

TOURISM IN THE TIME OF PANDEMIC OR THE RIGHT TO TOURISM

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Since the beginning of the 21st century, there have been phenomena with a major impact on tourism activity. At least two of them have generated similar crises in magnitude to the Covid-19 crisis: firstly, chronologically speaking, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and then the SARS epidemic of 2003. Both previous crises have led to a change in the perception of travel risk and safety we have had to get used to as tourists.

Broadly speaking, previous crises have triggered two broad categories of effects: short-term, immediate effects, and long-term effects. The immediate, short-term effects are related to the fear of infection and can lead to a decrease in the number of trips in the post-crisis period or the choice of destinations closer to the area of residence or more isolated. Destination safety information is becoming increasingly important in travel decision-making process.

Regarding long-term effects, it is expected that they will generate new behavior patterns as a result of changes in preferences, tastes, and even travel needs. All this could redesign the tourism industry. Those who will be able to create a personalized offer adapted to these changes, different from the offers characteristic of mass tourism, will successfully overcome this crisis. Restoring tourist confidence and stimulating demand can also be done through the use of new "safe and clean" labels for the tourism sector, tourist information applications and campaigns to promote domestic tourism.

Tourism service providers have sufficient reasons to find solutions to adapt to the new conditions of business. An interesting question for us would be, however, related to tourists: what determines them to leave home even in times of uncertainty?

Maybe tourism is already a way of life for the man of the 3rd millennium. How much of this way of life is determined by needs, let's say objectives, and how much was induced by the media is difficult to estimate and, most likely, does not matter too much. What we know now is that modern man needs to travel, he needs to "break the rhythm" of everyday life and return with "fresh strength" to work, after a period of almost complete disconnection from worldly concerns.

In 1980, the World Tourism Organization stated in Article 4 of the Manila Declaration:

<The right to use of leisure, and in particular the right to access to holidays and to freedom of travel and tourism, a natural consequence of the right to work, is recognized as an aspect of the fulfilment of the human being by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as by the legislation of many States. It entails for society the duty of providing for its citizens the best practical, effective and non-discriminatory access to this type of activity.>

In Europe, the European Economic and Social Committee adopted, in 2006, the following opinion on „**The right to tourism as a keystone of social tourism**”:

<Everyone has the right to rest on a daily, weekly and yearly basis, and the right to the leisure time that enables them to develop every aspect of their personality and their social integration. Clearly, everyone is entitled to exercise this right to personal development. The right to tourism is a concrete expression of this general right, and social tourism is underpinned by the desire to ensure that it is universally accessible in practice.>

Certainly, the issues related to the right to tourism are much more complex than that and we do not intend to analyze this issue from a legal point of view. If by right we mean a morally and / or legally justified claim to have or to do something, it is very possible that people, beyond the official declarations of governments or organizations dealing with tourism, consider that they have this right,

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justified, perhaps by a strong need. What is certain is that people want to travel. Even during the pandemic. Even with stricter rules to obey than before. Even if traveling could mean taking a greater risk than they were used to.

But the desire of tourists to travel should not be the only landmark of tourism. Maybe now we are at a new beginning. Perhaps now is the time for the biggest crisis in the history of tourism to become the biggest opportunity to reshape the sector. The new tourist offer will have to meet the need for sustainability, and the right to tourism to ensure the regenerative recreation of an educated and responsible public. The needs related to the environment, social and economic well-being, the right to privacy of the host communities and security will have to be vectors of the practice of post-pandemic tourism. Niche tourism will probably be more attractive than mass tourism. Perhaps phenomena such as over-tourism will remain only in tourism textbooks.

If destinations will be able to identify such attractions, if they will promote their "treasures" in a strategic manner, the way out of this crisis will also become an opportunity to relaunch a new tourism.

References

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