

THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 VIRUS ON THE OPERATION OF TRANSPORT COMPANIES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN THE WESTERN BALKAN COUNTRIES

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Summary: *The pandemic of the COVID-19 virus began to spread at the end of 2019, and in the countries of the Western Balkans at the beginning of 2020. Immediately after the declaration of the pandemic, measures to close the borders and a ban on movement followed. These measures have had a significant impact on the operations of almost all branches of the economy. The activities of transport and tourism companies were particularly affected, which determined the economic trends in these two areas. The business of transport and tourism companies has a declining revenue trend, both in the world and in the countries of the Western Balkans. Interest in tourist travel has especially declined. This paper discusses measures to halt further declines in transport and tourism revenues, opportunities and prospects for recovery and development, projected foreign tourist traffic and the impact of the Covid-19 virus on both global economic development and the Western Balkans. The paper will also present statistical data on trends in tourism in the city of Pristina, with an emphasis on reducing revenues from transport services, reducing the number of visitors for the seven-month period 2020, compared to the period in 2019.*

Keywords: *Pandemic, Virus Covid-19, transport, business transport companies, tourist destinations, number of trips, turistic trips.*

1. Introduction

In the modern world, human civilization has advanced in development to the greatest power of achievement on planet Earth. Over time, human civilization has reached in technology where a large amount of information and choices as well as a large number of means of transport, machines that help people achieve their goals faster. Massive means of transport have been built by which transport companies develop faster economic development of tourism, transport companies that operate on tourist trips that transport in different directions around the world. A man in the very beauty of life and the luxury of a large selection of transport and tourist beauties, wanting to last forever and thrive in business, unconsciously did not realize that it can stop all at once, he was stopped today by the Covid virus - 19. who once stopped the business of transport companies and the economic development of tourism, and in a few months stopped everything that man had invented for years and during his creation of business and tourist travel thought there was never an end, but today the Covid-19 virus stopped all dreams of mankind tourist travel planning. Today, it is more important to preserve immunity and health compared to the now disinfected and closed Huanan Seafood Market in Wuhan City, where doctors have noticed an initial group of diseases similar to the inflammatory virus. When it was announced in December 2019 that the Covid-19 virus was present on the market, although later research suggested that it may have started somewhere else. And since these first observations were recorded outside the Western Balkans region, air pollution and these effects could have negative consequences on mortality in the region. Without an effective vaccine or treatment, the COVID-19 pandemic may continue or recur. These public announcements discuss possible links between air pollution and COVID-19 that could also occur in the Western Balkans. Given the way the virus is spreading and fighting, many links are also still uncertain, especially in the Western Balkans. The last months of crisis and uncertainty from the COVID-19 virus have not only severely endangered infected people

but also their families and their very weak economic resilience. The higher the number of infected people, the more strict measures of freedom of movement are applied, which is immediately transferred to business and economic development, and transport companies, transport and tourism development are financially endangered.

2. CORONA VIRUSES COVID-19

2.1. Viruses such as SARS, MERS and COVID-19 can be deadly

The name "coronavirus" comes from the Latin word corona, whose meaning is "crown" or "halo", and refers to the characteristic appearance of viral particles (virions): they have a rim resembling the crown or corona of the Sun. Coronaviruses are large pleomorphic spherical particles with spherical surface protrusions. The average particle diameter of the virus is about 120 nm (.12 μm). The diameter of the envelope is ~ 80 nm (.08 μm), and the peplomers are ~ 20 nm (.02 μm) long. The envelope of the virus in electron micrographs appears as a special pair of electron-dense shells. Inside the envelope is a nucleocapsid, which is formed from multiple copies of the nucleocapsid (N) protein, which are linked to a single-stranded RNA genome in a continuous bead-on-string conformation. The lipid bilayer envelope, membrane proteins, and nucleocapsid protect the virus when it is outside the host cell.

Since 2006, the spread of SARS has come to a complete halt, with the last case observed in June 2003 (although the last case was a laboratory infection in 2004). However, SARS is not considered extinct because it may still be present among animal species and may return to the human population in the future.

2.2 PCR detects virus genetic material

PCR detects the genetic material of the virus in blood, mucus, tissue samples and stool. PCR proved to be extremely accurate but not sensitive. This means that a positive test means an infection with SARS, while a

negative one does not mean that the patient does not have SARS. White blood cells are often elevated. Early reports reported neutrophilia and lymphopenia - but relative, as the total number was reduced.

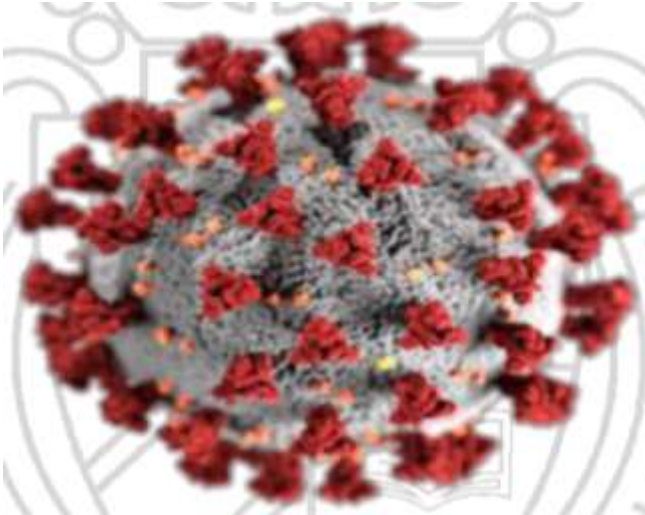


Photo 1. Virus Covid -19, Infectious_bronchitis_virus¹⁸

Table 1. Frequency symptoms in Covid-19 virus

Source : Autor research

Based on the table, it can be concluded that the most common symptoms that affect most infected people are: headache, loss of smell, muscle pain and sore throat. Symptoms affecting a small group of infected people, mostly the elderly, are nausea and diarrhea. Covid-19 virus is transmitted by airborne droplets, contact, through droplets of saliva or mucus when coughing, sneezing, speech of an infected person near others, except direct contact, the virus can be transmitted indirectly from the surface to which the particles survive for some time. The problem lies in the fact that people who do not show any symptoms of infection and are considered healthy can potentially be infected and thus spread the infection further

without being aware of their own health situation. Infection of the disease, ie the period from infection to the first appearance of symptoms can last up to 14 days, but on average it is a period of three to six days.

Tuesday February 2nd	Monday, February 8th	Registered in 6 days
Latest number	Latest number	Recent cases
Global cases	Global cases	Infected
103,499,063	106,220,644	2,721,581
Global deaths	Global deaths	Death
2,240,726	2,318,566	77,840
Cases in USA	Cases in USA	Infected in USA
26,322,212	27,008,096	685,884

Table 2. Recent numbers of global cases within six days of infection and mortality and differences in U.S. cases

Source : By [Eliza Mackintosh, CNN](#)¹⁹

Version B.1.351 has been identified in at least 41 countries, including the United States, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). Other variants first observed in the United Kingdom and Brazil have been discovered in dozens more. And

¹⁸ 220px-Infectious_bronchitis_virus

¹⁹ CNN Coronavirus Update : 01.02.2021. 12:32, By [Eliza Mackintosh](#).

they are spreading fast. From the study, which has not yet been reviewed, it was not clear whether the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine protected against severe disease from variant B.1.351. The 2,000 participants in the clinical trial were mostly young healthy adults, who were unlikely to become seriously ill. But based on immune responses discovered in blood samples, the scientists said there was "still some hope" that the vaccine could protect against more severe cases. Several other manufacturers have said they are trying to solve the variant problem by developing amplified shots. The WHO Independent Vaccine Committee will meet on Monday to discuss the AstraZeneca vaccine and what the new study means for future vaccines..²⁰

At this stage of development, national methodologies are not sufficiently harmonized to make the data fully comparable across countries. However, even in the absence of quality official statistics, the results provide useful insights on the state of TSA implementation and on assessments of the economic and tourism dimension of tourism at EU and national level.²¹

3. Tourism in the countries of the western balkans

Tourism plays an important role in the economies of many countries, as is certainly the case in the Western Balkans and then in the European Union. For the countries of the Western Balkans, the development of tourism due to the development of the economy and the development of the labor market and the activation of a large number of employees in their territories who would not look for jobs in other EU countries due to the impact of the crisis. For the member states of the European Union, tourism has been very important for the development of the national economy and labor market, which also includes transport companies that contribute not only to economic development but also social, social and cultural development of tourist destinations for the benefit of all Western Balkan countries. Most

countries of the Western Balkans have a well-established system of statistics for tracking tourist destinations and conditions of incoming and outgoing travel, transport lines as well as tourist accommodation and services. The reason for the income of the broad economic sector lies in the fact that a large number of people participate in maintaining strategically sustainable living in the tourism market:

- participation of people in the establishment and review of a tourist destination with a protected natural area
- participation of local communities in the design of tourist destinations,
- participates in the management and protection of certain areas of nature,
- makes a profit by participating through protected areas of nature,
- by participating in investments related to the management of the area and to support local communities
- manages protected nature areas through participation
- participation of national interest by the local community and private organizations

3.1. Tourism as a factor in the development of economically underdeveloped areas

Tourism mainly developed in parts of the country where people were primarily engaged in livestock, fishing, viticulture and others. These were mostly small places away from shopping and urban centers where the rural population lived worse than the population of the urbanized part of the country. Peace, uncleaned air, good climate and beautiful scenery is exactly what the weary city population needed. It is for these reasons that the process of transferring money from the city population to the

²⁰ CNN Coronavirus Update, By [Eliza Mackintosh](#).

²¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-statistical-reports/-/KS-FT-17-002>

treasury of the economically underdeveloped part of the country is being launched. Material income was ultimately used to improve these parts of the country and improve life in them. The consequence of this tourism factor is a positive redistribution of capital. But some tourist destinations began to develop a long time ago, so today they employ workers from the rest of the country or the world.

3.2. The impact of tourism on employment

Human labor in tourism has a major value, unlike other industries, tourism craves workers in tertiary activities (catering, utilities, transport). The advantage of tourism is that it constantly demands and creates new jobs, it does not robotize people's work. a) Direct employment in tourism - catering, tourist mediation, retail trade, etc. b) Indirect employment in tourism - water supply, construction, IT support, etc.

In European countries, statistics are extremely relevant, they do not measure the overall contribution of tourism to the economy. To this end, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat) have developed a harmonized tourist satellite accounts system (TSA).²²

Planned Transports as a destination benefit used concept and classifications as well as international accounts and is an internationally recognized program for measuring tourism activity and the importance of tourism to national or regional economies. While the statistics of the western Balkan countries are more used on traditional tourism destinations, they primarily focus on the number of passengers

(number of visitors, number of nights, number of filled capacity of one market, etc.), where we can say creates one tourist destination.

4. TOURIST DESTINATIOS IN PRIŠTINA

Pristina is a major tourist destination as well as the capital of Kosovo, known as a university center for students from neighboring countries such as Albania, Macedonia and Montenegro. In 2012, tourism in Pristina attracted 36,186 foreign visitors. Most foreign tourists come from Albania, Turkey, Germany, the United States, Slovenia, Montenegro and Macedonia, and the number of visitors from other places is growing every year. The city has a large number of luxury hotels, modern restaurants, bars, pubs and very large nightclubs. Coffee bars are a representative icon of Pristina and can be found almost everywhere. The largest hotels in the city are the Swiss Diamond and the Grand Hotel Pristina located in the heart of the city. Other major hotels present in Pristina include the Emerald Hotel, Sirius Hotel and the Garden Hotel. Some of the most visited sights near the city include Batlav Lake and the Marble Cave, which are also among the most visited tourist destinations..²³

Photo 2. Swiss International Hotel in Priština

Tourism in Kosovo offers a rich tourist offer that is divided into five tourist regions - the central region of Pristina, the tourist region of the Albanian Alps, or Prokletije, and the region of Shara, Pomoravlje, Mitrovica and Bajgorška Shala. The Sharr Mountains and the Prokletije region stand out in particular.

²² 2008 Tourism Satellite Account: Recommended Methodological Framework (TSA:RMF 2008); United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat), Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO). The document is available on the Eurostat website (see footnote 1).

²³ [„12 thousand foreign tourists visited Kosovo \(alb. 12 mijë turistë të huaj e vizituan Kosovën\)“](#). 2013. Arhivirano iz [originala](#) na datum 3. 12. 2018. Pristupljeno 2. 12. 2018.

Kosovo offers a lot to tourists, and some of the more attractive destinations are the Prokletije and Shara National Parks. When we are in the countries of the Western Balkans and on the map, most of the tourists are from Asia who visit the cultural heritage that is under the protection of UNESCO. We hope that this year we will fight the virus and be able to continue future planning for the development of the economy in transport and tourism.

Among the main natural attractions are the Marble Cave in Gadimlje, the source of Beli Drim, the Miruša waterfall, the Rugova gorge, and natural and artificial lakes and springs of thermo-mineral waters. Among the cultural and historical monuments in Kosovo, tourists can visit the monasteries of Gracanica near Pristina, Visoka Decani between Gjakova and Peja, and the Sinan Pasha Mosque in Prizren, and there is also an archeological site of the Roman and early Byzantine city of Ulpiana near the capital of Kosovo. .

4.1. Number of tourist visitors for the period 2008 – 2013

We will show the number of tourist visitors

TIME PERIOD	NUMBER OF TOURIST VISITORS		NIGHT STAY	
	Domestic	Foreign	Domestic	Foreign
TM1 2008	4.104	4.982	4.994	10.419

TM2 2008	5.142	6.380	5.824	12.428
TM3 2008	5.663	6.519	6.542	11.629
TM4 2008	4.769	6.735	5.242	12.434
TM3 2009	13.183	11.445	13.426	20.525
TM4 2009	17.925	8.017	18.026	23.546
TM3 2010	8.648	8.775	8.664	18.433
TM4 2010	5.556	7.807	5.561	20.180
TM3 2011	7.806	8.249	8.746	16.017
TM4 2011	11.141	6.676	11.859	15.730
TM3 2012	13.613	16.117	13.657	28.016
TM4 2012	12.172	12.683	13.196	27.055
TM3 2013	12.421	12.673	14.065	22.426

Table 2. Number of visitors (domestic and foreign) and overnight stays, for the period TM1 2008 - TM3 2013

Period number of visitors and overnight stay in TM3 2013. number of visitors is 25 094 visitors, of which 49.5% are domestic visitors and 50.5% foreign visitors, and the number of overnight stays in TM3 2013 is 36 491 overnight stays, where 38.57% of overnight stays are from the local population and 61.46% are foreigners.²⁴

²⁴ Agjencia E Statistikave Të Kosovës, Ueb-Faqe: [Http://Esk.Rks-Gov.Net](http://Esk.Rks-Gov.Net)

4.2. Number of monthly visitors for the period 2018 – 2019

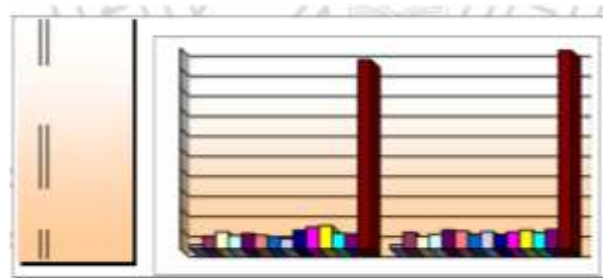
4.3. NUMBER OF VISITORS OF THE YEAR

Month	2018	2019
January	6357	8219
February	8472	6285
March	6701	7305
April	7675	9393
May	6790	8886
June	5973	7357
July	5195	8593
August	9268	7203
September	10837	8445
October	11603	9375
November	7842	8175
December	7505	9705
Total	94218	98941

Tabela 1. Broj posetilaca, 2018-2019²⁵

4.3. Number of monthly visitors for the period 2018 – 2019

The number of visitors in 2018 is 94218, the number of visitors in 2019 is 98941, the difference between 2018 and 2019 is 4 723 higher number of visitors in 2019. We will graph the difference in the number of visitors.



Graph 1. Number of visitors, 2018-2019, graphic presentation ²⁶

5. CONCLUSION

The Agency for Statistics of Kosovo (KAS) published the Statistics of Hospitality in Kosovo for the third quarter (Q3) in 2020. In Q3 2020, 206 hotels operating in Kosovo were part of the survey. In Q3 2020, there were 40,272 visitors (foreign and domestic), of which 47.14% were domestic and 52.86% were foreign. While the number of overnight stays was 80,980, of this number 45.32% of overnight stays were from domestic and 54.68% from foreign visitors. The region of Peja has the largest number of visitors and its overnight stays with 13,885 visitors and 38,188 overnight stays. The largest number of foreign visitors is concentrated in Pristina, Peja, Prizren, etc. As for foreign visitors, the largest number of them were from Albania, Germany, Turkey, etc. In the first seven months of 2019, the number of visitors in

²⁵ <https://ask.rks-gov.net/media/5421/godisnji-izvestaj-2019-srb.pdf>

²⁶ <https://ask.rks-gov.net/media/5421/godisnji-izvestaj-2019-srb.pdf>

Kosovo was about half a million tourists, and in the same period in 2020, only 50 thousand tourists requested private accommodation. The Tourist Union of Kosovo states that tourism has started to develop in Kosovo, even if the COVID-19 virus destroyed everything. And when the story of the economy and the story of money are in euros, then it is a 20 million euro deficit, unlike the previous year, and only when it comes to data on accommodation.

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