

CONTINUITY OF TOURISTIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE COMMUNE OF PUSTEC

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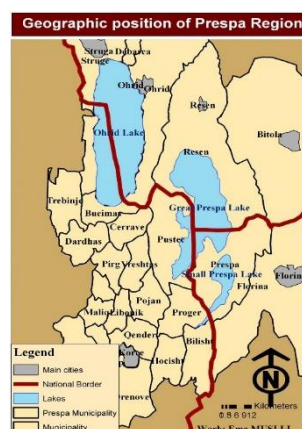
ABSTRACT

The commune of Pustec is a small administrative unit in the region of Korça in the Republic of Albania. It is located along the coast of the Greater Ohrid Lake and it has considerable value in respect of the natural and cultural heritage. The area around Prespa is now part of the Trans-Boundary Biosphere Reserve 'Ohrid-Prespa Watershed. Greater and Lesser Prespa lakes plus Ohrid Lake are included in the UNESCO World Heritage Site. This area has been known historically for its diverse natural and cultural features. Those areas are currently covered by Prespa National Parks in Albania and Greece and Galicica and Pelisteri National Parks in Macedonia. Geographically speaking the Commune of Pustec is located in the hollow of Greater Prespa. The hollow lies in the southeastern region of Albania and in the southwestern part of Macedonia, in the region of Korçë, commune of Pustec in the Albanian part, in the Resen commune in the Macedonian part and in the Prespe commune in Greece. The Watershed of Prespa stands at an elevation of 850-1200m above sea level surrounded by mountains assuming thus more continental features in the Macedonian part. In this region it is located the Greater and Lesser Prespa Lakes in the girdle of brown mountainous lands and fulvous forest; in the vegetation girdle of oak, beech and alpine pastures. The natural environment and cultural heritage is a key element designated for the development of the region's sustainable tourism. The study will handle the way tourism has been developed in Pustec starting with its inception until present days. This study was enhanced via the Geographic Info System (GIS) digital presentation showing the opportunities for nature tourism in the Pustec.

Keywords: Tourism, touristic potential, flux of tourists, income from tourism, capacity of touristic infrastructure.

INTRODUCTION

The historic-political conditions in the area of Greater Prespa contributed to the low economic-social development of the population dwelling in this area. As a consequence, the beginning of the touristic activity was delayed in the Albanian part of Prespa. In the commune of Pustec the beginning of the touristic activity coincides with the fall of the communist system and the beginning of the transition period in Albania.



Conditions of the development of tourism during border closure (1945-1990)

During 1954-1990 the ideological and economic system inflicted the confinement of the country. Border areas, like Prespa, did not have the same communication as before. This fact was accompanied with grave consequences in the economic and social state of the inhabitants of Prespa. The economic state of the area of Prespa appeared fragile even before 1945. The commune of Pustec had a higher development in the first sector. In the Albanian part farming was the most developed sector while the Macedonian part was distinguished for the cultivation of apples. No consideration was given to tourism until 1990. The enunciation of Prespa as a naturally protected area of category II, more specifically the National Park of Prespa in Albania, displayed the natural and cultural values of the area of Greater Prespa.

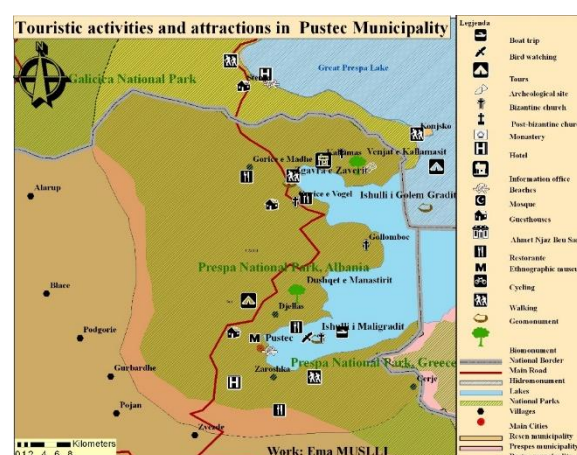
The new conditions created after 1990 and their influence in the touristic development

After 1990 the border with Macedonia was reopened. Until this period the main activity in the Albanian part was livestock breeding and the area was lacking in recreation infrastructure no matter how modest. The beginning can be set in 2002-2003 when the first restaurants were built and some houses of inhabitants of the village of Pustec were put under the disposal of tourists, mainly foreign. In 2003 in the village of Pustec there were approximately 30 families employed in the tourism sector. (Dh.Doka, Geographical studies, Potsdam). With the passing of the time tourism started to be developed in other villages of the commune of Pustec.

The principal economic activities during the transition phase, in the Albanian part, were tourism, commerce, fruit-growing, viticulture, medicinal plants, livestock breeding, farming, service and fishing¹. Many of the natural resources of the commune of Pustec have not been put to use for various reasons. Among them it can be mentioned the poor infrastructure and it is still being worked to appropriately promote Pustec. The tourism is not organized but is spontaneous. Since tourism is still undeveloped in both the Albanian and Macedonian part, there are still good chances for a stable development of tourism.

Touristic Flux in the Commune of Pustec

There exist good conditions for the development of family, cultural, religious, sports for instance cycling, and agro tourism in both areas of study. In the area of Liqenas there are opportunities for specific types of tourism like the ones of natural parks, bird watching (watch the pelican in the island of Maligrad), swimming tourism (sandy and rocky beach of Zaroshkë, rocky beach of Liqenas, the beach of Little Gorica and in Gollomboç and Kallamas), boat rowing; sportive fishing etc.



In Pustec, part of the visitors goes for the family tourism. They remain 2-3 days to enjoy the climate, the breathtaking view of the lake as well as the famous carp casserole. Tourism in the commune of Pustec commenced after 1999 when the area of Greater Prespa was announced as National Park of Prespë. Environmental and botanical research displayed also the esthetic values of the scenery of Prespa. Values related not only to the relict, endemic and endangered species of plants and animals but also related to the scenery which offers a calm and relaxing atmosphere. As analyzed in the second chapter the scenery is not only attractive but also varied.

Tab.1. Data about the touristic activity in the commune of Pustec in 2003-2015

	2003	2004-2007	2008(3)	2013	2015
Employed	30 families	28 people	56 people		
Infrastructure	Guest houses and restaurants(7)	13 cafes, 4 hotel-motels(6)	2 hotels, 17 restaurants	2 hotels, 25-30 beds, 30 guesthouses(4)	3 hotels 30guesthouses
Flux of tourists		16000 visitors	11520 visitors		50000 Visitors(5)

Some data about tourism are data about the commune of Pustec in 2003. In this year in Pustec there were 30 families employed in the tourism sector¹. In relation to the touristic infrastructure until 2007 it can be said that in the commune of Pustec there were 13 cafes, 4 hotel-motels. There are 28 people employed in tourism. The number of staying visitors in Pustec between 2004 and 2007 was 25%, while 10% with booking. While the number of day visitors was 75% about 16,000 visitors.

Graph. 1. Number of visitors in the National Park of Prespa, Albania.



Work: Ema Muslli

Before giving figures about the development of tourism in the years 2008 it should be stressed the fact that data about the commune of Pustec we will refer to the data about tourism in the National Park of Prespa for the case of the commune of Pustec. From the graph on page it can be noticed an increase in the flux of tourists from 2003 until 2007. Whereas from 2007 until 2008 there has been a slight increase in the number of tourists. From 2008 until

2015 it can be noticed a considerable increase in the number of tourists (National Park of Prespa, Albania, 2015) in the National Park of Prespa. So, we have 50000 tourist passing through Prespa Park and 35000 tourist that overnight in the National Park of Prespa. However, since there is no data about the flux of tourists from 2011 until 2014 it cannot be made a complete analysis of the pace of touristic development.

In order to have a stable touristic development there must be an improvement of general infrastructure (transport, accommodation, water and power supply) as well as an improvement of the environment of the area where the main problems are the urban remains and sewage without any processing into the lake of Greater Prespa. Based in these data it can be stated that in the park, accommodation in hotels is 34 beds, alternative choice 440 beds (D. Grazhdani, 2008).

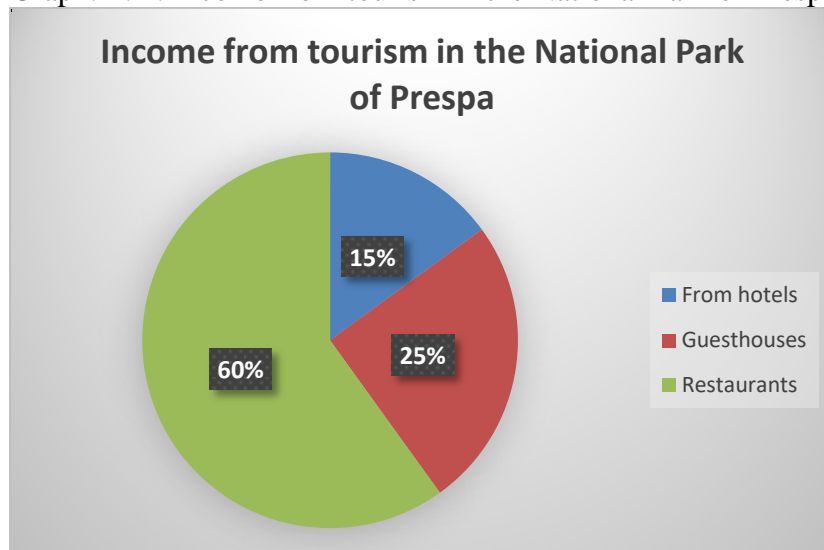
Tab.2. Yearly income from tourism in the National Park of Prespa, Albania

	Nr. Of beds and chairs	Accommodation capacity	Nr. of staying	Employed seasonally	Yearly income (€)
Accommodation					
Hotels	34	12 410	1438	10/12	14 380
Guesthouses	440	160 600	4824		24 120
Total		173 010	6262	10/12	38 500
Restaurant	375	136 875	11520	28/32	57 600
Total				38/44	96 100

Source: Current status of tourism and water quality in the Albanian part of lake Prespa, Dorina Grazhdani, 2010

In the area there are 11 restaurants visited by about 1000 visitors/ on weekends in July and August about 11 520 visitors in a year. An interesting fact worth mentioning is the supply and demand in relation to the touristic market can infer the provenience of the tourists. In the Albanian part, tourists are mostly local tourists (restaurants), visitors from the Macedonian minority (restaurants), hunters (family tourism), foreigners which travel by boat, seminars and various researchers visiting for scientific purposes. (Tourism Strategy and Action Plan for the Prespa Lakes Basin 2012-2016, pg19-20)

Graph.nr. 2. Income from tourism in the National Park of Prespa



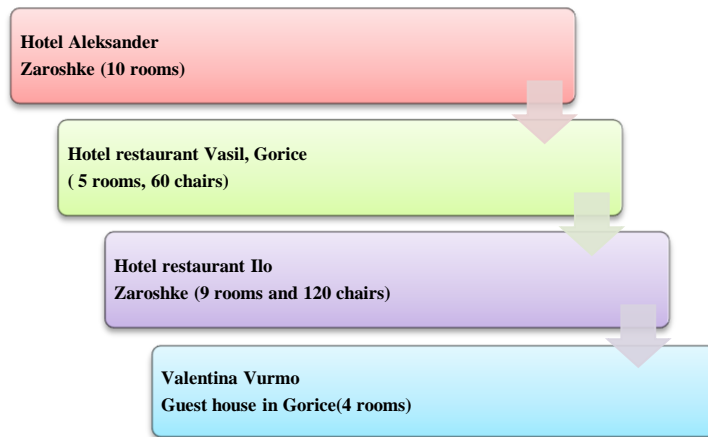
Worked: Ema Muslli

From the data from the table it can be noticed that the higher number of visitors is day visitors and that restaurant have the greatest profit. By viewing the data over the tourist accommodation capacity is insufficient. Infrastructure needs to be improved and especially important for tourism development is the improvement of the hygienic and sanitarian conditions which are not up to the standards. However, the data evidence that fact that the tourism sector is assuming a greater importance in the national park of Prespa and in the Commune of Pustec. Before we can discuss the development of tourism it is necessary to contemplate how to exploit the touristic activity to increase income in order to maintain the national park or at least to minimize the actual and future negative impact that tourism has brought in the area of Prespa until present days.

Some of the problems of the infrastructure of tourism which hinder the development of tourism together with other problems are: fresh water supply, telecommunication. Moreover service in relation to boat trips is not adequate, the state of the lake for those who would like to swim, the guide to cultural monuments, the insufficient number of natural observation points, lack of investment for the maintenance of the natural and cultural monuments. Another problem worth considering is the impact of the flux of tourist to the natural equilibrium of the park (D. Grazhdani, 2010).

Despite the comparison made between the Albanian and Macedonian part of the area of Greater Prespa, the area should be seen as an inseparable area where all kind of activity on the Albanian part affects the Macedonian one and vice versa. Cooperation not only between the Albanian and Macedonian parties but also the Greek one would ensure a greater stability in the touristic activity. In the area of Prespa there are some guesthouses, some hotels and restaurants in the Albanian and Macedonian part. In the Albanian part the number of hotels and restaurants is smaller related to the small area of the commune of Pustec.

Graphic. Nr.3. Some hotels and guesthouses in the Commune of Pustec



Source of information: Accommodation and restaurant, where to stay, eat and drink in the Prespa Region, SWG, ABD, Prespa cross-border region, EU

CONCLUSION

Hotels and guesthouses in the Albanian part of Prespa region need improvement. Other activities which could be offered together with accommodation are absent. One of the main problems that the tourism businesses are facing in Pustec is the irregular fresh water and power supply. Another problem affecting the arrival of tourists is the lack of a sewage system. Septic hole are used to solve this problem which in itself is causing pollution of the environment. Hygiene in general is one of the things that need to be regulated if there is any notion of bringing tourists to the village of Little Gorica. Furthermore, investments are necessary for the road infrastructure in the villages of Little Gorica, Greater Gorica, Gollomboç which obstruct the arrival of tourists.

In the absence of more complete and specified data in relation to tourism in the commune of Pustec between 2010 and 2015 it cannot be made a thorough analysis in relation to the continuity of the touristic activity in this commune. An action which could aid a qualitative touristic development of the area of Greater Prespa is not an unclear setting of goals and objectives of the local plans for development in Pustec and Resen but the setting of common goals and objectives for the development of tourism. In the commune of Pustec the objective of the local plan of development has been the development of family tourism. Whereas some of the main objectives of a comprehensive strategy would be:

- 1- Improvement of the accommodation conditions for tourists starting by water supply and power supply and also rural road improvement.
- 2- A better maintenance of the natural environment of the area of Prespa starting by investment in the sewage system.
- 3- Creation of premises to achieve the development of tourism not only the daily one
- 4- The creation of a higher diversity of the touristic activities
- 5- Creation of common touristic tours among border areas as a form of a touristic promotion of the Prespa Region.

Of great importance is not only the writing on paper of such strategy but also its application. Another problem that is obvious for the development of tourism is also the existence of a series of projects, plans, local and common strategies in the area of Prespa which are not fully applied in reality.

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