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SAFETY AND SECURITY IN THE AGE OF GLOBAL TOURISM

(The changing role and conception of Safety and Security in Tourism)

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Abstract: Safety and security have always been indispensable condition for travel and tourism. Research and education also has to face the issues of security and safety in tourism in order to prepare future specialists of the industry by incorporating new results of research to academic curricula.

Key words: Safety tourism, Security in tourism. Research and education

Safety and security issues in focus

Safety and security have always been indispensable condition for travel and tourism. But it is an incontestable fact that safety and security issues gained a much bigger importance in the last two decades in tourism. Changes in the World during the last two decades were enormous. Due terrorist acts, local wars, natural disasters, epidemics and pandemics, that we were witnesses to, security has significantly decreased.

The travel and tourism industry could not avoid the negative impacts and consequences of these events. Moreover some of these events manifested the vulnerability of tourism both on global and regional levels. Therefore this fact necessitates the research and study of the relationship between security issues and tourism, including the creation of a new, up to date definition of the notion “security and safety in tourism”. Studying problems of safety and security became vital for the tourism industry.

Why did safety and security become so important in the Age of Global Tourism? What are the main factors influencing security issues? What are the key elements that are treated as belonging to security and safety problems and that are included nowadays in the notion “tourism safety and security”? How do safety problems influence the tourists when they are choosing their destination? What is the tasks and responsibilities of the actors in tourism – including tourists – in reducing menaces against tourists and their possessions as well as against people working in the industry and tourism infrastructure?

Answering these questions means not only satisfying the researcher’s curiosity, but has very practical objectives, that is to give a management tools and working plans to all actors and levels of the tourism to parry and/or at least to reduce the risks.

The changing role, perception and concept of safety and security in the Age of Mass Tourism

Safety and security issues have been treated as important condition of tourism. It is a well known fact that the Ancient Olympic Games were so important to the Greek Polises that all warfare was suspended for its duration. (There is still something what we could learn from Ancient Greeks.) The great extent of risks contributed to the decline of travel in the Middle Ages.

Safety and security issues in travel and tourism came to the front by the evolution of the mass tourism from the beginning of the 1950s. The main reasons determining this evolution process are enumerated hereinafter:

1. Travel and tourism is not any more an activity of a narrow social stratum or class but the whole widening middle class is getting progressively involved into it. This is direct result of the growth of personal incomes and free time in the developed countries.
2. Tourism scope covers more and more countries and regions in the world and not only highly developed countries enabled to generate out-going tourism flows are getting involved in tourism but also countries of the so called third world. For them tourism is part of their economic development strategy.
3. The rapid and scenic development of transport (aviation, automotive industry) contributed to the rise of (geographical) mobility.

Due to these reasons the safety and security issues gained a bigger and bigger importance as the tourism itself became one of the largest industries in the world economy (contribution to the GDP, number of people employed in the sector, extent of investments into the tourism industry etc). Also the saying goes tourism is the industry of peace, which is true but there is a perceptible disparity and inequality in

Table 1. Compiled by the authors
The changing concept of safety and security in the tourism (1950–2010)

<i>Period</i>	<i>Main characteristic</i>	<i>Features, attributes</i>
Mass tourism/1. 1950-1970 Mass tourism/1. 1950-1970 (cont.)	Safety and security in tourism as one of the problems in tourism Simplified approach in the perception of safety and security issues in tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Tourism security is a one or two-dimension notion – Only few elements of security issues are in focus (public safety, health safety, road safety etc) – Within the elements of safety and security only a small number of factors were given importance (e.g. health and hygiene problems: 1. drinkable water, 2. necessity of vaccination, 3. cleanness of toilets) – Security problems are localized in time and space – Security problems may effect the image of a city or country but not the image of a whole region – Travel related risks and problems are not raised on the international level of tourism industry (excluding international transport regulations) – Solving problems of security depends mainly on the regulations of the national authorities
Mass tourism/2. 1970-1990	Period of enlargement of security concept of tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Additional risk factors appear in travel and tourism (airplane hijacking, terrorist actions as a tool of social struggle) – Threats on security reach regional level in some regions of the world (Middle East, Basque country etc.) – Beginning of a wider international cooperation related to security issues – Technical improvements in safety e.g. air transport) – WTO draws attention on safety, security of tourists (Hague Declaration on Tourism, 1989) – Compact but specific (that is to say not general) solutions are created (e.g. the case of El Al Israeli airlines)
Transition to Global Tourism 1990-	Period of complex perception of security and safety in tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Numerous new elements appear within the tourism security issues due to the omnipotent factors of globalization meaning that national/regional economies, societies and cultures become integrated through a worldwide network of communication (internet!), mobility (tourism!), trade of goods and services. (personal data security, environmental security, natural disasters, pandemics etc) – Security of travel has become a global problem that we can not disregard – Number of destinations, situations and tourists affected by the lack of security is increasing – Lack of security causes regional stagnation or decrease in tourist flows and even on global level (9/11.) – Basic changes in security concept in travel and tourism, understanding the necessity of common actions

point of interactions and impacts. Despite of the facts giving evidence of the increasing importance of tourism, the impact of tourism on politics is minor than in the reverse way.

Political situation in a given destination or in the whole world always had a crucial effect on the tourism security and safety issues. The evolution of political situation in the world in the last decades of the 20th Century was determinative on the tourism including safety and security problems. In conjunction with this fundamental fact, a wide range of changes and challenges in the world influenced the content of notion “safety and security in tourism”.

Towards a new approach and definition of safety and security in the Age of Global Tourism

Security and safety issues were treated by tourism researchers (named cognition based researchers or system approach researchers, such as Lengyel, Jaafari, Kaspar, Krippendorf, Cohen, etc) treated security as an element of supply in tourism. Michalkó characterized security as a fundamental condition of hosting tourists. Page and Connell

realized the changes in global security. After the tragic terrorist actions of 9/ 11 a line of researchers not only began to study problems of safety and security but these problems become a differentiated area of research and field study in tourism. The authors of these studies are trying to not only to give theoretical insight of security problems but also managerial responses and possible marketing actions in crisis situations due to security problems in tourism destinations (Hall, Timothy, Duval, Prideaux, J. and P. Hunter-Jones etc).WTO has set up a guide of Practical measures for Destinations.

Security and safety has become a complex multidimensional notion with a wide range of components belonging to it: political security, public safety, health and sanitation, personal data safety, legal protection of tourists, consumer protection, safety in communication, disaster protection, environmental security, getting authentic information, quality assurance of services etc.

Security has undergone a significant change: from a more or less passive factor it is now an active element of tourism, an imperative to act in order to protect tourists and their belongings as well as all the achievements of the industry.

Despite the results in studying problems of security and safety in tourism, there are several challenges for tourism researchers specialized in this field:

- Consequences of indivisibility of security problems in the global world
- Security related problems created by Internet
- Security in travel and tourism versus human freedom and rights.

The tourism and hospitality research and education has to face the new issues of security and safety in tourism in order to prepare future specialists of the industry by incorporating new results of research to academic curricula. This could be done by introducing new subjects (e.g. Risk Management in tourism) or by complementing the content of already existing subjects by the new knowledge of security and safety (e.g. marketing, Consumer Relations, Tourism Destination Management).

Is it absurd that in the future “Safety sells in tourism” will be an important slogan in the travel and tourism industry?

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