

LIST OF ABSTRACTS

The scientific publications of Assoc. Prof. Vera Nikolova PhD,

Submitted for the competition for the scientific position "Professor"

Indicator B.3. Habilitation thesis – monograph

B.3.1. Assenova, M., V. Marinov, V. Nikolova, E. Petkova, R. Mitova, Ch. Istatkova (2021) Between culture and tourism. Univ. ed. "St. Peter's University Press". Kl. Ohridski" ISBN 978-954-07-5167-2 (electronic edition)

In recent decades, there has been a convergence between tourism and culture, dictated by the growing interest of tourists in cultural values and experiences, on the one hand, and on the other - due to opportunities for local development and maintenance of local identity. Thus, tourist attractions based on cultural heritage are a cross-section of two sets: cultural heritage and tourist attractions. This presupposes to analyze the nature and scope of the cultural heritage and the tourist attractions, as well as the approaches to their classification, which is the subject of the analysis in the presented monograph. The main goal of the study is to provide key stakeholders with a theoretically sound, workable and acceptable typology of attractions based on cultural heritage in support of their proper and sustainable management. In addition, the typology underpins its own empirical study of cultural heritage attractions for testing, ensuring that it covers, if not all, then at least most types of attractions. The research methodology is based on an in-depth review of the scientific literature on tourist attractions and their typology, as well as on the relevant legislation and strategies in Bulgaria. The testing of the developed typology was performed through field studies in June-July 2019, along a predetermined route in the country, to cover different types of cultural heritage attractions, using the following methodological tools:

- Cabinet study of the studied attractions based on secondary sources of information;
- Semi-structured interview with “operators” of tourist attractions, presented by their directors / managers or employees with the necessary competencies (46 sites are covered, 26 of which have the status of immovable cultural values of national and global importance) in order to analyze the supply;
- Investigation of the presentation of the researched tourist cultural heritage attractions, in the Internet environment according to specially developed methodology and indicators for evaluation;
- Survey among the visitors of tourist cultural heritage attractions on a specially prepared standardized questionnaire (face-to-face interviews were conducted with 668 respondents at 30 sites) in order to analyze the state of demand;
- Expert observations and evaluations.

The research focus is primarily on attractions based on immovable tangible heritage, although some aspects of movable and intangible heritage have also been explored through the visitors’ survey. In addition, on the basis of secondary sources, information related to the

management, monitoring and financing of cultural heritage attractions is systematized and analyzed, and good practices of management and financing of cultural heritage attractions are researched and presented.

The potential contribution of the research is both theoretical - improvement of the existing definitions and typology, and practical - improved focus of public policies, respectively the distribution of public funds for the transformation of cultural heritage into tourist attractions.

Indicator Г.4. Published monograph not submitted as a major habilitation work

Г.4.1. Nikolova, V., A. Kazakov (2023) Culinary tourism between the local and the national. Univ. ed. "St. Kl. Ohridski" ISBN 978-954-07-5643-1 (in print)

Culinary traditions and practices, food culture and food preparation are part of the cultural heritage of nations. In many countries and regions, this heritage underpins not only local identification as communities, but also its actual application as a resource and attraction for tourist absorption.

In Bulgaria, cultural heritage-based tourist attractions have been developed primarily on the basis of tangible cultural and historical values and are concentrated in specific destinations where these sites have been discovered and subsequently socialised. For a long time, the great resource potential of the country's rich intangible cultural heritage, including its traditional culinary heritage, has not been actively exploited.

However, over the last twenty years there has been a visible change in the development of Bulgarian tourism. More and more companies, NGOs, local authorities (especially in smaller settlements) and cultural institutions are turning to the use of heritage resources for tourism purposes. Small and medium-sized businesses, mainly guesthouses and small family-run hotels, as well as independent small restaurants, are playing an active role in this area, focusing their offer on the old food traditions, giving priority to clean and ecological products, many of which they produce themselves. But not only that. Culinary traditions in this type of offer are combined with authentic ethnographic ambience and design, traditional folk music and traditional local hospitality, which adds further attractiveness and colour to the offer and creates conditions for local indigenous development and economic stability of destinations.

In this regard, we can not only dream, but we can already talk about opportunities that emerge as a perspective for the development of culinary tourism with clearly presented culinary destinations in Bulgaria and those where the products of culinary tourism are complementary to their overall presentation.

What is important - good (tasty) food (clean, ecological...), the image of the sites, active and aggressive advertising, hospitality and live contact, modernity in supply and demand? These are all questions that are difficult to answer unequivocally, especially at a time when globalisation processes are taking ever deeper roots in the perceptions and attitudes of the modern consumer. On the other hand, the search for healthy food, in order to overcome some modern allergens and the imposition of new diets, some of which are dictated by the "new modernity" for a healthy lifestyle, largely reject some old traditions and culinary practices of Bulgarian cuisine.

In this context, the basic research task of the present study is to attempt to analyse the state and supply of culinary tourism products in part of the country - mainly in the mountainous and

semi-mountainous regions of northwestern, western, southwestern and part of southern Bulgaria. The concept, which follows the line, the rhythm of the local to the local and the national, is oriented both to the tradition bearers in these destinations and to those offering real products - the restaurateurs and the event organizers. The opinion of experts is sought in order to balance contradictions and findings, presenting proposals for solutions to problematic situations for heritage and culinary tourism from the point of view of researchers, proven masters and culinary professionals, governmental and non-governmental institutions.

The exploratory work involves the use of both secondary sources of information on the issues of the study and empirical research - semi-structured interviews with four groups of respondents.

In the course of the research specific conclusions and findings are reached, which outline peculiar models for the development of culinary destinations in Bulgarian conditions.

Indicator Г.6. Articles and reports published in scientific journals, refereed and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information

Г.6.1. Marinov, V., M. Assenova, **V. Nikolova**, E. Petkova, R. Mitova, A. Kazakov, Ch. Istakova. (2019) Typology of cultural heritage attractions in Bulgaria: theoretical and management implications, International Tourism Conference Dubrovnik, 2019 “Tourism in the VUCA World: Towards the Era of (Ir) Responsibility”, Institute for Tourism, Zagreb, Croatia, 2020, ISBN 378-953-6145-45-4, pp 125-138 <http://www.iztg.hr/en/news/proceedings-book-from-the-itcd-2019---%e2%80%9ctourism-in-the-vuca-world-towards,3207.html>

Currently the tourist attractions are not well defined in the country despite of the recent significant financial public support for the adaptation and socialization of the rich cultural heritage for tourism purposes. The Ministry of tourism has launched an e-register of tourist attractions, festivals and events without clear guidance for local authorities on the selection of tourist sites and events to be inscribed and how they have to be classified. At the same time some policy documents are in process of elaborating - a Strategy for the development of Bulgarian culture and a master plan for cultural tourism development, requiring a practical typology of tourist attractions in order to mainstream the future activities. Thus, the main aim of the research is to provide to key stakeholders a theoretically sound, workable and acceptable typology of cultural heritage attractions to support their proper and sustainable management. In addition, the typology should guide the own empirical research of cultural heritage attractions ensuring that most if not all of attractions types are covered. The methodology of research is based on a thorough review of scientific literature on tourist attractions and their typology as well as of relevant legislation and strategies in Bulgaria. The proposed typology was tested through field research including semi-structured interviews with attractions’ operators and questionnaire surveys of tourists. The contribution is both theoretical – further development of existing definitions and typology, and practical – improved focus of public policies and allocation of public funds for conversion of cultural heritage into tourist attractions.

Indicator Г.7. Articles and reports published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes

Г.7.1. Vera Nikolova Balkan Countries as Part of the Tourist Region Europe, Coll. Tourism in the Age of Transformation, ed. "Science and Economics at IU - Varna, 2015, pp. 867-876, ISBN 978-954-21-0864-1, COBISS.BG-ID – 1276418532

The development of the tourism of the countries on the Balkan peninsula is being researched in the context of the European geographical area. They are a part of the European tourist region. The diversity of natural resources, the rich cultural heritage and the accessibility of the area are factors of prime significance. At the same time the complex historical and geopolitical development together with the economical changes have a significant effect on the tourism in these destinations. The purpose of this research is to present the Balkans as part of the European tourist region and to determine the position and the importance of the Balkan countries in the general development of the tourism in the region as well as to emphasis upon some specifications related to the tourist demand and supply typical for the Balkan countries.

Г.7.2. Assenova, M., V. Marinov, E. Dorpamadjieva, V. Nikolova, A. Kazakov, V. Application of the European System of Indicators for Monitoring Sustainable Tourism Development - Benefits and Challenges. "Geography and Friends (Proceedings edited by V. Boyadzhiev), ISBN 978-954-326-273-1, Ed. Paradigma, Sofia, 2016, pp. 387-400

Implementation of the European Tourism Indicator System for monitoring sustainable tourism development - benefits and challenges

The article presents the methodology of ETIS, the benefits of using the system and the challenges for those interested in its implementation, based on the experience of its full implementation in the Danube region in 2015. The application of the European Tourism Indicator System allows to draw the following conclusions: ETIS is appropriate for use at the municipal level (considered as a tourist destination), as well as at the higher regional destination level; It contains an optimal number of indicators, it is relatively easy to apply and allows flexibility in the use of core and additional indicators, which can be applied as a stand-alone system or integrated into other monitoring systems; The collected information allows to assess the current state of tourism development in various aspects of sustainability, while presenting in a concentrated form the various impacts of tourism. The quantitative parameters of the indicators may serve as a baseline for comparison in tracking the development, but also for comparison with other destinations that have applied the same methodology; The system helps to identify problem areas, prioritize future actions by developing an action plan and setting targets for a certain medium-term period; The positive achievements in the sustainable development of tourism can be used for the purposes of destination marketing; The effective implementation of ETIS requires the active involvement and leadership of local (regional) stakeholders in cooperation with the expert community.

Г.7.3. Nikolova, V., At. Kazakov, S. Staneva Using the Products of the Creative Industry for the Development of Creative Tourism in Bulgaria, in. Scientific Papers Vol. LX, No. 1, 2016 "Specialized Types of Tourism - Challenges and Prospects", ed. 1312-6318, ISSN (online): 23675845, pp. 93-100, indexed in CAB Abstracts, EBSCO Publishing, AGRIS

USE OF CREATIVE INDUSTRY PRODUCTS FOR CREATIVE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN BULGARIA

The contemporary development of mankind is connected inevitably with active and fast development of the new technologies. Its results lead not only to introduction of new ways and means of production and management of world economy, but also to a number of changes regarding sectoral redistribution and changes in demand's adjustment on the world market. The impressive growth of creative industries' development is part of these rapid changes. According to UNESCO's data in the area of culture and cultural creative works are generated 3% of world GDP and around 30 million people are employed there. At the same time development of tourism as world phenomena is also a fact. According to WTO, the constant growth in its development leads to market share 10% of world's GDP. One of every eleven in the world is employed in the tourism industry. There are two trends in the sector: ever more active demand for traditional holidays and markets, and a change in traditional views towards a tourist stay. In the foreground stands an aspiration for an active experience and ever growing tourist's participation in additional services offered.

Creative activities in the tourist offer are connected not only to additional services, but also to development of specialized tourism direction – Creative tourism. Its recourses are namely creative industries. The study is developed using questionnaires, which were filled on spot. It aims analyzation and presentation of foreign tourists' intentions in the city of Varna to buy and use creative tourism's products and additional services offered through creative industries. The present work is aimed studying the possibilities for development of creative tourism in Bulgaria, based on ever active presence of creative industries on our market. Active work towards creation of common products will put Bulgarian tourism in a new role and a new interest for our country on the tourist market will be provoked.

Г.7.4. Nikolova, V. (2016) Influences of the infrastructure of Smolyan region on tourism development, in. Scientific Works Vol. 2, SUB - Smolyan, ed. Union of Scientists in Bulgaria, 2016, ISSN (print):1314-9490, pp. 155-162

Smolyan District – How Infrastructure Influences the Development of Tourism

There are several factors and circumstances which affect the development of tourism in mountain areas, due to the geographical specificity of the region. To a certain extent, they determine the way tourist attractions function, the specificity of supply and demand, the product diversity, etc. The state of the local infrastructure is among the most influential factors. The present research aims to show how local infrastructure affects the development of tourism in one of Bulgaria's most visited tourist destinations – Smolyan district. The research is about the quality and the problems, as well as the prospects of future development of the infrastructure.

Г.7.5. Marinov, V., M. Assenova, **V. Nikolova** (2016) Participation in contracted research projects as an incentive for tourism students. BITCO conference proceedings: "Tourism education in 21st century: policies, practices, internationalization", College of Tourism, Belgrade, 2016, ISBN 978-86-82371-46-5, pp 305-318

Participation in contracted research projects as an incentive for tourism students

The aim of the paper is to present the approach and the results of the joint participation of teams of professors and students from the Tourism Department in research projects and to outline the benefits of the various stakeholder groups, in particular for the scientific and practical training of bachelor degree students. The projects were fulfilled in 2014 and 2015 and were directed towards the study of cruise tourism in the Bulgarian section of the Danube and the implementation of the European indicators for sustainable tourism development in the Danube region of Bulgaria. The methodology of the studies with students' involvement included briefing and introduction into the specifics of marketing research and techniques of surveys, supervised field research and questionnaire survey of students' satisfaction on the work done. Analysis of the results leads to the conclusion that participation in research projects gives young people the chance to be actively involved in the process of obtaining primary data, to analyze and draw conclusions about the current status and development of tourism in different destinations and regions. In general, students expressed their satisfaction with the general idea and the approach applied to the fieldwork, the overall experience, the work done and the results achieved, and the entertaining moments.

Г.7.6. Vera Nikolova (2017) Resources for sustainable tourism development in the Western Rhodope municipalities of Devin, Dospat, Borino and Bratsigovo. Good practices. In. "Sustainable Regional Development of Bulgaria, ed. Bulged Ltd, Sofia, 2017, ISBN 978-619-90054-7-7, pp. 98-111

Resources for sustainable development of tourism in the western Rhodope Municipalities - Devin, Dospat, Borino and Bratsigovo. Good practices

The development of tourism in the region of Western Rhodopes has been, for many years, determined by the strong dominance of seasonal ski, spa and hiking tourism. In recent years, new tendencies have emerged where new tourist products are offered on the basis of resource diversity in the mountain region. The tourist resource fund, as well as the resource reserve of the area (i.e municipalities of Devin, Dospat, Borino and Bratsigovo) give opportunities for the development of sustainable forms of tourism. The drive for sustainable development of the economy as a whole, supported by the ongoing programs and strategies for the development of the above mentioned destinations, correspond to the current trends of intensified efforts exerted by humanity and the international institutions aiming to cope with the increasingly tangible effects of the climate change and to preserve a clean environment for the future generations on a global scale. The goal of this publication is to present some of the best practices for tourism development in the study area, which meet the requirements for balance and sustainability of the environment to a great extent and serve as an example for other similar destinations.

Г.7.7. Vera Nikolova (2018) Harnessing the material cultural heritage in Smolyan municipality for the needs of cultural tourism. Peculiarities and problems., in Proc. "Regional Development and Policy. Jubilee collection dedicated to Prof. Dr. Petar Slaveikov", ed. "Melani, Sofia, 2018, ISBN 978-954-92917-8-0, pp. 29-39

Impacts of the infrastructure of Smolyan region on tourism development

Tangible cultural heritage sites are major resources for the development of cultural tourism. Smolyan municipality has a wide range of such sites dating from different historical periods. This publication aims to present the problems related to the utilization of the immovable cultural heritage sites in the territory of the municipality and their interpretation for the needs of tourism in the destination.

Г.7.8. Nikolova, V., M. Assenova, V. Marinov, A. Kazakov, R. Mitova, E. Petkova 2019) Culinary Holidays and Festivals in Bulgaria as a Cultural and Tourist Attraction, in. "MICE tourism: festivals, incentive events, conferences, exhibitions, Varna, 2019, ed. "Slavena", ISBN 978-619-190-149-4, pp. 183-197

Culinary holidays and festivals in Bulgaria as cultural and tourist attractions

On the map of culinary destinations in the world Bulgaria is not among the most famous countries. However, the country has interesting and authentic culinary traditions and practices that can make it a potential culinary destination. The rich culinary traditions in Bulgaria and their regional features are the basis for creating country-specific culinary holidays, festivals and fairs, which are an important tourist attraction and attract many visitors. The aim of the presented research is to study the culinary holidays and festivals as cultural and tourist attractions, representing an element of the product of culinary tourism in Bulgaria and to outline their regional specifics.

Г.7.9. Marinov, V., M. Assenova, V. Nikolova, E. Petkova (2020) Tourist Demand for Cultural Heritage-Based Attractions in Veliko Tarnovo Municipality, Proceedings of the Jubilee Scientific Conference "Tourism - Beyond Expectations", Publisher:Publishing Complex - UNWE, 2020, pp:558-571, ISBN:978-619-232-296-0

Tourist demand for cultural heritage attractions in Veliko Tarnovo Municipality

Veliko Tarnovo Municipality is one of the most prominent examples of a cultural tourism destination in Bulgaria. The study of the tourist demand for the cultural heritage attractions offered in the municipality provides an opportunity to draw conclusions about the current state and development of cultural tourism in the area, the market segment, the attitude of visitors to the product offered and the quality of service, as well as to identify some emerging problems. The aim of the study is to perform, through tourist demand analysis, a quantitative assessment of the visitation and a qualitative assessment of visitor satisfaction from the cultural heritage tourist attractions.

Г.7.10. Marinov, V., M. Assenova, **V. Nikolova**, A. Kazakov, R. Mitova, E. Petkova (2020) Profile of Visitors to Cultural Heritage Attractions in Bulgaria. Proceedings of 6th International Scientific Conference GEOBALCANICA 2020, 12-13 May 2020, Ohrid, North Macedonia, Geobalcancia Society – Skopje, North Macedonia, ISSN (online): 1857-7636, pp 389-406 <http://dx.doi.org/10.18509/GBP.2020.44>

Profile of Visitors to Cultural Heritage Attractions in Bulgaria

The overall objective of the study is to collect empirical information on the supply and demand of cultural heritage attractions in Bulgaria, and the specific objective is to outline a detailed profile of visitors to tourist attractions based on cultural heritage. The methodological toolkit includes preliminary desk research of the selected attractions, semi-structured interviews with the “operators” of cultural heritage attractions, questionnaire survey of visitors to cultural heritage attractions, as well as observations and expert assessments. The visitor typology is based on the methodology proposed by McKercher (2002). It aims to create a more precise classification (segmentation) of "cultural tourists" and is based on a combination of two dimensions - the importance of cultural motives (cultural tourism) in the decision to visit the destination and the depth of experience associated with the culture and heritage of the destination. Altogether 668 visitors were interviewed at 30 sites, identified as cultural heritage tourist attractions.

The questionnaire design and the data obtained allow the outlining of a detailed profile of visitors in terms of their socio-demographic characteristics, and the characteristics of the trip, respectively of the tourists' behavior. A visitor typology in terms of cultural tourism is elaborated, including the profile of each of the distinguished types. Their relationship with visitor and travel characteristics is revealed and analysed. The results indicate that the cultural tourist type in most cases is a variable that explain the differentiation in visitors' behaviour better than the typically used socio-demographic characteristics.

Г.7.11. Vera Nikolova (2022) Event tourism in the mountain regions of Bulgaria. UNION OF SCIENTISTS IN BULGARIA - SMOLYAN, Scientific Proceedings Volume 3, Part 2, 2022; ISSN:1314-9490 (online), pp. 414-423

EVENT TOURISM IN THE MOUNTAIN REGIONS OF BULGARIA

Bulgaria is a tourist destination in which mountain areas offer opportunities for tourism development throughout all four seasons.

However, in Bulgarian mountains, as well as along the coast, there is a certain seasonality of tourist visits, especially in the most popular resorts. The seasonality can be overcome by offering new attractions, creating and promoting new products which will provide an opportunity for both the available facilities and the labor resources involved in tourism to be used throughout the whole year.

The events are among the most favourite attractions for tourists not only in large and popular with such activities urban centers.

These events are gaining ground in the tourist supply of mountain destinations, including remote and until recently unknown small towns and rural areas. By offering new, in many cases unknown,

but attractive events, by gaining experience in organizing and managing events, mountain areas in the country are becoming increasingly popular tourist destinations throughout the whole year. Event tourism in the mountains of Bulgaria is more and more becoming a valuable alternative for tourism development.

Г.7.12. Kazakov, A., **V. Nikolova**, Special features in supply of “City Breaks” as tourist product in destinations Sofia and Skopje, Eastern Academic Journal, issue:3, 2015, pages:1-14, Ref, др.(Google Scholar, CEEOL, Cite Factor Open Academic), онлайн, <https://www.e-acadjournal.org/article9.html>

Special features in supply of “City Breaks” as tourist product in destinations Sofia and Skopje

Short term holidays organized in urban environment, at weekends are known as „City Breaks“. These products are developed quite recently—at the beginning of XXst century. Their appearance came as answer to population’s mobility increase. It happened everywhere in the world, mostly in well-developed countries. Important factors which influenced the contemporary development of city breaks are: sharp improvement of transport infrastructure in Europe as a whole, as well as the changing demand oriented towards shorter travel holidays. The development of this product is giving the opportunity for diversification of the tourist supply. It puts an accent on cultural heritage which is concentrated in cities and places for entertainment. Highest popularity „City breaks“ have among young single tourists and seniors from the age group 55+. These are one of the most solvent population groups. People are well educated. They have higher demands towards cultural experience and entertainment. At last they have enough free time. The main purpose of the article is to examine the possibilities of Sofia and Skopje to develop of this tourist product as well individually as in combined tourist packages. Their advantages are defined from their proximity on culture and language and from their common history in certain periods of time. Their function as capital cities and the small distance between them are additional conditions for possible combined supply of “City Breaks”.

Г.9. Studies published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes

Г. 9.1. Dorpamadzheva, E., R. Mitova, V. Nikolova (2018) Qualitative research on local tourism development through key informant interviews using Sofia as an example, Yearbook of Sofia University, GFU, Vol. 2 - Geography, Vol. 111, 2018, ISSN (print): 0324 - 2579, ISSN (online): 2535 - 0579, pp. 179-202 https://www.uni-sofia.bg/index.php/bul/universitet_t/fakulteti/geologo_geografski_fakultet/oficialni_izdaniya/kniga_2_geografiya_tom_111

Qualitative study of local tourism development based on interviews with key informants: the case of Sofia city

The paper presents a qualitative study of local tourism development in the city of Sofia aimed at identifying recent trends, main development drivers and current challenges, as seen by different local stakeholders. The study implements the method of personal semi-structured interviews that

were undertaken in April-May 2017 with twenty-seven key informants selected to represent various sectors of the local tourism industry and related services, as well as the tourism management body at the destination level. Information obtained from the interviews is analyzed using qualitative content analysis techniques of data coding and coding reliability verification.

Detailed analysis of the results is presented taking into account similarities and differences in subjective opinions. It is not limited to shallow counting of statements, but rather seeks their deeper meaning, and also utilizes direct quotes from the interviews' records. The main findings refer to the recent tourism development drivers that are associated with favorable coincidence of external circumstances rather than efforts put by local stakeholders. Conclusions are drawn considering both, the methodology of the qualitative study and the main results. Specifically, recommendations for further refinement of the methodology are suggested and the positive and negative tourism development trends are discussed, as well as the current challenges associated with the internal and the external environment.

Г.9.2. Stella Stefanova, Vera Nikolova (2020) Roman archaeological heritage and the attitudes for its inclusion in the tourist product of the regions of Montana, Vratsa and Vidin, YEARBOOK OF THE SOFIA UNIVERSITY "ST. CLEMENT OF OHRIDSKY, Vol. 112, No. 2 - Geography, 2020, ISSN (print): 0324 - 2579, ISSN (online): 2535 - 0579, pp. 354-381 https://www.uni-sofia.bg/index.php/bul/universitet_t/fakulteti/geologo_geografski_fakultet/oficialni_izdaniya/kniga_2_geografiya_tom_112

THE ROMAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE AND THE ATTITUDES TOWARDS ITS INCLUSION IN A TOURISM PRODUCT OF THE DISTRICTS OF MONTANA, VRATSA AND VIDIN

The current paper is a result of a study of the Roman archaeological heritage, carried out on the territory of Northwest Bulgaria, in the districts of Vidin, Vratsa and Montana which are among the least economically developed districts in the country. Their tourism development also doesn't have good indicators. At the same time, there is a large number of registered sites of Roman archaeological heritage. Some of them have been excavated in the past, others are still being excavated, but just a few of them have been evaluated, socialized and used as tourist attractions. The study of the possibilities for using this heritage for the purposes of cultural tourism in the destinations was carried out on the basis of extensive field observations and a survey conducted for the purpose of the current publication of some of the stakeholders interested in using this heritage for the needs of tourism in the region and at the same time by taking care of its preservation.

The results of the analysis show that the Roman archaeological heritage is highly appreciated as a significant and important part of the cultural heritage of the area by both experts from the museums and local authorities represented by the municipal administrations. The idea of interpreting it for the needs of tourism is emerging by creating a separate but possible integrated tourist product. Most of the limiting factors are related to the group of cultural heritage issues than those connected to the socio-economic environment. Yet it is largely relied by the use of heritage to derive maximum economic benefits for local communities through the development of tourism.

The boundary is very thin and it is definitely necessary to find a balance between seeking

economic prosperity, attracting investment and creating conditions for preservation the heritage by assuming adequate responsibilities.

Г.9.3. Marinov, V., M. Assenova, V. Nikolova (2021) Qualification of employees in tourist attractions based on cultural and historical heritage - status and problems, Yearbook of Sofia University "St. Kl. Ohridski", GGF, Vol. 2 - Geography, Vol. 113, 2021, ISSN (print) 0324 - 2579, ISSN (online) 2535 - 0579, pp. 361-388

Qualification of staff in cultural heritage attractions - status and problems

The aim of the article is to analyze the current status of preparedness of staff in cultural heritage attractions in Bulgaria in terms of their education, qualification and abilities and to identify the existing problems in the specified aspects. The analysis is based on surveys among key stakeholders, namely the operators of cultural heritage attractions, the visitors and the certified tour guides, carried out in 2019 and 2020. The results demonstrate the satisfactory level of the preparedness of personnel but some deficiencies in broader knowledge, manner of information provision and interpretation as well as foreign language proficiency are evident.

Г.9.4. Marinov, V., M. Assenova, M. Vodenska, E. Dogramdzhieva, R. Minkowski, V. Yaneva, V. Nikolova, A. Kazakov The Production Internship in Tourism Education at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" ISBN 978-954-07-4247-2; https://www.uni-sofia.bg/index.php/bul/universitet/t/fakulteti/geologo_geografski_fakultet/oficialni_izdaniya

The industrial placement of tourism students at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

The aim of this book is to present detailed analysis and assessment of the Geography of Tourism Department's experience in providing industrial placement based on the available documentation for a period of nearly 20 years (1997-2015). For this purpose the following activities were carried out: Review and systematization of the available documentation on the industrial placement, particularly employers' registration and evaluation forms, and trainees' reports; Designing a database for quantitative data processing (SPSS and Excel); Processing and analysis of results. Much of the information is obtained from the free answers and comments provided in the employers' evaluation forms and trainees' reports. They are classified based on their content and are also subjected to quantitative analysis (Excel). This applies in particular to: Specific activities of the trainees during the internship; Evaluation by the employers of the trainees' personal and professional characteristics; Evaluation by the employers of the trainees' job performance till 2009 (since 2010 quantitative evaluation has been included); Self-assessment of trainees; Recommendations of employers and trainees. The information available for 60% of apprenticeships has provided a reliable basis for analysis and assessment of the industrial placement organization and conducting as well as the students' performance.

Г.9.5. Nikolova, V. (2022) Dining and entertainment facilities in Smolyan region as part of the tourist offer - modern state of the base, Proceedings of the National Scientific Conference with International Participation "Education, Science Society", University Publishing House "Paisii Hilendarski", Plovdiv, 2022, ISBN 978-619-7663-43-3 pp. 849-875

Restaurants and entertainment establishments in Smolyan district as part of the tourist supply – actual state of the base

The territory of Smolyan region is entirely mountainous. The livelihood of the local population is connected to the mountain. Traditional cuisine is not distinguished by great variety, but it is unique, and culinary traditions are part of the intangible cultural heritage of this region. However – to what extent are these traditions in food preparation are part of the tourist supply?

The purpose of the following research is to study the current state of the actual registered material base of restaurants and entertainment establishments in the district. The analysis that we have made could to a certain extent show the real development of these business objects which can be used by tourists – such as their variety, category structure, capacity and the particularities of the services offered in them. As a result of the comparative characteristics of the indicators for a ten-year period, conclusions can be drawn about the changes and peculiarities, which the base of dining and entertainment establishments in the district has gone through and to give some guidelines and recommendations for its further development.

Г.10. Published chapter of a collective monograph

Г.10.1. Elka Dogramadjieva, **Vera Nikolova**, Radenka Mitova Sofia City as a Tourist Destination: Recent Trends and Development Drivers - In: M. Vodenska, V. Marinov, M. Assenova, E. Dogramadjieva (Eds), Traditions and Innovations in Contemporary Tourism, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, ISBN (10):1-5275-0829-3 ISBN (13):978-1-5275-0829-3 pp 281-305

Sofia City As A Tourist Destination: Development Trends And Driving Forces

Despite the crucial importance of Sofia city as Bulgaria's main administrative and cultural center, and the availability of diverse tourism resources both in the city center and the city surroundings, until recently it has not been distinguished as an attractive tourist destination. However, this situation seems to have changed over the last several years. There is a general feeling of upturning tourism industry while the widespread presence of foreign tourists in the streets, in restaurants and shops is no longer a surprise but is gradually becoming part of the urban landscape.

This paper seeks to answer several research questions: 1) is the overall impression of dynamic development of Sofia city as a tourist destination supported by the official statistics; 2) is such an impression shared by different stakeholders in local tourism development and in which aspects do they see positive or negative change; 3) what are the main current drivers and restraints

of Sofia's tourism development according to the stakeholders' perceptions. The analysis is based on statistical data and semi-structured interviews with selected key informants. Conclusions are drawn considering positive and negative tourism development trends as well as the main current challenges associated with internal and external development driving forces.

Г.10.2. Vera Nikolova Analysis of foreign experience on measures taken by public authorities and businesses to overcome the COVID-19 crisis in tourism and culture, In: In: Kabakov, I., V. Marinov, M. Asenova, V. Nikolova, E Petkova, R. Mitova, N. Stoeva, M. Staneva, P. Petrov, G. Dimitrova. The COVID-crisis in culture and heritage-based tourism: ideas for a way out. "St. Kl. Ohridski" University Publishing House, Sofia, 2021, ISBN:978-954-07-5214-3

Analysis of foreign experience on measures taken by public authorities and businesses to overcome the COVID-19 crisis in tourism and culture

The COVID-19 pandemic caused huge economic losses worldwide. Tourism and much of the cultural industries were among the most affected sectors.

This part of the monograph, by analysing data from a study by the World Tourism Organisation UNWTO, presents the trends in the decline of the tourism industry as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. UNWTO proposes a set of recommendations to develop the partnership between the two sectors of tourism and culture and measures to overcome the challenges posed by the pandemic crisis, created by the UNWTO Ethics, Culture and Social Responsibility Division in collaboration international partners.

It is noted that the study of the measures taken by public authorities and businesses at the national level allows for the comparison of models for coping with the crisis and overcoming the consequences of the pandemic, depending on the specific features of the development of not only the COVID-crisis problem, but also on the degree of economic and cultural capabilities of individual countries.

A rationale for the range of countries monitored is provided: for the analysis, the measures taken to prevent and cope with the crisis, not only at the national but also at the business level, by the 20 countries are selected for study. The selection criteria for these countries are also described.

The results are also summarised from an own study of information available at the time of the study from secondary sources, on the impact of the pandemic on some of the most visited tourist sites and events in the 20 countries.

Measures taken in the countries monitored to address the COVID-19 crisis are classified into several groups Measures taken by public authorities in relation to specific sub-sectors and stakeholders - businesses, institutions, legal entities and individuals - are described, noting that the majority of measures taken towards this category were taken in relation to artists, performers, etc. employed in cultural institutions and self-employed.

Г.10.3. Vasil Marinov, Mariana Asenova, Vera Nikolova The COVID-19 crisis through the eyes of the victims - survey results: Recovery and development. In: Kabakov, I., V. Marinov, M. Asenova, V. Nikolova, E. Petkova, R. Mitova, N. Stoeva, M. Staneva, P. V. Petrov, G. Dimitrova.

The COVID-crisis in culture and heritage-based tourism: ideas for a way out. "St. Kl. Ohridski" University Publishing House, Sofia, 2021, ISBN:978-954-07-5214-3

The COVID-19 crisis through the eyes of the victims - survey results: recovery and development.

This part of the monograph presents the results of a survey related to the COVID-19 crisis through the eyes of the victims. It examines the change in users after the lifting of the state of emergency and the recovery and development after the pandemic. First, the change in the number of users is examined. It is noted that despite efforts, national statistics show a very serious decline in visitors to Bulgarian resorts and tourist attractions on home territory. The change in the structure (profile) of consumers is also examined. Regarding the recovery time from the pandemic, it is noted that the general assessment of the respondents is that it will take a long time.

Measures and initiatives by public authorities to support recovery are also discussed. It is stressed that there is a mixed assessment of the feasibility of the previously announced public authority measures and initiatives that would support the recovery and development of the culture and tourism sectors. It is noted that attention should be given to those initiatives and measures that are supported by more than 25% of respondents and are considered the most important. It is concluded that the results allow the identification of the preferred measures and initiatives in two groups.

It is highlighted that in terms of the conditions that the addressees of measures and initiatives in the field of culture should meet, two leading conditions or requirements emerge quite clearly - to have proven activity in cultural life in the last 3 years and to have cancelled events and activities during the period of the state of emergency.

Responses related to measures to overcome the crisis in relation to the professions and non-profit organisations in culture and tourism are also analysed and conclusions drawn.

With regard to the issue of funding for the promotion of tourist destinations and other public goods, there is very strong support for funding the promotion of national, regional and local tourist destinations and public goods in the field of culture and tourism.

It is highlighted that support for a possible shift in measures towards culture and tourism from subsidising employment to supporting new products is less strong - a very high percentage of responses are 'subject to conditions'.

E. 20. Published university textbook or textbook that is used in the school network

E.20.1. Borisova, L., E. Aleksandrova, V. Nikolova, Hospitality in the Tourism Industry - Part 2, ISBN:978-619-7423-20-4, MATCOM, Sofia, Peer-reviewed

Hospitality in the Tourism Industry - Part 2 Section XVI. Life, Traditions and Culinary Art

This section is part of a textbook approved by the Ministry of Education and is intended for school and university students. It contains four main topics, each of which is followed by questions for self-study.

The first topic deals with the Bulgarian ritual system - its essence, basic concepts, rituals as part of the world cultural heritage, their importance in forming the holiday calendar, their place among the country's tourist resources and attractions.

Rites are part of the spiritual culture of nations. To a large extent, they reflect the specific cultural traditions of the population and are cultural values for each country. They can be related to nature and people's attitude to it, to important events for the people of the community, to a particular religious tradition.

The ritual system of the Bulgarians is the result of a long historical process of transformations and this is presented in detail and by historical periods in the units of study provided. The ritual system formed over the centuries is the basis of the festive calendar of the population in the Bulgarian lands. Alongside the official national holidays, the festive calendar is supplemented by some of the major religious festivals. It is pointed out that there is still no unanimous opinion among scholars on the classification of the ritual system of the Bulgarians.

In the context of the ritual system, traditions, customs and crafts in Bulgaria, the elements of intangible heritage included in the UNESCO World Heritage List and the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List are presented.

It is pointed out that rituals and traditional festivals are some of the most attractive events that attract the interest of tourists all over the world. They are the basis of a number of specialised tourist visits related to cultural, festival or religious tourism. Rituals and traditional festivals belong to several groups of anthropogenic tourism resources. Different groups of customs are considered - of a labour-bearing or folklore character and periodic events.

The second theme of the material deals with Bulgarian holidays related to the seasons.

The formation of the festive calendar ritual is described in detail, which since antiquity has been associated with the annual cycles of change in nature, which are dependent on cosmic forces and influences. Two types of calendar festivity are outlined - those associated with the solar calendar and those associated with the lunar calendar. The festive ritual of the Bulgarians is subordinated to the solar calendar.

An overview is made of the names and periods of celebration of the holidays of the winter, spring, summer and autumn festive calendar of the Bulgarians. The festivals of the different seasons are listed in separate tables, and the major holidays and the customs associated with them are described in detail. Photographs are also added to illustrate.

The third chapter introduces students to the nature of Bulgarian folk festivals and their characteristics according to the specifics of the different folklore regions of Bulgaria. The presentation of some of the most popular folklore festivals in this topic is intended to show their importance for the tourist development of the regions.

The musical-folklore regions of Bulgaria and their specificities, the festive folklore calendar in Bulgaria, the biggest international folklore festivals in Bulgaria, national folklore events are described in detail.

A kind of grouping of both national, regional and local festive events is presented, depending on the purpose, the way of organisation, the predominant folk art or the specific genre ritual presented (regardless of the territorial scope).

The fourth theme presents the nature, historical development and factors for the development of culinary art in Bulgaria. Attention is paid to culinary festive events in Bulgaria (culinary festivals, festivals and fairs). Their division into several groups is also presented.

Some of the most popular culinary festivals in Bulgaria are presented in tabular form.

