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CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE FUNCTION OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT : A CASE STUDY

Culture is a common characteristic of all peoples and nations, and according to the anthropological point of view, it is the basis of the development of states in the context of civilization and progress. People are given to use culture, but at the same time, culture and its entire heritage must be continuously preserved and nurtured. Although it seems that the culture of ethnic groups is part of the dynamics of every society, in Kosovo the politics of cultural management, the long-standing gap between regulatory investments and the representation of minority heritage raise questions about credible solutions that should be implemented, so that the entire cultural wealth of Kosovo becomes a resource not only for local but also for regional and development. Peja is special not only because of its spatial characteristics but also because of its traditions and the way of life of its citizens. Urban city parks, squares, beaches, markets, waterfront, forum, organ and salutation to the sun, cultural heritage, and intangible heritage, are all part of the identity of the city of Peja, which precisely with all its natural beauty and numerous cultural and historical monuments has all the prerequisites to become a recognizable center on the territory of the Republic of Kosovo. On the other hand, this potential has not yet been used sufficiently. It was important to determine whether Peja has the predispositions for further development of the tourist offer, and how much work is being done on it. Two groups, visitors and residents, were examined, and how satisfied they were with the offer and choice of tourist services in the city of Peca. The paper evaluated the quality of tourist services, the influence of promotional activities on the arrival of tourists in the city of Peć, and the contribution of event activities and new tourist products in creating a recognizable tourist destination brand. The satisfaction of tourists in a tourist destination is an important factor for the development

of the destination itself, especially because decisions are made to improve the tourist offer of the destination itself based on the (dis)satisfaction of the guests.

Keywords: cultural heritage, tourism, recognizable destinations in the city of Peja.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism development worldwide heavily relies on cultural heritage, attracting millions of visitors annually and contributing to economic growth and cultural exchange. This paper delves into the relationship between cultural heritage and tourism, examining its impact on tourism destinations, its associated challenges and opportunities, and how policymakers and stakeholders can utilize cultural heritage to develop sustainable tourism.

Cultural heritage encompasses diverse tangible and intangible aspects that reflect a community's identity, history, and traditions. These may include historic buildings, archaeological sites, museums, crafts, folklore, and culinary traditions. Tourists are often drawn to these heritage resources due to their unique and authentic qualities. They seek to explore the destination's historical background, learn about local culture, and participate in its traditions. Therefore, cultural heritage serves as a significant driver of tourism.

Utilizing cultural heritage for tourism can provide economic opportunities for local communities. The tourism industry creates employment in various sectors such as hospitality, crafts, and guide services, and promotes investment in infrastructure, such as restoring historic buildings and developing tourist facilities. This economic boost can significantly contribute to the prosperity of communities that otherwise have limited sources of income. However, there are challenges in utilizing cultural heritage for tourism, including maintaining a balance between promoting tourism and preserving the authenticity of heritage sites. Careful planning, management, and regulation are required to address these challenges. Sustainability should also be a crucial factor in the development of cultural heritage tourism.

Policymakers and stakeholders play a significant role in encouraging a harmonious relationship between cultural heritage and tourism by setting clear guidelines for heritage conservation, promoting educational programs to increase heritage awareness, and involving local communities in managing tourism activities. Diversifying the tourist offer and attracting a broader range of visitors is also vital for the industry's growth.

Pec is a city that boasts a rich and captivating historical and cultural background. The city presents several challenges when it comes to promoting

its cultural heritage for tourism effectively. Peć is home to a wide array of attractions, including awe-inspiring religious buildings, old towns, magnificent bridges, traditional cuisine, delightful music, and exquisite handicrafts that could attract tourists who are passionate about history and culture. However, it is of utmost importance for Peć to strike a delicate balance between tourism development and the preservation of its unique identity and heritage to effectively promote these aspects to visitors. Achieving this balance may prove to be challenging, but with meticulous planning and flawless execution, Peć has the potential to become a thriving tourist destination without having to compromise its rich cultural heritage.

Our case study aims to explore the relationship between Peć's cultural heritage and its tourism industry. The primary goal is to identify sustainable approaches that can be implemented to achieve the best possible economic benefits and infrastructure while also preserving the city's unique history and traditions. To guide our research, we will thoroughly examine the impact of conserving and promoting cultural heritage on Peć's tourism development and propose effective strategies to optimize its potential as a cultural tourism destination.

1.1. Tourism in the city of Peja

Based on the terrain on which Peja is spread, it can be seen that it has great attractive and interesting tourist resources, which can satisfy fans of untouchable nature and fans of the idyllic beauty of the countryside, as well as interested researchers on the traces of the past. Being located between the Beli Drim and Bistrica rivers, Peć offers opportunities for fishing for various types of freshwater fish, and for fans of winter and summer sports adventures, it offers great opportunities for the beauty of waterfall canyons and suitable skiing terrain. It offers families with children the opportunity to enjoy a walk of natural refreshment, which they will find in the ideal place along the banks of the rivers in the hottest summer days.

The vastness of Peja as a whole is covered by forests and peaks that are rich in deciduous and coniferous green trees, which hide unprecedented wealth for hunters and collectors of herbal medicines. Peja is rich in places that enable the development of tourism and hunting. The most famous reserves of the fund of wild animals are located in the Rusolija reserve: Visoki Lov, Bear, Deer, Boar, Fox, Wild Goat, Lynx, Golden Marten, White Marten, etc.

The mountainous climate of the Rugova region, with its long, strong, and cold winter and hot summer, unreservedly favors tourists to breathe clean air with reduced ions from the forest in the early mornings until 9:00 a.m., which sets a great stimulus for human health.

The thickness of the snow provides good conditions for skiing. This thickness goes from 1-2 m at a height of 1200-2000 m with the length of the tracks from 1-5 km. The very exposure of these terrains NW, NE, and SE provides the conditions for the creation of high-quality layers of snow from the end of December to April. The swelling of the water is excellent for the development of tourism, therefore the region is considered as a reservoir of water with optimal inputs in deep rivers that give an aesthetic appearance, waterfalls, springs, and wells both in number and in expansion. The water is crystal clear, in most cases cold, but rich with delicious fish – trout.

The Rugova region remains one place with a favorable climate for vacationing, in general with a fresh summer where temperatures reach 17-20 C and sometimes 20-25 C, which favors family tourism, organized in treatment and sports-recreational stations, and creates favorable conditions for sports. and recreation, climbing and hiking, walking and visiting cultural-historical monuments, parachuting, swimming in Lake Ličenat, as well as river cruises. The cold winter is favorable for the development of winter tourism, skiing, climbing, and accommodation in stationery.

The best and most special look is the Rugov gorge as well as the field around Peć Bistrica, past which passes the 24 km asphalted road, which leads from Peja via Čakor to Montenegro. The area around the Bistrica River has a 20 km long gorge, and the most beautiful part of the Rugovo gorge is 10 km long. It is about 1000 m deep, so it ranks among the most beautiful gorges in the country and Europe.

There are numerous mountain houses on the plains and well-known places, which are open to every nature lover. Natural beauties will not leave anyone indifferent, in all seasons they are attractive and favorable for unforgettable trips near the city. For fans of skiing during the winter, there are ideal skiing grounds in the tourist center of the village of Boge.

The mountains in the north and northeast of Peć Bistrica are also attractive beauties: Žleb with Rusolija peak (2380 m), Hajla (2400 m), Štedim (2272 m), Siška Planina with Hasan's peak (1471 m), Begova planina with Veljaku peak (2015 m), Peklena (1376 m) and others, and the second group consists of mountains between Peć and Bistrica in Deč: Kopranić with Aeperle rock (2460 m), Lumbardha Mountains (2335 m) with Cerven Kamen (2522), Lečenat (2341 m), Starac (2426 m) and Malash (2530 m), which due to their beauty and invisible landscape have become destinations for mountaineers, but also for ordinary citizens who want to rest from daily activities and monotony.

The river Bistrica passes through the city, which divides the city into two parts and gives it a special beauty and their green banks are desirable for

a walk with pecans. During the warm summer days, the people of Peć go out with pleasure and refresh themselves with the water of the Bistrica river, in the following places: the source of black water next to the Demaj cave, on the third kilometer next to the Kraljica cave up to the twelfth kilometer, and in the continuity of the river five kilometers from the city there is a swimming pool with an Olympic size dimensions, which on warm days is full of visitors of all generations, especially young people who refresh themselves with fresh water or in the shade with fresh cold drinks.

This is not the only wealth of Rugova, there are also caves with natural monuments in the zone and along the canyon, such as the Karamakaz Cave, the small Carica Caves, the Radavac Cave, the caves during the town, at a height of 350 m in the form of a spring, there is an entrance to the cave called "Velka Klisura", which has been studied for a length of 10 km, and which is considered one of the longest pits in the Balkans. From its entrance above the source of the underground river, this pit begins to climb in one continuous height from difficult climbs through its narrowings, the height difference is 310 m (+ 296 m, -14 m). That is why this pit is unique, one of the highest in the Balkans.

You can find a digital map of this pit at the address: www.aragonit.speleo.org.

A special tourist motif with visible aesthetic features is represented by the pit in the village of Radavac, and the waterfall of the source Beli Drim, which are located in the village of Radavac about 11 km away from the town of Peć in the direction of Rožaje in the northeast of the Prokletije mountains. The mentioned spring is located below the peak of Rusolija at an altitude of 2381 m above sea level, below which the field next to Beli Drim spreads. This cave is characterized by underground jewels, Sale, a lake, and perhaps unique waterfalls in the world. It is without a doubt one of the largest pits in the region, and although it has not been sufficiently explored, it has been declared a natural monument together with the source of the White Dream.

In the village of Ličenat, a tourist village "Crveni kamen" was built, with tourist capacities of up to 200 people who are visited throughout the year. In Garužde (Velki Stupeć) a swimming pool with a capacity of 150 places, a motel, Gryka, and a restaurant, Bjeshka, where you can taste the traditional friendly welcome with bread, salt, and heart, later satisfy yourself with local and original dishes, refreshments of milk, cheese, yogurt, cream, honey, forest tea, greens, boiled cheese, and healthy wheat and corn bread, baked in the bakery or the oven.

The area of the future National Park has a lot of natural resources, so the content of the landscape is very rich and diverse. These are above all high

mountains, overflowing with beauty. Rocky ridges that make up the mountain peaks, green slopes with grass, many forest valleys, clear rivers, waterfalls, springs, and lakes, are the content of the landscape of the Albanian Alps. Areas with forests and grass vegetation are a particularly attractive part of the landscape. Forest zones are made up of beech, aspen, fir, juniper, and other species that alternate with green vegetation.

On the surrounding forest meadows in the spring, various types of forest flowers bloom, giving the landscape a special attractive beauty, while the rooms have a special aroma and pure natural refreshment. A special visual awakening of the natural beauty of these forests is offered in autumn, at the time of the creation of a temporary mountain landscape, when the whole nature changes in a spectrum of various colors.

The views are most enlivening in late spring, when plant vegetation emerges in low areas, covering the entire territory with green color, while the high peaks of Mount Prokletija are still under a thick snow cover.

Figure 1. Tourist map - geographical position of Peja



Source: Ministry of Trade and Industry - Division for Tourism,

Main problems identified:

- Lack of tourism development strategy;
- Tourist facilities built without respecting environmental procedures and
- Tourist infrastructure not yet fulfilled

Priorities - Strategic actions:

- Promotion of natural heritage and landscape as unique values;
- Development of a strategy for sustainable and friendly tourism, of the nature of fulfilling requirements for the preservation of biodiversity;

- Establishing standards and criteria for the development of eco-tourism in protected areas i
- When planning the construction of tourist infrastructure, the procedures of Environmental Impact Assessment and Acceptability for Nature should be applied.

1.2. Potentials for tourism development

Scientific and technical progress, the development of means of transport, the increase in the level of culture, and the level of standards caused various changes in social movements, thus affecting the development of tourism. Considering the average annual growth rates recorded in the second half of the last century, tourism represents an economic branch that achieves constant growth. The importance of tourism is reflected in its close connection with several activities, such as traffic, culture, health, politics, etc.

- **Eco-tourism.** Eco-tourism has expanded from an insignificant base of "ecologically and socially responsible travel" to "travel with a natural component". Eco-tourism in the broadest sense offers both development opportunities and opportunities to finance protected zones. It requires differentiation into small groups with special interests and a large volume of those who associate a beach vacation with a one-day visit to nature reserves as part of their vacation experiences and entertainment;
- **Cultural tourism.** Here, WTO differentiates the choice between small market niches with special interest and a large group that includes a visit to cultural monuments in its vacation program, which otherwise has a different focus;
- **Thematic tourism.** It represents tourism, which is focused on very specific interests and represents a relatively small market. Special interests have advantages, but also other aspects, such as climate or location. Focused on the three big "Es" – Entertainment, Excitement, and Education – thematic tourism can act as a catalyst for development;
- **Adventure tourism.** This form of tourism represents a small but growing market niche. Given the circumstances, that almost every corner of the earth has been explored, this segment prefers to explore the peaks of mountains, the depths of the sea, Antarctica, and space. So, for example, about two million tourists ride submarines;
- **Cruises.** The main characteristic is reflected in the fact that it is possible to see a lot in a short time ("time poor – money rich"). Namely, no other way of traveling has such a characteristic, as offered by cruises

1.3. Specificities of the Peja Region (Cultural Heritage)

The Peja region includes the municipalities of Junik, Dečani, and Istok. These municipalities are rich in monuments of archaeological and architectural heritage, which have been protected and preserved since ancient times and show peculiarities closely related to history, landforms, and local materials. Protected historical buildings are under the guardianship of the RCKB in Peja. This region has examples of movable heritage in different areas, but also spiritual heritage, which is connected with local characteristics of everyday life and bears witness to our culture, history, and traditions.

Jashar Pasa's Albanian tower - Haxhi Zeka's tower (fortified stone house) in the village of Lešane, is an architectural construction with cultural and historical values, built by Haxhi Zeka, a well-known illuminator. The construction was carried out by...

Konak Tahir Beg - Konak Tahir Beg is located in the old part of Peć and was built in 1800. Until 1960, it was in the center of the city (between the municipality building and the post office), then it was moved to Haxhi Zeka Square, where it is now...

Bajrakli Mosque – The Bajrakli Mosque was built in the core of the Old Bazaar in Peja, which was previously an open market, which is a feature of Albanian cities. The donor of this mosque is Mehmet Fatih, who also financed Veli...

Church of the Virgin – On the right side of the Pec-Dečani road, in the village of Belo Polje, there is a church dedicated to the Virgin, built in the late 19th century. This Orthodox church is a reconstruction realized on the foundations of a religious building and from...

Church grave of Saint Jeremiah - The church of Saint Jeremiah was built in the village of Goraždevac, inhabited by members of the Serbian minority in the municipality of Peć. The church is built of oak wood, relatively well-preserved. The church is from the 16th century, and it is...



Picture 2. Konak Tahir Beg and Haxhi Zekin's grave (1902)

The grave of Ali Pasha Gusinje - In the courtyard of the Bajrakli Mosque is the grave of Ali Pasha Gusinje. The monument is of sacral type. It dates from the day of his death in 1885. It has a special significance for the historical content because it is about the remains...



Picture 3. Hamam Djamia and House of Emin Muse (Ehat Muse)¹

Hamam Djamia – Hamam mosque was built in 1587. It is located in the old part of the city in the neighborhood "Hadži Zeka" near the Hadži Beg Hammam and the building of the First Albanian School in Pec. The mosque is among the oldest historical m...

Haxhi Zeka's grave (1902) - In Duga čaršija in Peja, in the courtyard of the Bajrakli Mosque, there are 52 graves, including the grave of the Peć patriot Hadži Zeka. Hadži Zeka was born in 1832 and comes from a family of immigrants from Biber (Malaysia), ...

¹ https://dtk.rks-gov.net/tkk_trashegimia_sr.aspx?qyteti=17

Table 1. SWOT analysis of resources for cultural tourism

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • even distribution of the resource base, well-equipped and organized museums • the determination of the local administration to affirm „the resources • Our Lady's Day event • various events (music, art, gastronomy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no tourism product would unite all resources • lack of a clear cultural identity • lack of intercultural cooperation to create an identity
Chances	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • objects of industrial heritage (warehouses, pumping station), which can be used for tourist purposes • five castles, as part of the cultural identity of the Municipality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • similar offer in the surrounding area • insufficient economic resources for the realization of ideas

1.4. Development

Although it is under the burden of the consequences of the war and has an image based on the war abroad, the city of Peć has great natural, historical, and cultural potential to become a promising tourist destination, especially in the regional context of the Balkans. Given that tourism implies the function of local government, the development of tourism is directly related to:

- property ownership,
- regulations on business investments,
- cooperation between the public and private sectors,
- cultural and civic tasks
- tourism based in the community/municipality
- other local and national functions in destination management and marketing.

Development requires investments. After the analysis (which can be included in the future tourism development master plan) of domestic financing, the priority should be the search for international sources of financing. Public-private partnership financing can be a way out of a potential deadlock. Fiscal, legislative, and administrative bodies should support the projects. An incentive should be given for (foreign/domestic) investments.

Success in attracting investments depends on the cooperation of the private and public sectors and their willingness to continuously exchange information. Contrary to just commercial marketing, investment marketing and tourism

promotion require the support of private and public investments, associations, and citizens. The potential of each territory is determined less by geographical location, climate, or natural resources and more by people, their dedication, abilities, energy, values, and organization.

If a place wants to become a destination for investments and travelers, it must fulfill the following tasks:

- (1) To analyze what is happening in the country and the entire region;
- (2) To understand the needs, desires, and behavior of its target groups;
- (3) To draft a realistic perspective (vision, mission, guidelines) of its territory;
- (4) To develop a strategy and action plan, which explains how to achieve this vision;
- (5) To assess the progress of each phase.

1.5. Valorization of tourist resources

After the inventory of tourist resources, the value of the elements of the tourist potential (individually and collectively) was assessed, that is, to determine their use and market value, according to the UNWTO methodology.

The World Tourism Organization classifies tourist valorization factors into two large groups, namely:

- Internal factors
- External factors of valorization

Internal factors - refer to the specifics of the quality and value of the object, phenomena, and processes that can be used in tourism, and in terms of their degree of utilization, namely:

- *Urbanization – assessment of the type, quality, and level of resource equipment*
- *Infrastructure – characteristics of urban and transport infrastructure*
- *Tourist equipment and services – accommodation facilities, tourist offers, tourist services*
- *Inherent characteristics of tourism resources – a type of natural or anthropogenic resource*

External factors - (external factors that enable the manifestation of tourist value) Tourist valorization enables those elements that are important for their use in the sense that they facilitate accessibility, enhance attendance, emphasize certain specificities, and their recognition on the tourist market:

- *Accessibility of resources – adequate transport infrastructure*
- *Proximity to emitting centers – mark concentric zones*
- *Specificity of the tourist resource - comparison with other resources of the same type*
- *Importance of resources – image on the market, volume of tourist demand*

1.6. Setting, checking, and communication standards

The process of establishing and checking standards for various tourist facilities and services in a destination is important for quality, but it can be time-consuming and needs to be well-planned.

The seven types of quality standards are:

1. Minimum acceptable standards;
2. Technical level of facilities and services;
3. Special qualities of services and experience offered;
4. Qualities of authenticity, which reflect the destination;
5. Ability to meet special needs;
6. Environmental standards;
7. Practice management standards

That's why you should:

- Choose which types of quality standards are most important for the destination and quality strategy.
- Decide what types of businesses and activities should be subject to a formal standard and set targets for the percentage of those that should be covered.
- Encourage maximum participation in any relevant national and sector-level quality standards and review procedures, including programs run by organizations and agencies specializing in rural tourism, such as agritourism organizations.
- Work with local network groups to establish any specific local standards and procedures checks that may be deemed necessary or useful, that build on but do not copy the above.
- Identify quality standards for the functioning of the destination's tourist services, such as the speed of responding to inquiries.
- Participate in studies that check and compare the overall quality of the destination, such as the use of secret shoppers and comparative benchmarking studies.

1.7. Working with people on training and quality improvement

The process of improving quality by identified standards requires close cooperation of all participants in tourism in the destination, and well-constructed training and assistance programs that meet their needs.

- Connect tourism companies in groups of local networks, where needs can be identified, to encourage each other through demonstrations and joint action plans.
- Design training programs to encourage participation, with well-targeted short courses and built-in incentives.
- Provide access to training on customer care, technical skills, local knowledge, sustainability, and overall business management, as appropriate. Where possible, use professionally established and verified training modules and materials.
- Pay special attention to helping small rural businesses determine the right price for the quality offered.
- Pay attention to the need for training and motivation of local tourism staff in the destination, such as an information center for staff and guides.
- Provide, or point to, sources of practical advice on quality improvement AND link this to financial assistance where possible.

1.8. Market opportunities

Global market trends that Pec tourism should capitalize on are:

- **Opening of new markets** - implies penetration of new geographic markets and attraction of new market segments of customers with different demographic and psychographic profiles. The growth of new significant broadcast markets, distinct market segmentation, i.e. the growth of several specific customer segments based on lifestyles, interests, and hobbies, and the development of information technologies that enable constant, global, cheap, and precisely targeted communication with potential customers, as well as the development of transport technologies they contribute to the significant possibilities of expansion of the target markets.

- **Product development** - includes improvement of existing and creation of new products. This continuous process is primarily based on the adaptation of tourist products to the needs and expectations of the 'new tourist' who is active, informed, choosy, and critical, who wants to be a participant and strives for self-improvement and who, above all, is a buyer of life experiences, experiences and stories and on adapting the offer to the needs of different

target segments of guests. Such trends ultimately result in significant opportunities to create a content-rich, qualitatively improved, and diversified product portfolio.

- **Taking an environmentally responsible position** - implies a proactive attitude toward the preservation of space, biodiversity, and natural and social resources. The implementation of 'green' concepts at all organizational and business levels opens up opportunities for true sustainable development of tourism and appropriate market positioning.

- **Development of new communication and sales skills** - use of constantly growing opportunities and increasing levels of market penetration of new information technologies is a prerequisite for increased efficiency in reaching existing as well as new target customer segments.

- **Development of new and innovative existing business and management models** - networking of development stakeholders (eg clusters) and strategic management at the destination level is a prerequisite for increasing the efficiency of the private and public sector, but also a prerequisite for increased competitiveness.

1.9. The vision for the development of tourism in Peja

The new vision for the development of Pec tourism is based on a value system that answers three important questions: (i) what tourism should be, (ii) what are the key conditions for the development of Pec tourism, and (iii) how will Pec tourism attract demand?

What should tourism be like?	What are the key conditions for the development of tourism?	How will Peja tourism attract demand?
Recognizable	Long-term protection of space	Hospitality
All year round	Competitiveness	Quality
Developed throughout the area	Activation of state property	Authenticity
Diverse	Increasing knowledge and skills	Variety of content
Innovative and adaptable	Destination management	Security

CONCLUSION

The city of Pec, a renowned tourist destination, has yet to fully realize its potential despite the abundance of natural and historical beauty it possesses. Despite the joint efforts of various economic, legal, and physical subjects of the destination, strengthened by the influence of numerous organizations, bodies, and institutions at the local, regional, and state levels, the city is still waiting for significant development. This lack of progress highlights the need for a more comprehensive and effective strategy to harness the city's tourism potential. With appropriate interventions, the city of Peć can become an eminent destination for tourists seeking exceptional natural and historical experiences.

The first challenge for the development of the tourism industry is the lack of reliable official data and statistics. Data must be extracted from various sources to create a complete picture of the industry. This situation is partly because government agencies cannot agree on what constitutes tourism. The Ministry of Trade and Industry provides a list of companies that are considered tourism operators but taking into account the economic effects of cultural activities (festivals and the like), a redefinition and expansion of the list of entities related to the tourism sector has been necessary. Therefore, a cultural strategy must be drawn up for the city of Peć and a body should be established that will cooperate with all cultural institutions and legal entities to strengthen the city's cultural identity.

Furthermore, industry experts and politicians agree that until tourism is considered a priority policy area, the sector's development and its impact on Kosovo's economic growth will continue to be limited. Currently, tourism is regulated by central laws but there is no development strategy. At the same time, the responsibilities of the department are under the Ministry of Trade and Industry and are managed by four officials who make up the Ministry of Tourism. Also, state funding for tourism is limited as tourism is not a public policy priority. Due to limited financial resources, the government cannot even conduct a proper assessment of tourism potential, let alone implement feasibility studies and strategic plans. However, this shortcoming is compensated by international funds from various donor agencies, which support a large number of tourism development projects.

Kosovo also has a shortage of tourism managers and mid-level hotel and restaurant staff. Managers of tourism enterprises do not receive sufficient formal education, and middle-level employees are usually unqualified young people with no opportunities for training. Considering that the current representation of women in the tourism industry (9.1%) is largely disproportionate

to the female population in Kosovo, the problem of educated managers remains and the number of women involved in company ownership is low. Some secondary schools in Kosovo offer courses in the field of tourism and hotel management, and three higher education institutions in Kosovo (two private colleges and one state university) offer courses in tourism studies. From the above, it can be concluded that the curriculum of the faculties must be further improved to create and modernize competitiveness by international trends in the field.

Finally, Kosovo's tourism sector faces significant challenges due to the lack of stable material for its promotion. The lack of a clear strategy for tourism development resulted in weak institutional coordination and insufficient promotion of tourism initiatives. Moreover, many cities in Kosovo do not even have marked tourist information points, which worsens the situation. To meet these challenges, the Government of Kosovo must prioritize tourism as a potential driver of economic development. This requires a comprehensive and inclusive policy approach involving all relevant stakeholders, such as local governments, businesses, civil society, and tourism operators. In this context, the newly established Kosovo Tourism Council will play a key role in coordinating this dialogue process and facilitating the development of a strategic approach to tourism development.

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