

STATE OF CULTURAL TOURISM IN THE CITY OF PLOVDIV IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF BEING THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE

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Abstract

The city of Plovdiv in Bulgaria was elected by the European Commission to be the European Capital of Culture for 2019. Plovdiv is a city with eight thousand years of history located on one of the most fertile plains in Europe - the vast plain of Thrace, inhabited for thousands of years by various tribes and peoples. Eight civilizations and cultures inhabited the city: Prehistoric, Thracian, Macedonian, Roman, Byzantine, Old Bulgarian, Ottoman, Renaissance and contemporary culture. They left a rich, unique and priceless cultural heritage. For centuries in Plovdiv there have been living together Orthodox, Catholic, Muslim, Jewish, Armenian and other communities. Therefore the city has a rich variety of religions and remarkable monuments of the different religious cultures and cults. The subject of the present study is the state of cultural and historical tourism in the city of Plovdiv. The period 2015-2017 has been examined. The data required for the study are taken from the statistical reports. In 2017 a survey was conducted among 120 tourists during the seasons: spring, summer and autumn. The purpose of the survey was to determine the state of cultural and historical tourism in the city of Plovdiv. Moreover, for the purpose of the study a working group of 10 experts has been set up - experts in areas relevant to the development of cultural tourism in the city of Plovdiv. Each of the experts makes suggestions about the circumstances, conditions and factors on which the further development of cultural tourism in the city of Plovdiv depends. In this way, the assessment of both the experts in this sector and the users of this tourist product has been established. A SWOT analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of cultural and historical tourism in the city of Plovdiv has been carried out.

Key words: cultural tourism, historical tourism, opportunities and development, Plovdiv

INTRODUCTION

In the recent years in Bulgaria there has been an increase in the number of tourists both foreign and Bulgarian. Besides the most visited countries of the EU for years, the new member states which adhered during the last 15 years have become important more and more important tourist attractions on the tourist map of Europe [10].

Tourism is a priority branch of the Bulgarian economy, forming a significant part of the gross domestic product of the country [5].

The cultural and historical heritage of a country plays a major role in promoting its reputation and in directing public's interest in recognizing, learning and obtaining fuller and lasting perception and understanding of its values [7].

There is also an increasing interest in the already established tourist destinations, cities with rich cultural heritage such as Veliko Tarnovo, Plovdiv and Rouse. The largest

territorial concentration (over 100) of monuments of national importance in 3 districts - Veliko Tarnovo, Plovdiv and Sofia represents 17.8% of the total number of monuments [4]. Significant is the increase in the number of tourists' visits to places where there is an opportunity to combine cultural and historical tourism with balneological, spa and sea tourism – the town of Hissar, the town of Nessebar, the town of Sozopol, the city of Plovdiv, the town of Velingrad. Therefore, tourism services in the rural areas are able to support local population and communities in developing economic diversity [9]. During the past five years, the tourist flow to these destinations has increased with 12%. The interest, the needs and the attitudes of the modern tourist are various, therefore combining cultural historical tourism with balneotherapy and spa both sea and mountain, enormously improves the tourist flow to this type of destinations.

The city of Plovdiv is one of the well-known and popular destinations for cultural tourism. It is generally accepted that the object of this study, the city of Plovdiv, was named after Philip II Makedonski, the father of Alexander the Great and conqueror of the city in the 4th century BC. The city of Plovdiv has eight thousand years of history and is located on one of the most fertile plains in Europe - the vast plain of Thrace, inhabited for thousands of years by various tribes and peoples. Eight civilizations and cultures inhabited the city: Prehistoric, Thracian, Macedonian, Roman, Byzantine, Old Bulgarian, Ottoman, Renaissance and contemporary culture. They left a rich, unique and priceless cultural heritage. For centuries in the city of Plovdiv there have been living together Orthodox, Catholic, Muslim, Jewish, Armenian and other communities. Therefore the city has a rich variety of religions and remarkable monuments of the different religious cultures and cults. Very favorable fact for the development of a sustainable cultural historical tourism is that the city of Plovdiv is associated with many other unique internationally known archaeological sites, located at about sixty minutes drive: the valley of the Thracian kings with the world-known Kazanlak tomb, the Valley of the Roses, the Valley of the Wine, the unique natural wealth of the Rhodope Mountains and many SPA resorts, eco-, rural, mountain, culinary, folklore and other kinds of tourism. All this gives unlimited possibilities to organize an integrated tourist product, which is extremely attractive and entices many tourists.

The city of Plovdiv has been elected by the European Commission to be the European Capital of Culture in 2019. It is of utmost importance for the Municipality of Plovdiv in terms of improving the infrastructure resources for tourism and their development in the next programming period [6].

The purpose of the this study is to determine the state of cultural and historical tourism in the city of Plovdiv. To establish the assessment of both of the users of this tourist product and the experts in this sector. On the

basis of the study and the analysis unused opportunities have been revealed as well as conclusions and recommendations for achieving sustainable development of this type of tourism in the city of Plovdiv have been formulated.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In the majority of literary resources, cultural tourism has been defined as "the movement of people to cultural attractions far away from their place of residence, with a cognitive purpose and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs" [1]. The World Tourism Organization (WTO) defines cultural tourism as "a movement of people with a strong cultural motivation to visit sights, monuments, museums, festivals and other cultural events, to study nature, folklore and art or pilgrimage" [2]. UNESCO gives its definition of culture in the following way: "Culture is the multitude of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional traits of a society or a community group; it also covers art and literature, lifestyle, forms of cohabitation, moral norms, traditions and beliefs" [3]. According to the European Center for Traditional and Regional Cultures (ECTARC), the sites that attract tourists for cultural and historical tourism are: archaeological sites and museums; architectural monuments (ruins, famous buildings); art, sculpture, crafts, galleries, festivals, events; music and dance (classical, folklore, modern); drama (theater, movies, drama); linguistic and literary training, events; religious festivals, religious pilgrimage; mixed, folklore and primitive cultures and subcultures [11].

Tourism is no longer activity of a privileged minority but it is widespread among the majority of citizens of the European Union. The social importance of cultural tourism is expressed in the formation of positive and negative socio-cultural impacts on society. It contributes to the mutual understanding among the peoples. The World Tourism Organization recognizes it as one of the means of promoting respect for human rights

regardless of race, sex, language or religion; to strengthen people's understanding and to increase the well-being of the people. Cultural tourism is also a means of expanding the territory for practicing tourism. Cultural tourism has a beneficial influence also through its economic impact.

The subject of the present study is the state of cultural and historical tourism in the city of Plovdiv. The period 2015-2018 has been examined. The data required for this study have been taken from the statistical reports in the municipality of Plovdiv and from the NSI. In 2017 a survey was conducted among 120 tourists during the seasons: spring, summer and autumn. Moreover, for the purposes of the study, a working group of 10 experts in tourism and in fields relevant to the development of cultural tourism in the city of Plovdiv has been set up. Each of the experts makes an objective assessment of the circumstances, conditions and factors that determine the development of cultural historical tourism in the city of Plovdiv as well as they make proposals and a prognosis for its future sustainable development.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Prerequisites for the development of cultural and historical tourism in the city of Plovdiv

Cultural and historical cognitive tourism in the city of Plovdiv develops on the basis of a unique cultural and historical heritage layered over centuries and millennia. The city of Plovdiv is a popular tourist destination due to the concentration of a large number of cultural and historical heritage - remains of different ages: Neolithic, Antiquity, Middle Ages, Renaissance. The city has unique examples of the architectural and monumental art of Roman and Byzantine temples from the earliest periods of Christianity, Ottoman mosques and churches from the Renaissance period [9]. The various sites- churches, schools, urban architecture, museums depicting the ethnic and cultural diversity of the city of Plovdiv are a very rich resource which is a strong asset for the development of tourism.

The list of cultural values of national and local importance includes more than 715 individual cultural sites. There are 45 sites in the city included in the list of the cultural monuments of national importance. There are over 245 cultural sites of ensemble significance, the most famous of which are located in the historic area of Philipopol - Trimontium - Plovdiv, the Old Town and the Kapana area [8]. This allows visitors to get more information and a to have a more complete knowledge of the era. The city of Plovdiv is the city of the hills: Sahat tepe, Bunardzhika, Dzhendem tepe, Nebet tepe have been declared as natural protected areas with rare plant and animal species.

The climate is relatively mild - relatively mild winter and hot but wet summer, long soft autumn, i.e. there is a long season for outdoor events. The anthropogenic resources for the development of the tourism in the city of Plovdiv are above the average for the country and Europe.

The main tourist sites (cultural, religious, historical, etc.) in the city of Plovdiv are:

-architectural and historical reserve "Old Plovdiv";

-museums: regional museum of archeology, regional ethnographic museum, regional museum of history, exposition "Bulgarian Revival", exposition "Union of Bulgaria 1885", exhibition "Bulgarian Literature Publishing", Museum of Modern History, Regional Museum of Natural History, etc.;

-galleries: city art gallery - Plovdiv, icon gallery, permanent expositions "Tsanko Lavrenov" and "Mexican art", permanent exhibition of painting "Encho Pironkov";

-religious temples;

-archaeological sites: Nebet Tepe Archaeological Complex, Antique Theater, Antique Forum with Odeon, Antique Stadium, Late Antique Building „Eirene“, Hissar Kapia, Clock Tower of Sahat Tepe, Balabanov House, national revival houses, galleries, expositions, etc.;

-places of relax and culture: King Simeon's garden, the old town garden with the colorful Thursday market, the Olympic rowing canal,

sports and entertainment centers, home of science and technology.

In the city of Plovdiv there are natural sites with potential for valorisation: one of the largest Bulgarian rivers - Maritsa and the six rock hills (tepetata). Tepetata in a tourist sense are used to give a general idea of the city and are important for the residents of the city of Plovdiv as good places for walk and relax.

By analyzing the main resources and assets that create the material base for the development of cultural and historical tourism in the city, we can say that the city of Plovdiv has not enough bed base, which will not be able to accommodate the expected tourist flow in 2019. In 2017 in the city there were 171 functioning accommodation places with more than 10 beds in the site - hotels, motels, campsites, chalets and other accommodation facilities. The number of rooms in this type of accommodation is 4.600 and the number of beds is 8.700. Compared to 2016, the total number of accommodation places increased with 1.8%, while the number of beds remain unchanged.

The total number of overnight stays in 2017 in all accommodation places in the city amounts to 77.000, or 13.3% more than in the previous year. 60.500 overnight stays have been made by Bulgarian citizens, and 16.500 - by foreigners.

Table 1. Economic indicators of the state of tourism in the city of Plovdiv

Indicators	2016	2017	Dynamics 2016 =100%
Overnight stays	483,762	526,180	108.76
Including foreigners	225,477	260,176	115.39
Persons stayed overnight	470,449	514,436	109.35
Occupied beds	29.45%	31.93%	+ 8.42
Average period of stay (nights)	1.79	1.78	99.44
Income from overnight stays for the hotel owners, BGN	25,097,529	260,210,801	103.68
Income from TT and TC, BGN	424,263	492,961	116.19

Notes: TT - tourist tax; TC – taxes from categorization

Source: Statistical reports in the municipality of Plovdiv.

It was established that 60.20% of the total number of overnight stays by foreign tourists

were spent in 4 and 5 star hotels. It is known that foreign citizens always prefer high category accommodation places, especially for security reasons and to a lesser extent because of the better quality of facilities and service. The Bulgarian tourists account for 36.70% of the total number of overnight stays in 4 and 5 star hotels. In the 3-star accommodation places, 32.60% of the overnight stays were made by foreigners and 36.80% by Bulgarian citizens. In the remaining 1 and 2-star accommodation places, this ratio is changing: foreign tourists account for only 7.20% of the total number of overnight stays and the Bulgarians for 26.5%

In 2016, a total of more than 447 thousand tourists have stayed in accommodation places with a minimum of 10 beds in Plovdiv region which is an increase of nearly 11% compared to 2015 according to NSI data. In 2016, the total number of overnight stays was 942 thousand which is almost 8% more than those in 2015.

The average number of overnight stays by foreigners in all accommodation places in 2017 is 2.4. 23.0% of the foreign tourists visiting the city of Plovdiv, who stayed overnight are citizens of Turkey, 9.2% of Greece, 7.0% of Italy, 6.2% of Germany and 3.9% of the United States.

In 2017 compared to 2016, there was an increase of 9.35% in the persons stayed overnight and total amount of 8.76% in the overnight stays. The number of foreign people stayed overnight increased with 12.32% which means that an increasing number of foreigners visit the city as tourists. The overnight stays of foreigners increased with 15.39%. However, the occupation of the accommodation base is unsatisfactory: in 2016 it was 29.45% and in 2017 it increased to 31.93% which is 2.48% more. The average period of stay is almost the same in the two years. One day and one weekend visits by Bulgarian tourists are more so the number of overnight stays is less.

The economic results of the development of the tourism in the city of Plovdiv are positive. Income from overnight stays is calculated over BGN 40.4 million, which is an increase

of nearly 10% compared to the previous year. In 2017 compared to 2016 there was an increase in the overnight stays with 3.68% for the hotel owners. Tourist tax income and a 16.19% taxes from categorization present an increase of the tourism tax income with 14.27% and an increase of the income from categorization taxes with 24.06%.

The income from the tourist tax (from overnight stays) in the funds for accommodation in the municipality only until the end of August 2017 amounts to more than BGN 250.000, which is 8% more than that for the same period in 2016. This also shows that half of the tourist visits are made during the dry spring-summer months. The other half of the tourist visits take place during the mild fall in the city of Plovdiv and its region.

The revenues from the collected tax from overnight stays for the same period represent 72% of the total budget of Plovdiv Municipality's Annual Program for Tourism Development in 2017.

For the eight months of 2017 there is also a significant increase in the funds accrued by charges for the categorization of tourist sites. The amount is 45% higher than those collected for the same period in 2016.

The tourist flow in the city has increased twice over the last six years. In 2016 more than 800,000 tourists visited the city of Plovdiv. In 2019 when the city of Plovdiv will be the European Capital of Culture more than 2 million visitors are expected.

Cultural historical sites in the city are visited a lot. Trakart Cultural Center which stores unique priceless ancient mosaics in 2017 made 94,100 visits more than 2016 or there is an increase with 22%. The Tourist Information Centers in 2016 were visited by 39,961 tourists and in 2017 by 70,694 tourists. So in 2017 there were 30,733 more visitors which is an increase with 77%. In 2016 the foreign tourists represented 74.03% of the total number and in 2017 they were 80.42%. In 2017 visits of Bulgarian tourists increased with 33.35% compared to 2016 and visits by foreigners increased with 92.18% (almost double) which is indicative of the intensification of the interest especially by the

foreign tourists towards cultural the historical heritage in the city of Plovdiv. The interest of foreign tourists to the old part of the city increases. While in 2016 foreign tourists were 29.19% of the total number of visitors, in 2017 they were 41.96% of the total number. Total visits to the old town increased with 9.31%. The number of the Bulgarian tourists decreased with 10.39% and the number of the foreign tourists increased with 57.09%.

The interest of foreign tourists increases in the Bulgarian traditions and particularly in the Thracian folklore. Visits to the regional ethnographic museum in 2017 increased with 10.37%. Foreign visitors are 36.25% of the total number of visitors. Visits to the Museum of Natural Science have increased with more visits by Bulgarians with 147.73% and by foreigners with 313.49%.

Table 2. Visits to cultural historical sites in the city of Plovdiv

Visits, number, in:	2016	2017	Dynamics 2016 =100%
Museums- total	432,535	526,635	121.75
Including foreigners	113,666	146,527	128.91
Old Plovdiv	246,984	270,001	109.31
Including foreigners	72,119	113,293	157.09
Ethnographic museum	64,267	70,933	110.37
Including foreigners	23,303	12,470	53.51
TIC- total	39,961	70,694	176.9
Including foreigners	29,584	56,856	192.18

Notes: TIC- tourist information center

Source: Statistical reports in the municipality of Plovdiv.

The following is typical of the city of Plovdiv: on one hand, the city is an established tourist destination; on the other – it is the second largest city in the country and it hosts a large number of events with the participation of many people with several peak occupancy periods of the bed base.

It is noteworthy that middle sized hotels with a better material base have recently been put into operation. The persistence and the increase of the tourist flow provide income for the hotels so there are no hotels with old and unrenovated facilities. The Tourism Development Program in the city of Plovdiv is in compliance with the Strategy for

Sustainable Development of Tourism for the period 2014-2020 as well as with the municipal plan for the development of the city during this period. The activities on the program are financially guaranteed in accordance with the income from the tourist tax and taxes from categorization of the tourist sites on the territory of the municipality.

The Municipality of Plovdiv makes a lot of efforts to develop cultural tourism in the city. There have been made public investments unprecedented so far to enrich the cultural content of public life in the city. In addition, a large number of private investors have been attracted through competitions to offer their own projects for cultural events. The municipality has signed over 250 contracts with cultural operators worth over BGN 8 million. All proposed projects are evaluated by an expert jury.

From our marketing survey carried out among 120 users of cultural and historical tourism in the city of Plovdiv it is clear that the main part - 34.2% of the total number of tourists with interests in cultural historical tourism are between 36 and 45 years old; 29.6% are at the age of 26 to 35 years or about 64% of fans of cultural historical tourism are young people. Young people at the age of 18 to 25 years represent 11.4% of the total number of tourists. The share of tourists at the age over 56 is small: 5.4% are between 46 and 55 years old and only 2.6% are over 65 years old.

According to the level of education, the users of this tourist product are predominantly with secondary education - 44.3% of the total number. Those with higher education are 34.7% and with high school - 12.6%. The lowest is the share of tourists with basic education- 8.4%. According to the tourists, the popularity of the cultural heritage in the city of Plovdiv is estimated as follows: the most numerous - 38% is the group of those who think it is very popular; 25% responded more likely yes; 18% - 19% think that the cultural heritage of the city of Plovdiv is not known. Regarding the means of promoting the architectural and cultural heritage of the city of Plovdiv, 39% of the respondents say that

they learn from tourist guides; 32% learn from information sites; 17% - from information leaflets in the stores; and 12% learn from advertising panels on motorways and roads. 32% of respondents believe it is necessary to improve the advertisement of the cultural heritage of the city of Plovdiv.

The assessment of the tourists about the state of the architectural and cultural historical sites in the city of Plovdiv is as follows: more than half - 54% give an excellent assessment of their state; 27% rate it as very good; 11% give a good rating and only 8% give an unsatisfactory grade.

In the following paragraph it is made a SWOT analysis reflecting the experts' assessment of the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the development of cultural tourism on the territory of the city of Plovdiv.

Results from the SWOT analysis:

The result for the strengths of cultural tourism in the city of Plovdiv is currently 0.88. For the development of cultural tourism, it is very important to have various, preserved and high-valued cultural and historical sites in the examined region which is in our case the city of Plovdiv. Therefore, the most points are awarded to a "multitude of cultural monuments", i.e. the rich cultural and historical heritage of the city with a large number of monuments from different historical eras. (8.5 points).

According to the results of the survey carried out during the seasons: spring, summer and winter in 2017 among 125 tourists, the majority of respondents visited the city of Plovdiv for the first time - 87% of the total number. This is indicative of the increasing interest in the cultural and historical sites in the city of Plovdiv. The high percentage of new "cultural" tourists is most likely provoked by the interest in the European capital of culture- the city of Plovdiv.

One-tenth of the total number of respondents - 10% visit the city for a third or more time. These are the permanent core of fans of cultural and historical sites in the city of Plovdiv. One third of all tourists stay in the city of Plovdiv for more than two days and 22% spend two days with one overnight stay.

These are tourists who want to visit all cultural and historical sites in the city. The variety and the diversity of cultural and historical sites is the reason for visits to the city by more than 50% of tourists.

Table 3. "STRENGTHS"

Cultural tourism	Current state			Expected state		
	importance	points	result	importance	points	result
Strengths	1		0.88			1.20
Various monuments of culture	0.45	8.5	3.82	0.2	10	2
Easily accessible by a vehicle	0.05	5	0.25	0.15	10	1.5
Presence of restaurants and party places	0.09	9.2	0.89	0.2	10	2
Sanitary-hygiene conditions in the tourist sites	0.04	7	0.28	0.05	8	0.4
No contamination from factories	0.07	5	0.35	0.05	9	0.45
Abundant tourist information for the sites	0.11	7	0.77	0.2	9	1.8
Safety during stay	0.08	5	0.4	0.05	9	0.45
Quality of the service	0.11	3	0.33	0.1	10	1

Source: Own calculations.

Therefore, the preservation and maintenance of these sites is of great importance for the development of cultural tourism in the city of Plovdiv.

For a whole day or for one afternoon the visitors get acquainted with the most accessible, closest and most famous historical sites or they participate in organized cultural events. Plovdiv municipality has a very rich cultural calendar with numerous cultural events. This type of tourists are half of the total number of tourists. That is why the reason for their visit and the specific purpose of staying in the city should be explored in detail and analyzed.

Over 83% of the total number of tourists are "very satisfied" with their knowledge of the cultural and historical sites in the city of Plovdiv, a quarter - 25% are "satisfied". These data are indicative once more of the

seriousness of the problem with preserving and maintaining historical sites in the city because they are the main attraction for cultural tourism in the city. According to the poll, the most popular tourist sites are: the old town, the antique theater, the Roman stadium and Kapana area.

The least points experts give to the indicator "quality of the service" - 3.0. This is an indicator of the problem with the necessity to increase the professionalism of the employees in the field of tourism; as well as systematic and thorough preparation of highly qualified young and reliable personnel for this sector; to reduce and to stop staff turnover in tourist enterprises; to increase the linguistic preparation of the employed in tourism especially necessary in the city of Plovdiv due to the large number of foreign tourists. The sanitary and hygienic conditions in many tourist sites, restaurants and accommodation places are not at the required level.

The great variety of cultural and historical sites, cultural events and festivals, numerous restaurants and entertainment venues, accommodation places in the city are the strengths in the experts' prognosis and guarantee the development of cultural and historical tourism in the city of Plovdiv. Improving the quality of tourist services, information support and advertising are also crucial factors.

Quality of service, however, is a complex factor so its role and influence on the development of cultural tourism is unique. The prognosis predicts that the strengths of cultural tourism will increase with 0.32 points which is real and satisfactory given the overall socioeconomic picture.

The results for the weaknesses is 1.06

Much of the cultural and historical heritage in the city of Plovdiv is not in good state so the indicator "state of the sites of the cultural and historical heritage" has been awarded the lowest score - 6. A small number of points is also given to the indicator "bad sanitary hygiene conditions in tourist sites". The quality of the offered tourist product depends to a large extent on these indicators.

In the tourist business the condition of the tourist infrastructure is particularly important. In many sites it is inaccessible or old which is an obstacle to the intensive development of cultural and cognitive tourism.

Table 4. “WEAKNESSES”

Cultural tourism	Current state			Expected state		
	importance	points	result	importance	points	result
Weaknesses	1		1.06	1		0.85
Condition of the sites from the CHH	0.32	6	1.92	0.22	6	1.32
Prices in restaurants and party places	0.18	8	1.44	0.21	7	1.47
Advertising and marketing	0.04	9	0.36	0.2	8	1.6
Sanitary-hygiene conditions in the tourist sites	0.16	7	1.12	0.10	4	0.4
Information service	0.14	9	1.26	0.08	4	0.32
Territory infrastructure	0.08	9	0.72	0.10	5	0.5
Quality of the service	0.08	8	0.64	0.09	4	0.36

Notes: CHH – cultural historical heritage

Source: Own calculations.

Tourist advertising and marketing in the city of Plovdiv are at an unsatisfactory level and they turn into factors which limit the development of both cultural tourism and tourism as a whole. These common weaknesses in the tourism industry should be removed although this requires time, effort and significant financial resources.

In order to increase the overall effect of the cultural and historical heritage for the economy of the city of Plovdiv, it is necessary first to start an integrated offer of resources in adequate tourist packages, covering as much as possible the spatial combinations of tourism resources.

According to the experts' prognosis, the weaknesses of cultural tourism in the city of Plovdiv will decrease with 0.21 points. The condition of advertising and marketing will be strongly influenced by the weaknesses. In the same direction the following influencing factors are "the state of the sites of the cultural and historical heritage" and "poor quality of services".

The result for opportunities is 0.60

The realization of projects in the region will have a positive effect on the development of cultural tourism. There is a young work force in the city because of the high unemployment

rate but these young people are not qualified and specialized to work in the field of tourism and they need training. Greater coordination of the actions of the state and municipal authorities will speed up the work on the maintenance of tourist sites and the training of young people for the sector. The development of small and medium-sized businesses, especially in sectors related to tourism will contribute by improving the quality of the tourist product. New archaeological monuments are still being discovered in the city and the surrounding area.

In order to increase the opportunities for the development of cultural tourism in the city of Plovdiv the most hopes are given to the "realization of projects financed by national, municipal and foreign resources". That is why the most points are awarded to this indicator - 5. Achieving a more complete coordination of the efforts of the municipal and state authorities and the local business will contribute to the creation of a more favorable business environment thus contributing to the development of cultural tourism.

Table 5. “OPPORTUNITIES”

Cultural tourism	Current state			Expected state		
	importance	points	result	importance	points	result
Opportunities	1		0.6			1.1
Realization of projects financed by national municipal and foreign resources	0.03	5	1.5	0.25	8	2
Coordination of the efforts of municipal, state and local business authorities	0.2	3	0.6	0.2	8	1.6
Available free work force	0.1	4	0.4	0.15	5	0.75
Construction of new transport connections	0.1	3	0.3	0.1	6	0.6
Development of small and medium enterprise business	0.2	3	0.6	0.15	6	0.9
Discovering new historical monuments in the city and its surroundings	0.1	3	0.3	0.15	5	0.75

Source: Own calculations.

According to the experts' prognosis the opportunities for the development of cultural tourism in the city of Plovdiv increase from 0.60 to 1.10 or with 0.50 points which can be realized. The prognosis gives the greatest hope to the influence of the factors:

"realization of projects financed by national, municipal and foreign resources" as well as "coordination of the efforts of the municipal and state authorities and the local business".

The result for threats is 0.95

The main threat to the successful development of cultural tourism in the city of Plovdiv is the lack of financial resources. The regulatory documents - laws and sub-economic provisions also do not support the development of cultural tourism.

Table 6. "THREATS"

Cultural tourism	Current state			Expected state		
	importance	points	result	importance	points	result
Threats	1		0.95			0.73
Insecure financing of the projects for cultural tourism	0.2	6	1.2	0.2	6	1.2
Gaps in the regulatory base for cultural tourism	0.2	5	1	0.15	4	0.60
Lack of good professionals	0.1	7	0.7	0.1	4	0.4
Lack of enough investments and financial stability of the entrepreneurs	0.1	5	0.50	0.1	4	0.4
High mobility of the young people towards other regions	0.25	5	1.25	0.25	4	1.0
Aging of sewage, power supply and roads	0.15	7	1.05	0.2	4	0.8

Source: Own calculations.

The indicator "lack of sufficiently qualified personnel" is considered a major threat for the future development of cultural tourism in the city of Plovdiv. The system for training and permanent re-qualification of personnel in the tourist sector needs revision and improvement.

The long-term effect on the development of tourism in the city of Plovdiv will have the training of well-trained and qualified personnel in the field of cultural and historical heritage and cultural tourism.

The lack of sufficient financial means - the indicator "insecure financing of cultural tourism projects" is a serious threat according to the developed expert prognosis for the development of cultural tourism in the city of Plovdiv. All activities to improve the state of

cultural and historical heritage sites, accommodation and catering facilities and the quality of service are related to the availability of sufficient financial resources. However, generally speaking, the threats for the development of cultural tourism decrease with 0.22 points.

CONCLUSIONS

The performed analyzes allow to summarize the following conclusions:

-The city of Plovdiv has a very good resource potential for cultural historical tourism. The rich thousand years architectural and cultural-historical heritage of the city is a major factor and it guarantees the future successful development of cultural tourism;

-The municipality organizes a lot of events and happenings of local and national importance that contribute to the development of cultural tourism. A significant role is given to the public-private partnership in the field of culture;

-Located in the vast plain of Thrace, the city of Plovdiv is associated with the unique, widely known in abroad archaeological sites: The Valley of the Thracian Kings with the world-famous Kazanlak Tomb, the Valley of the Roses, the Valley of the Wine, the unique natural wealth of the Rhodope Mountains, and countless SPA, eco, rural, mountain, culinary, folklore and other kinds of tourism. All of them are located at about sixty minutes drive from the city of Plovdiv. All this gives unlimited possibilities to organize an integrated tourist product which is extremely attractive and entices many tourists.

-a large number of available tourist resources are not used for example: hills are currently not sufficiently utilized for the purposes of tourism. The Maritsa River is unattractive due to its low water level, large, water-borne areas overgrown with shrubs and weeds which does not contribute to the creation of an aesthetic and ecological environment;

In order to achieve a more sustainable development of cultural and historical tourism in the city of Plovdiv it is necessary:

-to improve the preservation and maintenance of tourist sites;

-to improve the quality of service for tourists.

A very important element of this problem is the improvement of the professional level of the personnel employed in the tourist sector and the information offices. The training should include both permanent training and qualification of the already employed as well as training of highly qualified young employees for the sector;

-the lack of sufficient financial resources requires encouraging of investment in the tourist sector;

-there is a need to promote advertising, information service and marketing;

-there should be created and updated a positioning map of the cultural historical sites and attractions;

-accessibility, transport connections and communications should be improved at regional and local level.

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