazda" which is intended for encouraging the development of special forms of tourism in the continent, among which is hunting tourism as well. So, in the frame of that program, in the period 2008-2010, the Ministry of tourism extracted around 1.4 million of KN for completion, building, equipping and improvement of hunting-tourist capacities, and creating conditions for development of hunting tourism in Croatia (adapted according to: <http://www.kigo.hr/tekst/1962.html> (14.01.2014.)). Advantages of Croatia lie in its excellent geo-traffic position, vicinity of outbound markets, climate conditions, rich fund of game, various relief, hydrography, etc. Following is the review of game kill in the Republic of Croatia in the period 2007-2011.

Table 3 Review of game kill for the period 2007-2011 in Croatia

SORT OF GAME	GAME SHOTS					INDEX			
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
Deer (all sorts)	2.738	2.139	2.520	2.916	3.394	78,12	117,81	115,71	116,39
Roe deer	11.175	11.689	11.388	11.284	13.373	104,6	97,42	99,09	118,51
Wild Boar	17.527	18.679	18.243	18.409	21.871	106,57	97,67	100,91	118,81
Rabbit	10.000	21.000	21.000	22.000	24.000	210	100	104,76	109,09
Pheasant	70.000	84.000	54.000	68.000	58.000	120	64,29	125,93	85,29
Wading birds (various)	19.000	15.000	21.000	23.000	19.000	78,95	140	109,52	82,61
Other feathered game	75.000	100.000	111.000	108.000	116.000	133,33	111	97,3	107,41
Total	205.440	252.507	239.151	253.609	255.638	122,91	94,71	106,05	100,8

Source: http://www.dzs.hr/Hrv_Eng/publication/2012/01-02.01_01_2012.htm (25.01.2014.)

In year 2011, 3.394 deers were shot, which represents growth of 16.39% in relation to the previous year. Regarding the roe-deer, 13.373 of them were shot, or 18.51% more than the previous year. The highest growth of shootings of wild boars was noted (21.871, or 18.81%) in relation to the previous year. At the same time, a decrease of killing of pheasants and wading birds was recorded. While planning the quota for game kill, it has to be taken into account to disable overhunting the game, and in the highest possible measure to secure their natural habitats. Briefly, it is necessary to ensure sustainable hunting.

4. Strategic guidelines of hunting tourism development in rural areas of Croatia

In order for hunting tourism to develop successfully on hunting grounds, it is necessary to ensure enabling of successful integration of postulates of hunting-tourist offer, which will be achieved through inclusion of highly valuable human resources which possess high level of knowledge about hunting, organization, planning, marketing and management of tourist development of (hunting) destination. Besides previously mentioned facts, it necessary to ensure financial support (the ministry of agriculture, ministry of tourism, Croatian Bank for reconstruction and development – HBOR, cohesion funds of EU, Croatian hunting associations, etc.) for improvement of production, cultivation and protection of game, as well as indemnification of the third party from possible damages caused by game (i.e. wild boars as indigenous animals in the islands of Cres and Krk – which are inhabited in the mentioned areas for hunting). Also during the project implementation, it is necessary to create and financially ensure investments in optimization of material-technical infrastructure, this means equipping hunting-cultivating hunting-technical buildings, buildings for processing and preservation of game meat, buildings for accommodation of hunting dogs, buildings for weapons testing, purchasing means of transport for use in the hunting grounds, purchasing the adequate hunting weapons, ammunition, equipment etc.

Table 4 SWOT analysis of hunting tourism of Republic of Croatia

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Preserved eco-system – Richness of game fund – Vicinity of outbound markets – Traffic connection – Non-existence of specialized tourist agencies – Non-existence of self-financing system of promotion abroad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Membership in the European Union – EU Cohesion funds – Strong engagement of inspection in protection from poaching – Offering services of additional value – Educating members of hunting alliances about tourism – Creating and introducing hunting tourism as a course of study at the faculties – Connection of the offer of health, rural, and hunting tourism in a cluster.
WEAKNESSES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Hunting tourism is not recognized as a potential for development of rural areas of Croatia – Non-existence of sufficient quantity of formal education about hunting and hunting tourism – Insufficient funds for development of hunting tourism – Insufficiently controlled urbanization – Lack of awareness of hunting alliances about possibility of development of hunting tourist offer in rural areas – Strong competition of foreign countries – Lack of interest of the local community for development of tourist offer of hunting tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Strengthening of competition of the neighboring countries – Societies for animal protection – Pollution – Overhunting of protected game – Disrespect of closed seasons – Uncontrolled and unorganized overhunting – Excessive urbanization – Loss of game habitats – Poaching

Source: Authors' analysis

Profitability of introduction of hunting tourism offer into the offer of a tourist destination through, i.e. offer of accommodation in small (family) hotels (smaller dimensions up to 10 rooms, and it can be built in the areas of hunting grounds, if landscape and natural particularities, or animal habitats are not endangered) is visible in the fact of numerous sources of income in hunting tourism, which come from: leasing hunting grounds (if it exists), fees for entering the hunting grounds, fees for dogs, fee for game kill, wounding and misses, repurchase of game meat, funds paid for services regarding hunting, services of masters of hunt, use of hunting dogs, use of vehicles, services of guides and interpreters, insurance, consumption of hunters outside the hunting grounds (accommodation, food services, additional services) and others, as well as connecting in clusters with other forms of tourist offer (health tourism-stay of guests hunters in wellness oasis with the stay in nature-hunting, rural tourism-stay of tourists-guests in tourist country farms, and surrounding hunting grounds with the hunter-host, congress tourism-organization of scientific-professional conferences about hunting, game, dogs, etc.). Also, hunting tourism represents the most significant source of revenue of hunting societies and organizations which are involved in it. Selling trophies, organizing dog exhibitions etc. can enable permanent sustainability of income of offer carrier of hunting tourism. Besides hotels, it is possible to enable tourist offer in traditional hunting houses as well, which almost every hunting society has in its ownership, by the same principle of standard and quality of offer. It is important to point out that here it is about the tourists of higher purchasing power who tend towards sports activities (climbing, walking, cycling) have a permit for carrying firearms, possess passion towards hunting and experiences in nature, and show the need for socialization. For attracting that target group of guests it is necessary to create a marketing strategy, and undertake adequate promotion activities which will ensure that hunters-tourists, which make the demand for hunting tourist arrangements offered by specialized tourist agencies, in a way that they organize, advertise and sell hunting tourist

arrangements, and mediate between the demand and organizers of the hunt (in this case, the hotel) hunting holder who possesses the right for organization of hunting activities, get high quality of services by adequate price. Following is the price list for group hunt on wild boards, and conditions. According to the data of Croatian woods, the highest amounts for game kill amount bear and wild boar (4.000 KN per head), following is a deer (2.500 KN per head), muflon and chamois (2.000 KN per head), fallow deer (1.500 KN per head), wild boar (1.000 KN per head), while roe bucks amounts moderate 700 KN per head (adapted according to <http://portal.hrsume.hr/index.php/hr/turizam/lov-i-usluge/cjenik-odstrjela-divljai-i-usluga-u-lovu/555-cjenik-odstrele-divljai-2013>, 12.02.2014.). From previously mentioned, it is visible that it is about a high-profit form of tourism, whose development should be encouraged, but with strict respect of sustainability principles, for habitats, wild animal species, and landscape particularities of the destination. Croatia should approach to stronger forming of a brand of hunting tourism, which is possible due to the fact that Croatia is the owner of a bigger part of hunting grounds. The biggest hunting holder in the Republic of Croatia are Croatian Woods, who manages hunting grounds, the surface of 297.605 Ha. Hunting grounds of Croatian woods occupy around 8% of the total hunting surface of Croatia. But, when discussing the number of big game, share of that sort in the habitats in the hunting and cultivation area of that game which are managed by Croatian woods amounts 40%. Uniqueness of hunting grounds of Croatian woods is in the fact that in the hunting grounds of Gorski kotar, Velebit and Velika Kapela live all three big European predators: big brown bear, wolf and the lynx. Regarding small game, here resides the rabbit, the pheasant, wild duck, wheat-eater, common quail, and other feathered game (adapted according to <http://portal.hrsume.hr/index.php/hr/lovstvo> (20.01.2014.)).

4.1. Development of standards for hunting tourism of Croatia – hunter host

Hunting tourism must serve as an additional stimulation to the tourism development in the rural areas of Croatia, under the condition that the tourist offer is developed according to the market needs, but in manner to respect the principles of sustainable development. Sustainable tourism has a goal to ensure that development of tourist offer which will with is presence effect the least on the environment and change of life habits of the local population, reducing negative effects to a minimum, and the usefulness (income, employment) on maximum, taking into account the future generations and their needs for development and improvement of life standards. For this purpose, it is necessary to develop an eco-standard for the offer of hunting tourism of Croatia, which will define the conditions that need to be satisfied in order to get a certificate "hunter host". Certain existing offer carriers in hunting tourism are really accomplishing that goal with minimal negative effects, while others are presenting themselves like that, but in reality are far from ecologically acceptable business. One of the ways of rewarding the tourist family farms and businesses who really accept the mentioned goals is assigning credible recognition. Recognition can be granted in a form of a certificate Hunter-host, or the mark of hunting ecotourism which respects high standards of ecology. The certificate is granted to those hotels-carriers of hunting tourism offer, who dedicate great importance to ecology and respecting the principles of sustainable development. Their activities totally satisfy certain standards, respectively basic or minimum standards, which usually go beyond the demands of legal regulations. Marks of hunting ecotourism can be assigned to a hotel as a reward for achieving significantly better results in comparison with other offer carriers in hunting tourism. Assigned certificates and marks of hunting ecotourism bring certain advantages, for example: better way of managing environment problems, improvement of the hotel's image, but also the destination, satisfying the consumers who can demand that standard, achieving competitive advantages in the global market, improving

compatibility with the current ecological laws, Law about hunting, regulations and standards, through reduction of exposure of organization to ecological responsibilities, and through increasing organizational goodwill by prevention of pollution and waste. In Croatia still do not exist defined standards in hunting tourism, which would enable competitiveness to the offer carriers on the turbulent world tourist market, therefore, basic conditions for development of hunting tourism in rural areas of Croatia mustn't be rigorous as the standards of hunting tourism in the world are. In order to, finally, realize adequate standard of hunting tourism offer, and the way of certification, in continuum a proposition of standards of hunting tourism offer of Croatia is offered.

4.2. Proposition of standards of hunting tourism in Croatia

In order for the offer of hunting tourism of Croatia to reach high quality level, it is necessary to create strategic guidelines of development, which will have to be coordinated with the strategic guidelines of development of Croatian tourism, and they need to be its integral part. Previously mentioned elements will be ensured through deliberation of a high quality tourist offer, while the tourist development will be based on preservation of natural and cultural richness of the country, while respecting the principles of sustainable development, as well as the principles of the European Union project NATURA 2000 (EU ecological network) which in its basic regulations contains also the guidelines about sustainable hunting. In the year 1979 the European Union brought the decision about sustainable hunting in the directive about the protection of wild birds (Directive about bird protection (79/409 EEC) – <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1373> (10.01.2014.)). In June 2011, the European Commission acquired the new Strategy for stopping the loss of biological diversity and services of ecosystem in the European Union until the year 2020. The Strategy covers six basic goals and twenty actions. Loss of biological diversity is a big problem in the European Union in which one of the four endangered species the extinction is threatened, while 88% of fish supplies is reduced in half or significantly reduced. Total implementation of Directive about habitats, and the Directive about the birds, respectively, the program NATURA 2000, is considered one of the key mechanisms for achieving the goals of the Strategy.

Six goals covers: (adapted according to http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/pdf/2020/1_EN_ACT_part1_v7%5B1%5D.pdf (10.01.2014.)):

1. Complete implementation of EU legislations in the area of protection of nature (Directive about birds and Directive about the habitats);
2. Better protection of eco-system and greater use of "green infrastructure";
3. More sustainable agriculture, forestry and fishery;
4. Better managing with fish supplies;
5. Stronger control of foreign invasive species;
6. More significant contribution of the EU in stopping global loss of biological diversity.

As a European Union member, Croatia needs to promote, in its hunting tourism development, the highest level of standards of protection of wild animal species. However, as previously mentioned, currently in Croatia there are no standards of hunting tourism offer. In order to ensure standardization of the offer, and particularity of hunting tourism in relation to other selective forms of tourist offer, it is necessary to create certain conditions which the service carriers need to fulfill, so they could be engaged in hunting tourism activities, and in order to get the certificate, or a mark. Here it is necessary to point out the fact that hunting tourism is in its beginning, so here mentioned standards need to be subject to constant checking and improving, according to market demand, taking into consideration that here the hunter is the

center of interest. It can be concluded, from previous facts, that it is necessary to introduce a standard of hunting tourism which consists the elements of certificate and the mark of hunting tourism. The elements of standards which have characteristics of the certificate refer to compliance of certain conditions. It refers to the way of business which takes care of social-cultural, economic and ecological resources of the hunting areas and the surroundings. The basic condition that the offer carries need to satisfy on hunting tourism, along with satisfying previously mentioned elements of standards is to offer exclusively gastronomic specialties made of game, offer home-made beverages, and while building the accommodation capacities takes care about the dimensions of the building, which needs to be built in accordance with the local traditional building. Besides mentioned, additional points for getting the certificate will receive that business that offers additional offer, i.e. photo-safari, tours of hunting grounds, contests in preparation of dishes made of game, contests in shooting with a hunting rifle, trophy exhibition, and similar. In the following table the authors specify the proposition of conditions which necessary to satisfy in order of getting the certificate hunter-host.

Table 5 Presentation of conditions which are necessary to satisfy in order to get the certificate hunter-host

a) Aspect of relations towards local community	
–	Acceptance of offer carriers of hunting tourism from the local community;
–	Positive influence and relation of offer carriers towards people, including health protection and security for those who work in the location or live nearby;
–	Giving advantage to the local community in giving employment, and enabling life-long learning for them;
–	Offer carrier of hunting tourism does not disrupt the rights and prosperity of the local community, and contributes to the social, cultural and economic development of the local community;
–	Offer carrier influences on the revitalization of traditional crafts/indigenous products, and encourages preservation of non-material cultural heritage.
b) Economic aspects	
–	Offer carrier respects legally prescribed regulations about the rights of their employees, and does business according to the ethical codex, and its business activity helps the economic revitalization of the local community, by using human, natural and cultural resources of the local community;
–	Through its business and activities, the offer carrier encourages inclusion of the community in nature and environment protection (especially game) while achieving economic benefits;
–	In its business it stimulates the use of renewable materials.
c) Ecological aspects	
–	Business activities of hunting tourism offer carries do not disturb bio-diversity nor eco-systems, as well as the habitats, and they do not disrupt the look of the landscape, and they stimulate revitalization and preserving indigenous sorts of plants and animals (game);
–	Offer carrier effects the least possible in wider and immediate environment, and ensures ecological waste managing, waste, wastewaters, soil, energy (in its business they use renewable energy sources- i.e. collectors);
–	Activities of offer carriers do not create noise and do not harm the air and environment quality in total;
–	In construction of facilities and landscaping exclusively natural materials were used, and the principle of originality-traditional architecture was respected;
–	It influences on preservation of bio-diversity of landscape, and performs continuous education of visitors through workshops about the significance of nature protection and its preservation, types of game in the hunting ground, educations about indigenous dog breeds, and their habits. It introduces visitors with the traditional way of life, gastronomic delicacies of the area, and similar.

Source: Authors' analysis

Elements of standards that have the characteristics of hunting mark are related on rewarding those offer carriers which are marked as a certain benchmark to other businesses subjects. When all the mentioned criteria is satisfied, in order to be able to maintain the mark hunter host, the service provider must focus its business towards sustainable hunting tourism, respectively, enabling organized tours of visitors with professional interpretations, and organization of one-day trips to visit individual particularly interesting and attractive localities of the hunting ground and the surroundings, and are enabling for the visitors tours of parks

and protected parts of nature in tours with professional tour guides. Within its offer, it is necessary to enable at least two activities the visitor can do (hiking, walks, photo-safari, birds watching, painting in nature, education and workshops...) in wider and immediate environment. Offer carrier of hunting tourism is obliged to give particular attention to preservation of natural resources by presenting them to the visitor with a goal of wider knowledge and better understanding of particularities of hunting grounds and its surrounding, to encourage and promote ecological beauties, particularities of hunting grounds and surroundings, and give a positive influence on preservation of biodiversity and habitats of wild animals. By indirect education of tourists through various activities, the offer carrier is obliged to stimulate and include local community into projects of protection of nature, environment, preservation and renewing of game habitats, etc. Attention must be given to the revitalization and preservation of tradition, and through all that influence on the development of visitor's ecological awareness. The main goal of implementation of standardization is also the goal that the offer carrier of hunting tourism contributes to the economic development of a wider area by including local population in processes of production (employment, buying groceries from the local eco-producers, and similar). Set conditions for creating an eco-tourist product will enable creation of a new brand in the tourist offer which will be based on the original eco-product. All mentioned points to the need of creating this form of tourist offer in Croatia, with numerous possibilities of development of small and medium entrepreneurship in hunting tourism, which can be one of the carriers of development of rural areas. The main characteristics of program of certifying the standards of hunting tourism contain the elements which are the same in the majority of world programs of certification in the domain of tourism. Here it is about the offer carriers who are willingly deciding for a certificate, standards and criteria are clearly defined, and the grading and the review are done in certain time intervals (here the plan is to repeat the standardization every other year). Besides that, this program has its logo which is assigned to the offer carrier, it helps him in achieving market recognition, continuous improvement of the criteria, and transparency of the system. Offer carriers, whose services are carriers of hunting mark and certificate, as a confirmation of a certain standard of quality, need to use hunting mark during every presentation, and educate tourists and mediators about sustainable practice and doing business according to certain standards which enable for guest-hunter the differentiation of the offer carrier from the rest of the competition, and enable him top quality of services.

5. Conclusion

While realizing hunting activities, tourist offer carriers must provide top quality services, with significant added value for hunter-guest and excellent relation of price and value. All of this is of particular importance, since it is known that the competition in hunting tourism (Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, etc.) is very strong. So, it is necessary to ensure the cooperation with the providers of additional services, i.e. renters of hunting equipment, transport service performers, translations, guide, translators, cameraman, etc. Successful positioning of Croatia on the tourist market will enable its market recognition, as a preserved, ecologically aware tourist destination, with a high level of standardization of hunting tourism offer according to the principles of value for money and experience for money. Also, the development of hunting tourism will, especially for the rural areas of Croatia, enable sustainable development, economic and demographic renewal of areas, while in other parts of Croatia it will give the possibility of upgrading the existing tourist offer, serving as a promoter of elite tourism with a high level of additional value. Through connecting into clusters with the other carriers of the tourist offer (health, rural, congress tourism), significant economic value for the areas where they are situated, will be achieved. Besides through connecting with the offer carriers in

tourism, it is necessary to ensure permanent cooperation with the experts and scientists in the area of hunting, kinology, tourism, etc., all with the goal of increasing quality of offer and ensuring high ecological awareness.

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