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# THE TOURIST VALORIZATION OF THE ACCOMMODATION FACILITIES ON THE E-75 MOTORWAY IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSIT TOURISM

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## **Abstract**

Hospitality has contributed to a huge increase in the global economy, precisely through the provision of basic accommodation and food services. The importance of hospitality today is portrayed as a leading economic contributor in world and national economies in terms of added value, capital investment, employment and tax contributions. Hence, it is important to conclude that the hospitality offer is formed exactly according to the potentials of the designated country for the development of selective types of tourism. According to this, transit tourism as a selective type of tourism, is one of the strongest economic facilities in the tourist offer of each country, as well as in the offer of the Republic of North Macedonia. The fact that a huge number of foreign tourists' transit through our country during certain periods of the year annually confirms the statement that the country has a large touristic transit function. It is assumed that with the realization of all transit corridors the Republic will become more frequent in tourist terms.

**Key words:** hospitality, hotel, transit tourism, tourists, North Macedonia, valorization

## **1. Introduction**

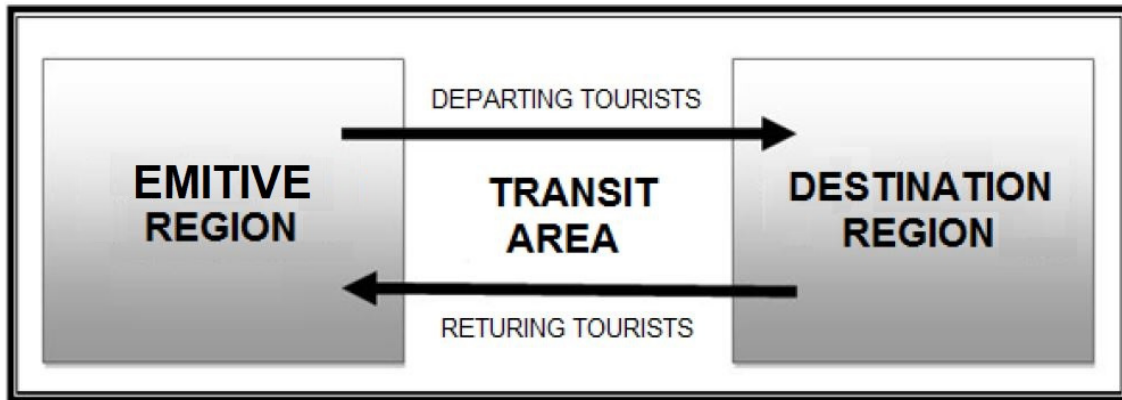
Defining the concept of transit tourism, means a set of terms and phenomena which appear as a complex reflection of all relevant factors related to the movement of tourists through certain places, regions or countries towards their particular tourist destination, where their retention with a certain goal ranges from a few minutes to one or more nights. Accordingly, although the Republic of North Macedonia is a relatively small country, precisely its central Balkan position is the one that enables significant circulation of tourists by interlacing the roads from local, regional, national and international significance with

potential value for creating transit tourism. But for North Macedonia to have the possibility of attracting transit tourists, first, the country must have the basic base for the development of transit tourism, which is accommodation. Hence, in this paper the research is focused on the analyzing the accommodation facilities on the E-75 motorway, and since every tourist potential needs to be valorized, the accommodation facilities will be valorized in order to determine their competence for attracting transit tourists.

## **2. Defining transit tourism**

Referencing (Angelkova Petkova & Ristova,2015a) have stated that, transit tourism as a concept that it cannot be found in foreign tourist literature. In theory, this type of tourism was introduced for the first time in the 1960's by the professor Dr. Srdjan Markovic, who specially worked on this issue in the territory of Yugoslavia and later in the Republic of Croatia. It is composed of two terms that are opposite in meaning. Transit implies (travel from the point of departure to the place of arrival) with the possibility of a short stay,while tourism implies travel, stay and activities at the place of residence (destination) that meets tourist needs. All journeys are transited through some areas,but transit is not a travel motive. Contemporary literature that deals with the whole or partially with the issues of transit tourism considers the tourism as a special form of tourism activity (Jovičić, 1986; Stanković, 1994; Štetić, 1999a). Štetić (1999b) states that transit tourism is very widespread in practice, but there is always no clear definition of what is meant by this type of tourism, both theoretical and methodological.

Transit tourism represents the movement of tourists across places, regions or countries towards their final tourist destinations. Those places, regions or countries, where tourists pass by are indeed called transit routes. Transit routes constitute and are a vital part of the transit tourism. Without transit routes there cannot be transit tourism. Their performance and features are vital to accessing certain tourist destinations, and affect the number and directions of the tourist movements. Transit routes are a spatial whole within which it is realized the transfer of tourists to the relation domicile - tourist destination – domicile (Tuntev, 2007a; Dimitrov & Angelkova Petkova, 2014). The duration of the stay of tourists in the transition area will be longer, as long as a quality offer with expressed tourist value is present. Often, due to the significant tourist values in the surrounding area, sometimes an interaction can occur with tourist attractions, use of services and objects, so transit tourism can apply both excursion and picnic characteristics, but Tuntev (2007b) states that only an efficient transit route represents an easy and quick flow to a large number of tourists.



**Figure 1. Position of the transit area**

Source: Adaptation from Tuntev, Z (2007). Tourist destination, Faculty of tourism and hospitality, Ohrid, pp.18.

### 3. Who are the transit tourists?

(Kovačević & Obradović, 2006) discuss that transit tourists are subject of two concepts, a concept of a tourist who spends one day or one night in an accommodation facility and a transit concept, meaning tourist in the specified destination in which he spent an overnight stay is not a goal on his journey. Today, this type of passengers are considered as tourists because they have spent overnight stays, nevertheless if they are staying in some facilities to meet any tourism related needs.

However, in the Republic of North Macedonia, the State Statistical Office defines transit tourists as persons entering the country from a border crossing, and exiting from another, in order to extend or complete the journey to another country, and do not stay for either one night in the country (State Statistical Office, 2010). To determine transit tourists, and they represent, their needs will be analyzed. Since we know that transit tourists due to the long travel time are affectionate towards leisure and recreation, their needs can be divided into two main categories (Angelkova Petkova & Ristova, 2015b):

- *Basic needs*: access to fuel, food, water, assistance and repair of transport vehicles and a place for shorter and longer vacations. These needs are invariable and constitute the basis on which the offer for transit tourists should be built.
- *Additional needs*: depend from the habits of the target groups, and, therefore, are a variable category of additional needs. But of course the importance of this category of needs is great because without it the transit tourist can not make a stay. These include the need for road information, the need to satisfy the wishes of discovering new places and things, landscapes and people, the need for local food and gastronomy tasting.

### 4. Touristic – geographical position of the Republic of North Macedonia: A prerequisite for developing transit tourism



With a total area of 25,713 square kilometers and about 2 million inhabitants, the touristic - geographic position of the Republic of North Macedonia is an important component of tourism development. The touristic - geographic position of the Republic of North Macedonia allows it to be part of the countries with emphatic functional characteristics. Roads that pass through the Balkans enable North Macedonia to have even more favorable geographical position (Dimitrov & Koteski, 2015). Transitivity is primarily derived from its central position in the Balkans, and the significant travel routes that have roots from the ancient roads Via Militaris (north-south) and Via Egnatia (east-west) (Marinovski, 2006). Whereas (Angelkova Petkova & Ristova, 2015c):

- The north-south transit route is indispensable for connecting North, Central and Western Europe to Southwest Asia and Africa through the Suez Canal and South-East and South Asia. In this direction the traffic is carried out with a combination of road and maritime, but also the air traffic is not that less important.
- The east-west transit route enables the connection of eastern European and Asian countries with the Adriatic coast, through Italy and all over Western Europe. The significance of this direction is of particular importance in the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia because it is taking place in its area.

Although the Republic of North Macedonia is a relatively small country, it is in a touristic sense a great advantage because of the increased concentration and location of the natural and cultural heritage on its territory. And it is precisely its central Balkan position that enables significant circulation of tourists by interlacing the roads from local, regional, national and international significance with potential value for creating transit tourism (Ristova, 2015). The Republic of North Macedonia can be defined as a transit area that represents the spatial unit in which the transfer of tourists to the domicile - tourist destination - domicile is realized. Although the transit area in the scientific and research fields of tourism has been found to attract the least attention, it is inevitable that the Republic of North Macedonia, with its position and important road routes, can benefit very much in terms of increasing the tourism income of this type of tourism. Therefore, by possessing these key determinants, the development of transit tourism should be one of the main goals for the development of the country. Because with the very development of transit tourism and attracting transit tourists on the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia and their motivation for stopping and staying, a more intensive development will be contributed to the other types of tourism in the Republic.

##### **5. E-75 motorway: The route of extending in the Republic of North Macedonia**

The E-75 motorway, known as “Friendship” from 2018, formerly known as the “Alexander the Great” motorway since 2008, extends in the north-south direction from the border with Republic of Serbia at the border crossing Tabanovce to the border with Republic of Greece at the border crossing Bogorodica near Gevgelija. It is part of the Pan-European international corridor X, the international route E-75, which is part of the network of international European roads (E-roads), a series of major roads across Europe. E-75 starts in Varde, Norway in the Barents Sea, continues south through Finland, Poland, the Czech Republic,

Slovakia, Hungary, Serbia, North Macedonia, and to Sitia on the island of Crete in Greece. In the second half of the XX century, this motorway was part of the Yugoslav Motorway “Brotherhood and Unity”, which crossed the four Yugoslav republics, linking the northern and southernmost boundaries. However, the conditions and infrastructure of the motorway were not fully at the level of today's international motorway standards, since only the section from Kumanovo to Veles was with two separated traffic lines.

After the independence of North Macedonia in 1991, this stage is gradually starting to be built and improved, with the construction of separate traffic lanes in two directions. The construction and reconstruction of the motorway were mostly carried out with funds from North Macedonia and financial assistance from the EU funds. Thus, in the period from the late 1990s to 2000, the sections to Gradsko and Smokvica – Gevgelija were completed, then in the period from 2001 to 2002, the section to Negotino, later in the period until 2004, the section to Demir Kapija was completed, and in 2011, the 7,4 km long section Kumanovo - Tabanovce was completed, which was officially put into operation on the Independence Day of the Republic of North Macedonia, September 8th. With the completion and the last construction of 28,2 km from the section Smokvica - Demir Kapija in May 2018, the Republic of North Macedonia completely completed the entire motorway construction according to all international standards with two separate traffic lines. Thus, with the completed construction, the length of the E-75 motorway in the north-south direction is 172.3 km, while in the south-north direction it is 168.3 km. Undoubtedly, improving the transport connection will significantly help support the growing economy of tourism in the Republic of North Macedonia, stimulating more tourists and strengthening the transit tourism (Temjanovski, 2017). Therefore, the transport connection is also crucial for accommodation facilities being able to attract transit tourists and benefit from their consumption (Ristova & Angelkova Petkova, 2015). In order to evaluate the E-75 motorway for tourist purposes, i.e. developing transit tourism, the authors will recall to the very first aspect that is attracting transit tourists, which is accommodation. Hence, on the previous division of transit tourists' needs, discussed above, the valuation of the E-75 motorway will be analyzed through the offer of the accommodation facilities.

## 6. Analysis of the accommodation facilities along the E-75 motorway

When developing accommodation facilities in transit destination, it is important whether the destination is accessible through one or more routes, and which means of transport provide access. Regarding the fact that besides the Republic of North Macedonia an international motorway pass, the E-75 motorway is a key factor for developing the accommodation facilities in the country. Thus, in Table 1, all accommodation facilities located along the E-75 motorway will be analyzed.

**Table 1. Analysis of the accommodation facilities on the E-75 motorway**

No.	Type	Name of accommodation	Location	Location / Accessibility on E-75 motorway
1.	Motel	Motel Ibro Komerc	village	relation: south – north (right side)

			Kosturnik, Kumanovo	
2.	Hotel	Harmony Hotel ** superior	village Dolno	relation: north – south (left side)
			Konjare, Kumanovo	relation: south – north (right side)
3.	Villa	Villa Just Outside of Skopje	Agino	relation: north – south (right side)
			village, Kumanovo	
4.	Hotel	Hotel Belvedere **** superior	Ilinden	relation: north – south (right side)
	Camping		Municipality, Skopje	relation: south – north (left side)
5.	Hotel	Hotel Mirror ****	Petrovec	relation: north – south (right side)
			Municipality, Skopje	relation: south – north (left side)
6.	Hotel	Hotel Spa Katlanovo ****	Katlanovo, Petrovec	relation: north – south (left side)
			Municipality, Skopje	relation: south – north (right side)
7.	Hotel	Hotel Romantik *** superior	Veles Municipality	relation: north – south (right side)
				relation: south – north (left side)
8.	Hotel	Hotel Brod Panini ***	Veles Municipality	relation: north – south (right side)
				relation: south – north (left side)
9.	Motel	Hotel Montenegro Rivijera ***	Veles Municipality	relation: north – south (right side)
				relation: south – north (left side)
10.	Hotel Spa	Gardenia Hotel & Spa *****	Veles Municipality	relation: north – south (right side)
				релација: југ – север (лева страна)
11.	Motel	Motel Macedonia ****	Veles Municipality	relation: north – south (right side)
				relation: south – north (left side)
12.	Hotel	Hotel Pamela ***	Negotino Municipality	relation: north – south (right side)
				relation: south – north (left side)
13.	Hotel	Hotel Park *	Negotino Municipality	relation: north – south (right side)
				relation: south – north (left side)
14.	Hotel	Hotel Moderna Spa ****	Demir Kapija	relation: north – south (right side)
			Municipality	relation: south – north (left side)
15.	Hotel	Hotel Popova Kula ***	Demir Kapija	relation: north – south (right side)
			Municipality	relation: south – north (left side)
16.	Apartments	Valentina Apartments	village	relation: north – south (right side)
			Negorci, Gevgelija	relation: south – north (left side)
17.	Hotel	Hotel Bozur ***	village	relation: north – south (right side)
		(complex Negorski Spa)	Negorci, Gevgelija	relation: south – north (left side)
18.	Hotel	Hotel Ilinden **	village	relation: north – south (right side)
		(complex Negorski Spa)	Negorci, Gevgelija	релација: југ – север (лева страна)
19.	Hotel	Hotel Jasen **	village	relation: north – south (right side)
		(complex Negorski Spa)	Negorci, Gevgelija	relation: south – north (left side)
20.	Guest House	Village House	village	relation: north – south (right side)
			Mrzenci, Gevgelija	relation: south – north (left side)

21.	Hotel	Hotel Nar ****	Gevgelija Municipality	relation: north – south (right side) relation: south – north (left side)
22.	Motel	Motel Vardar *	Gevgelija Municipality	relation: north – south (right side) relation: south – north (left side)
23.	Motel	Casino Motel Senator ***	Gevgelija Municipality	relation: north – south (right side) relation: south – north (left side)
24.	Hotel	Hotel Ramada Plaza ***** superior	village Bogorodica, Gevgelija	relation: north – south (left side) relation: south – north (right side)
25.	Hotel	Casino Flamingo Hotel *****	village Bogorodica, Gevgelija	relation: north – south (right side) relation: south – north (left side)

*Source: Ristova Cvetanka's research*

On the E-75 motorway in the Republic of North Macedonia there are 25 accommodation facilities, 17 of which are hotels, 5 are motels, 1 villa, 1 apartment and 1 guest house. From all the accommodation facilities in the Republic of North Macedonia the categorization is only applied to hotels, motels and boarding houses. Accommodation facilities analyzed according to their location are situated in the 8 municipalities where the E-75 passes and are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Analysis of the accommodation facilities of the E-75 motorway in municipalities**

Categorization	Hotel	Motel	Villa	Apartments	Guest house	Total
<b>City</b>						
Kumanovo	1	1	1			<b>3</b>
Ilinden	1					<b>1</b>
Petrovec	2					<b>2</b>
Veles	3	2				<b>5</b>
Gradsko						<b>0</b>
Negotino	2					<b>2</b>
Demir Kapija	2					<b>2</b>
Gevgelija	6	2		1	1	<b>10</b>

*Source: Ristova Cvetanka's research*

**Table 3. Analysis of the categorized hotel facilities of the E-75 motorway in municipalities**

Type of accommodation	5* superior	5*	4* superior	4*	3* superior	3*	2* superior	2*	1*	Total
City										
Kumanovo							1			1
Ilinden			1							1
Petrovec				2						2
Veles		1			1	1				3
Gradsko										0
Negotino						1			1	2
Demir Kapija				1		1				2
Gevgelija	1	1		1		2		2		7

*Source: Ristova Cvetanka's research*

Most accommodation facilities along the E-75 motorway are in Gevgelija (10) ,and the least accommodation facilities are in Ilinden (1). No accommodation capacity was recorded in Gradsko.

According to Table 3, on the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia there are 17 categorized hotel facilities, of which 1 hotel categorized with 5\* superior, 2 hotels with 5\*, 1 hotel with 4\* superior, 4 hotels with 4\*, 1 hotel with 3\* superior, 3 hotels with 3\* superior, 1 hotel with 2\* superior, 2 hotels with 2\* and 1 hotel with 1\*. Most of the categorized hotels located on the E-75 motorway are hotels with 3\* (5), then hotels with 4\* (4). Hotel with 5\* superior are least located on the E-75 motorway. From all of the municipalities, Gevgelija (7) has the most categorized hotels, while Kumanovo (1) and Ilinden (1) have the least categorized hotels. No accommodation capacity was recorded in Gradsko.

## 7. Tourist valorization of the accommodation facilities on the E-75 motorway

Tourist valorization is a detailed assessment of natural and created values that are significant for the tourist development of one destination, region and the whole country. Over time tourist valorization is pushed as one of the most significant factors of developed and undeveloped tourist destinations (places, regions and states) meaning one of the most complex issues of theoretical and methodological scientific basis of tourism, but also the practice of development of this activity (Stefanovic, 2004). Valorization aims to emphasize, or to detect the use values of the potentials (Čomic & Pjevač, 1997). The essence of tourist valorization is to determine the current existing state of resources where the estimation allows setting and determining the actual opportunities for tourism development, and then assess the merits of some suggestions for a certain protection of resources or the whole space and realization of possible solutions for protection, assessment of investment activities and the possibility of tourist turnover.

With the analysis of the accommodation facilities on the E-75 motorway from the aspect of developing transit tourism, a valorization will be made which will aim to determine the current state of accommodation

facilities of the E-75 motorway and with that assessment later, the authors will set and determine the real role of accommodation facilities for the development of transit tourism in the Republic of North Macedonia.

For the purposes of this paper, valorization is carried out according to the Hilary du Cros model (Du Cros, 2001) which is quite complex due to the large number of indicators for valorization. Valorization will be supplemented with certain indicators in order to get more necessary information about the accommodation facilities.

The tourist valorization of the accommodation facilities will be analyzed through:

- I. Tourist-geographical position,
- II. Infrastructure,
- III. Accessibility,
- IV. Close to tourist attractions,
- V. Accommodation capacity,
- VI. Offer of local and traditional food,
- VII. Proximity to additional needs (gas stations, auto-services and other)
- VIII. Speaking a foreign language.

Identification and evaluation of accommodation facilities will be done using a scale ranging from 1 to 5:

- Grade 1 (unsatisfactory quality) is not for tourist presentation,
- Grade 2 (satisfactory quality) represents the local tourist importance,
- Grade 3 (good quality) shows the importance of transit tourism,
- Grade 4 (very good quality) for wider regional (national) importance,
- Grade 5 (excellent quality) international tourist significance.

Tourist valorization of accommodation facilities is shown in Table 4.

**Table 4. Valorization of the accommodation capacities on the E-75 motorway**

No.	Name of the accommodation	Location	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	Touristic value
1.	Motel Ibro Komerc	village Kosturnik,Kumanovo	5	5	5	4	3	5	5	5	4,6
2.	Harmony Hotel ** superior	village Dolno Konjare,Kumanovo	4	5	5	4	2	5	5	5	4,3
3.	Villa Just Outside of Skopje	Agino village,Kumanovo	5	5	5	5	1	1	5	3	3,7
4.	Hotel Belvedere **** superior	Ilinden Municipality,Skopje	3	5	5	2	3	5	1	5	3,6
5.	Hotel Mirror ****	Petrovec Municipality,Skopje	3	5	4	3	2	5	5	5	4
6.	Hotel Spa Katlanovo ****	Katlanovo,Petrovec	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4,7

		Municipality,Skopje									
7.	Hotel Romantik *** superior	Veles Municipality	4	5	5	3	3	5	1	5	3,8
8.	Hotel Brod Panini ***	Veles Municipality	4	5	5	5	2	5	1	5	4
9.	Hotel Montenegro Rivijera ***	Veles Municipality	4	5	5	3	3	5	3	5	4,1
10.	Gardenia Hotel & Spa *****	Veles Municipality	4	5	5	3	3	5	3	5	4,1
11.	Motel Macedonia *****	Veles Municipality	5	5	5	3	3	5	5	5	4,5
12.	Hotel Pamela ***	Negotino Municipality	4	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	4,6
13.	Hotel Park *	Negotino Municipality	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	4,7
14.	Hotel Moderna Spa *****	Demir Kapija Municipality	4	5	5	4	4	5	3	5	4,3
15.	Hotel Popova Kula ***	Demir Kapija Municipality	3	3	5	4	4	5	3	5	4
16.	Valentina Apartments	village Negorci,Gevgelija	3	4	5	3	3	1	5	5	3,6
17.	Hotel Bozur *** (complex Negorski Spa)	village Negorci,Gevgelija	3	4	5	3	3	5	5	5	4,1
18.	Hotel Ilinden ** (complex Negorski Spa)	village Negorci,Gevgelija	3	4	5	3	4	5	5	4	4,1
19.	Hotel Jasen ** (complex Negorski Spa)	village Negorci,Gevgelija	3	4	5	3	5	5	5	4	4,2
20.	Village House	village Mrzenci,Gevgelija	3	4	5	2	1	1	5	5	3,2
21.	Hotel Nar *****	Gevgelija Municipality	3	4	5	5	3	5	5	5	4,3
22.	Motel Vardar *	Gevgelija Municipality	4	4	5	5	3	5	5	5	4,5
23.	Casino Motel Senator ***	Gevgelija Municipality	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	4,7
24.	Hotel Ramada Plaza ***** superior	village Bogorodica,Gevgelija	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
25.	Casino Flamingo Hotel *****	village Bogorodica,Gevgelija	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5

The tourist valorization of the E-75 motorway from the aspect determining the development of transit tourism, has an average tourist value of 4,2 which represents an excellent tourist value for prerequisites for development of transit tourism on the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia.

## 8. Conclusion

The Republic of North Macedonia is a relatively small country, in tourist terms, it is of great advantage because of the increased concentration and location of the natural and cultural heritage on its territory. And its central Balkan position allows for significant circulation of tourists with international importance on the E-75 motorway, which leads to a potential value for creating transit tourism. In this paper, the E-75 motorway was analyzed from the aspect of attracting transit tourists, through the accommodation facilities offer. With the valorization of accommodation facilities, we conclude that the Republic of North Macedonia can meet the needs of transit tourists, benefit from their consumption and positively influence the increase

in the touristic income of the country.

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