

## POTENTIALS OF OSIJEK AS A CENTRE OF CULTURAL TOURISM

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### Abstract

Cultural tourism is becoming the leading trend in the world tourism. Ever growing number of travellers put all of their free time and available resources in visiting and exploring of cultural sights. Sites of rich history and preserved tradition take precedence over usual summer arrangements. Active vacation is popular as well as travels that include visits to sights and adoption of cultural patterns of local culture. This ever increasing tourist area and the overall global trend can be also observed in Croatia. The Strategy for development of cultural tourism, which has been in use for several years, recognizes the present issues and shortcomings, and it gives recommendations for their solution. Being a town of rich historical and cultural tradition, Osijek also needs to find its model for development of cultural and tourism potentials.

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### 1. Introduction

In the following period it will not be possible to maintain the usual tourism model that has been dominant throughout the 20th century – 3S (sun-sand-see). What attracts extremely large number of tourists today are cultural attractions, i.e. heritage. Some towns base their cultural and tourist offer on the heritage itself, i.e. on archaeological sites, old buildings, etc. (for example, Egyptian pyramids). Some tourist destinations utilize their potentials through known cultural institutions, while some of the active tourist areas attract most of the tourists through cultural events, that is, projects. Analysis of cultural tourism issues as well as global and national trends will be presented in this paper, along with a proposal on how to develop potentials of cultural tourism in Osijek. The recent literature dealing with issues of cultural tourism and management in culture has been used here as well as various Internet resources. The account of the current situation in cultural offer is provided in the paper

and suggestions are made on how to improve that offer and utilize it to attract more tourists.

## **2. Cultural tourism and cultural tourists**

The Strategy for development of cultural tourism in the Republic of Croatia differentiates between the three types of cultural tourists: “tourists motivated by culture; tourists inspired by culture; tourists attracted by culture”<sup>2</sup>. (Strategy for development of cultural tourism, 2003; p. 6) Tourists motivated by culture find “attractive elite cultural events and tourist packages” interesting, and they make from 5 to 15 percent of the total number of tourists, and 5 percent of the local population. They are also motivated by their wish “to be treated as special guests”. They could also be called 'real' cultural tourists. The largest group of cultural tourists is the group of tourists inspired by culture (about 30 percent of tourists and 15 percent of the local population). They are only 'partially motivated by culture', and what characterizes them in particular is the fact that they are attracted by “known cultural sites, attractions and events”. They decide to visit cultural attractions in the following situations: “if they have time; if attractions are easily accessible; if attractions offer value for money”. Tourists attracted by culture make 20 percent of tourists and 20 percent of the local population. As the Strategy states, “this group does not plan a visit to cultural attractions, but they will visit them if these are offered to them during their stay”. (Strategy for development of cultural tourism; 2003; p. 6)

Strategy for development of cultural tourism of Croatia states the following definition of the term *cultural tourism*, in environment of Croatian tourism: “Cultural tourism is one of the special forms of tourism that offers a long-term competitive advantage to that field of Croatian economy”. (Strategy for development of cultural tourism; 2003; p. 3) “Cultural tourism is considered a tourism of special interests”, and it can be defined as “... visits of people outside of their permanent residence motivated entirely or partially by their interest in history, arts, heritage or lifestyle of the site, region, group or institution”. (Strategy for development of cultural tourism; 2003; p. 5) Cultural tourism very often relies on history and tradition, i.e. preserved cultural heritage, and in this sense we can talk about the following type of travelling: “travels – reconstruction of historical events, (...) exploration of a historical period, (...) and religion travels”<sup>4</sup>. (Dragičević-Šešić & Stojković, 2007; p. 175) As a form of cultural tourism there are also the so-called culture-oriented travels, that generally are not related to any particular country or region, “... but the travel is organized for the purpose of learning about a certain direction in arts, most often in the field of fine arts”<sup>4</sup>. (Dragičević-Šešić & Stojković, 2007; pp. 175-176) Anyway, we can talk about cultural tourism being not only the ever more propulsive branch of tourism, but also the object of ever growing interest of tourism experts and theoreticians.

### *2.1. Cultural tourism – management of cultural resources*

Kombol states that there is a need for understanding and using culture in four ways: “supporting development of cultural and artistic creation; using arts and culture as a means of achieving objectives outside of culture and forming policies in the way to perceive culture and cultural development as a broad adjustable resource that refers to important features like identity and image of a country and a site; creating and strengthening the well-being of a community; protection of cultural resources by determining the capacity of sustainability or acceptance”. (Kombol; 2006; p. 220) Various areas of attraction can become motives in cultural tourism: “archaeological sites; architecture (ruins, known facilities, the whole cities); museums, arts, sculptures, crafts, galleries, festivals, various events; music and dance (classic, folk and modern dance); drama, theatre, movies; language and literature studies (tours and events); religious celebrations, pilgrimages; overall (folk and primitive) culture and subculture”. (Kombol; 2006; p. 214-215)

## **3. Cultural tourism and global initiatives**

As the number of cultural tourists is growing every year, more institutional attention is given to his phenomenon. There is a whole range of institutions that are trying to promote cultural tourist destinations, develop certain cities, regions and countries through promotion of cultural forms of tourism, but at the same time to preserve the heritage, that is, the world cultural resources.

### *3.1. Cultural tourism and UNESCO*

UNESCO is among the most important world institutions that are also in charge of cultural tourism promotion. According to UNESCO data, currently in the world there are 878 properties that are under special protection. In 145 countries throughout the world there are 679 properties under special cultural protection of UNESCO, 174 of them are on the list of protected natural heritage, and 25 are in a mixed project of cultural and natural protection. (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list>)

Criteria for including a site on the list of protected heritage are extremely strict and hard to meet. There are ten basic conditions that have to be met, and the following six refer to the list of protected cultural heritage: “to represent a masterpiece of human creative genius; to exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world; to bear a unique or exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which has disappeared; to be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates a

significant stage in human history; to be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change; to be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance”. (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/criteria/>)

### *3.1.1. Croatia and UNESCO*

Currently there are seven sites in Croatia that are under special protection of UNESCO – six as protected cultural heritage (Historical Complex of Split with the Palace of Diocletian, Old City of Dubrovnik, Episcopal Complex of the Euphrasian Basilica in the Historic Centre of Poreč, Historic City of Trogir, The Cathedral of St James in Šibenik and Stari Grad Plain on the island of Hvar) and one on the list of protected natural heritage (Plitvice lakes National Park). (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list>)

Historical-Town Planning Ensemble Tvrđa (*Fort*) has been put on the tentative list of UNESCO protected cultural heritage as an old historical city centre. Peczs, in the neighbouring country of Hungary, is a sister city of Osijek and it is an important partner of Osijek as well, because it has experience in candidature of its early Christian cemetery Sopiana for the list of protected heritage.

## **4. Cultural tourism in Croatia**

It is a known fact that Croatia is perceived as a tourist country which bases a large part of its economical development exactly on this branch of economy. “It generates, both directly and indirectly, about 22% of gross domestic product, and more than 40 percent of the total export, which undoubtedly puts it among the key elements of the national economy and foreign trade exchange”. (Strategy for development of cultural tourism until 2010, p. 5) However, development of Croatian tourism was mostly based on potentials of the Adriatic Sea, with insufficient or minimum investments in additional attractions. The 3S concept (sun-sand-see) should, nevertheless, be replaced with more advanced forms of tourism strategy – investments in continental (mostly rural), and cultural tourism.

### *4.1. Strategy for development of cultural tourism in Croatia*

During 2003 the Croatian Ministry of Tourism, in cooperation with the Tourism Institute, has developed the key strategic document for more advanced approach to Croatian heritage-based tourism – Strategy for development of cultural tourism.

The following strategic development priorities are given in the Strategy for development of cultural tourism: “to create a positive natural environment that will encourage initiatives for development of products of cultural tourism; to establish organization system and cooperation mechanisms between sectors; to raise the level of knowledge and skills necessary for development of good quality products of cultural tourism; to raise the level of interpretation, equipment and quality of products of cultural tourism; to improve the flow system of information, promotion and distribution of products of cultural tourism”. (Strategy for development of cultural tourism; 2003; p. 17)

Problems, i.e. obstacles to development of cultural tourism are still a common phenomenon in Croatia. Jelinčić emphasizes several reasons for which cultural tourism has not been represented to a sufficient extent: “insufficiently developed system of cultural statistics; insufficient knowledge of project coordinators about cultural management; centralization and bureaucratism of procedures; a lack of a recognizable product of cultural tourism; superficial knowledge of the local population about their own heritage; insufficient or poor organization of promotion; insufficient cooperation between cultural and tourism sector; a lack of a counselling institution for organizers of cultural and tourism projects”. (Jelinčić; 2008; p. 266)

## **5. Model for development of cultural tourism**

**Heritage** can be taken as the foundation for development of cultural tourism in any community – town, region, country. Heritage offers an autochthonous story to visitors, which attracts them to the tourist centre. The strategy for tourism development is developed around heritage as the foundation for development of cultural tourism. Heritage shall be approached in an interdisciplinary manner “... as a development path, as a way of thinking, as a way of forming experts in the future and as an only perspective of efficient protection”. (Maroević; 1986; p. 51)

The next important element of cultural tourism development consists of cultural events. The existence of a separate form of tourism – festival or event tourism – reflects the importance of events, and it “... is developing at the same time as development of summer festivals (...) but also other large cultural projects (...) that always attract a large number of professionals and students from all over the world”. (Dragičević-Šešić & Stojković; 2007; p. 176-177)

The next important element in the strategy, i.e. in the model for development of cultural tourism, is cultural institutions, which take care not only about cultural events, but also about the heritage itself. These institutions take care about the culture of a town, a region, a country.

The following, equally important link in the model for development of cultural tourism are stakeholders. Whether these are citizens of a town/region/country,

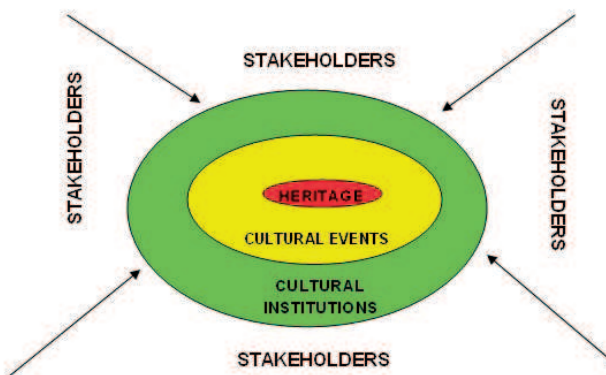
the state or local authorities, or tourist boards or associations, stakeholders are those who represent the control mechanism and very often they make important decisions, ultimately defining the direction of the strategy itself.

According to this, the four key elements of the model for development of cultural tourism can be stated:

1. Heritage;
2. Cultural events;
3. Cultural institutions;
4. Stakeholders.

The cultural tourism development model can be presented in the following way:

*Figure 1: Model for development of cultural tourism*



Source: designed by the authors

## 6. Cultural tourism in Osijek

In order to obtain as good as possible image of the current situation in cultural tourism in the Osijek area, we will conduct a SWOT analysis. By determining internal strengths and weaknesses as well as external opportunities and threats we will find out what the real situation is.

### 6.1. SWOT analysis of cultural tourism in Osijek

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognizability of cultural heritage – baroque Tvrđa (<i>Fort</i>) and Roman remains of Mursa</li> <li>• Long tradition of cultural life in Osijek</li> <li>• Large number of already existing cultural events</li> <li>• Good cultural projects</li> <li>• A range of various cultural institutions</li> <li>• Good position</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient recognizability of cultural events</li> <li>• Lack of cooperation among cultural institutions</li> <li>• Insufficient tourism activity in promotion of culture</li> <li>• Insufficient promotion and investment in marketing</li> <li>• A lack of linkage between culture and tourism</li> <li>• Insufficient accommodation capacities in the vicinity of attractive sites</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ever growing interest for cultural tourism</li> <li>• Political will of the local and state authorities for development of cultural tourism</li> <li>• UNESCO and the European Capital of Culture as development potentials</li> <li>• International cooperation on joint projects</li> <li>• International initiatives</li> <li>• Interest of stakeholders for promotion of Tvrđa as a cultural brand of Osijek</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large competition of cultural and tourist destinations in the country and abroad</li> <li>• Complexity and expensiveness of developing a Strategy for development of Osijek as a cultural and tourist destination</li> <li>• Insufficient investment in development of cultural tourism in the Republic of Croatia</li> <li>• Insufficient investment in modern means of communication (Internet promotion)</li> <li>• A large number of world sites that have invested in cultural tourism for a long time</li> </ul>

### 6.2. Strategy and model for development of cultural tourism in Osijek

Here we are trying to analyze Osijek cultural scene by applying the earlier explained model for development of cultural tourism.

### 6.2.1. *Heritage*

Historical legacy, i.e. heritage should be used as a foundation for development of Osijek as the centre of cultural tourism. In case of Osijek, heritage consists of two important elements that are foundation for development of a strategy for cultural tourism: Tvrđa – the old baroque core of Osijek, where mostly the key cultural, scientific and other institutions are situated; and Mursa – the Roman site in the area of Donji grad (a part of Osijek), representing the oldest preserved settlements.

### 6.2.2. *Cultural events*

The cultural events that fit in the model for development of cultural tourism in Osijek should be listed.

The most recognizable and known cultural events in the Osijek area are: Osijek cultural summer; Osijek youth summer; UFO – Urban Fest Osijek; SLUK – a biannual selection of the best Croatian puppet performances; EPTA – international competition of young piano artists; Theatre Open Days; Children, the Theatre is Calling You; KristFest – ecumenical festival of culture; Krleža Days; Franjo Krežma Memorial; Graphic Arts Days; Slavonian biennale; A Night at the Museum; Christmas Concert; New Year's Concert; Land Without Borders.

### 6.2.3. *Cultural institutions*

In Osijek there is a range of cultural institutions that should be necessarily included in the building and realization of the cultural tourism strategy and implementation of this strategy.

In Osijek there are following cultural institutions:

- 1) Theatres: Croatian National Theatre in Osijek, The Children's Theatre of Branko Mihaljević
- 2) Town galleries in Osijek: Waldinger Gallery, Kazamat Gallery, Barutana (performance space), Art cinema (in the process of foundation, situated in the area of the northern town wall in Tvrđa (*Fort*))
- 3) City and University library Osijek
- 4) Matica Hrvatska
- 5) Museums: Museum of Slavonia Osijek, Archaeological Museum, Gallery of Fine Arts, Puppetry Museum (in the process of foundation)
- 6) The State Archive
- 7) HAZU – Institute for Scientific and Artistic Work in Osijek
- 8) Academy of Arts (part of the University of Josip Juraj Strossmayer)
- 9) Kinematografi Osijek (*cinemas*): Kino Europa, Kino Urania
- 10) Music School of Franjo Kuhač



#### 6.2.4. Stakeholders

Stakeholders in the model for development of cultural tourism in Osijek are represented by the whole range of institutions – from the local authorities, over the University and non-government sector, to tourist offices and boards.

### 7. Conclusion

In order to have a successful and attractive tourist destination, it is no longer enough to emphasize the natural beauties – it is necessary to manage tourism resources and to direct efforts to develop a new type of tourism. Cultural tourism as a brand new trend was also popular in the past, but with increased education of today's travellers, the number of visits to certain places only because of cultural attractions (culture monuments, cultural institutions, events) is rising. Croatia, especially its continental part, can also seek its opportunity in the new world of tourists interested in culture.

Osijek also has large potentials for developing cultural tourism as a key economic activity. In the first place it is necessary to utilize the existing advantages, and to develop a clear strategy for development of tourism through cultural potentials. A successful model for development of cultural tourism can be created through a combination of heritage, existing cultural institutions and current and new events. Through applications for EU pre-accession funds, but also through participation in various European and global cultural initiatives, Osijek can become a new tourist hit destination.

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