

CHANGES IN THE VOLUME OF TOURIST TRAFFIC FROM POLAND TO SPLIT-DALMATIA REGION IN CROATIA IN THE PERIOD OF 2002-2011

Tomasz WISKULSKI⁴, Marta JAŻWIECKA⁵

ABSTRACT. The main aim of author is a presentation of diversity of tourism in the coastal part of the Split-Dalmatia region of Croatia in the period of 2002-2011. Split-Dalmatia region is the main reception area for the Polish tourism. In the years 2002-2011 it focused 24,3% to 33% of the Polish tourism on the territory of Croatia. The author attempts to show that transport network is important for the size of tourism in the study area and a major factor in creating the traffic volume is the price of services. The analysis also shows that the Polish tourism is gradually transferred from the island to the mainland areas. It has been shown by declining or constant number of Polish tourists on the island of Hvar and Brač with a significant increase the number of tourists in mainland part of the region. In addition, the author tries to present the possible benefits and risks of accession of Croatia to EU in tourism movement.

INTRODUCTION

In the history of Polish tourism in Croatia can be distinguished two periods which are characterized by the increased intensity of tourism movement. The first period of increased intensity of tourism concerns the seventies and eighties of the twentieth century. The contemporary geopolitical situation in Poland and Europe made that period of travel abroad largely limited. The split of the world into areas of influence forced from people looking for rest outside the country searching tourist centers located in countries of People's Republic. Polish tourists who want to

⁴ Jędrzej Śniadecki Academy of Physical Education and Sport, Departament of Tourism and Recreation Management, K. Górskiego street 1, 80-001 Gdańsk, e-mail: twiskulski@awf.gda.pl

⁵ University of Gdańsk, Institute of Geography, Department of Regional Development Geography, Bażyńskiego 4, 80-952 Gdańsk, e-mail: jazwiecka.marta@gmail.com

spend their time abroad decided to go to Yugoslavia to the Adriatic, either to Bulgaria or Romania to the Black Sea. The second period of interest in Croatia has been beginning in 1996, when the tourism industry in a country was started by rebuilding after the civil war. This period lasts until today contributing significantly to the growth of GDP of Croatia.

Ten-year period from 2002 to 2011, although it was a disturbed period, it seems to be the representative period for measuring changes in volume of tourist traffic. It is a period with many changes in the social and economic situation on the territories of both countries. Poland joined the EU in 2004, Croatia applied for EU membership in 2003 and began accession negotiations in 2005. On 9 December 2011 the EU and Croatia signed the Treaty of Accession and in 2007 it took place the beginning of the economic crisis whose effects have been felt to this day.

According to data published in statistical yearbooks of Republic of Croatia the number of foreign tourists visited the country increased from 6 944 thousand in 2002 to 9 927 thousand in 2012, which is giving an increase of nearly 43%. Based on the same data we can see that the main tourist reception area is coastal area, it had been focusing in that period from 88% to almost 92% of tourists in Croatia.

Among the coastal areas characterized by the largest Polish tourist traffic we can see that the largest number of tourists focuses on Split-Dalmatia region. During a period of ten years this percentage has been changed rising from 24,3% in 2002 to 33% in 2011 all it has shown an upward trend.

PERIOD BEFORE 2004

During the years 2002-2004 we can see that for both countries that period was a turning point in many ways. It was a short period in which Poland finished preparations for full accession to the EU and Croatia was on the beginning of the road to the Community. This period didn't remain

with no influence on tourism (Table 1). Although on this area in 2002 was focused more than 24,3% of Polish tourists. In the next years we can observe a significant decrease in the number of Polish tourists visiting the region. However, it was a tendency which has its reflection in the situation of all the coastal regions of Croatia.

Table 1. Changes in the number of Polish tourists in coastal municipalities of Split-Dalmatia region in 2002-2004

Municipalities	2002	2003	2004	2003/2002	2004/2003	2004/2002
Seget	10 297	7 111	7 888	69,1	110,9	76,6
Kaštela	10 896	6 210	6 779	57,0	109,2	62,2
Okrug	2 694	2 376	2 815	88,2	118,5	104,5
Podstrana	949	836	964	88,1	115,3	101,6
Dugi Rat	1 571	958	1 144	61,0	119,4	72,8
Omiš	5 247	3 791	5 113	72,3	134,9	97,4
Brela	1 390	645	894	46,4	138,6	64,3
Baška Voda	6 151	4 916	3 382	79,9	68,8	55,0
Makarska	5 321	3 058	3 886	57,5	127,1	73,0
Tučepi	2 108	831	746	39,4	89,8	35,4
Podgora	6 849	5 662	7 722	82,7	136,4	112,7
Gradac	2 742	2 085	1 964	76,0	94,2	71,6
Sućuraj	906	162	206	17,9	127,2	22,7
Sveta Nedjelja	167	157	242	94,0	154,1	144,9
Stari Grad	3 216	1 998	2 129	62,1	106,6	66,2
Komiža	682	203	211	29,8	103,9	30,9
Vis	120	114	176	95,0	154,4	146,7
Šolta	1 061	221	1 163	20,8	526,2	109,6
Sutivan	349	200	326	57,3	163,0	93,4
Milna	37	24	31	64,9	129,2	83,8
Supetar	5 126	2 827	2 229	55,2	78,8	43,5
Postira	503	151	188	30,0	124,5	37,4
Bol	1 681	1 339	1 694	79,7	126,5	100,8
Pučišća	267	32	21	12,0	65,6	7,9
Selca	420	374	335	89,0	89,6	79,8
Trogir	1 765	2 161	2 750	122,4	127,3	155,8
Split	2 074	3 188	1 398	153,7	43,9	67,4
Marina	1 873	1 347	1 458	71,9	108,2	77,8
Hvar	7 624	4 313	4 518	56,6	104,8	59,3
Jelsa	2 934	2 468	2 349	84,1	95,2	80,1
TOTAL	87 020	59 758	64 721	68,7	108,3	74,4

Initial analysis has been subjected 30 of 32 coastal municipalities in the Split-Dalmatia region (Fig. 1a). Due to the lack of tourist was excluded two municipalities: Nerežišća on the island of Hvar and Zadvarje between municipalities Omiš and Brela. Comparing the years 2002 and 2003 can be observed decrease in the number of tourists from Poland by more than 31%. Analyzing this situation we should look at the problem from two sides. The main reason for the large number of tourists in 2002 can be regarded as the country's transport accessibility. Following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 the significant decline of interest were areas where the main type of transport were planes. Tourists trying to relax in the Mediterranean climate were somehow forced to use road transport. They analyzing traffic demand of distance and chose Croatia. However, decrease in the number of tourists in 2003 was caused by the following factors:

- an increase in prices for accommodation and catering in Croatia;
- excess of tourist capacity in 2002;
- 10% increase in the value of Euro for the Polish zloty compared to 2002;
- restricting foreign funding packages from the Social Fund.

It should be noted that this decrease did not concern the entire study area. In two communities was noted a significant increase of Polish tourists - the municipality of Trogir and Split. This can be combined with the fact that both cities are on the UNESCO list

However, in 2004, in the study area was observed over 8% increase in the number of Polish tourists with only a 1,1% increase in the number of all Polish tourists on the coast of Croatia. This was due to factors such as:

- a decrease in value of Euro since the end of January 2004;
- enlargement of the EU;
- sedation in air transportation;

- unfavorable weather on the Polish coast;
- opening of the motorway links to the north of the country.

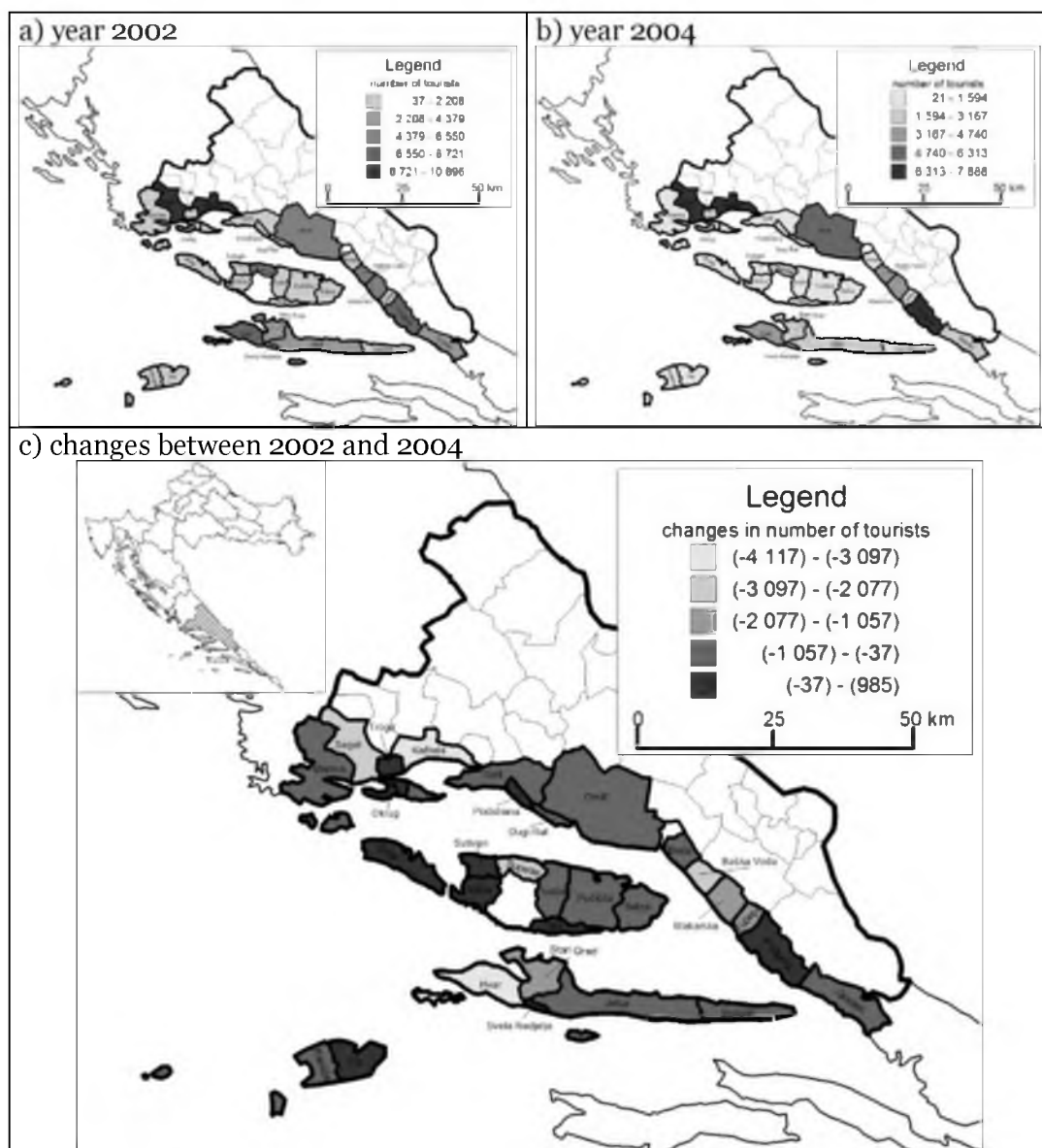


Fig. 1. Number and changes of Polish tourists in years 2002 and 2004
source: own elaboration based on: „Turizam u primorskim gradovima i općima”

Analyzing the period of 2002-2004 can be observed decrease of the Polish tourism in the Split-Dalmatia region by 25,6% (22 299 tourists)

(Fig. 1c). However, it is the smallest of all observed decrease of seven coastal regions of Croatia. The average decline in the whole coast was 32,8%.

The biggest decline in interest in the offer of accommodation was characterized by a municipality Pučišća, a decrease of 92,1%, and Sućuraj (77,3%). However, there are the municipalities visited by a small number of Polish tourists so decline have no significant impact on the situation in the region. Analyzing the number of Polish tourists in the study area in terms of the absolute number of tourists can be noticed that the biggest decrease was in Kaštela, loss of interest of 4 117 (37,8%) visitors in year 2002.

The biggest increase in interest has a town of Trogir - an increase of 55,8% in over period. This is due to the location of the municipality at a distance of 5 km from the Split airport, the only airport in the study area.

Watching on data from 2004 we can see that the biggest fall in the number of visitors has a Split – municipality which previous year was recorded the highest increase in the number of tourists (Fig. 1b). The main reasons of the phenomena we can admit continued increase in the prices of services in Split compared with the stagnation or even decline in prices in the other research centers.

PERIOD AFTER 2004

2005 was the first full year of Polish membership in the EU and the second year for the tourist season, when crossing borders between EU member states was possible without passports. This has helped to a large extent the development of tourism market, not only between the Polish and Croatia, but also between other Mediterranean countries. It had a huge influence on a size of tourism in the study area. Facilitation on crossing of national borders has become a catalyst for increased growth period. Already in 2005, compared with the previous year, can be observed

8,3% increase in the number of Polish tourists in the study area. 11 municipalities from all studied were characterized by a decrease in the number of Polish tourists with the largest decline occurred in the municipalities of Podgora (-1 788 tourists) and Kaštela (-1 002 tourists). As the main reasons for that significant decline should be considered the position of those two municipalities. In the case of Kaštela municipality the main reason was the increasing pollution of the Kaštela lagoon and in the case of Podgora municipality the main reason was peripheral location of the airport of Split and limited access to the airport in Dubrovnik by 17 km of coastline belonging to the Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The biggest increases were characterized municipalities Baška Voda (+1 963) and Seget (+1 076). In the case of municipality Baška Voda increase was applied to all municipalities located in a short distance from the town of Makarska, but in Makarska was noticed a decrease in the number of Polish tourists. This was due to rising costs of tourists stay and exceeding level of tourism capacity. The increase in the number of tourists in town Seget was caused by excess tourism capacity and a significant increase in tourism prices in the town of Trogir.

Comparing the years 2006 and 2005 can be observed 14,8% increase in the number of Polish tourists. The largest percentage increase occurred in the municipalities Pučišća (121,4%) and Selca (89,7%). However, these are municipalities where the number of Polish tourists is not significant, despite a significant increase, they do not play a significant role in the development of the Polish tourism. The largest decreases were registered in the municipalities Kaštela (-24,6%) and Marina (-32,6%). Both of these decreases was accompanied by a rise in the number of tourists in the town of Trogir and Okrug. It might have been exceeded the level of tourism capacity in these towns and exceeded the level of tourist absorption in the municipality of Kaštela. In terms of the nominal number

of tourists the greatest increase occurred in the municipalities of Omiš (+2 070 tourists) and Okrug (+1 917 tourists).

In 2010 in comparison with 2009 there has been only 2,8% increase in the number of tourists. Such a small increase in the number of Polish tourists was a consequence of the global economic crisis. However, Croatia quickly tackled the consequences of the crisis and already in 2009 recorded an increase in the total number of tourists compared to 2007. In 2010 the largest percentage decline in the number of tourists took place in the municipalities of Hvar (-68,3%), Stari Grad (-44,9%) and Trogir (-42,7%). In the case of municipalities Stari Grad and Hvar decrease in number of tourists was noticed almost on the entire island of Hvar, the exception was the Municipality of Jelsa, where growth in 2010 was about 7,5%, while already in the following year there was a decline in the number of Polish tourists in the area. This significant decrease in the number of Polish tourists in Trogir can be explained by an increase in prices compared to neighboring coastal communities as all these municipalities (Seget, Kaštela, Split, Okrug). The number of Polish tourists increased in these towns. The biggest percentage increase in this period were characterized by a municipality Postira (73,9%) and Komiža (46,5%). In terms of nominal values there were the municipalities of minor importance for the Polish tourism. The increase in total Polish tourist traffic in the study area had a community Podgora (+2 374 tourists), Okrug (+2 368 tourists) and Baška Voda (+2 308 tourists). Two of them are located on the Makarska Riviera where in that period was an overall increase in the number of Polish tourists except Gradac municipality where the highway A1 is still under construction. However, growth in the number of Polish tourists in the municipality Okrug can be explained by a very large decrease in the number of tourists in the neighboring town of Trogir.

Comparing the years 2011 to 2010 can be seen up 13,8% increase in the number of Polish tourists. The largest percentage increase occurred in

the municipalities of Stari Grad (45,6%), Makarska (42,4%), Marina (42,2%) and Omiš (40%). In the case of municipalities Stari Grad and Marina, due to the small nominal number of Polish tourists, the increase has not the greatest impact on the total number of Polish tourists in the study area. However, in the case of municipalities Makarska and Omiš increase could be due to their geographical location on the mainland, because almost all of the municipalities located on the mainland of the study area reported an increase in the number of tourists - the exception is the region of Gradac. Analyzing the reductions in the number of Polish tourists the main factor in a given period may be their insular location so they have a reduced transportation availability.

Analyzing the period from 2005 to 2011 can be observed annual increase in the number of Polish tourists in the study area (Table 2). Only in the case of the three municipalities there was a decrease in the number of Polish tourists (Fig. 2), these are the municipalities of Hvar (-3 670 tourists), Kaštela (- 3 016 tourists) and Jelsa (- 1 082 tourists). In case of Kaštela so significant decrease was caused by a very close proximity to the airport Split and location on the Kaštela lagoon, one of the more polluted reservoir of water in Croatia. Despite the increased interest in reservoir by the authorities and getting cleaner water, in the minds of tourists lagoon is considered as a low-attractive. In the case of municipalities Hvar and Jelsa as two largest municipalities in the island of Hvar the main reason of the decline in a significant increase in prices associated with the ferries to the island and decrease the availability of transport in the region.

The greatest increase in the number of Polish tourists have a community Podgora (+12 178 tourists), Makarska (+11 666 tourists), Baska Voda (+11 622 tourists), Seget (+10 618 tourists), Omis (+ 10 196 tourists) and Okrug (+9 557 tourists). This significant increase in the number of tourists in these communities was due to several factors. These are factors such as:

- increase the transportation availability by putting into service further A1 motorway;
- continental location;
- lower interest on centers situated on the islands by increases of ferry cost.

Table 2. Changes in the number of Polish tourists in coastal municipalities of Split-Dalmatia region in 2005-2011

Municipality	2005	2006	2009	2010	2011	2006/ 2005	2009/ 2006	2010/ 2009	2011/ 2010
Seget	8 964	8 606	15 910	16 534	19 582	96,0	184,9	103,9	118,4
Kaštela	5 777	4 356	2 292	2 447	2 761	75,4	52,6	106,8	112,8
Okrug	3 274	5 191	10 932	13 300	12 831	158,6	210,6	121,7	96,5
Solin	-	-	1	94	73		-	9400,0	77,7
Podstrana	868	1 020	2 231	2 774	2 970	117,5	218,7	124,3	107,1
Dugi Rat	1 317	1 835	3 621	3 710	4 715	139,3	197,3	102,5	127,1
Omiš	4 752	6 822	9 818	10 680	14 948	143,6	143,9	108,8	140,0
Brela	1 142	1 580	3 182	3 870	4 193	138,4	201,4	121,6	108,3
Baška Voda	5 345	4 463	10 544	12 852	16 967	83,5	236,3	121,9	132,0
Makarska	3 805	3 823	9 736	10 863	15 471	100,5	254,7	111,6	142,4
Tupie	1 051	1 679	3 178	4 373	4 651	159,8	189,3	137,6	106,4
Podgora	5 934	7 284	13 945	16 319	18 112	122,8	191,4	117,0	111,0
Gradach	2 276	3 796	10 824	8 613	8 091	166,8	285,1	79,6	93,9
Sućuraj	525	619	538	450	582	117,9	86,9	83,6	129,3
Sveta Nedjelja	253	262	469	-	-	103,6	179,0	-	-
Stari Grad	1 463	2 707	4 377	2 412	3 511	185,0	161,7	55,1	145,6
Komiža	303	365	514	753	537	120,5	140,8	146,5	71,3
Vis	255	240	399	548	352	94,1	166,3	137,3	64,2
Šolta	833	1 281	790	1 059	1 332	153,8	61,7	134,1	125,8
Sutivan	330	325	609	664	856	98,5	187,4	109,0	128,9
Milna	56	49	70	-	-	87,5	142,9	-	-
Superat	1 802	2 428	3 814	4 465	3 433	134,7	157,1	117,1	76,9
Postira	278	358	700	1 217	1 006	128,8	195,5	173,9	82,7
Bol	1 719	1 608	3 112	3 626	3 523	93,5	193,5	116,5	97,2
Pučišća	28	62	63	59	48	221,4	101,6	93,7	81,4
Selca	273	518	919	913	733	189,7	177,4	99,3	80,3
Trogir	2 503	3 536	7 966	4 562	4 883	141,3	225,3	57,3	107,0
Split	2 258	2 920	4 749	5 343	6 795	129,3	162,6	112,5	127,2
Marina	1 368	922	2 795	2 911	4 138	67,4	303,1	104,2	142,2
Hvar	5 145	4 659	5 438	1 726	1 475	90,6	116,7	31,7	85,5
Jelsa	2 783	3 211	3 436	3 693	1 701	115,4	107,0	107,5	46,1
TOTAL	66 680	76 525	136 972	140 830	160 270	114,8	179,0	102,8	113,8

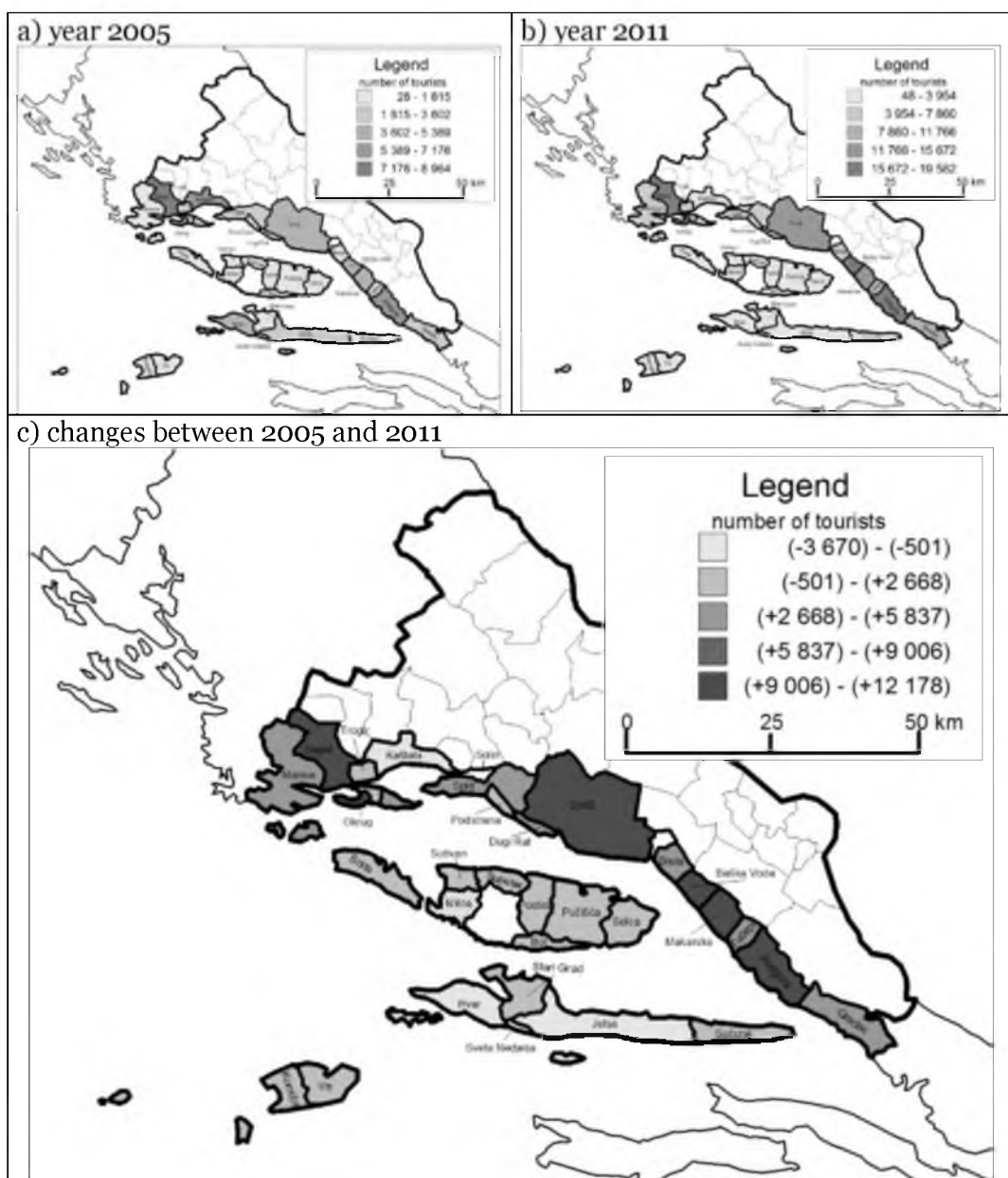


Fig. 2. Number and changes of Polish tourists in years 2005 and 2011
 source: own elaboration based on: „Turizam u primorskim gradovima i općima”

THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE ACCESSION OF CROATIA TO THE EU

Croatia's accession to the EU on the first of July will carry through many implications for the size of tourism. As it was in the case of the countries acceding to the EU in 2004, in the initial period may be a sharp increase in the number of tourists. Another benefit of membership will be able to become a benefit from EU funds. The money obtained in this way will be used for the development of tourism infrastructure and restoration of the monuments. Together with the new possibilities associated with increased investment attractiveness is the development of accommodation facilities. Also environment will be improved. It will be possible to achieve through the introduction of a large number of EU directives devoted to this term. In the long term should be also made a improve the transport accessibility. Will be possible to raise funds for completion of the project related to the construction of the motorway network and should be more low-cost air travel companies which today are present on the Croatian sky. In the long term, it should be also lead to increased tourist traffic. It will happen through Croatia's accession to the Schengen area. Accession to the EU will also help to increase the attractiveness of Croatia by lowering the cost of calls to other countries of the European Community.

Unfortunately, the enlargement of the EU for Croatia may have some negative effects. The first, quite visible to tourists might be the increased checks at the border with Bosnia and Herzegovina on the way to Dubrovnik. However, the EU's position in this case is quite clear. First of all they have to find the best solution between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina with a mutually satisfactory. At the moment a number of potential solutions to the problem are provides. Among other things, these are solutions such as:

- construction of bridges connecting the main part of Croatia with Dubrovnik by using the neighboring islands;

- construction of a transport corridor in the form of a flyover above the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- construction of a tunnel under the city of Neum.

Additionally, despite the increased traffic from the territory of the Member States the number of tourists from outside of EU will be reduced. This will be caused by changes in passport regulations on the Croatian border from the date of accession. The final factor limiting the attractiveness of Croatia in terms of purchasing would be elimination of the possibility of making purchases in a duty-free shops or the abolition of the submission of applications for VAT refund for goods purchased on the territory of Croatia. However, in the case of Polish tourists shopping tourism is not a priority objective of the tour. This factor should not significantly affect the size of the Polish tourism.

References

- Turizam u primorskim gradovima i općima, Statistical Reports, 2003, Zagreb.
 Turizam u primorskim gradovima i općima, Statistical Reports, 2004, Zagreb.
 Turizam u primorskim gradovima i općima, Statistical Reports, 2005, Zagreb.
 Turizam u primorskim gradovima i općima, Statistical Reports, 2006, Zagreb.
 Turizam u primorskim gradovima i općima, Statistical Reports, 2007, Zagreb.
 Turizam u primorskim gradovima i općima, Statistical Reports, 2010, Zagreb.
 Turizam u primorskim gradovima i općima, Statistical Reports, 2011, Zagreb.
 Turizam u primorskim gradovima i općima, Statistical Reports, 2012, Zagreb.
 Wendt J., Ilies A., 2012, Polish tourists at Croatia and Slovenia 1991-2011 [in:] J. Wendt, I. Josan, A. Ilies (ed.), Chosen Problems of Tourism Geography, Editura Universitatii din Oradea, Oradea.
 Wiskulski T., 2013, Dostępność transportowa centrów turystycznych Chorwacji na przykładzie transportu lotniczego [in:] T. Wiskulski, M. Pilarski (ed.), Współczesne zagadnienia, problemy i wyzwania w badaniach geograficznych, tom II, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, Gdańsk.