

## CHALLENGES IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF DUBROVNIK AS A TOURIST DESTINATION

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### **Abstract**

**Purpose** –Tourism in Croatia acquired significant characteristics in the second half of the 20th century. The main characteristic of tourism was overtourism, not only in Croatia, but in all important destinations, including Dubrovnik. Of course, this kind of tourism brings economic growth, investment, employment. Unfortunately, overtourism destroys the destination in the long run. The city of Dubrovnik has for long been a popular tourism destination. At the same time, however, it is under pressure due to the enormous tourist flow. The tourism carrying capacity it enables the destination to be sustainable in a way that better regulates tourist flows, and this would allow the historic core of the city to be preserved.

**Methodology** –The author has conducted an analysis of the scientific literature, as well as the available secondary data. Author used research case studies of Venice as global representative of overtourism and Dubrovnik as a local sustainable destination in Croatia to explain challenges in tourism destination field.

**Findings** – In the last decades studies have dealt with the negative impacts of overtourism. The protection and sustainability of a tourist destination are important factors in the strategy of managing development. The balanced development of tourism is most needed by destinations with already demonstrated problems of economic, social and environmental sustainability. It is an urgency as a result of unclear tourism development strategies of a destination of extraordinary cultural values. Sustainable development is a priority that enables a longer and more stable life spans of the destination.

**Originality of the research** – The paper provides a critical analysis of overtourism and confirms the justification of research about negative impacts of overtourism on the destination, and, based on a critical analysis of the current state, enables local government to find possible solutions for the long-term preservation of the cultural heritage and identity of the city of Dubrovnik.

**Keywords** carrying capacity, overtourism, sustainable development, cultural heritage

### **INTRODUCTION**

Tourism, as one of the most massive, dynamic and complex socio-economic phenomena of the modern world, touches almost all spheres of social and economic development and is one of the most powerful industries in the world. As one of the largest and fastest growing industries in the world, tourism accounts for about 10% of world GDP, with one in ten employees working in tourism (WTTC 2018). Increased travel opportunities have made world tourist destinations accessible to all walks of life, and the number of tourists is increasing year by year.

Although the increasing number of people who engage in tourist flows brings numerous positive effects for the tourism industry, the impacts of mass tourism are often negative. Any human activity and any expansion in its own way degrades the environment and space in which they take place, and so does tourism. Compared to most other industries, the environmental impact of tourism is generally milder.

However, the rapid expansion of tourism, its rapid growth, that is, its size and widespread impact, have negatively affected the natural and cultural heritage (Stelios and Melisidou 2010). The focus of tourism policy makers on the quantitative determinants of tourism, which emphasize the growth of tourists and the realization of increasing revenues, neglects the negative effects of overtourism on the local population and the environment. Over tourist arrivals to the same locations lead to permanent and gradual degradation of the natural environment, which is impossible to regenerate after a certain time (Vukonic and Keca 2001). In addition, the costs incurred by environmental and local degradation in the long run outweigh current tourism revenues (Simon, Salvador, and Pechuan, 2015). This problem has been present in the world for many years, and the consequences for all involved participants are becoming more severe. Some of the problems of overtourism are the congestion, the destruction of the resource base, the disappearance of cultural identity, the dissatisfaction of the local population, and many others, which in recent years have caused numerous protests (locals) across Europe. The seriousness of this problem is proved by numerous examples (at the national level all the way to individual tourist attractions), and among the more famous are Venice in Italy and Dubrovnik in Croatia.

Opposite to overtourism is sustainable tourism, which every tourist destination should strive for, with the aim of maintaining its original quality and long-term survival on the market. Consequently, sustainable tourism is based on three essential points: a) make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity; b) Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance; c) Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation (UNWTO, 2020).

## **1. OVERTOURISM AND SUSTAINABILITY**

Tourism as a driver of world industry involves a few different forms and types of tourism. Overtourism is nowadays recognized as one of the trends in the tourism market. Today overtourism is a reality for many tourist destinations in the world. It is characterized by many users in a relatively limited area in each period or season based on enjoying the sun, sea or mountain snow activities. The main features of overtourism are uniformity, expansiveness and affordability. Goodwin (2017,) says that overtourism 'describes destinations where hosts or guests, locals or visitors, feel that there are too many visitors and that the quality of life in the area or the quality of the experience has deteriorated unacceptably.

The application of economies of scale in the development of tourism, which began in the 1950s, has led to a decrease in average total costs, making the tourism product easily accessible to lower-paying consumers (Sezgin, Yolal 2012). This process marks the beginning of a massive momentum of tourism, culminating in the late 1970s and

early 1980s. Many coastal areas, first of Spain and Italy, followed by Greece, Malta, Cyprus and the former Yugoslavia, began attracting many tourists from northern Europe (Bramwell 2004).

In the beginnings of the modern phase of development, this attribute had a positive meaning because it signified the fulfillment, in tourism development so far, of the unrealizable dreams of many people to spend their holidays not only outside the place of permanent residence but also abroad. Overtourism was first national in nature, and since the 1950s it has begun to cross national borders (Davenport, Davenport 2006).

By the definition from UNWTO (2018) overtourism can be defined as the impact of tourism on a destination, or parts thereof, that excessively influences perceived quality of life of citizens and/or quality of visitors experiences in a negative way. The Responsible Tourism Partnership refers to overtourism as destinations where hosts or guests, locals or visitors, feel that there are too many visitors and that the quality of life in the area or the quality of the experience has deteriorated unacceptably.

However, the accelerated and often uncontrolled pace of tourism development has inevitably brought with it some negative phenomena. At the same time as the process of increasing tourist demand and increasing economic effects, problems that such tourism brings with it are beginning to be noticed. Thus, in the early 1970s, the negative aspects of overtourism were also seen (Diaz-Parra, Jover, 2020; Dodds, Butler, 2019). These early criticisms focused primarily on the negatives observed in the socio-cultural sphere, tourists began to outnumber the inhabitants resulting in migration, souvenir shops replaced places such as pharmacies, bakeries, butchers and tailors, which led to anti-tourist protests (Capocchi et.al. 2019; Postma, Schmuecker, 2018). But as international tourism continued to grow exponentially, it became apparent that this form of tourism had a negative impact on the ecology, as well as on the overall economy of particularly underdeveloped countries (Berno, Bricker 2001).

### **1.1. Managing a tourist destination in order to achieve sustainability**

According to Baum (2006, 283), the concept of sustainable development is designed "to protect and improve natural environment while meeting basic human needs, promoting justice and improving the quality of life of all people." The problem of sustainability is of global importance and is present in every field of human activity. The concept contains several "levels of sustainability" that need to be considered simultaneously, notably environmental, socio-cultural and economic, but also other components of sustainability such as technological, political and other parameters. It is also important to emphasize the interdependence and the need to simultaneously consider all sustainability parameters. Thus, sustainable development can be described as a target triangle in which three seemingly conflicting areas are balanced: the environment, society and the economy. These three elements in tourism development must be harnessed to promote environmental responsibility, economic efficiency and socially sensitive tourism at all levels. Consequently, tourism may influence the quality of life (QOL) for the residents in a positive way such as festivals, restaurants, natural and cultural attractions, and outdoor recreation opportunities, and in a negative way such as crowding, traffic and parking problems, increased crime, increased cost of

living, friction between tourists and residents, and changes in residents' way of life, all of which can be detrimental to life satisfaction (Andereck, Nyaupane, 2011)

Often, World Heritage Sites, especially those listed on the UNESCO World Heritage Sites list, are turned into mass tourism destinations. Although UNESCO advocates for their accessibility to as many people as possible, it has become very difficult to strike a balance between the conservation and residence of too many people in these areas (Dujmovic, 2014). A senior associate Kunst (2011) at the Institute of Tourism, points to the problem of crowds caused by the increasing number of concurrent visitors in historic cores. First, in most such cities there is no adequate infrastructure for such many tourists. Life in protected or historic cities is becoming extremely expensive, which is most reflected in the increase in property prices. In addition, in these cities, to the detriment of the locals, the use of public space is continuously adapted to the needs / requirements of tourists and day visitors. Thus, often within the historical cores no business premises can be found that predominantly serve the needs of the local population (shops, services, post office, dispensary, kindergarten), which further complicates and stimulates their life. Due to all the above, many domicile people are moving out and so-called musealization of such cities. They become merely visual scenery that an increasing number of tourists (once) admire.

In addition to its great impact on the local population, overexploitation of attractive localities can impair, even destroy, the originality and significance of cultural heritage. Regardless of the current social, political or economic justifications, the future of natural and cultural heritage should come first. For such attractions, it is necessary to apply an acceptance capacity strategy as a very important part of destination quality management (Cetinski, Šugar, Perić, 2012).

Tourism organizations in the world today face several problems on how to manage a tourist destination. Creating a sustainable environment is one of the main settings for managing a tourist destination.

## **1.2. The environmental effects of overtourism in a tourist destination**

In the process of realizing both its own development goals and the goals of the higher system, tourism generates several effects that are most often seen in the environment. Positive environmental effects are evident in the following areas:

- Protection and restoration of monuments of nature and culture, industrial and architectural heritage
- Creation of special protected areas of national parks, nature parks, etc.
- Maintenance of forests, beaches, etc.
- Improving infrastructure.

The negative environmental impacts of tourism would be:

- Decrease in the quality of land, water and air due to the increase in their pollution level
- Change of the natural environment and influence on the natural balance among living beings

- Increase in the costs of prevention of patching and pollution
- Increase in the cost of space protection and natural and built attractions
- Containing the visual identity of a space by constructing buildings that do not aesthetically fit
- Destruction of historical and natural monuments due to their excessive and uncontrolled exploitation for tourist purposes (e.g. graffiti, erosion of natural paths, etc.)
- Increase in spatial risk (fire, landslide, etc.)(Mathieson and Wall 1982; Seabloom et.al. 1989; Andereck 1993; Gartner 1996; etc.).

Furthermore, overtourism in a City context, it produces other negative effects like (Koens et al, 2018):

- Overcrowding in city's public spaces
- Pervasiveness of visitor impact
- Physical touristification
- Residents pushed out of residential areas
- Pressure on local environment

The following describes in more detail the problems of overtourism in Venice (as an example at the world level) and Dubrovnik (as an example at the level of the Republic of Croatia, which can be mapped to other coastal cities in Croatia).

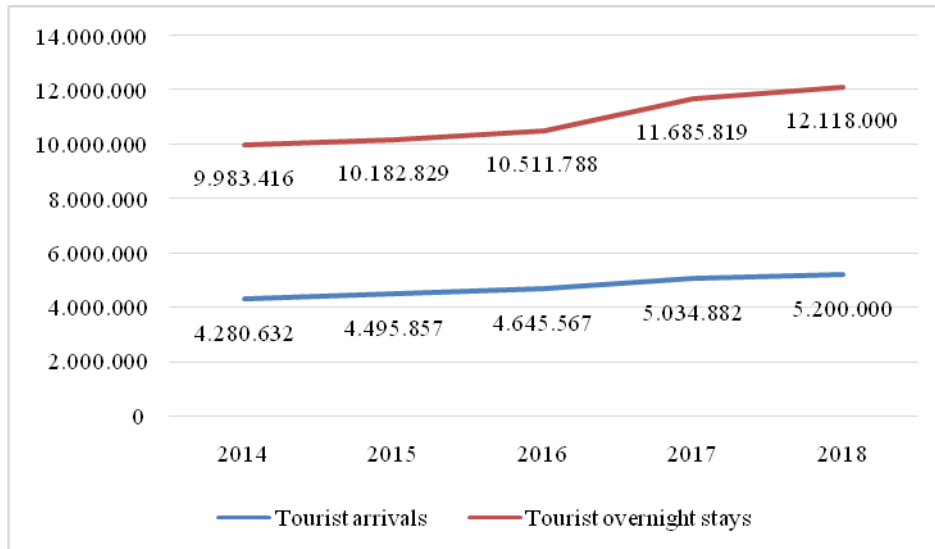
### **1.3. Case study: Venice and Dubrovnik**

#### **1.3.1. Venice**

Venice is one of the most important tourist destinations in the world because of its distinctive and acclaimed art and architecture. After a very dynamic past, Venice has turned to tourism today and its economy is based mostly on tourism revenue, tourism services, trade and industrial exports. The Italian city of Venice has become an emblematic example of a destination struggling with what is now frequently called overtourism (Bertocchi et. al. 2020). Venice population dropped from 174.808 inhabitants in 1951 to the current 52.994 (January 2019). A city of 156.9 km<sup>2</sup> receives 30 million tourists per year. Tourists do not stop coming, motivated by cruises too (in 2017 2.5 millions of people landed). Population has descended two-thirds since the last century, becoming one of the most notable case of gentrification and touristification (Trancoso Gonzales, 2018). It can be linked directly to the dramatic increase of overtourism.

In 2019 Venice recorded 4,280,000 arrivals compared to 264,000 inhabitants, which means 16 tourists on one inhabitant (Istat, 2018). According to Graph 1, in Venice, over the past few years, there has been an increase in tourist activity both in arrivals and overnight stays.

Graph 1: Tourist arrivals in Old Town of Venice (2014-2018)



Source: Author according Elaborazioni Comune di Venezia, Settore Turismo - Osservatorio del Turismo sudatidell'Ufficio di StatisticadellaRegione del Veneto, 2017; Annuario del turismo 2017., Citta' di Venezia, Assessorato al Turismo; Statista 2018, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/732406/overnight-tourist-arrivals-in-venice-italy>

Taking into consideration the latest estimates on the number of day visitors provided by the City of Venice (Peeters et. al. 2018), which set the number of excursionists to around 53,000 per day, it can be easily understood how these tensions are still affecting the tourism subsystem of transport, parking, and the use of the cultural resource of St Mark's Square. Sustainable and responsible tourism, seasonal adjustment, more balanced flows throughout the City of Venice are just some of the challenges that the city must cope with more effectively, and what are the factors behind a successful and quality tourism offer.

After the Second World War a new phase started, the age of overtourism that, together with the general social and economic transformations of the city, deeply changed the life in the historical center, where tourism had become the predominant economic activity (Zannini 2014). The tourism sector has grown in the past twenty years like never in the city's centuries-old history: 5.6% more visitors, on average, every year.

Since the mid-nineties, then, the number of daily tourists who do not stay in the city (the so-called "hikers") has exceeded that of those who spend at least one night in the municipality, and has now reached the stratospheric figure of 20 million people per year (Ferri and Guararoli 2012). Among the "new" visitors, the increase in cruise passengers, which has increased tenfold in the last decade, is significant: Venice has become the sixth largest Mediterranean home port after Barcelona, thanks also to the proximity of Marco Polo airport which has now become the third Italian airport for passenger traffic.

The number of tickets sold for entry into the sites of the Venetian Civic Museum Foundation is emblematic: they increased by only 4.4% between 2012 and 2018 compared to an increase in attendance in the city of 10.2% (Municipal of Venice 2018).

This further impetus in the tourism sector has generated profound changes in the accommodation offer. The historic center has been hit by a new wave of transformation of buildings into hotels, which have grown by a third for the number and availability of beds in the last decade (Zannini 2014).

This set of changes has fueled the discussion around the sustainability of tourism and the search for possible interventions to limit the disadvantages on the resident population and on the fragile urban structure of the city. Up to now, interventions have been adopted to rationalize the transport system and reception in the city, but the real crucial point consists in the prospect, on several sides of the air, to plan tourist revenues, that is to limit access to the city.

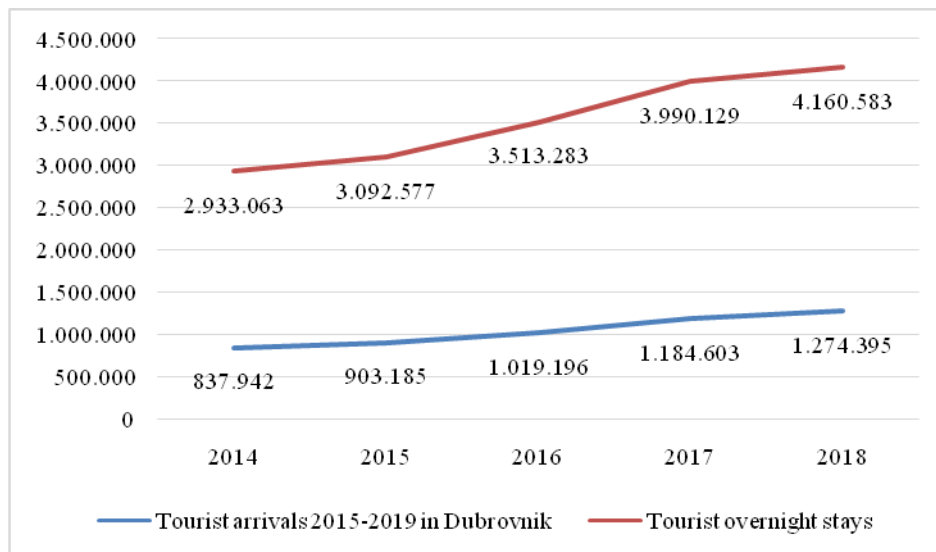
In a first simulation, thirty-two years ago, Costa and van der Borg (1988) calculated the maximum tourist capacity of the city in 20 thousand presences per day. Venice, that is, "hosts" several times the number of visitors than its urban and economic structure would allow: in addition to irreparable damage to the city, the negative effects of the "vicious circle" induced by tourist congestion are approaching (Russo 2002). Venice is threatened on several fronts – from overtourism, from damage caused by a steady stream of cruise ships, including ones weighing over 40,000 tons, and from the potential negative effects of new developments. As the consequences are enormous, certain measures are being taken to counteract the masses. In early 2019, Venice introduced a 2.50 to 10 euros per person entrance fee for tourists, depending on the season of travel. The aim of this measure is that tourists also bear the high costs of maintaining a popular tourist destination built on the water, but also reduce the number of one-day visitors and guests from the cruiser. These are economic instruments to combat the social and environmental costs arising from overtourism, and one that has been advocated by some popular destinations, include the levying of direct taxes (such as city tax, lodging tax, entrance fees, visa fees, departure tax) or indirect local corrective taxes (such as sales tax, value added tax) (Nepal, Nepal, 2019). This is because the problems of sustainable tourism are always a challenge to be solved by exerting greater effort and demanding greater efficiency through economic instruments (Hall, 2019).

The age of global tourism requires not only to "rethink the city" as it has been invoked by many, especially in reference to various buffer measures taken in recent years to try to limit the negative effects of the tourist impact without however, have the courage to give up any of its possible advantages. It also implies "rethinking tourism", that is, understanding that in the age of low-cost flights and the appearance of billions of potential new tourists, tourism is something more complex, wider and culturally more pervasive than twentieth-century mass tourism: it is a force capable, literally, of destroying places and cultures and recreating others. If the Venetian entrepreneurial and political class manages to conceive a new "Venice project" suitable for the third millennium, it will transform this challenge into a possibility.

### 1.3.2. Dubrovnik

Dubrovnik was listed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1979, and in recent years it has received additional attention as the location for the production of the popular *Throne Games* series. For example, in 2018, more than 1.2 million tourists visited Dubrovnik (Dubrovnik Tourist Board 2019). Graph 2 shows arrivals and overnight stays of tourists from 2014 to 2018 in Dubrovnik, showing a constant increase.

Graph 2: **Tourist arrivals in Dubrovnik (2014-2018)**



Source: Central Bureau of Statistics (2014-2018)

Cruise ships also have a major impact on the overtourism in Dubrovnik. In addition to the negative environmental impact, cruise tourism is already contributing to the already large crowds. During the tourist season, three modern cruisers arrive daily in Dubrovnik, bringing five or six times more people than the total population. Geic (2011) outlines a possible solution through payment for each individual departure of tourists from the ship. This regulates demand as a legitimate market instrument. In addition, the price of fees may increase. However, it can lead to the opposite effect, the resistance of tourists. Instead, a measure was introduced that does not discourage the arrival of cruisers but only manages them temporarily. From this year, there will be at most two large passenger ships with a maximum of 5,000 passengers in Dubrovnik at the same time. The large number of tourists, on the one hand, impedes the normal life of the local population, while on the other hand, it diminishes the quality of experience for the tourists themselves, which negatively affects the image of the city. For this reason, in 2016, UNESCO requested that the number of visitors to the city be limited to 8000 at the same time, so the city administration set a people counter at the main entrance to the old city center. Due to the rising cost of living in the city center, many Dubrovnik residents are forced to sell their property and move out, and new owners in the city usually stay only during the season or rent accommodation to tourists.



According to the census conducted at the end of 2016, only 1557 people live inside the walls, of which 500 are over 65 years old. By comparison, in the 1950s, the city's core had about 5,000 inhabitants. Just like in most Croatian coastal cities and towns, in Dubrovnik in winter there is exactly the opposite problem. The streets are empty, souvenir shops and restaurants closed and there is almost no cultural content. Tourism has squeezed out of the city any other economic activity that the population could engage in the spirit of the place.

In Dubrovnik, tourism is still viewed as a resource for making money, or for making a profit, and the needs of tourists are put ahead of the needs of the local population as in Venice. To end this, a overtourism regulation measure (Program Respect the City) was introduced, which, through a visitor prediction application that uses machine learning as a separate branch of artificial intelligence, increasingly assessing the number of people in the historic core and contact zone of the city of Dubrovnik on the selected day. This information can be useful for locals as well as tourists to help plan their arrival in the old town. To predict the number of visitors, the algorithm uses various parameters such as the number of people on cruise ships, the number of arrivals and overnight stays in Dubrovnik.

Despite the introduction of certain measures, the results are not yet satisfactory.

#### **1.4. Threats and possible solutions**

In addition to numerous opportunities, tourism in Croatia has generated negative effects on the environment and on the social environment. Although it cannot be said that Croatia is a land of overtourism, there are more and more overtourism destinations, especially coastal ones (Jadresic 2010). On the other hand, despite the awareness of the importance of preserving natural and cultural values and the necessity of change, Croatian tourism is still not developing according to the principles of sustainable development (sustainable tourism is often carried out only declaratively). Considering that today tourism is one of the most important economic activities of the Republic of Croatia, planned and sustainable development is a precondition for its development in the future (Sunara et. al. 2013). Moreover, Gregoric, Božić and Mirković (2017) point out that sustainable tourism development is a possible solution for the economic progress of the Republic of Croatia.

##### **1.4.1. Obstacles to sustainable tourism development in Croatia**

Jadresic (2010) points out that tourism reflects specific social and economic conditions and facts, so it can be said that tourism is an image of Croatian society. The root cause of unsustainable Croatian tourism is the insistence on a development strategy and policy based solely on the economic and foreign exchange component, which aims to maximize profits as soon as possible (Jadresic 2010). Therefore, the negative aspects of tourism in Croatia are not to blame for tourism itself, but for how it is managed. The tourism space, contrary to the determinants of sustainable development, is not used as a limited, hardly renewable, strategic resource, but is mostly used for the economic prosperity of a small number of elected members of the current generation. The problem is not in the misunderstanding of the negative consequences, but in the

conflicting interests of different stakeholders in economic and tourism development. Tourism management decisions are often directly targeted by interest groups, so the management of available (tourist) space in Croatia can be brought into the context of the use of power policy (Kunst 2011). Therefore, for tourism to develop according to the principles of sustainable development, many changes are needed in almost all areas of life. There must be a change of consciousness in the fields of economy, society and politics (Usorac 2010).

#### 1.4.2. Opportunities and solutions

Although Croatia is not yet a tourist overcrowded country, it needs to be protected in due time from the potential adverse effects of tourism. The answer to the negative effects of mass tourism is sustainable tourism, which can help promote the destination as different and of better quality (Geic 2011). The characteristics of the Croatian territory and its natural and social resources provide good opportunities for the development of sustainable tourism. However, there is a lack of adequate infrastructure to support such development (Usorac 2010). Examples of other countries may be useful, but each tourist destination is specific and requires specific policies, strategies and programs (Klaric and Gatti 2006). Therefore, it is necessary to learn from your own and others' mistakes. Many Croatian destinations (especially coastal ones) have yet to minimize the negative impacts of mass tourism in order to focus on sustainable development. The biggest threat to the sustainable development of Croatian tourism is the fact that the state bases its development too much on tourism. This is evidenced by the share of travel and tourism revenue in Croatia's total GDP, which stood at 19.6% in 2017 (Rihelj 2018). For this reason, the emphasis is still on the economic effects of tourism, which is too much to be expected. It is important to emphasize that tourism is viewed separately, (either at the state or destination level) they cannot be sustainable. In order to be sustainable, it must be complementary to the development of other industries, especially those closely related to its development (eg agriculture, food industry, domestic products that will reduce imports, the construction sector, etc.). Jadresic (2010) points out that the weaknesses of Croatian tourism can be reduced by the transition of quantity into quality and a selectively sustainable concept. In addition, efforts should be focused on preventing the destruction of the destination. It is necessary to eliminate mass tourism, which destroys the resources on which it is based, i.e. it requires a different use of the same resource (Geic 2011). Therefore, the emphasis should be placed on the number of arrivals and overnight stays, but on tourism spending and its dispersion on the local economy. In this sense, tourist success is measured not only by the number of visitors, but also by the length of stay, the amount of money spent and the quality of the experience (Dujmovic 2014).

Tourism policy makers in Croatia operate at the national level (Ministry of Tourism, Croatian National Tourist Board, Croatian Chamber of Economy) and at regional and local level (tourist organizations and business entities, tourist boards) (Usorac 2010). Clear long-term planning and management anticipate negative impacts and develop plans that will minimize or mitigate them. Legislation, legislation and regulations that will sanction tourists' negative behavior towards the environment and introduce acceptable standards, but also effective control systems, are of great importance. With numerous regulations and measures, states should not support mass tourism projects,

but alternative forms (Geic 2011). States can control entry to their countries, regulate the arrival of means of transport, planes, buses, trains and ships, can prevent inappropriate hotel development, and use tax systems to shape visitor demand and provide a more favorable location for locals (Valcic 2018). For example, in the old part of Amsterdam, cruisers were forbidden, in Barcelona (which receives about 7 million tourists a year) licenses for the construction of hotels and apartments were rented, and in Copenhagen, 9 millions of tourists a year, decided to ban the opening of new bars and restaurants in the city. Vukonic (2010) points out that it is the only fully effective means of protection in tourist destinations. However, such measures need to be taken with great caution in order not to have the opposite effect - loss of interest in the destination. To give tourists a true experience, it is necessary to limit the number of tourists visiting a attraction at a time. Kunst (2011) states that this can be done through administrative measures (by determining the maximum acceptable number of concurrent visitors to an attraction), or by limiting the construction of accommodation facilities, especially family apartments and reducing tourist development zones (thus, accommodation capacities represent a tourist arrival limit). Instead of physical constraints, it is "much better to monitor/direct the growth of (unwanted) accommodation capacities through appropriate tax policy, or to encourage the development of tourism in the hinterland (financial, fiscal and organizational).

In addition, the concentration of large numbers of tourists in one area can be diverted by creating innovative tourism products and attractions in the wider area, encouraging off-season visits, etc. Furthermore, it is important to determine what kind of tourism is to be developed and to which target group it is emphasized. It is necessary to adjust the offer as well as the promotion. For example, if overtourism in the Dubrovnik area is to be prevented, then such already known destinations need not be further promoted in the promotional videos of the Croatian National Tourist Board. In their place, less well-known tourist attractions should be put in place, which will show the wider offer of Croatia as a tourist destination and thus enable dispersion of tourists throughout its area.

Magas (2000) emphasizes that only a quality offer can attract quality guests. For this to happen, proper strategy and leadership and cooperation between all development stakeholders guided by a common vision is necessary. Effective coordination between the state, local government, private companies and the local population is needed (Klaric and Gatti, 2006). The current Strategy for the Development of Croatian Tourism by 2020 emphasizes the importance of sustainable development and seeks to develop tourism on its principles, but many obstacles have emerged in its implementation so far.

Therefore, it can be said that there is awareness of the necessary changes and that the development of tourism in Croatia is slowly beginning to be directed towards sustainable in the long run.

## CONCLUSION

Based on everything presented in the paper, and especially the case studies and isolated examples, it can be concluded that the negative impact of overtourism on the viability of the destination will be reduced by adequate destination management. Many destinations began to focus on sustainability only after they began to see the negative consequences of overdevelopment.

There are numerous ways in which overtourism can be controlled or prevented. Price is often a factor that influences a consumer profile. Therefore, it can be an instrument to regulate the number and segment of visitors, but only if the destination also provides adequate value for money, i.e. a quality offer. In summer overtourism destinations, communal and transport infrastructure need to be adjusted, carrying capacity studies and beach regeneration measures must be developed.

While some destinations seek to mitigate the effects of overtourism they are aware that a the great interest in their destinations cannot be avoided (e.g. Dubrovnik). Each destination can take different measures to move away from or at least control mass tourism. However, it is evident from the example that the balance between all three halves of sustainable development is difficult to achieve. Therefore, each destination, focusing on dimensions of sustainability, can reduce its negative impacts.

Some destinations will always be popular and therefore will attract many visitors. What can be done to make such destinations more sustainable is, first, to improve and solve the problem of traffic jams and the problem of parking. e.g. during the high season, provide free or cheaper public transport from the city center to the most important attractions in order to discourage the use of passenger cars in the destination, which will be more cost-effective than investing in the construction of additional infrastructure given its off-season utilization.

The solution for large numbers of visitors to individual tourist attractions may be temporary closure at certain times of the year, limitation of the number of visitors using tickets, limitation of sightseeing times and more even distribution of tourists throughout the day. It is advisable to offer multiple routes and combine several different complementary attractions that will allow the dispersion of tourists in the area.

Measures, i.e. instruments for controlling overtourism and directing it towards sustainable development depend on the specific destination, and the decision is made according to the scenario of development and the identified advantages and disadvantages of each. Through sustainable tourism, each destination can increase its competitiveness in the market, valorise its untapped natural and cultural resources and base its offer and recognition on their specific features.

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