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Croatian Tourism Sector and Crisis Management - A Case Study Related to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Abstract

Tourism is an extremely important economic sector for the Republic of Croatia and an important component of certain economic and social activities, such as transport and business of travel agencies, trade, catering, agriculture, and numerous service activities. Many Croatian citizens are directly, indirectly, or partially employed in the said sectors. Many depend on it – from individuals, through various business entities and tourist destinations, to the state itself which generates almost 20 percent of the annual state budget revenue from tourism. Given the multilevel and multifunctional importance of tourism, it is important to research how it is organized for emergencies that can cause significant disruptions in the operation and revenue generation. The goal of this paper is to analyze how and how successfully the tourism sector coped with the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting crisis, what crisis management mechanisms were developed and how they were used during 2020.

Keywords: tourism sector, crisis management, COVID-19 pandemic, crisis response measures, Croatia

1. Introduction

The coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) and COVID-19 pandemics have caused numerous structural disruptions and changes around the world, significant setbacks and major challenges in most global, regional and national processes, resulting in operational problems (and in some cases bankruptcy and instability) of many small and large national and international institutions. The crisis that began in early 2020 is the first truly global – because all previous crises and disasters (e.g., World War I and World War II, The financial crisis of 2008, or any previous pandemic) have not affected all business processes and all people worldwide. This crisis has presented numerous new insights into prevention, preparedness, and response to known risks, but also unforeseen events from international institutions, states, economic organizations, all the way to all of us individuals. Everyone is affected by the crisis, while this research's special interest is focused on analyzing the crisis management activities of the tourism sector in Croatia through the prism of a case study related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Croatia is an extremely tourism-dependent country, while numerous accompanying activities, production and service activities, labor market trends, the construction sector, as well as real estate trade depend on it. Dependence can be seen from the analysis of various institutions. According to the Tourism Satellite Account calculated by the Croatian Bureau of Statistics (CBS) in coordination with the Institute for Tourism from Zagreb, tourism in Croatia in 2018 directly generated 11.4% of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and 10.9% of GVA (Gross Value Added), respectively the total direct and indirect contribution of tourism to GVA was estimated at 24.1% (CBS, 2019). Furthermore, for the same year, The Ministry of Tourism and Sport of the Republic of Croatia (MINTS) announced that the share of the international tourism receipts in GDP in Croatia was about 16.5%, using the data calculated by the Croatian National Bank (MINTS, 2018a). All listed institutions that were used as sources of information utilize statistical indicators and/or calculations of the Croatian National Bank and the Croatian Bureau of Statistics, and although they do not match in the

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final calculations, they all agree that Croatia has the largest share of tourism in GDP in the European Union. This, as well as the key characteristics of the tourist offer (seasonality, staticity, inelasticity, and concentration on the coastal part of the country), make Croatia extremely vulnerable to disruptions in the movement and arrival of tourists – dependent on numerous risks and potential crises to which it responds through crisis management on different levels. These three terms (risk, crisis, crisis management) are also the key concepts of this research.

Risk in this analysis presents the possibility of an adverse event happening sometime in the future (Oxford dictionary), which has certain causes and produces harmful consequences in terms of previous lifestyle and activity or achieving a certain goal. Risk can be said to be determined by the likelihood of occurrence of the adverse event and the magnitude of its consequences. The higher the probability of occurrence of the adverse event and the greater the magnitude of its consequences, the higher the risk. A crisis is a process marked by the characteristics of threat, time pressure, and insecurity with ambivalent development possibilities (Kešetović & Toth, 2012; Glaesser, 2006). A crisis arises when a certain risk materializes and threatens acquired and/or protected values. Crisis management is the readiness and ability to deal with risks, manage them, manage emergencies and crises, all in order to avoid and/or reduce the harmful consequences (Kešetović & Toth, 2012).

Each country pays special attention to risk assessment to classify, quantify critical risks, and build an integrated risk management plan and process. Croatia has highlighted and analyzed the risk of pandemics in the *Disaster Risk Assessment for the Republic of Croatia* (Government of the Republic of Croatia, 2019, p. 40-48), Great Britain in *Global Britain in a competitive age* (HM Government, 2021, p. 94), the USA in *2017 National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (The White House, 2017, p. 9). All of the above is especially important from the aspect of tourism to enhance strategic destination management to reduce risk and boost readiness when negative events occur. Ritchie (2004, 2008) suggests combining tourism-specific insight with theories/concepts from other disciplines. Even earlier, Manning (1999) had already noted that risk management is crucial to the management of sustainable tourism development, while Faulkner (2001) identified risk assessment, in particular, to be one of the key ingredients of the disaster management planning process (Mikulić et al., 2016, p. 36) as well as for effective crisis management.

Due to Croatia's high dependence on the tourism sector, the central interest of this analysis is to research and describe the crisis management activities of the tourism sector in Croatia. In order to implement the above, it is necessary to research the institutional framework of the tourism sector, assessments and plans for dealing with risks and crises, the existence of a crisis management system, and cooperation, coordination, and action of various entities in the tourism sector. For this purpose, we set a descriptive central research question: How did key actors in the Croatian tourism sector manage the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic? The purpose of the research is to detect the strengths and weaknesses of the tourism sector in crisis management, while the goal of the research is to provide a number of recommendations for improving crisis management. The time frame is represented by actions and events until the end of 2020.

The remainder of this article is divided into six sections. The following section provides an overview of the research methodology. Section three reviews security risks faced by Croatian tourism, as well as the characteristics of Croatian tourism that define it as a sector and shape its activities. Section four presents the Croatian normative framework for crisis management with particular emphasis on the tourism sector, which serves as a basis for discussion on how the tourism sector has dealt with the current crisis. Section five provides an analysis of crisis management compared to the normative framework, followed by a discussion of several observations that might provide a basis for identifying and learning lessons in further analyses. The article concludes with a summary of the main results.

2. Theoretical and methodological framework

The theoretical approach of this paper is based on the use of crisis management theory as a central framework for conducting research and analysis. Crisis management as a theoretical framework is used in various scientific disciplines, such as security studies, economics, and management studies. For this purpose, a basic approach is used as part of security studies that has its own specific vocabulary and concepts. Crisis management theory scrutinizes the ability of an organization or system to prepare for a crisis by developing a prompt and effective response after a crisis occurs, as well as the ability to effectively manage a crisis (Kešetović & Toth, 2012), where management involves implementing "a set of strategic tasks that encompasses all activities associated with the stages of crisis management" (Boin et al., 2005, p. 9). The analytical framework by which the data in this study are analyzed is a crisis management study model developed by the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The model consists of prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery phases (Kešetović & Toth, 2012).

In the first phase, the prevention phase, it is crucial to avoid crises or reduce their impact if they occur. Prevention includes proactive planning, assessments of the state of the environment, risk assessments and risk management plans, and strategic forecasting and development of various scenarios for dealing with crises when they occur. The key institution in the prevention phase in the tourism sector in one country is a governmental body such as the Ministry of tourism or some other institution such as the national tourism administration (NTA). The task of this organization is to make a list of crisis management resources, identify responsible stakeholders who will make decisions and report on the crisis, and draw up action plans (Huang et al., 2008). NTA should compile and regularly revise the contact list of all public and private tourism organizations, travel agencies, and carriers that need to be reported during the crisis. On the financial side, it is necessary to set aside special crisis funds in the budgets in advance in order to reduce the time necessary for obtaining funds when the crisis occurs. It is also recommended to establish emergency centers such as tourist police and call centers where tourists can obtain relevant information related to the crisis in several international languages (Mazilu et al., 2012).

The second phase, the preparedness phase, begins when the crisis begins to loom. For this phase, it is crucial to prepare concrete and adequate responses to crisis according to already drawn-up action plans. Depending on the nature of the threatening crisis and the time pressure, plans are analyzed and, if time permits, revised and supplemented depending on the direction in which the crisis is developing. At this stage, it is necessary to set up a pre-crisis working group consisting of local government officials, tourism professionals, tourist board staff, travel agency staff, and staff from the Ministry of tourism (Sönmez et al., 1999). The pre-crisis working group meets to organize all available capacities and assign powers to each individual member or segment in the sector in a timely manner. All in order to minimize the damage caused by the crisis (Huang et al., 2008) and achieve the best possible recovery.

The reaction phase begins immediately after the outbreak of the crisis and lasts until the moment when there is no longer a possibility of threat, i.e., a state in which things can begin to return to the state before the crisis. At this stage, the measures and actions indicated in the plans are taken to minimize damage, the possibility of crisis escalation, and to reduce the possibility of additional crises. For a quality response to crises in the tourism sector, it is necessary to establish good communication, make effective and timely decisions, and have good resource management (Ritchie, 2004; Mazilu et al., 2012). Communication must be timely and transparent without manipulating data. Therefore, the situation should be reported by one person who has been selected in previous stages to communicate to the public. Inaccurate information should be denied immediately. Phrases like "this destination is safe" should not be sent to the public if there is a possibility that the situation may worsen (Mazilu et al., 2012). Given that maintaining the destination's image is the main goal of this phase of crisis management (Huang et al., 2008), it is necessary to prevent situations in which destination stigmas would be created due to insincere communication. As far as decision-making and resource

management are concerned, they surely must be timely but also coordinated, both within the tourism sector as well as between the tourism and other state sectors.

Recovery from a crisis begins when the crisis starts to subside and when the system is slowly returning to its original state if it is possible to achieve it. This phase should not be left out or neglected as it can be crucial in dealing with future crises. The crisis, regardless of the consequences it leaves behind, is a driver of change. The recovery phase is crucial for assessing the effectiveness of crisis strategies and responses (Ritchie, 2004) and identifying lessons that can later be incorporated into new crisis management strategies. Of the greatest importance in the recovery of the tourism sector is to restore the trust of tourists in the destination. The most important role in this phase is played by tourism boards or national tourism organizations i.e., tourism offices working on the promotion of the destination through content that pushes positive news after the crisis (Mazilu et al., 2012). The content should primarily be aimed at the countries from which the largest number of tourists arrives and neighboring countries (Huang et al., 2008). In addition, it is necessary to adjust the tourist offer by creating attractive packages, highlighting new and different tourist products at promotional prices (Mazilu et al., 2012; Glaesser, 2006).

The methodological framework of this paper includes the inductive inference method, content analysis technique, examination technique and interviews. The inductive method is important because it determines the causal links between phenomena and consequences, concluding on the basis of individual facts about the general truth (Zelenika, 2000). In this paper, it is used to make conclusions about the overall readiness of the Croatian crisis response system in tourism based on the capabilities of individual institutions and their inter-relationship. Reference points for crisis analysis, according to Ole Hosti, are the state, organization, group, and individual (Kešetović & Toth, 2012). This research examines The Ministry of Tourism and Sports of the Republic of Croatia at the state level as well as organizations and groups in the tourism sector. Each institution is studied separately, but the research conclusions are used to generalize about the overall crisis management system in the tourism sector at the state level. The content analysis technique in this paper is used to study laws and bylaws that deal with crisis management in tourism, such as the *National Security Strategy of the Republic of Croatia* and the *Risk Management Strategy of the Ministry of Tourism and Sport*.

Conclusions about preparedness to respond to crises in tourism as the first step in crisis management are drawn based on these documents. In addition, the content analysis technique includes news related to coronavirus published on the websites of The Ministry of Tourism and Sports of the Republic of Croatia and other institutions in charge of the tourism sector. The examination technique examines how each institution responded to the crisis caused by the uncontrolled spread of coronavirus and tries to draw conclusions about the system. It was examined in a standardized way so that variations emerge from the respondents' point of view rather than from research instruments (Burnham et al., 2006). The interview consisted of three sets of questions. The first set of questions covered crisis planning activities in each institution at the general level. The second set of questions referred to the experiences of institutions with previous crises. Respondents were asked to describe a crisis that the institution and the tourism sector had previously faced and how the institution had acted in that crisis. The third set of questions examined the activities of each individual institution in the COVID-19 crisis. This paper's basic point of analysis is the state, but data were also collected at the level of organizations and groups and were concluded in text inductively. The interview method was used in order to obtain direct insights and experiences of persons who are professionally involved in the Croatian tourism sector in various positions and activities. Fifteen interviews were conducted with persons representing independent tourism workers, employees of various tourism organizations, tourism boards, hotel directors, and advisors to the Minister of Tourism and Sports of the Republic of Croatia. Seven interviews were conducted through an online questionnaire, then an additional telephone conversation with some of the respondents after completing the online questionnaire to explain better certain activities of the institution they represented. After that, eight more interviews were conducted live with representatives of other institutions. Interviews were conducted from April 2020 to October 2020.

3. Security challenges in tourism and characteristics of Croatian tourism

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and United Nations (UN) defines tourism as "a social, cultural and economic phenomenon related to the movement of people to places outside their usual place of residence, pleasure being the usual motivation" (UNWTO & UN, 2008, p. 1). Tourism is the sum of the various relationships and interactions that arise from the activities of people who travel and stay in places outside their usual place of residence for the purpose of sightseeing, entertainment, business meetings, and other activities (Wall & Mathieson, 2005 in McCabe, 2009). As an economic activity, tourism is one of the most sensitive activities in which crises can cause devastating consequences (Santana, 2004). Given that tourism is one of the most sensitive economic activities, it is subject to various security challenges that, by tarnishing the image of tourist destinations, can lead to large and hard-to-recover losses in that activity. For this reason, it is necessary to know well the risks that threaten both the tourism sector and tourist destinations.

The complex functioning of modern societies has created new and more demanding security challenges and threats. Each form of security challenge requires a specific type of response, and for this reason, it is very important to identify the threats and menaces in order to be able to respond to threats in a timely and adequate manner. Ogorec cites war conflicts, asymmetric threats, natural and technical-technological catastrophes, and economic breakdowns as contemporary security threats that lead to crises (Ogorec, 2010). Santana classifies these threats as more serious threats to tourist destinations and, due to the extreme sensitivity of the tourism sector, adds to the list problems as the functioning of the market, reputation of tourist destinations, communication mistakes, and major accidents that can distort the image of the tourist destination (Santana, 2004).

Mikulić et al. (2016) singled out and analyzed the effect of eleven security challenges (risks) that can cause crises in the Croatian tourism sector. The said security challenges are bad weather, natural disasters, outbreaks of epidemics and diseases, terrorist attacks, political and societal instability in the region, ecological incidents, bad tourist experience, generating market purchasing power, exchange rate, fuel prices, and more difficult border crossing (Mikulić et al., 2016). They singled out the risk of terrorist attacks, the bad experience of tourists, the risk of bad weather, and the outbreak of environmental incidents as the risks to which the Croatian tourism sector should pay the most attention. The impact of the crisis caused by these risks would be very unfavorable for the Croatian tourism sector, although terrorist attacks and environmental incidents are somewhat less likely to occur (Mikulić et al., 2016). According to the latest *Public Report of the Security and Intelligence Agency of the Republic of Croatia*, "the terrorist threat on the territory of the Republic of Croatia is still low. Although the possibility of a terrorist attack cannot be ruled out" (Security and Intelligence Agency of the Republic of Croatia, 2019, p. 21).

Risks that would have significant consequences for the Croatian tourism sector but are still less damaging than those previously mentioned are the risk of natural disasters, outbreaks of diseases and epidemics, as well as political and social instability in the region. These risks are considered less likely to occur, but they should be taken into account because there is still the possibility of crises resulting from these risks (Mikulić et al., 2016). The remaining four risks (decline in tourist purchasing power, changes in exchange rates and fuel prices, and difficult border crossing) are often out of focus because they generally do not cause significant and long-lasting consequences, but they should be closely monitored because they can lead to declining tourist traffic. Interestingly, difficult border crossing has been assessed as the least likely to occur (Mikulić et al., 2016), although it is what has led to a short-term cessation of tourism activity in much of the world in 2020 due to the coronavirus epidemic outbreak and continued in spring 2021 in Croatia as well.

In this part, it is important to emphasize the characteristics of the Croatian tourism sector for a deeper insight into the possible consequences of the crisis. It is necessary to single out three main characteristics of Croatian

tourism that are important for the analysis of the impact of possible crises and their consequences. These are a) great dependence on international tourism arrivals and overnight stays; b) high seasonality of tourism in Croatia, c) geographic concentration of tourism traffic on the coastal part of Croatia (islands and Adriatic coast). Although statistical data on tourism in Croatia have been gathered since the 1960s, this paper uses data about foreign tourism when the independent Republic of Croatia was established (1991). Namely, with the disintegration of the ex Yugoslavia, new independent states were formed, and since then, the tourist arrivals of their residents in Croatia have been statistically recorded as foreign (while in the former state, they were domestic). The total realized tourist overnight stays in Croatia in the last decade have increased 62%, from 56 million in 2010 to 91 million in 2019 (CBS, 2020). In that period, the share of international tourism has constantly accounted for more than 90% of total overnight stays. The first, very important conclusion is that Croatian tourism is currently primarily oriented to the arrival of foreign tourists. Another important characteristic of Croatian tourism is its distinct seasonality. Kožić (2013) researched the seasonality of tourism in Croatia compared to eight comparable countries (by geographical location, climatic conditions and type of tourism), i.e., Italy, Spain, Montenegro, Greece, France, Portugal, Cyprus, and Malta. He concludes that Croatian tourism shows the highest levels of seasonality compared to other countries (Kožić, 2013), which means that it is oriented only to the summer months.

In the past few years, trends have begun to change, and now several destinations such as Dubrovnik, Split, and Zagreb are visited by tourists throughout the year. However, the still prevailing feature is the seasonality of Croatian tourism oriented towards the three summer months. The third important feature is geographical orientation. In 2019, according to the data of the Central Bureau of Statistics of Croatia, Croatia recorded 19.6 million tourist arrivals and 91.2 million tourists overnight stays, with 93% of all tourist overnight stays located in the coastal part of Croatia (CBS, 2020). Data by the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of the Republic of Croatia on the geographic spread of Croatian tourism show that four Croatian counties are in the lead in terms of the number of tourist arrivals (MINTS, 2019). The share of arrivals in the county of Istria, in relation to the total number of arrivals, is the highest, and in 2019 it amounted to 22.9%, followed by the county of Split-Dalmatia with a share of 18.7%, then the county of Primorje-Gorski Kotar (15.2%) and the county of Dubrovnik-Neretva (11.4%). The other 16 counties plus the City of Zagreb together account for 31.8% of total tourist arrivals in Croatia (MINTS, 2020a).

Given that tourism itself is a very sensitive activity, especially in Croatia because it is predominantly oriented towards foreign tourists, during the three summer months of tourist arrivals in four counties, it should not be an activity on which the economy and public finances rely so strongly. However, precisely because the share of tourism in GDP for 2019 was as high as 19.5% (MINTS, 2020a), the tourism sector should have extremely high-quality crisis management mechanisms and tools. The danger of a crisis in the Croatian tourism sector does not affect only this activity but also other sectors of the economy and one-fifth of state finances. The shocks in tourism can lead to many adverse domino effects and impacts in many areas and industries. The coronavirus crisis has largely illustrated this assumption. For these reasons, it is very important to manage crises in the Croatian tourism sector.

4. Croatian tourism sector and crisis management

Since the end of the Homeland War (the war lasted from 1991 to 1995), Croatia has approached the development of a normative framework for crisis management in several phases and two basic directions within those phases. The phases relate to the development of a cross-sectoral approach based on the guidelines given in national security strategies, while two basic approaches are: creating an interdisciplinary framework for different stakeholders and developing crisis management capabilities within each individual security system (internal security system, security intelligence system, defense system, civil protection system, healthcare system, and others).

The first phase of building an integrated crisis management system is indicated in the guidelines for developing public policies for establishing such a unified system, which were set out in the *2002 National Security Strategy*. It indicates that a modern civil-military crisis planning and crisis management system will be organized by unifying different parts of the system, currently deployed in several ministries (Croatian Parliament, 2002, point 94). The stated was not realized, although several attempts to initiate processes would lead in that direction. Along with these efforts, crisis management capacity building within the civil protection system for the needs of civil protection and interdepartmental cooperation of all actors who are in any way connected with the civil protection system went parallel. This was realized in the years that followed, primarily through the establishment and operation of the National Protection and Rescue Directorate (it existed from 2005 to 2018). This system was the central platform of the state to respond to the major crises it faced in 2014 (managing the consequences of the catastrophic floods that hit the eastern part of the country), and in 2015/2016 (management of the migrant and refugee crisis when more than 660 thousand migrants passed through the territory of Croatia). The Government of the Republic of Croatia decided that this system would be the main carrier of crisis management activities that occurred in early 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (Mikac, 2020). It should also be noted that other individual systems have built crisis management capabilities within their sectors.

The next phase in developing a unified crisis management system is related to the adoption of the *2017 National Security Strategy*. The Strategy emphasizes individual crisis management systems and the need to develop and establish an integrated system that will unite all the existing individual systems into a single unit. It states that: "Experience to date in responding to emergencies suggests the need to establish a model that will systematically address identified shortcomings by ensuring coordinated planning, response and management in emergencies and crises. The goal is to achieve a synergistic preventive effect of several factors, quickly and effectively prevent or eliminate the harmful consequences of an emergency or crisis event and shorten the recovery time and return to pre-crisis levels" (Croatian Parliament, 2017, Chapter IV, point A). The homeland security system was to unite all the individual systems, but it was yet to be established: "Organizing the homeland security system will ensure the rational, efficient and harmonized use of the existing resources in order to reduce or eliminate risks to national security. The homeland security system will support emergency and crisis management, including participation in crisis management at the NATO and European Union level. The operation of the homeland security system will ensure a unique methodology and systematic monitoring of risks to national security and the determination of priorities in action" (Croatian Parliament, 2017, Chapter IV, point A). This was a more concrete attempt than the one in the previous phase. However, the Government of the Republic of Croatia decided that this system was not ready to respond to the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government of the Republic of Croatia decided that the civil protection system would be a central platform that would serve all actors in managing crises facing the whole country, all its sectors, and citizens (Mikac, 2020).

Let us now consider solutions in the tourism sector. As early as 1991, the UNWTO adopted the document *Recommended Measures for Security in Tourism*, according to which every tourism-oriented country should have a national strategy for security in tourism (UNWTO, 1996). However, this type of document still does not exist in Croatia. The first strategy that regulates the area of the tourism sector in Croatia is the *Development Strategy of Croatian Tourism*, which the Ministry of Tourism adopted in 1993. The Strategy was adopted because it was recognized that tourism in Croatia is a key development factor and that the tourism sector is suitable for rapid economic integration with Europe (MINTS, 1993). The goals highlighted in the Strategy are "renovation, valorization, and protection of tourism potentials as well as building a new identity and market repositioning of Croatia as one of the leading tourist countries in Europe and the Mediterranean" (MINTS, 1993). The Strategy itself does not emphasize security as a factor in attracting tourists but states the abundance of tourist resources and attractions as a strategic advantage of Croatia over competing tourist

countries. More than ten years later, Matika and Gugić noted that there is still no unique document in Croatia that regulates crisis management in the tourism sector, neither at the state level nor at the level of The Ministry of Tourism and Sports of the Republic of Croatia. As a country that generates almost 20% of GDP from the tourism sector, Croatia should "analyze the degree of threat to the life and health of tourists, property and economic interests of tourists within its state territory, and develop a national tourism security strategy that includes risk prevention" (Matika & Gugić, 2007, p. 86).

From the nineties of the 20th century, the Croatian tourism sector was affected by several different crises. Some of which were the Homeland War (1991-1995), the Global Financial Crisis (2008), and the air traffic congestion due to volcanic eruptions in Iceland in 2010. According to some interviewed experts, the Croatian tourism sector responded to these crises by "waiting for the crisis to resolve itself" without any action plans. In addition, no steps of action were recorded, and no lessons have been identified from these crises, so good practice or opportunities for progress could not be included in action plans for addressing possible future crises (Kravaršćan, 2020).

A milestone in understanding the security in the Croatian tourism sector is the *Tourism Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia until 2020*, which was adopted in 2013 by the Croatian Parliament. The Strategy emphasizes security as an important factor for attracting tourists, and personal security is mentioned as a competitive advantage of Croatia as a tourist destination. One of the principles of Croatian tourism development is the partnership of the tourism sector with numerous departments, including civil society organizations, institutions in the field of environmental protection, culture, transport, health, and security (Croatian Parliament, 2013). The partnership emphasizes the importance of cooperation but also opens a place for cooperation between the security and tourism sectors, which is necessary for quality crisis management in the tourism sector.

Then, in 2018, The Ministry of Tourism and Sports of the Republic of Croatia adopted a *Risk Management Strategy* that regulates monitoring strategic and operational risks. The purpose of the document is to help achieve the Ministry's goals, mission, and vision through risk management (MINTS, 2018b). This Strategy ensures that "the framework for identifying, assessing, handling, monitoring and reporting on risks is communicated and understood at all levels of the Ministry" (MINTS, 2018b, p. 8) and establishes coordination of risk management. The Strategy sets out a risk management cycle in four phases "risk identification, risk estimation, risk management, risk monitoring and reporting" (MINTS, 2018b, p. 8). It also lists the responsibilities of persons involved in creating action plans. Assistant Ministers, the Secretary-General of the Ministry, the heads of independent organizational units, and risk coordinators in organizational units are in charge of developing action plans. They meet once a month or when an extremely significant risk is observed in order to make decisions on "measures to reduce risk exposure, on deadlines and persons who will be responsible for performing the necessary actions" (MINTS, 2018b, p. 14). However, this document is only the first step in creating a crises management system in tourism. It does not state what measures can be taken, and lessons learned from previous crises are not listed to direct crisis management during future crises. The *Risk Management Strategy* is an excellent first step, but there are still no concrete action plans for addressing future crises.

A positive example of cross-sectoral operation in the Croatian tourism sector is that from the 2018 tourist season. The Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Croatia formed a Headquarters for Tourist Season Security Measures, which operated from June 15 to September 15. The Headquarters coordinated and harmonized police forces and other competent bodies in charge of security during the tourist seasons. The Ministry of the Interior thus cooperated with the Security and Intelligence Agency, the Military Security and Intelligence Agency, the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Ministry of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure, and they were networked with the Croatian Mountain Rescue Service and firefighters (Radić, 2019).

5. COVID-19 pandemic and reaction of the tourism sector

Analyses of the UNWTO for the world and the Croatian tourism sector predicted that 2020 would be a record tourist year everywhere in the world, including Croatia (Croatian National Tourist Board [CNTB], 2020a; UNWTO, 2020). Even the data for the first months of 2020 were promising (CNTB, 2020a), but then the crisis broke out. At the end of 2019, an uncontrolled spread of a hitherto completely unknown virus (coronavirus SARS-CoV-2) emerged in the Chinese city of Wuhan. In the beginning, the crisis seemed to be local, but given the globalization and growing networking, the virus spread to all countries of the world and caused the first truly global crisis. Coronavirus has spread across Europe through Italy since mid-January, and the first case of infection in Croatia was recorded on February 25, 2020. *Disaster risk assessments for the Republic of Croatia* predict similar scenarios to what happened at the beginning of 2020 (they describe how the virus developed in Asia, spread to Europe internationally, and consequently reached Croatia). The Assessment elaborates scenarios for the most probable severe outcomes as well as for worst-case outcomes. According to the most probable adverse scenario, the epidemic was predicted to last for nine weeks, 860 people would succumb to complications caused by the disease, and the mortality rate of all infected people would be 0.01%. In the event of the worst-case outcomes, it was predicted that 2,580 people could die in nine weeks, and in that case, the mortality rate of all infected people would be 0.2% (Government of the Republic of Croatia, 2019). As for the impact of pandemic crises on the economy, the crisis would have a moderate impact on the economy in case of the most probable outcomes, while under the worst-case conditions, it would have a significant impact on the economy (Government of the Republic of Croatia, 2019). Estimates proved correct, especially for the second wave of the pandemic that began in late September.

At the end of January 2020, when the virus began to spread in Europe, the Crisis Headquarters of the Ministry of Health was activated in Croatia. Even then, it was realized that the health care system alone would not be enough to fight coronavirus and the consequences it could cause. Therefore, interdepartmental negotiations began, resulting in the activation of the Civil Protection Headquarters of the Republic of Croatia in mid-February as a unique platform for cooperation and coordination of all other state and private institutions (Mikac, 2020), and each sector was additionally preparing itself according to specific risks and potential crisis effects for each of the sectors. Theoretical assumptions and insight into the processes and activities of the institutions were supplemented, verified, and interpretations and views were obtained from the interviewed experts who helped us to frame the analysis.

Focusing on the tourism sector and the prevention phase, crisis management begins long before the emergence of crisis indicators, with continuous risk monitoring, development of strategies, and implementation plans to avoid crisis outbreaks or mitigate the impact of crisis if outbreaks are unavoidable. Previously, it has been stated that there are strategies and documents in Croatia that record and monitor risks for the tourism sector, such as the *Risk Management Strategy* of The Ministry of Tourism and Sports of the Republic of Croatia from 2018 but there are no concrete action plans. Therefore, the Croatian tourism sector did not enter the phase of preparation for the crisis at the level it could or should have. However, there are positive examples, and here we should certainly point out the Association of Croatian Travel Agencies "which has detailed defined action plans, crisis teams and contacts for communication in crises and can certainly serve as an example to other institutions in the sector" (Kravaršćan, 2020, p. 33).

The preparedness phase follows the prevention phase and begins when the crisis slowly starts to emerge. The Government of the Republic of Croatia and The Ministry of Tourism and Sports of the Republic of Croatia started monitoring the situation related to the spread of coronavirus in China very early and began with the preparedness phase towards the end of 2019. In the last few years, the Croatian tourism sector has recorded an increasing number of tourist arrivals from the Far East, and as the virus began to spread in that area, a great number of potential tourists canceled their bookings and overnight stays in Croatia. The Croatian tourism

sector institutions realized that the situation was becoming serious and began to continuously monitor events in China and the Far East to prepare responses to a possible crisis. At the beginning of February 2020, the Minister of Tourism Gari Capelli said that the Government of the Republic of Croatia, as well as The Ministry of Tourism and Sports of the Republic of Croatia, were closely monitoring the coronavirus situation, both in China and in the immediate vicinity (because the virus had already spread to Europe) and they were ready to respond (MINTS, 2020b). In March, the Minister held a meeting with representatives of the Croatian Tourist Board, travel agencies, the Tourism Department of the Croatian Chamber of Commerce, the Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts, and hoteliers to coordinate and disseminate the most important information related to the spread of the coronavirus (MINTS, 2020c).

Despite the lack of concrete action plans, the Croatian tourism sector implemented this phase very well – for two main reasons. The first reason is the character of the crisis itself. Namely, the crisis started in the Far East, and the situation began to be monitored already before the end of 2019. Although at that time, no one still believed that it could become global, due to the seriousness of the situation in China, Croatian institutions observed the situation and prepared for the possibility of the crisis spreading to Europe, including Croatia. Due to its sensitivity, and the growing emitting market in the Far East, the tourism sector began to feel the crisis even before the health sector due to the cancellation of reservations. The crisis started far from Croatia and spread slowly, leaving the tourism sector institutions enough time to prepare. Another reason why the readiness phase was well carried out is that the Croatian tourism sector is very well networked, and there is constant communication between institutions, both during the season and off-season. Namely, in Croatia, there are several institutions and associations through which employers in tourism communicate with the Ministry, and they cover all areas of tourism. Some of them are the Association of Employers in Croatian Hospitality Industry, the National Association of Family and Small Hotels, the Association of Croatian Travel Agencies, The Croatian Camping Union, the Croatian National Tourist Board (CNTB), and Association of Private Renters from Zagreb. A vital role in monitoring the situation in the sector and reporting in this crisis was played by the Institute for Tourism, the Sector for Tourism within the Croatian Chamber of Commerce, but also the Croatian National Tourist Board with all other boards on the regional and local level in Croatia and representative offices abroad.

At the time of border closure (from mid-March to the end of May 2020) and the countrywide lockdown, the tourism sector was not waiting but was operating. The Croatian National Tourist Board played a major role in maintaining visibility and attracting attention. They have devised a new communication concept under the hashtag *#CroatiaLongDistanceLove* with the message *"Welcome Croatia to your home"* for communication with multimillion followers on social networks and online platforms. The concept was designed with the aim of "bringing" Croatia to the homes of travel enthusiasts around the world, but also to encourage the arrival of tourists as soon as the borders open. After border opening at the end of May, they started an intensive call campaign for closer emitting markets with the message *"The Vacation You Deserve Is Closer Than You Think"*, and for more distant emitting markets with the message *"Enjoy The View from Croatia"*, which maintained the visibility of Croatia as a destination. In addition to the Croatian National Tourist Board, the work of the Association of Croatian Travel Agencies should also be highlighted, which has actively represented the interests of the tourism sector and provided important support to its members through constant appearances in the media. The Association has launched several initiatives related to the adaptation of the tourism sector to epidemiological measures and helped employers in tourism to continue their business after the opening of hospitality facilities and state borders. The work of the Croatian Tourism Association should also be emphasized, which has launched the website www.croatiacovid19.info to provide timely and accurate information to the public about the number of COVID-19 cases in Croatian regions. On the website, the map of Croatia is divided into four regions: North Coast (Istria and Kvarner), South Coast (Dalmatia), Central Croatia (Zagreb and surroundings), and Eastern Croatia. The map, designed as the corona region tracker, was made to help all tourists coming to Croatia plan their vacation.

During April and May, the Croatian Institute of Public Health adopted a number of epidemiological measures, and the Civil Protection Headquarters of the Republic of Croatia made recommendations related to reducing the spread of the coronavirus, which all sectors, including tourism, needed to adapt to, so they can continue their work when the lockdown ends. In addition to the obligation to wear protective masks, employers in tourism had to repurpose the reception areas by installing plastic partitions on the counters, marking the mandatory distance between guests, and determining the number of guests in each facility. There has been a great deal of uncertainty in the tourism sector in those weeks – how it will look like and whether it will be a tourist season at all. At the time, optimistic statements, like the one made by Tourism Minister Capelli in mid-June, said that "30 to 35 percent of tourism revenue is expected compared to last year's revenue". One of the ideas promoted for the partial salvation of the season was CRO cards, of which about 40,000 were printed (Croatian News Agency [HINA], 2020). The introduction of cards was considered several years before the outbreak of the crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic, and the Government of the Republic of Croatia decided to introduce them as a quick help to the economy in the 2020 season. They were conceptualized as employers' payment of up to 2,500 Croatian kuna (HRK) in non-taxable benefits to their employees. The amount from the card could be spent on services in tourist facilities, where Croatian workers would have special benefits and get additional discounts.

The response to the crisis was conditioned by several factors and circumstances, some of which changed on a daily basis. The situation itself, on which everyone depended, was conditioned by the dynamics of the spread of the virus and epidemiological measures among the local population as well as in the most important tourist markets from which a significant number of foreign tourists come. Then, the aspect of international cooperation was important, primarily within the European Union, the ways in which the Union institutions and the Member States managed to ensure cooperation and mutual understanding in a number of areas. It is important to point out that Croatia (primarily a car-tourist destination) was strongly dependent on Austria, Slovenia, and Hungary and their regimes of opening and closing state borders for international travel for tourists coming from or traveling through those countries. Two significant situations that were happening in those countries were important predictors for our forthcoming tourist season. The first refers to campaigns that some states launched, encouraging citizens to stay in their countries during the holidays and not travel abroad. The second is the announcement of closing the borders for tourist trips to other countries. In both cases, Austria partially implemented and announced such measures. That is something that certainly affected Croatian tourism. Therefore, Croatian institutions (ministries in charge of tourism, foreign and European affairs, health, internal affairs, plus a number of others) communicated daily with numerous multilateral and bilateral partners about all the segments of the crisis, crisis management, the situation in Croatia and clearly lobbied not to close borders to Croatia for travel and arrival of tourists in Croatia.

By the decision of the Civil Protection Headquarters of the Republic of Croatia, catering facilities were opened on May 11, 2020, and the borders were tacitly opened in mid-May with the message that those who "have a business reason" can enter Croatia (Koretić & Krnić, 2020). Until May 21, it was not entirely clear whether tourists could come to Croatia, but then it was announced that tourists who have confirmation of booking accommodation could freely cross the border (MINTS, 2020d). Only then, the tourist sector started inviting campaigns and activities related to the reception of guests. Ultimately, a crucial political decision was made that Croatia would take the "calculated risk" and open up to the arrival of foreign tourists (Jutarnji.hr, 2020). At the end of May, optimists predicted "that up to 50 percent of last year's tourism revenues could be realized" (Crnjak, 2020). The coordination for the actual start of the season was proven by the forecast of the Croatian National Tourism Board "that all tourist facilities on the Adriatic will be open in June". Also, that "Croatian hoteliers and tourism workers are ready for the season-opening. All standards of safe stay have been implemented in accommodation facilities, restaurants, and other tourist facilities according to the recommendations of Croatian epidemiologists, the World Health Organization, and with regard to the

recommendations from key emitting markets" (Crnjak, 2020). Ultimately, optimistic predictions came true, and Croatia realized about 50 percent of last year's tourism revenues. Where, according to Eurostat data as provided by the Croatian National Tourism Board, "in the period from January to July, of all Mediterranean countries, Croatia recorded the smallest decline in the number of domestic and foreign tourists and in tourist overnight stays in tourist facilities" (Pavlović, 2020). All of the above is evidence of great efforts put in by all Croatian tourism workers and institutions.

We have the least current indicators for the recovery phase because this phase is ongoing, and all the undertaken activities and ones that are being prepared for the next season are not publicly available. Therefore, we will single out those that were possible to acquire. The director of the Croatian National Tourist Board, Kristijan Staničić, states that in 2020 "cooperation with all relevant stakeholders, from national and local civil protection headquarters, police and diplomacy to foreign and domestic partners and the media, was crucial in order for everyone to have accurate, precise and complete information" (CNTB, 2020b). Towards the end of the summer tourist season (mid-September), the CNTB launched a promotional campaign called "Thank you" in 13 foreign markets, specifically in the markets of Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Italy, Hungary, Belgium, France, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. The campaign's content was purposefully prepared for each of the emitting markets so that three favorite destinations of guests from a certain emitting market were selected with thank you messages in their languages (CNTB, 2020c). Here it is important to emphasize that the campaign was conducted on social networks where prize games were organized, and the winners of the prize games won gift packages of Croatian souvenirs, which further promoted Croatian products and maintained the visibility of Croatian destinations. During the winter, the CNTB is planning to continue implementing the "Croatia Full of Magic" campaign on social networks to maintain Croatia's presence and visibility in the most important emitting markets and launch several additional projects from the beginning of 2021. In addition, for 2021, it plans a separate promotion to position Croatia as an attractive destination for digital nomads (CNTB, 2020b). Afterward, the positive thing from the point of view of the tourism sector is that they managed to agree politically within the triangle of key institutions (Government of the Republic of Croatia – Civil Protection Headquarters of the Republic of Croatia – Croatian Institute of Public Health) that at the end of the year when it was decided to reintroduce lockdown, hotels stayed open, and they were allowed to remain open to guests.

6. Discussion

The crisis poses a danger and opportunity, so this part of the paper is devoted to considering observations of the tourism sector's response to the coronavirus crisis to identify lessons learned and make recommendations for dealing with future crises. Three very important findings were noted by reviewing the literature and strategic documents, interviewing people working in different positions in the tourism sector and monitoring the situation and trends. The first is that the crisis management system in the Croatian tourism sector is fragmented. The second is that communication between decision-makers and leaders in the tourism sector (especially in the early stages of the response) was not coordinated. The third is that the crisis response was reactive.

The finding that the crisis management system in the Croatian tourism sector is fragmented is best indicated by the fact that at the state level, there are strategies that identify risks and analyze their impact, there are elaborated scenarios and lists of key contacts, but there are no clear action plans, so it mostly happens that every institution responds separately. Based on the Disaster Risk Assessment for the Republic of Croatia (a document at the state level), each institution develops risk management strategies at their level but not in coordination with other institutions. Risk management strategies are an excellent first step (and they should not be an ending point) for establishing a comprehensive system that includes institutions in the tourism sector, security sector institutions, and members of the academic community. It is also necessary to create a

document that clearly defines the tasks of each institution, i.e., persons in leadership positions. We should mention that since 2018, the Headquarters for Tourist Season Security Measures has been operating in Croatia during the tourist season. However, the said Headquarters includes more institutions of the security sector than the tourism sector, so it is worth considering the inclusion of more institutions and associations from the tourism sector that would complement the tasks of the security sector and maintain the image and reputation of tourist destinations. Also, given the fact that the tourism sector is very important for the Croatian economy and that tourism in continental Croatia has been on the increase in recent years (which is active outside the summer months), it is necessary to consider establishing the Headquarters for the implementation of security measures "within the tourism sector", instead of "during the tourist season".

Regarding the second finding, communication with tourists is the most important part of crisis management in the tourism sector, which in the initial phase of the response to the coronavirus crisis in the Croatian tourism sector was not sufficiently transparent or harmonized between sectors. This was noticeable through various statements of key people in tourism, but also epidemiological measures that were occasionally contradictory for most general public and experts. During the crisis, it is necessary to communicate the implementation of measures as transparently, coordinatedly, and consistently as possible, which was not the case at the beginning of this crisis. One of the clearest examples is the statement of the Minister of the Interior Davor Božinović, who on June 18, 2020, told the citizens of the Republic of Croatia not to travel abroad in order to prevent the spread of the coronavirus (Poslovni.hr, 2020), while the CNTB simultaneously conducted campaigns inviting tourists to come to Croatia. Also, as already pointed out in previous chapters, opening borders was tacitly done, and neither employers and employees in the tourism sector nor potential tourists from important emitting markets were sure how to react. During the crisis, it is necessary to avoid statements such as "this destination is safe" or to declare the end of the crisis before its actual end. That is what Prime Minister Andrej Plenković said at the end of June 2020 "we have, I will repeat it once again, very responsibly – beat COVID-19 in the first wave, without any dilemmas, with restrictive measures, movement permits, and physical distance which we have secured" (Government of the Republic of Croatia, 2020). Uncoordinated and non-transparent statements can very easily damage the destination's reputation because they distort the image of the destination, especially when one thing is spoken and the other thing is done. Therefore, it is necessary to clearly define the communication strategy and implement an action plan already in the readiness phase.

Regarding the third finding, it should be noted that the results of the tourist season were better than expected, but they did not result from the proactive, planned, and coordinated action of the tourism sector. The crisis caused by the spread of the coronavirus is global; it has spread slowly and left the tourism sector quite enough time to prepare for the reaction phase. According to one respondent, the Croatian tourism sector showed confusion in response to this crisis. Also, when asked about previous crises, the answers were "we waited for the crisis to resolve itself", and about the crisis caused by the coronavirus "this crisis is special and completely unpredictable and we expect that the State will provide help". As a quick measure of assistance, the Government of the Republic of Croatia decided, before the summer tourist season, to introduce Croatian tourist cards, i.e., CRO cards, "with the aim of encouraging domestic tourist traffic and consumption" (MINTS, 2020e). The card should have helped employers – who would be able to pay workers their salaries without being taxed; workers – who would receive additional discounts and benefits when using tourism services; and the tourism sector – with higher tourist turnover and consumption would be higher encouraged. However, the issuance of cards did not start until July 2020, and then it was not clear to many employers and service providers in tourism how to use them. Out of 40,000 ordered cards (according to the respondents), only 2,300 were used from the beginning of July to the end of September (Pauček Šljivak, 2020). The project was conceived very well, and it will certainly prove positive in the long run. The 2020 tourist season did not yield results due to the unpreparedness and a reactive approach to the crisis. This is just one example of how processes and activities should not function. Here we can also point out the statement of CNTB director

Kristijan Staničić: "More than 54 million overnight stays are a very good 50 percent of the last year's result in the same period, but also a proof that we managed well and were successful in the given circumstances" (CNTB, 2020b). It is true that the tourism sector has coped well, but dealing with crises was reactive, and the question is whether a proactive and planned action would produce different results.

7. Conclusion

The results of the tourist season show that the Croatian tourism sector has been relatively successful in preparing (for) and responding to the crisis, although it has not developed effective plans, procedures, and crisis management teams. So, we have to ask ourselves whether we can be satisfied with that? We certainly should not be because a significant part of the Croatian economy relies and depends on tourism, so we cannot get into the situation of simply saying "tourism sector has managed" (in dealing with the crisis). This research has produced three very important findings described in the previous chapter, and they are: (1) the crisis management system in the Croatian tourism sector is fragmented, and action is uncoordinated; (2) communication between all relevant institutions in the tourism sector (especially in the early reaction phase) is not aligned; and (3) the response to the crisis is reactive. Also, this research has shown that in the Croatian tourism sector, there are risk assessments, consequence analyses, event scenarios, and even a list of key contacts and persons who should be responsible for adopting measures in response to the crisis. However, when actual actions are taken, it is not clear how they are used; namely, a very important second step is missing in which action plans are developed according to scenarios that rely on risk assessments and which, when the crisis breaks out, are ready for use.

The use of the phase crisis management model in this research proved to be very useful and justified, especially because "crisis management in the Croatian tourism sector" does not exist as an organized system but is fragmented. The theoretical framework and literature recommendations toward the strategic approach to crisis management in this study directed the research to the essential elements of crisis management according to the stages of prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery in which the system could be analyzed and systematically evaluated. Also, the methodological framework of this paper included the inductive method of inference, content analysis technique, examination technique, and interviews to perceive the system from different points of view and make conclusions and recommendations. The purpose of the research, which was to detect the strengths and weaknesses of the tourism sector in crisis management by comparing literature recommendations and insight into strategic documents, was also justified. The main research question was answered by talking to people from different areas and institutions in the tourism sector and monitoring the situation and trends. Specifically, the research showed that key actors in the Croatian tourism sector managed the COVID-19 pandemic crisis in an insufficiently coordinated manner and that there are numerous opportunities and needs for improvement in the crisis management system.

In addition, this paper aimed to provide recommendations for improving crisis management in the tourism sector. Some of the recommendations are highlighted in the previous chapter, and here we will highlight the most important ones. Firstly, plans and strategies exist at the state level. Still, there is no specific comprehensive document that covers all risks in the tourism sector and, at the same time, defines clear action plans. Hence, the first recommendation is the adoption of such a document. When developing such a document, one should rely on the *Recommended Measures for Security in Tourism* adopted by the UNWTO back in 1991. It is, therefore, necessary to adopt a National Tourism Security Strategy that includes risk prevention. Given that the period of validity and implementation of the current *Tourism Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia until 2020* terminated at the end of 2020, we propose that the new 2021 Strategy place greater emphasis on security in tourism and create preconditions for the adoption of the National Tourism Security Strategy. The second step is creating a coordinated and comprehensive system that harmonizes the

tourism sector with the security, financial, and transport sectors, modeled on the Headquarters for Tourist Season Security Measures. We suggest that such a system operates throughout the year and that the measures be implemented "within the tourism sector" instead of "during the tourist season". If there was such a unified, comprehensive system, action and communication with the public and potential tourists would be harmonized, and thus better results of action in crisis situations would be achieved, and Croatia's reputation as a destination would be maintained. Investing in security by creating a comprehensive crisis management system should not be seen as a cost but as an investment to meet new security challenges more successfully in the future. This research provided valuable insights into the challenges of crisis management that can serve as a continuation of research on how Croatia prepares and acts in the event of a crisis in the tourism sector. The research, therefore, justified its main purpose and goal. Only with knowledge, prevention and building targeted capabilities, the Croatian tourism sector can successfully deal with new crises that are increasingly occurring given the current security challenges.

Appendix

Questionnaire:

Croatian Tourism Sector and Crisis Management - A Case Study Related to the COVID-19 Pandemic

FIRST SET OF QUESTIONS - PLANNING

1. Are there crisis management plans at the level of your institution?
 - a) If the answer to the previous question is no:
 - Are there any documents that mention the risks that threaten your institution or the sector in which you operate?
 - b) If the answer is yes:
 - What is defined in them?
 - Do they describe the immediate or distant environment?
 - Are they adapted to different types of threats?
 - Are you revising the plans? If yes - how often?
 - Do you have a separate item in the budget for crisis situations?
 - Do the plans have a list of contacts for communication just before and during the crisis? If yes - which contacts are listed - are they Tourist Boards, travel agencies, carriers?
2. Are crisis teams defined at the level of your institution?

If the answer to the previous question is yes:

 - Who makes up the crisis team?
 - Are there more teams in charge of different areas?
 - Do the plans define the responsibilities and obligations of the team members? If yes - which level of employees are in charge of which area of activity?
 - Do you educate employees on how to act in crisis situations? If yes - how often do you remind employees of the actions defined in the plans?
 - Do you have a written manual for dealing with crisis conditions?

SECOND SET OF QUESTIONS - DEALING WITH CRISIS

1. What crisis situations have you faced so far?
2. Can you describe an example of acting in one such situation?
3. What did you identify as crucial in dealing with the crisis?
How long did the journey to recovery take and how did it go?
4. Do you cooperate with institutions of higher / lower instances in such situations?
If so - with whom and in what way - is the communication two-way or do you only receive instructions from higher instances / issue instructions to lower instances?
5. Are you satisfied with the way of cooperation?

THIRD SET OF QUESTIONS -

Crisis caused by uncontrolled spread of coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) causing disease (Covid-19)

1. Guide me through what your institution is doing to mitigate the effects of the current coronavirus crisis.
2. When did you start preparing for the crisis response?
3. How did the preparation go?
4. Have you established a crisis team? If yes - who is a member of the group, what are the obligations and responsibilities?
5. Do you cooperate with higher / lower instance institutions? If so - with whom, how often, in what way and what have you agreed?
6. Do you cooperate with the media?
7. What measures have you taken so far to mitigate the effects of the crisis?
8. Do you monitor the situation in other tourist countries in the region? If so - how does this affect decision-making in this crisis in your institution?
9. How do you plan to recover from this crisis? How will you regain the trust of tourists?

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSTITUTION AND RESPONDENT

1. Data on the respondent:
 - a) How many years have you been working in the tourism sector?
 - b) How many years have you been working in the position you currently hold?
 - c) What exactly function do you perform?
 - d) What is your educational profile
 - Economical
 - Law
 - Other social sciences or humanities
 - Technically
 - Natural or medical sciences
 - Art area
2. Information on the institution:
 - a) Name of the institution / business entity
 - b) Number of employees
 - c) Does it operate at the state or local level?

April 30, 2020

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