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Article

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Contemporary Approaches and Challenges of Tourism Sustainability

As a generic process, sustainability of development requires satisfying the needs of current population without compromising the integrity of the environment for future generations, respecting the principles of intra-generational and inter-generational equity, substituting options of excessive centralization with forms of interstate cooperation and partnerships between corporations and companies, governments and local communities etc.

Sustainable tourism, through the development of its many concrete manifestation forms, of management and marketing of tourism, ensures the natural and economic integrity of the environment and rationally exploits natural and cultural resources, but it retains the potential for future generations and practically identifies a state of dynamic equilibrium of demand and supply, which outlines any modern tourist market.

Sustainable tourism has been considered in the twentieth century as one of the locomotives that pulled up an ascending slope many developing world economies, this activity was determined by a certain level of seriousness in the organization, contractual honesty and professionalism in communication and thus valued cultural and historical traditions, revealed the uniqueness of some geographical spaces, time and demographic specific identity of peoples or communities. Tourism of last century has managed to provide, with a perpetual creativity, the energy necessary for the tourist recovery and rebalancing, directly by its more personalized approaches and innovative visions, finally leading to the necessary economic growth.

The new millennium continues the process of encouraging investment in a sustainable tourism sector, provides new concepts for new forms of tourism: ecotourism, rural tourism, etc., as it is characterized by the abundance of information, the discovery of other civilizations and cultures, through innovation, experimentation, flexibility and diversity, increased expertise and tourist destination advice, all of which Internet-enabled. However sustainable tourism of the XXIst century remains exposed to the negative trends generated by climate change, global conflict, natural disasters, terrorism, while making great efforts to mitigate seasonality, sometimes excessive, and avoid circumstances that redefine it through *the cyclic evolution of tourism services*.

The true equations of the sustainable transformation of modern tourism provide the premise of profit and, derived from here, its ability to create

wealth, aggregate vertical concentration (generating historically viable groups of tour operators) with horizontal expansion through increasingly diversified networking (denser virtual networks of travel agencies), but still the profit motive prevails over the rights to maintain the quality and integrity of the natural, cultural, social and traditional environment. Knowing the tradition and history of the beginnings and development of the tourist activity in the economy remains essential for the future of tourism in that territory, and understanding the statistical information complements its dynamics, which at the end of 2013 accounted for 9% of global GDP and 9% of the workforce employed, providing 6% of world exports and satisfying demand of more than 1.087 billion tourists (according to statistics of the World Tourism Organization - UNWTO, 2014)

The theme of the articles of this issue brings together multiple challenges of specialists in the tourism domain and their attempt to identify realistic and adequate answers to the problems of the economy. The articles approach the theme of sustainable development in tourism, under varying aspects, from empirical research (*Sustainability of the Tourism Industry, Based on Financial Key Performance Indicators*), to econometric models applied in tourism (*Econometric Models in Romanian Tourism under the Impact of Sustainable Development* and *Modelling the Image Research of a Tourism Destination*), highlighting the importance of confronting in sustainable development through the calling at regional area (*Tourism and Sustainable Regional Development in Romania and France: an Approach from the Perspective of New Economic Geography*), or analyzing the maturity of the sustainable education system (*Attitudes and Intentions of Business Master Students Towards Sustainable Tourism and Entrepreneurship*).

The contemporary approaches and challenges of sustainable tourism reunite tourism sectors with diverse problems, from medical tourism (*Hand Surgery – Postoperative Recovery and Medical Tourism; Analysis of Medical Tourism for Cardiovascular Diseases, or Medical Tourism in Romania. The Case Study of Cardiovascular Rehabilitation in Covasna.*) to cultural tourism (*European Cultural and Touristic Heritage: Sighișoara vs. Verona*), from the behavior of tourism services consumer (*Tourism Consumption Behaviour in Natural Protected Areas or The Impact of Service Quality on Customer Behavioral Loyalty in the Case of Travel Agencies from Romania*) to organizational culture and strategic management (*The Impact of Management and Organizational Culture on Creativity in the Hotel Industry; Facets of Economic and Financial Crisis Impact on Strategic Planning of Travel Agencies; Strategic Management Practices within the Romanian Hotel Industry; Investigating Potential Strategies for Increasing Tourism Competiveness at the Black Sea Shore or The Role of Cross-Training in Reducing the Level of Labor Turnover. Applied Study on some Hotels in Tripoli - Libya*) to ethics and specific communication (*The Ethics of Online Touristic*

Counseling: A Matter of Users Satisfaction or The Duality of Social Media in Tourism).

Quality is essential in developing any activity, being crucial in the services domain, in general, and the tourism domain, in particular, thus naturally quality becomes theme subject in the articles *Quality and Vision in the Romanian Tourism Agencies* or *Analysis of Romania's and Transylvania's Tourist Supply Development and Performance*. Finally, the articles from this number of *Amfiteatru Economic* present also other original and necessary themes in Romanian and international tourism, such as: *The Economic Impact of the SAPARD Programme on the Tourism Supply in Suceava County*; *The Dynamic of Foreign Visitors in Romania since 1990*. *Current Challenges of Romanian Tourism*, or *Hotel Chain's Strategic Options to Penetrate the Romanian Market*.

A final point can emphasize that the chances of Romania and those of Romanian sustainable tourism decrease from day to day, unless the thread of tradition is rekindled, along with the one of continuity and specific Romanian hospitality, and also unless this is based on the principles of intensive funding, diversity and creativity, continually practiced with the support of domestic policies, dedicated to this important activity and, especially, of European Union programs and funds.

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