

Features of European Tourism

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Abstract: At the beginning of the XXI century, it has started to record a series of tendencies in the Spanish touristic sector, through the reduction of tourism participating in GNP, including the contribution of international tourism. This change of demand and offer from the last decade is coinciding with a scenario where the touristic offer is marked more and more by the accelerated process of urbanizing from the Mediterranean, Balears and Canaries area. The natural and cultural environment quality is the main attraction of this area. The itineraries wish to offer an exclusive alternative to the locals, valuing the touristic potential of the regions and to offer new touristic products.

Keywords: tourism, Mediterranean basin, touristic tradition

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The main worldwide touristic basin – the Mediterranean Sea is characterised through its “own identity”, beyond the particular identity of the states that are common; it separates as a region of the antique civilization and modern civilization of twin ship.

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The statistics show that this area is annually visited by about 1/3 international touristic circulation. If it will be counted that sufficient travellers have destination to the Helio Marin treatment, it will be concluded the fact that the Mediterranean littoral is, far from being the first place in the aestival destinations.

The Mediterranean, known in roman period as the Nostrum Sea, is suffusing the littoral of 3 continents: Europe, Africa and Asia. The states which are located on shore benefit of an unusual beauty, the wealth of the lands, but especially of the sunny climate known in the whole world. The water of the sea is medium deep, but with accentuated salinity. It includes a lot of islands such as: Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, Malta, The Greeks islands from the Egee Sea etc. Its arms are: The Tirenian Sea in the West of Italy, The Adriatic Sea between Italy and Balkan Peninsula, The Ionic Sea in the West of Greece and The Egee Sea between Greece and Turkey. Marseille (France), Barcelona (Spain), Genoa (Italy) and Haifa (Israel) are holding the status of main ports. From this point of view the Mediterranean Sea plays a strategic role by being the gate between numerous states.

From the political point of view, it can be three distinct locations on shore: the states that are pertaining to Europe, states which are pertaining to Africa and those to the Middle East. The best individualized is the tourism from the old continent. In defiance to the declaration of the State secretary for Commerce and Tourism of Spain, according to which: “The Mediterranean states offer similar products and that’s why it is logical that they should cooperate”, they can’t pass unnoticed the distinction between political, economical and social order. Of course, the cooperation between states is necessary in an age of globalization, but the European shores are passing beyond as number of emplacements, age, degree endowment, and the other areas. Starting from the fact that area such as: France and Italy are known for few decades and until the ample problematic of the management in the coast line is solved, it can be easily affirmed the importance of the European states over the Africa or Asia.

The most wanted areas for the littoral tourism are the French Riviera, Italian Riviera, and then the Spanish coast which attract a lot of tourists. The touristic tradition of the European countries from the Mediterranean basin was created at the middle of the XVIIIth century, when British aristocracy and then the continental, were travelling in winter to the South of the Continent. For the Mediterranean Europe, the touristic fashion was demanding that the voyages must have places in the cold season, the tourists escaping from the country of origin in seeking of a warm climate, and not in a special way for the sun, from that the fashion asked to protect. The mutations from the value system of tourism determined by the fashion, medical opinion, and development of sportive activity in free air they brought the revelation of sunny destinations particularly appreciated especially for their offer of type “3S”- Sun, Sea, Sand.

The ample centres or touristic poles of the Mediterranean basin are getting between 10 and 15 million tourists annually, which are going to in particularly to Azure Coast, Lido Coast (from Adriatic Sea), Brava Coast (Spanish Catalonia) and Coast del Sol (Malaga). Alongside this cost regions from Mediterranean basin are also included the islands of Cyprus (Turkey-Greece), Corfu, Crete and Cyclades (Greece). The tender of the Mediterranean country contains alongside the coast area and also the touristic area of continental type. This is having a pronounced cultural and relaxing pattern and it is located in urban centres which annually receive between 5-10 million tourists. Cities such as Rome (including Vatican), Venice, Florence, Granada, Cordoba, and Athens owe their development to the touristic, cultural and transcultural offer of the Mediterranean civilization. Beside their littoral offer of the "big city", it is valued the whole time of the year, the seasonal oscillations being insignificant after confronting with other areas of the littoral.

The tourist industry of the Mediterranean basin is developed, and it has an integrated pattern trough the hotelier chain in its full expansion and it is valued into diversified assortments, for the mass and the elitist tourism. The Egypt is attracting trough the Nile River Valley, where annually over five million tourists discover the antic artefacts of the antic world. The traditional tourist offer is also including the cities of Cairo, Port Said, Alexandria, which attract massive amount of tourists. The North African littoral and also Morocco, Tangier, Al Hoceima, Sidi Reruch and at Hammamet - Tunisia, Monastir and Djerba represent the touristic locations in full development, with a diversified offer of international quality. The main international touristic basin is located in Europe and it contains the next regions:

1. The Occidental Europe:
 - The Mediterranean area;
 - The area of North Atlantic facade.
2. The alpine arch from the central Europe
3. The central Europe and Eastside

The demand for the transport service and touristic in the European Union was evaluated at 2. 149 billion USD and predicted of reaching the level of 3.529 in the course of a decade. The contribution of T&T (Travel and Tourism) in the total GPD of EU had situated at approximate 3,9% in 2006. In EU the industry of T&T is generating 8,6 mil. Work places (4,2% from the total of the work places existent at the EU level).

The exports of T&T represent approximate 13% from the total exports of EU from 2006. The investments of capital in T&T had the value approximate 241 billion USD in 2006, 88,6% of the volume of the international region.

The Mediterranean area, which is mobilizing 1/3 from the world wide tourist is approximate ½ from the offer of the regional touristic, is representing the biggest tourist concentration in the world.

The specialization in Mediterranean offer is following the natural features of this area (climate, littoral, flora etc.) of the ones activity is, answering in present to the principal motivation from summer time of the European tourists, specifically to those from the North continent.

The main international tourist destinations among European countries riverside resident of the Mediterranean Sea are:

- 1 Spain – cashing 38,495 mil Euro;
- 2 France – cashing 33,981 mil Euro;
- 3 Italy- cashing 28,453 mil Euro.

Near France and Italy, Spain is a famous state for the touristic industry. Getting an annual number of tourist's average of 50 million, Spain is on the second place in world after France (according to the appreciations ONT). Spain is confronting to overcrowding, especially in the warm season. With all of this the littoral tourism is contributing to the income of this industry.

With the Mediterranean Sea of 1670 km, Spain is having numerous famous resorts, which appeared and evolved in the same time with traditional locations, for example, Valencia. Although the massive arrangements of the littoral area were accomplished hardly over 1950, from the point of view of the quality resources and the services labour conscription, we cannot speak about a significant difference between resorts from this place and those from France for example.

The first area and the most important is The Costa del Sol, with an impressive length, around 300 km, between the Gibraltar rock and Cabo de Gata. It gives more beauty to Andalusia, famous trough its history and cultural traditions.

The quality of water and air, nebulousness extremely low and the endowment attract numerous tourists. Some results draw attention: Torremolinos, Nerja (the Mediterranean pearl), Acipino, Merbella, La Linea (the oldest Iberia beach). It adds the beaches with sand very thin and white from the Plaza Degetares, Algeciras, El

Rincancillo, Malaga, the capital of the province with the same name, is an old place, dating from the 12th century BD. The colony of Cartage, then of Rome and not at the last time moor; it is still keeping the marks of the old civilization (including those of a Moor fortress). Encouraged by the subtropical vegetation rich in palm tree, Malaga, is today a modern city, renamed aside the tourism and for wine production, sugar or textile.

Forwarding from the frontier, to the south, is laying Costa Brava, with its unique landscape, formed by a multitude of gulfs with sand, where the water is penetrating calmly, is the second area of Coast line littoral of Spain, as beauty and tourist attraction. The little villages had transformed gradually in very crowded resorts such as Lloret de Mar with more than 100 hotels, San Feliu de Guixols, Palamos, Tossa de Mar or Blanes. It must be mentioned Barcelona, as a main touristic centre of Spain, where it may be rediscovered a series of monuments and cultural elements such as the Sagrada Familia Cathedral, the biggest in the world in modern style, with a interesting history, yet undetermined (opera of the famous artist Antonio Gaudi), between Costa del Sol and Costa de Brava, reference points for the touristic wave of summer. It may also be found other four "costs": Costa Dorada - with the resorts Mataru, Garrof, Bara, and Tarragona. Costa del Azahar with the city of flowers Valencia (having the biggest botanic garden in the world) and resorts as: Denia and Alicra, Costa Blanca, with the capital at Benidorm, one of the most known littoral resorts of Spain, with a beach with golden sand of 5 km, and with Calpe (spectacularly rocks), Torrevieja and Costa de Los Pinos, an area with less improvements.

At 200 km of Spanish coast is finding a group of five islands Los Baleares. The climatic regime extremely favourable (10-25 Celsius degrees), the air purity because of the emplacement in the wide sea; it makes this area the most pleasant destination for beach in Europe. The carstic phenomenon is all around and the human had put its imprint trough beautiful and relaxing ports and places. The best known, most and most look daring is the island of Mallorca, with the main touristic centre Palma de Mallorca, with beautiful beaches and roman architectures and the Ibiza island, the favourite destination of German tourists.

Ibiza knew a development in the last years concerning the tourism. Without having demands of an extremely expensive destination, it gathers lots of visitors. A characteristic of this island is the fact that wherever you are (especially when travel by car) you are never far away from the beaches and from the isolate gulfs. Ibiza is reuniting over 30 beaches arranged around the cities.

One of them is Talamanca, situated in the golf, very close to the Ibiza City. With all of this it remains quite a resort with sandy, beautiful beaches which makes it so popular. It has 900 m length and 25 m wide. The waters penetrate the golf line, ideal for swimming (including for children). Some other possibilities of recreation are the bicycle or courses at the windsurf school. All the hotels have a view on the old side of Ibiza city which can be seen spectacularly in the night, when is illuminated.

At the beginning of the XXIst century has started to record a series of tendencies in the plan of Spanish touristic sector, translated trough the reduction of tourism participating in GPD including the contribution to international tourism. This fact is coinciding with the relative loss of competitiveness at international level of a whole new line of products and tourist destination. Although it had registered an increase of international touristic, the average income didn't increase, by comparing with the one of the 1999. The foreign tourists spend more and more time in Spain, they are auto - organizing quickly, respective, trough the internet, contacting directly the offer of touristic services and transport service at low cost, spending more time in their own residences, or to friends' or in rented residences, what it means an obvious breakup of the model of classic Spanish tourism of the type of beach and sun.

This change from the demand and to offer from the last decade is the same with a scenario where the touristic offer is seen as marking more and more the accelerated process of urbanizing from the Mediterranean area, Baleares and Canaries.

There was the loss of the external market from Spain for the other Mediterranean countries specialized in offers of sun and beach products. After 40 years of continuous growth of the touristic performance from the region, the first regress sign have manifested trough the deterioration of particularly touristic areas and a slowing down of the rhythm of increasing the demanding for the touristic products with increased added value, compared with another destinations of the Mediterranean competitors for the same line of touristic products, especially from the closer Orient.

The reduction of the companies' profit activate in a succession of subsectors and the reduction of the socio-economic contribution of the tourism.

The gradual loss of the advantage trough price is a competitive element.

Between the 70's, 80's and 90's the prices acted in a decisive way in the meaning of multiplying the international tourist arrival, diversion from a low level of the life costs, wages costs and supplying tourism reduction, sustained by the offered advantages in some moments of the devalued pesetas. At the middle of the 90's the touristic cashing of Spain advanced favourably and under the influence of the

reduction of competition in the area, that is the reduction of attractiveness of the Oriental Mediterranean as following from the geopolitical instability from the area.

In exchange, in the last years, the economical growth registered by the Spanish economics and the approaches of life cost registered in other European states, have made the price for goods and service at the Spanish market for approaching for the ones from the source country of the tourists, losing in this way the competitiveness of the price, in comparison with the offer of the oriental states from the Mediterranean area for the demand.

The factor of influence - elements of demand:

- The influence of the macroeconomic scenery with excess of financial liquidity and reduced levels of the rate of the interest at credits in all Europe, with consequence over the acquisition capacity for families and companies;
- The expectation of increased the profitableness, in the touristic immobile domain associated with the good results in Spanish tourism obtained until the year 2000;
- The powerful and constant increase of the vacation resident prices in the coast line area, including the ones under the pressure of short terms exercise by publicity in the real estate domain, the disturbance of stock market in the year 2004 and the low profitability of other financial active with a fixed rent;
- The accentuation of the preference to leave in areas with a pleasant climate and more closely to the sea manifested an increase of Spanish population and European after the pension;
- The explosion and the diversification of the air route at low cost had two effects:
 - the tendency of buying/sale numerous residential homes in the coast line area where there are better connections towards the air line with low cost;
 - shorter visits and a level of more reduced expenses of the tourists which use the low cost company transportation.

Elements of the offer:

- the intensification of estate company investments in vacation house as result of strategies and diversification of the offer line;

- the deficit budget of local authorities, as a result of intensification of investments in some local services of infrastructure (security service and guard, sanitary service and of the local network transportation;
- the strategies of territorial planning - a good part of the urban plan for the touristic areas; they have in view the increase of urban level without foreseeing, the limits and without including a long term strategy, which represents a threat of the sustainable feature of Mediterranean area from the socio-economical point of view.

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