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## **NAUTICAL TOURISM - RIVER CRUISE ONE OF THE FACTORS OF GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF EASTERN CROATIA**

### **NAUTIČKI TURIZAM – RIJEČNA KRSTARENJA JEDAN OD ČIMBENIKA RASTA I RAZVOJA ISTOČNE HRVATSKE**

#### **ABSTRACT**

*Tourism is the most complex and the most dynamic socio-economic phenomenon.*

*The basic hypothesis of this paper is that tourism in Croatia is one of the key sectors of the economy, however, it is questionable whether the river tourism as a form of tourism is sustainable in the future.*

*The demand for international cruises along European rivers has recorded an increase over the last few years. The total number of cruises in 2012 amounted to 90.000, which is almost 12% more cruises than compared to 2011.*

*Increased demand in the number of international cruises on European rivers affected the growth of capacity in the number of ships, and activities in the market of new shipping companies specializing for cruises on the European rivers.*

*There were 235 ships docking in passenger ports of cities Vukovar and Ilok located on the Danube as part of international cruises during 2012.*

*Year after year, Vukovar, Ilok and Osijek marked an increase in the number of tourist cruise ships docking on the Danube River. According to the Vukovar Port Authority visits to Vukovar from the international cruises started in 2002, while the visits to Ilok started in 2007.*

*The reason for this is certainly in the construction of the required infrastructure for the docking of the ships (Aljmaš and Batina). The increase in the number of cruises on the Danube is certainly a key factor in the development of continental tourism, especially in Eastern Croatia, which is still feeling the effects of the war of aggression and the world economic crisis.*

*The aim of this paper is to highlight and analyze the existing resources in the river tourism in Eastern Croatia, detect main reasons: (in) visibility dock in Vukovar and Ilok, (un)attractive tourist facilities and offer a solution for increasing the use of tourism services on land and increasing the total number of arrivals of the same.*

**Key words:** river tourism, Danube, Drava, Eastern Croatia, growth and development

## SAŽETAK

*Turizam je najkompleksnija i najdinamičnija društveno - ekonomska pojava.*

*Temeljna je hipoteza ovog rada da je turizam u Republici Hrvatskoj jedna od ključnih gospodarskih grana, no upitno je li riječni turizam kao jedan od oblika turizma održiv u budućnosti.*

*Posljednjih nekoliko godina potražnja za međunarodnim krstarenjima na europskim rijekama bilježi stalni porast. Ukupan broj krstarenja u 2012. godini iznosio je gotovo 90 tisuća, što je u odnosu na 2011. godinu 12% više.*

*Povećana potražnja za brojem međunarodnih krstarenja na europskim rijekama utjecala je i na rast kapaciteta u broju brodova, te djelovanja na tržištu novih brodarskih kompanija specijaliziranih za krstarenja europskim rijekama. U putničkim pristaništima u Vukovaru i Iloku tijekom 2012. Godine evidentirano je 235 pristajanja brodova na međunarodnom krstarenju Dunavom.*

*Iz godine u godinu Grad Ilok, Grad Vukovar i Grad Osijek bilježe porast broja turista pristajanjem brodova na krstarenjima Dunavom. Prema podacima Lučke uprave Vukovar, od 2002. godine brodovi na međunarodnim krstarenjima Dunavom posjećuju Vukovar, dok od 2007. godine posjećuju Ilok. Razlog tome zasigurno možemo pronaći u izgradnji potrebne infrastrukture za pristanak brodova (Aljmaš i Batina). Porast broja krstarenja Dunavom zasigurno je ključan čimbenik u razvoju kontinentalnog turizma, posebno Istočne Hrvatske koja i danas osjeća posljedice ratne agresije i svjetske gospodarske krize.*

*Cilj ovog rada je istaknuti i analizirati postojeće resurse u riječnom turizmu na području Istočne Hrvatske, detektirati glavne razloge: (ne)prepoznatljivosti pristaništa u Vukovaru i Iloku, (ne)atraktivne ponude turističkih sadržaja, te ponuditi rješenje za povećanje korištenja turističkih usluga na kopnu i povećanja ukupnog broja dolazaka istih.*

***Ključne riječi:*** riječni turizam, Dunav, Drava, Istočna Hrvatska, rast i razvoj

### 1. Introductory remarks

Before proceeding to the study of river tourism it is necessary to define the following terms: tourists, visitors, tourism and forms of tourism.

Tourists are temporary visitors who remain in the country for at least 24 hours, regardless of whether they come on holiday or business.

Hikers are temporary visitors who remain in the country less than 24 hours, and they also come for a vacation or business (Koncul, 2009, 12).

Tourism is the most complex and the most dynamic socio-economic phenomenon. The social components of tourism include: health, cultural, social, political and entertaining function, while the economic components include: multiplicative, occupational, conversion function, absorption, acceleration, inductive, integrative function, the function of promoting international exchange of goods, the function of balancing the balance of payments and function of the development of underdeveloped areas (Bartoluci, 2013, 37).

According to the UN WTO there are three basic forms of tourism: domestic tourism, inbound tourism and outbound tourism. (<https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/staticunwto/Statistics/Glossary+of+terms.pdf>).

Within the strategy of tourism in 2020 - operational strategy - the strategy of market segments, river tourism is focused on the so-called golden age. The members of the golden age are active retirees without health problems who usually travel during the spring and fall (<http://www.mint.hr/UserDocsImages/Strategija-turizam-2020-editfinal.pdf>).

The demand for river cruises on European rivers grows from year to year, therefore, it is not surprising that due to this development the demand for ship capacity grows as well.

Ports in cities Vukovar and Ilok recognized this demand and at this time represent the most attractive passenger ports on river cruises in Eastern Croatia. These ports record increasing numbers of stopovers on cruises along the Danube River, while the port in Osijek recorded the highest number of dockings on the Drava River.

The recent openings of the new passenger ports in Aljmaš and Batina, continuous investment in infrastructure, further expansion of tourist and cultural offerings certainly indicate a great potential for further development of this type of tourism on the rivers Danube and Drava in Eastern Croatia.

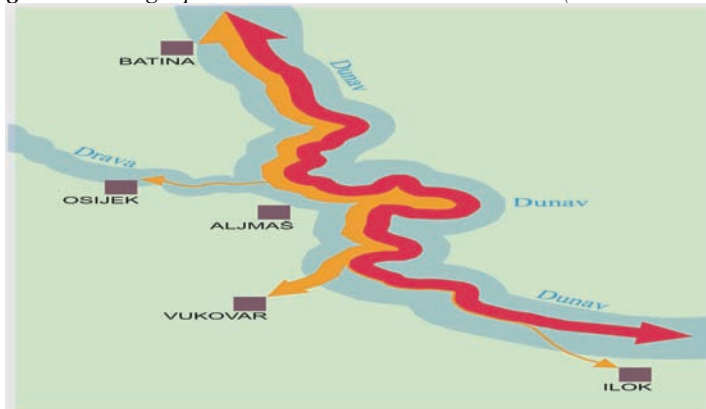
## 2. Analysis of nautical tourism river cruises in Eastern Croatia

The term nautical tourism - river cruises, includes a variety of activities that take place on rivers such as: multiple-day cruises, yachting, one-day cruises (excursions).

This paper will place special emphasis on multiple-day river cruises.

Danube River with its passenger ports Aljmaš, Batina, Ilok and Vukovar and Drava River with its passenger port Galija (Osijek), play a crucial role in river cruises in Eastern Croatia.

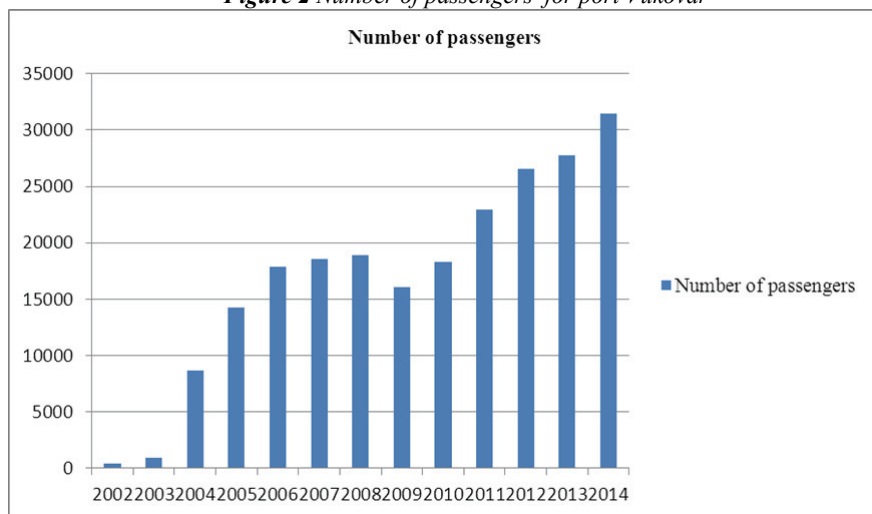
**Figure 1** Passenger ports on the rivers Danube and Drava (Eastern Croatia)



Source: the author analyzed and adjusted data available at: <http://www.mint.hr/UserDocsImages/1412-AP%20naut-rijecni-kruz.pdf> (04.19.2015.)

According to figure 1. Passenger ports on the rivers Danube and Drava (Eastern Croatia), it is evident that the rivers Danube and Drava have five passengers ports: Ilok, Vukovar, Aljmaš, Galija (Osijek) and Batina.

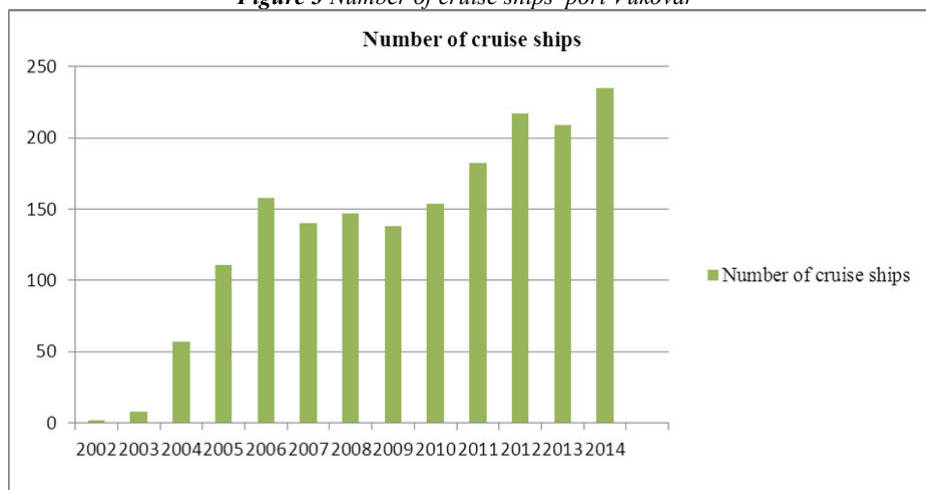
**Figure 2** *Number of passengers for port Vukovar*



Source: Port Authority Vukovar (04.21.2015.)

According to data from the figure 1. Number of passengers for port Vukovar, it is evident that since 2002., from the first docking into the passengers port Vukovar, the number of passengers every year grows, respectively. A considerable decline in the number of passengers dockings in port Vukovar experienced in 2009., when the number of passengers was at the level of 16.054 as opposed to 2008., when the number of passengers was 18.918.

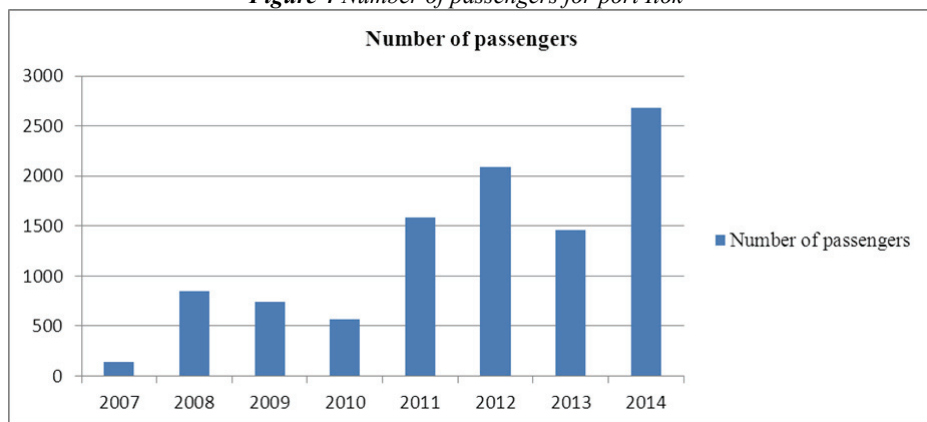
**Figure 3** *Number of cruise ships port Vukovar*



Source: Port Authority Vukovar (04.21.2015.)

According to data from the figure 2. Number of cruise ships port Vukovar, it is evident that the number of cruise ships fluctuates from year to year, but this decline is not visible in the total number of passengers.

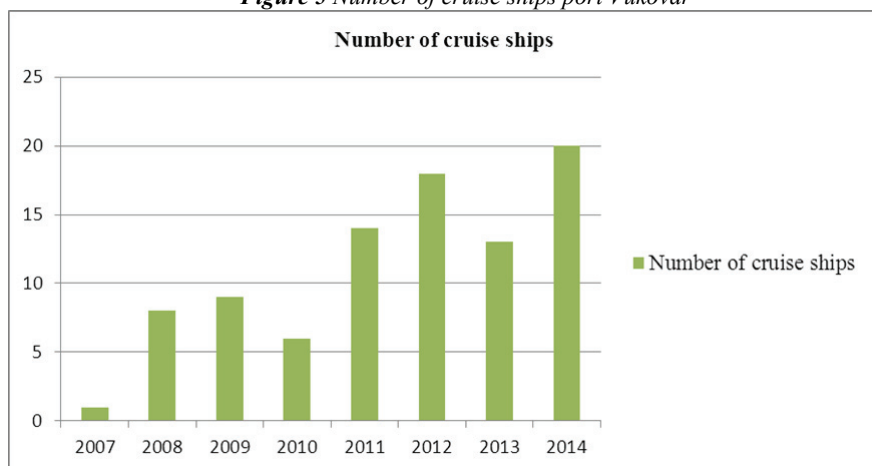
**Figure 4** Number of passengers for port Ilok



Source: Port Authority Vukovar (04.21.2015.)

According to data from the figure 3. Number of passengers for port Ilok, it is evident that the number of passengers fluctuates from year to year. The decline in the number of passengers was recorded in 2009, 2010 and 2013.

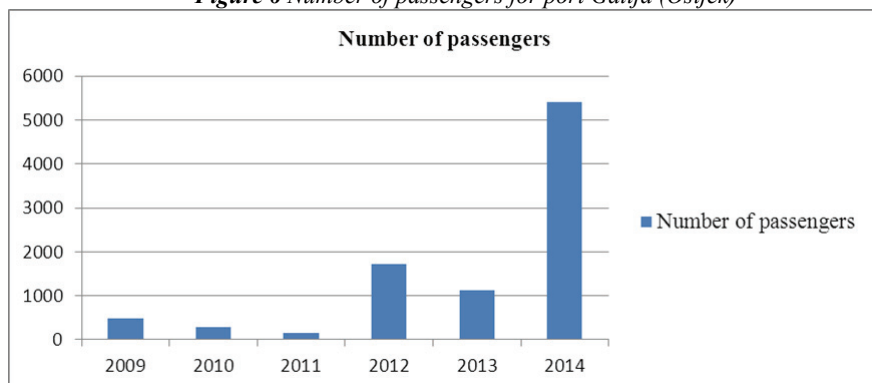
**Figure 5** Number of cruise ships port Vukovar



Source: Port Authority Vukovar (04.21.2015.)

According to data from the figure 4. Number of cruise ships port Ilok, it is evident that the number of cruise ships fluctuates from year to year. The decline in the number of cruise ships was recorded in 2010 and 2013.

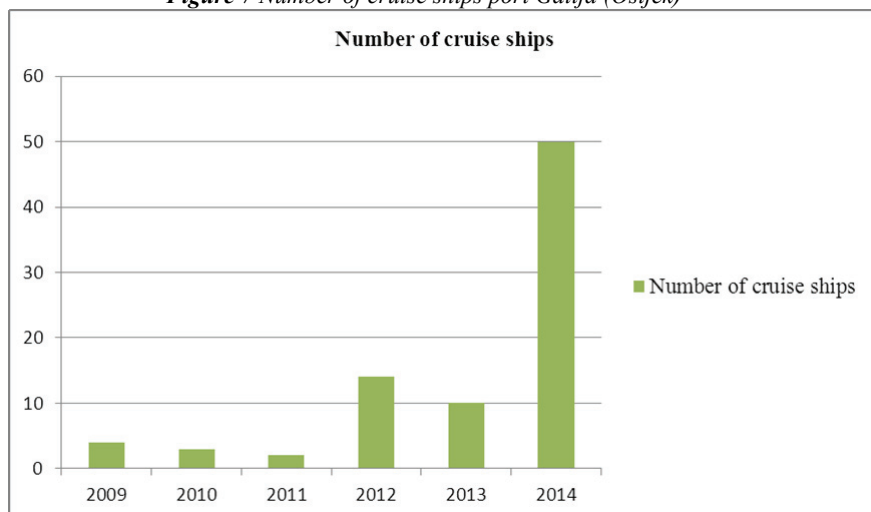
**Figure 6** Number of passengers for port Galija (Osijek)



Source: Port Authority Osijek (04.13.2015.)

According to the data from the figure 5. Number of passengers for port Galija (Osijek), it is evident that the number of passengers fluctuates from year to year. The decline in the number of passengers was recorded in 2011 and 2013.

**Figure 7** Number of cruise ships port Galija (Osijek)



Source: Port Authority Osijek (04.13.2015.)

According to data from the figure 6. Number of cruise ships port Galija (Osijek), it is evident that the number of cruise ships fluctuates from year to year. The decline in the number of cruise ships was recorded in 2010, 2011 and 2013.

Passenger port Aljmaš records no cruise ship dockings, while the passengers port Batina records 5 cruise ships with 622 passengers in the first quarter of 2015. 45 cruise ships have been announced for the passenger port Batina for 2015.

**Table 1** SWOT analysis of river cruises on the Danube and Drava (Eastern Croatia)

<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
Danube, Drava Rich cultural and historical heritage Nature resource and preserved environment Excellent gastronomic offer Stable security environment Croatia is a member of the European Union	Unused potentials Insufficiently valued tourist cultural and historical heritage Insufficient sanitary units Insufficient promotion Insufficient networking of stakeholders Insufficient specialized human resources Insufficient infrastructure for yachting Undeveloped one day cruises (excursions) Untapped possibilities of EU funds Not enough space to maneuver on the river Drava
<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
Growing demand in Europe Differentiation among ship owners New market niches in demand Demand for authenticity destination	Possible stagnation of the market Increase in costs of cruiser services Increase/decrease of river water levels / climate change Ecological disaster / oil spills

Source: the author analyzed and adjusted data available at: <http://www.mint.hr/UserDocsImages/1412-AP%20naut-rijecni-kruz.pdf>

According to the data of Table 1. SWOT analysis of river cruises on the Danube and Drava (Eastern Croatia), it is evident that the river cruises are influenced by many factors, both internal and external.

### 3. Closing remarks and recommendations

Continental tourism in Eastern Croatia has recorded a steady increase in the number of visitors and the number of nights year after year.

With continuous investments in human resources and infrastructure, continental tourism in Eastern Slavonia can experience a high level of recognition on the Croatian tourist map. The rich natural, cultural and historical heritage and excellent gastronomic offer are some of the factors that attract tourist arrivals to the area.

The importance of contributing to the development of continental tourism in Eastern Slavonia is provided the arrivals of international cruise on the Danube and Drava rivers. According to the data of Vukovar Port Authority, 1758 cruisers with 222.665 passengers visited Vukovar from 2002 until 2014, while 89 cruisers with 10.120 passengers visited Ilok from 2007 until 2014. Passenger port Batina registered 5 cruise ships with 622 passengers in 2015, with additional 45 ships announced until the end of the year.

Passengers port Aljmaš has not made any one achieved cruise ships, which calls into question its sustainability in the future.

According to the data of Osijek Port Authority, passenger port Galija (Osijek) docked 83 cruisers with 9.148 passengers from 2009 until 2014. The total number of announced ships for port Galija (Osijek) is 60 in 2015.

The author's recommendations for further development of river tourism on the Danube and Drava (Eastern Croatia) are focused on: further development of infrastructure (modernization of port docks, signaling and technical equipment), improving of the quality of tourist services

(gift shops, restaurants, exchange offices and availability of supply of local food), but also significant networking of all stakeholders.

River tourism is certainly one of the key factors of growth and development of continental tourism in Eastern Croatia, whose potentials are not sufficiently exploited and its sustainability is not questioned.

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