

THE IMPORTANCE, CONTEXT AND FRAMEWORK OF CULTURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AT EUROPEAN LEVEL

*Marian Florin Busuioc,
Alina Niculescu,
Andreea Elisabeta Budacia**

Abstract

Today, cultural tourism is one of the fastest growing segments of tourism worldwide, not just in Europe. At the same time, in today's Europe, cultural heritage is a strategic resource for the development of sustainable tourism. In fact, heritage resources are long-term goods that generate values, thus contributing to the development of competences, skills and economic growth, all by promoting tourism. Culture is also a tool for generating important social (through the active participation of people) and economic benefits (through tourism revenues), both inside and outside the European Union. At the same time, cultural heritage projects have often turned into examples and good practices of tourism activities, with an innovative social and economic impact in Europe.

Keywords: *tourism, culture, heritage, Europe*

Acknowledgments: Completing this paper was made possible thanks to the Nucleus program, conducted with the support of the Ministry of Research and Innovation, Project no. 15N/2019.

Europe's cultural diversity is one of its most important features. A 2016 overview of the European Economic and Social Committee demonstrated that cultural diversity is unequally distributed in European cities, being more concentrated in large urban areas, in Western Europe and in Central Europe. Culture (defined as, or in terms of art, literature, traditions, languages, values and beliefs) is almost universally considered an important factor for encouraging tolerance and integration, and activities discharging an expressive function in this field seem to be important for at least three quarters of Europe's population (a higher percentage being evinced among people with a higher level of education).

In the current century, however, culture has also been used by smaller cities or towns to draw attention to themselves the kind of national and regional capitals, allowing them to promote their own personality. Taking part in cultural events is relatively constant for all age groups, with a plus for seniors and an increase in the young population, which has

* Marian Florin Busuioc is Associate Professor, Romanian – American University. E-mail: busuioc.marian.florin@profesor.rau.ro

Alina Niculescu is third-degree scientific researcher, National Institute for Research and Development in Tourism. E-mail: niculescu@incdt.ro

Andreea Elisabeta Budacia is Associate Professor at the Romanian – American University. E-mail: budacia.andreea.elisabeta@profesor.rau.ro

begun to give more importance to collective and social activities (even if this is not true for all art forms).

Over time, studies conducted by international bodies (UN, UNWTO, WTTC) have shown that technical, social and economic changes have had a direct impact on the tourism phenomenon. Moreover, studies have identified a tendency to improve the horizon of knowledge, the level of culture of many populations from which important segments of tourists have formed. In addition, contemporary tourism now means not only mere rest and entertainment, but also multiple opportunities for cultural knowledge. Cultural tourism has thus become a factor in supporting travel, especially in the conditions in which the phenomenon of fragmentation of holidays is becoming more and more obvious.

At the level of the European Union, the phrase “**cultural and creative sectors**” appeared¹ and began to be used due to the need to harmonize two different approaches: the one that supports the centrality of the notion of **creativity** in defining the sector, and the one that supports the centrality of the notion of **culture**, in the same context. One can say that the definition adopted for the cultural and creative sectors, at European Union level, is one of the most comprehensive as it considers the economic and social impact of culture and creativity, namely: the name cultural and creative sectors encompasses visual arts, performing arts, heritage, film and video, television and radio, software (including video games), music, books and media, design, architecture, advertising, and support industries (a very broad category, which includes those activities that depend on the cultural and creative industries to exist).

Over the years, the cultural and creative sectors have demonstrated their social and economic importance on the European continent. To this end, we will present, in chronological order, the studies that have proven this. Thus, the study “*Creating growth*”, published by Ernst and Young in 2014, estimated that the cultural and creative industries in 2012 had revenues of 536 billion euros and contributed to the Gross Domestic Product in a proportion of 4.2%, employing 7 million people (representing 3.3% of the active population).

According to the European Commission², Europe’s culture and creative sector has contributed to growth, employment, innovation and social cohesion. In 2014, it accounted for approximately 4.5% of European GDP and 3.8% of the available labour force in the European Union (8.5 million people). Moreover, the European creative and cultural sector has proven to be more resilient than other sectors during the economic crisis. It has made a decisive contribution to stimulating innovation, competences and skills development and urban regeneration, while having a positive impact on other areas, such as tourism or information and communication technologies.

¹ The term “cultural and creative sectors” is used mainly at European Union level (Commission Communication COM (2012) 537 – *Promoting cultural and creative sectors for growth and jobs in the EU*).

² European Commission – *Cultură și audiovizual: să înțelegem politicile Uniunii Europene / Culture and audiovisual: understanding the policies of the European Union*, available at https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=6&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjv3P3zgKfhAhUN_SoKHdeaApMQFjAFegQIBBAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Feuropa.eu%2Fen%2Ffile%2F863%2Fdownload_ro%3Ftoken%3DBnQ_usp6&usg=AOvVaw0-hOG1m3DyzMLHso8NwoSM

The European Commission's report to the European Parliament and the European Council (Mid-term evaluation of the "Creative Europe" program – 2014-2020) specified that, from an economic point of view, the cultural and creative sectors generate around €509 billion as value added to the Gross Domestic Product, which represents 5.3% of the total value in the European Union, and employs more than 12 million people (equivalent to 7.5% of Europe's workforce)³.

Culture, the arts, creativity and the creative industries are interdependent. Combining knowledge and skills specific to the cultural and creative sectors with those specific to other sectors contributes to generating innovative solutions, also in the field of information and communication technology, tourism, manufacturing, services and the public sector. Culture and tourism represent a strong driving force of economic activity. European cities that invested in culture received substantial rewards, attracting more jobs and more human capital than other cities, as mentioned in the "Monitor of Cultural and Creative Cities" drawn and published by the European Commission's Joint Research Center in 2017.

In the European Union, the positive economic and social impact of cultural heritage, as well as its potential to generate sustainable development, was also stated in the "*Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth*" (as early as 2010). Four years later, the Council of Europe conclusions of 21 May 2014 on cultural heritage as a strategic resource for a sustainable Europe, emphasized its role as "a strong factor in inclusive local and regional development and [...] created by significant externalities, especially through the development of sustainable cultural tourism", as well as in support of sustainable rural and urban development and regeneration. In 2018, European cultural tourism was already considered⁴ an extremely profitable market segment, attracting many target groups from a more highly educated environment and enjoying greater financial possibilities.

Ever since 1972, UNESCO established the "List of World Cultural and Natural Heritage" through an international convention, and 193 states have acceded to it: it still administers the list. The working out of that convention was done in order to know the most important elements/assets of the world heritage and to determine each state to protect and enhance its own heritage. Until 2018, as many as 1,092 natural and cultural assets have been included in the "List of World Cultural and Natural Heritage".

Nițulescu⁵ recently mentioned (2019) that, while the natural and intangible heritage is better represented in Africa, Asia, Australia and America, Europe is extremely rich in terms of built cultural heritage (historical sites and monuments). Thus, Greece has inscribed in the List of World Natural and Cultural Heritage 18 objectives, while Burkina Faso,

³ From the study "*Boosting the competitiveness of cultural and creative industries for growth and jobs*", published by the European Commission in 2016 and conducted by the Institute for SMCs in Austria/VVA Europe, based on the data available up to 2013.

⁴ See the project *EuropeTour – Ghid de utilizare social media pentru turismul cultural din zonele rurale* / "*EuropeTour - Guide to social media use for cultural tourism in rural areas* (last update – 2018). Available at https://www.europetour.tips/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Ghid_de_utilizare_Social_Media_RO_compressed.pdf

⁵ Virgil Nițulescu, *ABC-ul patrimoniului. Capitolul 9 – Patrimoniu, dezvoltare locală și turism* (*The ABC of heritage. Chapter 9 – Heritage, local development and tourism*). Available at <http://patrimoniu100.ro/abc-ul-patrimoniului>

a country with a territory three times larger and with a population 50% larger than Greece, only managed to include 2 objectives in the List.

The countries having the richest heritage are those that have also invested in promoting and capitalizing on it, especially in terms of tourism. Thus, the countries that have attracted the largest number of foreign tourists in the world, regardless of their size in terms of territory or population, are France (44 natural and cultural assets recorded in the afore-mentioned list) and Spain (47 sites). The experience of these two countries has shown that an important role in attracting tourists has also been played by mobile cultural heritage, concentrated in museums and historical monuments that are visited. For example, in the top 20 most visited museums in the world are three Parisian institutions: the Louvre Museum (10 million visitors in 2018), the Museum of Modern Art (4 million visitors in 2018) and the Musée d'Orsay (3.5 million visitors in 2018). In this way, around the natural and cultural assets and the areas where the intangible cultural heritage was registered, an important tourist network developed, which has produced significant revenues.

The market study conducted by CBI (Center for the Promotion of Imports from Developing Countries) mentions that in 2018 most European cultural tourists initially focused on Europe's famous cultural attractions. This study also reiterated the statement made by the World Tourism Organization in 2017, according to which cultural tourism represents approximately 40% of global tourism.

According to Zbucnea (2008, p. 9), there is a close link between cultural heritage and the economy, a correlation also highlighted by the fact that in highly economically developed countries (such as the United Kingdom, Germany, France and more recently Sweden) cultural heritage management is a model of efficiency, both in terms of economic indicators and the role it plays in educating the population and developing society – namely, increasing cohesion and developing stronger communities. In the states mentioned above, the management of organizations that manage cultural heritage is mainly made up of people with managerial skills, and the strategies they adopt are carried out on pragmatic, economic bases, and the marketing activity is highly developed and diversified (in terms of objectives, approach, strategies, means and target audience). An example of the success of these nations is provided by the very special attraction represented by the museums in the respective countries, as well as the special way of capitalizing on the immovable components of the cultural heritage (historical and architectural monuments). Thus, these successes were not based on the intrinsic value of the heritage they have, but rather on how to capitalize on it, how to promote it, on the role given to it within a community (in other words, the success was due to a realistic marketing vision, appropriate to the given conditions). In this way, special performances were achieved, both from an economic point of view and in terms of educational and cultural efficiency, through the accumulation of practical experience.

From Jora's perspective (2015, p. 6), expressed in the *"Guide for the capitalization of the heritage on the European Union labour market"*, cultural investments (including those made in the capitalization of historical heritage) bring about prestige and improve the general business climate and investment flow, being the current method applied in cities such as Paris, Barcelona, Frankfurt, Bilbao. All successful examples in this field involved active communication and mutual openness between practitioners in the field (civil servants, businessmen, etc.) and academia. According to the above-mentioned expert, the

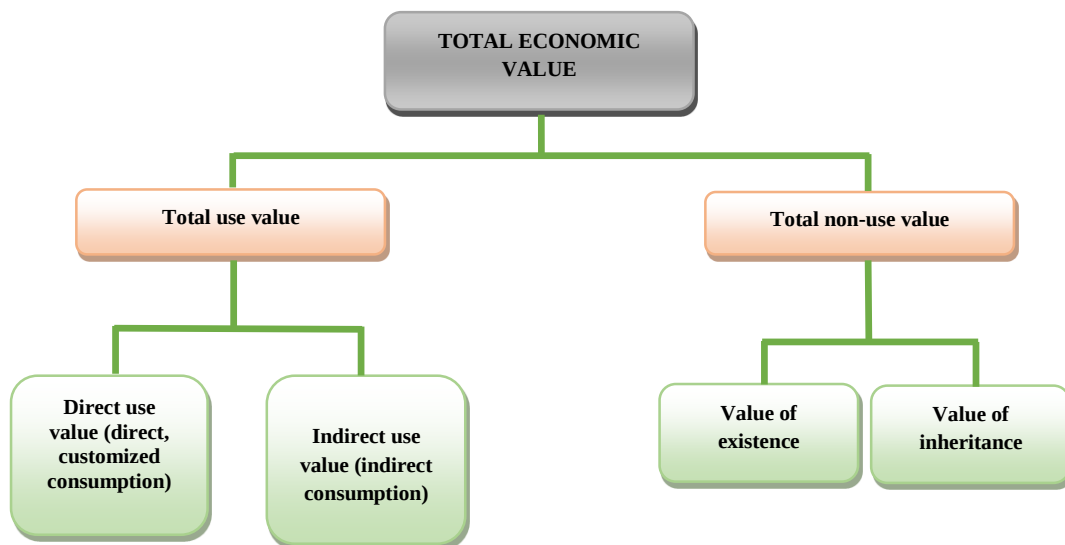
latest European policies in the field of culture, innovation and cohesion indicate how the interconnections between the different dimensions of culture can contribute to various aspects of economic and social life, namely:

- culture is a tool likely to support intercultural dialogue, creativity and international relations;
- investing in design and creative industries;
- culture is defined as a factor of attractiveness in cities, towns and regions, as the creative industries are considered as the most suitable to ensure the link between creativity and innovation;
- the regions and cities or towns with cultural competences have already assumed this change in the political paradigm of the European Union.

As far as the social impact of cultural tourism is concerned, Busuioc (2002, p. 21) considered that it enhances the need for communication, sharing feelings, thus contributing to the destruction of barriers given by social origin, race or geographical area. Assessing itself as a reaction against wars, political conflicts, discrimination of any kind, cultural tourism determines the development of a spirit of appreciation, of defending the idea of solidarity against the attempts to destroy the universal values created over the centuries. Bringing about new models and social forms, cultural tourism is a way to increase the degree of civilization and the level of culture. The close relationship it develops with education ensures and develops social programs in tourist places and regions. This way, cultural tourism has contributed to increasing the quality of life of the local population/communities, and also of the tourists themselves.

According to the group of authors of the “*Sectoral Strategy in the field of culture and national heritage for the period 2014-2020*”, cultural assets have (like other assets) multiple values, namely *economic, social and cultural values*. Cultural goods and services also have a special dimension, which makes them be quite *unlike “other types of goods”*. These goods (whether or not they are public or quasi-public goods) can be defined as *social goods*, as they have a special feature – namely that their value increases, the greater the number of people who consume them.

The same strategy specified that, in general, any question about value receives an almost standard answer from the culture sector: “culture has an inestimable value” (in other words, it cannot be measured, as there are no adapted tools or units of measurement). Another generalized answer is that “culture is non-estimable/non-assessable” (it is so high that it exceeds any scale of measurement). Either of these two approaches claims that cultural goods must be completely excluded from the evaluation, or the measurement of their value. Below is a chart illustrating these approaches from their economic perspective.

Economic values of cultural goods

Source: Center for Research and Consultancy in the Field of Culture – Sectoral strategy in the field of culture and national heritage for the period 2014-2020

Zadel and Bogdan (2013, p. 358) considered that **the economic impact** of cultural tourism can also be analyzed from two main points of view, namely those that include the macroeconomic and microeconomic levels. Thus, at the microeconomic level, the economic value of cultural tourism can be defined as a “group of benefits for a particular society”. At the same time, the economic value of cultural tourism at the macroeconomic level is reflected in its stimulating other economic branches, through direct, indirect and induced effects. Therefore, these authors argue that cultural tourism brings about benefits, because its development stimulates the development of individual economic branches, which contributes to the full development of a particular destination or venue.

The above-mentioned authors also analyzed the economic impact in terms of consumption by tourists in the cultural destinations, which, in their opinion, depends on four basic variables, namely average consumption, length of stay, attractions and cultural activities in a destination. Research on the economic impact of individual cultural tourism products depends on the specific characteristics of the cultural product itself. For example, the impact of a museum as a cultural tourism product is relatively easy to estimate by quantifying the number of visitors and the price of tickets. Unlike museums, the impact of festivals or cultural events is more difficult to quantify, because the presence of tourists at festivals or events is not always imposed a fee, and when such activities take place the economic benefit is realized by other tour operators (hotels, restaurants, various shops and stores).

In addition, Zadel and Bogdan (2013, p. 358) listed and described the **types of economic impact of cultural tourism**, which, according to them, are *direct, indirect and induced*. Thus:

- ✓ when tourists spend their money in hotels, restaurants, transport, communication services and outlets, **direct revenues**, government revenues, employment effects,

some direct imports of goods and services are created. The direct effects are reflected in the economic benefits of the holders of individual tourist offers, who realize benefits by selling cultural tourism products;

- ✓ the **indirect effects** are the benefits achieved by other tour operators, through whom tourists achieve cultural consumption;
- ✓ the **induced effects** occur as a result of the direct and indirect effects, and are reflected in the increase of the tour operators' consumption, due to the economic profit that they obtained by selling their own products. The total economic effect represents the sum of the three types of effects.

Indirect effects can sometimes be much more significant than direct effects for certain tourism products, such as cultural events. Unlike indirect effects, direct effects are easier to measure and monitor.

Considering all the above arguments, it is not surprising that UNESCO stated, as early as 2003, that “the cultural field is considered to be the saviour of tourism”, cultural tourism being one of the most popular (and also revenue-generating) forms of tourism since the beginning of the 21st century.

At European level, the economic impact of cultural tourism lies in the revenues generated by cultural tourism activities, as UNESCO experts found (2003, p. 9). Thus, there was an increase in local production, given that cultural tourism activities are closely linked to other branches of the economy. Given that the development of cultural tourism activities also requires employment, there have been increases in this regard, which has helped to prevent labour migration phenomena (which in the end proved a positive catalyst for regional development). At the same time, the demographic situation in the respective areas has improved, by offering new perspectives to the younger populations.

UNESCO also specified that cultural tourism has been, and continues to be a key instrument in regional development strategies in European Union countries. Its development has led to improved general infrastructure and living environment – not only for tourists, but also for local communities. It is through cultural tourism that identities were offered to lesser-known destinations, which thus became more “visible”. A positive aspect for the economic and social development of communities lies in the fact that cultural tourism generates new cultural tourism products, new development ideas, as well as cooperation between the inhabitants of a host community.

In support of the above statements, we should also mention the European Commission's communication to the European Parliament in 2018 entitled “*A new European agenda for culture*”, in which the following data were presented: “In the European Union, employment in the cultural field has constantly increased to €8.4 million between 2011 and 2016. There is a trade surplus of cultural goods worth €8.7 billion, and the cultural and creative sectors are estimated to contribute 4.2% to the Union's gross domestic product. Innovative economic sectors also need creativity to maintain their competitive advantage. Culture and creativity are important assets for the economy. Culture directly contributes to job creation, growth and foreign trade. Urban and rural areas are increasingly relying on culture to attract employers, students and tourists.”

At the same time, however, the impact of tourism on culture is not always beneficial. Thus, the **negative effects** of cultural tourism are associated with the loss of cultural

identity, deterioration of lifestyles and values of local populations. In the socio-economic and cultural dimension of tourism development, the negative impact on different segments of the population may include social degradation of local communities, undesirable effects on customs and habits, traditions and lifestyles, the negative effect on employment structure, income level and distribution.

Richards (2013, p. 3) also identified a further danger that cultural tourism may face, referring to the issue of “mass replication, or serial reproduction”, mentioning the examples of destinations that have implemented strategies based on identical and extremely well-known events in cities around the world (tourist buses, guided tours, tourist cards). In the author’s opinion, the identified risk refers to the fact that these types of products are becoming more and more familiar to tourists, who are more and more experienced, more sophisticated and more able to organize and structure their own tourist experience. In this way, the cultural tourism product provided becomes more and more standardized and rigid.

References

1. Busuioc M., (2002), *Turismul cultural – evoluție și perspective* (Cultural tourism – evolution and perspectives), Bucharest.
2. CBI (Centre for the Promotion of Imports from developing countries), (2018), *What are the opportunities for cultural tourism from Europe*. Available at <https://www.cbi.eu/node/2547/pdf/>
3. Centrul de Cercetare și Consultanță în Domeniul Culturii, *Strategia sectorială în domeniul culturii și patrimoniului național pentru perioada 2014-2020*. (Culture Research and Consulting Center - Sectoral strategy in the field of culture and national heritage for the period 2014-2020) Available at http://turism.gov.ro/web/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/STRATEGIA_SECTORIALA.pdf
4. Comisia Europeană, (2018), *Comunicarea Comisiei către Parlamentul European, Consiliu, Comitetul Economic și Social European și Comitetul Regiunilor. O nouă agendă europeană pentru cultură*. (European Commission - Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. A new European agenda for culture) Available at <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/1/2018/RO/COM-2018-267-F1-RO-MAIN-PART-1.PDF>
5. Comisia Europeană, (2018), *Comunicarea Comisiei către Parlamentul European, Consiliu, Comitetul Economic și Social European și Comitetul Regiunilor. O nouă agendă europeană pentru cultură* (2018). (European Commission - Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. A new European agenda for culture) Available at <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/1/2018/RO/COM-2018-267-F1-RO-MAIN-PART-1.PDF>
6. Comisia Europeană – *Cultură și audiovizual: să înțelegem politicile Uniunii Europene*. (European Commission – Culture and Audiovisual: understanding the policies of the European Union) Available at <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=6&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjv3P3>

- zgKfAhUN_SoKHdeaApMQFjAFegQIBBAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Feur
opa.eu%2F%2Ffile%2F863%2Fdownload_ro%3Ftoken%
3DBnQ_usp6&usg=AOvVaw0-hOG1m3DyzMLHso8NwoSM
7. Comitetul Economic și Social European, (2016), *Cultură, orașe și identitate în Europa – sinteză*. (European Economic and Social Committee – Culture, cities and identity in Europe – an overview) Available at <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/resources/docs/qe-04-16-540-ro-n.pdf>
8. Jora B.L., (2015), *Ghid - valorizarea patrimoniului pe piața muncii din Uniunea Europeană* (Guide for the capitalization of the heritage on the European Union labour market) Available at <http://clio.spiruharet.ro/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Ghid-Valorizarea-patrimoniului-pe-piata-munci-din-UE.pdf>
9. Nițulescu V., *ABC-ul patrimoniului. Capitolul 9 – Patrimoniu, dezvoltare locală și turism* (The ABC of heritage. Chapter 9 – Heritage, local development and tourism), Available at <http://patrimoniu100.ro/abc-ul-patrimoniului>
10. Richards G., (2013), *Tourism development trajectories – from culture to creativity*. Available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237139724_Tourism_development_trajectories_From_culture_to_creativity
11. UNESCO, *Baltic cultural tourism policy paper* (2001–2003). Available at <https://docplayer.net/29505313-Baltic-cultural-tourism-policy-paper-short-version.html>
12. Zbucnea A., (2008), *Marketingul în slujba patrimoniului cultural* (Marketing in the service of cultural heritage), University Publishing House, Bucharest.
13. Zrinka Zadel, Sinisa Bogdan, (2013), *Economic impact of cultural tourism*. Available at http://www.utmsjoe.mk/files/Vol.%204%20No.%203/1-9B-Zadel_-_Bogdan_Croatia.pdf
14. <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/publication/eur-scientific-and-technical-research-reports/cultural-and-creative-cities-monitor-2017-edition>
15. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/TEXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52018DC0248>
16. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/TEXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0248&from=EN>