Tourism management as an element of contemporary international relations

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ABSTRACT

Tourism management is a significant mean for realization of various political objectives, such as development of a given country’s image abroad, or a character and the zone of relations with other states. It is also a phenomenon of sizable and diversified contents. The tourism itself plays a significant role as one of the components of international economic relations. Currently, tourism and/or tourism management is a reason for numerous scientific studies. Tourism is continuously accompanied by such phenomena and notions as: migration of persons, transfer of money and capital, exchange of goods and services, currency exchange rates, international cooperation or balance of payments. The problems associated with foreign tourism occupies an important position in the scope of international economic relations. Purpose of the article is to analyze the significance of international cooperation in tourism, and identification of its basic forms, recognition of main entities of international tourist policy and their initiatives undertaken to the benefit of tourism development. The article is focused on cooperation of governmental organizations. The performed analysis proved that the significance of various form of international cooperation in tourism remain on the increase. Its scope and role in shaping contemporary tourism policy are expanding constantly.

Keywords: management; tourism; EU; international relations

1. INTRODUCTION

Trips to foreign countries have been in place since the beginning of time. Spatial mobility of a human being could have been noticed already in the Ancient and Medieval era.
This was caused by wars, crusades, missions, legation, commerce and private journeys. Currently, such trips are included in the meaning of the international tourism term, while in the past, they were referred to in relation to traveling abroad. In Ancient times actually everyone was able to travel, what by the way was quite dangerous and expensive, but it allowed conclusion of certain arrangements between countries, and as a result international cooperation in the field of tourism. Therefore, some believe that “international cooperation in tourism is almost as old as the phenomenon of tourism itself”. Some people believe that tourism in past times was impossible because of political and social relationships. However, choosing not to argue with such opinions, it can be stated clearly that cooperation between countries in this sector has a long history, and its role grew along with development of tourism. Currently, it is hard to imagine operation of tourism market without cooperation between various institutions and the tourism enterprises from various countries.

Together with development of the world economy globalization processes, aggregation of ecological problems, a world economic crisis, terrorism threat or intensification of military conflicts, the significance of international cooperation in various fields is greater, within international organizations, multilateral or bilateral contracts and agreements between particular countries, and various forms of cooperation between local governments. One plane of such a cooperation is tourism, which is especially prone to transformations taking place in the international surroundings. This is related both on the side of tourism demand and development of tourism supply.

2. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF TOURISM

International cooperation in tourism adopts various forms, and it can be realized on different levels: national, ministry, non-governmental organizations, etc. A basic division suggests multilateral (conventions, international organizations) and bilateral (graphic agreements, tourism conventions, joint undertakings) cooperation. A multilateral character of tourism causes that it is present in agreements pertaining to other disciplines, such as commerce, transport, finances, etc. The greatest role in international cooperation in tourism is played by international organizations. They exert considerable influence on the shape and functioning of the tourism market. A permanent increase in their significance is observed, thus their number is constantly growing. While playing different roles, they contribute to the fact that the international tourism market may be perceived as an efficient place, where chaos and serious failures are scarce.

3. ROLE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF TOURIST ORGANIZATIONS FOR OPERATION OF A TOURISM MARKET

Operation of international tourist organizations revealed a large diversity of purposes, scopes and forms of their operation. Interdisciplinarity of the tourist phenomenon, especially its influence on various life spheres, caused deep specialization of international organizations engaged in shaping of a contemporary tourist market and its future. All of those compose a large system of international cooperation in the field. The system is widely diversified, in terms of influence on both particular types of tourism and sectors of the tourism industry, and
on the tourism in general. There is a place for tourist operation of large organizations, such as UN or OECD, and for a specialized intergovernmental organization dealing only with tourism, e.g. WTO. However, special stress should be put on unique diversity and multiplicity of non-governmental organizations, engaged in tourist activity.

This results, among others, from a large increase in the number of international non-governmental organization, which took place after the end of the WWII. They emerged almost in all fields of the economic and social life. However, it is hard to state, which non-governmental organizations that were established in in those times were related to tourism. A process that supports formation of tourist organizations is globalization. Regarding its character and range, it is a factor that homogenizes patterns, norms and standards in various fields of life around the world.

Regarding its international character, tourism is embedded in the process of evolutions taking place in the contemporary world. The emerging world, resulting from a flow of ideas, desires, strategies, resources, goods, norms and regulations, and various institutions, managed by various people, in order to realize the course of events, causes that role of the international institutions increases on the tourist market. The most important features that characterize the world economy of the 21st century is globalization of activity, concentration of capital and an increase in significance of international economic communities. Tourist industry, similarly to the whole economy, is falling under control of huge corporations, including in majority large enterprises of a transnational character.

The organization that exerts the greatest influence on international relationships is the United Nations. The scope of its operations is very broad. It encompasses actions related to military operations, intended to maintain or reestablish peace, through humanitarian activities, in countries stuck by natural disasters and wars, to bring help to the so-called third-world countries, to actions that might be less effective but are equally important. The latter include establishment of international standards and principles to be followed by the member states. One example of such an activity are initiatives in the scope of tourism. Legal acts and international conventions of UN exerted enormous impact on the development manner of tourism. The most significant achievements of UN and related organizations in the field of tourism include:

- Establishment of standards for time of work and dimension of paid leave, thanks to the International Labor Organization (ILO).
- Introduction of preventive vaccinations and prophylaxis of communicable diseases in case of travels to exotic countries, thanks to the World Health Organization (WHO).
- Legal regulations related to tourism, in the scope of international trade, including among others elimination of limitations and reduction of custom duties by successor of GATT - the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Significant achievements, not only in terms of tourism, must be accredited to UNESCO. The organization operating in the field of active protection of cultural heritage. Numerous other international organizations are involved in such operations. In case of tourism, a significant role is played by the International Council of Museums (ICOM). In turn, such organizations as Europa Nostra or the International Friends of Nature (IFN), did a lot of good for the natural heritage, by initiating numerous pro-ecological actions. Environmental protection is a field of operation of numerous international tourist organizations.
The World Travel and Tourism Council is an organization that together with the Council of the Earth introduced the principles of Agenda 21 into the tourism industry. Agenda 21, developed by the organizations for the tourist industry, stipulates that:

- Tourism should promote a healthy and an efficient lifestyle, in a harmony with nature, get people of different nationalities closer, and create openness and tolerance.
- Development of tourism is to contribute to preservation of natural richness.
- Tourism development in regions is to take place with participation of local communities.
- In tourist branch, the service and manufacturing operations should be directed at reduction of the amount of waste and saving of water and energy, and eliminate substances that are dangerous for the environment from life, stimulate the personnel, clients and social communities to pro-ecological behaviors.
- Free exchange of tourist services, a policy of an open market system, should be promoted by the countries.

4. BASIC FORMS AND SCOPE OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Tourism market, its operation and functioning, is regulated by law. International regulations, apart from provisions that govern the tourist activity, play a crucial role. All persons, who take part in tourist relationships must be aware that their operations need to comply with international standards. Disregard of those standards by a given country participating in tourist exchange may lead to negligence of economy or total or partial exclusion from an international community. Therefore, actions aimed at improving operational effectiveness of the international tourism have been undertaken. In the earliest period, an important matter was to decide whether the countries could shape the income of foreigner into their countries to any extent, or whether there should be some restrictions applied in the scope.

Over the centuries, opinions on the rights and obligations of a country in the field of international movement of persons changed. They were based on two contrary theories. The case was similar with birth of contemporary international tourism.

The problems of principles that have governed the international movement of persons over the centuries fail to exhaust the disciplines, which the countries realize tourist cooperation in. These problems may be related to various perspective of the tourist market operations, and they may adopt different forms, including:

- Participation in various international seminars, conferences, meetings related to the issues of tourism.
- Membership in international tourist organizations and other institutions related to the issues of tourism.
- Conclusion of international agreements and conventions.

International conferences pose a highly significant element, when it comes to cooperation between countries in the field of tourism. Objectives of such meetings are to serve homogenization of notions, definitions and criteria for statistical classification in the
area of tourism. The first large conference with the tourist background was organized by the League of Nations in 1937. After WWII, the next important conference was the so-called Rome conference organized in 1963. It was called under the aegis of the United Nations. During the conference, experts from the Statistical Commission of the UN agreed that three types of travelers can be differentiated in arrangements on international statistics, namely visitors, tourists and holiday makers. The assumed principles and definitions for classification of the international tourist movement have been applicable since then, with several amendments. Both conferences mentioned above are associated first of all with arrangements in the scope of tourist statistics. It is also worth stressing that also other important matters were discussed on those conferences. For example, during the Rome Conference, participated by representatives of 85 states, 12 intergovernmental organizations and 14 non-governmental organizations, also the following themes were discussed:

- Improvements in the scope of official formalities, related to international travels (passports, visas, customs formalities, deposits and principles for exchange, charges, burdens and interconnected requirements, formalities related to mechanical vehicles, travels referring to educational and cultural functions).
- Technical cooperation (tourism as a factor of economic development, schooling and counseling).

International agreements are understandings governed by international law, concluded in a written form by particular countries. There are two forms of international cooperation agreements occurring in the international law in the scope of tourism: bilateral and multilateral agreements.

1. Multilateral agreements. They are most often concluded during international conferences and within the scope of international organizations. Especially significant multilateral agreements adopt a form of international conventions. The group of most important conventions includes those related to customs, transport, operation of travel agencies and hotels.

2. Bilateral agreements. They encompass documentation that governs cooperation in the field of tourism in two contracting countries. They serve expansion and development of new contacts and cooperation between the interested organizations and enterprises from both states, thus enabling more effective operation. The binding force of such agreements covers territories of the contracting states, and they are legally invalid within territories of third countries. This agreement is binding for both parties in whole, unless one party makes a reservation to it. One of the first such agreements was concluded between the United States of America and China in 1880. It allowed full access to territories of those countries: for professors, students, buyers and tourists. Bilateral agreements on international cooperation are usually a crowning of good relationship between the governments and tourist organizations of both states. There have also been some cases, where conclusion of such agreements posed an impulse to established closer contacts and develop tourism. Special significance is borne by the agreements, which liberalize passport, visa and currency exchange regulations.
Respect is the basic determinant that decided on inclusion of the inland waterways transportation into handling of container loads in Europe. The inland waterways transport belongs to the most economic and at the same time the most environmentally friendly branches of transportation (EECTM 2007). Its low energy consumptions, no congestion, and low external costs in the form of emission of contaminants, as well as a scarce amount of accidents, contribute to application of this transportation branch to an increasingly broader scale (DOC 2014: 25). The possibility to realize the inland transport of container loads requires proper parameters of inland waterways, which according to the AGN requirements, adopted in Europe, should meet the standards of classes from IV to VII (COM 2013). It is necessary for realization of long-range container transport, and for relatively sizable sets.

Currently, there are about 750 inland ports located within the European Union - 389 of which operates in the Netherlands. In more than 50 ports, annual handling exceeds 1 mln tons, and almost 40 is at the same time an inland and a sea port. There are container terminals functioning in case of more than 100 ports, while this number is on a continuous increase.

The existing potential of the container terminal in Szczecin, in terms of the container loads handling is first of all related to the fact of its convenient location in comparison to other inland and water terminals. The port in Szczecin is the only Polish sea port that has a direct connection thanks to the Oder Waterway (ODW, Odrzańska Droga Wodna), with the system of Western European network of inland waterways (Kulczyk and Skupień 2010). The Oder-Sprewa and Oder-Hawela channel connect Szczecin to Berlin, to the areas of Mecklenburg and Brandenburg, what constitutes an additional asset for development of this transportation branch in the international goods exchange.

The location of the Port of Szczecin and inland connections with the Southern part of Poland, as well as the trans-boundary character of the Oder river, are the biggest asset of the container terminal (www1b), (www1c). In relation to the policy of sustainable transport development, assuming that loads transported on roads should be moved to the rail and water transport, including the inland waterways (COM 2011), it seems that the Oder, as a transport route, would be - after rendering its navigable along its whole course - one of the crucial inland waterways in this part of Europe.

Countries such as the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium, which have a network of waterways with high technical parameters (Quispel 2011) (BVB 2013), record a permanent increase in the share of inland waterways transport within containers handling to and from sea ports (www1). There are distribution and logistic centers created within their territories, nearby thriving inland ports, enabling operation of containers and their transportation into land. Therefore, the ports transformed into multi-functional logistic centers, which are crucial components of container logistic chains.

Another asset supporting the inland waterways transport in handling the container loads is the concept of establishment of the West-Pomerania Logistic Center (ZCL, Zachodniopomorskie Centrum Logistyczne) at the container terminal in the Port of Szczecin. It will offer at least 40 thousand m² of warehouse space, where - apart from temporary goods storage - also other operations are assumed, such as light manufacturing, conditioning, repackaging of goods. This added value of port services may also attract loads - triggered by the ZCL and container terminal operation - which previously could not undergo such logistic processes (www1d).

Location of the Port of Szczecin and the trans-boundary character of the Oder river are the greatest asset of the container terminal, and they provide proper conditions for receipt and
handling of a greater number of containers than previously. Therefore, it provides solid basis for handling container logistic chains, based on inland waterways transport.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Complexity and dynamics of the processes taking place in the contemporary world, including aggravation of problems of a global reach causes that various forms of international cooperation develop in numerous sectors and fields. Such a field is also tourism, a great development dynamic of which in recent years causes that it is more and more often perceived as an important tool for solving various economic, ecological, social and cultural problems.

Nowadays, international organizations exert more and more influence on formation of tourist policy, both on the international and national scale. First of all, they shape the institutional and legal surroundings, and often establish directions and priorities of that policy. The European Union shows a growing initiative in the scope. However, great diversity of international tourist organization hinders analysis of this notions, as each entity realizes various aims and functions, thus playing a different role in the system of tourism management and tourist policy shaping. What is more, international cooperation should not be perceived only in the organizational or formal and legal aspect, but first of all in a dynamic dimension. It is a process that is in continuous realization. Objective, directions, forms, scopes and fields of this cooperation change.

References


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