

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN MESSUAGES IN AUTONOMOUS PROVINCE OF VOJVODINA: POSSIBILITIES AND LIMITATIONS

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Abstract

Thanks to the fact that it was noticed that the messuages have a tourist value, new opportunities for their revival through tourism development have been revealed. The research subject of this paper is the messuages tourism in the area of AP Vojvodina. The objective of the research is to examine the possibilities (conditions) for the development of messuages tourism in AP Vojvodina and the situation in this area, as well as the positive effects of development. In the preparation of this paper the following methods were applied: analysis, historical method, comparative method and synthesis method. Also, the results of the survey of rural tourist households (RTHs) and tourist organizations (TOs) in the area of Vojvodina from 2011, which were relevant for the topic, were also used. Based on the results of the research, it was concluded that the agricultural tourism in the area of AP Vojvodina has very favorable development opportunities that are mostly seized in Bačka, and especially in the South-Bačka district. Key areas whose development could significantly contribute to the process of development of messuages tourism in the territory of AP Vojvodina are state financial support and categorization.

Key words: messuages, tourism, Vojvodina, rural tourism, agriculture.

РАЗВОЈ ТУРИЗМА НА САЛАШИМА У АУТОНОМНОЈ ПОКРАЈИНИ ВОЈВОДИНИ: МОГУЋНОСТИ И ОГРАНИЧЕЊА

Апстракт

Захваљујући томе што је уочено да салаши имају туристичку вредност, указале су се нове могућности за њихово оживљавање путем развоја туризма. Предмет истраживања у раду је салашарски туризам на простору АП Војводине. Циљ истраживања је сагледавање могућности (услова) за развој салашарског туризма у АП Војводини и стања у овој области, као и позитивних ефеката развоја. Приликом израде овог рада примењени су следећи методи: анализе, историјски метод, компаративни метод и метод синтезе. Такође су коришћени и резултати

анкетног истраживања сеоских туристичких домаћинстава (СТД) и туристичких организација (ТО) на простору Војводине из 2011. године, а који су од значаја за тему. На основу резултата истраживања, изведен је закључак да салашарски туризам на простору АП Војводине има веома повољне могућности развоја, које су највише искоришћене у Бачкој, а нарочито у Јужнобачком округу. Кључне области чије би унапређење могло значајно да допринесе процесу развоја салашарског туризма на територији АП Војводине су државна финансијска подршка и категоризација.

Кључне речи: салаши, туризам, Војводина, рурални туризам, пољопривреда.

INTRODUCTION

According to the categorization of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which as the basis for defining rural areas uses a population density lower than 150 inhabitants per km², about 90% of the territory of the Province is a rural area. In four (North Bačka, Central Banat, North Banat and West Bačka) out of seven administrative districts in Vojvodina, 100% of the population live in rural municipalities. In Srem District (78.4%) and South Banat (59.1%), this percentage of the population is lower, which categorizes them as highly rural area, while the South Bačka District, with 44.5%, is categorized as partially rural area (Regional Spatial Plan of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina until 2020, page 35). Agricultural land makes over 80% of the territory of Vojvodina, of which about 76% is arable. The total fertile land makes up about 90% of the territory of Vojvodina. Therefore, the rural areas of Vojvodina are characterized by very suitable conditions for the development of, first of all, agriculture, in which the population is traditionally engaged in this area. In addition, exceptional water wealth, rich hunting grounds, cultural and historical heritage that is characterized by multiculturalism, preserved customs and traditions and in general a rich and diverse resource base, make this area suitable for other activities, such as, for example, tourism. Nevertheless, in rural areas of Serbia, there is a low level of diversification of economic activities. The activity the rural population is predominantly engaged in is agriculture, and according to the 2009-2013 Rural Development Strategy Plan, this is the case with as much as one third of the active rural population. However, the agriculture sector records low productivity, and according to the Strategy for Agricultural and Rural Development of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2014-2024, the main indicator is agricultural income, which is relatively low compared to wages from other sectors and social benefits. If we add the fact that in rural areas there is a high unemployment rate (around 21%), as well as a lack of new jobs in other sectors outside agriculture, it is clear that the rural population faces numerous existential problems. Compared to urban areas, these areas record significantly more unfavorable economic indicators.

According to the Rural Development Strategy 2009-2013, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita in rural areas equals 74% of the national average and is significantly lower than in urban areas. Poverty in Serbia is increasingly mentioned as a predominantly rural phenomenon as it affects primarily the rural areas. The following categories of population are at the highest risk: farmers earning income exclusively from agriculture, elderly and pensioners, women and youth and displaced persons. According to the findings of the AP Vojvodina Economic Development Program (2006), according to the age criterion, the poorest is the population of 65 and more years, and agricultural pensioners stand out as particularly vulnerable group.

As a consequence of this situation, negative demographic phenomena and tendencies (depopulation, unfavorable changes in the structure of the population - age, educational, economic) are observed. The middle-aged and younger educated population moves from rural to urban areas, and more and more often abroad. Experts from this area warn of the problems of gradual extinguishing (extinction) and the disappearance of certain villages throughout Serbia. According to the 2011 Census data, over the past decades, the number of settlements with less than 100 inhabitants has increased. In Serbia more than every fifth settlement has fewer than 100 inhabitants. This situation is alarming and requires measures that would stop this negative demographic trend, which also reflects on the economic and development possibilities of these areas. The solution of this decades-long problem is, above all, in improving the economic and social conditions for life and work in these areas.

The experiences of the developed European economies indicate that diversification of rural economy through the expansion and improvement of economic activities can contribute to the improvement of the economic position of the population and the provision of additional sources of income. One of the possibilities is the development of rural tourism, for which Vojvodina has almost ideal conditions, bearing in mind the richness and diversity of natural and social resources. In the rural areas of Vojvodina, it is possible to develop numerous tourist products, among which the messages tourism is distinguished as an authentic and unique segment of the offer. The *research subject* of this paper is the messages tourism in the area of AP Vojvodina. The *objective of the research* is to analyze (review) the possibilities (conditions) for the development of messages tourism in Vojvodina and the conditions in this area, as well as the positive effects of development. Based on the results of the research, adequate measures will be defined (suggested) to improve the future development of messages tourism.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Ćurčić (1994), the disappearance of messuages and farms was the first sign of the process of deagrarization and general depopulation in Vojvodina, which after several decades will expand to almost all the villages in this area. In the 1990s, more attention was paid to the need for more active stand towards the problem of the messuages in order to find ways of their further survival: either by activating them in primary agricultural activity, either by linking with rural tourism (Kacemberger, 1994). In literature, a large number of papers are devoted to the historical development and geographical arrangement of the messuages in Vojvodina (Ćurčić, 1994; Devavari, 1994; Stojanov, 1994; Subić, 1994). However, the tourist valorization of the messuages has recently occupied the attention of the researchers. It has been fully realized how important the reviving of the messuages is for Vojvodina (Lazić, 2006). In strategic documents, such as the Marketing Strategy of Vojvodina Tourism (2009), the messuages are recognized as one of the most important individual attractions to be used in the development of rural tourism in Vojvodina. On the other hand, tourism is also recognized as a factor of revitalization of mesuasges that can have positive economic and non-economic effects, not only on the household, but also on the owners of the messuages, as well as on the overall development of rural areas in which they are located (Dragičević, 2007). The results of the research (Grubišić et al, 2013; Lendel Laslo - Sel Endre, 2011) indicate that, in practice, there are two models in the development of message tourism in Vojvodina: the development of tourism in the messuages that exclusively and solely deal with catering, and the development of tourism on the so-called "traditional" messuages. It is considered that messuages that are primarily engaged in agricultural production, with tourism as a secondary source of income, are more prosperous. It is pointed out that this is "due to the presentation of the messuages way of life and agricultural activities in the message, as well as the direct sale of products" (Lendel Laslo - SelEndre, 2011, p. 486). The results of the former research indicate that, although there is a good basis, the development of message tourism is only at the initial stage of becoming acquainted with these forms of business (Ćurčić & Pavlović, 2011). According to this research, what is lacking for the faster development and improvement of this tourist product are more quality tourism programs, improved infrastructure, market launches with stronger promotion and support of municipal tourist organizations (TO).

METHODOLOGY AND DATA SOURCES

The methodology of work is subordinated to the subject and objective of the research. In the preparation of this paper the following methods were applied: analysis, historical method, comparative method and synthesis method. Sources of data were publications of national and international institutions, results of previous research, as well as available websites of all domestic and international institutions relevant to this field. For the purposes of this paper, the results of the survey of rural tourist households (RTHs) and tourist organizations (TOs) in the area of Vojvodina from 2011, which were relevant for the topic, were also used. The research was carried out within the author's (Bošković, T.) preparation of the doctoral dissertation. A structured questionnaire, compiled by the authors, was used as a research instrument, separately for each group of respondents. The survey of RTHs was conducted in the period from the beginning of October 2011 to the end of April 2012. A total of 58 households (both registered and unregistered) were surveyed, as well as the owners of apartments, ethno houses, houses, boarding houses, *messuages*, rural tourist households and rooms. Also, the results of the survey of TOs conducted in the period from the beginning of October to the end of November 2011, were used in the paper, which included 22 out of 31 TOs in the area of Vojvodina.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Messuages on the Territory of Vojvodina

Vojvodina cannot be imagined without the messuages. They are simply part of life, history, culture and tradition of the people from this region. Just as the Netherlands is recognizable by windmills, it could also be said that the region of Vojvodina is recognized by the messuages. According to Lazić, “the messuages are an architectural, cultural, historical part of the Pannonian Plain, our roots and our untapped wealth” (Lazić, 2006, p. 21). There are various definitions of the messuages in the literature. The definition that points out to the practical reasons for their emergence is that they represent the “seasonal habitats of farmers or cattlemen that were built far from the village” (Ćurčić, 1994, p. 433). Messuages represent an agricultural household located outside the settlements and include a part for housing, ancillary economic facilities and surrounding arable land or fields.

It is mentioned in the literature that the messuages were present in Vojvodina even before the period of Turkish rule (Devavari, 1994), and since then their development path has been more than dynamic. In the middle of the 18th century, the process of building of messuages began, and most of them were built in the second half of the 19th and early 20th

century. Their building was related to the need of peoples from this area, whose life and survival were closely connected with land, i.e. with the need to be as close as possible to the fields and spend more time working on them. The growing demand for cereals in Europe had a positive impact on this process, in the mid-18th century (Stojanov, 1994). In the period after the World War I, the period of growth and development of the messuages continues. However, the period after the World War II, due to demographic and certain changes in the economic sphere, had a negative effect on their development. Changes, such as the replacement of the German population by colonists, the implementation of agrarian reform, and the pooling of possessions in peasant labor cooperatives, are often cited as crucial in the process of the extinction and disappearance of messuages and their way of life and production. The subsequent modernization of agriculture (especially massive use of tractors) also contributed to this process. Under the influence of the process of industrialization and urbanization, the population has moved en masse to urban areas since the 1960s. The consequence of these phenomena is the drastic reduction of the agricultural population in the total population of AP Vojvodina in the entire post-war period. For example, in 1953 this share was about 63%, and in 2002 it was only about 10% (Bošković et al., 2010). Also, the number of messuages in the period between 1953 and 1980 was more than halved (Subić, 1994). Messuages, as well as villages, are abandoned and physically decay. Today, the number of Vojvodina's messuages is not even close to the former number. However, in recent years efforts have been made to revitalize them and include them in the tourist offer, to revive and put into economic function through tourism.

Development of Messuages Tourism in Vojvodina

However, although the possibilities and benefits of connecting the messuages with tourism in the previous period were pointed out, the development of tourism in the messuages in Vojvodina is considered as a recent phenomenon. Today, in Vojvodina, two basic types of messuages can be distinguished: those who are engaged in agricultural production, and others, the so-called "tourist" messuages. Also, in practice, two basic models of development of tourist messuages are observed: messuages dealing exclusively with catering (without agricultural activities) and messuages that supplement their primary agricultural production with catering activities. Therefore, the first ones are purely "catering", and others are "traditional" messuages for which the tourism is an additional source of income. The results of the previous field research show that the former are newly constructed objects of tourist and catering purposes that bear only the name of a messuage in their name and that besides the "inserted", "traditional" elements of the material culture, contain many contemporary contents that cannot be connected with the tradition of the

messuages (congress halls, swimming pools, saunas) (Grubišić et al, 2013). The latter represent renovated old messuages where tourists are offered to actively participate in the farming mode of life and jobs. Such messuages represent a specific aspect of the development of agri-tourism (farm) tourism, where the messuages appear as “flatland farms”. If trends are also taken into account regarding the preservation of the environment and the provision of health-safe food, it is necessary to direct agricultural production to an integrated concept or organic production. The offer of this kind of food through the messuages can improve the messuages tourism in terms of the quality of the service. Unfortunately, „that agricultural producers in Serbia see solving the existential problems and poverty as greater and more important problems than the environmental protection“ (Šarković et al 2016, p.741).

The Tourist Organization of Vojvodina (TOV) recognized the tourist importance and value of the messuages and included them in its offer, but also took appropriate measures on their promotion. For this purpose, the CD “Farms in Vojvodina – Salaši u Vojvodini” was published, where the tourist offer of 37 messuages was presented, according to the data from the 2011 TOV. The distribution of messuages in Vojvodina is shown in the following table:

Table 1. Territorial distribution of tourist messuages in Vojvodina by districts, 2011

Districts	Number of messuages	%
1. South Bačka	16	43
2. North Bačka	9	24
3. West Bačka	5	14
4. Srem	3	18
5. North Banat	2	5
6. Middle Banat	1	3
7. South Banat	1	3
Total:	37	100

Source: Bošković, T. (2013): *Tourism as a developmental advantage of rural areas of Vojvodina*, doctoral dissertation, Faculty of Economics, University of Niš; Note: The table was created by the author based on the internal data of the TOV, data from June 2011

It can be seen from the table that the largest number of messuages is concentrated in Bačka, more precisely 30 messuages, or about 81% of the total number. The South Bačka District is distinguished with a share of 43% in the total number of tourist messuages. The disposition of messuages per districts, with more detailed information on the messuages, is shown in the following table:

Table 2. Messuages per districts, municipalities and towns in AP Vojvodina, 2011

Districts	Municipalities	Name of the messuage (town)
1. North Bačka	Bačka Topola	Nacionalna kuća Capriolo, Messuage Udvardi (Nacionalna kuća Capriolo, Salaš Udvardi, Bačka Topola)
	Mali Idoš Subotica	Messuage Katai (Salaš Katai, Mali Idoš) Deermessuage (Jelen salaš, Palić); Mother's messuage and Flowermessuage (Majkin salaš i Cvetni salaš, Palić); Roka's messuage, etno-museum (Rokin salaš, etno muzej, Hajdukovo); Messuage Đorđević (Salaš Đorđević, Palić); Messuage-Farm Roža (Salaš-Majur Roža, Bački Vinogradi); Winemessuage Čuvarđić (Vinski salaš Čuvarđić, Kelebija)
2. Middle Banat	Novi Bečej	Messuage „Slano Kopovo“ (Salaš „Slano Kopovo“, Novi Bečej)
3. North Bačka	Ada	Messuages (Salaši, Obornjača)
	Kanjža Senta	Kucora messuage (Kucora salaš, Galamboš-Fodor) Fruit queen (Kraljica voća, Gornji Breg)
4. South Bačka	Bela Crkva	Green palace (Zeleni dvor, Kajtasovo)
5. West Bačka	Kula	Messuage at Zuko (Salaš kod Zuka, Mali Stapar)
	Odžaci Sombor	Katić messuage (Katić salaš, Deronje); Art messuage „Višinka“ (Art salaš „Višinka“ Gradina); Grandma's messuage (Bakin salaš, Gradina); Grandpa Hornjak's messuage (Dida Hornjakov salaš, Gradina); Messuage Bošnjak (Salaš Bošnjak, Lugomerci)
6. South Bačka	Bačka Palanka	Messuage Gojić – messuage of sighs (Salaš Gojić – salaš uzdaha, Bačka Palanka); Messuage „Gnjezd“ (Salaš „Gnjezd“, Bačka Palanka)
	Bečej Žabalj	Kosoruš messuage (Kosoruš salaš, Poljanica) Grandma's messuage (Babin salaš, Žabalj)
	Novi Sad	Brka's messuage (Brkin salaš, Čenej); Cveja's messuage (Cvejin salaš, Begeč); Kiza's messuage (Kizin salaš, Čenej); Mlada's messuage (Mlađin salaš, Begeč); Our messuage (Naš salaš, Čenej); Messuage 137 (Salaš 137, Čenej); Messuage 84 (Salaš 84, Kač); Mita's messuage (Mitin salaš, Čenej); Messuage Prodanov (Salaš Prodanov, Čenej); Messuage Volića (Salaš Volića, Čenej)
	Srbobran	Beljanski heaven (Beljanski raj, Turija); Đuza Svorcan's messuage (Salaš Đuza Svorcana, Srbobran); Toša Zeremski's messuage (Salaš Toše Zeremskog, Srbobran)
7. Srem	Indija	Messuage Stojšić (Salaš Stojšić, Beška); Zeka's messuage (Zekin salaš, Krčedin)
	Irig	Perko's messuage (Perkov salaš, Neradin)

Source: Bošković, T. (2013): *Tourism as a developmental advantage of rural areas of Vojvodina*, doctoral dissertation, Faculty of Economics, University of Niš; Note: The table was created by the author based on the internal data of the TOV, data from June 2011

The previous data indicate that in the territory of the South Bačka District the message tourism is the most common in the following municipalities: Bačka Palanka, Bečej, Žabalj, Novi Sad and Srbobran. Srem and Banat districts, according to the number of messages, can be considered as the regions with the least represented messages tourism. According to the TOV data from 2016, the total number of tourist messages was 41. Regarding the territorial distribution, the largest number was still in the South Bačka District, 15 messages, or 36.6% of the total number (Jegdić et al., 2017, p. 230). According to the latest TOV data, the number of messages with tourist offer increased to 47 in 2017 (<http://vojvodinaonline.com/sta-videti-i-raditi/seoski-turizam/etno-kuce/> April 6, 2017). Based on this, it can be said that the interest of the owners of the messages for the provision of tourist services is growing. However, for the successful development of message tourism, first and foremost, a well-designed, authentic and high-quality offer is necessary.

Tourist Offer of Messages in Vojvodina

According to the results of the 2011 research, the majority of the surveyed owners of the messages, more precisely 46.2%, began to engage in the provision of tourist services in the period from 2006 to 2011. In the period from 2000 to 2005, this percentage was 30.8%, and in the period before 2000, about 23% of the surveyed owners of the messages started engaging in touristic activities (at the earliest in 1990). Based on a more detailed insight into the content of the tourist offer of the surveyed messages, it was concluded that the messages, besides the basic accommodation and food services, offer various additional contents and services. Certainly, as the most important part of the offer, guests can *participate in works on the message*, and most often these are works related to the field, orchard, garden, yard, livestock, kitchen. Some of these works offered by the messages are: work in the garden and field, apple picking, brandy production, grass mowing, feeding poultry, cooking tomatoes, cooking domestic juices, collecting herbs and others. Particularly attractive segment of the offer, especially for children from urban areas, is acquaintance with domestic animals, sometimes the usual “inhabitants” of Vojvodina's messages. First of all, this refers to chicks, turkeys, ducks, helmeted guineafowls, pigs, cows, sheep, goats, puppies and others. The offer segment, which is particularly significant for messages, is *direct sale of products from domestic production*. The most common are brandy, wine, juices, cheese, ham, bacon, sausages, kulen (hot sausage), eggs, seasonal fruit and vegetables and other similar products. In addition, it should be noted that these products produced in the message are used in the preparation of food and drinks for guests. This is one of the reasons why message dishes are recommended, characterized by the dishes prepared from domestic products in a

traditional way according to some old, somewhat forgotten, recipes from these areas. Also, the results of the research indicate that the messuages offer various sports and recreation activities (fishing, boating, sports fields for football, volleyball, golf, swimming pools...) and entertainment facilities (playgrounds for children), but are also places for the maintenance of various educational programs and creative workshops. These are mostly programs that are dedicated to getting acquainted with some old crafts, tools, and related topics. Valuable collections of old items, furniture and agricultural tools carefully collected by messuages' owners witness the old-times and also serve for educational purposes. Based on previous considerations, it can be estimated that the Vojvodina's tourist offer is rich and provides various opportunities for an active and high-quality holiday. Guests have the opportunity to enjoy numerous contents that combine tradition with modern, but also to learn and find out about the former way of life and work of the population in this area. It is important to emphasize that they do not have to give up comfort, as the owners of the messuages sometimes did. Some of the messuages are also equipped with swimming pools, sports fields, fish ponds, horse stables, mini zoo gardens and other facilities that are not normally part of the traditional message offering.

The results of the survey of rural tourist households in the territory of AP Vojvodina within the doctoral dissertation (2011) show that the offer of message tourism attracts, above all, urban tourism demand, that is, guests from large urban areas such as: Belgrade, Novi Sad, Subotica, but also Zrenjanin, Niš, Kraljevo and other cities. Tourist flows are dominated by domestic tourist demand. However, visitors from some neighboring countries such as Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia, Romania, Italy and others, but also from some distant, such as Australia, are recorded. Guests most often stay for one day (usually visitors), and these are usually organized tourist groups, and up to three days in the case of overnight stay. According to the results of the survey, about 77% of respondents stay for up to two days, and only 23% of respondents stay three or more days. According to the results of the survey, the highest average prices of accommodation in rural tourism in Vojvodina, are realized in the messuages and ethno villages as a specific type of offer in the rural tourism of Vojvodina, while the houses in the village represent the cheapest type of accommodation.

Table 3. Average prices in rural tourism in Vojvodina, by type of accommodation, per person, in euros, 2011.

Type of accommodation	Overnight stay	B&B	Half board	Full board
1. Houses in the countryside	7	9	13	16
2. Messuages	12	14	-	49
3. Cottages	16	-	-	-
4. Villa	11	-	16	19
5. Apartment	10	-	-	-
6. Hotel in the countryside	12	19	17	19
7. Exclusive	-	-	-	-
8. Ethno villages	15	25	30	35

Source: Bošković, T. (2013): *Tourism as a developmental advantage of rural areas of Vojvodina*, doctoral dissertation, Faculty of Economics, University of Niš; Note:

The table was created by the author based on the data from the website www.selo.co.rs from May 2011

However, when it comes to the messuages, it is noticed that higher prices of services are recorded in those facilities that, according to their characteristics, can be classified into luxurious tourist and catering facilities, which were mentioned earlier. Regarding the realized economic effects, i.e. the realized turnover and tourism revenues, most of the surveyed owners of the messuages have avoided answering this question. Some of the rare answers indicate that turnover ranges from several tens to 1,000 overnights while the number of visitors reaches 2,000, as recorded by one of the more famous messuages. When it comes to the number of household members employed in the message tourism industry, according to the results of the survey, the most common number, to be more precise in 58.3% cases of surveyed owners of the messuages, is two members of the household. A quarter of respondents, i.e. 25%, said that only one member is engaged, and about 16.7% more than two members of the household. Regarding the amount of realized net income from tourism, the illustrative answer of one respondent is that “it is much, much less than in agriculture and for now insufficient for them to live or repay the loans.” Otherwise, according to the survey results, some 30.8% of respondents cite agriculture as the primary source of income in the household, while for 23.1% of respondents this is tourism. As the primary source of income, the respondents state the pension (23.1%), salaries (15.4%) and the rest (7.7%). Such answers point to the conclusion that the developmental potential of this tourist product has not been sufficiently exploited.

The results of the research survey of Tourist Organizations in Vojvodina from 2011, also refer to similar conclusions. To the question “What are the most developed forms of rural tourism in the municipality”, the respondents should have chosen one of the 11 offered answers or forms of rural tourism. However, most interviewed TOs gave multiple answers because they believe that several forms of rural tourism were developed on the territory of their municipalities. The event tourism was singled out as a

form of tourism with the largest percentage share of 25.7% in the overall responses of the respondents. Messuages, agrotourism, religious, wine and sports-recreational tourism were the least represented in respondents' answers.

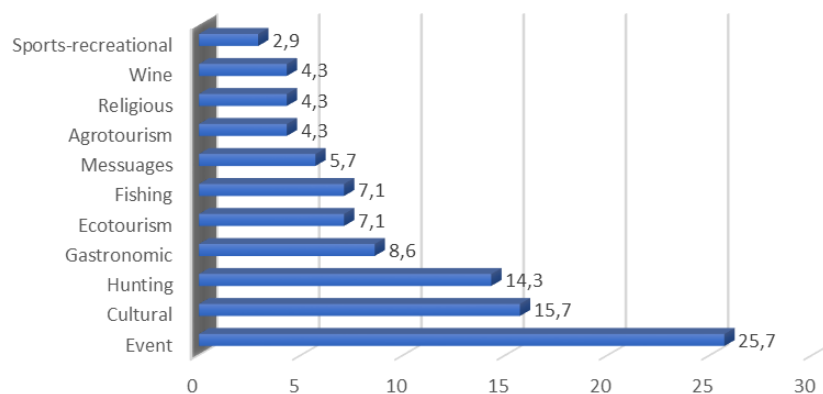


Figure. 1 Share in the overall responses of the respondents to the question: The most developed forms of rural tourism in the municipality? (%)
 Source: Bošković, T. (2013): *Tourism as a development advantage of rural areas of Vojvodina*, doctoral dissertation, Faculty of Economics, University of Niš;
 Note: edited by the author

According to this research, message tourism is one of the most developed forms of rural tourism in just 4 municipalities: Žabalj, Indjija, Kanjiža and Mali Idjoš. Also, according to the results of the same TO research, to the asked question “What do you think is a good resource base for rural tourism development in your municipality?”, some

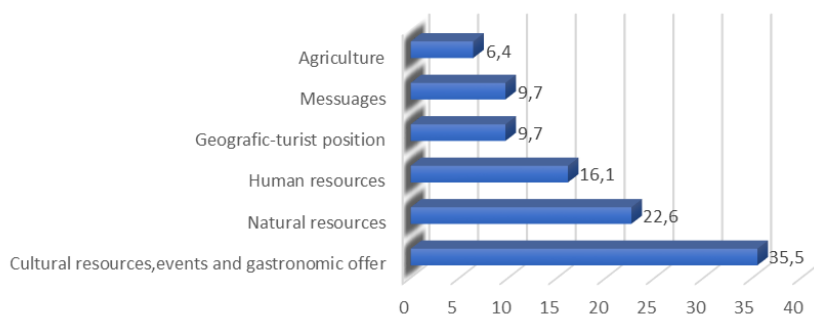


Figure 2. Participation in the overall responses of respondents to the question: What do you think is a good resource base for the development of rural tourism in your municipality? (%)
 Source: Bošković, T. (2013): *Tourism as a development advantage of rural areas of Vojvodina*, doctoral dissertation, Faculty of Economics, University of Niš; Note: edited by the author

respondents gave multiple answers. It should be noted that in this case the respondents were not offered answers. Only 9.7% of all responses of the respondents state the messages as a good resource base, and even a smaller percentage, i.e. only 6%, recognize the importance of agriculture for the development of rural tourism.

In the first place, respondents emphasize cultural resources, events and gastronomic offer. Such results indicate that the tourist value and importance of the messages, but also agriculture, are insufficiently recognized by local tourism workers, who should, among other things, stimulate the development and promotion of this tourist product in the territories of their municipalities.

Limiting Factors

The owners of the tourist messages recognize the numerous advantages of message tourism. First of all, they are thinking of supplementing their basic agricultural revenues by providing tourist services. It is particularly important to place products from their production directly on the “doorstep”, without costs and going to the market. This way, tourism can support agricultural activities of message owners. However, they also indicate the number of restrictions. In the opinion of the message owners, although it exists, there is still *insufficient financial support from the state*. Such a conclusion can be derived from their most common answers in the above-mentioned research of RTHs. Thus, some owners made the following suggestions for improving the existing situation: “Greater understanding for message owners – old-style messages – traditional, so they can get more financial support”; “Providing financial support from the state”; “Motivating the original rural households”. In practice, RTH owners define for different sources of funding starting from self-financing where they use their own funds, through lending, EU funds and state support. According to the Handbook for Rural Tourism (2015), which lists 10 possible sources of funding, state support plays a crucial role in the development of rural tourism and agriculture. According to the Handbook, this type of support is provided primarily through subsidies, incentives, loans, guarantees and other means. Subsidies are allocated as a very desirable source of funding because they are non-refundable funds. The realization of this type of support for the development of rural tourism is in the competence of: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Water Management, Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications, then the Secretariat for Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management of AP Vojvodina and the Secretariat for Economy, Employment and Gender Equality of AP Vojvodina. In terms of incentive funds for the development of message tourism, the Provincial Secretariat for Agriculture, Water Management and Forestry, for example, announced in 2013 a Competition to support non-agricultural and accompanying agricultural activities in the villages of AP Vojvodina. According to the

results of the competition, on that occasion, funds were granted for 24 users, with the minimum approved amount per user of RSD 119,972.00, and the highest amount of RSD 1,998,612.00 (www.psp.vojvodina.gov.rs). These are the means that are aimed at the development of message tourism.

In addition to the financial support, message owners also draw attention to the *categorization*. Categorization that normally represents a guarantee of quality of services and as a rule contributes to development, in the case of messages is often mentioned as a problem. Namely, valid legal solutions do not mention messages but introduce the concept of a rural tourism household (RTH) as a type of catering facilities for accommodation and prescribe their obligatory categorization. In this way, the messages are equated with all other types of catering facilities for accommodation, and especially with the category of “homework” (where services are also provided by a physical person). The law stipulates that facilities in which RTH services are provided must meet the minimum technical, sanitary and hygienic conditions and be categorized. According to the Association of Messages Owners, the prescribed standards do not respect the specificity of the messages and meeting those standards endangers the authenticity of the message on which its basic tourist value rests. Also, experts from this field consider that “it is difficult, if not impossible, to compare the quality of services and facilities offered, for example, by some message or inn with services offered by a rural hotel or other type of accommodation” (Todorović et al., 2009, p. 103). Harmonization of the Rules with the actual situation “on the ground” and providing the possibility to categorize the existing old facilities is also proposed by the Tourismologists Association of Serbia. In addition, the owners of the messages have remarks on the very way of conducting categorization. The results of the 2011 survey, obtained also in direct contact with the owners of individual messages, point to dissatisfaction with the work of the municipal authorities in charge of categorization (long duration of the procedure, failure to provide all the necessary information...). Also, the owners of the messages consider that they have not been provided with the professional assistance they need, since the categorization is carried out according to the principle of “self-assessment” (by the applicant, i.e. the owner of the message). In practice, the biggest problem occurs when completing the application of electoral elements, which forms an integral part of the Application for category registration. For these reasons, many Vojvodina’s messages are not categorized, which certainly constitutes a constraint in development. Thus, for example, according to the results of the 2011 survey, only one message was registered as a RTH in the territory of Subotica, and that is Wine message Čuvarđić in Kelebija.

CONCLUSION

Message tourism in the territory of AP Vojvodina has very favorable development opportunities that are the most used in Bačka, and especially in the South Bačka District. The advantages that tourism brings to the owners of the messages undoubtedly indicate that tourism can positively influence the economic recovery and revitalization of the messages, and vice versa, the revival of the messages contributes to the development of tourism. The most important positive effects that can be expected from the development of agricultural tourism are, above all, economic, but also social and cultural. The key areas whose development could significantly contribute to the process of developing the tourism industry are state financial support and categorization.

In this regard, it can be suggested that the *state financial support* for the development of agricultural tourism should be more significant and accessible and that it is realized primarily through various types of subsidies and grants. First and foremost, this support should be directed towards the reconstruction of already existing traditional messages (with retained agricultural production based primarily on the integral and biological concept of production) in the function of tourism. The reconstruction of old messages with an authentic, traditional offer should have priority over the construction of new messages. At the same time, attention should be paid to assisting all interested message owners in order to get them acquainted and informed about all possible forms of support in a timely manner, as well as to help them meet the conditions for using different forms of state assistance (in preparing necessary documentation, technical support and similar).

Successful implementation of *categorization* is one of the most important preconditions for organized development of tourism in a certain area, which is also the case with the development of message tourism. Therefore, measures are needed to encourage the categorization of the messages, the financial ones already mentioned, but also some other (for example, professional education). It is certainly necessary, first of all, to listen and take into account all the remarks and suggestions of the owners of the old messages. Their basic requirement is reduced to the necessity of respecting the specifics of the old messages and the real situation on the ground and creating the possibility to categorize such objects that, according to the current Rules, could not be categorized. It is undeniable that the authenticity of the message is its basic tourist value, which must be carefully approached. However, it is also important to respect the standards in order to protect and improve the quality of the service. Yet, there is a consensus that the application of standards should not erase the individuality and authenticity of products in rural tourism. In that sense, opinions and consultations with experts in the field of culture might be very useful when it comes to the application of standards to existing old messages. Also, it seems that in the case of the messages the

recommendation of the International Conference in Riga is useful and applicable: “Local tradition must be preserved, but without insects in bed” (www.cenort.rs). If, according to the latest Tourism Development Strategy of Serbia, “the marketing war for future tourists and destinations on the market will not be anymore lead decisively by prices of accommodation, infrastructure, traffic and facilities, but through the feelings and positive experiences of tourists” (Tourism Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia for the period of 2016-2025, p. 19), it seems that in this case, the message tourism built on an authentic, traditional offer, could be one of the winners.

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РАЗВОЈ ТУРИЗМА НА САЛАШИМА У АУТОНОМНОЈ ПОКРАЈИНИ ВОЈВОДИНИ: МОГУЋНОСТИ И ОГРАНИЧЕЊА

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Резиме

У руралним пределима АП Војводине је могуће, захваљујући богатој и разноврсној природној и друштвеној ресурсној основи развијати различите туристичке производе. Салашарски туризам је аутентичан и јединствен сегмент понуде руралног туризма чију основу за развој чине салаша по којима је простор Војводине препознатљив. Салаша су utkани у начин живота, историју, културу и традицију народа са овог подручја. Ипак, од саме своје појаве па до данас, може се рећи, да су прешли динамичан развојни пут током којег су доживели врхунац свог развоја, али и драстичан пад и нестајање. Данас, број војвођанских салаша није ни приближан некадашњем броју. Међутим, њихово укључивање у туристичку понуду може бити један од начина да се допринесе заустављању овог процеса и да се омогући њихова ревитализација. У новије време туристичка валоризација салаша заокупља пажњу истраживача и увиђа се велики значај оживљавања салаша за Војводину. Такође, и власници салаша препознају бројне предности од бављења туризмом. Позитивни ефекти који се могу очекивати од развоја салашарског туризма су, пре свега, економски, али и друштвени и културни. Имајући у виду потребу да се побољшају економски услови за живот и рад руралне популације која претежно зависи од пољопривреде, као најзначајнија предност се може издвојити могућност остваривања допунских прихода. Развој салашарског туризма подржава пољопривредне активности власника салаша и локалну пољопривреду што је од огромног значаја за регион Војводине. Резултати истраживања у раду указују да су повољне могућности развоја салашарског туризма највише искоришћене у Бачкој, а нарочито у Јужно-бачком округу. У будућности се бољи резултати могу очекивати унапређењем државне финансијске подршке, али и области категоризације, на које власници салаша указују као лимитирајуће. При томе, посебну бригу и пажњу захтевају већ постојећи традиционални салаша са аутентичном понудом, као најзначајнији чиниоци у развоју квалитетног салашарског туризма.