

THE EFFECT OF THE 2012 EUROPEAN HANDBALL CHAMPIONSHIP ON THE HUMBER OF VISITS IN HOTELS IN NOVI SAD

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APSTRACT: *The introduction of capitalism, new products and social relations, as well as a modern lifestyle, opened a path to a more versatile development of an increasing number of different sporting events. A major sporting event such as the European handball championship which took place in January 2012 in Novi Sad, Belgrade, Vršac and Niš, brought thousands of tourists to these cities, resulting in an increasing consumption, both in accommodation facilities in these cities as well as in many other hospitality, marketing and other companies. The objective of this paper is to show sports facilities in the Novi Sad hotels and analyze the effect of a major sporting manifestation, the European Handball Championship, on the number of visits of the hotels in Novi Sad. The aim of the paper is to fulfill the given objective by comparing the number of visits from the previous two years in the same period. By comparing the number of overnight stays in the Novi Sad hotels in January 2012 when the Championship took place, with the same period in the previous two years it was concluded that there was a sudden increase in the number of overnight stays in 90% hotels.*

Key words: *hotel management, sporting event, sports tourism*

INTRODUCTION

The beginning of 21st century was marked by new global trends in the economy and society. Modern trends are very dominant in tourism and hotel management as a result of these changes. They may be even more prominent when compared to other branches of economy. Innovations are present not only within the economic but also political, business, cultural, sociological and psychological dimension of tourism, which results

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in an important specificity of the hotel management to gradually leave its classical frame of being a simple and uniform social activity.

A continuous growth of tourism which manifests itself in a steady increase of the tourist flow and consumption, as well as engaging new layers of the population into international tourist flows and their segmentation makes an increasing competition on the global tourist market. Modern tourists are becoming increasingly more demanding, and their needs are being increasingly more sophisticated, expressing demand for new destinations, new types of offer and the most various activities during their tourist stay.

Sports and sporting events in modern tourism are not only an observed object but also an important part of the stay at the tourist destination where tourists become active participants in different sports (Bartoluci, Škorić, 2009). Apart from the competitive sport which is being implemented with the help of tourism, in modern tourism sport and all of its forms is becoming an important part of the tourist stay where tourists become active participants in different sports and recreational activities. Such relationship spurs recognizable forms of sports tourism at the sea, competitive sports tourism, numerous major sporting spectacles, special tourism in spas and other. Thus, sport has entered the sphere of tourist market and has become an important factor of tourism development (Bartoluci, 2003).

Thus, sports and tourism are mass social and economic phenomena which are largely intertwined. The relation between tourism and sports is reflected in tourism and sports factors, functions which generate tourism and sports as well as their economic effect (Trkulja, 2008). Sports tourism involves all types of active and passive involvement in sports activities which take place occasionally or regularly for non-commercial or business and commercial reasons, where it is necessary to leave the place of residence or business environment.

Sport tourists are major consumers, they enjoy new experiences and they often stimulate other tourist forms. Their direct effect on the destination is income, and their indirect effect might be tourists who come by recommendation or follow them.

This paper will show the effect of the 2012 European Handball Championship in January 2012 on the number of visits in hotels in Novi Sad by analyzing the number of visitors in 11 hotels of different categories. In order to determine the effect of such major sporting event, the paper compares the number of visitors within three years in the month when the Championship took place.

SPORTS TOURISM

Sports tourism is a non-commercial travel in order to participate in sporting activities or become their spectator away from the place of residence (Plavša, 2007).

In general, travels related to sporting and physical activities are one part of tourist activity which is being developed the fastest. In other words, "sports tourism is a social, economic and cultural phenomenon which is the result of unique interaction of activities, people and places" (Weed, 2008).

The development of sports tourism results in numerous direct and indirect economic effect on destinations, such as affecting the motivation to choose the tourist destination.

tion, the increase of extra services consumption as well as the promotion of versatility and quality of the tourist offer (Škorić, 2008).

The effect of sporting events on the tourist destination is significant through the improvement of image (spreading positive vibrations of the country), positive economic effects (increase in tourist consumption and opening new work places), an increase in the number of visits to the regions, making new activities as well as the improvement of the local infrastructure, an increase in the level of local interests and involvement in the activities related to the event, an increase in traditional and regional values and customs, as well as through promotion of other attractions (Morgan, Prichard, Pride, 2004).

The share of sports tourism in individual countries

The research of the Global Tourist Organization from 2011 shows that German tourists mark 32 millions of sport-oriented travels a year, which is 55% of all travels. The Dutch make 7 million travels which involve sport components and thus make a 52% share of yearly travels. French tourists were less motivated for sports tourism, although 3.5 million travels motivated by sports activities make a 23% share in tourist flows.

British research by the foreign agency *Visit Britain*, point to the result of 20% of tourist travels directly related to sport. Apart from this it must be taken into account that the development of sports tourism and the increase of share of sport-motivated travels is not only a European trend. In the USA, sporting event tourism generates 27 billion dollars a year (*Travel Industry Association of America*, 2001) and 2/5 of total population i.e. 75 million people attend sporting events. A research in Canada from 1998 shows that 37.3% out of 73.7 millions of domestic travels were made in order to attend a sporting event (Milenković, 2009).

In Australia, the Bureau of Tourism Research showed that 12.9 millions of domestic travels were made with the aim of participating in, spectating or organizing sporting events in 1999 (Richie, 2003).

SPORTING EVENT

Sporting event involves various activities of the organisers which are directed towards the program offer to certain sportingspectators in order to achieve a sports result. On the other hand, sporting events can be observed, and in a broader context, where it is not of primary relevance to achieve a sports result but rather their non-competitive character. In this case, sporting events involve recreation, relaxation, entertainment and amusement (Milenković, 2011).

In order to adequately view the complexity of a sporting event it is necessary to establish the factors which determine its importance. These factors involve: frequency of the sporting event, its size, its content, authenticity, visitors' profile, the event concentration at sports venues, requirements for venues and infrastructural facilities and management and planning (Trkulja, 2008).

Major sporting events visitors can be classified in the following way:

1. Local visitors—they represent a group of people whose place of residence is in the host city and for them this does not require additional tourist services such as accommodation.
2. Domestic visitors—people whose place of residence is outside the host city and who are in need of accommodation and use other types of tourist services, such as hospitality services to a great extent.
3. External visitors—they involve sports people, media representatives, match officials from the corresponding sports facilities or federations and all other who are directly related to the functioning of the championship.
4. External tourists—the most represented group which requires overall service, and is distinguished by a significant share in the total tourist income (Milenković, 2011).

Types and forms of sporting events

The introduction of capitalism, new products and social relations as well as a new lifestyle opened the path to a more versatile development of an increasing number of different sporting events. Today, sporting events involve a wide range of manifestations within the sports sector, starting from the simplest and the least demanding (local tournaments, competitions of amateur sportsmen, certain games at the lowest levels of competition, sporting and promotional manifestations), over amateur tournaments, leagues and other manifestations within the competitive sports, professional championships, to European and World championships, Olympic games and other high-commercial (top-class) sporting events (Šurbatović, 2011).

Moreover, sporting events can be classified according to their importance and level, their rank, form principle, sport quality, age principle, geographical principle, sports typology principle, versatility and complexity principle, sports branch principle, the level of presentation principle, and other (Iago, Shaw, 1998). Apart from this, sporting events may be competitive or recreational, intended to raise financial funds, meet social goals or simply intended to offer quality entertainment.

If we take into account the most prominent notions in modern sports scientific papers, in this case, the most common classification of sporting events is the following: international sporting events, national sporting events, regional sporting events, local sporting events and other.

There are three primary reasons for the expansion and constant increase in the level of attractiveness of major sporting events. The main reason lies in the continuous development of technology which is used in mass communication and which acquired an incredible large population across the world who follows global events such as the Olympic Games or the Football World Cup. Another reason is forming partnerships which relate sport to media and corporation society. Such partnership has transformed professional sport in the end of 20th century. Through different sales models of sponsorship rights, exclusive rights to broadcast and income from the so-called *merchandising* i.e. selling products related to a major sporting event, the sponsors are encouraged by sports federations and associations to get involved. The third reason why sporting events are

being increasingly popular and have overcome the borders of a country is the tourist potential of each host city of a major sporting event (*Denis et al.*, 1988).

Sporting events characteristics

Sporting event is one of the most basic pillars of sports resources but also marketing resources of any association, club, championship organizer or any sportsman or sports trainer (*Tomić*, 2001).

Sporting event can be international, national, regional or local, it may involve sport or any other sporting activity, can be competitive or recreational, intended to raise financial funds, meet social goals or simply intended to offer quality entertainment. Each year numerous sporting events take place around the world. They vary from small local competition, mostly organized according to the knockout system, over medium-sized championships, mostly on a national level which are most commonly leagues, to major championships on a global level.

Special sporting events are classified into smaller events, festival events and main events. General characteristics of sporting events are the following: limited duration; they do not have a proper timetable; they affect the increase of popularity, image of a country, region, city; they have a prominent social character and attract tourists and affect the development of tourism of a specific destination (*Milenković*, 2011).

The biggest sporting events, such as the European Handball Championship goes along with significant changes and a range of effects, where the most prominent ones are economic, social, cultural and political. Opening new work places, improving the infrastructure, increasing the consumption and global recognition of the destination are the most important positive effects which are the result of organizing such event.

THE 2012 EUROPEAN HANDBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

The European Men's Handball Championship takes place every second year since 1994 and is organized by the EHF (the European Handball Federation).

There have been 26 representations at previous European Men's Championships, out of which 10 representations have won medals. Only five representations have participated in all previous championships: France, Croatia, Germany, Russia and Spain (www.arenabeograd.com).

The tenth European Handball Championship took place 15-29 January 2012 in Serbia. The official decision was made September 27, 2008 at the EHF congress in Vienna (www.sportlive.at).

This was the second European Championship which used a new classification system, according to which only the host and the defender have direct placement and all other representations must play in the qualifications.

Sixteen representations were divided into four groups. Serbia was the carrier of the A group, Macedonia for the B group, Hungary for the C groups and Croatia for the D group. The Championship took place during the Olympic year thus it was significant for

those representations which have not ensured their participation at the Olympics. Serbia was among those representations (www.etrafiika.net).

The games were played in five halls in four cities: Belgrade, Novi Sad, Niš and Vršac.

Novi Sad as the host city of one part of the 2012 European Handball Championship

Novi Sad has been the host city of numerous and various sporting, cultural, economic, ethnographic, tourist and entertainment manifestations.

The city has always been a good host and exemplary organizer of sporting events and spectacles. Among others, the Table tennis World Championship, The Chess Olympics and the 2005 European Basketball Championship all took place in Novi Sad. Novi Sad has also hosted auto and motorcycle races, athletic marathon, bicycle races and other competitions which gathered Serbian and foreign participants. The biggest mass sports and recreational manifestations is *the mountaineering marathon at Fruška Gora* which gathers 10 thousand amateur mountaineers. The marathon takes place in the beginning of May and the participants choose their own trekking (mountaineering) trails, which range from ten to one hundred km (www.visitnovisad.rs).

Sports games for children with disabilities within the *Best woman championship* project, take place in Novi Sad since 2010 (www.novisad.rs).

The 2012 European Handball Championship took place at the SPENS (the Novi Sad sports center). The SPENS (abbreviated from the Table Tennis Championship of Novi Sad in 1981) is a sport, recreational and business center in Novi Sad located in the old town. The building started in May 1979, and it opened April 14, 1981 for the 36th Table Tennis World Championship. The center is multi-functional, considering that it involves various activities: business activities, sports, culture, congress activities, press-center, hospitality activities, tourist activities (Plavša, Romelić, 2000).

THE PAPER RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sports facilities in the Novi Sad hotels

Only five hotels in Novi Sad offer the possibility of sports and recreational activities. These are the following: *Park, Gymnas, Best Western Prezident, Elite* and *Sole Mio*.

The Park hotel offers a special service of using the relaxation center Sanus which offers using the gym, the spa, massage and the beauty salon. The recreational programs involve VIP programs, group recreational programs, pregnant ladies recreational program, school of sports and swimming for the children, the *My trainer* program and the *Power Plate* program. The spa program involves visiting the swimming pool, sauna, Roman bathroom and special spa packages.

The *Best Western Prezident* hotel offers the spa and recreational programs, a centre with indoor and outdoor swimming pools, Turkish bathroom, Finnish sauna, jacuzzi and a gym.

The *Gymnas* hotel offers a gym equipped with numerous modern exercising machines and they also offer other group exercise programs (pilates, yoga, body-mind, taekwondo and others), as well as personal trainings.

The *Elite* hotel is the only sports hotel in Novi Sad and it is primarily oriented toward tennis. There is a tennis academy, the school of tennis within the hotel.

The hotel *Sole Mio* offers the use of two swimming-pools, a hydro-massaging bath, sauna, the gym, spa and relaxation program.

Only the *Park* hotel has extensions for beds (for basketball players and other guests whose height is over the standard bed length).

Considering that the health of sportspeople as well as their results at the competition depends on a proper diet, it was examined to which extent hotel managers in Novi Sad are committed to this part of the offer when they host sportspeople.

Neither of the hotels has a professional nutritionist who would make balanced meals according to the guests' needs and wishes, both for sportsmen and other guests. The diet of the sportsmen in the *Park* hotel which is in its content the most acceptable for sportspeople is corrected, special menus are being made according to the advice of personal doctors which are assigned to certain sports teams.

The *Sajam* hotel offers a special sports menu, which is nutritionally enriched and adjusted to great effort that the athletes make while they practice. In this hotel, as well as in others which are technically equipped to offer full accommodation, the management is willing to organize special meal preparations according to the advice of the sports teams' doctors who are staying in the hotel.

The number of visitors in individual hotels in Novi Sad

In 2012, from the view of the engagement of tourist accommodation, in the very beginning, there has been an increase of the number of visitors in the hotels in Novi Sad due to the European Handball Championship taking place. Table 1 shows the number of domestic and foreign guests, as well as the total number of overnight stays on a sample of 11 hotels. In order to determine the effect of a major sporting manifestations on the number of visitors in these accommodation facilities, in table 1 data from January 2010 and 2011 are compared with the data from January 2012.

Table 1 shows that the income in the *Park* hotel almost doubled compared to the same period in the previous two years. In this hotel, in January there were 990 guests which realized 3,638 overnight stays which is 2,274 more than in January 2011 and 2,245 more than in January 2010.

An increase in the number of visitors was also marked in another five-star hotel, the *Best Western Prezident* where there were 682 guests who realized 1,347 overnight stays. This number is also significantly higher than in January 2011 when there were 708 guests and in the same period in 2010 when 534 domestic and foreign guests stayed overnight.

Table 1. The number of arrivals of domestic and foreign guests and the number of overnight stays in individual hotels in Novi Sad in January 2010, 2011 and 2012.

| N ^o | Hotel name | January 2010 | | January 2011 | | January 2012. | | | | |
|----------------|------------------------|--------------|---------|-------------------------------|----------|---------------|-------------------------------|----------|---------|-------------------------------|
| | | Domestic | Foreign | The number of overnight stays | Domestic | Foreign | The number of overnight stays | Domestic | Foreign | The number of overnight stays |
| 1. | Park | 226 | 468 | 1393 | 213 | 509 | 1364 | 308 | 682 | 3638 |
| 2. | Best Western President | 111 | 142 | 534 | 142 | 185 | 708 | 198 | 484 | 1347 |
| 3. | Elit | 99 | 20 | 218 | 80 | 65 | 236 | 85 | 55 | 453 |
| 4. | Gymnas | 34 | 61 | 169 | 24 | 69 | 182 | 78 | 91 | 338 |
| 5. | Master | - | - | - | 19 | 45 | 107 | 78 | 166 | 748 |
| 6. | Centar | 2 | 36 | 74 | 106 | 203 | 741 | 61 | 340 | 1162 |
| 7. | Panorama | 47 | 74 | 222 | 39 | 63 | 207 | 49 | 99 | 274 |
| 8. | Vigor | 48 | 110 | 184 | 98 | 71 | 189 | 111 | 196 | 543 |
| 9. | Vojvodina | 131 | 63 | 325 | 153 | 161 | 531 | 130 | 145 | 548 |
| 10. | Sajam | 132 | 52 | 376 | 114 | 69 | 348 | 77 | 104 | 327 |
| 11. | Aurora | 52 | 98 | 193 | 76 | 121 | 318 | 94 | 182 | 572 |

In the *Elit* hotel the number of overnight stays doubled compared to 2010 and was 217 higher than in 2011.

The hotel *Gymnas* had twice as much overnight stays compared to the same period in 2010 and 156 overnight stays more than in 2011.

The *Master* hotel was not open until 2010, while in 2011 with 107 overnight stays its number of visitors was significantly lower than in the same period in 2012 when this number raised several times, with 748 overnight stays.

The *Centar* hotel had the most significant difference in its number of guests, as well as the number of overnight stays. In this hotel, the number of overnight stays from January 2012 was 1,162, which was 15 times as much than in January 2010, when it was 74. In January 2011 in this hotel there were 741 overnight stays, which is 421 less than in the year when the Championship took place.

The *Panorama* hotel also marked an increase in the number of visitors. In the period when the Championship took place, the number of overnight stays was 274, while in January 2011 it was 207 and in 2010, slightly higher, with 222 overnight stays.

The *Vigor* hotel also doubled its number of overnight stays in January 2012 compared to the same period in 2010 and 2011.

The *Vojvodina* hotel, with 548 overnight stays in 2012 marked a slight increase in the number of visitors compared to 2011 when there were 531 overnight stays. In the same period in 2010 there were significantly less visits when there were only 194 guests who realized 325 overnight stays.

The *Sajam* hotel is the only one of the analyzed hotels where the number of overnight stays did not increase in January 2012 compared to the same period in the two previous years as a result of the Championship.

The *Aurora* hotel with 572 overnight stays in January 2012 marked a sudden increase in the number of visitors compared to the two previous years when there were 193 people in January 2010 and 318 people in the same period in 2011.

Thus, the analysis of the number of visits and overnight stays indicate that taking place of major sporting manifestations, a part of the European Handball Championship had a very strong positive effect on the number of visits in the Novi Sad hotels. The differences are evident since individual hotel managers had an increase in visits over 300% compared to the same period in the previous two years which can be seen in table 1.

CONCLUSION

Organizing sporting events goes along with multiple positive effects on the destination where the event takes place, primarily economic, social, cultural and political. The most significant are the openings of new work places, improvement of the infrastructure, as well as increase in consumption which is highly prominent in hospitality facilities, primarily hotels.

The results of the paper indicate that most hotels do not offer sports facilities, while only a small number of hotels (five) offer the possibility to do sports and recreational activities. In only one hotel in the highest category these facilities are adjusted for the ac-

commodation of sports representations and other sportspeople whose stay also involves recreation. The same hotel is the only one which offers extensions for beds intended for basketball players. Neither of the hotels has employed a professional nutritionist who would make balanced meals according to guests' wishes and, both sportspeople as well as other guests on a special diet.

By comparing the number of overnight stays in hotels in Novi Sad in January 2012 when a part of the European Handball Championship took place in Novi Sad with the same period in the previous two years, it was concluded that there has been a sudden increase in the number of overnight stays in almost all of the analyzed hotels. In some hotels the number tripled, in some it doubled while in some the number was far higher compared to the number of overnight stays in 2010 and 2011.

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