

# ***HOTELPLAN 2018***

**BOOK OF PROCEEDINGS**

**ZBORNIK RADOVA**



**2-3. novembar 2018.**  
**Beograd, Srbija**





7<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS

## ***HOTELPLAN 2018***

**HOSPITALITY AS A QUALITY FACTOR OF TOURIST  
DESTINATION OFFER AND COMPETITIVENESS**

2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2018  
BELGRADE, SERBIA

### **BOOK OF PROCEEDINGS**



### **ZBORNIK RADOVA**

**The College of Hotel Management, Belgrade, Serbia**  
University of Prešov, Faculty of Management, Prešov, Slovakia  
Old Polish University in Kielce, Kielce, Poland  
Tourism College of Zhejiang, Hangzhou, China

SEDMI MEĐUNARODNI KONGRES

## ***HOTELPLAN 2018***

**GOSTOPRIMSTVO KAO FAKTOR KVALITETA PONUDE I  
KONKURENTNOSTI TURISTIČKE DESTINACIJE**

02 – 03. November 2018.  
BEOGRAD, SRBIJA

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## PREDGOVOR

Osnovni cilj kongresa HOTELPLAN 2018 je da okupi istaknute hotelijere, članove akademske i stručne zajednice, pružajući im mogućnost da kroz panel diskusiju i izlaganje referata razmene znanje, iskustvo i istraživačke rezultate iz domena savremene ugostiteljske teorije i prakse. Visoka hotelijerska škola predstavlja lidera u razvoju visokoobrazovanih stručnih kadrova iz oblasti ugostiteljstva, razvojno-istraživačkog rada i međunarodne saradnje. Njena uloga i nacionalni značaj je ove godine potvrđen i od strane Ministarstva prosvete, nauke i tehnološkog razvoja Republike Srbije kroz dodelu prestižne Svetosavske nagrade za doprinos obrazovanju, a prepoznata je i od strane renomiranih partnerskih visokoškolskih institucija iz inostranstva. Upravo takva reputacija obezbedila je da nam se kao suorganizatori kongresa HOTELPLAN 2018 pridruže i naši partneri iz Poljske - *College of Economy, Tourism and Social Sciences*, Kine - *Tourism College of Zhejiang* i Slovačke - *University of Prešov, Faculty of Management*.

Tema ovogodišnjeg kongresa je „Uloga ugostiteljstva u formiranju ponude i brendiranju turističkih destinacija“. Za Kongres je prijavljeno ukupno 112 radova, a posle postupka recenzije, uredništvo je za publikovanje i prezentaciju odabralo je 89 radova. Radovi su pristigli iz 14 zemalja, uključujući i Srbiju, pri čemu je 53 radova napisano na srpskom jeziku, a 36 radova na engleskom jeziku. Prihvaćeni radovi su, na osnovu tematike koju obrađuju, klasifikovani u tri tematska bloka u Zborniku radova:

- Ugostiteljski sadržaji turističke destinacije - hoteli i drugi oblici smeštaja, tradicionalna i kreativna gastronomija, raznovrsnost i kvalitet restoraterske ponude
- Razvoj turističke destinacije – identitet, brendiranje, menadžment kvaliteta, planiranje i održivost.
- Primena informacionih tehnologija u promociji i upravljanju turističkom destinacijom – digitalni marketing, internet, društvene mreže, interkulturalna komunikacija i strani jezici.

Za razliku od prethodnih godina kada su prihvaćeni radovi za Kongres publikovani u tematskom broju časopisa HotelLink, ove godine se prvi put objavljuje poseban Zbornik radova koji se nalazi pred Vama, a za koji je po ispunjenju neophodnih uslova podnet zahtev za kategorizaciju kao naučne publikacije.

Na kraju želeo bih da se zahvalim svim autorima radova na priložima, kao i recenzentima, tehničkom uredniku i lektorima za srpski i engleski jezik na trudu i znanju koje su uložili kako bi omogućili publikaciju ovog Zbornika radova kojim obeležavamo petnaestogodišnjicu od organizovanja prvog međunarodnog kongresa od strane Visoke hotelijerske škole strukovnih studija.

Beograd, 12.10.2018.

Predsednik međunarodnog naučnog odbora  
*dr Slavoljub Vičić*

## FOREWORD

The main goal of the congress *HOTELPLAN 2018* is to gather distinguished hoteliers, members of the academic and practical community, and give them an opportunity to exchange their knowledge, experience and research results in the field of the contemporary hospitality theory and practice in the form of panel discussion and paper presentation. The College of Hotel Management is the leader in the development of the higher-educated professionals in the fields of hospitality industry, research and development and international cooperation. This year, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia acknowledged the role of the college and its national importance by presenting it with a prestigious award "*Svetosavska nagrada*" for the contribution to education, and that role has been recognized by the College's renowned foreign partner colleges and faculties as well. That very kind of reputation has encouraged our partners from Poland - *College of Economy, Tourism and Social Sciences*, China - *Tourism College of Zhejiang*, and Slovakia - *University of Prešov, Faculty of Management* to join us as co-organizers of the congress *HOTELPLAN 2018*.

The theme of this year's congress is „Hospitality as a quality factor of tourist destination offer and competitiveness“. Altogether, a number of 112 papers had been submitted for the congress, and after the review process, the Editorial board chose 89 papers to be published and presented. The papers had arrived from 14 different countries, including Serbia, and 53 papers were written in the Serbian language, whereas 36 were written in the English language. The accepted papers, based on their topic, were categorized into three separate thematic fields in the Congress Proceedings:

- Hospitality facilities and tourist destinations - hotels and other forms of accommodation, traditional and creative gastronomy, diversity and quality of restaurant offer;
- Tourist destination development - identity, branding, quality management, planning and sustainability;
- The use of information technology in the promotion and management of a tourist destination - digital marketing, the internet, social media, intercultural communication and foreign languages.

Unlike the previous years, when the accepted papers had been published in the thematic journal *HotelLink*, this year, for the first time, a separate Congress Proceedings Book has been issued, for which a request for classification as a scientific publication has been filed.

Finally, I want to express my gratitude to all the authors for their contribution, along with the reviewers, technical editors and proofreaders for the effort and knowledge they had put into enabling the publication of the Congress Proceedings Book which commemorates the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first international congress hosted by the College of Hotel Management.

Belgrade, 12.10.2018.

The Chair of the International Scientific Committee  
*Slavoljub Vičić, PhD*

# SADRŽAJ / CONTENT

## UGOSTITELJSKI SADRŽAJI TURISTIČKE DESTINACIJE / HOSPITALITY FACILITIES AND TOURIST DESTINATIONS

### **Ljiljana Kosar**

#### *HOTELIJERSTVO IZMEĐU PREKOMERNOG I ODGOVORNOG TURIZMA*

*Hotel industry between overtourism and responsible tourism.....1*

### **Milko Palibrk, Vladan Jonić, Višnja Istrat**

#### *IZAZOVI ODLUČIVANJA U MENADŽMENTU HOTELIJERSTVA*

*Decision-related challenges in hotel management.....14*

### **Milan Vujić, Danijela Andjelković, Ana Liberakos**

#### *KVALITET HOTELSKE USLUGE KAO FAKTOR TURISTIČKE DESTINACIJE*

*Quality of hotel service as a factor of tourist destination .....20*

### **Marina Protić, Zvezdan Ilić**

#### *MENADŽMENT TROŠKOVA KVALITETA KAO PREDUSLOV RAZVOJA HOTELSKOG PREDUZEĆA*

*Quality costs management as a predisposition for hotel enterprise  
development.....29*

### **Nada Dikić**

#### *ULOGA I ZNAČAJ ANIMACIJE U HOTELIJERSTVU*

*The role and significance of animation in the hotel business .....35*

### **Pero Petrović, Stevan Barović**

#### *BUDŽETIRANJE KAPITALA U HOTELIMA ZA FINANSIJSKO ODLUČIVANJE I MODELIRANJE PROCESA I PODATAKA*

*The budgeting capital in hotels for the financial decision and data of  
process modeling.....45*

### **Pantelis Kyrmizoglou**

#### *AN ENDEAVOUR TO INTERPRET THE HIGH NPLS OF THE GREEK HOTELS*

*Pokušaj tumačenja velikog broja nevraćenih zajmova grčkih hotela .....51*

### **Saša Mašić**

#### *INTENZITET GLOBALIZACIJE HOTELSKE PONUDE BEOGRADA I ADMINISTRATIVNIH CENTARA JUGOISTOČNE EVROPE*

*The globalization intensity of the hotel offer of Belgrade and south-  
east European administrative centres .....55*

**Jelena Tepavčević**

*ISTRAŽIVANJE NIVOVA SATISFAKCIJE GOSTIJU BEOGRADSKIH  
HOTELA SA PET ZVEZDICA PUTEM ANALIZE IZVEŠTAJA  
KORISNIKA REZERVACIONOG SISTEMA TRIPADVISOR.COM  
Research of guests' satisfaction of five star hotels in Belgrade by  
analysing reviews of users on reservation system tripadvisor.com .....65*

**Jelena Vujošević, Milena Jovović, Ilija Moric**

*NACIONALNI UGOSTITELJSKI BREND KAO FAKTOR  
KONKURENTNOSTI TURISTIČKE DESTINACIJE: SLUČAJ  
HOTELA FORZA U KOTORU (CRNA GORA)  
National hospitality brand as a factor of tourist destination  
competitiveness: case of Forza hotels & cafe in Kotor (Montenegro).....73*

**Milan Ivkov, Magdalena Jezdić, Ivana Blešić**

*ANALIZA MOGUĆNOSTI REORGANIZACIJE ZATVORENOG  
HOTELA ZVEZDA IZ BRUSA  
The analysis of the reorganisation possibility of the closed hotel Zvezda  
in Brus .....81*

**Nikolina Kordić**

*UNIFORMA ZAPOSLENIH – KOMPONENTA IMIDŽA HOTELA  
Uniform of employees - component of the hotel image .....91*

**Milica Popović**

*ZNAČAJ SEKTORA FINANSIJA U HOTELIJERSTVU  
The importance of finance in the hotel industry .....99*

**Snežana Milićević, Nataša Đorđević**

*ULOGA GASTRONOMIJE U IZGRADNJI IMIDŽA TURISTIČKE  
DESTINACIJE  
The role of gastronomy in the reputation building of a tourist  
destination .....106*

**Biljana Cvetković**

*MOGUĆNOST PROMOVISANJA GASTRO VREDNOSTI REGIONA  
PUTEM KULINARSKIH TAKMIČENJA  
Possibilities of promoting gastro values of the region through culinary  
competitions .....113*

**Betül Öztürk, Arda Yılmaz, Buket Kasalı**

*URLA – CREATIVE TOURISM, HERITAGE CUISINES, FOODWAYS  
AND GASTRONOMIC TRADITIONS  
Urla – kreativni turizam, zavičajna kuhinja, putevi hrane i  
gastronomska tradicija .....124*

<b>Danijela Stojanović</b>	
<i>ZNAČAJ GASTRONOMSKIH FESTIVALA ZA PROMOCIJU LOKALNE HRANE I GASTRONOMIJE Significance of gastronomic festivals for the promotion of local food and gastronomy.....</i>	<i>133</i>
<b>Milos Zrnić, Marija Jovanović</b>	
<i>BECOMING A CHEF - THE BASIS OF CULINARY TRADE AND TECHNICS Kako postati glavni kuvar – osnovi i tehnike kulinarske profesije.....</i>	<i>144</i>
<b>Danguolė Baltrūnaitė, Danutė Belazarienė, Danutė Jakštienė</b>	
<i>INNOVATION OR TRADITION: WHAT SHALL WE SUGGEST FOOD TOURISTS IN LITHUANIA? Inovacija ili tradicija: šta ćemo predložiti gastro-turistima u Litvaniji? .....</i>	<i>151</i>
<b>Slobodan Čavić</b>	
<i>SAVREMENI NAČIN IZRADE POSLASTIČARSKIH PROIZVODA A contemporary style of pastry product production.....</i>	<i>160</i>
<b>Srbijanka Bogosavljević Dubroja, Nadica Asanović, Mladen Pršić</b>	
<i>ZABORAVALJENI SLATKI ZALOGAJI SRBIJE Forgotten sweet bites of Serbia.....</i>	<i>172</i>
<b>Bojana Kalenjuck, Bojan Đerčan</b>	
<i>UTICAJ STRUKTURE STANOVNIŠTVA NA GASTRONOMSKI IDENTITET RURALNIH PODRUČJA VOJVODINE I RAZVOJ TURIZMA Influence of the structure of a population on gastronomy identity of a rural areas and development of the tourism of Vojvodina.....</i>	<i>185</i>
<b>Goran Gašparovski, Boris Bogaroški</b>	
<i>NUTRITIVNI, TURISTIČKO-UGOSTITELJSKI I EKONOMSKI ZNAČAJ UPOTREBE NAMIRNICA STAROSLOVENSKE KUHINJE U GASTRONOMIJI DANAŠNJICE Nutritional, tourism/hospitality-related and economic significance of the use of old-Slavic cuisine in the gastronomy of today .....</i>	<i>192</i>
<b>Dragan Tešanović, Maja Banjac, Miloš Živković</b>	
<i>UTICAJ HARMONIZACIJE AUTENTIČNIH SIREVA I VINA NA POBOLJŠANJE REGIONALNE UGOSTITELJSKO-TURISTIČKE PONUDE Influence of harmonization of the authentic cheese and wine on the improvement of the regional hospitality and tourism offer.....</i>	<i>208</i>

<b>Vesna B. Vujasinović, Sanja B. Dimić</b> <i>FUNCTIONAL PLANT BUTTERS – A NOVELTY IN A LOCAL SPREAD</i> <i>Funkcionalni biljni namazi - novina na domacoj trpezi.....</i>	<i>221</i>
<b>Snježana Gagić, Ana Jovičić Vuković</b> <i>REGIONALNA ANALIZA KVALITETA RESTORANSKIH USLUGA</i> <i>Regional analysis of the quality of restaurant services.....</i>	<i>229</i>
<b>Živadinović Bojan, Knežević Miroslav</b> <i>GOSTOPRIMSTVO URESTORANIMA U SRBIJI IZ UGLA STRANIH TURISTA</i> <i>Hospitality in Serbian restaurants from the point of view of foreign tourists.....</i>	<i>240</i>
<b>Milorad Vukić</b> <i>PREDVIĐANJE PRODAJE U RESTORATERSTVU</i> <i>Setting the expectations for the sales in the service industry.....</i>	<i>250</i>
<b>Dragan Nikolić</b> <i>KONTROLING KAO FUNKCIJA MENADŽMENTA U UGOSTITELJSTVU</i> <i>Controlling as a management function in the hospitality industry.....</i>	<i>262</i>
<b>Dimitrije Bukvić, Dragoljub B. Đorđević</b> <i>BEOGRADSKJE KAFANE U TRANZICIJI: RELEVANTNI KAFANOLOŠKI PROCESI</i> <i>Belgrade taverns in the transition period: relevant tavern-related processes.....</i>	<i>272</i>
<b>Nikola Vuksanović, MilijankoPortić, Milena Gobeljić</b> <i>THE IMPORTANCE OF TOURISTS' PERCEPTION OF RESTAURANTS OFFER IN SREMSKI KARLOVCI</i> <i>Značaj mišljenja turista o ugostiteljskoj ponudi Sremskih Karlovaca.....</i>	<i>280</i>
<b>Milovan Krasavčić</b> <i>JELENSKO MESO U GASTRONOMSKOJ PONUDI LOVAČKIH RESTORANA BEOGRADA</i> <i>Venison in the gastronomic offer of hunting restaurants.....</i>	<i>289</i>
<b>Momčilo Stojanović</b> <i>ULOGA I ZNAČAJ LJUDSKIH RESURSA U HOTELSKOM KETERINGU</i> <i>The role and importance of human resource in hotel catering.....</i>	<i>300</i>
<b>Miloš Krasavčić</b> <i>GASTRONOMSKA PONUDA RIBLJIH RESTORANA BEOGRADA</i> <i>The gastronomic offer of fish restaurants in Belgrade.....</i>	<i>306</i>

## RAZVOJ TURISTIČKE DESTINACIJE / TOURIST DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

**Mirjana Sekulovska**

*IMPLEMENTATION OF CRM SOLUTIONS IN TOURISM*

*Implementacija CRM rešenja u turizmu.....314*

**Oliver Filiposki, Dejan Metodijeski, Ljupco Janevski**

*INTERNATIONALIZATION AND STANDARDIZATION, RELEVANT  
FACTOR OF CONCEPT OF INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT IN  
TOURISM*

*Internacionalizacija i standardizacija, relevantan faktor koncepta  
integrisanog menadžmenta u turizmu.....321*

**Jasmina Leković, Mirjana Ilić**

*ZNAČAJ UDRUŽIVANJA STEJKHOLDERA U DESTINACIJSKI  
MENADŽMENT ORGANIZACIJE - DMO*

*The significance of stakeholders alliance into the destination  
management organisation – DMO.....334*

**Naume Marinoski, Cvetko Andreeski, Sasho Korunovski**

*BUSINESS PROFILE ANALYSIS IN THE FIELD OF TOURISM*

*Analiza poslovnog profila u oblasti turizma .....343*

**Olga V. Zhuravleva, Irina S. Shchetinina**

*ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN THE SPHERE OF  
TOURISM: THE REGIONAL LEVEL*

*Razvoj preduzetništva u sveri turizma: regionalni nivo .....355*

**Miloš Tucović, Jasna Simović, Desimir Nedeljković**

*ZNANJE I VEŠTINA LJUDSKIH RESURSA ZA TURIZAM  
BUDUĆNOSTI*

*Knowledge and skills of human resources for tourism of the future .....361*

**Vidoje Stefanović, Nedžad Azemović**

*METODI PLANIRANJA LJUDSKIH RESURSA U TURIZMU*

*Human resources planning methods in tourism.....373*

**Vesna Marić, Aleksandar Živković, Miloš D. Lutovac**

*LJUDSKI RESURSI KAO FAKTOR RAZVOJA TURISTIČKIH  
PREDUZEĆA*

*Human resources as a development factor of tourism companies .....386*

**Simona Martinoska, Katerina Angelevska-Najdeska**

*CRITERIA AND STANDARDS FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM*

*Kriterijumi i standardi za održivi turizam.....392*

<b>Ivana Marinović Matović</b> <i>DESIGNING THE SUSTAINABILITY BUSINESS MODELS IN TOURISM</i> <i>Osmišljavanje održivog poslovnog modela u turizmu.....</i>	<i>404</i>
<b>Igor Trišić, Marija Kostić</b> <i>ZNAČAJ ZAŠTIĆENIH PRIRODNIH PODRUČJA ZA RAZVOJ TURISTIČKE DESTINACIJE</i> <i>The significance of protected natural areas for the development of a tourist destination.....</i>	<i>414</i>
<b>Mladen Maksimović, Snežana Urošević</b> <i>ULOGA WELLNESSA U RAZVOJU SAVREMENOG ZDRAVSTVENOG TURIZMA</i> <i>The role of wellness in the contemporary health tourism development .....</i>	<i>425</i>
<b>Nata Ćirić, Marija Vuković</b> <i>MARKETING, MENADŽMENT, BRENDIRANJE I KONKURENTNOST INOVATIVNIH PAKETA USLUGA MEDICAL, WELLNESS I SPA</i> <i>Marketing, management, branding and competitiveness of the innovational service packages – medical, wellness and spa.....</i>	<i>433</i>
<b>Barbara Urh</b> <i>SPORT AS PART OF HEALTHY LIFESTYLE PROMOTION – AN INNOVATIVE PROSPECT OF MEDICAL TOURISM</i> <i>Sport kao deo promocije zdravog načina života – inovativni prospekt medicinskog turizma.....</i>	<i>444</i>
<b>Goran S. Jović</b> <i>TRADICIONALNA KULturna BAŠTINA U FUNKCIJI TURISTIČKOG GOSTOPRIMSTVA</i> <i>Traditional cultural heritage in the function of tourist hospitality .....</i>	<i>452</i>
<b>Saša Đorđević</b> <i>RAZNOVRSNOSTI GRADSKOJE ANIMACIJE U FUNKCIJI RAZVOJA URBANOG TURIZMA</i> <i>Diversity of city animation aimed at urban tourism development .....</i>	<i>462</i>
<b>Anna Šenková</b> <i>DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN SLOVAKIA AFTER JOINING THE EU</i> <i>Razvoj turizma u Slovačkoj nakon ulaska u EU.....</i>	<i>471</i>
<b>Jasna Micić, Stefan Denda, Marko D. Petrović</b> <i>TOURISM POLICY IN MONTENEGRO – CURRENT SITUATION AND FUTURE CHALLENGES</i> <i>Turistička politika u Crnoj Gori – trenutno stanje i budući izazovi.....</i>	<i>481</i>

**Tanja Angelkova Petkova, Marija Magdinceva-Sopova, Suzana Džordžević  
Milosević**

*DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL TOURIST DESTINATIONS  
THROUGH THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE REPUBLIC OF  
MACEDONIA*

*Razvoj destinacija seoskog turizma kroz preduzetništvo u Republici  
Makedoniji.....*490

**Boštjan Humski**

*ESCAPE TRAIN - EXPERIENCE OF SLOVENIA*

*Voz za beg – slovenačko iskustvo .....500*

**Marina Vesić, Sanja Pavlović**

*KREATIVNOST KAO FAKTOR POBOLJŠANJA USLUGA U  
OBJEKTIMA ETNO TURIZMA U SRBIJI*

*Creativity as a factor for improving services of etno tourism facilities  
in Serbia .....505*

**Cipriana Sava**

*THE ACTIVITY OF TRAVEL AGENCIES IN ROMANIA*

*Aktivnosti putničkih agencija u Rumuniji.....514*

**Pavlo Ružić, Desimir Bošković, Dragoljub Amidžić**

*ANALYSIS OF FACTORS OF QUALITY FOR TOURISM  
PRODUCTS IN ISTRIA (CROATIA)*

*Analiza faktora kvaliteta turističkih proizvoda u Istri (Hrvatskoj) .....520*

**Hanqiong Zhou**

*A COMPARISON OF TOURIST DESTINATION IMAGE IN THE  
MINDS OF EUROPEAN GROUP TOURISTS: CASE STUDY OF  
HANGZHOU, SHANGHAI, AND SUZHOU IN CHINA*

*Upoređivanje percepcije turističke destinacije evropljana: studija  
slučaja Hangžou, Šangaju i Sužou u Kini .....531*

**Gabrijela Popović, Dragiša Stanujkić, Darjan Karabašević**

*APPLICATION OF SWOT-SWARA APPROACH IN THE  
IDENTIFICATION OF KEY FACTORS FOR TARA MOUNTAIN  
TOURISM DEVELOPMENT*

*Primena SWOT-SWARA pristupa u identifikovanju ključnih faktora za  
razvoj turizma na planini Tara.....541*

**Alexandra Kartseva, Anna Konovalova**

*MEDICAL AND HEALTH TOURISM IN SAINT-PETERSBURG  
RESORT AREA: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS*

*Medicinski i zdravstveni turizam u Sankt Peterburgu: problemi i  
perspektive.....554*

<b>Emilija Todorović</b>	
<i>CREATING THE IDENTITY AND BRAND OF SKOPJE AS A TOURIST DESTINATION</i>	
<i>Kreiranje identiteta i brenda Skoplja kao turističke destinacije</i>	562
<b>Aleksandar Božić, Mladenka Đurović, Vesna Pijevac</b>	
<i>GOSTOPRIMSTVO – PREDNOST UGOSTITELJSKO-TURISTIČKE DESTINACIJE BEOGRAD</i>	
<i>Hospitality – an advantage of hospitality-tourism destination of Belgrade</i>	575
<b>Đorđe Čomić</b>	
<i>DESTINACIJA NJUJORK - DEKONSTRUKCIJA FENOMENOLOGIJE GLOBALNE METROPOLE</i>	
<i>Destination New York - deconstruction of global metropolis phenomenology</i>	583
<b>Milenko Gajić</b>	
<i>ROGAŠKA SLATINA AS A DESTINATION BRAND</i>	
<i>Rogaška Slatina kao destinacijski brend</i>	594
<b>Snežana Bešić</b>	
<i>ISTRAŽIVANJE PONAŠANJA TURISTA KAO POLAZNA OSNOVA ZA BRENDIRANJE TURISTIČKE DESTINACIJE GRADA BIJELJINE</i>	
<i>Tourist behaviour research as a basis for tourist destination branding of city of Bijeljina</i>	604
<b>Predrag Stamenković, Lukrecija Djeri</b>	
<i>ENVIRONMENTAS A TOURISM COMPETITIVENESS FACTOR OF JABLANICA DISTRICT IN SERBIA</i>	
<i>Prirodno okruženje kao faktor turističke konkurentnosti Jablaničkog okruza u Srbiji</i>	613
<b>Bojana Kovačević Berleković, Nataša Pavlović, Tatjana Bošković</b>	
<i>DEČIJI I OMLADINSKI TURIZAM U FUNKCIJI RURALNOG RAZVOJA: STUDIJA SLUČAJA REGIONA JUGOISTOČNE BAČKE</i>	
<i>Child and youth tourism in function of rural development: a case study of southeast Bačka region</i>	623
<b>Aurelian Csaholczi, Cornelia Petroman, Ioan Petroman</b>	
<i>IMPLEMENTATION OF EDUCATIONAL-ENTERTAINING ACTIVITIES SPECIFIC TO BANAT RURAL TOURISM</i>	
<i>Implementacija obrazovno-zabavnih aktivnosti specifičnih za seoski turizam u Banatu</i>	632

<b>Srdan Milošević, Iva Škrbić, Ivana Mišković</b> <i>LOKALNE INICIJATIVE I PARTNERSTVA U FUNKCIJI ODRŽIVOG TURIZMA NA DESTINACIJI KANALI BAČKE Local initiatives and partnerships in the sustainable tourism development of the Bačka channels.....</i>	638
<b>Sara Stanić Jovanović, Milena Cvetković</b> <i>UTICAJ PRIRODNOG, SOCIO-KULTURNOG OKRUŽENJA I TRAŽNJE NA PROFILISANJE OPŠTINE SURČIN KAO TURISTIČKE DESTINACIJE The influence of natural, socio-cultural environment and the demand for profiling of municipality Surčin as a tourist destination .....</i>	651
<b>Bojana Plemić, Smiljka Kesić, Emilija Lipovšek</b> <i>INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE CREATIVE ZONES OF TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY OFFER IN BELGRADE Kreativne zone industrijskog nasleđa u okviru turističke i ugostiteljske ponude u Beogradu .....</i>	660
<b>Ksenija Vodeb, Miha Lesjak, Marinela Krstinić Nižić</b> <i>CROSS-BORDER INTER-DESTINATION COLLABORATION AND INNOVATIONS – A LITERATURE REVIEW Prekogranična saradnja i inovacije u među-destinacijama – pregled literature.....</i>	670
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PRIMENA INFORMACIONIH TEHNOLOGIJA U PROMOCIJI I UPRAVLJANJU TURISTIČKOM DESTINACIJOM / THE USE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN THE PROMOTION AND MANAGEMENT OF A TOURIST DESTINATION</b></p>	
<b>Snežana Štetić, Dario Šimičević, Jelena Aksentijević</b> <i>INFORMACIONA I KOMUNIKACIONA TEHNOLOGIJA (ICT) KAO OSNOVA SAVREMENE TURISTIČKE DESTINACIJE Information and communication technologies (ICT) as a tourist destination platform .....</i>	682
<b>Cvetanka Ristova, Aleksandar Maglovski</b> <i>TRANSFORMING HOSPITALITY IN THE DIGITAL ERA, FACTOR FOR COMPETITIVENESS IN THE TOURIST DESTINATION Transformisanje ugostiteljstva u eri digitalizacije, faktor konkurentnosti u turističkoj destinaciji .....</i>	693

<b>Nikica Radović</b>	
<i>MOGUĆNOSTI PRIMENE BLOCKCHAIN TEHNOLOGIJE U POSLOVANJU TURISTIČKIH DESTINACIJA</i>	
<i>Possibilities of BLOCKCHAIN technology application in business operations of tourist destinations .....</i>	<i>701</i>
<b>Ivana Lončar, Nada Lončar</b>	
<i>PRIMENA SAVREMENIH ALATA DIGITALNOG MARKETINGA ZA PROMOCIJU I PRODAJU HOTELSKIH USLUGA</i>	
<i>The application of modern digital marketing tools in the sales and promotion of hotel services .....</i>	<i>708</i>
<b>Dejan Sekulić, Drago Cvijanović, Marija Mandarić</b>	
<i>ZNAČAJ EWOM U OCENI KVALITETA USLUGA U HOTELIJERSTVU</i>	
<i>The importance of the eWOM in the service quality assessment in the hospitality industry.....</i>	<i>719</i>
<b>Nevena Ćurčić, Željko Bjeljac, Nataša Savović</b>	
<i>PRODAJA HOTELIJERSKIH PAKETA USLUGA PUTEM INTERNET SERVISA – GRUPNA KUPOVINA</i>	
<i>Sale of hotel package services through internet services - group purchase.....</i>	<i>729</i>
<b>Hui Xu, Lingling Li</b>	
<i>A STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF ALIPAY HANGZHOU INBOUND TOURISM</i>	
<i>Studija uticaja elektronskog plaćanja turističkih usluga ALIPAY u Hangžou .....</i>	<i>737</i>
<b>Magdalena Miceva, Aleksandar Shopov</b>	
<i>THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF HEALTH TOURISM</i>	
<i>Uloga društvenih medija u razvoju zdravstvenog turizma.....</i>	<i>747</i>
<b>Vesna Loborec, Dejan Cvitković</b>	
<i>PINTEREST FOR QUALITY DESTINATION MARKETING IN SLOVENIA</i>	
<i>Pinterest u cilju promocije kvaliteta turističke destinacije u Sloveniji .....</i>	<i>753</i>
<b>Dragana Ćamilović</b>	
<i>PROMOCIJA RESTORANA NA DRUŠTVENIM MREŽAMA</i>	
<i>Restaurants promotion via social networks .....</i>	<i>759</i>

**Aleksandar Kontić**

*THE APPLICATIONS OF ARNHEIM'S LAWS OF VISUAL  
PERCEPTION IN HOTEL ADS : SOME EXAMPLES*

*Primena Arnhajmovih zakona vizuelne percepcije u hotelskim  
reklamama: primeri.....*768

**Mihaela Lazović**

*THE LANGUAGE OF COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY IN  
HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM*

*Jezik komunikacione tehnologije u turizmu i ugostiteljstvu .....777*

**Andrej Stojanović**

*KOMUNIKACIJA SA RUSKIM TURISTIMA: POGLED SPOLJA*

*Communication with Russian tourists: a view from the other side.....787*

**Andrea Žerajić**

*INTERKULTURNI DIJALOG U POSLOVANJU I ULOGA  
INTERKULTURNOG KONCEPTA U NASTAVI STRANIH JEZIKA*

*Intercultural dialogue in business and role of intercultural dialogue in  
foreign language teaching.....800*

**Jovana Nikolić**

*INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE AND  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN THE CONTEXT OF THE  
HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY*

*Međukulturalna komunikativna sposobnost i podučavanje engleskog  
jezika u kontekstu ugostiteljske privrede .....812*

**Ivan Milošević**

*METAPHORICAL STRUCTURING OF THE CONCEPT OF HOTEL  
BUSINESS IN TERMS OF THE CONCEPT OF SAILING IN THE  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE*

*Metaforičko struktuiranje koncepta hotelskog poslovanja na primeru  
koncepta PLOVIDBE u engleskom jeziku .....821*

**Milena Vukić**

*STRUČNA PRAKSA U FUNKCIJI RAZVOJA DUALNOG  
OBRAZOVANJA U VISOKIM STRUKOVNIM ŠKOLAMA: PRIMER  
VISOKE HOTELIJERSKE ŠKOLE*

*Professional practice in the function of development of dual education  
in colleges: the example of College of Hotel Management.....826*

# CREATING THE IDENTITY AND BRAND OF SKOPJE AS A TOURIST DESTINATION

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## **Abstract**

On a market where there are countless tourist destinations that offer a variety of products, being special, unique and appealing is indeed a privilege but not an impossible mission if the goal is to be different from others and have a strong identity that will facilitate the consumers when making a decision to select the destination they will visit. Considering that Skopje as a tourist destination annually visits almost 1/3 of the total number of tourists in Macedonia, there is a need for building own identity and brand of tourism products that the city offers on the market.

The aim of this paper is to analyze the tourism product of Skopje, through a SWOT analysis of the city's receptive, attractive and communicative factors, in order to see the main elements on the basis of which the identity of the city would be built.

**Key words:** brand, Skopje, image, identity, tourist destination, city

## INTRODUCTION

In the broadest sense, the brand is an expression that names products and services that have top quality, but broadly speaking, the notion of a brand, with globalization and the rapid development of modern society, becomes synonymous with the highest universal value and concept accepted in many areas.<sup>1</sup> Simply put, the brand is a recognition of value that is, identifying the identity of the product or service. "Brand" represents a recognizable set of elements (name, logo, symbol, design and message) that identify and differentiate enterprises, products, services and create unique rational and emotional associations, beliefs and expectations of consumers. The essence of the brand is in creating a brand-buyer relation, which analyzes Chevalier and Mazzalovo and through that relationship define the brand as a kind of "contract" ie. trust relationship that implies the expectations of the buyer on one hand and the promised features of the product or service by the lender. The relationship and the benefits are two-way and not only economically important, but also an emotional benefit.<sup>2</sup> Brand represents the identity, it represents a certain product or service enriched with additional dimensions, the way products and services

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<sup>1</sup>Branding magazin (12.01.2009): <http://brandmagazin.com/index>

<sup>2</sup>Chevalier M., Mazzalovo G., Pro Logo-Brands as a factor of progress, Plagrove Macmillan, New York, 2004, taken from Cicvarić S., Brend-kreiranje, pozicioniranje i održavanje, Zadužbina Andrejević, Beograd, 2006, p. 15

make them different from the rest and are aimed at meeting the needs of consumers.

The brand is comprised of several elements: identity, value, brand awareness and awareness. Defining these elements shapes and defines the brand and its basic attitudes, or rather its ideology. What is crucial in the concept of a brand is that these elements can have different forms and cause different emotional, cultural and rational associations, beliefs and expectations. Emphasis is primarily placed on emotional associations, because emotions are an integral part of the human person, and in many cases, no matter how rational the person is, they have a dominant influence on the purchasing decision. The brand also has a communication function, that is, it is a relationship between the buyer and the seller.

When choosing elements of the brand, the following criteria should be considered:<sup>3</sup> commitment, meaning, liking, portability, adaptability and protection. Elements of the brand that contribute to its construction should be defined in such a way that they are easily remembered and applied, and should be directed to the value of the product itself or service itself. On the other hand, elements that contribute to brand utilization play a major role in the process of brand management and the spread of different markets and different categories of products or services.

Today, the tourists pay great attention to choosing a destination where they will spend their holidays and meet their needs, with one of the main decision-making factors being the emotion and the promise of quality that the destination radiates. The need for tourists to recount experiences in the tourist destination and its sensibility is a significant artificial capital of a successfully positioned brand. Having in mind the specificity of the tourism product, above all, in its invisibility at the moment of buying, building and transferring a positive image should be the basis in the strategic plans for development of the tourist destination.

Creating a brand of a tourist destination, unlike the brand of a product or service, is a complex process because the destination is a complex whole that represents a set of attractions, facilities and services and areas of diverse natural, cultural, anthropogenic and historical values. Although there are many definitions of the brand of a tourist destination in the literature, one can distinguish the definition that "a brand of destination is a name, a symbol, a logo or some other graphic design that identifies and differentiates the destination, that is, promises an unforgettable experience that is unique related to the destination, and serves to strengthen and strengthen the memory of the pleasant experience associated with the tourist stay in the destination."<sup>4</sup> This

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<sup>3</sup>Kotler Ph., i Keller K.L., Marketing menadžment, Data Status, Beograd, 2006, p.175

<sup>4</sup> Goeldner R., Ritchie B., McIntosh W., Tourism: Principles, practices, philosophies, 8<sup>th</sup> ed., John Wiley & Sons, New York, 2002, p.21, taken from Bešlić V., Kreiranje brenda Vojvodine kao turističke destinacije, mag.rad, Univerzitet Singidunum, Beograd, 2009

means that in order to create a brand of destination, it is necessary, in addition to existing products, to enable consumers to experience an event in which they will experience it as a single experience, which they will remember and recite for a long time, and will create a strong emotional connection with the destination.

On the tourism market where there are countless tourist destinations that offer a variety of products and stories, to be special, unique and appealing to the truth is a privilege, but not an impossible mission if the goal is to be different from others and to have a strong identity that will make it easier for consumers to make a decision to choose the destination they will visit. This is also due to the fact that consumers are overwhelmed by information that resembles one another and make their decision difficult. While many Western European countries have an identity built, the Republic of Macedonia is still searching for something specific and special that will separate it from the others and on the basis of which it will build the identity, and will improve the image of a tourist country.

It should be noted that it is very important to distinguish between concepts of brand identity and brand image. The identity is created by the manufacturer and represents a desired image, that is, how the manufacturer would like his brand to be perceived by the public, while the image is the image that the consumer has in the reality for the brand. The brand should be consistent and true to its own identity, and the image is unstable and subject to change, and it is managed through communication channels. Since the tourist destination is the sum of many tourist products and services, the brand building process should include all entities by the tourist offer in order to get a common view on how the brand is to be perceived by consumers.

Each brand has its own culture, that is, the intrinsic value of the brand owner. It makes it different from others and plays a major role in differentiation. The brand should be treated as a person and during its construction it is necessary to imagine what it would be if there are human characteristics. Own image is a kind of internal mirror of the brand, which means that consumers express their own image through the brand they consume. The physical characteristics of the brand represent its basic, but also the added visible value. The brand is a reflection of its consumer, and an emotional relationship is created between the brand and the consumer, which, if positive, will force the consumer to constantly cherish or re-use it.

The brand image of the tourist destination greatly contributes to increasing the attendance, that is, the destination with a positive image motivates consumers to visit and consume its tourist products. The image can't be bought for money, nor can it be created immediately. It is built for years, and if it's good, it needs to be maintained as such, while the bad image is how it can be repaired with a quality strategy and participation of all entities in the destination.

Today, in times of globalization, each city strives to be at the top of the tourist map, through various investments in tourism, culture, events, etc. Simon Anholt in 2006. has developed the City Brands Index as a way to measure and monitor the image and reputation of world cities. In collaboration with one of the leading research agencies GFK Roper Public Affairs & Media, City Brands Index becomes the only analytical ranking of the image and reputation of world cities. Each year, the study surveys about 20000 people in 20 countries, and contains more than 40 questions for 50 cities<sup>5</sup>. National and regional promotion agencies, city administration, tourism unions and other institutions are drawing analyzes of the international perception of their tourist offer, the environment, the economy, the competition, the trends, etc.

The City Brands Index unites 6 aspects of the city's brand that make up the structure of this index: familiarity, place, people, prerequisites, pulse, potential.<sup>6</sup>

Knowledge, that is, familiarity with the city, perceives knowledge of the particular city and its status and connects with cultural and educational associations. Place refers to the perception of the physical and geographical characteristics of the city. Aspect of people implies hospitality of the population, their attitudes and reliability. Prerequisites are a perception of the basic attributes of the city: general living conditions, accommodation, infrastructure. Pulse refers to interesting things that can be discovered. Potential, is reflected in the opportunities for employment, education, conditions for starting a business.<sup>7</sup>

The main goal of building a city brand is actually increasing its attractiveness, which will increase the satisfaction of the local population and will attract investors and visitors. Therefore, the advantages of the city that will first be accepted by the local population should be highlighted and as such will represent the visitors. In the strategic planning process, all interested parties should ask themselves and find an answer to the following questions: Where are we now? Where do we want to be? How to get there? and how will we know if we have reached it? It all involves understanding the current situation, imagining the future, analyzing strategic options, setting priorities and making decisions.<sup>8</sup>

According to Ashworth, the city as a product can be treated as a place in which products are created and as a place that is itself a product. The city is a product that is produced and conditioned more by social factors and relationships than from natural and spatial factors.<sup>9</sup> It is a dynamic product that

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<sup>5</sup> Ozegovic M., Brendiranje gradova na primeru Njurorka, Master rad, Univerzitet Singidunum, Beograd, 2014, p.57

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.gfk.com/us/Industries/public-services/Pages/City-Brands-Index.aspx>

<sup>7</sup> Ozegovic M., Brendiranje gradova na primeru Njurorka, Master rad, Univerzitet Singidunum, Beograd, 2014, p.58

<sup>8</sup> Kebede G., Ramirez L., Stratesko planiranje lokalnog razvoja, Studije slucaja malih i srednih evropskih gradova, UN-Habitat SIRP, Beograd, 2010, p.2

<sup>9</sup> Ashworth G.J., Marketing of places, What are we doing?, Torino Incontra, Torino, 1994, p.644

is constantly transformed and has never been fully formed. The components of the city as a product can be divided into:<sup>10</sup> natural background, socio-cultural background (tradition, architecture, mentality), infrastructure, local economy, tourism and recreation, city administration, education and health. Successful cities that are able to attract investors, who plan and control the space, who care about the overall visual edifice of the city that create their own attractions, are becoming recognizable in the world.<sup>11</sup> Such cities successfully build their brand and image, properly pack their own product and successfully manage its destiny.

Branding of cities is a complex process in order to achieve maximum results, it is necessary to engage all stakeholders: the local population, the local government, the representatives of the economy and create and send a public message to the public. Under no circumstances should the local people's vision be ignored for the direction in which the city should develop. Understanding and cooperation between the population and tourists is a very important factor for successful brand building. For these reasons, the branding of the city should be understood as the responsibility of the local government and the institutions to take the initiative and engage all the necessary resources and stakeholders.

The first step in the city's brand building process is to identify the core values of a site and the future brand that must be tangible, relevant, promotional and marked with specific attractions.

The goal of the branding strategy of the city is to recognize and collect the perceptions of the target group and accordingly create activities for their satisfaction. Once the strategy is defined, the testing of the target group and undertaking concrete actions, preparation of plans, provision of investments, organization of cultural and sporting events is being approached. The effectiveness of the strategy also depends on the compliance with marketing and communication, urban spatial planning and public policy, the most important thing is for partners to see and understand the importance of brand strategy and define the directions of its development. In the following, I will show the Paliaga model for the introduction of the branding process, based on marketing planning and the concept of strategic branding.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Spies S., Marketing für Regionen, Anwendungsmöglichkeiten im Standortwettbewerb Wiesbaden, 1998, p.87

<sup>11</sup> Paliaga M., Branding i konkurentnost gradova, samostalna naklada Rovinj, I izdanje, 2008, p.86

<sup>12</sup> Paliaga M., Branding i konkurentnost gradova, samostalna naklada Rovinj, I izdanje, 2008, p.118

Figure 1: A proposal for a brand building brand

Preparation for building brand-input data, determining the existing identity of the city	<p>Analysis of the situation and trends in the environment, SWOT analysis</p> <p>Setting the mission, vision and goals of the city</p> <p>Competition analysis</p> <p>Target groups and exploring the needs of users</p> <p>Identity of the city and analysis of the image of the city</p>
<p>Buyers</p> <p>Population and employees in the city / Tourists and visitors / Business (Local economy / Foreign investors)</p>	<p>Defining a city product, a quality policy and a strategy for improving the site</p> <p>Building and brand design of the city</p> <p>Market research</p> <p>Logo design and slogan of the brand</p> <p>Building a brand identity</p> <p>Education</p> <p>Strategy of positioning the city's brand</p> <p>Strategy of building the brand image of the city</p> <p>Strategy of communicating the brand of the city</p>
Implementation and control of the process	<p>Application</p> <p>Measuring the brand's success and valuing the values of the brand from the aspect of the city</p> <p>Expanding the city's brand and global branding</p> <p>Control and repositioning the brand</p> <p>Feedback</p>

*Source:* Paliaga M., *Brending i konkurentnost gradova*, samostalna naklada Rovinj, I izdanje, 2008, p.118

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Secondary data from published sources were used for the preparation of this paper: professional literature, scientific and professional papers, magazines in the field of tourism, web pages, as well as published statistical data for the City of Skopje. Trading from the fact that creating identity and brand of a tourist destination is a complex, protracted and continuous process involving many stakeholders, I hope that with this paper I will make a small contribution to the branding process of the City of Skopje. For this purpose, using the Paliaga model for brand building, using SWOT analysis, I will make the first step in strategic planning, which is to analyze the situation and trends in the environment, which will give a clear picture of the current situation and will be determine the directions in which the brand building plan needs to move.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1.General information about the City of Skopje

The City of Skopje is the main administrative, economic, political, cultural and sports center in the Republic of Macedonia. It is spread to the north-western part of the Skopje valley, on both sides of the river Vardar, at an average altitude of 240-350 meters. It is one of the most important crossroads in the Balkans through which the European E-75 passes, stretching from Norway to Greece. The climate is variable continental with long, dry and hot summers and cold winters with very misty days. The average temperature in the city is 12.4 degrees. The city of Skopje has about 811,045 habitants and is composed of 10 municipalities.

### 2.Infrastructure

Public transport in the city takes place by taxi and buses whose lines operate throughout the day and with occasional night lines. From Skopje there are regular routes to all cities in Macedonia, as well as to neighboring countries and other European countries. At 17 km. from the city is a modern airport through which the city of Skopje connects with the world. The road infrastructure is solid, road signs, road signs and information boards are all over the city. The city of Skopje is completely covered with water, sewage, electricity, telephone and 4 G network. Regarding the tourist infrastructure, graphically the number of rooms and beds in Skopje is displayed, by years.

Regarding the number of accommodation facilities we see steady growth. Namely, the City of Skopje in 2011 had 2355 rooms and 5039 beds, and in 2017 it was 3462 rooms and 7237 beds. This means that in the analyzed period the number of accommodation capacities increased by 1107 rooms or 47%, ie by 2198 beds or 43.6%. The city of Skopje is dominated by the Aparna accommodation, where as many as 80% of the facilities have 4 stars, as well as the small number of motels whose number is insignificant if the number of transit visitors is taken into account. For hotels, 12.5% have 5 stars, and most of them (73%) have 3 and 4 stars. Only a small percentage of hotels are categorized with 1 or 2 stars. The hostels account for 11% of the total number of accommodation facilities and are all categorized with 1 and 2 stars.<sup>13</sup>

### 3. Tourist turnover, number of tourists and overnights

According to the State Statistical Office data, the constant growth of foreign tourists who visited Skopje and the mild growth of domestic tourists was noted. Namely, in 2011, the city was visited by 141.356 tourists, of which 15.979 domestic and 125.407 foreign tourists. In 2017, the total number of tourists was 300.772, out of which domestic were 28.399, and foreign 272.373. That means that in the period 2011-2017 the number of tourists who visited Skopje

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<sup>13</sup>[http://makstat.stat.gov.mk/PXWeb/pxweb/mk/MakStat/MakStat\\_\\_TurizamUgostitel\\_\\_Turizam/475\\_Turizam\\_Reg\\_Kapac\\_mk.px/table/tableViewLayout2/?rxid=46ee0f64-2992-4b45-a2d9-cb4e5f7ec5ef](http://makstat.stat.gov.mk/PXWeb/pxweb/mk/MakStat/MakStat__TurizamUgostitel__Turizam/475_Turizam_Reg_Kapac_mk.px/table/tableViewLayout2/?rxid=46ee0f64-2992-4b45-a2d9-cb4e5f7ec5ef)

increased by 112.7%, the number of domestic tourists by 77.7% , while the foreign ones increased by 117.2%. In terms of overnight stays in 2017, were realized 506.711, which is 99% more than the realized overnight stays in 2011. Number of nights spent in 2017 in foreign tourists in comparison with 2011, increased by 99.6%, and with domestic tourists by 94.5%.<sup>14</sup> These figures indicate a serious increase in the interest of tourists to the city of Skopje, primarily due to the improvement of all the factors that are crucial for tourism development and should be the motive for developing a strategy for branding the city and improving its image.

But despite the increase in the number of tourists and overnight stays, their ratio over the years has changed slightly. Namely, in 2011, it is 1.81, and in 2017, 1.68. In domestic tourists it increased by 0.12, while in foreign tourists it decreased by 0.14. Although the changes are small, the fact remains that tourists in Skopje are on average kept for 2-3 days. The question arises why all these years nothing has been done to keep tourists longer. Whether these are mostly transit tourists, whether due to lack of attractive offers or something third is yet to be analyzed.

According to the State Statistical Office in 2017, the city of Skopje had the most visitors from the European countries, a total of 241.447 or 86% of the total number of tourists, and realized 401.384 overnights or 85% of the total overnight stays in the city. 4.8% of tourists were from the American continent, 0.4% from the African continent, 5.8% from the Asian and 1.9% from the Australian continent. In terms of overnight stays, US visitors made 5.8%, African 0.7%, Asian 5.3% and Australian visitors 1.8%. In number, the most numerous were visitors from Turkey - 70090, Serbia – 22.463, Bulgaria – 14.095, Germany – 135.22, Croatia - 9977, Romania - 8234, United Kingdom - 8013, Slovenia - 7615, Italy - 6909, Albania - 6651.<sup>15</sup>

Regarding the turnover of the given catering services in the City of Skopje in 2011, was 3 392 166 thousand denars, and in 2016, it increased to 4 283 637 thousand denars or 26.3%. The introduction of new, high quality and recognizable products on the market will in any case increase turnover, attract visitors and make them come again. It simultaneously improves the image of the city and strengthens its identity. Therefore, the brand strategy should pay great attention to differentiating tourist and other products of the city and the city itself as a product. The brand itself should guarantee quality, be recognizable, authentic and desirable.

#### 4. Tourist attractions of the City of Skopje

<sup>14</sup>[http://makstat.stat.gov.mk/PXWeb/pxweb/mk/MakStat/MakStat\\_\\_TurizamUgostitel\\_\\_Turizam/375\\_Turizam\\_\\_Reg\\_Turisti\\_mk.px/table/tableViewLayout2/?rxid=46ee0f64-2992-4b45-a2d9-cb4e5f7ec5ef](http://makstat.stat.gov.mk/PXWeb/pxweb/mk/MakStat/MakStat__TurizamUgostitel__Turizam/375_Turizam__Reg_Turisti_mk.px/table/tableViewLayout2/?rxid=46ee0f64-2992-4b45-a2d9-cb4e5f7ec5ef)

<sup>15</sup>

[http://makstat.stat.gov.mk/PXWeb/pxweb/mk/MakStat/MakStat\\_\\_TurizamUgostitel\\_\\_Turizam/610\\_Turizam\\_\\_RM\\_ZamjiGod\\_mk.px/?rxid=46ee0f64-2992-4b45-a2d9-cb4e5f7ec5ef](http://makstat.stat.gov.mk/PXWeb/pxweb/mk/MakStat/MakStat__TurizamUgostitel__Turizam/610_Turizam__RM_ZamjiGod_mk.px/?rxid=46ee0f64-2992-4b45-a2d9-cb4e5f7ec5ef)

Although the city of Skopje is primarily a destination in which cultural attractions prevail, it also has natural resources for the development of certain types of tourism. We can freely conclude that there are excellent conditions in the Jasen reservoir for development of hunting tourism, recreational tourism, paragliding, mountain biking, eco tourism. Katlanovo bath offers excellent conditions for the development of health tourism, hunting and fishing tourism, sports and recreational tourism. In the Matka canyon there is a potential for the development of speleological tourism, fishing tourism, alpinism, religious tourism, sports tourism, the Vodno mountain will attract recreational and mountain climbers.

The City of Skopje has significant cultural and historical sites that are subject to the interest of the visitors and represent potential tourism products which are themselves a brand in themselves, but all together as a whole make the city an attractive tourist product and give the opportunity for successful brand building. I will list some of the special interest for the visitors: <sup>16</sup> the Skopje Kale, the Aqueduct, Skupi, Tumba Madzari, the Stone Bridge, the Clock Tower, the Feudal Tower, the Old Railway Station, Stratha Skopje Bazaar, one of the biggest celebrities in the city, architecture and craft shops have a great number of monuments of culture and religious objects: Daut Pasha amam, Cifte Amam, St. Dimitrija church, Murat Pasha Mosque, Suli an, Bezisten, St. Spas church, beautiful Kurshumli an, Museum of Contemporary Art, Museum t of Macedonia, Sultan Murat Mosque and many other witnesses of the past, St. Panteleimon, St. Nikita, St. St. Andrew's Day, St. Mark's Day, the Church of the Assumption of the Most Holy Mother of God, the Cathedral Church, St. Dimiria, the Museum of the City of Skopje, the Museum of the Macedonian Struggle, the Mother Teresa Museum, the Natural Science Museum, the Museum of the Holocaust, the Archaeological Museum and the numerous manifestations : Skopje Summer Festival, Skopje Jazz Festival, Pivolend, May Opera Evenings, Vinoscope, Youth Open Theater, etc.<sup>17</sup>

Each of the listed cultural values has its own value and authenticity and only with a well-planned development strategy can contribute to enriching the city's tourist offer. Of course, we need to work on improving the quality of services, including all stakeholders. All this in addition to quality promotion will surely strengthen the identity of the city and will correct his image. Therefore, a quality analysis of the current situation is required, which will direct stakeholders to make the right decisions in the brand building strategy.

5.SWOT analysis of the environment in the function of setting up a brand building strategy for the city of Skopje

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<sup>16</sup> <https://macedonia-timeless.com/img/PDF%20Vodic%20Regioni%20MAK/index.html>

<sup>17</sup> [https://mk.wikipedia.org/wiki/spisok\\_na\\_crkvi\\_i\\_manastiri\\_na\\_Makedonskata\\_pravoslavna\\_crkva](https://mk.wikipedia.org/wiki/spisok_na_crkvi_i_manastiri_na_Makedonskata_pravoslavna_crkva)

In order to be able to follow world tourism trends and keep pace with competition, it is necessary to continuously analyze internal and external potentials of the destination and its surroundings. This can be achieved with the so-called situational (SWOT) analysis, which is a marketing-strategic element for determining the strengths and weaknesses of the destination, as well as the opportunities and threats for its development.

<p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- favorable geographical position</li> <li>- transport infrastructure</li> <li>- different types and categories of accommodation facilities</li> <li>- rich and authentic cultural and historical heritage</li> <li>- cultural and entertaining contents</li> <li>- a blend of nature and culture</li> <li>- competitiveness in prices of catering services</li> <li>- opportunities for development of different types of tourism: cultural, religious, business, transit, gastronomic, caving, rural, recreational and other alternative forms</li> <li>- hospitable people</li> <li>- free visa regime</li> <li>- favorable investment climate</li> <li>- legislation in line with the EU directives</li> <li>- aviation and tourism subsidies</li> <li>- professional staff in tourism and hospitality</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- research in the field of tourism is insufficient and minimal</li> <li>- Uncoordinated and unplanned promotional activities</li> <li>- non-built identity of the tourist product</li> <li>- insufficient coordination of tour operators and tourist catering in the city</li> <li>- many of the accommodation capacities are not categorized according to European standards</li> <li>- there is no quality standard</li> <li>- low awareness of environmental protection and infrastructure facilities</li> <li>- there is no unified souvenir of the city</li> <li>- insufficient number of accommodation facilities that offer attractive content</li> <li>- low utilization of the city's natural resources in the tourist offer, insufficient number of info bureaus</li> </ul>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- sing EU funds and tourism development funds</li> <li>- trends for the development of alternative forms of tourism</li> <li>- exploiting the rich cultural and historical heritage as a tourist product</li> <li>- low-tariff carriers and annual arrangements</li> <li>- candidate for EU membership as an incentive for investment and interest in visiting</li> <li>- transit corridors</li> <li>- the abolition of the passport regime with all EU members</li> <li>- branding tourist products of the city and the city itself as a product</li> <li>- connecting with other cities in the function of development of city tourism</li> </ul>	<p><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- increased pollution of the environment, which damages the image of the guard</li> <li>- unplanned building that destroys the authenticity of certain parts of the city</li> <li>- competition in the region</li> <li>- an unstable political situation that can reduce investment</li> <li>- the negative image of the region</li> <li>- uncoordinated competencies of the institutions</li> <li>- there is no strategy for the sustainable development of tourism</li> <li>- Stalling and slowing down the process of EU and NATO integration</li> </ul>

From the conducted research and analysis it can be concluded that the City of Skopje has great potential for tourism development, not only the city itself, but also offers opportunities for development of other alternative forms of tourism. The trend of increasing tourists' interest in visiting the city of Skopje is evident, increasing the number of investments, both in infrastructure facilities and in the workforce, increased interest of the state and local authorities for

promotion of tourism and the city, and so on. While it takes time, it is necessary to engage all interested parties in making quicker use of opportunities and turning them into advantages. First, everything was about building a good business climate, using EU funds, strengthening the identity of the city, building a quality strategy for branding authentic tourism products and the city itself as a product. Also, the shortcomings should be turned into advantages as soon as possible, which especially refers to increasing research in the field of tourism, introducing quality service standards, taking measures to improve the image and develop a branding strategy. Only with recognizable products, which in itself will guarantee quality, we can be competitive and hope for high positioning of the world tourist map. Although the city offers specific tourism products that can be a brand in itself, the strategy should move in the direction of creating an overall tourist product of the city that will provide the tourist with a complete tourist service during his stay. Building a strategy for building a city's identity and brand is a difficult and long-lasting process in which all stakeholders should be involved in order to strengthen identity and create a brand. This work is only a small, first step in the process of creating identity and brand of the city of Skopje and I believe it will be an incentive for further activities in this field. Namely, if we send the proposed model to Paliaga, the next activity would be to set up a mission, vision and determine the objectives of the guard. The following is a competition analysis, research target groups and their needs. Based on the obtained data, the identity of the city and the current image will be determined. This completes the first phase in the brand building process, to continue to define products, perform the necessary activities at all stages in brand building, as well as the process of its implementation and control. I hope that these activities will be an incentive for the preparation of other papers that will complete the setting up of a strategy for creating a brand of the City of Skopje.

## CONCLUSION

Branding is increasingly taking an important place in the marketing strategies of various entities in the tourism market, primarily because of the successful positioning of the tourist destination on the market. Creating a brand as a conscious marketing activity directly promotes the tourist destination, and while its image is conditioned by several factors: the relationship with the international community, political views, state laws, the local population, culture, history, religion, etc.

The specific contribution of branding the city as a tourist destination implies consumer loyalty, commercial value of the destination, fostering partnership between the private and state sector, promotional weapons, motivation for travel of tourists, increasing the attractiveness of tourism products, increased demand for products and services and increasing the volume of investments. All these

signs of economic benefit, expressed through increased tourism turnover and other revenues, functional benefits expressed through improving the quality of services and innovation and psychological benefit, ie satisfying the needs and wishes of the consumers and their loyalty. Therefore, it requires alternative, unique tourism products and stories in the fields of culture, history, food, art, etc., with the differentiation of the destination becoming recognizable and unique. If we add a strong identity and a positive image to it, we can say that the branding strategy will be successful, and the brand will be permanently caught in the consciousness of consumers.

The world trends in tourism and the growing interest of tourists for trips in urban environments where they will experience something new and authentic will support the city of Skopje as a tourist destination. The image generally sent by the Balkan countries can be corrected if the country has a stable policy and good macroeconomics, which quickly ensures entry into the big European family, and of course, setting a strategy for positioning the positive image and comprehensive promotional activities that will convey the message in the world. This means that all stakeholders should have a clear vision of how our country should look in the eyes of consumers, and then start building a strategy for building a strong identity and brand of a tourist product.

The tourist offer of the City of Skopje consists of various and specific products which, although independent, are not independent and all together as a whole constitute the entire offer of the destination. Setting up a quality strategy for branding identity and building a brand will show which of those individual segments are leading in the overall tourism product. This will determine which products the city of Skopje can be competitive on the market, but also determine the potential tourism products that should be placed on the market in the future. It is normal that one should not expect that all segments of the tourist offer can be developed with the same quality and speed, but it is certainly worth recognizing those who need the most effort and investment in order to achieve the greatest effects in the shortest possible time. These products should have the function of boosters of tourism development, which means that the effects of their development will enable investment in other products that are more difficult to develop and commercialize. All this will ultimately result in a tourist product with a strong identity and brand, which will contribute to increasing the city's recognizability and strengthening the position of the world tourism market.

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