

THE EVOLUTION OF INTERNATIONAL TOURIST FLOWS BETWEEN YEARS 1970 – 2010

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Abstract

International tourist flows represents one of the most dynamic component of international economic exchanges. The largest share in international tourist circulation, have the internal tourist and intra-regional flows.

International statistics show that over three quarters of international journeys take place over short distances, most of these being performed within or between countries with developed economy from Europe, North America and Asia. Analysis of international tourist flows is performed using both physical indicators (number of arrivals at the borders) and value (receipts from international tourism).

In this paper we will analyze the evolution of the number of arrivals and revenues from international tourism for a period of 40 years, in order to draw the best conclusions concerning the development that world tourism industry met in last four decades.

Key words: tourist flow arrivals, receipts, industry.

INTRODUCTION

The evolution of tourism as a result of combined action of economic, demographic, psycho-social, political factors, etc., marked along the time an upward trend. We may speak therefore of its development, reflected in an increasing demand for goods and tourism services, but also in the increase of number of travelers, development characterized by high rates, rivaling the most dynamic sectors of the economy. Also, forecasts concerning the future of tourism anticipate its continuous growth.

Therefore, world tourism is characterized by very large inequalities in the distribution of international tourist flows. Thus, the developing countries, even if they are in progress, keep only less than one third of total international tourist arrivals, globally. These trends are amplified by increasing the share of intra-regional touristic flows, which represents more than 30% of international tourism in the world.

International tourism demand is measured principally through the number of arrivals and overnight stays (days-tourist) and through the part of receipts recorded in the balance of payments of a country under "tourism" chapter, and the tourist offer is evaluated according the tourist accommodation capacity, mainly the hotel, and the number of tourism products offered by tourism organizations.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The material used for realization of this work includes: the latest bibliographic sources in the field, the statistical data at national and international, and the thesis of the author.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The evolution of the number of tourists, worldwide, has seen spectacular growth over the last four decades. Thus, if in 1970 the World Tourism Organization (WTO) recorded 165 million international tourist arrivals, their number expanded to around 802 million in 2005 and about 916 million arrivals in 2008, according to provisional estimates of the WTO.

On the other hand, the increase of proceeds from the international tourism was achieved in an even faster rate. Thus, if in 1970, the receipts from international tourism, worldwide, totaled only 18 billion U.S. dollars in 2008, they reached pursuant to WTO estimates, the figure of 940 billion dollars (and these figures do not include receipts of international tourist transport).

In Table 1 is presented the evolution the number of arrivals and revenues from international tourism worldwide in the period 1970 to 2010.

Table 1.

The evolution of the of arrivals and revenues from international tourism
in the period 1970 – 2010

Year	Nr. arrivals (mil.)	The growth rate of nr. of arrivals (%)	Revenues (mild. USD)	The growth rate of revenues (%)
1970	165		18	
1980	284,8	72,2%	102,4	468,8%
1990	436,1	53,1%	270,2	163,9%
2000	683,6	56,7%	475,5	76%
2005	802,5	17,4%	677,6	42,5%
2006	842,2	4,9%	742,1	9,5%
2007	897,7	6,6%	856,6	15,4%
2008	916,1	2,0%	939,8	9,7%
2009	881,4	-3,8%	851,2	-9,4%
2010	940,1	6,6%	918,1	7,9%

Source: www.tourisme.gouv.fr

During the period of the four decades we see that in a single year the growth rate of the two indicators (arrivals and receipts) show negative values. It is the case of 2009 when the growth rate of arrivals was -3,8%, and revenue growth rate was -9,4%.

Concerning the amount of receipts from international tourism, on the main tourist regions of the world, they have increased in the last decades, in a higher rate than the number of arrivals of international tourists. In the following table I presented the situation of revenue from international tourism on the major tourist regions of the world in 2009 and 2010.

Table 2.

Receipts from international tourism worldwide and on the major tourist regions of the world in the years 2009-2010 (in billion \$ U.S.)

	<i>Receipts</i>		
	2009	2010	% from global total
Global total	851,2	918,1	100%
Europe	411,5	406,9	48,3
Africa	28,6	30,8	3,4
Asia and Pacific	203,2	248,2	23,9
America	165,9	181,8	19,5
Middle East	42	50,5	4,9

Source: www.tourisme.gouv.fr

It can be noticed that Europe had, in 2010, a share of 44.3% of the total of receipts from world tourism, four percent less than in 2009, and Asia Pacific a share of 27% with 3,1% more than in 2009. Africa has a percentage about equal in the two years, and America registered a very slight increase of 0,6%.

CONCLUSIONS

Succinct analysis of international tourism phenomenon, undertaken in this paper highlights the achievements and minuses recorded over a period of 40 years (1970-2010) within this phenomenon.

Of course, a complete picture of the size, evolution and structure of international tourist traffic involves mobilizing a larger number of indicators and deepening of their determinants.

Still we can detach from this paper that international tourist circulation registers during the 40 years a significant increase, in the last 10 years the growth rate of tourist arrivals being 33,7% and the growth rate of receipts being 75,6%.

If in first two decades the increases registered by the two indicators are fulminant, in last two decades in the case of arrivals indicators the increases are lower, and in the case of receipts, these are about the same.

It is also obvious that most of the receipts from international tourism are recorded on the European continent, followed by Asia and the Pacific and then by America.

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