

THE ROLE OF EVENT TOURISM STRATEGY OF SERBIA IN STRATEGIC PLANNING

Željko Bjeljac¹, Geographical Institute “Jovan Cvijić” SASA, Belgrade, Serbia

Marijana Pantić, Dresden University of Technology and Dresden Leibniz
 Graduate School - IÖR, Dresden, Germany

Marko Filipović, Geographical Institute “Jovan Cvijić” SASA, Belgrade, Serbia

Tourist events represent not only a significant tourism potential, but also the touristic product of Serbia. There are approximately 2500 events every year, attended by several million visitors from Serbia and all around the world. Since the 1990s in the world and since the beginning of the 21st century in Serbia, the organization and development of events has become a significantly profitable activity. Certain countries developed event tourism strategies on the level of the country or on the regional level; in Serbia, the event tourism is mentioned in the national tourism development strategies and certain regional ones. This paper targets the need for development of Event Tourism Strategy on the level of Serbia.

Key words: *strategy, event tourism, Serbia.*

INTRODUCTION

According to Getz (1997, 2008), during the last decade of the 20th century, events have become an important tool for local communities to gain advantage and fulfill a set of economic, social and environmental objectives. The role and the impact of planned events in the tourism industry are well documented, and are of increasing importance for the competitiveness of tourist destinations on the market. Due to the increase in competitiveness among tourist destinations, organization and development of events has become a significantly profitable activity.

Event tourism strategies have many objectives. They attempt to influence visitors' perception of the destination. Backman *et al.* (1995) highlight the potential of hosting large events as a means of shaping a positive image of a destination. In some cases, event strategies are reported to be an integral part of extending tourism seasons (Baum and Hagen, 1999). Their ability to attract visitors, extend the visitor season, increase average spending and lengthen the average stay makes events an important tool in developing the tourism

industry. Events are, therefore, an essential element of the Tourism Strategy and Action Plan of an area.

In Serbia, the importance of event tourism, as well as economically prosperous type of tourism, started to increase only at the beginning of the 21st century. It first appeared in strategic documents, such as the Tourism Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia (Horvat Consulting *et al.*, 2005; 2006), in which this segment of tourism is observed as a major global market potential, which contributes to the comeback of Serbia onto the international market, raising the level of competitiveness and forming a stronger base for marketing. 'In Serbia, there is a number of traditional events, local events, festivals, celebrations and the like. In addition to the popularity on the domestic market, some of these events have the potential on the international market as well, where they have already gained a degree of popularity' (Horvat Consulting *et al.*, 2006:77).

According to Bjeljac (2010), and Vodič kroz turističke manifestacije (2012), 1,600 to 2,500 events are held in Serbia every year. Events are mostly similar to each other, economically and touristically unsustainable; there are no data on the number and structure of the visitors and the events are frequently inconsistent with the

strategic goals and priorities at the local and national level. As a result, in March 2011, the group of organizers of business tourism events of the Serbian Chamber of Commerce – the Board for Tourism, concluded that Serbia needs an event tourism strategy.

The methodology of constructing this paper used questionnaires and interviews with visitors and organizers of certain manifestations in Serbia, comparative analysis of results obtained by field research presented in the 'Strategy of tourism development in Serbia – Events; comparative analysis of certain foreign event strategies and the spatial analysis of tourist manifestations in Serbia'. The primary objective of this paper is to analyze the possibility of forming the Strategy of Event Tourism in Serbia and to predict its effect on the spatial and regional development, having in mind that Serbia is one of the countries without this strategic document, although there are numerous foreign examples available. There are examples of worldwide event strategies (event tourism) at the national or regional levels, such as: *A National Business Events Strategy for Australia 2020, National*

¹Đure Jakšića 9/III, 11000 Beograd, Serbia
 z.bjeljac@gi.sanu.ac.rs

The paper represents the result of research on the Projects 47007 III and 47027III, financed by Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of Republic of Serbia.

Events Strategy for South Africa, National Events Strategy for New Zealand, National Events Strategy, Scotland; California Cultural Heritage Strategic Plan, Ontario Major Festivals and Events Attraction Research Study; as well as the strategic plans for the development of the events themselves, such as CARIFESTA festival, Guyana. In Australia, for example, there is a very high level of investment in tourism marketing and the integration of key events into the national tourism organization's domestic and international marketing strategy (Stokes, 2008).

THE BASIC ELEMENTS OF EVENT TOURISM

In the world literature, the most appropriate classification is the one given by Getz (1991, 1997, 2008), and was adopted by the team that worked on the Tourism Development Strategy, although there are several other definitions and classifications. In his classification, Getz lists following events: cultural celebrations, arts/entertainment, business/trade, displays (shows), sporting events, family events, social events, educational, scientific, recreational and political/state events. The shows, festivals, manifestations, events and performances are just different conceptual nuances that indicate a 'period of a certain program with a specific content that is attractive for tourist visits' (Bjeljac, 2006:7).

Since the 1970s, a significant number of scientists gave their contribution to defining concepts of event tourism (see Bjeljac 2006). In his research of event tourism in Serbia, Bjeljac (2006:8) defines tourism as a 'public performance in the form of an event or more events (with the same or different content), different categories of human achievement, that stand out for their specificity and attractiveness, have a tradition (permanency), achieving the goals and effects of tourism, and are organized in areas that have an interest in them, with massive performances and public expression, which are significant in scale, size, quality and quantity of content, with a clear and prominent central theme and recognizable date of happening, which all results in profitability as part of a tourist destination'.

Within Serbian tourist offer, event tourism is a type of tourism that can contribute to broadening touristic demand, particularly in terms of natural and anthropogenic values of tourist places or regions. The following cities and towns stand out in terms of the number of events: Belgrade – 257 events (10.8%); Novi Sad – 125 (5.2%), Pančevo – 102 (4.3%), Čačak – 77 (3.2%), Kanjiža – 51 (2.2%),

Subotica – 48 (2.0%), Bačka Palanka, Niš, Bečej and Sombor – 46 each (1.9%).

TOWARDS THE EVENT TOURISM STRATEGY

In 2011, the presidency of the Group accepted the proposal to use the methodology of experts from the Geographical Institute "Jovan Cvijić" SASA, so as to categorize and classify tourist events (Bjeljac, 2006, 2010). The group analyzed the Tourism Development Strategy (Section – Events) and compared it to event field research

(Table 1). They came to the conclusion that the existing presentation of tourist events and products in Serbia is not adequate and do not correspond to the actual situation.

The criticism aims at an event definition by Getz, given in the Tourism Development Strategy. It is unspecific and unacceptable for our requirements, while the definition by Bjeljac is more appropriate (2006). This general definition does not distinguish between an event continuously going on as an independent traditional event, or it being a

Table 1. Comparative Analysis of Tourism Development Strategy and Event Research in the Field

Tourism Development Strategy	Research by G.I. "Jovan Cvijić"
Tourists that attend events belong to the widest population, and they visit particular events during short breaks or as third holidays. The age structure of tourists ranges from 18 to 55, with individuals being from 18 to 25, groups from 25 to 35, and couples between 45 and 55.	- <i>The Rajac Haymaking, 2008, 352 interviewees*</i> Origin: Belgrade (14.8%), Valjevo (13.1%), Indija (12.2%), 14.5% of foreigners 51.2% of the age group 60-69 and 70 and older. 59.6% travel more than five times a year. 1.7% came through travel agencies, 72.7% stayed for one day only, 76.4% will spend up to 50 euros.
The main motive is the specific event, in which they have taken part for several years. The tourists are additionally motivated by sites, shopping, gastronomy and nightlife.	63.6% were informed about the event by the visitors of the past Haymakings, 66.5% came because they wished to get to know the traditions and customs of haymaking. 56.3% spent money on food and drinks
In terms of accommodation and transportation, the main motto is good value for money. Their stay lasts for three to five days. The main source of information is the Internet.	- <i>Shepherd-Days, Sakule (2009) 160 interviewees**</i> Origin: Belgrade (53.8%), Opovo (13.8) Pančevo (5.6%) Age groups 60-69 (28.1%) and 20-29 (26.3%) (35%) travel more than five times a year. 65.6% visited the event independently, 88.6% stayed for one day. (32.5%) came for fun and company, 61.9% spent money on food and drinks, 47.5% willing to spend up to 100 euros. 56.9% got the information from the previous visitors of Shepherd days.
	- <i>Trumpet Festival, Guča (2010) 975 interviewees***</i> Origin: Belgrade (19%), Čačak (8.2%), Novi Sad (5.4%), 48.6% foreign visitors (Bosnia and Herzegovina (18.8%), France (10.8%), Slovenia (9.3%). Age groups 20-29 (48.1%) and 30-39 (29.7%). 28.4% travel more than five times a year, 97.4% came independently, 38.8% stayed for 5 and more days. For 61.6% entertainment was the motive for the visit, 44.9% came with friends, 12.1% willing to spend about 200 euros: 54.1% on entertainment; 53.6% got the information about the event from previous visitors.
	- <i>Plum Days, Blace (2011) 304 interviewees****</i> Origin: Blace 19.4%; Belgrade 12.5%; Prokuplje 10.5%; foreign visitors 3.3%, 40.1% age group 20-29, 36.5% travel twice a year, 14.1% motive for visit was entertainment, 100.0% came independently, 16.1% willing to spend about 300 euros; 38.2% willing to spend money on food and drinks; 46.7% got the information about the event from previous visitors

* Brankov et al. (2009)

** Bjeljac and Brankov (2010)

*** Bjeljac et al. (2013)

**** Lović et al. (2012)

continuous series of events that promote a tourism destination, such as various concerts, exhibitions, economic events, which are not necessarily linked thematically by content and place, and are organized by the same organizer once a year. Not enough was done to make the definition more precise, as there are authors who gave more detailed definitions of an event.

In addition, field research conducted by a team of experts from the Geographical Institute "Jovan Cvijić" SASA in cooperation with the organizers of individual events, shows different information (Table 1) than outlined in the Strategy. The Strategy does not contain a clear categorization and classification of events. It used, as discussed above, the classification of events by content, given by Getz (1991). The Group believes that the appropriate classification is the one proposed by the team of experts from the Geographical Institute "Jovan Cvijić" SASA: children's, economic, religious, political, historical, ethnographic, entertainment, scientific-technical, sporting, artistic and touristic events, because they contain a more detailed subdivision of each group (Bjeljac, 2006; Vodič kroz turističke manifestacije, 2012).

The Strategy was detailed on the basis of analyses of events worldwide, containing the number of visitors, income, and jobs, but omitting the example of Serbia. Only the major events in Serbia were mentioned: EXIT (Novi Sad) and Trumpet Festival (Guča), and more than 300 local events, but without detailed analyses. In the tourism clusters, as key events, the Strategy listed (with no obvious categorization criteria): EXIT (Novi Sad), International Film Festival Palić, Vintage Days and 'Dužijanca' (Subotica), summer theater performances and horse races; film ceremonies and choral ceremonies (Niš), Gitarijada (Zaječar), First Accordion (Sokobanja) Trumpet Festival (Guča), Tešnja Evening (Valjevo), Carnival and Film Festival (Vrnjačka Banja), the Rajac Haymaking (Ljig), Days of Comedy (Jagodina), conventions, conferences, trade shows, sporting events, culture festivals, events at the Iron Gate, 'Golubački kotlić'.

The Strategy predicts the arrival of large numbers of foreign tourists, while field studies show that the largest number of visitors is from the daily and half-daily gravity zone, where foreigners are mostly from the former Yugoslav states and the countries with the dominant Serbian diaspora. The largest number of visitors is informed about the event by the visitors of previous event editions and through the Internet. In addition, most visitors arrive

independently, by personal transport, by car or bus, except for the age group of 65 and over, who have the visits organized by the associations of pensioners. The widest age group is from 20 to 39.

Positive examples of event tourism strategies can be used in forming the Event Tourism Strategy in Serbia, to be involved in the analysis of the festival business model (organization structure, financial flows, stakeholders, competition, business environment): an environmental scan (Social, Legal, Economic, Political, Technological, Meteorological, Demographic and Competitiveness issues) with a SWOT analysis; identify and examine current events and develop strategies to ensure they are promoted and incorporated within the overall strategy and aligned with other local and regional events where possible; develop marketing strategies, including the identification of target markets; accounting events that are suitable for staging in larger cities, where accommodation and event facilities exist, as well as in rural areas where events could highlight the specific attributes of a region (National events strategy, 2009; Central coast festival, 2009).

THE FIRST STEPS TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF EVENT TOURISM STRATEGY IN SERBIA

Using the examples of the mentioned world strategies, the team from the Geographical Institute "Jovan Cvijić" SASA, developed a categorization and classification, later adopted by the Group of organizers of business tourism events of the Serbian Chamber of Commerce – Board for Tourism. This was undertaken in order to determine which of the traditional events have attractive tourist potential (the requirements to become a motive for the arrival of visitors), as a first step towards a national strategy.

To make an event a successful tourism product, it is necessary to extract the fundamental elements that promote the product: the attractiveness and uniqueness, content, rank, tradition, quality of organization, number of visitors, location, natural and anthropogenic values of the location, as well as the time and duration of the event. The more events based on specific values, well planned, organized in an attractive location, and at a time convenient for visits, the more interesting participants the program has, the greater the value of the event as a tourism product will be.

All events that are of importance to tourism can be valorized by: origin of performance, durability at the same venue, the nature of

maintenance, program content, number of visitors, invested funds and the motives of visitors (Bjeljac, 2006, 2010). Based on the complex and detailed analysis, the basic evaluation of this type of tourism was undertaken (Bjeljac, 2006; Bjeljac and Brankov, 2008; Bjeljac and Čurčić, 2010; Goldblatt, 2000, Getz, 1997, 2008; Carlsen *et al.*, 2001).

This evaluation includes: content, origin of visitors and participants by rank, tradition (maintaining continuity), location, transport accessibility, time of the event, the number of visitors and participants, the artistic value of the event, number of accompanying events, visitor and organizer satisfaction (Bjeljac, 2006, 2010). This set of criteria has a grading scale from zero to five points.

It includes the impact of constructing capital projects, environmental, economic, media and political influence, stakeholders relations, as well as evaluating cooperation with tourist organizations (Goldblatt, 2000; Bjeljac, 2006, 2010; Bjeljac and Brankov, 2008; Bjeljac and Čurčić, 2010). Economic impact analysis is one of the instruments that policy makers can use to support effective decision making processes, by comparing the return on investment into the events and their whole economic impact with alternative investments. (Della Lucia, 2013). All criteria were assessed before and after the event, and the grading scale is from zero to four points.

Through these sets of criteria, events can be divided into three categories attractive for tourist visits:

- The second category – events that are a significant element of the tourist offer
- The third category – other events where particular attention is paid to events in less developed regions of Serbia.

When the highest values of all geographic and economic indicators of criteria are summed up, the result is 116. Therefore, events that have 97 or more points belong to the first category of tourist events, the second category gathers events between 73 and 96 points, and the third category groups the events that have less than 73 points.

Based on the evaluation of tourist events, events that belong to the first and second category of tourist events are singled out. The first category events are: Dragačevo Trumpet, Guča (115 points), EXIT, Novi Sad (114), the Rajac Haymaking, Ljig (110), the International Agricultural Fair, Novi Sad, Vintage Days, Vršac (with 108 each), International Book Fair, Belgrade (106), Days of Beer, Zrenjanin (105)

Vuk Karadžić Days in Tršić (104), International Hunting, Fishing, Sports and Tourism Fair, Novi Sad (101), International Tourism Fair Belgrade (100), Accordion Championship – Sokobanja (98) and Dužijanica, Subotica (97 points).

The listed events, passing national boundaries and gaining affirmation in the international market, positively stand out and have become recognized brands whose attractiveness increases, and the economic effects rapidly increase revenues from tourism.

The second category includes: Vintage Days, Sremski Karlovci (96 points); Bacon Festival, Kačarevo (94); Serbian Assembly of Folklore and Oplenac Vintage, Topola and 'Brankovo Kolo', Sremski Karlovci (93); Barbecue Festival, Leskovac (91); Folklore Festival Vršac (88), Harvest Festivities of the Carpathian Basin, Gornji Breg; BITEF, Belgrade; Pumpkin Days, Kikinda (87); The Guitar Festival, Zaječar (85); the Autumn in Smederevo (83); Harvest Days, Palić; Sausage Festival, Turija; Children's festival 'Zmajevе dečije igre', Novi Sad (81); Joy of Europe, Belgrade (80) Cultural Festivities, Vrnjačka Banja; Folklore Festival 'Prođoh Levač, prođoh Šumadiju', Rekovac; BEMUS, Belgrade (79); Marble and Sounds, Arandelovac; Pudar Days, Irig; Danube TID regatta; Belgrade Marathon (78); Vintage Days, Aleksandrovac; Sterija's Theatre, Novi Sad (77); Shepherd Days, Kosjerić; Slovakian Folk Festivities, Bački Petrovac (76); Kovačica October; Vuk's Council, Tršić (75); Mokranjac Days, Negotin; Jazz Festival, Kanjiža; Night of Museums; International Nautical Faire, Belgrade; Cultural Summer, Sokobanja; Serbian Statehood day, Orašac; Ljubičevo Horse Games, Požarevac (74); Nisomnia, Niš; A Great School Lesson, Kragujevac (73 points).

The third category gathers other traditional events. Most of these events have a potential for tourism, but do not fully meet the criteria, first of all economically. In this category, there are 107 significant traditional events that take place in the 26 least economically developed municipalities in Serbia. These events are the basis for the development of tourism, but also for other sectors of the economy in underdeveloped regions in Serbia.

Ministry of Economy and Regional Development (Ministry of Finance and Economy of the Republic of Serbia, Department of Tourism) and the Group of organizers of business tourism events of the Serbian Chamber of Commerce – Board for Tourism, organized a workshop in the period from December 2011 until September 2012 on the following topic: "Improving the Quality of Tourism Product – Manifestations".

The SWOT analysis was used as a means for this paper, which is the second step in the strategic planning process in order to improve the quality of this product. Based on the SWOT analysis, solutions are given to remedy deficiencies and risks, and the conclusions and recommendations were drafted for the development of products based on the benefits and opportunities that the participants of the workshop defined. During registration, participants have indicated the number and type of events they organize during the year.

The most common strengths were geo-transport position, rich cultural, historical and natural heritage, tendency of the Serbian people towards celebrations and festivals, enthusiasm and tendency towards volunteerism. The most common weaknesses listed the following: professional specialization (event management, strategic planning, etc.), main capacities (venues), small share of foreign visitors, politicization in every sense, inadequate promotional materials and infrastructure. The following were pinpointed as potentials: the increase in the number of foreign tourists in Serbia, creating brands out of certain events, tourist valorization of events, education of event organizers. External threats are: inadequate attention to the eco system, abuse of events and the existence of "unregistered services" (during certain events, prices of food, drinks, accommodation, taxi services, etc. are higher), low purchasing power of the population, overproduction of similar events, loss of local cultural identity and values.

Based on the results of the SWOT analysis, we can conclude:

- It is necessary to replace the enthusiasm of the employees in organizing events by professionalism (professional staff with specialized knowledge and skills in management, strategic planning, promotions, advertising, funding...);
- Establish a data collection methodology to explore the tourism market (number of visitors by gender, age, country of origin, income from events, and grade of satisfaction of visitors);
- Strengthen cooperation between the public and private sectors;
- Establish coordination between the event organizers and local and national authorities as well as with other stakeholders (media and other organizers of the event, the tourism industry, transport...);
- Event integrating and networking (horizontal and vertical integration);
- Adopt rules of categorization, classification and evaluation of tourism events, as well as

the strategic document on the development of this product;

- Organize training of employees in culture, tourism and education on the following topics: managing events, finding funds to finance events, promotions, effective organization of events, preservation of local values, and cultural identity of the places in which the events take place...);
- Development of event clusters in Serbia
- Pass laws or by-laws to regulate the place and role of event tourism in Serbia and relieve the organizers of unnecessary fees and permits;
- Create a special event tourism strategy in Serbia.

SPATIAL ASPECTS IN CREATION OF EVENT TOURISM STRATEGY IN SERBIA

The term "territorial cohesion" was used in the *Second Progress Report on Economic and Social Cohesion* (CEC, 2003) for the first time in the context of European development. However, the term "balanced spatial development" has been used in the past, when the Ministers of the European Union, responsible for spatial issues, set it as a goal in 1994, and later accepted it in the document *European Spatial Development Perspective* (CEC, 1999). Since then, territorial cohesion and balanced spatial development have become an integral part of a number of key European documents such as the *Guiding Principles for Sustainable Development* (CEMAT, 2000), *Territorial Agenda* (EU, 2007), *Lisbon Treaty* (CEC, 2007), *Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion* (CEC, 2008), etc.

This approach starts from the fact that the diversity of regions is an advantage to be preserved, thus improving balance in the economic, demographic and social capacities. This is also expected to reduce the difference between the areas used beyond the limits of sustainability on the one hand, and abandoned areas of emigration on the other.

In line with the pan-European aspirations, *Spatial Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia* (RASP, 2009) and the *Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia* (RASP, 2010) supported the model of balanced territorial development. Moreover, both documents are based on the principles proclaimed in the *Guiding Principles* (CEMAT, 2000) and the *Territorial Agenda* (EU, 2007), setting the promotion of territorial cohesion as an objective. Accordingly, the spatial development of Serbia aims at reducing the significant regional differences.

In reality, the process of socio-economic transition and transformation of management in Serbia has repeatedly failed in the use and quality of strategic thinking, which led to a neglect of the role of long-term (strategic) decisions (Vujošević, 2010). In the above mentioned transformation process, the spatial aspect in the development of sectoral and strategic papers was ignored (Maksin and Milijić, 2010).

Thus, Serbia can be classified among European countries with the largest regional differences in terms of socio-economic indicators, according to the intensity of resource use, and thus the use of the entire territorial capital (Vujošević, 2010). A share of responsibility for the violation of territorial cohesion and spatial balance belongs to the limited approach to the creation of sector documents, whereas other aspects are not examined, including the spatial ones (Maksin-Mičić et al., 2009). For these reasons, the significance and role of the strategic thinking on the subject of event tourism in Serbia are clearly highlighted, including the consideration of the physical/spatial aspect.

In the previous section, the evaluation of events in Serbia is presented in three categories. When their distribution is visually represented (Figure 1), it becomes obvious that events are not territorially balanced, i.e. some regions and/or their parts are leaders in comparison to others. The Southern and Eastern Serbia regions, territorially the most spacious, lag far behind with the number of municipalities where the first and second category events are held, in comparison to Vojvodina, Šumadija, and Western Serbia.

In fact, when valorization points are added by region, Vojvodina, Šumadija and Western Serbia are leaders, with 1308 and 1032 points ahead of Belgrade region, which gathered 754 points, and the regions of Southern and Eastern Serbia, with 730 points. When the comparison between regions is made, only by criterion of the first category events, the differences are even more significant: Vojvodina is the best positioned, having almost twice as many points as Šumadija and Western Serbia (633:329), three times as much as Belgrade (633:206), and even six times as much as the Southern and Eastern Serbia (633:99).

Therefore, Vojvodina leads convincingly, while the Southern and Eastern Serbia is the worst positioned, particularly with regard to events of major importance (first category events).

Also, Figure 1 shows that only one municipality, in which events held are in the first category, belongs to the region of

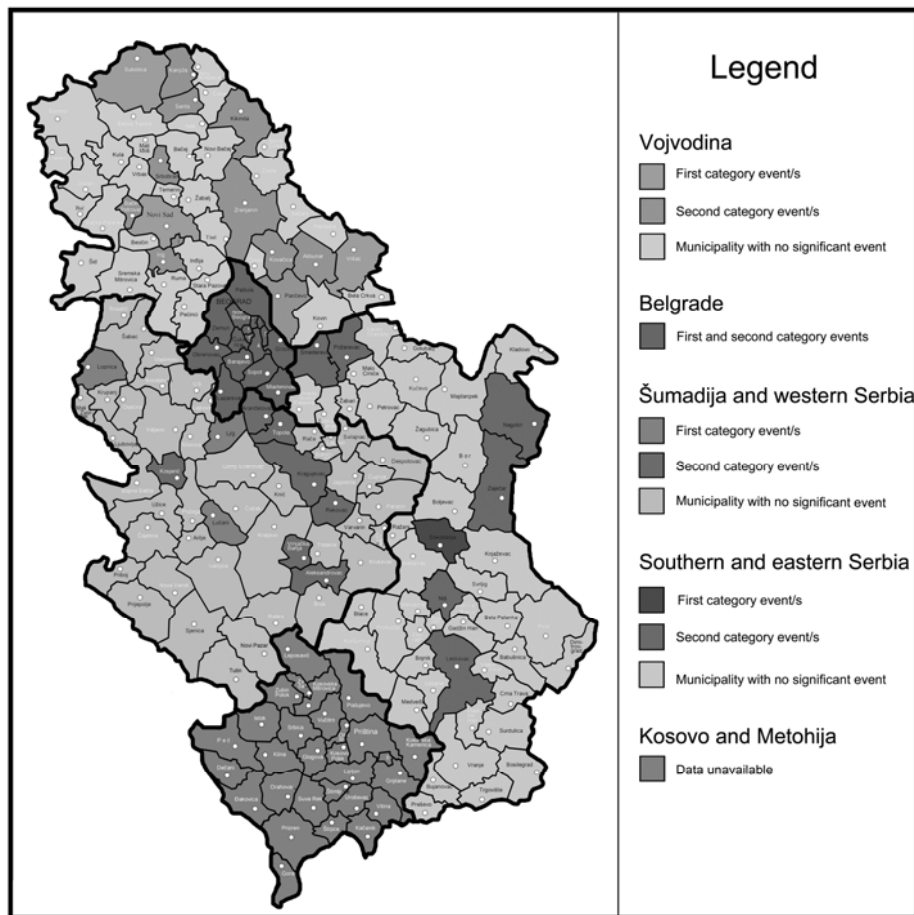


Figure 1: Serbia - Distribution of events by priority (in municipalities and regions)
Source: elaborated by Marijana Pantić

Southern and Eastern Serbia, and that generally, in each region, with the exception of Belgrade, there are groups of municipalities that do not hold any first, nor the second category events.

Here, the Belgrade region is an exception because the small territorial range contains a large number of municipalities, and the entire region can be roughly considered as one municipality. Thus, Figure 2 separates seven groups of municipalities, adjacent to each other, and at the same time none of them bordering with the municipality in which the significant event(s) is/are held. If these groups, in terms of territorial cohesion disruption, are given the name of critical zones, it can be concluded that there is one of these zones in the region of Vojvodina (Apatin, Bač, Kula, Odžaci and Šid municipalities), two in Šumadija and Western Serbia (Bogatić, Koceljeva, Osečina and Ljubovija in the first zone; Čajetina, Priboj, Nova Varoš, Sjenica, Tutin and Novi Pazar in the second zone), three in the region of Southern and Eastern Serbia (Blace, Kuršumljina and Prokuplje in the first zone; Bela Palanka,

Babušnica, Pirot and Dimitrovgrad in the second; Bosilegrad, Bujanovac, Preševo, Surdulica and Trgovište in the third zone), and the remaining zone covers the regions of Šumadija and Western Serbia on the one side (Despotovac, Lapovo, Paraćin, Svilajnac, Čuprija and Čičevac) and Southern and Eastern Serbia on the other (Golubac, Kučevo, Petrovac and Žagubica). Broken down by regions, the territory of Belgrade is completely covered by events, the territory of Vojvodina, about 90%, Šumadija and Western Serbia, and Southern and Eastern Serbia around 70%.

So, according to the number of evaluation points (for the first category events) and the number of critical zones, regions of Southern and Eastern Serbia seem to be the weakest. In contrast, the region of Vojvodina is best ranked in terms of all the relevant criteria and, observed through the prism of first-class events, it noticeably stands out from other regions.

Therefore, the creation of Event Tourism Development Strategy in Serbia should be approached with an awareness of the existing regional imbalances and it is vital for the

Strategy to introduce policies that would reduce these differences. Particular attention should be paid to strengthening the critical zones of all the regions, and most of all, the regions of Southern and Eastern Serbia, and also to Belgrade region from which it would be expected to have a leading role in the organization of first class events.

The advantage of current state of event tourism in Serbia is that the two most successful festivals have been held in two different regions and grounded on different topics. Guča Trumpet Festival, based on Serbia/Balkan musical heritage, promotes entertainment typical of Serbia, while Exit Festival represents a prototype of originally west European/American music and festivities. Both events together also confirm that other festivals in Serbia should not be thematically limited. Concerning the spatial aspect, beside Belgrade and Novi Sad, other big cities in Serbia – Niš and Kragujevac can be suitable for events based on world-wide trends, while other cities and towns can take over the leading role in local tradition based events.

Involvement in this field, especially branding and certification of small events, would contribute to the realization of the aspirations proclaimed in the first phase report of the *Serbian Tourism Strategy* (Horvat Consulting *et al.*, 2005), which states: 'The Republic of Serbia cannot and should not count on tourism in isolated oases for the guests, but, on the contrary, the system should provide interesting tourist experiences on its entire territory' (Horvat Consulting *et al.*, 2005, p. 6).

CONCLUSION

The results of the field research analysis of event visitors, and the comparison of this field research with the section 'Events' of the Tourism Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia (2006-2015), show discrepancy between the actual situation on the field and the demands of the tourist event organizers on the one hand, and what is presented and suggested by the Strategy on the other. The foreign examples of successful strategic planning that include the spatial planning (local/regional/national) and strategic planning of one or more events already exist and have an elaborate methodology – thus, these examples should be applied to Serbia. The group of event organizers took the first steps – they undertook tourist valorization and classification and SWOT analysis.

The event tourism strategy should also empower manifestations in otherwise marginalized regions of Serbia and make it a tool for overall socio-economic development of the regions. This would particularly refer to

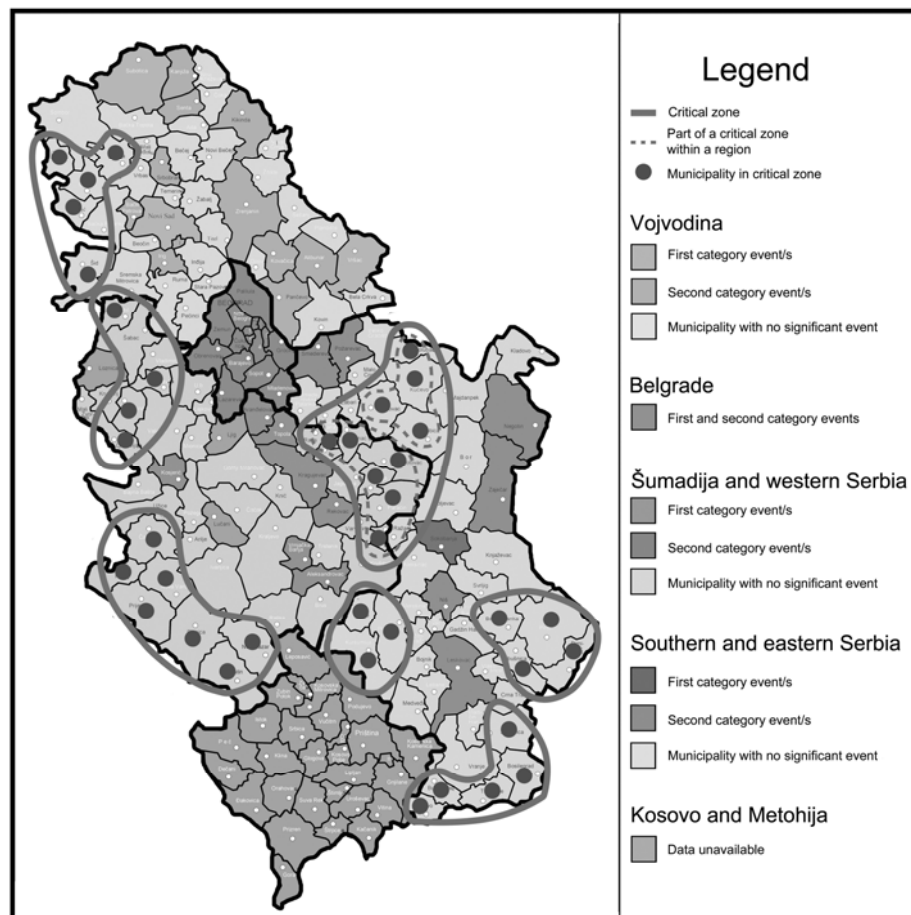


Figure 2: Serbia – distribution of critical zones Source: elaborated by Marijana Pantić

Šumadija and Western Serbia and South and Eastern Serbia regions where the analysis has shown weaknesses in terms of the number of events and their visitors, but also to other regions covering all seven critical zones and Belgrade, which can be expected to fulfill the demands of a capital city. Branding and certification of small, but already existing events would certainly contribute to creation of first class events.

It is recommendable that municipalities in the same critical zone cooperate and, with a view to the national event tourism strategy, create their own regional strategies. Additionally, the strategy should explicitly consider possibilities of event tourism development in rural areas and villages because they represent socially, economically and demographically affected areas in Serbia where the strategy can contribute to their reanimation.

References

A National Business Events Strategy for Australia 2020 (2008), <http://www.ttf.org.au/>, accessed 24th August 2012.

- Baum Baum, T., Hagen, L. (1999) Responses to seasonality, The experiences of peripheral destinations, *International journal of tourism research*, Vol. 1, pp. 299–312.
- Backman, K. S., Backman, M., Uysal, K. M. S. (1995) Event tourism: An examination of motivations and activities, *Festival Management & Event Tourism*, No. 3 (1), pp. 15–244.
- Bjeljac, Ž. (2006) *Teorijsko metodološke osnove manifestacionog turizma*. Belgrade: Geographical Institute "Jovan Cvijić" SASA.
- Bjeljac, Ž. (2010) *Turističke manifestacije u Srbiji*. Belgrade: Geographical Institute "Jovan Cvijić" SASA.
- Bjeljac, Ž., Brankov, J. (2010) Turistička manifestacija „Ovčarski dani“, *Hotellink*, No. 13/14, pp. 654-661.
- Bjeljac, Ž., Čurčić, N. (2010) Turizmološka valorizacija etnografskih manifestacija u Srbiji, *Etnoantropološki problemi*, No. 5 (3), pp. 227-242.
- Bjeljac, Ž., Terzić, A., Brankov, J. (2013) Sabor trubača u Guči - socio demografski profil i motiv dolaska posetilaca, *Zbornik Matice Srpske za društvene nauke*, No 144. (in print).
- Bowdin, G., Allen, J., O'Toole, W., Harris, R.,

- McDonnell, I. (2006), *Events management*, Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann.
- Brankov, J., Bjeljac, Ž., Popović, B. I. (2009) Haymaking on Rajac mountain tourist event-analyses according to gender and age structure, *Journal of Geographical Institute "Jovan Cvijić" SASA*, No. 59 (1), pp.75-92.
- California cultural heritage strategic plan (2003), <http://www.industry.visitcalifornia.com/>, accessed 26th August 2012.
- Carifesssta a strategic plan (2004), <http://www.acpcultures.eu/>, accessed 28th August 2012.
- Central coast festival and events strategy (2009), <http://www.centralcoast.tas.gov.au/>, accessed 27th August 2012.
- Carlsen, J., Getz, D., Soutar, G. (2001) Event evaluation research, *Event Management*, No. 6 (4), pp. 247–257.
- Council of Europe Conference of Ministers Responsible for Spatial/Regional Planning (CEMAT) (2007) *Guiding principles for sustainable spatial development of the European continent*.
- Della Lucia, M. (2013) Economic performance measurement systems for event planning and investment decision making, *Tourism management*, No. 34, pp. 91-100.
- European Commission (CEC) (1999) *European spatial development perspective. Towards balanced and sustainable development of the territory of the European Union*.
- European Commission (CEC) (2003) *Second progress report on economic and social cohesion. Unity, solidarity, diversity for Europe, its people and its territory*.
- European Commission (CEC) (2007) *Treaty of Lisbon*.
- European Commission (CEC) (2008) *Green paper on territorial cohesion. Turning territorial diversity into strength*.
- European Union (CEC) (2007) *Territorial agenda of the European Union. Towards a more competitive and sustainable Europe of diverse regions*.
- Getz, D. (1991) *Festivals, special events, and tourism*, New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.
- Getz, D. (1997) *Event management and Event Tourism*, New York: Cognizant Communications Corporation.
- Getz, D. (2008) Event tourism: Definition, evolution, and research, *Tourism Management*, No. 29, pp. 403–428.
- Goldblatt, J. J. (2000) A future for event management: The analysis of major trends impacting the emerging profession in settings the agenda, in Allen, J., Harris, R., Jago, L. K., Veal, A. J. (eds.) *Events beyond 2000: Setting the agenda, Proceedings of conference on Event evaluation, research and education*. Sydney: University of Technology, pp. 1–8.
- Horvat Consulting - Zagreb, Faculty of Economics – Belgrade, Ministry of commerce and tourism of the Republic of Serbia (2005) *Strategija turizma Republike Srbije – prvi fazni izveštaj*, Belgrade: Faculty of Economics.
- Horvat Consulting - Zagreb, Faculty of Economics – Belgrade, Ministry of commerce and tourism of the Republic of Serbia (2006) *Strategija turizma Republike Srbije – drugi fazni izveštaj*, Belgrade: Faculty of Economics.
- Lović, S., Bjeljac, Ž., Cvetković, M. (2012) Tourist event „Days of Plum“ at Blace - Demographic and geographic analysis of visitors, *Journal of Geographical Institute „Jovan Cvijić“ SASA*, No. 62(2), pp. 81-92.
- Maksin-Mičić, M., Milijić, S., Nenković-Riznić, M. (2009) Spatial and Environmental Planning of Sustainable Regional Development in Serbia, *SPATIUM International Review*, No. 21, pp. 39-52.
- Maksin, M., Milijić, S. (2010) Strategic Planning for Sustainable Spatial, Landscape and Tourism Development in Serbia, *SPATIUM International Review*, No. 23, pp. 30-37.
- National events strategy for South Africa (2002), <http://www.environment.gov.za/> accessed 24th August 2012.
- National events strategy for New Zealand (2009) <http://www.majorevents.govt.nz/>, accessed 24th August 2012.
- National events strategy for Scotland to 2020 (2009), <http://www.eventscotland.org/>, accessed 26th August 2012.
- Ontario major festivals and events attraction research study (2009), <http://www.mtc.gov.on.ca/>, accessed 28th August 2012.
- Republic Agency for Spatial Planning of the Republic of Serbia (RASP) (2009) *Strategija prostornog razvoja Republike Srbije*, Belgrade.
- Republic Agency for Spatial Planning of the Republic of Serbia (RASP) (2010) *Prostorni plan Republike Srbije*. Belgrade: Official Gazette No. 88/10.
- Stokes, R. (2008) Tourism strategy making: Insights to the events tourism domain, *Tourism management*, No 29, pp. 252-262.
- Vodič kroz turističke manifestacije, <http://kalendar/www.manifestacije.com>, Cvetković M. (ed.), accessed 14th August 2012.
- Vujošević, M. (2010) Collapse of Strategic Thinking, Research and Governance in Serbia and Possible Role of the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia in its Renewal, *SPATIUM International Review*, No. 23, pp. 22-29.