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CONTEMPORARY PROBLEMS OF NAUTICAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN CROATIA

ABSTRACT

The paper deals with the problems that have arisen due to the rapid development of nautical tourism on the Croatian coast. The fact is that Croatia, unlike other Mediterranean tourist countries still does not control nautical tourism development in the sense of spatial planning and implementation of specific laws. There are other problems that are generated by the growing number of tourists in Croatian marinas and uneven geographic distribution of ports.

KEY WORDS

nautical tourism, marinas, Croatia, Adriatic coast, the Croatian Littoral

1. INTRODUCTION

According to the results on the Mediterranean tourism market it is obvious that the the Croatian Littoral has become an important destination especially for the nautical tourists. Some analyses such as the one by the American magazine "Cruising World" have proclaimed the Croatian Adriatic Littoral, together with the Caribbean Islands, as the best nautical tourism area in the world.

The fact is that the marina capacities and the quality of service in Croatia are at the same level as ten years ago and they are similar to poor hotel accommodation. That fact shows that the overall potential that may generate stronger economic development of the Croatian coast and the islands still has not been used.

General orientation during the process of improvement of the marinas capacities should implement protection of the nature and the originality of the Mediterranean cultural heritage. It is also important to bear in mind that such tourists come in order to enjoy the sea and they usually consider marinas as "necessary evil". Because of that they tend to shorten the stays in the ports.

The most important role in accomplishing that orientation should have the institutions of Croatian government that should incorporate the experiences of

the developed tourism countries. Of course, it is important to adjust such experiences with the Croatian situation. Therefore, it is necessary to develop the standards and the mechanism of the state control that would guarantee sustainable tourism development of the the Croatian Littoral.

2. GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF MARINAS

The current geographic distribution of marinas in the Croatian Littoral is extremely uneven. It is primarily the result of undirected development of the harbours at the national level. Therefore, the harbours were established thanks to the local initiative that came from the developed tourist destinations.

The cartographic analysis of the harbours shows maximum concentration in the northern and central part of Dalmatia, in the very centre of the Croatian Littoral (Fig. 1).

With 30 marinas in total (with the proportion of 55%) it is the most important zone, especially the area of Šibenik with 11 marinas, followed by the Split (10) and Zadar area (9). Regions of Istria and Kvarner that shape the Northern Croatian Littoral is the secondary zone of the harbours concentration. Its 19 marinas are primarily situated on the western coast of Istria and on the Kvarner islands.

Central Dalmatia (the Split area) is also important, although it is not as developed as the aforementioned zones concerning the length of the coast. At the very south is the southern part of Dalmatia, the area of Dubrovnik, with only six marinas.

The map also shows the area without harbours – one in the north, between Zadar and Rijeka, and the other in the south, between Split and Dubrovnik where there are only two marinas – in Tučepi and Podgora (both are situated near Makarska, an important and highly developed tourist destination).

Such geographic distribution is a good example of the uncontrolled development of nautical infrastructure. The areas of Šibenik and Zadar are situated in

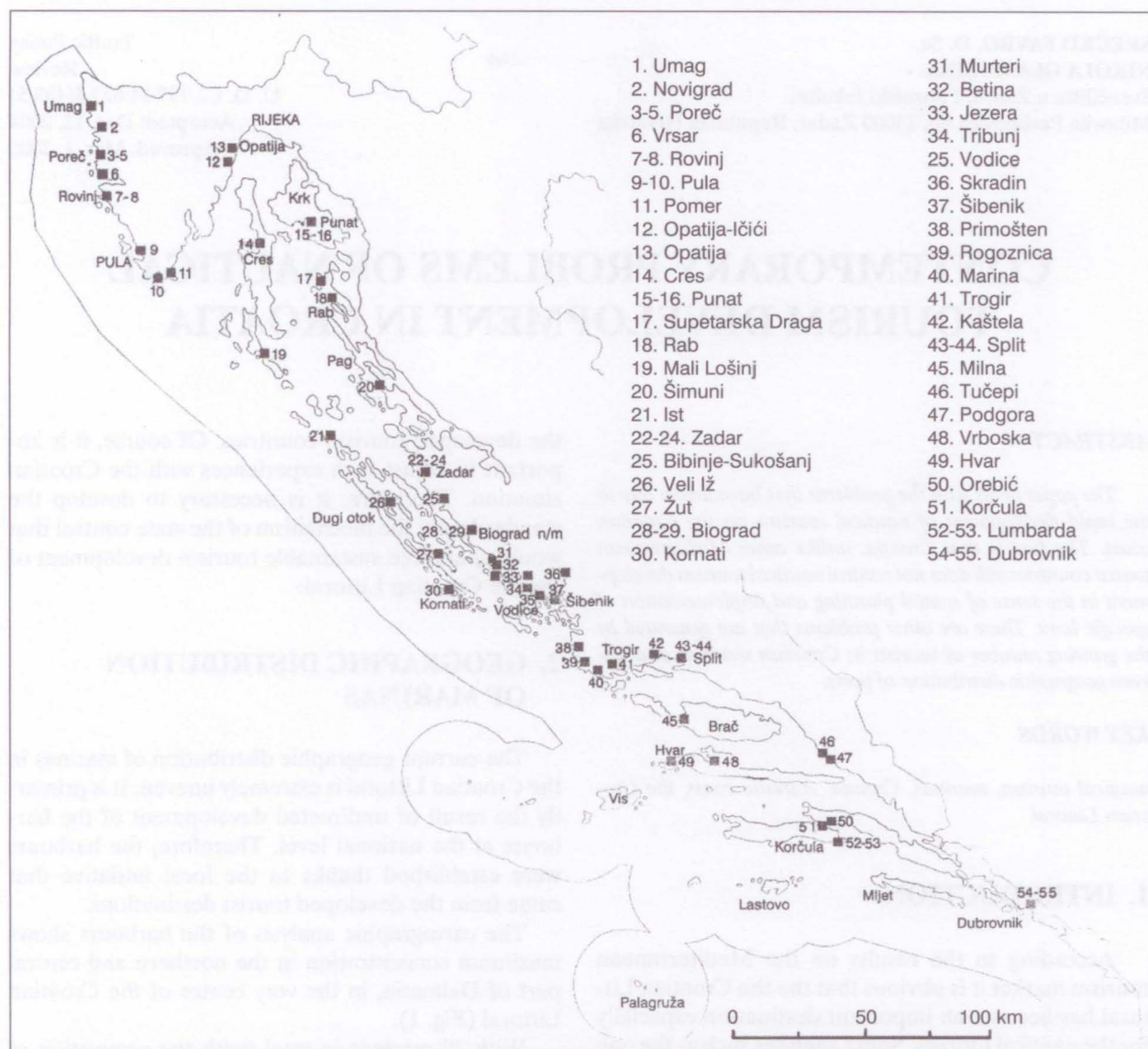


Figure 1 - Geographic distribution of marinas on Croatian Littoral

the very centre of the Littoral and the accessibility is an important factor of such high concentration of marinas. The Šibenik area coast, with high indentedness and attractiveness (proximity of two national parks - Kvarner Islands and Krka) is the most interesting for yachtsmen. It features ideal conditions for further development of harbours not only on the numerous islands but also on the coast – for example, the very town of Šibenik is planning to build a marina in its centre. The Zadar area, on the other side, does not have as many bays and inlets as the Šibenik area but in addition it is much more urbanized, especially the coastline close to Zadar. The same problem exists on some of the islands in the Zadar area, in the first place on the island of Ugljan. Although the marinas could be established in the urbanized zones, it is understandable that various social groups in such zones shape the politics of the urban landuse that often does not favour nautical tourism. The northern coast of the Za-

dar area, that is not as urbanized as other parts, does not have appropriate natural conditions for the marinas because of specific northern wind (*bura*) that is extremely strong and dangerous for vessels.

The Split area consists of a significant part of the coastline and islands. Generally, for such a vast area it has very small number of marinas (ten in total). The prevalent orientation to the bathing tourism and the uncontrolled urbanization (the Split agglomeration is the biggest on the Croatian coast) did not allow significant development of nautical tourism. The biggest potential is on the islands that abound with natural ports that cannot be found on the continental coast.

Together with the northern and central Dalmatia, the Istria and Kvarner regions are the most developed zones of nautical tourism in Croatia. These two regions have very long tourism tradition and they were the first to establish the marinas in Croatia. Istria and Kvarner profit from the proximity of the developed

European countries from which they attract numerous yachtsmen. The overall tourism infrastructure is at a very high level and the local authorities place great significance on tourism because it is the main source of income.

The southernmost part of the Croatian coast (the Dubrovnik area) has the lowest level of the nautical tourism development. It is interesting to point out that the potential is immense: numerous natural ports on the coast and the islands together with the minor urbanization of coastal line. Although Dubrovnik also has an international airport, the whole area only has six marinas.

3. PROPOSITIONS FOR LEGAL AND SPATIAL DIRECTING OF NAUTICAL TOURISM

The goal of nautical tourism is to attract rich tourists with their vessels for as long as possible (Mikačić, 2002). The interest of the society is to redirect a share of the profit and turn it into a stable source of income for the local community and the state. However, further development of nautical tourism should be realized as part of a wider strategy of sustainable development of the coast and islands and one of the goals has to be the implementation of control that would guarantee safer navigation on the Croatian Adriatic (Petrić, 1995).

It is necessary to make many moves that would create an identifiable image of the Croatian Littoral (that does not exist at the moment) and speed up the development of some segments of nautical tourism, but on the other side to stop and redirect the uncontrolled building of berths, devastation of the coastline and illegitimate rent of vessels.

The first step toward the realization of those goals is making of the Nautical Tourism Development Strategy that should be created by a scientific institution and that should define the conditions for reaching the aforementioned goals.

One of the purposes of the Strategy should be the defining of conditions that would lead to the realization of the aforementioned goals. Some of the conditions should be:

- enactment of an integral programme for the whole Croatian Adriatic that should define the types of landuse on the Croatian Littoral (the programme should also define the role of the government as the principal factor in the nautical tourism development);
- implementation of legal coordination among all groups that represent interests of local community, national government and individuals in the nautical tourism development process (Fig. 2). Such co-

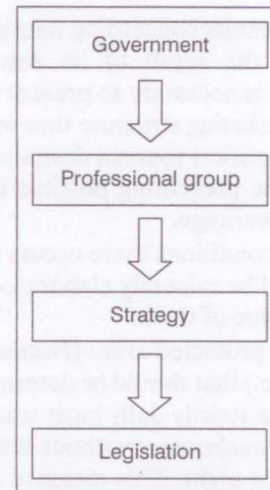


Figure 2 - Scheme of proposed legislation process of nautical tourism development

ordination should be also directed toward the development of various activities connected with nautical tourism. Local communities are the ones that should have priority to choose a way of achieving the goals but it is important for them to fight against all purely individual interests;

- creating of maritime land-registry to facilitate making of major decisions based on information about the Adriatic Sea (types of seabed, proximity of attractions such as National Parks, archaeological monuments, sunken ships etc.);
- education of the local population so that they could maintain various services that yachtsmen need;
- defining of great marinas near big airports – majority of them on the mainland in the urbanized areas such as Pula, Zadar (district of Borik and the central district near the ferry port), southern bank of the Krka mouth (near Šibenik), Bay of Kaštela (near Split), Bay of Rijeka Dubrovačka (Dubrovnik). On the other hand, it is necessary to define attractive and intact Mediterranean inlets that exist on the larger part of the Littoral and have marinas of secondary significance;
- creating of an adequate database and providing access to people who are able to explain to the yachtsmen the possibilities for further development of the nautical tourism in Croatia. The existing brochures for tourists do not satisfy that need nor does the knowledge of the employees because they do not have the nautical approach. Yachtsmen need various information for their trips just as they need maps and general tourist information. Such information is provided only by the Croatian Hydrographic Institute which did not find understanding of the tourist sector for their work;
- marketing – in the sense of introducing new nautical products and their marketing. The fact is that

all the past results concerning nautical tourism in Croatia are the result of its natural beauties. Therefore, it is necessary to present Croatia using a defined marketing structure that would promote sustainable nautical tourism development while at the same time preventing possible destruction of the national heritage.

Using these conditions there occurs a whole set of tasks that should be minutely elaborated in the Strategy. Here are some of them:

1. Defining the protected areas (National Parks, Nature Parks etc.) that should be determined as zones for visits on a strictly daily basis using the official marinas and anchorages without the possibility of staying during night. This measure of precaution would minimize the possibility of devastation of environment by the yachtsmen (in the form of oil leaks, garbage dumping etc.).
2. Professional evaluation of all the interesting localities using complex spatial analysis. The data for such analysis are stored in specialized institutions and would serve as the base for the proposals for further development of nautical tourism. The most important data should be of geographical, nautical, ecological, social and economic nature such as: geographical and meteorological characteristics of localities, environmental values, nautical and navigational characteristics, past influence on the environment and the risks of further influence, infrastructure (electricity, running water, telecommunications), traffic connections, regional plans, market needs, possibility of further development of various services for yachtsmen. These data would facilitate determining the potentials of a particular locality for the nautical tourism development.
3. Presentation of the evaluation documents to the local community and the local promoters of nautical tourism development. Then the professionals authorized by the government should start working together with the local community in creating of the Project (Fig. 3). During this process it is important to adjust the Project with the existing

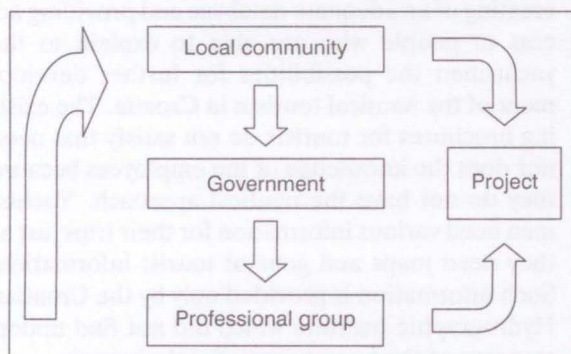


Figure 3 - Proposition for making of Projects for nautical tourism development

- regional plans if necessary. This is the most convenient way to work because the experiences with the "100 Little Ports Projects" show that the government cannot conduct a project without cooperation of the local communities (that Project was severely criticized by numerous local communities). The local community should play the main role in conducting the Project and the government and the professionals should help them with their advice. The local community should also have the privilege to choose an investor after inviting tenders for the realization of the Project. Concerning the making of the Project and its realization it is important to use international categorization standards (by the "Lloyd's" or some other esteemed institution) that evaluate the quality of the following elements: technical equipment, services, security, adverse weather conditions and fire protection, conditions for keeping vessels during winter, optional facilities.
4. The Strategy would also authorize the government in enforcing the implementation of international standards in work of marinas such as Environment Management System ISO 14000 and Environment Management System ISO 9000. This measure would simplify supervision of service quality and impact on the environment.

4. PROPOSITIONS FOR INSTITUTIONAL DIRECTING OF NAUTICAL TOURISM

Through the Ministry of Tourism, the government should stimulate the association of marinas (the role model could be *Associazione Italiana Porti Turistiche dell'Adriatico* in the neighbouring Italy). Such association also may conduct various activities in promoting the marinas and Croatian tourism in general: regattas, competitions, visiting the marinas during local festivities, gastronomic offer, national wines and so on. At the same time, the joint marketing promotion may increase the competition between the marinas and that would lead toward permanent improvement of services that they offer.

Control of services in the marinas could be maintained using the certificates of international institutions but also through the work of specialized national inspectorate.

Navigation security should be under the authority of the Coast Guard and the Port Authorities, while Ecological Patrols financed by the local communities could control the protection of the environment.

The government and local community should also cooperate in fighting against the illegitimate berth renting not only because of security and environment

protection but also because of fighting the black market that already exists in the sector of nautical tourism.

5. POSSIBILITIES OF COMPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES DEVELOPMENT

Nautical tourism development may generate overall economic development of respective local communities through cooperation with various institutions. At this moment none of the possibilities has been used and the marinas regularly function as separated economic units that do not interact with their social environments. Linking with other institutions is important not only because of promotion but also because of further economic development of the respective communities (especially on islands that abound with economic problems). However, the role of the national government is crucial in creating various projects.

Here are examples of some projects that may be conducted in cooperation with various institutions regarding the expansion of income from nautical tourism:

Cooperation with traditional shipbuilding industry

Project directed toward building traditional ships made of wood. Such project demands cooperation with state-owned institution *Hrvatske šume* (Croatian Forests) that takes care of national forests, Ministry of Economy and entrepreneurs from shipbuilding sector.

Introducing specialized secondary and university education

Project of adjusting school programmes by introducing courses that may be applied to nautical tourism market: shipbuilding, maintaining of boats, marinas managing, marketing etc.

Establishing of free-trade zones on islands

Project of stimulation of industrial production for nautical tourism purposes not only for the vessels but also for marinas.

Development of ship-repairing yards

Project of establishing small ship-repairing yards (especially on the islands) specialized for repairing of tourist vessels.

Systematic developing of mariculture

Project of directing the mariculture development through sales of the products in restaurants that exist in the marinas.

Reviving of traditional production

Project of stimulating traditional activities and the sales of such products in restaurants, shops and souvenir shops in marinas: high-quality domestic wines, folk handicrafts, cheeses, regional-cuisine specialties and so on.

Settling of islands through investing in local economy

Project that should secure investments for employing of population on islands in all sectors of nautical tourism. Using that kind of policy makes it possible to attract highly educated population from the mainland.

Implementing of historical heritage in tourism economy

The project of creating navigation routes for yachtsmen that would connect various places with historical monuments such as fortresses, archaeological sites, old towns and so on. Through such approach the yachtsmen could get better knowledge of the Croatian history. This project could also be part of the national programme of implementing cultural and historical heritage in the general offer (Jelinčić, Mesarić, 2001).

6. CONCLUSION

The expansion of nautical tourism in Croatia in the current period is marked not only by positive economic effects but also by many negative ones. The rise in demand has resulted in the expansion of the black market in nautical tourism sector and ecological problems. It is obvious that Croatia needs to create the Strategy of nautical tourism development that would introduce improved methods of valorization of its Littoral. Past experiences not only from Croatia but also from other Mediterranean countries show that the best way to accomplish this is through cooperation of national government with professionals and local communities. The meaningful planning process is important for better marketing, securing of regular incomes for local communities, fighting against illegal renting of vessels and berths, ecological protection of the coast and the general improvement of standards in the Croatian tourism. Through cooperation with various institutions it is possible to expand the offer and achieve better effects in the sense of income and marketing that would especially favour the local communities and Croatian nautical tourism in total.

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SAŽETAK

SUVREMENI PROBLEMI U RAZVOJU NAUTIČKOG TURIZMA U HRVATSKOJ

U ovom članku obrađeni su problemi proizašli iz ubrzanog razvoja nautičkog turizma na hrvatskoj obali. Činjenica je kako Hrvatska, za razliku od drugih mediteranskih turističkih zemalja još uvijek planski i zakonski ne usmjerava razvoj nautičkog turizma. Postoje i drugi problemi koji proizlaze iz porasta broja turista u hrvatskim marinama, kao i iz nejednake geografske raspodjele marina.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI

nautički turizam, marine, Hrvatska, jadranska obala, Hrvatsko primorje

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CONCLUSION

The expansion of nautical tourism in Croatia in the future period is viewed not only as positive economic effect but also as a way of regional development. In order to realize the potential of the region, it is necessary to invest in nautical tourism and to create a network of nautical tourism development that will include improved contacts of infrastructure, local and international. This expansion will only come from Croatia but also from other Mediterranean countries since that is the best way to accomplish this through cooperation of national government with partnership and local communities. The expansion of nautical tourism is not only a local matter, it is a regional and national matter. It is necessary to create a network of nautical tourism development that will include improved contacts of infrastructure, local and international. This expansion will only come from Croatia but also from other Mediterranean countries since that is the best way to accomplish this through cooperation of national government with partnership and local communities. The expansion of nautical tourism is not only a local matter, it is a regional and national matter. It is necessary to create a network of nautical tourism development that will include improved contacts of infrastructure, local and international. This expansion will only come from Croatia but also from other Mediterranean countries since that is the best way to accomplish this through cooperation of national government with partnership and local communities.

U ovom članku razmatra se razvoj nautičkog turizma u Hrvatskoj kao jedna od mogućih strategija razvoja. Nautički turizam u Hrvatskoj može biti važan faktor regionalnog razvoja i ekonomije. U skladu s tim, potrebno je uložiti u nautički turizam i stvoriti mrežu razvoja nautičkog turizma koja će uključivati poboljšane kontakte infrastrukture, lokalne i međunarodne. Ovo proširenje doći će samo iz Hrvatske, ali i iz drugih zemalja Mediterana, jer je najbolji način za ostvarenje ovog cilja suradnja nacionalne vlade s partnerstvom i lokalnim zajednicama. Proširenje nautičkog turizma nije samo lokalni problem, već regionalni i nacionalni problem. Potrebno je stvoriti mrežu razvoja nautičkog turizma koja će uključivati poboljšane kontakte infrastrukture, lokalne i međunarodne. Ovo proširenje doći će samo iz Hrvatske, ali i iz drugih zemalja Mediterana, jer je najbolji način za ostvarenje ovog cilja suradnja nacionalne vlade s partnerstvom i lokalnim zajednicama.

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