

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TOURISTIC TRAFFIC INDICATORS FROM 6 EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

Dudaș Anca Iulia

University of Oradea, Faculty of Environmental Protection, 26 Gen. Magheru St., 410048, Oradea, Romania, e-mail: julia_dai@yahoo.com

Abstract

In this paper, we made a comparative analysis of some indicators that characterize tourist circulation studying six member countries of the European Union at the level of 2014; three of these countries being in Western Europe: Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg and the other three in Eastern Europe: Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria.

Source of information used is the database of EUROSTAT.

Indicators studied were: arrivals and overnight stays of tourists, average sojourn spent by tourists, touristic density related with population, and touristic density related with in each country's surface. Analyzing medium sojourn indicator we note that in Bulgaria are realised the longest sojourns, followed at a great distance by Holland and the Hungary. The shortest stays are held in Belgium and Romania. Regarding touristic density indicator related with population we find that in Holland the value of this indicator is higher than in all other studied countries, for each inhabitant falling a number of 2.13 tourists, while at the opposite pole is Romania, in this case for each inhabitant falling a number of 0.42 tourists. Regarding touristic density related with the surface, Holland holds the highest values of the indicator, for each km² falling 870.33 tourists, followed by Belgium with 479.88 tourists/km² and the Luxembourg with 441.95 tourists/km². The lowest values of this indicator are registered for Romania 35.42 tourists/km² and Bulgaria 53.61 tourists/km².

Key words: (maximum 6): touristic density, average sojourn, arrivals, overnight stays.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism can play a significant role in the development of European regions. Infrastructure created for tourism purposes contributes to local development, while jobs that are created or maintained can help counteract industrial or rural decline. According to a United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) publication titled 'Tourism highlights', the EU is a major tourist destination, with five of its Member States among the world's top 10 destinations in 2014 (Eurostat, 2016).

In some EU Member States, over half of the total number of tourism trips made in 2014 were to destinations abroad; this was the case for Luxembourg, Belgium, Malta and Slovenia (as well as Switzerland). However, 10.0% or less of the trips taken by residents of Romania, Spain and Portugal were abroad. These figures appear to be influenced by both the size of the Member States and their geographical location (smaller and more northerly countries tended to report a higher propensity for their residents to travel abroad), (Eurostat, 2016).

During recent years, the number of nights spent in tourist accommodation establishments has generally shown an upward trend. However, there was a short-lived downturn in the number of nights spent in tourist accommodation establishments in 2008 and 2009 as a consequence of the financial and economic crisis: the number of tourism nights in the EU-28 fell by 0.6% in 2008 and by a further 2.1% in 2009. In 2010, however, the number of nights spent increased by 4.7% and this positive development continued, with growth of 3.3% in 2011, 4.3% in 2012 and 2.1% in 2013. In 2014, the number of nights spent in tourist accommodation establishments in the EU-28 reached a peak of 2.7 billion nights, up by 1.8% compared with 2013 (Eurostat, 2016).

In 2014, Spain was the most common tourism destination in the EU for non-residents (people coming from abroad), with 260 million nights spent in tourist accommodation establishments, or 21.5% of the EU-28 total. Across the EU, the top four most popular destinations for non-residents were Spain, Italy (187 million nights), France (131 million nights) and the United Kingdom (105 million nights, data for 2013), which together accounted for more than half (56.6%) of the total nights spent by non-residents in the EU-28 (Eurostat, 2016).

MATERIAL AND METHOD

For the elaboration of this paper were collected statistical data from Eurostat's database. Data source was: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>.

The research method used to elaborate this work was the comparative analysis of statistical indicators (arrivals, overnight stays, average sojourn, touristic density related with population, touristic density related with the surface) to see the differences between them in the case of the 6 countries studied (Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We will present in the following, the results of data processing.

In Table 1 are highlighted tourists' overnight stays resident and non-residents in the 6 studied countries in 2014. In Holland were registered the most overnight stays – 99,751,562, followed by Belgium with 32,605,681 overnight stays. On opposite side are Luxembourg with a total of 2,867,811 overnight stays and Romania with 20,230,245 overnight stays. Overnights of foreign tourists have the highest percentage in the case of Luxembourg - 88% of all overnight stays, followed by Bulgaria with 65% of all overnight stays. Instead, Romania attracts only 19% of non-residents overnight stays of all overnight stays.

Table 1

Overnight stays of residents and non-residents tourists in 2014

Country	Residents overnight stays	%	Non-residents overnight stays	%	Total overnight stays
Belgium	15,536,809	48%	17,068,872	52%	32,605,681
Holland	65,328,010	65%	34,423,552	35%	99,751,562
Luxembourg	354,226	12%	2,513,585	88%	2,867,811
Hungary	13,702,543	53%	12,351,330	47%	26,053,873
Romania	16,467,780	81%	3,762,465	19%	20,230,245
Bulgaria	7,620,593	35%	14,077,798	65%	21,698,391

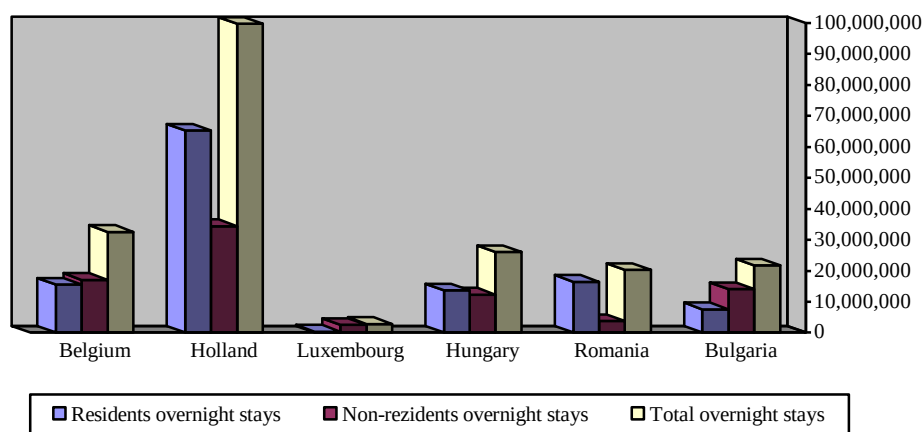


Fig.1. Overnight stays of residents and non-residents tourists in 2014

*Source: Processed data from Eurostat, 2016

In Table 2 we notice that the most tourist arrivals are registered in Holland – 35,856,074 tourists, followed by the Belgium with 14,641,070 tourists.

The lowest values of the tourist arrivals indicator are registered in Luxembourg – 1,142,892 tourists and Bulgaria - 5,945,908 tourists. In Luxembourg, 91% of all tourists come from other countries, followed by the Belgium with 54%, Bulgaria 47% and Hungary with 46%. This denotes that these countries carry an effective policy to promote tourism potential. Instead in Romania only 23% of tourists are foreigners, which proves the fact that this country is not sufficiently promoted abroad, and services and infrastructure are inadequate in many locations in the country.

Table 2

Arrivals of residents and non-residents tourists in 2014

Country	Residents arrivals	%	Non-residents arrivals	%	Total arrivals
Belgium	6,753,644	46%	7,877,426	54%	14,641,070
Holland	21,931,193	61%	13,924,881	39%	35,856,074
Luxembourg	104,417	9%	1,038,475	91%	1,142,892

Hungary	5,515,165	54%	4,617,751	46%	10,132,916
Romania	6,532,213	77%	1,911,817	23%	8,444,030
Bulgaria	3,154,330	53%	2,791,578	47%	5,945,908

*Source: Processed data from Eurostat, 2016

In Table 3 we analyzed the average sojourn indicators (an indicator of tourist traffic that shows the average number of days of tourists stay in a country, zone or accommodation) and touristic density.

We can see that the average sojourn varies from one country to another, recording the lowest values in Belgium, and the largest in Bulgaria. If the average stay for a tourist visiting Belgium, whether resident or non-resident is 2.23 days, for a tourist visiting Bulgaria an average sojourn is 3.65 days, 1.42 days longer. Also, foreign tourist arriving in Bulgaria spends 5.04 days holiday, while the average sojourn of a autochthon tourist is 2.42 days. It follows a big difference between a non-resident tourist sojourn and a resident tourist sojourn in Bulgaria.

Table 3

Average sojourn and touristic density in 2014

Country	Total population	Country surface in km ²	Td. in related with the population	Td. Related with the surface	Average sojourn
Belgium	11,203,992	30,510	1.31	479.88	2.23
Holland	16,829,289	41,198	2.13	870.33	2.78
Luxembourg	549,680	2,586	2.08	441.95	2,51
Hungary	9,877,365	93,030	1.03	108.92	2.57
Romania	19,947,311	238,392	0.42	35.42	2.40
Bulgaria	7,245,677	110,910	0.82	53.61	3.65

Note: Td = touristic density

*Source: Processed data from Eurostat, 2016

Regarding the touristic density, this is an indicator that shows how requested are the destination countries from touristic point of view. In Table 3 touristic density related with the population is under one tourist/capita in two of the six studied countries, namely Romania and Bulgaria, which means that these countries are less required from touristic point of view. The greatest value of this indicator is found in Holland - 2.13 tourists/capita, followed by Luxembourg with 2.08 tourists/capita, meaning that these countries are highly demanded by tourists.

Touristic density related with the surface has the highest value in the case of Holland, namely 870.33 tourists/km², followed by Belgium with 479.88 tourists/km² and Luxembourg with 441.95 tourists/km².

Of the six studied countries, the lowest touristic density both in proportion to the population and in proportion with the size of the country,

is encountered in the case of Romania. This means that tourists visiting Romania are very few, Romania being too little required from touristic point of view.

For the countries with high tourist density, social conflicts may occur between the local population and tourists, and also environmental conflicts.

CONCLUSIONS

From the results presented above for 2014, we can conclude the following:

- Belgium is the country that attracts most foreign tourists of all tourists who visit after Luxembourg. On the other side is the country with the shortest average sojourn of the six countries studied.

- Holland is the most requested country from the touristic point of view of the countries analyzed, if we refer to the surface of the country, touristic density related with the surface reaching a value of 870.33 tourists/km².

- Luxembourg, with a population of 549,680 inhabitants, has attracted 1,142,892 visitors of which 91% are foreign tourists.

- Hungary, with a population of 9,877,365 inhabitants, has attracted 10,132,916 visitors of which 46% are foreign tourists. Regarding the touristic density related with population, its value is 1.03 tourists/inhabitant and touristic density related with the surface is 108.92 travelers/km².

- Romania, with a population of 19,947,311 inhabitants, has attracted 8,444,030 tourists, of which only 23% foreign tourists registered the lowest percentage of this indicator in comparison with the other countries analyzed. Regarding touristic density is the country with the lowest values of this indicator, both in proportion to the population and the surface. The average stay is 2.40 days, being ranked 5 in comparison with the other countries analyzed. The average stay of a foreign tourist in Romania is 1.97 days.

- Bulgaria, with a population of 7,245,677 inhabitants has attracted in 2014, 5,945,908 tourists. Of these 47% are foreign tourists who achieved an average sojourn of 5.04 days. Resident tourists spend an average sojourn of 2.42 days, total average sojourn reaching 3.65 days, Bulgaria being on the first place with this indicator compared to the other countries studied.

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