

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM – A REQUEST FOR GLOBALIZATION

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## **Abstract**

*Over the last 50 years, globalization has developed greatly. Its pressure has a great impact upon the industrial areas. The current paper focuses mainly on the main stakeholders within the tourism industry. We thought it would be important for us to understand what globalization really means, especially nowadays. Therefore, sustainable development represents the key-concept of this theoretic approach. A briefly review is given as well as the evolution of tourism in terms of globalization. Questions such as: what the private and public sector should do in order to improve the global situation? Which European institutions are responsible for implementing sustainable development and consequently, sustainable tourism? Would the networking alliances apply to a better management? are about to be emphasized.*

## **Keywords**

*sustainable development, globalization, sustainable tourism, environment, public private partnerships*

## **Introduction**

The evolution of the society, on all development levels (economic, social, politic, and religious) has its own price. Nowadays, the wealth gap between the developed and developing countries is a reflection of globalization. Global warming, pollution, the faulty management of resources – particularly of natural ones – are manifestations that affect society as a whole, regardless of individual incomes. This is the reason why, considering the spectacular evolution of globalization after the 80s, we can't mention this concept without referring also to sustainable development. The first official mentions have been the ones from "Our Common Future" Report, in 1987, 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter named "Towards sustainable development" of the UN Conference, when all the member states have identified the necessity of a new term that truly encompasses the real support towards human beings and their environment. The industrial activities in which big actors are involved and their negative impact on the environment are under the scrutiny of the competent international organizations. These are, more and more often, involved in campaigns and events, with the sole purpose of increasing the awareness related to the risks. These organizations also initiate and implement the measures to deal with these risks.

Sustainable development involves a series of initiatives: insuring the renewable energy from unconventional sources, waste recycling, supporting "greener" industries (eco/bio food industry, ecotourism, sustainable tourism etc.). There are multiple ways to define and promote the subject, emphasizing, at the same time, the trends from organizations that have proved themselves – during the last 2 centuries - preoccupied with the phenomenon of globalization. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development – OECD, European Environmental Agency – EEA, World Business Council for Sustainable Development – WBCDD, US National Research Council, Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat - UN/DESA, United Nations Environmental Program – UNEP,

World Trade Organization – WTO, The United Nations World Tourism Organization – UNWTO etc. This is why we decided to make a short revision of the phenomenon, from a historical point of view, along with the main differences between sustainable developments given meanings.

### **1. A briefly historically review**

The environment does not exist as a different sphere, but it's linked to human actions, ambitions and needs. While trying to protect the environment from the main risks, the term has got a naïve connotation in certain political circles. The concept of “development” has also been restricted – everybody is limited by the answer to the question “What do poor countries need to do to align with the developed countries’ standards?” Still, “environment” is the place where we live, we act and create, and development is what we are all trying to do, in order to improve our lives in this place. As the motto of the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of “*Environment for Development*” *Rapport states, the two components – environment and development – are vital and inherent.*

The most known definition for sustainable development is the one given by the World's Commission for Environment and Development in the Brundtland Report: sustainable development is what insures the “needs of the present moment, without compromising the possibilities of the future generations to provide for their own needs”. Of course that many more ideas came as a result of the later official meetings – worth mentioning are the UN Conference for Environment and Development from 1992, in Rio de Janeiro, known as the “Earth Summit”, the Rio +20 Conference in 2012, etc. in Agenda 21, a series of principles and measures have been shaped, international agreements have been signed regarding climate change and biodiversity. And yet, until Agenda 21, and the World's Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, 2002 - all the focus surrounding this concept was around poverty eradication and environmental protection.

We consider necessary a short analysis of „*Our Common Journey: A transition toward Sustainability*”, made by the Sustainable Development Office of the National Academy of Sciences, SUA. The central idea consists in the need of a distinction between what specialists have been trying to prove (respectively the established priorities) and the time horizon needed for their implementation). Three aspects have been emphasized: nature, wealth system and communities that connect very well with the pillars of sustainable development, from an economic, social and environmental point of view, at a local, national, regional and global level.

There can be no discourse about sustainable development without mentioning the “*European Strategy for Sustainable Development*”, which aims at being a model for the states focused on changing their public policies. The purpose is to change the mentality of the civil society and to mobilize the collective effort in order to identify, implement and monitor the main objectives. It has been adopted in 2006, but it has roots in the initial strategy from Göteborg, 2001, that has been strongly criticized by the European Commission.

P. Worsley used to say that “until our days, the human society never existed”, which means that only today we can talk about types of associations that spread across the whole world – never before have all the possible actors been on the same stage. In a way, the possibility of a sole human society has always existed, since Homo sapiens, but the real opportunity has appeared just now. The world has become, from the main perspectives, a unique social system, as a result of the development of the interdependencies that affect each one of us. The global system is not only an environment for the particular societies to develop and evolve. Social, economic and political connections that cross the borders between the states condition decisively the fate of the individuals living inside.

## 2. Tourism

The general concept used to characterize this continuously growing interdependency inside the society is “globalization”. Globalization has cultural, political and economic dimensions. According to the definition that World’s Tourism Organization, tourism encompasses the activities of an individual that travels and lives for a less than 1 year outside his or hers familiar environment, to relax, to develop businesses or for other purposes. Guyer Freuler defined tourism as “a modern time phenomenon, based on the bigger need to heal, to vary the environment, to encourage amazement and care for natural beauties, but mainly to contribute to the wellbeing of the people, as a result of commerce and industry development and of the improvement of transportation”. The organized structures at a local, national and international level have also evolved in the last years, the main tendency being to decentralize and divide the roles when it comes to tourism. Public – Private Partnerships (PPP) have proven to be a good solution for certain projects on touristic development, financing promoting campaigns etc.

One of the most important demographic tendencies, which has already been manifesting in Western Europe and North America, but it is still at the beginning, is population’ aging. It’s about the retired people, which have enough free time to travel, have incomes above average and behave in a certain way when it comes to travelling. (Serrière, 2003). Tourists are more and more experimented when it comes to voyages. The competition between destinations is powerful and this is why every country needs to position and to address to the targeted clients – success belongs to those who know-how to capitalize the advantages they have. (Hughes and Allen, 2005). This led to a considerable increase in marketing investments.

Being interdependent of other socio-economic areas, the international tourism is vulnerable. The terrorism, armed conflicts, natural hazards, epidemics are external factors that can influence in a negative way the flow of foreign tourists towards certain destinations. The distribution and commercialization of touristic products is strongly influenced by the development of new information and communication technologies (ICT).

More and more organizations profit or non-profit, have started awareness campaigns, aiming to guide the consumers towards sustainable, responsible tourism. The need to satisfy the internal clients (employees) has led to new, innovative techniques in HR management. Also, a good response to all the changes globalization imposes is that the big companies are forced to change the organizational behavior and to innovate.

## 3. Globalizing tourism – what does it mean?

As any other domain, tourism has both positive and negative effects. The main thing is not to completely eliminate the negative effects (such goal would be completely unrealistic) – but to reduce the damaging actions and results, while we look for, observe and capitalize the opportunities.

Some of the positive aspects due to the intensification of foreign investments in tourism are: more work places, bigger incomes and better living standards. But opening towards foreign investors doesn’t have immediate major positive effects: *More than 65% of the earnings from tourism in Mediterranean countries go to approximately 10 companies from the country the visitors come from – to the air-transport companies, tour-operators and hotels* (Cazelais, cit. in Borma, 2012). Of course, the increase of the numbers of foreign investors can lead also to the image improvement of the country, which will gain credibility in the eyes of potential investors. To help developing the local tourism industry and to reduce the external control by the national authorities from different countries means nothing else but a good way to improve local entrepreneurs by counseling programs, financing and subventions (Bran, 2011). An important comment is that this type of politics can be considerate as having a protectionist character unless they fulfill certain conditions stipulated in international agreements, such as GATS (General Agreement on Trade in Services).

The fact that certain countries or regions are attractive from a touristic point of view has given those places an extra chance in their fight for survival. Maybe one of the most important merits of tourism is promoting cultural exchanges, peace, understanding and the idea of “global community” (Goeldner et al., 2003). But many see in tourism a way to save the national economy, which is a mistake, because a healthy economy cannot rely on just one economic sector. The countries that depend exclusively on tourism are considered as fragile environments, and any external event that negatively affects tourism can have devastating effects on them. It is hard to distinguish precisely what is positive and what is negative in tourism development, because many times, the short term impact is positive, while the long term consequences are detrimental. In other cases, even if the first impression is an encouraging one, a deeper look shows that things are not quite clear or good. So, although the development of the tourism industry can lead to new jobs, most of the times, these are seasonal and poorly paid ones.

### Conclusions

One of the greatest achievements of the current concept: sustainable development in terms of globalization would be the environment protection and everything that may be related to the green economy such as sustainable tourism, ecotourism and the list may continue. However, what is worth mentioning is the fact that different factors that appeared as challenges for the future to come are very close to the priorities of a national and international economic policy within public private partnerships in terms of tourism, environment and their systems. Last but not least, we may conclude that although the principles of sustainable tourism are beneficial, putting them into practice is a difficult task and must be based on the economic and political scenery as well as encouragement and communication between governments and international organizations.

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