

Plans For Development of Tourism In the Area of Danube Basin In Vojvodina And the Djerdap Gorge In Serbia

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Abstract For a long time, the rivers in Serbia have not been the object of scientific research for the needs of tourism, protection and valorization of tourist values in the coastal area and recreational needs of the population from the near-by city centers. However, there were studies and plans in this area, in which experts wrote about the problems of tourism as well. Those studies were published in a small number of copies, since they were made on order, and thus remained unknown to public. Since most of the plans have not been carried out, there is a general impression that today they are useless and forgotten. There are a number of written papers on the Vojvodina's part of Danube Basin, the Djerdap gorge, as well as on some smaller rivers and canals in Vojvodina. The river Danube, as the biggest river in Serbia, together with its basin in Vojvodina and the Djerdap gorge, has got many elements which qualify it not only as a national and European, but as one of the world's tourist value. Therefore, we are not satisfied with the present state of tourism in these areas, and we believe that the Danube tourist zone stretches far towards Europe. The zone has obviously expanded when the canal system Danube-Rhein-Main had been made. On the other hand, it has also shrunk after the bridges in Novi Sad had been destroyed in bombing, an event which stopped the river traffic in this area for many a year.

Key words plans, tourism, Vojvodina, Djerdap gorge, Danube, valorization, Serbia, scientific research, applicative action

The Danube-Tisza-Danube hydrosystem was the object of research and planning from the aspect of tourist potential. A study under the title "Basis of Spatial Organization Around the Danube-Tisza-Danube Hydrosystem" was made (Group of authors, 1966). The main starting point of this research is the great length of the system and its significant water resource. Considering the fact that Vojvodina is a continental plane, this hydrosystem is an element which has many functions. For the needs of tourism, the authors have concentrated on the zones of gravitation and, thus, defined the tourist values of the area.

The first tourist gravitation zone of the Danube-Tisza-Danube hydrosystem is made of the area with several Vojvodina's towns which, due to their location, do not have any better, bigger and, from the tourist point of view, more significant hydrographic objects than the rivers of Danube and Tisza and the canal system connecting those two. The authors have put the accent on the recreational importance of the first gravitation zone. It is pointed out that it is the people from the near-by towns who make the space around rivers and canals attractive for tourists and inhabitants of other towns, therefore, expanding the gravitation zone.

The second tourist gravitation zone is made of those rural, mixed and urban settlements which, apart from the Danube, the Tisza and the canals, have other hydrographic objects in their neighborhood. The second gravitational zone coincides with Banat and Backa, i.e. the east and northwest parts of Vojvodina. The settlements located on the banks of the rivers and canals would be able to satisfy recreational needs of their population, if the appropriate sport objects are built. Providing accommodation and food for tourists could further develop tourism and economy of the area.

The third tourist gravitation zone of the Danube-Tisza-Danube hydrosystem

stretches to Belgrade and includes the entire Srem and the east part of Slavonija. This area has a certain demand for hydrographic objects, sailing and water recreation. This zone is directly attached to the fourth zone, whose borders are not strictly defined. It includes other areas of Yugoslavia, as well as parts of some neighboring countries. The authors point out possible development of transit tourism on navigable rivers and canals of the Danube-Tisza-Danube hydrosystem, but they do not give precise data and documentation.

The study "Basis of Spatial Organization Around the Danube-Tisza-Danube Hydrosystem" points to the natural and anthropogenic tourist values of the rivers, canals and their surrounding. It also analyzes problems connected to preservation of water, as the basis for development of sailing tourism, water sports, especially fishing, and other sorts of tourist manifestations. In addition, the paper discusses characteristics of flora and fauna in the area, which is of great importance for development of hunting tourism and sport fishing. Some anthropogenic tourist values which can be included in tourist offer of the area are presented. The authors point out to possible forms of tourism in the area. The Danube-Tisza-Danube hydrosystem is ideal for recreational and sailing tourism. Anthropogenic values in the surrounding offer numerous possibilities to complement the present tourist offer with elements of cultural heritage.

Geographic position of the area in question, natural and anthropogenic attractions, present localities and the future plans for tourist exploitation of the riverbanks have caused a logical and justified division of the area into potential tourist zones. They are the following zones: Danube Basin, Middle Backa, Middle Banat and Southeast Banat. The combination of present tourist values in those zones can lead to the increase of general tourist offer in Vojvodina. The combinations of complementary tourist values are numerous. This fact has a positive effect on the variety of tourist offer. As a result, there have been plans to build a number of different tourist objects in the preserved ambiental localities.

There were plans for capacity expanding of 1980 beds in the hotels near the rivers Danube and Tisza and the canal system, and 6318 beds in the weekend zones. In tourist camps, there is space for 1810 tents. This material basis is complemented by other objects, mostly concentrated around Bezdan (auto-camp, weekend zone, hunters' club, tourist

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camp, restaurant). It was planned to build tourist centers near Srbobran, Bac, Becej, Novi Becej, Baltas and Janosik. In the tourist zone Vlajkovac - Vrsac - Banatska Palanka, the plan is to build a number of restaurants, hotels, camps, rest homes and two tourist camps and weekend zones. The purpose of all these objects would be to satisfy needs of both local population and tourists.

A closer insight into the study "Basis of Spatial Organization Around the Danube-Tisza-DanubeHydrosystem" reveals that the research was superficial and the plans for building tourist objects were blown up to unrealistic proportions. It turns out that they are not in accordance with tourist demand and that tourist market has not been adequately investigated (Stankovic, M. S., 1989). It is certain that local population would mainly use some of the objects and, thus, the tourist offer should be formed in accordance with the needs of this group. The towns included into wider gravitation zone of the Danube-Tisza-Danube hydrosystem are: Sombor, Bac, Novi Sad, Zrenjanin and Vrsac. The towns of inter-municipal importance are: Apatin, Backa Palanka, Becej, Kikinda and Bela Crkva. Towns whose tourist contraction zone stays within the limits of municipality are: Odzaci, Kula, Vrbas, Srbobran, Temerin, Novi Becej, Alibunar and Plandiste.

The Danube River – from Belgrade to Bulgarian Border

Bureau for Improvement of Communal Activities in Belgrade has made "Spatial Plan of Danube Coastal Area From Belgrade To Bulgarian Border" (Group of authors, 1967). One part of the plan refers to tourism, but it contains only general statements and idealistically interpreted phenomena and processes. This approach is a result of the fact that many important details could not be closely investigated due to the great size of investigated area. In any case, the aim of this study was not related to tourism and none of the scientists in the team was a tourist geographer.

The coastal area of the Danube River was divided into logical sectors. The authors established a dominant form of tourism, appropriate contents and objects for every sector. However, in several cases, they also include tourist values on a considerable distance from the river, which creates the impression that the research is unrealistic and that it would be impossible to connect all the localities into one unique territory. A good example for this would be the case of connecting the river Danube with Deliblato sand zone.

Sectors from Belgrade to Pozarevac and from Kovin to mouth of the river Nera were set aside for development of outing and weekend tourism in private rest houses. The adjacent towns would provide tourist demand. Recreation and water sports are seen as the basis for tourist offer. Development of hunting tourism in this area is also possible. For that purpose appropriate objects would be build and hunting ground would be organized.

Sector from the mouth of the river Mlava to Golubac is seen as suitable for development of outing tourism. Main attractions are two fortresses, Ram and Golubac, and the valley of the Pek River. The conditions are also favorable for development of children and youth tourism: good climate, water, vegetation, easy access to the locality, rich cultural heritage and agriculture.

The most valuable tourist site is the Djerdap gorge, 100 km long. It is known as a unique ambient locality, made of exceptional natural and anthropogenic tourist attractions. It is expected that tourists in transit would make breaks here and spend some time at attractive viewpoints or other interesting localities which would have to be organized in accordance with tourists' needs. Road and water traffic can both be used in sightseeing the Djerdap gorge. The nature is beautiful in all seasons, especially in summer, when the conditions for the sailing tourism are the best.

Tourist value of the Djerdap Lake has also been examined. It provides conditions for swimming, water sports, fishing and sailing. Mountainous terrain around the lake gives the opportunity for development of hunting tourism. The cultural heritage increases the value of this tourist area. The impressive cement dam and the "Djerdap" hydroelectric power station are interesting for school excursions and can provide transit of passengers from Yugoslavia to Romania and vice versa.

The last sector, running from the Djerdap gorge to the Bulgarian border, was given lost of attention in the study. The area has favorable conditions for fishing on the Danube and hunting on the near-by planes. The mountain slopes of Miroc, Veliki Greben and Deli Jovan are considered to be important for advancing the tourism in Kladovo and Negotin.

The authors predicted that, in 1975, there would be 2280 more beds in hotels, motels and tourist camps in the Danube Basin area stretching from Belgrade to the Timok river mouth. All these facilities together would be able to receive 390 000 guests per year. The number of permanent staff working in tourism would be around 250, and in the high season, additional 500 workers would

be hired.

Spatial plan, which, we are presenting, is the first of its kind that was made in Serbia. It offered a number of useful ideas and solutions. It marked out the way for global tourist organization of the space it refers to. Since the lakes Djerdap, Djerdap II and Srebrno Jezero near Veliko Gradiste did not exist at the time, the plan could not have foreseen all the changes. Still, the general impression is that tourist facilities and the expected tourist visit were exaggerated, which is a result of lack of tourist market investigation.

Tourist Area of the Danube River

The Institute for Tourism Research in Belgrade made a study called "Regional Spatial Plan – Tourist Area of the Danube River" (Group of authors, 1968). Starting from the need to preserve the main features of the area, especially those parts that were to be flooded by the Djerdap Lake, the authors consider the banks of the lake as a ground for tourist development. In that sense, the tourist facilities must be grouped around best locations, like Donji Milanovac.

In the tourist area around the Danube, we can talk about immediate zone, attached zone, wider zone and international zone. However, from the point of view of geography and tourism, the zones are not clearly defined. Immediate zone includes the river Danube with its banks; they have the biggest tourist value. There should be a concentration of tourist and catering facilities and appropriate infrastructure. Attached zone, that stretches from the banks, includes main roads, forests, hunting grounds and settlements of interest for tourists. Wider zone includes several tourist values which are complementary to those in immediate and attached zones around the Danube. Those values are mainly forests, hunting grounds, fortresses, monasteries and caves. International zone is defined in the similar way.

Regional spatial plan includes data about climate, hydrography and hydro-technical elements; it points out to forest complexes, tourist values and tourist activities. It also includes the information on traffic and other material conditions for development of tourism. The measures of environmental protection are planned in details. Some space is devoted to cultural and historical monuments, their protection, restoration and tourist presentation. There is an analysis of tourist demand up to 1990. The authors have, justifiably, expected faster increase of local tourist turnover than international one. Locations suitable for

tourist facilities are not specified in details. They can be defined as coastal, special and panoramic and, according to this division, they can be appropriately organized (Stankovic, M. S, 1994). Going too far from the river is not always justified for it leads to improvisation, especially because the traffic infrastructure is not satisfactory.

Coastal Area of the Djerdap Lake

In 1979, a group of experts from "Energoprojekt" in Belgrade made a plan called "Spatial Plan of the Area With Special Purpose On the Banks of the Djerdap II Lake" (Group of authors, 1979). The study emphasizes the need to preserve the original features of nature and ambient, as well as the way of life of local population. Particular localities are chosen for the main tourist activities. The most attractive ones are, of course, those around the water. The plan includes green areas for sport and recreation, as well as a small harbour for water sports, a fish pond, a camping site, observation points, restaurants, rest houses and other facilities for various forms of tourism.

The plan from 1979 divides the area into a coastal zone, running along the Danube, and a mountain zone in the surroundings. Those two zones are complementary and are both important in forming a unique tourist offer. The coastal zone is very attractive for tourists. The interesting localities are those in the Djerdap National Park, in sector Milutinovac - Brza Palanka - Kupuziste and sector Mihajlovac - Kusjak in Kljuc and in northern part of Negotinska Krajina. In the Djerdap National Park, the most significant localities are some parts of the gorge, hunting grounds, protected habitats of certain plant species and localities with archeological sites and historical monuments. Centers of tourism in this zone are Karatas, Kladovo and Mala Vrbica. The mountain zone is less defined than the previous one. The most interesting locality is the Vratna Monastery with the surrounding hunting ground.

After describing coastal and mountain localities in details, taking into consideration natural and anthropogenic tourist values, the authors conclude with an estimation of prospective tourist turnover and material base. The time has shown that the expectations concerning tourist development were inflated. Thus, the whole project seems to lack scientific basis. It was not realistic to expect that, in the last sector, the average rate of increase of tourists would be 5% per year (5.4% for overnight stays), that it would be possible to employ 800 new workers in tourism and build fa-

cilities with 2000 beds. The investment money was not available and, therefore, only a small part of the original plan was carried out. The plan remains as a witness of high ambitions, which lacked the necessary social and material prerequisites for realization. State is not justified because the Danube in Yugoslavia, especially the sector with Djerdap, is represented by lakes, gorges, valleys, one national park, nature reserves, archeological sites and medieval monuments. In addition, the conditions for river traffic were considerably improved after the dam had been built (Stankovic, M. S, 2000).

The Program of Economic Bureau

The institute for Marketing and Economic Research, Economic Bureau in Belgrade has made a study called "Program For Development of Tourism In the Danube Area From Belgrade To the Timok River Mouth" (Group of authors, 1981). The research is based on the fact that the Danube, together with narrow coastal zone and the lakes, represents the main tourist value. The wider zone features only as an additional tourist value. The main direction of tourist development on the river Danube, downstream from Belgrade, should be a tourist fleet – a basic condition for sailing tourism and other water activities.

The program includes zones that are important for the activation of tourism in the area. The city of Belgrade, with Zemun and the city sector of the Sava River, has been treated from the viewpoint of big local demand. The authors have emphasized great tourist possibilities of the sector Veliko Gradiste – Donji Milanovac. The zone of Donji Milanovac was estimated as the most attractive one for tourists. The Kladovo zone was given the central function. Municipalities were described separately in the study. Apart from describing momentary state, the authors have presented some perspective possibilities. They concluded that the factor which limits the development of tourism in this area is the unsolved problem concerning passenger water traffic.

The program refers to several interesting localities in the Danube sector near Grocka. In the Smederevo municipality, the fortress "Smederevski grad" represents the biggest tourist value. The plan for this municipality includes building a small harbor and making a link to holiday hotel "Jugovo". Tourist offer of Pozarevac is complemented with Kostolacka Ada and "Ljubicevo" horse farm. In the Veliko Gradiste municipality, the main tourist localities are Srebrno jezero (the Silver Lake) and the Ram fortress. Further downstream, there is a

fortress "Golubacki grad", as well as the Cezava locality with a harbor and a camp. The town of Donji Milanovac and the archeological locality Lepenski Vir are very attractive for tourists. The plan included building several tourist facilities in Kladovo and some private weekend houses in the bay of the Porec River. The plan was not carried out and, eventually, it became just a theoretical postulate.

Conclusion

All the above projects, plans and studies on the Danube sectors in Vojvodina and the Djerdap area, as well as some other attempts to activate tourism in this part of Serbia, remained without results. Whenever it came to switching from theory to practice, the lack of investment money was always a problem. The situation grew worse from year to year, especially after 1990, when the number of tourists in the Danube area dropped drastically. The reasons for present condition have to be investigated in details. Natural and anthropogenic potentials of the Danube River and its banks are of global importance, while the present tourist activity is on local or, at best, regional level.

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