

Opportunities For Tourism

Budva has a long memory. Archaeological finds indicate that an Illyrian settlement existed here two and a half millennia ago. Later a succession of rulers, leaving a rich cultural and historical heritage, testifies to their fascination with the natural conditions and geographic position of the region. During its turbulent past Budva was a Roman and Byzantine city, later a town in the medieval Serbian state, then a possession of the Venetian Republic. For a fairly lengthy period it was dominated by Austria... In 1918 the Montenegrins liberated it from Austrian rule. During the Second World War the region was briefly occupied by the Italians, then the Germans. Indeed, the people of this region won the right to rule themselves long ago.

Always a naturally endowed region, it did not manage, however, owing to the course of civilization in this part of the world, to initiate much economic activity until the middle of this century. For centuries its few inhabitants were engaged in extensive farming and fishing. Fishing, raising olives and citrus fruit, truck farming were the chief sources of income along the coast, while in the mountain districts livestock were raised. Because of frontier barriers cutting off the hinterland, trade and maritime activities were poorly developed, and at a time when these activities were successful in neighbouring regions. Under these conditions, of course, the public sector (schools, culture, etc.) advanced little. There were only the monasteries and churches, and in the late 18th century the first public schools were opened.

This long period of adverse conditions set off economic migrations -emigration to various parts of the globe, so that demographic growth was nonexistent. Only with economic development after the Second World War, especially the dynamic growth of the tourist trade, was the socio-economic transformation of the region ensured. Emigration was replaced by immigration, as conditions for working and living improved. The population has increased several times: from 3,822 in 1948 to 11,717 in 1991- Furthermore, the number of seasonal residents also multiplied, the number of tourists being four times greater than the number of domicile inhabitants.

The municipality of Budva occupies the central part of the Montenegrin coast. It has an area of 122 square kilometres (less than 1% of the area of Montenegro) with a coastline extending 38.1 km (13.6% of the coast of Montenegro, i.e. Yugoslavia) and an immediate mountain hinterland consisting of the ridges of Mt. Lovcen facing the sea. This has resulted in a close encounter of an azure-blue sea and rising directly from it, a green mountainous mainland. The dramatic relief, i.e. the harmonious diversity of natural elements concentrated in a small space, has produced an unusually picturesque landscape. Simply, "here nature was playing a game when it created its works" (S.M. Ljubisa). Nature's generosity has become well-known to tourists headed for the Budva Riviera, now recognized as an exemplary tourist destination.

Speaking eloquently of the advantages of a holiday in this region are its natural conditions, anthropogenic factors, its geographic and communications position and the mostly receptive basis of the tourist trade with, of course, its hospitable hosts. Further advantages are a mean annual air temperature of 17°C, 270 sunny days, only a few days of frost, even fewer with snow; then the calm sea (with a refreshing maestral in the summer and strong north and south winds in the winter), an average annual temperature of the water at 18.5°C (with a summer maximum of 27°C), its limpid, azure-blue sea. Therefore the bathing season lasts six or seven months.

The varied relief is a real treasure. The many coves, cliffs, islands and reefs (the largest island is Sveti Nikola, two kilometres long), and particularly the existence of 17 lovely beaches are of great importance for developing holiday centres. That it is a distinctive tourist area is seen in the fact that Becici (1,800 m, different colours and granulation) was proclaimed by international experts (Paris, 1935) the most beautiful beach in the Mediterranean. Since it represents a natural heritage, the beaches of the Budva Riviera are under special protection.

The sudden rise of the terrain from the sea to the heights of celebrated Mt. Lovcen, accessible by modern roads, affords panoramic views of the coastline, a string of beaches and modern tourist centres. Naturally, this mountainous district, especially because of the existence of attractive villages and conditions for the development of winter sports (skiing on the slopes of Mt. Lovcen) can also be visited by holiday-makers.

The splendours of the holiday package are enhanced by an interesting cultural and historical heritage, especially the Old Town of Budva, the former fishing village of Sveti Stefan (now converted into a hotel), Petrovac and numerous other settlements with a distinctive architecture; then the monasteries of Rezevici, Praskvica, Podostrog, etc.; some forty medieval churches and other treasures. Traditional events in the fields of culture, entertainment, science, business such as the multi-medial festival known as Theatre City, an international music festival Song of the Mediterranean, a Mediterranean tourist exchange and fair (METU-BES), the YUMEN conference, the business fairs and shows attached to the Adriatic Fair, etc. further enhance the tourist package.

Although the region has long been appreciated as a pleasant place to rest, organized tourism is connected with the period between the two world wars, i.e. the building of better hotels (the Hotel Milocer was built in 1934 and Avalain 1938).

During this period the first tourist societies, Mogren in Budva and Primorje in Petrovac, were founded. Only by securing good communications with domestic and foreign markets was large-scale tourism made possible, especially with the construction of the Adriatic Highway in the mid-60s, then the completion of the railway line from Belgrade to Bar, the airport in Tivat, and later improvement of other communications infrastructure (the marina in Budva, etc.) was the flow towards this region encouraged.

At the same time the tourism infrastructure and other public amenities were developed; promenades, new shopping centres, sports and entertainment facilities. Special attention was assigned to the building of hotels and other elements of the material basis of tourism. During the 60s Budva, Becici, Milocer-Przno, Sveti Stefan, Petrovac became leading holiday centres. The dynamic growth of tourism, that is, development in general, was suddenly interrupted by the disastrous aftermath of elemental forces of nature - the earthquake of April 1979. Great efforts were made during the 80s to repair the damage wrought. And the whole tourist package was promoted with hotels Avala, Mogren, the modern holiday village of Slovenska plaza, hotels Villa Milocer, As, Palas; rebuilt were the Old Town of Budva, Petrovac, many buildings of cultural and historical interest; the beaches were cleared, new facilities for public amenities were provided. Confidence in the tourist trade was sufficient to overcome the misfortunes that had beset the Budva Riviera at a moment when nature lashed out destructively.

Available accommodations include about 42,000 beds, which amounts to 27% of the total in Montenegro. The problem, however, lies in the fact that the share of quality accommodations (hotels and holiday villages) are an insufficient 25%, while on the contrary lower-class accommodations (camping sites, guest homes, rest homes) are too numerous when one considers the amount of quality space available. But since these are temporarily occupied sites, generally camping sites (tent villages) they will be redesigned as modern, even mondaine tourist centres (Jaz, Lucice, Buljarica, etc.).

One should point out that the structure of capacities includes a whole range of accommodations from five to four stars. Especially attractive is the world-famous Hotel City of Sveti Stefan, a unique holiday establishment that received the international "Pomme d'or" award (FIJET award, 1972).

The Budva Riviera in better years recorded over 360,000 visits (approximately 50% foreign tourists) that is, more than 3,200,000 overnight stays (53% foreign guests). Demand varies, and activity as in the rest of the Mediterranean, is seasonal. The fact is that in some years hotel capacities were used six months of the year.

Bearing in mind the developed basis of tourism and accessory activities, the existence of reputable tourist and catering services and travel organizers (the Budvanska Rivijera Hotels with 9,000 beds are the most powerful tourist and catering enterprise in the country; Montenegroexpress is a well-known tourist agency, etc.), also better personnel resources, one can say that tourism has reached maturity. Namely, although there exist certain defects in the structure of the package, which make it difficult to design a high-class, integrated tourist product, tourism can no longer be qualified as overnight stays ("horizontal"). Naturally, here, too, efforts are being made to improve all-round facilities and quality with examples of high-class accommodations. Without a doubt, the current, transformation of socially-owned enterprises and the resulting entrepreneur mentality (privatization of firms, introduction of modern market management, more efficient organization models, etc.) will have a stimulative effect on the market ambience, on improving the package, introducing quality systems, etc., while ensuring the desired positive image, and in the final analysis, greater tourist consumption (profitable operations) as the ultimate goal. Finally, it is already easier to claim that the development of an open market economy in the last few years has sparked private initiative and hence, a more successful fulfillment of increasingly complex tourist needs.

Owing primarily to the dynamic development of tourism in the municipality of Budva, a high level of all-round social and economic growth has been achieved. This, among other things, means a high level of activity among the population (40-45%), a per capita social product which exceeds the republican level by 2,5 times, the creation of quality conditions for the development of public amenities (kindergartens, schools in Budva and Petrovac, the secondary school centres in Budva, health facilities; in the domain of culture and communications there is the Cultural and Information Centre, Radio Budva, a newspaper - Primor-ske novine; sports activities are especially lively considering the existence of 20 sports clubs, particularly waterpolo successful on a federal level).

Contributing to the socio-economic development of the region is, of course, the Adriatic Fair, the Zeta film distributor and producer, Building Institute, production plants for liquid gas, ceramics (both in Buljarica), also several small businesses. Still, in view of the fact that most of the social product is created in the tourist trade, and also that almost all other economic factors are derived from tourist growth, one can say that Budva has all the features of monoculture tourism development.

Tourism is the present but also the future of the municipality. Future development will include modern centres at Jaz, Becici, Kamenovo, Milocer, Lucice, Buljarica, expansion of existing centres, revitalization of the picturesque villages of the Pastrovici district and elsewhere. Planned are the removal of present defects in the infrastructure, a better entertainment and sports programme (a large sports hall and multi-purpose pool will soon be completed), modern commerce, etc. This will improve the performance of the tourist trade on the Budva Riviera when it will be possible to organize quality aspects of tourism (besides the present dominant seaside holiday, also congress, health, sports,

nautical, countryside and other kinds of holidays which will completely satisfy the needs of specific tourist market segments).

A guarantee for the further successful growth of tourism, as well as other economic and non-economic activities, should be seen in the fact that the available space, especially the narrow strip of coastland, is covered by corresponding spatial plans, i.e. concern for the optimal use of spatial potential. It is important to point out that Budva is headquarters for the Public Enterprise for Montenegro's Maritime Resource, which has set up a corresponding centre for the promotion of investment programmes on the Montenegrin coast. In early 1995 scientific and other organizations coordinated on a programme of development and protection of Montenegro's maritime resource whereby, besides other parts of the Montenegrin coast, the conditions and opportunities for development along the Budva Riviera were thoroughly examined.

As evidence that the prospects for what is essentially the development of tourism in the municipality are favourable, one should mention the high degree of tourist loyalty. About Budva songs are sung, people pine for it, and the number of those who want to return is growing. By constantly improving individual elements of its receptive facilities, Budva hopes to preserve its distinction as a high-class tourist destination.

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