

Магистър СТЕЛА ЗЛОТО

УНИВЕРСИТЕТ „ФАН С. НОЛИ“, КОРЧА, АЛБАНИЯ

ДЕЙСТВИТЕЛНА ОЦЕНКА НА ПОТЕНЦИАЛА ЗА РАЗВИТИЕ В РЕГИОН ПРЕСПА

ACTUAL EVALUATION OF DEVELOPMENT POTENTIALS IN PRESPA REGION

STELA ZOTO, M.A.

UNIVERSITY “FAN S.NOLI”, KORCE, ALBANIA

Abstract: The Prespa Lakes, shared between Albania, Greece and FYR-Macedonia, are among the 10 most important wetlands in the Mediterranean. The area is acknowledged for its wide range of flora and fauna and is characterized by outstanding natural beauty including monuments from the Byzantine and post-Byzantine periods. All three countries have taken a series of steps to protect the Prespa ecosystem. It is apparent that the Region enjoys significant strengths that can be leveraged to further its tourism development objectives. This includes the unique natural scenery, cuisine, culture, local agricultural products, skilled artisans, historical and religious attractions and adequate basic infrastructure. This paper discusses Albanian area capacities to develop tourism.

1. AN ANALYSIS OF SUPPLY IN THE REGION.

1. Area, population, density

Total area of Prespa including the water basin and lakes is 2.519.1 km². There are two lakes in the Region, large Prespa and small Prespa and their basin, small Prespa (total area approximately 47.4 km² belongs to Greece (43.5km²) while a small part of it (nearly 4 km)

belongs to Albania. Large Prespa (total area is nearly 259.4 km²) is divided into three countries. The largest part belongs to Macedonia. The Prespa lakes are situated nearly 850 m above the sea level, while mountains reach over 2000 m above the sea level. There are 3 islands in the small Prespa Lake in the Greek part and Grad and

Golem Mountains in the large Prespa respectively in Albania and Macedonia.

Table 1. Total number of inhabitants in the inhabited places during the years.

Years	1926	1945	1960	1969	1979	1989	2000	2025
Liqenas	515	565	697	788	941	1035	1120	1141
Lajthize	68	84	149	157	182	215	232	236
Zaroshke	156	201	247	307	317	322	348	355
Diellas	531	398	265	320	371	464	502	512
Cerje	98	175	250	308	308	297	252	246
Gollombec	472	346	217	239	252	299	294	282
Small Gorica	149	108	210	271	253	364	371	
Large Gorice	517	201	329	369	406	489	515	525
Kallamas	290	289	448	515	587	661	658	651
Rakicke	626	512	500	539	496	443	394	386
Shuec	26	64	179	208	232	262	281	286
Buzliqen	44	96	165	187	202	224	242	247
Total	3337	3080	3554	4145	4565	4964	5202	5238

2. Climate

The climate of Prespa Region is characterized from a middle continental like the one of Central Europe with Mediterranean features. Annual precipitations estimate 600-900 mm. The humid season lasts from October to April. Annual average temperature is between 9.5° and 11°C. Number of sunny days is nearly 270 days and the sunny hours are 2300 a year. So, the Prespa Lake is the source of life for the entire ecosystem in the Region, because it plays the role of the main climate regulator for the Region.

3. Landscape

The geomorphology of Prespa Region is an intense one. The geomorphologic character of the Region is determined from two lakes: large Prespa, small Prespa and high mountains (Dry Mountain) situated near along the shore of both lakes. Area of mountains, 1100-1500 m takes the main part of all the land area.

4. Vegetation and flora

Areas with water vegetation are of a special importance for preservation. Formation of land plants displays such a variety of forms. There are endemic species, rare and interesting threatened by plants. Many endemic species on the level of the Balkan Peninsula are distinguishable. Besides, non-endemic species of the pretended to be part of the area are involved in the catalogues of protected planted species.

5. Fauna

The most important areas of fauna and rare flora species in Albania are:

- Small Prespa Lake and its surrounding basin;
- Gorice-Kallamas Bay in Large Prespa;
- Forests of chestnuts in the western part of Dry Mountain and Bitincka and Rakicka hills on the Greek boundary;
- In the area of Kallamas, the ancient forest about 45 ha of *Juniperus Foetidissima*;
- A chestnut forest near Diellas monastery;

- Old treed in Liqenas and Gorice villages;

- Along the stony belt in the Prespa lake shore grows 'karakas' (*touronortici celtis*);

- Beech forest in the eastern part of the Dry Mountain;

- The alpine part of the Dry Mountain;

- Mountain Grad island;

- Tren cave in the shore of small Prespa Lake.

6. Development of the infrastructure

Transport infrastructure involves a partly asphalted road of about 5-6 m wide of a national importance which passes through all the length of the "Large Prespa" ecosystem. The road begins from the pass of Zvezda and widens bordering Macedonia measuring 25 km long. Inside the Park there is a road network with link Zvezda-Gorica (the boundary) with Devolli. Its total length is 40 km and the average width is 4 m. Also, there is a mountain road 17 km long and 3 m wide used only by seasons. In the low areas around both lakes, there is a road network that can be used for trips and climbing from tourists of all ages, but there is no business initiatives to promote such sports.

7. Management of hard residues

There is no system of residues collection and their treatment. According some observations, the amount of hard residues as result of humans is 4.2 t in 24 hours. In this context, the organization of communal residues treatment through landfills is required.

8. Water management

The greatest negative interference was done in 1953 when Devolli River was connected with small Prespa lake. The river was used for watering during 1960. In 1986 one gate was put in the end of the channel linking small Prespa with the large one, while now the system is closed and the river is not connected with the lakes. In small Prespa, the quality of water is good in general. Large has the best

water oxygenation, while its transparency is getting gradually lower because of pollution. There is no existing infrastructure for a potable water network. Local people use the lake water which does not meet the needs of for potable water and some of villages use water wells of a poor quality. Only Ligenas and Lajthize villages have natural water resources of a high quality, used for drinking. There is no treatment of home residues.

9. Transport

Inhabitants use mainly small cars for transport, but there are others means such as bicycles, buses and animals.

10. Historical and cultural heritage

Prespa is rich in historical and cultural values which include prehistoric places, monuments and handicrafts since the ancient and byzantine period and local traditions, architecture and art forms. Generally, the monuments need maintenance, restoration and promotion in order to be preserved and publically promoted.

Some of the most important monuments of the Region are:

Monastery of Saint Mary situated in the small island of Large Prespa (XIV century), Eremites in the boundary between Macedonia and Albania (VII century), Castle of Tren (the Bronze Age), Eremites called Saint Mary of Depths (XII-XIII century) and many other churches and monasteries inside the castle.

The Region possesses many traditional values such as handicrafts and many events and folkloric festivals building thus a variety of values in order to provide its sustainable development.

11. Environment protection

Prespa Region is a National Park. Its objectives are as follows:

The Park is managed from the Directory of Forest Service in Korca. The directory with its staff is one of the most important bodies able to organize tours of visitors in the Region as they know it better. There is no developed industry in the Albanian part and the activities are

scarce here. The unique polluting elements in the Region are home residues which need to be managed. GTZ supports those who offer houses for tourists with solar panels. There are 10 solar panels situated in the Region that are used for tourist purposes.

12. Handicrafts, museums, churches and events

Prespa is rich in historical and cultural values which include prehistoric places, monuments and handicrafts since the ancient and byzantine period and local traditions, architecture and art forms. Generally, the monuments need maintenance, restoration and promotion in order to be preserved and publically promoted. There are a lot of events organized in the Region from three countries. In the Albanian part, "Prespa Festival" is organized every year. The Festival of Wines is organized during November – December. Actually, the festival is only organized in Gorica, but there is a proposal for extending it in all villages. The number of people is 100, while 30 of them are competitors. Christmas and New Year celebrations are really impressive. Each village celebrates a special saint day and during these days guests are welcome in every house. Different handicrafts are present in the Region such as wood products, textile, leather, cooper and pearls. These products are used for inhabitants' needs. There is only one spontaneous interest from visitors to buy these products.

13. Actual tourism business

Accommodation in the Region is organized in different kinds of facilities: hotels, camping, private residences and some monasteries. In the Albanian part, this service is offered from Globocen and Gorica villages. There is only one hotel Ligenas village which offers 10 rooms for the visitors. The other part involves private houses. In these accommodation units, tourists may be provided with traditional food and wine produced in the same locality.

13.1. From the questionnaires with hotel owners resulted that:

1. Hotels of the area are private owned.

2. There are small hotels consisting of 2-5 employees;

Hotels in the Prespa area

Hotels	Single room	Double room	Price	Double room price	Room service	Number of stars
Liqenas	4	4	25\$	30\$	No	* *
Zaroshke	0	5	--	15\$	Yes	*

Bars, restaurants, percentage of occupation, additional services.

Prespa area	Restaurants	Bars	% of occupation Season 1	% of occupation Season 2	% of occupation Season 3	% of occupation Season 4	Additional services	Promotional expenses	% of growth 2008	% of growth 2009
Liqenas	40	30	2	10	40	5-10	Booking	300\$	10-15	15
Zaroshke	150	32	5-10	15-30	60	5-10	Booking	100\$	10-15	15

13.2. The following conclusions resulted from the questionnaires asked to rented houses' owners:

1. Are private houses;
2. They have tow or more rooms to rent;
3. They are private properties;
4. Tourist development is considered as good;
5. Mainly they are new activities;
6. Prices vary from 15\$ per person and 10\$ per group of persons;
7. Kitchens are mainly equipped with electric stoves; fridges, gas stoves, cupboards, etc.

8. Toilettes are provided with WC, showers, bide, solar panels.

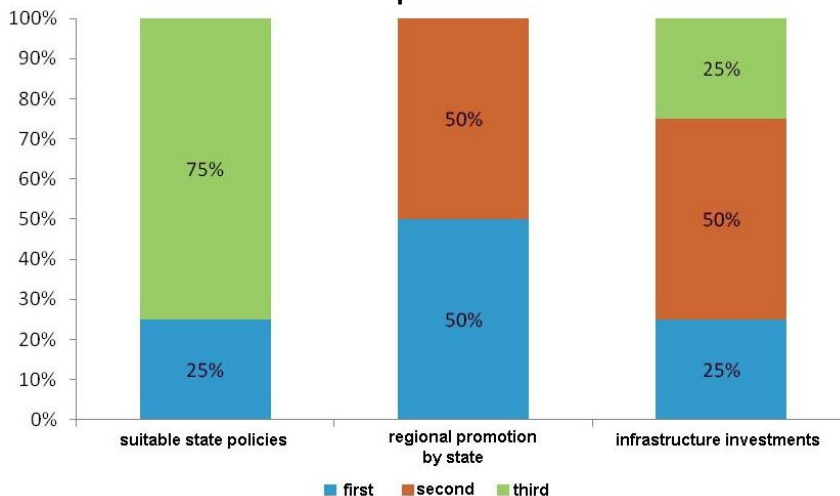
9. Potable water supply is 6 hours per day, electric power 24 hours, landline phone does not work, mobile does, and sewage water system does not exist in 75% of cases, only in 25%.

10. No Internet access.

11. Relations with travel agencies are made only to 25% of rented houses. Agencies are mainly from Korca.

12. The most mentioned forms according to which the inhabitants expect the government to assist in tourism development: (graphic 1)

Graf 1. The most mentioned forms according to which the inhabitants expect the government to assist in tourism development.



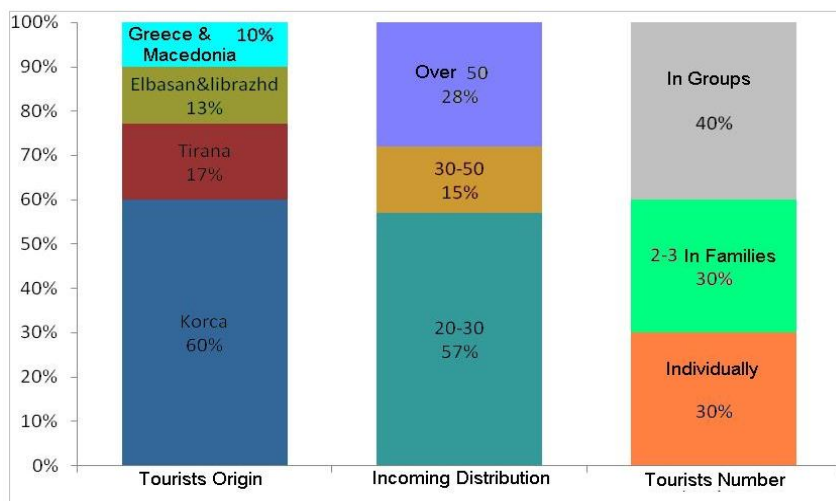
2. AN ANALYSIS OF DEMAND IN REGION

Tourists that come and visit the area are mainly from Korca. The average number of visitors is 1000 tourists per year. They are mainly coming from Korca and Devolli and spend the weekend and about 50 people come from other places every year. (grafic2)

Results of the questionnaires

The selected sample was generally casual. The results are as follows:

Graf 2.



2.1. Questionnaires for tourists:

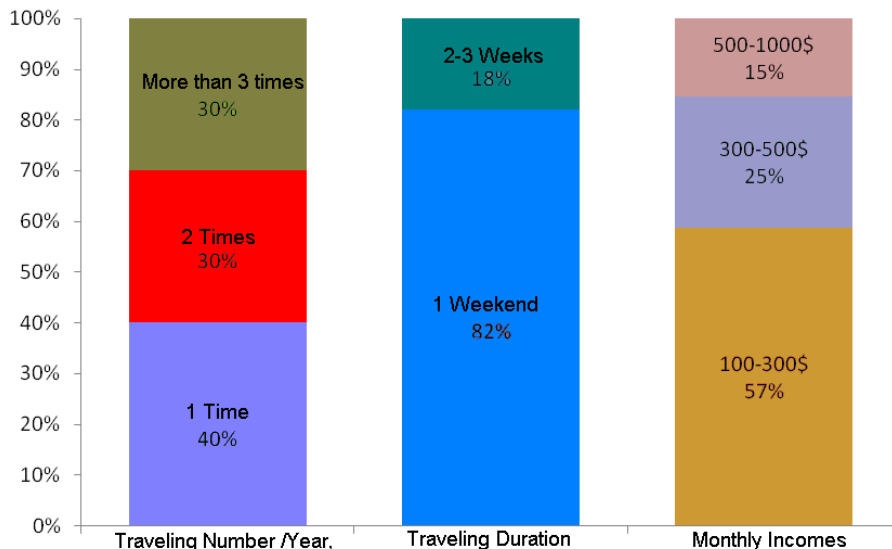
More than half of tourists are originated from Korca; the others come from Tirana, Elbasan and Librazhd. Only 10% from outside borders: our neighbors Greece and Macedonia. (Graphic 2). 30% comes individually 30% 2-3 persons, 40% in groups (Graphic 2). 50% comes more than 3 times in the area, 20% 2-3 times and 30% comes for the first time. (Graphic 2).

82 % stay 1 weekend, 12% stay 2-3 weeks (Graphic 3). The majority of tourists stay only overnight in the area and only one small part (12% stay relatively longer). This is not a favorable indicator for the area.

As it can be seen, the tourists of the area are relatively loyal. They return to the area. This can happen because they are originated from the same area.

Monthly income per tourist coming in the area are 57% 100-300 \$, 25% 300-500 \$ and 15% 500-1000\$(Graphic 3). Monthly incomes for tourist that visit the area (for the Albanian part are relatively low); the majority is taken from the individuals with minimal incomes. 57% are coming in the area for vacation 31% for personal events and 12% for business.

Graf 3.

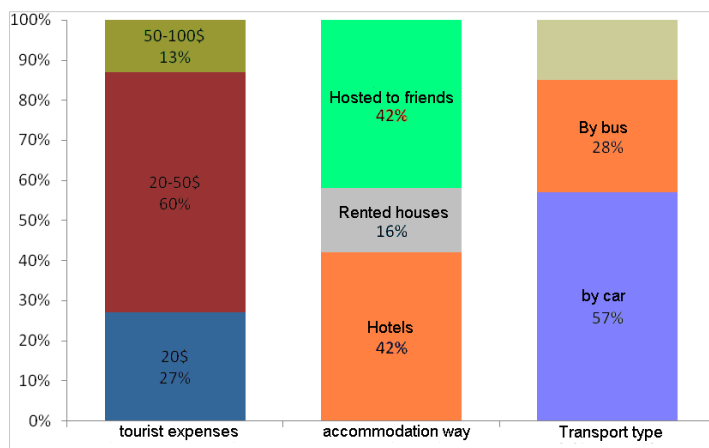


Tourist spending is 27% till-20\$ per day, 60% 20-50\$ per day and 13% 50-100\$ per day (Graphic 4). The majority of tourists make minimal expenses for their staying. This is a very unfavorable indicator for the area. This can be explained with the limited activities organized in the area.

42% stay in hotels, 42% to friends and 16% at rented houses. (Graphic 4). A small part is accommodated in rented

houses; meanwhile there exist a relatively wide offer in this sector with good accommodation conditions. Accommodation in friends' houses takes a considerable space as for the type of tourism of the area. 47% of tourist come in area by private car, 28% by bus and 15% by other types of transportation. (Graphic 4) 57% comes by promotion 40% transit, 35% by travel agencies.

Graf 4.



Appreciation of quality of touristic services.

The quality of services in hotels 80% good, 20% bad, restaurants 100% good, transportation 20% good, 80% bad, other services 10% good, 76% bad, 14% very bad.

Appreciation of price of touristic services.

Price in accommodation appreciate 42% high, 58% normal, in restaurants appreciate 71% normal, 29% high, in other services 56% normal, 44% high.

Appreciation of rate quality-price of touristic services.

In accommodation 89% good, 11% bad, in transport 78% good, 22% bad, in other services 60% good, 40% bad.

Literature:

- Dobrinisky, R. (2000) Multi-speed Transition and Multi-speed Integration in Europe: Recent Economic Developments in the Balkans, in *The Development of the Balkan Region*, Petrakos & Totev (eds), London: Ashgate, pp. 75-112.
- East West Institute, (2000) *Task Force on Economic Strategy for SEE*.
- East West Institute and European Stability Initiative, (2001) *Democracy, Security and the Future of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe*.
- Eilat, Y. & Zinnes, C. (2000), *The Evolution of the Shadow Economy in Transition Countries: Consequences for Economic Growth and Donor Assistance*, CAER II Discussion Paper No 83.
- Emerson, M. & Whyte, N. (2001), "The Future of the Stability Pact" in *Europe South-East Monitor*, Brussels, CEPS.
- Emerson, Michael (2001), *About Forming and Reforming the Stability Pact; From Balkans to Caucasus*, Brussels, CEPS.
- European Stability Initiative, (1999) *The Stability Pact and Lessons from a Decade of Regional Initiatives*, Brussels, www.esiweb.org.
- European Stability Initiative, (2000) *Stability, Institutions and European Integration*, Brussels, www.esiweb.org.
- 79
- MARER, P., *The Soviet block, as an integration block, economic, political and military aspects*, 1997
- SINNHUBER, K.A., *Central Europe – Mitteleuropa – Europa Centrale: An analysis of a Geographic Term*, In: Transactions and Papers of the papers of the Institute of British Geographers, 1954
- Survey of Agriculture in Transition Countries*, 1998, OECD, Paris
- Third Report on Economic and Social Cohesion, Main Regional Indicators, 2004, February
- http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/reports/pdf/cohesion3/cohesion3_indicator_en.pdf
- VISION PLANET Strategies for Integrated Spatial Development of the Central European, Danubian and Adriatic Area. Background Report., 2000, Bonn