

# CONTEMPORARY TRENDS IN NAUTICAL TOURISM ON THE EXAMPLE OF EUROPEAN RIVER CRUISING COMPANIES

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**ABSTRACT:** *Tourism is one of the most important initiators of economy in the world, as well as an activity which connects nations and countries the most. That is one of the main reasons which enable tourism to develop fast. Under the influence of rapid development and fast changes in demand, special forms of tourism have been demanded more and more recently. In accordance with that, this paper will explore a special form of tourism, more precisely current trends in nautical tourism in the area of cruising. The following of current trends is a condition for an accurate positioning on the dynamic and competitive market.*

*The subject of this paper is river cruises in Europe, and its goal is to determine the way cruising companies follow current trends in tourism. A dominant American cruising company "Grand Circle Cruise Line" was analyzed in comparison to competitive European cruising company "Croisi Europe". Cruises on the Danube River were studied in order to have a more precise analysis of products, price, sales channels and promotion of cruises, more precisely market segmentation – tourists and workforce. Methods used for collection, analysis and processing of data include historical method, field exploration (conducted during the work in the company "Grand Circle Cruise Line"), descriptive, comparative method and synthesis.*

**Key words:** *tourism, current trends, cruises, rivers in Europe, the Danube.*

## INTRODUCTION

New, unknown, exciting and distant have represented the background of the development of tourism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Creation and design of tourist offers follow but also condition new directions of development of tourism and way of thinking about tourist activity. Specific, alternative forms of tourism have become more and more talked about.

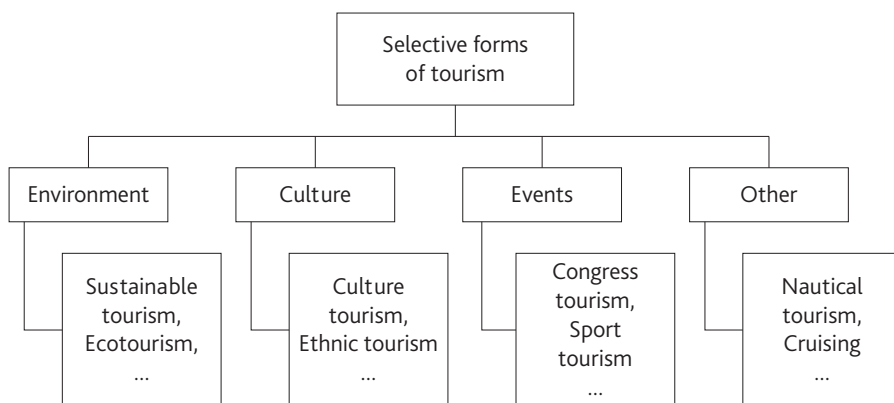
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We are faced with many new types of tourist movements which result in creation of different forms of tourism that have never been discussed in the previous century. It is a fact that the change of tourist offer brings new habits and new needs which can only be realized through special forms of tourism. Tourism is taking new forms and content and, in accordance with their motives and needs, special (selective) forms of tourism are being developed. Specific forms of tourism cannot be entirely observed and studied as “classic” forms of tourism. That is a complex phenomenon which is determined by the market through the following: strong influence of technological development on the selection of these types of tourist movements; strong market segmentation; specific characteristics of management and distribution of these forms of tourism (Milovanovic, 2011).

In the future, tourism will be characterized by: reduction of travel expenses, reduction of the length of stay, changes in the manner of holiday reservation, changes in the main motives of travel, new products and ways of promotion, future trends in tourism, continued growth of supply and demand, increased diversification of destinations and products, significant demographic changes (older population, changes in family structure), increased migration of population, increased number of individual trips (independently organized), new opportunities for future tourism in cooperation with low-cost airway companies and Internet possibilities, use of weekend houses for commercial purposes. World Tourist Organization (UNWTO) has predicted a profile of a new tourist who is: independent, experienced, oriented towards technology, active, looking to buy good quality for his money and wishes to learn from other cultures, has shorter holidays more frequently, is ecologically and socially sensitive (Kalinic, 2012; <http://www2.unwto.org/en>). Additionally, World Tourist Organization predicted, back in 1998, in the “Study of Tourist Vision”, five forms of tourism which will be in highest demand in the following two decades: culture tourism, event tourism, ecotourism, tourist cruises and thematic tourism (Hadzic, Bjeljic, 2005).

Numerous studies over the years have shown an increase of the number of tourist movements, increase of national income in many countries and number of people employed in tourist economy. In addition, there are other factors present, such as econom-



**Scheme 1.** Manifestation and types of selective forms of tourism

*Source: adapted from Štetić et al. (2013)*

ic, sociological, ecological and social, all of which have an impact on tourist economy. According to the World Tourist Organization's data for year 2012, the greatest amount of money was spent in international travel by Chinese tourists (102 billion US dollars), which puts them in the first position, followed by tourists from Germany, USA and Great Britain (<http://www2.unwto.org/en>). All these changes resulted in the formation of specific, selective forms of tourism. Their development and need for current trends contributed to the appearance of new directions of movement in tourism. Authenticity, experience in local environment and appreciation of hosts are only one of the forms of touristic demand which occur as a product of new, special forms in tourism.

These are only some of the characteristics which mark current trends and specific characteristics of special forms of tourism. According to Stetic et al., (2013), specific forms of tourism are divided according to: surroundings, culture, event and other (Scheme 1). This paper will focus on nautical tourism or cruises, which belong to other specific forms of tourism.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Kljajic (1962), the term “nautical” comes from a Greek word *nutos* (sailor) and signifies a navigation skill and seamanship, as opposed to Lukovic (2007), who believes that the term is derived from a Greek word *naus*, which means ship but also the skill of sailing.

In literature, the term ‘nautical tourism’ is frequently identified with the term ‘marinetourism’ – thus, with sailing and other sea activities exclusively. However, that type of tourism is also conducted on rivers, lakes and their coasts, on rented and own vessels for recreation, entertainment and sport, stationary or at sea (Stetic et al., 2013).

The development of nautical tourism has become a world phenomenon. Until the occurrence of air traffic (the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) trips, especially intercontinental ones, were carried out by ships, which gradually turned into luxurious hotels (Dragin, 2010). Tourist ships are nowadays considered to be hotels, as seen from the phrase “floating hotels” (Dowling, 2006). The 16<sup>th</sup> century saw the first known beginnings of cruises oriented towards fun, recreation and sport on Dutch canals. The most important events in the development of mass touristic cruises have taken place since the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The history of international touristic cruises starts with the year 1801 – steamboat “Charlotte Dundas” was launched to the market.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century started the construction of specialized ports for mooring of yachts and ships. Association of motor and ship constructors from New York “New York” used the term marina for the first time in 1928, which has been internationally recognized for all basic objects of nautical tourism. The most famous ship for touristic cruises across the Atlantic in 1935 was “Normandie” (Dragin, 2008).

Cruises are constantly increasing worldwide and represent an attractive form of contemporary tourist travel. During the last decade international tourist cruises became a tourist niche which showed the highest increase of all on the global level. While the global demand for international trips increased by the rate of 4.3%, the market of international tourist cruises showed an increase of 7.9% (WTO, 2003).

## TRENDS IN NAUTICAL TOURISM

Main and leading destinations of international tourist cruises which are in the focus of demand are North and Central America (57.15%), followed by Europe (24.10%) and the rest of the world (16.05%) (Brogen, 2004; Dragin, 2008). It is estimated that the market of tourist cruises will make a financial transaction of 36.2 billion US dollars in 2013 (4.8% more than in 2012); it is predicted that the tourist traffic connected to cruises will be 20.9 million (3.3% more than in 2012); direct costs of travelers and cruiser's crew in ports on the global level will amount to 17.5 billion US dollars for this year; total accommodation capacities of cruisers worldwide by the end of 2013 will be 438 595 tourists (3.0% more than in 2012) and 238 ships; it is expected that an average daily consumption of a tourist will be approximately 200 US dollars, an average price of a package tour will be around 150 US dollars and an average consumption on the cruiser around 50 dollars. An average length of a cruise is 8.5 days. (<http://www.cruisemarketwatch.com/articles/cruise-market-watch-announces-2013-cruise-trends-forecast/>).

World nautical market of internal waters is mainly focused on three centers: Europe, the river Nile and Far East. According to estimates, Europe has more than 15 000 fairway kilometers, including canals. Hrabovski-Tomic (2008) divides nautical tourism (spatially) into internal waters and open seas. According to the aforementioned author, the following three zones of internal waters have the longest tradition on the European market: the Mediterranean area, the Atlantic Ocean's coast and inner European waters.

Katic et al., (2011) claim that nowadays the most significant emissive areas of river-canal cruises incorporate the USA, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, Spain and France. Even though there are several separate sectors of cruises on European rivers, almost all big operators offer cruises on two or, more frequently, more rivers. The most well-known companies for cruises, which dominate the European market, are "Croisi Europe" and "Grand Circle Cruise Line".

Although the share of cruises on rivers on the total market is only symbolic, this type of tourist travel is becoming more and more popular every year. According to data from 2005, the world fleet for cruises on rivers included 518 ships, whose total capacity was 67 874 beds in travelers' cabins. Two years later (2007), the number of cruisers on rivers worldwide increased to 575 (9%), as well as the capacity of beds – 77 413 (14%) (Shipping Statistics and Market Review, 2007).

As far as European rivers are concerned, the most popular ones are the Danube and Rhine with their tributaries, including the Rhine-Main-Danube Canal and Dutch waterways (Katic et al., 2011). The data from "Liody's Cruise International" (2005) show that the number of ships which travel on the given river routes and canals is 115 ships with 16 739 beds. According to official data, the Danube is much superior not just from other rivers, but also in comparison to the Nile and the Yangtze River, which can be seen from the rate of growth of number of tourists which travel on the Danube – 12%. However, statistical data of the Danube touristic commission (February 2004) show that the number of tourists who cruise rivers worldwide increased to 1.3 million in 2003, which represents an increase of 11% when compared to 2002 (Dragin, 2010). In the period between 2008 and 2012, river cruises had an increase of 10% in tourist traffic on an annu-

al level (while on the global level cruises on oceans, seas and rivers altogether showed an increase of 7%). Tourist operators of river cruises reservations said that they had already sold almost all packagestours for the year 2014 at the beginning of 2013 (marketing for Cruise Travel Outlet, a booking website from <http://www.marketwatch.com/story/whats-behind-the-river-cruise-boom-2013-02-01>).

According to Stetic et al., (2013), great political changes have an impact on tourist cruises of Europe. However, the traffic of people and capital increases by repealing custom formalities and introducing a unique currency, which has a positive influence on tourist travel.

## METHODS AND PLACE OF RESEARCH

One of the methods used in creation of this paper is the historical method. It was used in order to demonstrate current trends of river cruises, with a focus on the company “Grand Circle Cruise Line“. Field research was conducted in the period between 2007 and 2012, during work on a ship of the given company.

Moreover, comparative method was used to compare data of the company “Grand Circle Cruise Line“ with the competing company from Europe “Croisi Europe“. Analysis of a research questionnaire gave results about profiles of tourists and cruisers’ employees on the Danube River in Serbia.

The researched area is river cruises and the researched locations are docks on the system Rhine-Main-Danube Canal and cruisers “River Aria“, “River Addagio“, “River Rhapsody“, “River Harmony“ (“Grand Circle Cruise Line“), “Van Gogh” and “Victor Hugo” (“Croisi Europe“).

## PROFILES OF COMPANIES “GRAND CIRCLE CRUISE LINE“ AND “CROISI EUROPE“

“Grand Circle Travel” was founded by Ethel Andrus in 1958 as a company specialized for trips of members of the “American Association of Retired Persons“. It gradually developed into a corporation “Grand Circle Corporation“, and since 1980 it has overcome its basic business concepts and has started offering its programs to all age groups on the tourist market of the USA. The basic brands of “Grand Circle Corporation” are companies “Grand Circle Travel” (which incorporates “Grand Circle Cruise Line“) and “Overseas Adventure Travel“. The corporation’s headquarters are in Boston (Massachusetts, USA). It includes 30 offices worldwide and a cadre of 2000 people (with employment contracts and specific contracts – economists, agents, captains, hosts, engineers, service providers, doctors, tourist guides). This corporation became a leader of the USA in international tourist trips, with the goal to provide holidays for Americans aged 50 and more ([www.gct.com](http://www.gct.com)).

“Grand Circle Corporation” started investing in its own fleet of tourist ships in 1997. According to data from 2005, the fleet consists of 45 ships – 16 of which are used for riv-

er cruises, 8 canal barges, 2 research ships, 19 private charter yachts and motor boats of lower accommodation ([www.advfn.com](http://www.advfn.com)). The current fleet has 10 ships, 3 of which are located in France (Seine, Rhone and Saone), 6 of which are on Rhine-Main-Danube Canal and one on the River Laba. Furthermore, this corporation is present on other markets as well. In Russia on the river Volga it has two ships and three ships on the Mediterranean. The company conducts organized cruises on the Atlantic, in Asia and through Panama Canal. The aforementioned tourist destinations are available on the official Internet page and are given under the name “Small Ship and River Cruises“ ([www.gct.com](http://www.gct.com)). Despite economic crisis, market turbulences and appearance of new competing companies, “Grand Circle Cruise Line“ does not fall behind in comparison with other cruising companies.

“Grand Circle Corporation” is enlisted as one of the first five companies in the world which employ small ships<sup>1</sup>. The company offers more than 100 different tour packages – river, canal and ocean cruises, exploring expeditions, inland trips and other ([www.advfn.com](http://www.advfn.com)).

The expand of its business can be seen from the fact that in 1985 “Grand Circle Corporation” had 5 000 sold out tour packages, which were 27 million US dollars of worth, while in 2007 it sold 166000 tour packages about 760 million US dollars of worth ([www.bizjournals.com](http://www.bizjournals.com)).

Since its founding up until 2000, more than 120 000 tourists from all American states traveled via “Grand Circle Travel” ([www.arb-forum.com](http://www.arb-forum.com)). Even more important information is that in the period between 1958 and 2008 more than 1.5 million tourists traveled via “Grand Circle Corporation” ([www.smallshipcruises.typepad.com](http://www.smallshipcruises.typepad.com)).

French company “Croisi Europe” is taken as a competitive company from the European market. The representation of its business profile will focus on the development of its business strategy – company’s history and range of work.

French family company “Croisi Europe” was founded in 1976 with headquarters in Strasburg. The company was founded by Gérard Schmitter with his wife. Nowadays, their heirs manage the company and run the entire business, which is divided into department for sailing, department for construction of ships, department for hospitality industry (lodging and restaurants) and finance department.

“Croisi Europe” consists of two cruising companies “Croisi Europe” and “Croisi Mer”. Furthermore, this company deals with construction of ships. It employs 900 people and its annual profit amounts to approximately 94 million euros.

Main destinations of tourist cruises of this company are European rivers. Its business success is confirmed by the fact that about 177 000 tourists traveled via this company in 2006.

The company started dealing with river tourism the same year when it was founded under the name “Alsace Croisières”. Its first ships with cabins “Hansi”, “Kléber” and “Petite France” were put on market in 1984. That enabled longer cruises with night stays on ships. They included international tourist cruises of Rhine, Neckar, Moselle, Main and Sava.

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<sup>1</sup> Dowling, 2006. – Classification of tourist ships; very small cruisers are ships which weigh from one to five tons; their accommodation capacity is between 16 and 320 tourists.

The first luxurious ship “Kellermann” became part of the fleet in 1986. In 1990 the company started constructing ships for personal use, with the goal to invent its own brand. The following year the company opened its office in Paris, which enhanced further expansion and breakthrough in potential demand. The first cruise on the Danube River was launched in 1993 and in 1995 two rivers, Rhone and Saone, were added to tourist programs. Brand “Alsace Croisières” was replaced with the new one, “Croisi Europe”, only in 1997, which enabled the company to spread to markets outside of France (Portugal, Spain, Italy, north Europe) and include sea cruises in their offer (such as Baltic).

In 2004, it expanded its business to the east. It created a tour package “On the Blue Danube” (from Passau to the Black sea) consisting of 12 days. Additionally, it began cruises on Tisa. The same year “Croisi Europe” launched on the market its biggest ship “MS Beethoven” (three decks, 110 m long, 11.4 m wide, and accommodation capacity 180 travelers).

In 2006, the company started partnership with UNESCO organization and launched another ship on Corridor 7 through tour package “Danube – Black sea”, which incorporated Serbia in its itinerary.

Nowadays, the company has branches all over Europe: Paris, Lion, Nice, Brussels etc. In 2007, it created a new brand - “Croisi Mer”, which is specialized in sea cruises.

In France “Croisi Europe” is the only constructor, owner and operator of ships specialized in international tourists cruises. Due to the fact that it controls the entire management, starting from the ship construction to its tourist travel, it is capable of maintaining a high quality of all services provided for tourists. Judging from that indicator, it is considered the strongest company in Europe in the area of river international tourist cruises.

River ships of this company are 82-110 m long and 9-11.4 m wide, depending on the river course cruised. Everything on the ship is adjusted to provide maximal comfort and functionality. Every cabin has its own bathroom and satellite TV. The ship has a system of air conditioners with separate thermo-adjuster in every cabin. The upper part of the ship is open, with an awning in one part.

Accommodation capacity of river ships of the company “Croisi Europe” is between 100 and 180 passengers. The entire fleet was designed to have mobility on all rivers which are part of the company’s tourist offer. The ships’ names were chosen from the world of art and culture: “Renoir”, “Van Gogh”, “Monet”, “Michel Angelo”, “Mona Lisa”, “Victor Hugo”, “Modigliani”, “Léonard de Vinci”, “Beethoven” and others.

The expansion of its business is confirmed by the fact that their annual capital turnover in 2004 was 81 million euros, in 2005 87 million, and in 2006 about 94 million euros. More than 9 million euros was invested in construction of new ships in 2006 and about 8 million in 2005. The ships were constructed according to latest standards (“VERITAS standards”) and equipped with the latest technology. Since 1999 “Croisi Europe” has been constructing two-three ships annually.

The number of tourists who use the services of this company has been continually growing. In 2004 about 163 000 tourists cruised via “Croisi Europe”; in 2005 about 172 000, in 2006 about 177 000 and in 2011 about 191 600 tourists ([www.wtmlondon.com/Press/Sailing-towards-new-horizons](http://www.wtmlondon.com/Press/Sailing-towards-new-horizons)).

The main emissive areas for cruises on European rivers in this company's offer are: France, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Belgium, Great Britain, USA, Canada, Finland, Italy, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Turkey, Japan, Spain and Portugal. About 30% of travelers annually are foreign tourists.

In addition to Europe, "Croisi Europe" expanded its touristic offer to China, Mongolia and Canada (Croisi Europe, 2007).

## BUSINESS TRENDS OF COMPANIES "GRAND CIRCLE CRUISE LINE" AND "CROISI EUROPE"

Some of the most popular rivers in Europe are the Danube, Rhine and their tributaries. The company "Grand Circle Cruise Line" – "GCCL"<sup>2</sup> can satisfy the needs of demand with its offer of six ships on the Rhine - Main - Danube. As far as the Danube is concerned, "GCCL", as the most attractive company for tourist cruises worldwide, offers three routes, which follow the contemporary trends of tourist demand. In addition to the given destinations, the Mediterranean area is very attractive for cruises in Europe. The same company owns two ships and five routes in this area. The company is also present in other cruising destinations, such as the Caribbean, Europe and Alaska.

All of the aforementioned offers are available on the website of the company "Grand Circle Cruise Line", which gives plenty of information in a simple way (however, only in English). All current ways of online reservation are available. It is also possible to download itinerary with basic geographic data about countries visited. Moreover, other information, which is in accordance with contemporary business trends, trips and other, is also available (for example, conditions of travel, sustainable growth, consumers' protection etc.).

The company's tourist offer for Europe is given under the name "*Learning and Discovery*". This idea is derived from intercultural activities and encounters with local population. It enables travelers to move in groups through local communities, listen to folklore tales, discuss history, tradition, and attend cooking lessons and traditional ceremonies. These exchanges of cultural experience are enriched by local guides, thus providing a unique knowledge of national culture and everyday tradition. This is only one form of tourist demand conducted by this company, which occurs as a product of new special forms in tourism. That clearly shows that provision of basic accommodation and food is not enough – the need for experience is necessary. Thus, it is necessary to follow and apply contemporary trends which appear on the market, but also to apply control of quality of service and other activities.

The comparison of the trend of trips that last several days shows that "Grand Circle Cruise Line" offers the longest traveling period on rivers. Canal Rhine – Main – Danube is the most popular cruising destination in Europe in both companies, which was confirmed in a research conducted by "Liody's Cruise International" (2005). Company "Croisi Europe" does not include rivers Laba and Volga as destinations in its offer, but it

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<sup>2</sup> Grand Circle Cruise Line – "GCCL"



**Table 1.** Current offers destination company „Croisi Europe“ and “Grand Circle Cruise Line” in the European market

Destinations where sail ships	„Croisi Europe“ (duration of the cruise; 3-11 days)		„Grand Circle Cruise Line“ (duration of the cruise; 3-11 days)	
	No. of ship	No. route	No. of ship	No. route
Rhine – Main – Danube (RMD Canal)	15	28	6	9
Laba (Germany and Czech Republic)	-	-	1	1
Volga(Russia)	-	-	2	1
Rhone and Saone (France)	3	15	2	2
Seine (France)	3	9	1	1
Douro (Spain and Portugal)	3	6	-	-
Gironde and Garonne (estuary France)	1	8		
Guadalquivir (Spain)	1	6	-	-
Guadiana (border between Spain and Portugal)	1	6	-	-
Po (Italy)	1	5	-	-
Dnieper (Ukraine)	-	-	-	-
The Mediterranean area	1	4	3	5
The area of Atlantic coast	-	-	-	-
Total	29	83	15	15

(Source:www.croisieurope.traveluwww.gct.com)

stands out with a new form of tourist demand on Guadalquivir (Spain), Guadiana (border between Spain and Portugal) and Po (Italy). Additionally, “Croisi Europe“ does not fall behind “Grand Circle Cruise Line“ when it comes to tourist offers for the Mediterranean area.

Generally, analyzed companies do not include in their offers the Atlantic coast as a destination. “Croisi Europe“ stands out as far as the number of ships and itineraries are concerned (table 1).

At the moment, contemporary trends of demand dictate several-day trips on waterways of Europe through several countries. Furthermore, as in all types of tourism, there is a great need and demand for the Internet on ships, for various free time activities, expansion of hotel offer and other. It is possible to modernize watervessels, but not to expand their dimensions; more precisely, it is possible to modernize and make their inner design more attractive (however, water routes with certain specific characteristics on rivers limit the ship’s capacity to a great extent). The aforementioned factors are only some of the limits that prevent the expansion of tourist offer. Nevertheless, companies



**Map 1.** Current offers destination companies in the European market

*Author: Vuksanović, 2013*

should follow contemporary trends and actively influence the adjustment and offer's development in the following ways: the manner in which they advertise their company and its services, following trends regarding the quality of services and expanding activities outside of ships.

All of the aforementioned factors are very significant for categorization of ships, which is important for verification of services' values on the market, protection of both demand and supply through given prices, quality and content that should be prescribed for every category (minimal conditions).

## MARKETING PLAN OF THE DANUBE CRUISE OFFER PLACEMENT

Giving a definition of a tourist product is not simple, because it is a complex, heterogenic product, which is segmented by both space and time. The presence of a tourist (consumer) is crucial for its whole existence. Moreover, the tourist product consists of both material and non-material component (service). The same applies to tourism based on international tourist cruises.

British theoretician Medlick determined five crucial factors in order to define the a product of hospitality (which represents the base of cruising): location (as a spatial functioning frame), material conditions and conveniences (equipment, appliances etc.), services – style and way of provision, price and image (Kosar, 2002). Image is a value or quality of a tourist product as experienced by a consumer. According to Go and Pine (1995), product's value is the combination of quality, needs, expectations and price.

es. That is why it is necessary for creators of cruise companies' tourist offers to foresee as much as possible potential needs of their users and to offer them, based on material-spatial, technical-technological and non-material (organizational-cadre) resources and possibilities, a certain form of their synergy. Additionally, the price needs to fit financial abilities of potential users.

The concept of a ship, as a material element of a cruising product, is very sensitive, primarily in the area of spatial limits. Its space must secure the working process which refers to realization of basic and additional services, or "production and consumption" of the complex product of hospitality. At the same time, tourists must not get the impression of confinement, which can easily happen on a river and river ships.

Premises reserved for guests are: reception premises, communicational premises, premises for guests' stay (public premises – reading room, premises for board games etc.), premises for provision of food and drink (restaurant, bars), premises for provision of special services (sport-recreational centers, beauty salons etc.), sanitary-hygienic premises and accommodation premises. Further text will give more detailed descriptions of ships "River Adagio" and "River Aria", which are used for cruises of the Danube through Serbia within the company "Grand Circle Cruise Line". The ships are constructed in four basic levels, within which there are seven sublevels: *Sun deck*, *Serenade deck*, *Adagio deck*, *Aria deck*, *Sonata deck*, *Cantata deck* and *Prelude deck*. Upper level (*Sun deck*) is open and used for rest, exercise, sunbathing, board games, sightseeing and other. The command bridge for navigation is located on the front part of this deck. Restaurant and bar are placed in sublevels under the command bridge (*Adagio deck* and *Aria deck*). The basic purpose of other four levels is accommodation.

*Serenade deck* is a level with the most luxurious cabins, whose area is minimum 14 m<sup>2</sup>. The basic advantage of these 20 cabins is balconies. Levels placed bellow, *Sonata deck* (34 cabins) and *Cantata deck* (14 cabins) have cabins with windows (without balconies), while the lowest level – *Prelude deck* (14 cabins) has cabins with windows placed just above the water's surface. *Prelude deck* is the only level which is not connected with other levels by an elevator. In addition to accommodation capacity, the level *Cantata deck* also includes a gym and a sauna. The company's offer for loyal customers consists in the privilege of entering "Inner Circle Club" with the third trip. The privileges of this club are multiple, including various discounts, priority in transport, choice of cabin and many others. *Serenade deck* is a level with cabins which are first given to members of the aforementioned clubs. They are given golden name tags which are carried around neck. Moreover, this card allows customers to consummate certain drinks, which are not available for other passengers. Distribution of other cabins is based on reservation.

All cabins have a bathroom, radio and TV set, direct telephone lines (via satellite), safe and two beds which can be transformed to sofas to provide more comfort. Due to the fact that the company is American, the choice of TV channels for tourists includes CNN. Additionally, a direct recording by a camera placed on the ship's bow is given as a special TV program (Grand Circle Travel, 2005).

The ship of the company "Croisi Europe" which most frequently sails on Corridor 7 through Serbia is "Victor Hugo". It was placed on the tourist market in 2000. It is 110 m long and its accommodation capacity is 150 passengers (77 cabins). It has a simi-

lar appearance and contents as the previously described ships of American companies (L'Europe en Croisières, 2004).

Tour packages of the given companies are based on cruises which usually last for 13 days (but also up to 24 days), with the possibility of trip expansion by staying on land before or after the cruise in Budapest, Dubrovnik, Transylvania etc. In addition to accommodation and food, the package incorporates transport by airplane, certain trips on land (by bus or railway), dinner with the captain, guides' services etc. Differences in prices in one cruising company are caused by program's length, shifts, ship's class, ship's level, transport by airplane or railway, travelling alone, in a pair or in a group, traveling with the same company for the second time (loyalty to the company) etc. So, for example, the price range of tourist packages for cruises of Corridor 7 on European and American market is between 749-5.320 euros.

Tour packages are sold in several ways: directly (via offices, Internet, on fairs – by tour operators and travel agencies of cruising companies) and indirectly (via partners – e.g. travel agency). According to numerous studies, it has been established that a tourist contacts an agent of a travel agency approximately 1.8 times in order to inquire about reservation of a classic tour package. When it comes to international tourist cruises, it is almost double – 3.2 times. Moreover, an average length of a reservation of a standard package in a travel agency is 25 minutes, while a reservation of a cruise lasts for about 2 hours. This means that a buyer of a tour package based on international tourist cruise must have a large amount of information in order to opt for buying and filling out reservation form (Dragin, 2010). It has also been established that these packages are mainly sold out a year before and now even more frequently on the ships during previous cruises.

## ANALYSIS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE'S RESULTS

Married couples, especially the generations that were born after the World War II (*baby boomers*<sup>3</sup>), constitute the biggest percentage in international tourist cruises. This commercial segment of demand has developed (fixed) traveling habits. In addition, cruises, as a peaceful and safe way of travel with a rich content, are an adequate form of tourist movement for their age. As emphasized by "Association of Companies Specialized in International Tourist Travel": "Baby boomers are the heart of international tourist cruises" (CLIA, 2004; taken from Dragin, 2008).

An average age of tourists on cruisers including both seas and oceans is 45 years (Dowling, 2006). However, travelers who travel with "GCCL" on very small (river) cruisers are on average 73 years old – 85% of them are retired people, sex ratio is equal; 65% of travelers are married couples, while 35% are single (Grand Circle Cruise Line, 2012). The situation is similar in the case of demographic profile of the company "Croisi Europe". The main difference between them is emissive markets, more precisely speaking area. In order

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<sup>3</sup> *Baby boomers* – Population born in the first decade after a war. That decade usually brings a rapid increase of birthrate.

to establish emissive, gender and age structure of tourists and cruiser employees and to remove fluctuations (which could be accidental), travelers of 67 ships which were docked in Novi Sad in 2007 were analyzed as a representative sample (12.9% of total tourist traffic of cruisers in Novi Sad that year). That includes 8 225 tourists (12.4% of total tourist traffic from cruisers in Novi Sad that year) and 2218 crew members (from 54 ships). An average age of tourists is 69.4 years, and they docked in Serbia from 37 countries (from all continents). Their ratio is as follows: 30.1% from Germany, 26.2% from the USA, 10.0% from the UK, 9.8% from France and 3.9% from Switzerland. The remaining tourists arrived from 32 countries (from all continents) and constitute 20.0% of tourist traffic. The research was repeated the following year (with a sample of 60% of the total tourist traffic of cruisers in Novi Sad that year), which established that the given trends were continued.

When it comes to ship crew, it has been established that there are cruiser employees from 32 countries (table 2). About 99.1% are citizens of European countries (2199 persons from 27 countries), 0.1% of employees from the territory of the USA, and 0.7% are citizens of three Asian countries (Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines). Citizens of countries with the Danube River who are present on cruisers take first eight and the tenth place.

Austrians and Germans are mostly employed as hotel managers and cooks, while Slovaks, Hungarians, Romanians, Serbians and Ukrainians are waiters and maids. Ad-

**Table 2.** Structure of employees on ships by nationality

Pbp	Nationality	No.	%	Pbp	Nationality	No.	%
Europe				Europe			
1.	Romanians	543	24,5	19.	Norwegians	1	>0,0
2.	Ukrainians	486	21,9	20.	British	1	>0,0
3.	Hungarians	313	14,1	21.	Belgians	1	>0,0
4.	Slovaks	293	13,2	22.	Danes	1	>0,0
5.	Bulgarians	160	7,2	23.	Swiss	1	>0,0
6.	Germans	133	6,0	24.	Slovenes	1	>0,0
7.	Serbs	89	4,0	25.	Italians	1	>0,0
8.	Austrians	44	2,0	26.	Portuguese	1	>0,0
9.	Dutch	27	1,2	27.	The Greeks	1	>0,0
10.	Croats	24	1,1	North America			
11.	French	20	0,9	28.	SAD	3	0,1
12.	Czechs	16	0,7	Africa			
13.	Poles	12	0,5	29.	Ghana	1	>0,0
14.	Bosnia and Herzegovina	8	0,4	Asia			
15.	Macedonians	7	0,3	30.	Indonesians	9	0,4
16.	Lithuanians	6	0,3	31.	Filipinos	5	0,2
17.	Russians	5	0,2	32.	Sri Lanka	1	>0,0
18.	Latvians	4	0,2	Total		2.218	100,0

(Source: Lists of crew boats)

**Table 3.** Structure of employees on ships according to nationalitie within the same job (share in%)

Senior positions						
Nationality	Captain	Second Captain	Cruise-manager	Hotel-manager	Reception manager	The chef
Austrians	5,0	3,2	14,3	13,2	14,3	9,5
Germans	3,3	4,8	32,1	35,9	42,9	23,8
Slovaks	5,0	3,2	–	17,0	7,1	7,1
Hungarians	3,3	4,8	7,1	11,3	7,1	11,9
Romanians	33,3	33,3	10,7	3,78	14,3	14,3
Serbs	–	–	28,6	3,78	–	11,9
Ukrainians	9,0	36,5	–	–	–	2,4
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
Middle position						
Nationality	Doctor	Cook	Bartender	Waiter		
Austrians	16,7	2,6	–	–		
Germans	–	8,7	2,0	1,1		
Slovaks	6,7	14,4	18,8	17,3		
Hungarians	–	10,8	15,8	11,8		
Romanians	30,0	17,4	26,7	28,7		
Serbs	–	7,2	5,0	4,4		
Ukrainians	26,7	28,7	17,8	19,5		
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0		
Lower position						
Nationality	Housekeeper	Dishwasher	Launderers	Mechanic		
Austrians	0,4	–	–	2,2		
Germans	4,0	–	–	4,4		
Slovaks	15,0	36,0	–	9,9		
Hungarians	18,6	36,0	18,4	4,4		
Romanians	31,0	16,0	26,3	22,0		
Serbs	4,9	–	–	–		
Ukrainians	15,0	4,0	52,6	49,4		
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0		

(Source: Lists od crew boats)

ditionally, majority of Austrians opt to be ship doctors, Serbs and Slovaks opt for cooks and Ukrainians for cooks and mechanics.

Most captains come from Romania (33.3%), Holland (18.3%) and Ukraine (9.0%). Moreover, Ukrainians and Romanians are also dominant on the positions of second officers, but also mechanics and cooks. With more than 30%, Germans are predominantly employed on

the positions of cruise managers, hotel managers and chief of reception (table 3). The French aspire to the sector of food and drink, as well as Filipinos (but on lower positions).

## CONCLUSION

It is safe to conclude that nautical tourism is developing fast and that it contributes to the expansion of tourist market. As can be seen from the above, it belongs to specific form of tourism and has a tendency of global development. The representation of contemporary trends of development and offer of “Grand Circle Cruise Line“ and “Croisi Europe“ leads to the conclusion that the aforementioned companies are present on the currently most popular nautical destinations. Moreover, new forms of tourist offer stand out, such as cruises of rivers Guadalquivir, Guadiana, Po and Dnieper. A possible threat to these companies could be the economic crisis.

The representation of trends of development of nautical tourism confirms that this form of tourism has enough specific characteristics to be a special type of tourism. This claim is supported by the performances of these companies discussed in this paper. The companies’ tourist offer is directed towards fifty plus age group. Taking into account that the living expectancy is becoming permanently longer, thus increasing the world’s population average age, the companies’ strategic decision about tourist cruises corresponds to contemporary business trends. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that an average age of tourists on cruises worldwide is already 45 years (Dowling, 2006). Thus, it can be concluded that future trends regarding river cruises will be focused on attracting younger population as well.

The fact that there are tourists from numerous countries (from the USA, New Zealand, Czech Republic, Portugal, the Republic of South Africa and others) on the same ships proves that this type of tourism has been affected by the process of globalization. Additionally, cruisers have become a popular job market for the entire planet. For example, cruisers on the Danube employ people from 32 countries.

The representation of touristic destinations offered by the aforementioned companies and comparison of contemporary trends can give numerous useful data to other developing companies which are designing their tourist products or offers. Based on the analysis that is the framework of this paper, we can conclude that it is necessary to follow contemporary trends in tourism and cruises in nautical tourism. River tourism has a very specific tourist product and as such, it should be continually modernized and it should tend to follow the latest trends as frequently as possible.

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