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Меѓународна научна конференција за услужен сектор на ФТУ

Во организација на Факултетот за туризам и угостителство – Охрид на 26-27.09.2024 ќе се одржи XVII Меѓународна научна конференција за услужен сектор (International Scientific Conference on Services Sector – INSCOSES 2024).



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DYNAMICS OF PASSENGER MOVEMENT AT TABANOVC AND BLACA BORDER CROSSINGS

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ABSTRACT

The dynamics of passenger movements at these two border points of the Republic of North Macedonia in the period 2020-2023 are analyzed, through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, including the analysis of international traffic data, the factors that influence cross-border traffic, between The Republic of North Macedonia and the two neighboring countries from the northern part, the Republic of Kosovo and the Republic of Serbia. It explores the dynamics of passenger movement at the border crossings of Tabanovci and Bllaca, analyzing changes and trends in their use over a certain period of time. Through an in-depth analysis of available data and traveler experience, we identify key factors influencing border movement and travelers' perceptions of the efficiency and experience of these crossings. This analysis contributes to our knowledge of border movement and provides a basis for further discussions on appropriate policies and practices for border management and regional integration.

KEY WORDS: border, crossing, travelers, reception, service, etc.

INTRODUCTION

Based on the recorded movements of the two border points on the border between the three countries, the Republic of Macedonia, the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Kosovo from the annual reports of the services of the Customs Directorate for the customs units received from the border points, which indicate the dynamics of entry and exits of travelers at the border crossings of the Republic of North Macedonia towards the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Kosovo.

The most important border crossings in the border area are Tabanovci and Bllaca, and besides the fact that there are other border crossings, but they still do not have an international decision, there is also an interstate adventure character.

In this part of the paper, the data related to the exit and entry of travelers at the two important border points (Tabanovc and Bllacë), which are interesting in scope and intensity, will be analyzed. At the same time, the opportunities and infrastructural capacities of the mentioned border points will be analyzed to satisfy travelers with the necessary services, as well as the possibility of their valorization for tourism purposes, not only at the border points, but also in the wider area around the border points. that is, in the border areas with the relevant countries.

To see the frequency of motor vehicles, we also have interesting data from the last 3 years (2020-2022) for the exits and entries of cars, buses and vehicles, with the sole purpose of seeing the readiness of the border, for the acceptance and delivery of their safe.

CIRCULATION OF PASSENGERS AT BORDER CROSSINGS

Tabanovce border point is a new border point built after the independence of the Republic of Macedonia as a sovereign and independent state and a member of the United Nations. Although this border point is of new age, it is built according to all the criteria foreseen for border points that would meet the general needs of people in their activities, in the process of trade of goods, in their individual movement , means of transport, etc.⁷

⁷ Zimeri. Z. Tourism transit and cross-border , 2016

During 2020, 1,822,009 people crossed the border crossing Tabanovci passengers, of which passengers from the Republic of Macedonia 966,808 (departure-entry), and foreign passengers who participated with 855,201 travelers. However, the data for this border crossing during 2021 are interesting, because there was an increase due to the end of the Covid-19 restrictions, where from the total number of travelers 3,911,542, foreign travelers participated with 2,060,768 travelers, while travelers from the Republic of Macedonia with 1,850,774 travelers. In the next year, i.e. in 2022, the passenger frequency at this border point is somewhat higher compared to 2021. Namely, the total number of passengers (2022) is 4,764,257 passengers, of which the largest number are foreign travelers 2,621,637, of which the number of travelers are citizens of the Republic of North Macedonia 2,142,620. This can be seen from the table below:

Table 1: Passenger movement at the Tabanovc border crossing, 2020-2022

Year	Tabanovce		
	<i>Entrances</i>	<i>Exits</i>	<i>Total</i>
2020	867 471	954538	1 822 009
2021	2 083 803	1 827 739	3 911 542
2022	2 534 251	2 230 006	4 764 257

(Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs of North Macedonia)

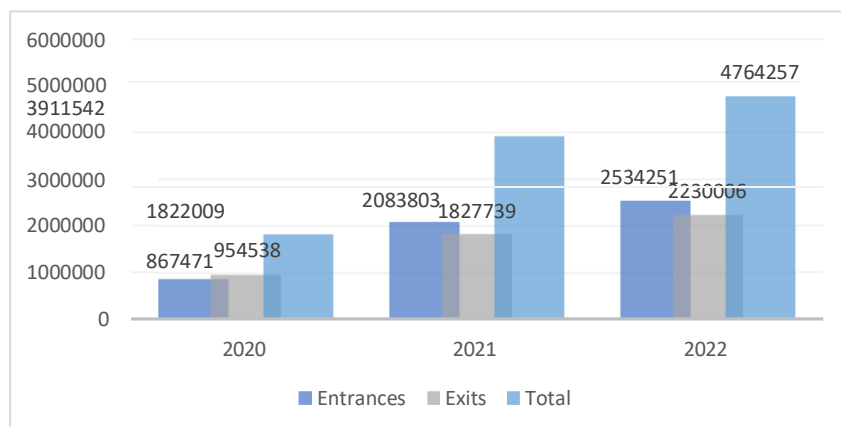


Chart 1: Movement of passengers 2020-2022 at the border point Tabanovce
(Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs of North Macedonia)

At the border crossing Bllacë, the frequency of passengers is lower compared to the border crossing Tabanovci. Accordingly, in 2020, a total of 1,675,746 passengers passed through this border crossing (passenger entry-exit), of which 981,188 passengers or 59% entered the Republic of North Macedonia, while 694,558 passengers or 41% left from country, of general circulation. If we analyze the results of the movement in 2020 and 2021, even at the border point Bllacë, there is an increase from 2020 to 2021, because the anti-Covid- 19 measures are included there, when there was also a total closure from our country, and the expressed difference in numbers it is as follows, (see table 1 and 2, as well as Graph 1 and 2). Government measures to ensure physical distancing and closure of non-essential services had stopped almost all activities in this sector, the sector which has been hit the hardest by the government measures, the hospitality and food service sector is also one of the sectors that have had a lot of negative impact as a result of the drop in tourist traffic and passenger traffic in general.

Table 2: Passenger movement at the Bllace border crossing, 2020-2022

Year	Blace		
	<i>Entrances</i>	<i>Exits</i>	<i>Total</i>
2020	981 188	694 558	1 675 746
2021	1 996 677	1 574 179	3 570 856
2022	2 346 607	1 912 185	4 258 792

(Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs of North Macedonia)

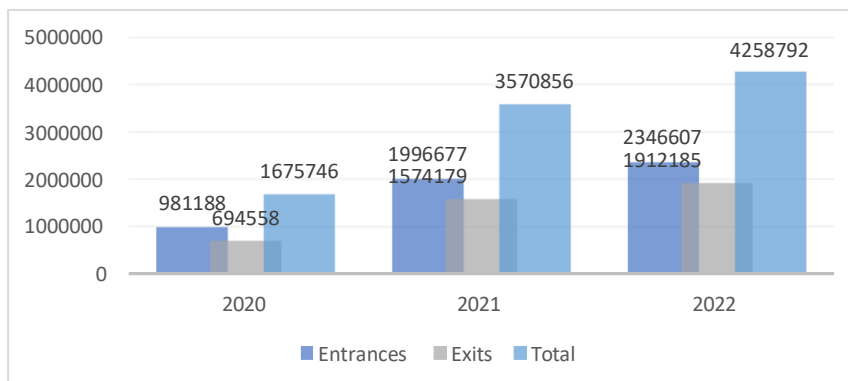


Chart 2: Movement of travelers 2020-2023 at the border point Bllace

(Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs of North Macedonia)

PASSENGER MOVEMENT AT THE BORDER CROSSING TABANOVCI AND BLLACE

The Republic of Macedonia has favorable conditions for the development of tourist activities. The geotourist position of our country is quite interesting, because it occupies a central position in the Balkan Peninsula, and geotourist routes pass through it in the north-south direction and vice versa. In this direction, the fact that the operation of the traffic routes of the corridors should be used as rationally as possible by the transitory tourist clientele should be emphasized. Also in this direction, the fact that the geoposition of Macedonia is specific and which is evaluated with these facts should be emphasized: from the aspect of the geographical position where several routes (road, railway and air) intersect in its territory, it immediately indicates the dynamics of transit of travelers and tourists; from the aspect of Macedonia's proximity to the countries with the highest population density and at a higher level of economic development, from the aspect of Macedonia's proximity to the gravitating powers of neighboring tourist sites ⁸.

The Tabanovci border crossing is considered the second border crossing in terms of the volume and intensity of the movement of travelers in Bogorodica of Gjevgjelia. Namely, during the year 2022, the total number of travelers who entered the country was 2 534 251, while the exits abroad were 2 230 006, a total of 4 764 257 travelers passed through this border crossing and it should be noted that there were enough influence on the country's economy.

However, it should be noted that the largest number of travelers (originating from the Republic of Macedonia) was in 2022 out of a total of 2,230,006 passengers, which means that about 46.7% of the total number passed through this border crossing (enter exit). The number of population in our country, which means that this border crossing is very frequent. The number of foreign travelers is also large. In 2022, the total number of foreign travelers (entry- exit) at the Tabanovc border crossing was visited by a total of 2,621,637 passengers.

The general assumption is that foreign travelers crossing their border points, who would be mobile with various services, parking lots, restaurants, etc., the fiscal effects would be greater at the border point itself, for which experts emphasize the fact that they should be more mobile and more functional in terms of services and short breaks for travelers at border points. According to the forecasts of the International Monetary Fund, the outbreak of the pandemic

⁸ A. Stojmilov , D. Karanfilovski , Osnovi us tourism , Skopje, 1976

has affected the tourism sector with a drop of 20%, mainly related to regular visits from the diaspora, which due to travel restrictions, have made it almost impossible to carry out these visits.⁹

So, for example, if our border points were mobile in terms of the necessary infrastructure (Hotels, Supermarkets, Restaurants, etc.), travelers would spend some money at the border points themselves. If each passenger spent an average of one euro (€1) at the border point, the ratio of funds received would be equal to the number of passengers in 2023.

It is interesting that this border crossing is characterized by two phenomena: According to the data from table 1, it can be seen that the number is greater than our citizens who are at the border point Tabanovci in all years, with the exception of 2020, while for the travelers of foreigners this phenomenon is the opposite, they are more involved than in this border. This phenomenon should be explained by the fact that our citizens come from the Republic of North Macedonia, and this also applies to foreign travelers who, when they leave our country, use other border points from our country.

OVERVIEW ACCORDING TO THE MONTHLY MOVEMENT OF TRAVELERS AT THE TABANOVCI BORDER CROSSING

A total of 24,582,625 citizens of the Republic of North Macedonia entered the country at the border crossings during 2022, with a maximum of 2,799,058 travelers in the month of July, while the minimum was recorded in the month of February, 1,399,370 travelers. The maximum was reached in July, because in that period, among others, citizens of the Republic of North Macedonia who are temporarily employed in the countries of Western Europe and beyond return. The data from the table show that the monthly average is 2,048,552 people entered through the border points of the country. On the other hand, the entry of foreigners into the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia in 2022 was greater than the return of our citizens to the Republic of North Macedonia and reached a total of 13,862,354 foreign passengers, with a maximum in July of 1,715,946 passengers, who are mainly tourists from Western European countries, as well as from countries such as the Republic of Kosovo and other neighboring countries.

⁹ Covid-19 and the impact on the economy "Opportunities for recovery and economic transformation", December 2020.

The data for this calendar year are also interesting for travelers who have been to the border point Tabanovci. The figures show that the ratio between the citizens of the Republic of North Macedonia and the number of foreign travelers differs by month

Table 3: Overview of passengers (domestic and foreign) by month for 2022

Year 2022	Passengers in the Republic of North Macedonia				
	Domestic passenger		Foreign passengers		Total
	Entry	Exit	Entry	Exit	
January	408828	508875	496753	403273	1 817 729
February	302332	344632	415519	336887	1 399 370
March	371613	414212	478681	382193	1 646 699
April	421747	495865	614598	469091	2 001 301
May	404567	483229	670334	520744	2 078 874
June	391999	506992	839651	541381	2 2800 23
July	475949	607163	1058299	657647	2 799 058
August	427991	701835	1015417	635986	2 781 229
September	363066	529267	782458	532067	2 206 858
October	418336	495945	640461	488293	2 043 035
November	342129	395999	512193	396391	1 646 712
December	434703	472997	573608	400429	1 881 737
Total	4763260	5957011	8097972	5764382	24 582 625

(Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs of North Macedonia)

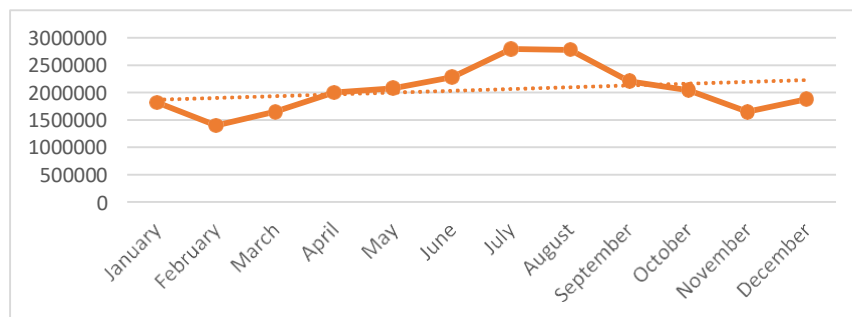


Chart 3: Dynamics of passenger movement in North Macedonia, 2022

CONCLUSION

Tourism in this locality has high values, being characterized by a series of directly and indirectly related activities, presenting a complex of activities at the national and international level, in the scientific, technical, technological and socio-economic policy of every country in the world.

The dynamics of the movement of travelers at the border crossings of Tabanovci and Bllaca is an important topic that reflects the geopolitical and economic reality of the region. These crossings, which connect the Republic of North Macedonia with the neighboring countries, the Republic of Kosovo and Serbia, have a great impact on the economic and social life of the area, as well as on the broader level of regional integration of our country.

In order to understand the dynamics of passenger movement at these crossings, it is important to analyze and we have analyzed the number of cross-border traffic including entries and exits from these two strategic border points, as can be seen in the above tables and graphs. In this context, the dynamics of passenger movement at these crossings is a reflection of many factors, including border procedures, the level of economic development in the area, as well as security issues. In addition, international policies and relations also have an impact on the intensity and nature of passenger movement at these crossings. An important conclusion is that the dynamics of the movement of travelers at the border crossings of Tabanovci and Bllaca is a complex phenomenon that is influenced by many factors. Improving infrastructure, harmonizing border procedures and promoting regional cooperation are some of the steps that can help ease this dynamic and improve the integrity of the region as a whole.

An interpretation of this situation would be that Tabanovci and Bllaca are preferred border points for entry by different people and of different nationalities, and the reasons may be for different commercial, touristic, economic, etc. purposes.

To better see this dynamic, it is very important for a larger analysis of the reasons why people enter and leave the border point. This will include externally socio-economic, migratory policies, behavior and long-term trends of the movement of areas in the region of Tabanovci and Bllaca.

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