

## INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN THE FIELD OF SUPPORTING THE WINE TOURISM

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### Abstract

*Tourism is a very important sector in the world economy. The growth of wine tourism has become an essential preoccupation for both those involved in tourism and those in the wine industry. The growth of tourist activity determines the development of some branches of the national economy, such as: industry, agriculture, construction, transport and trade. The paper presents the mechanisms for supporting wine tourism in different countries of the world. The paper also analyzes government programs and specific mechanisms for supporting and developing the wine sector in general and wine tourism in particular. For the research were utilised the methods: monographic, analysis and synthesis, comparison, etc. The results demonstrate the efficiency of measures and mechanisms to support wine tourism in different countries of the world.*

**Key words:** wine tourism, enotourism, wine sector

### INTRODUCTION

As an economic and social phenomenon, the tourism has known major developments in the second half of the XX<sup>th</sup> century. Deborg M. P. mentioned that “*tourism is the action, the desire, the art of traveling for your own pleasure*”. In 1880, E-Guy Frenler stated that “*tourism, in the modern sense of the word, is a phenomenon of our times, based on knowledge of the need to restore health and the change of environment, to cultivate sentiment for the natural beauty as a result of the development of trade, industry, as well as the improvement of the means of transport*” [15].

The tourism is considered to be one of the most important, profitable and prosperous branches of the economy for many states from the world. The growth of international tourism is conditioned by the purpose the tourist proposes, wanting to visit a certain country or a certain tourist destination. Countries with a tourist destination aim to promote tourist attractions that have cultural and touristic values, are recognized worldwide and represent the country's business card.

Vinitourism or “*wine tourism*” is a form of tourism of special interest, with a continuously increasing role, becoming an important component of tourism for many winemaking regions. The development of “*wine tourism*” has become an essential preoccupation for both those involved in tourism and for those in the wine industry [8].

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The paper presents the mechanisms for supporting wine tourism in different countries of the world. The paper also analyzes government programs and specific mechanisms for supporting and developing the wine sector in general and wine tourism in particular. The following research methods were used in the elaboration of this research: monographic, analysis and synthesis, comparison, etc.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

For the expansion of wine tourism and for the amelioration of the infrastructure the elaboration and promotion of an efficient policy are needed. Moreover, wine products

must be recognized in the world, especially in Europe, where enotourism is already well developed and sustained by the state, representing a major source of revenue for tourism activity and for the wine industry. The wine sector, including the wine tourism, faces several problems, such as:

- climate change and its impact on wine quality is one of the most serious environmental problems;
- increasing competition, consolidation of distributors and importers;
- consolidation of the role of chain stores, and, sometimes, unexpected changes in consumer demand;
- activation of the anti-alcohol lobby in some countries;
- strict visa regime for some countries;
- creation of a positive image of the country;
- few touristic marketing activities, exhibitions, promotional materials, etc.

To address these issues, as well as many others, in some countries there are government programs and specific mechanisms to support and develop the wine sector in general and wine tourism in particular. For example, to expand the wine tourism, many countries require that the best wines to be released from taxes, which allows tasting of a certain type of wine only on the territory of the state in which it was produced [2]. This is explained, by the fact, that the wine that is "gone" away from the grown place and has matured, loses its true taste. Hence the conclusion that French wines can be tasted only in France. At the same time in EU countries, the amplification of the wine sector is financially supported by the state, also there are special grants, which aren't reimbursed, but their management is strictly controlled [1].

According to the World Tourism Organization's Forecast (UNWTO), in their research «Tourism's 2020 Vision», one of the most popular types of tourism for the year 2020 will be thematic tourism. Wine tourism as "quality tourism" (durable; "soft"; qualitative; going beyond business; focusing on culture, environment, issues and human values) can be attributed to this type of tourism.

Wine tourism is actively developing in all countries of the world, especially in France - a classical country of tourism. Promoting enotourism in France is a basic element of the State Program for the improvement of the competitiveness of tourism industry. In the Strategic Plan for the years 2010-2020, wine tourism is one of the main directions [1]. The Wine Tourism Committee seeks to establish a strong relationship between winemakers, tour operators, hoteliers and restaurants in the country. France is the country where, by definition, the wine has been raised to the rank of art, culture, touristic superlative, and in some cases even religion. France has paid particular attention to winemaking not only as a beverage industry, but also as a special tradition, as an integral part of centuries old history, culture, lifestyle and identity of the French people. The quality and taste of French wines have become a reference (standard) among other wine regions of the world, such as Italy, Greece, Spain, etc.

The French researchers in the «*Tourisme et vin: les clientèles françaises et internationales, les concurrents de la France*» have listed a series of recommendations on the evolution of wine tourism, attracting tourists to wine regions:

- improving the transport problem (active use of trains, buses, bikes and cruise ships);
- to broaden the potential audience, attracting families, also women (SPAs with "wine-therapy" notes);
- reduction of travel costs (the price for three days on average costs 350-600 Euros);
- increasing interest in cultural events and wine festivals;
- extending the number of accommodation facilities, especially on wine routes (camping sites, motels, for example tourist cabins in the form of wine barrels);
- widening the dissemination of information, as examples: wineries' internet sites, virtual guides through the region, journals, booklets with winemaking destinations, also special regional navigators who are currently on the Beaujolais and Bordeaux wine routes on various media outlets, to give tourists access to tourism agencies, committees [1].

One of the most successful projects on the promotion of wine tourism in France, the Bordeaux region, can be called «Le Centre Culturel et Touristique du Vin». France ranks seven in the ranking, out of 140 countries, losing 4 positions since 2011, ranks fourth in terms of world cultural heritage items and fifth in the number of thematic events organized in the country (exhibitions, fairs) according to the data of «The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index», TTCI, which were presented at the World Economic Forum in Davos (Switzerland) in 2013. Due to its rich cultural heritage (including wine factories and enotourism), France continues to attract tourists from around the world.

In Italy, besides government programs that support the wine industry, there are also various tourism development programs, including for wine tourism. As an example, the state organization ENIT (Ente Nazionale Italiano per il Turismo, today renamed in the National Tourism Agency), which has offices in every region of the country, aims to promote tourism opportunities in Italy by producing and distributing free of charge in the country, at all international tourism exhibitions, specialized brochures, maps, leaflets, advertising materials. At the same time, there are free tourist information offices in every city, where you can get information about booking a hotel, booking a tour, description of wine routes, etc. In Italy, one of the four major tourist forums - BIT (Borsa Italiano Turismo) is taking place [3]. Moreover, in some areas, financial support is provided for the amplification of the tourism industry, for example in: Sicily, Campania, Calabria, Friuli-Venezia Giulia. Special tours for journalists, for tourism industry staff from abroad (potential tourist providers) are organized, there is advertising on television, radio, outside the country, publication of promotional materials, organization of exhibitions and workshops, participation in tourism exhibitions, special promotions such as week of museums, where entry tickets are free of charge.

In Bulgaria, the wine sector is one of the main pillars of agriculture. Lately, the wine sector is attracting more investments than other

sectors of agriculture. Wine legislation in Bulgaria is the best of all members of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON). In recent years, market relations on wine trade have changed dramatically, new regulations have emerged, and some of the provisions of the law adopted in 1978 remain valid until now [4]. In 1980 Bulgaria was the second largest exporter of bottled wine in the world, the production being carried out within a large vineyard enterprise that administered all vineyards in the country. However, due to poor publicity and the early stage in the development of wine tourism, Bulgaria is not mentioned on popular wine sites such as: World Wines (wine club) - the site where you can find information about the wine of the world, wine tasting rules, wine stories, and more [16].

Romania is an important European wine producing country with a great historical past and rich cultural traditions, much of which is related to this beverage, considered a divine elixir. Since 1927, Romania is a member of the International Organization of Vine and Wine. According to the International Organization of Vine and Wine (OIV), Romania ranks 13th in the world's top wine producers and ranks sixth in the European rankings [17].

The wine promotion measure is an instrument of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) implemented through the National Support Program of Romania (NSP) in the wine sector 2014-2018, financed from the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) budget, which refers to a set of actions that has as a general objective increasing the awareness of Romanian wines with a protected designation of origin (PDO) and geographical indication (GI) on the domestic market and in third countries, on entering new markets, leading ultimately to improvement of competitiveness and increase in wine exports with PDO/GI or for those wines for which the vine varieties are indicated [13].

Due to the impact of the National Support Program 2009 - 2013 on the wine sector, which absorbed, in proportion of 100%, the funds of the E.A.G.F. made available by the European Commission through the new

Regulation (EU) No. 1308/2013, Romania benefits from an increased financial allocation for the wine sector, amounting to 47.7 millions of euro annually [13].

Romania has a great potential for developing wine tourism, that is why more owners of wine cellars invest in accommodation, restaurants, tasting rooms, guided tours in vineyards, well-trained staff.

In order to promote Romanian wine tourism, were elaborated the following projects: CrameRomania.ro (a database of wine cellars in Romania that is in Romanian, as well as in English language), Revino.ro (a website that collects data about the wine cellars and specialized wine shops - vinoteques and restaurants - from Romania) and The Salon REVINO - Discover Romania Wines (an event, in the form of a specialized wine salon, takes place from 14 to 16 May at Novotel Bucharest and brings to the attention of wine lovers small and medium sized wine cellars in Romania to make known the vineyards of which they belong, the unique, indigenous varieties and to increase the interest for the discovery of the wine tourism) [15]. Platforms that promote wine tourism and organize cellar tours and tastings show that the number of active wine cellars that produce and sell bottled wine has reached more than 140 and of which about a quarter can support wine tourism.

Ukraine is one of the five countries in Europe, where wine tourism has great prospects. Efforts on the preparation and presentation of the wine road are being carried out from a long time ago in Ukraine. But for the first time, the wine road was developed yet in 2007 by the Winemakers and Sommeliers Association and by the "Master-Class" Sommelier School together with the Kiev Tourism Institute. This project involved enterprises in the southern area of Ukraine - "Shabo" wine factory, Odessa factory of sparkling wines, cognac factory "Shustov", TM „Guliev Wines” and TM „Colonist”, which formed a "wine road" route model in the Odessa region. Such models were also organized in other regions of Ukraine, Kherson and Mykolaiv. The total tour duration is 12 days, each tour takes 3 days.

Wine tourism in Ukraine, as practice shows, is in demand. This is not just a way of developing the tourist infrastructure, such trips allow tourists and locals to get acquainted with traditions, customs, wine production, and participate directly in the wine production process. Ukraine has something to be proud of, it is a wine country and is entitled to a worthy place on the world map of wine [12].

For spreading the wine tourism in Ukraine was registered the draft law *"on the amendments to some legislative acts of Ukraine for the development of regional wine production and natural honey drinks"*. The practical application of the main provisions of the draft law will provide favorable conditions for the extension of the terroir wine industry (wines from the region), the production of wine from fruit and berries, unique honey beverages, made from fruit, grains, grapes, honey of their own production. This will allow small businesses to create unique wines in the area, organize new jobs and increase incomes to state and local budgets [9].

For the first time in Ukraine, in 2010, the National Winemaking Holding elaborated the Ukrainian Winemaking Development Strategy for the years 2010-2020, whose purpose was to arrive at a minimum level of wine consumption of 20 liters per person per year. For this it is necessary to achieve an average annual growth of 13.6% for a period of 10 years. The main purpose of Ukraine for wine production is in 2019 to reach 102 million decaliters of wine. This Program was supported by a number of industrial associations, in particular by the Ukrainian Bureau of Vineyard and Wine [10].

In Russia, according to experts, about 40 wine factories operate in the Krasnodar region, of which only 7-8 winemaking households work in the field of wine tourism. One of the main enterprises in the territory of Krasnodar is "Abrau-Durso", that is important for the Russian enotourism [6]. A trip to "Abrau-Durso" costs 550 Russian rubles together with wine tasting. Among other winemaking households where wine tourism is cultivated are also: "Kuban-vino", JSC "Aurora", Alcoholic Production Company "Gelendzhik",

agricultural company "Myskhako" and "Fanagoria". The most visited is the "Kubanvino", with about 10,000 tourists per year, the rest of the winemaking households - each with 1,000 [14].

In general, we can say that wine tourism in the tourist market in Russia occupies a niche position. Wine tourism became known on the market in the late 2000s, especially after the formation of the tourism agencies «Simple Wine Travel» (in 2007), and afterwards, the «Alora S.M.B.A» Agency (in 2011), who have specialized in the organization of wine and enogastronomic tourism around the world [12].

In the Montenegro in 2006, a State Program on the development of wine tourism was elaborated, with the support of Germany and Austria. Priority had only some regions in supporting small producers, in the development of the wine route, infrastructure and wine promotion. The wine route was developed by the National Association of Winemakers, which was formed as a part of the project, in support of winemaking enterprises and job creation. Since the beginning of its activity, 16 new businesses have emerged in the area. The wine region is promoted as "The Wine Land" [7].

Countries such as Australia, USA (California) have obtained great achievements in viticulture due to the use of the cluster principle, where the state and branch organizations played an important role in the formation and coordination, as well as the administration of cluster activity.

Cluster - an association of interconnected enterprises, located in geographic proximity, as a rule, belonging to a sector or related sectors, as well as scientific research institutions, universities and other organizations, whose activity is focused on innovation, and their cooperation allows to increase the competitive advantages of businesses.

In the United States, the most developed wine region is California, where the world's largest producer, Gallo, can be found. In California, are actively developing wine tourism development programs related to the growth of direct sales, attracting new customers and

keeping the old ones, wishing to raise the prestige of winemakers/viticulturists' craftsmanship by direct contact with customers and also to receive additional income and to cooperate with tourism agencies. On average, per year, vines and wineries are visited by about 20 million tourists, including Napa Valley - about 5 millions. By the number of tourists in the state of California, the first place is occupied by Disneyland and Napa Valley occupies the second place. The most famous winery is «Mondavi winery», which annually receives 300 thousand tourists, the price being about 25 US dollars per person. If on average about 30-50 workers are implicated in the production of wine, about 60 workers serve the tourists [6].

From the point of view of winemaking and wine tourism development, Argentina's experience is interesting, although historically it didn't belong to exporters of wine and didn't develop wine tourism, but has become so in the last 15-20 years. The wine sector in this country is growing fast and occupies a quite important place on the world wine market [11]. Even today, the country is positioned as the main competitor in this world of exporters such as France, Spain and Italy. The most interesting thing is that Argentina has created a unique winemaking on the basis of small winemaking households. Exports of wine products from this country grow year after year. Argentina's wine tourism received a boost after 2005 when, following the initiative of the Wine Industry Association of Argentina (which includes 200 wine factories), was developed the Strategic Plan for Wine Sector Development until 2020, where a special focus was given to wine tourism. At present, in Argentina 167 winemaking households in 8 provinces are open to tourists. 16 wine routes were elaborated and conceived, which in 2011 were visited by about 1 million tourists - 70% of local tourists and 30% of foreign tourists (of which 68% of tourists are from USA, Brazil, Chile, United Kingdom and France) [5].

Thus, wine tourism for its development needs state support and very hard work to promote this direction. At present, in many countries of

the world for the development and assistance of the wine sector, as well as for the advancement and amplification of wine tourism, special attention is paid by both central authorities and local authorities. In some countries this process is at the beginning and is at an early stage.

However, according to experts - today very few tourists would want to travel only to explore the local cuisine or wine map. Therefore, in order to obtain some stable guaranteed economic results and a stable inflow of tourists, the trips must be multi-directional and should include all the elements. As was mentioned by Alessio Kavikki, a professor at the Chair of Tourism from the University of Macerata (Italy), a person has to come to the designated destination, informed and "mentally" mature. With the support of the mass media and other available sources, the desire of tourists to visit a particular region needs to be cultivated, but it is important to provide an appropriate proposal. If there is no such correlation, the tourist will not return to this place again.

## CONCLUSIONS

Development of the wine sector and wine tourism will contribute to attracting a large number of consumers of the production of this branch. However, the wine tourism is not possible to be developed only on attracting tourists or on the experience of other countries. First of all, it is necessary to improve the consumption culture, to adjust the winemaking and to provide the guests with the required quality of the product. For the development of wine tourism it is necessary to elaborate and implement the government programs and specific mechanisms for the support and development of the wine sector in general as well as for the wine tourism in particular.

Attracting a large number of tourists will turn the wine tourism into a generator of economic, social and cultural benefits.

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