

## **TOURIST VALORISATION OF NATIONAL PARKS IN SPAIN AND CROATIA – COMPARISON BETWEEN THE NATIONAL PARKS OF CABRERA AND KORNATI**

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**Abstract:** As a form of protected natural heritage, national parks have an important attraction role in tourism, as one of the leading world economic businesses. It is the planning itself of the concept, role and significance of a natural area which have a special importance in current national parks organisation. The goal of this paper is to note the importance of proper management of national parks by means of improvement of tourist results, while simultaneously improving the preservation of the environment. With regard to the analysis of the model of organisation of two coastal and island Mediterranean region national parks, located in two European Union countries, the hypothesis reads: tourist valorisation of Croatian national parks lags behind the organisation and positioning of the national leading Mediterranean destinations. The research opens new questions, but also offers qualitative solutions for the purposes of the best possible positioning and valorisation of sustainable tourism in protected areas.

**Topic group:** Industry, area or region specific studies

**JEL Classification:** L83, Q01, Q26

**Key words:** protected area, sustainable development, nautical tourism, national parks

### **1. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM OF NATIONAL PARKS**

When considering the theme area, we should, first of all, refer to the research problem framework. It is presented in the introduction and illustration of the applied methodology and literature review follow. Thereafter, room for research implications is opened in the paper, its implementation and the discussion on the acquired knowledge.

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Since the very beginnings of the awareness of the idea about the need for protection and valorisation of specific nature areas, attitudes have been changing, as well as the motives and methods of management and utilisation of protected areas and the need for protection of specific parts of the country, in order to contribute to a quality cohabitation of men and nature, was recognised.

By means of tourist valorisation of national parks, areas with unique features and aesthetical values are presented to the tourist market and they are economically, socially

and ecologically exploited. The concept of sustainable tourism development represents a strategy of the equilibrium of men and nature in the tourist sector and the essence itself is a rational utilisation of resources, in order to prevent their exhaustion.

Together with the highly estimated resources for the development of summer holiday tourism, comparative advantages are also recognised for the development of special forms of tourism, so programmes are being prepared and niches occupied in the tourist market. This is the task of individual Croatian tourist promotional activities, with the aim to “prepare the ground” for the occupation of suitable market positions; above all, outside the spheres of mass tourism. Simultaneously, it is possible to use foreign tour operators as the largest, most productive and most inexpensive link between the Croatian offer, focused on the niches in the tourist market and the mass market of packages and tourist demand, on the other side. From the aspect of valorisation of tourist attractions and areas which develop tourism in Croatia, the following forms of tourism, as well as potentials for the development of its selective forms have been evidenced: nautical tourism, rural tourism, within which agritourism and hunting and fishing tourism are the most prominent, tourism in national parks, tourism of coastal and mountain resorts and thermal spas. The potential is recognised for the development of congress, sports and religious tourism.

The areas of a more preserved Croatian landscape and the national parks areas and parks of nature are valorised through their activity factors; however, they become endangered zones with big tourist migrations. Tourist, and all other activities, must be subordinated to the nature protection principles, so that tourism, with the necessary limitations, acts as a factor which will facilitate visiting, enjoyment and viewing of the protected nature areas, thus preserving their cultural and historical, scientific and wider social significance.

## **1.2. METHODS**

In the scientific research, conducted on the comparison of the case studies of the Spanish National Park Cabrera and Croatian National Park Kornati, as well as in the paper formulation and presentation, numerous scientific methods were used in corresponding combinations, such as: the method of analysis and synthesis, the method of deduction and induction, the statistical method, the method of comparison, the method of description and the method of classification.

## **1.3. THEORY**

Vidaković (2003) identifies the programme of arrangement which “synthesises protective, tourist and economic and cultural and historical aspects and the general and long-term concept of work and life in the national parks”, while Alfier (1977), through the pioneering considerations of the theme areas of tourism development and protection of areas in Croatia, appeals to mutual understanding of associations for nature protection and the tourist industry, of which the first one gravitates towards the intensification of nature protection and limitation of its exploitation, while the latter one, towards the intensification of economic activities. Carić (2006), Črnjar (2009) and Klarić (2011) point to the importance of strategic planning of sustainable development and protection of sensitive areas. Otero, Garrabou and Vargas (2013) study the problem areas of preservation of bio diversity in the protected areas, while Dudley (2008) considers the guidelines of management of specific protected area categories. Blažević and Knežević (2006) observe

the resource base of Croatian national parks and present the potentials of future development and tourist valorisation. Casier (2013) concerns himself with that topic on the example of Spain as a Mediterranean destination.

Sustainable tourism development is represented by the growth which closely follows the responsibility towards the environment, society and also towards us. The sustainability problem is a global problem, as it does not affect only a specific country, region or continent. Modern and accountable society pays attention to the protection of the environment and development of local communities. A generally accepted definition of sustainable development was created on the occasion of the UN Conference on Environment and Development, which was held in Rio, in 1992. According to the United Nations' report, named the Brundtland Commission Report, sustainable development is: "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Brundtland, 1992). Sustainable tourism development uses natural and cultural heritage for the purposes of increasing the number of visitors and profits, but in such a way that it is kept also for future generations (Klarić, 2011).

Sustainable tourism principles include ecological sustainability which implies a long-term development, harmonised with ecological processes, biological diversities and resources, social and cultural sustainability, which emanates from the social tourism functions and which is manifested through socialisation among people, as well as through the economic sustainability principles, which are founded on healthy and economically efficient development, which includes optimal resource management in the manner that future generations can also use it. Such a development implies resource management in the way that basic economic, social and aesthetic demands are met, while, at the same time, preserving the cultural integrity, basic ecological processes and biological diversity (Berger, 2008). Preserved resource diversity and attraction form the basis of the tourism valorisation and future sustainable development.

There are approximately 10,000 protected zones in Europe; some of them are very small, categorised as protected landscapes and some large, categorised as national parks. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) categorised the protected zones into the following categories (Dudley, 2008):

1. Strictly protected nature reserves, which include strictly protected nature reserves and wilderness areas,
2. National parks,
3. Natural monuments,
4. Wild animal habitats/species management areas,
5. Protected landscapes,
6. Reserves - sources,
7. Natural biological areas – anthropological reserves,
8. Managed sources,
9. World heritage centres.

The most numerous protected zones are protected landscapes; there are 1,097, followed by managed nature reserves, 705, and national parks, 143. (IUCN)

There are several definitions of the term National Park, but the New Delhi one, from 1969, is the most appropriate. It encompasses national park provisions/postulates and criteria:

1. A national park is a relatively large area of exceptional beauty, where one or several ecosystems have not, in essence, been changed by human utilisation and where flora and fauna and geological and morphological features have a special significance for science, education and recreation.
2. The park is taken care of by the highest competent body in the state, taking measures to ensure that, in the entire protected area; colonisation and exploitation are prevented or limited, in order to preserve ecological, geomorphological and aesthetic features, which were the prerequisite for the establishment of the protected territory.
3. Visiting is permitted under certain conditions and it has a recreational, educational and cultural purpose.

It was also stated that recreational activities which could cause harm to some strictly protected areas and disturb the biological balance must be excluded from the national park belts. (Otero, Garrabou, Vargas, 2013)

Tourist and all other activities must be subordinated to the nature protection principles, so that tourism, with necessary limitations, acts as a factor which will facilitate visiting, enjoyment and viewing of the protected natural areas, thus preserving their cultural and historical, scientific and wider social significance.

The degree of national park protection has its specific zones and, in each zone, purpose, capacity dimensioning, specific contents, conditions and visiting possibilities, i.e. generally speaking, the behaviour while visiting, are determined. The ecological policy contains the measures which have preventive, repressive and reparative functions: avoidance of further environmental endangerment, limitation of current pressure/strain and pollution, i.e. removal and reduction of already incurred damage to the environment (Črnjar 2009).

Five zones are anticipated within the park protected areas. They are: (FNNPE, 1993)

1. Forbidden zone – a zone which is strictly protected from any form of tourism.
2. Quiet zone – a zone of limited access to individuals or small groups (up to 15 persons).
3. Zone of limited tourism without additional development – tourist activities emerge, compatible with the tourist area type without additional infrastructural development.
4. Zone of sustainable tourism development – a zone in which, according to the protected area type, tourism can be developed.
5. Zone outside of protected areas – attractive zones in which a form of tourism can be developed with a higher degree of construction freedom, as opposed to the sustainable tourism zones.

According to the WCMC (World Conservation Monitoring Centre), the general scheme for protected area planning would include, as the first element, the concept in which ideas about the importance of protection of specific areas are developed and in which an important role is played also by different associations and non-governmental organisations. In promotion, as the next planning step, it is necessary to present those ideas to the general public and to gain the confidence of the local population, local authorities and other organisations at the state level, in order for them to recognise the purpose of protection of a specific area. The subsequent planning course includes the formulation and the commencement of execution, which are sometimes processed simultaneously, thus collecting the data for the preparation of the project proposal, which must justify its financing and declaration of area protection, as well as the preparation of the pilot project. Execution, as the next planning step, begins much earlier, as early as in the preparation

phase and includes public relations, natural resource management and ecological education. The planning scheme concluding phase is the analysis, which is the basis for new concepts and which contains the analysis of the executed work so far, goal achievement and is used in protection of a specific nature area.

In the world, there are different strategies of protected area planning and the accent is put on the most favourable concept, which will unite the natural basis with a satisfactory level of economic features. For the planning of protected areas, a series of experts are needed, starting from geographers, geologists, economists and other, who will correctly consider different elements. When decision making, it is necessary to obtain the answers to the questions which will later contribute to an efficient protected area management, such as benefits for the local community, the significance of those benefits, which area would be protected, financial means needed to be invested and in what measure natural resources should be used and protected. Although the natural heritage values are immeasurable, it is still necessary to consider the justification for protection of the specific areas, calculate benefits and costs and benefit increase which is brought by protection for a particular country and local population.

The importance of Croatian national parks Brijuni, Risnjak, Slapovi Krke, Paklenica, Kornati, Mljet, Plitvička jezera and Velebit (Ministry of Tourism, [www.mint.hr](http://www.mint.hr), 27th November 2013), which are situated in the vicinity of important tourist areas, is manifested in selective programmes and excursions, which is possible to link to hotel products and to place in the tourist market.

## **2. NATIONAL PARKS WITH THE PURPOSE OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**

Strategic management of national park tourism includes optimisation of dynamics of the strain caused by tourist visits and equal distribution throughout the year, as well as intensification in the pre- and post-season. A good organisation of parks requires avoidance of concentrations by encouraging short stays in the areas of the highest sensitivity level, as well as directing visitors towards peripheral areas, to the established information centres, commercial offers and hostelry facilities. Adequate management ensures that development remains within the permitted and planned capacities of each part of the protected area, as well as retention of the environmental quality standard.

Hostelry and accommodation offers in Croatian national parks are of low quality. Apart from unfavourable economic conditions in which the state, as the owner of public institutions, struggles to set aside financial means for investment in order to improve the quality of accommodation, the problem area of economic and market aspects also emerges, with low return rates and, coupled with the protected area restrictions, limits the investment.

Croatian national parks record increased levels of organisation, they are more efficiently promoted and the number of tourist agencies which organise excursions to national parks or offer specialised tourist programmes, is also on the increase. The total number of visitors evidenced in the park is often the result of an estimate. Namely, while some parks are organised in a manner in which it is very hard to enter without paying for a ticket, in some other parks the visiting system is such that, officially, i.e. through the tickets sold, it is possible to evidence just some of the visits. The data on the total number of visitors is, therefore, a combination of realistic, evidenced visits and estimates of the total number of visitors. The entry tickets to national parks include parking, tours of the park itself, group guide services, use of panoramic trains or boats on the lakes for transport

and there are no limitations as to the number of visitors. The income of all national parks and nature parks is approximately 50 million euros or 375 million kunas and the money generated through tourism and accommodation facilities is, among others, utilised also for preservation of the parks (Ministry of Tourism, [www.mint.hr](http://www.mint.hr), 27th November 2013).

By further analysis, categorisation of the protected areas in Croatia is considered, as well as the level of management and financing sources. The Croatian legislation classifies the protected areas into 9 categories, like the IUCN, with a small difference in the ranking and content description (State Institute for Nature Protection, Categories of protected areas in Croatia, <http://www.dzrp.hr/zasticena-podrucja/kategorije-zasticenih-podrucja/kategorije-zasticenih-podrucja-u-hrvatskoj-255.html>, 08.03.2013).

**Table 1: Categorisation of protected areas in Croatia and management levels:**

Protection category	Purpose	Management level	Declared by
STRICT RESERVE	Preservation of original nature, monitoring of nature condition and education	County	RoC Gvmnt.
NATIONAL PARK	Preservation of original natural values, cultural, educational and recreational	State	Croatian Parliament
SPECIAL RESERVE	Preservation of its uniqueness, rarity and is of a particular scientific significance	County	RoC Gvmnt.
NATURE PARK	Protection of biological and landscape diversity, cultural and historical and tourism and recreational purpose	State	Croatian Parliament
REGIONAL PARK	Protection of landscape diversity, sustainable development and tourism	County	County Assembly
NATURAL MONUMENT	Ecological, scientific, aesthetic or educational	County	County Assembly
IMPORTANT LANDSCAPE	Protection of landscape values and biological diversity or cultural and historical values	County	County Assembly
PARK - FOREST	Preservation of natural or planted forest of higher landscape value, relaxation and recreation	County	County Assembly
PARK ARCHITECTURE MONUMENT	Preservation of man made, which is of artistic, cultural and historical value	County	County Assembly

*Source: Nature Protection Act (RoC Official Gazette nos. 70/05 and 139/08)*

According to the Ministry of Environmental and Nature Protection Register of protected areas (situation on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2012), in the Republic of Croatia a total of 433 areas are protected in different categories, of which 5 areas are under preventive protection. Today, the protected areas cover 8.48 % of the total surface area of the Republic of

Croatia, i.e. 12.07 % of the terrestrial territory and 1.94 % of the territorial sea. The largest part of the protected surface areas are nature parks (4.77 % of the total state territory).

### 3. VALORISATION OF THE NATIONAL PARK KORNATI AND THE NATIONAL PARK CABRERA – CROATIAN AND SPANISH MODELS

National parks and nature parks play an important role in the Republic of Croatia tourist offer. Management and work organisation in Croatian national parks are under the strict supervision of the Croatian Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning. This state body is responsible for national parks, nature parks and other protected areas. Within the said ministry, there is Administration for nature protection, which is accountable for the management of all protected natural areas. Under this administration, there are also Department of protection of biological and landscape diversity, Department of sustainable use of natural resources and Department of preservation of natural values, which, under their authority have the Section for preservation of natural areas and natural heritage, as well as the Section for protection of non-living nature. National parks are directly managed by governing councils, appointed by the government of the Republic of Croatia and constitution and council legislation are illustrated in table 2, in which the comparison with the competitive model is also shown.

**Table 2. Comparison of national park constitutional bodies in Croatia and in Spain**

Croatian constitutional model	Spanish constitutional model
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of environment and spatial planning</li> <li>• Administration for nature protection</li> <li>• Department of protection of biological and landscape diversity</li> <li>• Department of sustainable use of natural resources</li> <li>• Department of preservation of natural values</li> <li>• Section for preservation of natural areas and natural heritage</li> <li>• Section for protection of non-living nature</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of environment of Spain</li> <li>• Ministry of agriculture, fishery and food (MAPA)</li> <li>• General secretariat of agricultural structure and Department of protected areas</li> <li>• National institute for protection of nature (ICONA)</li> <li>• General sub-administration for natural areas and National parks council</li> </ul>

*Source: processed by authors according to Vidaković (2003)*

The data shows that both destinations of the Mediterranean circle valorise national park resources as biologically sensitive areas, constituting administrative bodies dealing in legislation and implementation of related acts, directed towards their protection.

For each national park in Spain, a specific plan of use and management is prepared, where the manner of use and protection of forests and waters is especially elaborated, as well as the plan of park arrangement, in cooperation with local and state governmental bodies. Like in Croatia, the state reserves the right to manage parks, which are integrated in the state national park network, through the above mentioned plans of use and management, in which norms and instructions for use and preservation and zonification are determined, specifying the manner of public use of parks. These plans are approved of and periodically revised by the royal government decrees.

The importance of national parks grows parallelly with the growth of tourist demand for spending their holidays in nature, in quiet surroundings. There are eight national parks in Croatia, covering a surface area of 950 km<sup>2</sup>, i.e. approximately 1.1% of the total surface area of Croatia. The basic characteristics of the parks in the Republic of Croatia are shown in table 3.

**Table 3: Analysis of surface areas and founding of national parks of Spain and Croatia**

Name	Year	km <sup>2</sup>	Name	Year	km <sup>2</sup>
Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici	1956	141	Plitvička jezera	1949	266
Cabrera Archipelago	1991	100	Paklenica	1949	102
Cabañeros	1995	390	Risnjak	1953	64
Caldera de Taburiente	1954	10	Mljet	1953	54
Doñana	1969	543	Kornati	1960	224
Garajonay	1981	40	Brijuni	1980	34
Guadarrama	2013	340	Krka	1985	109
Illas Atlánticas de Galicia	2002	90	North Velebit	1999	97
Monfragüe	2007	1,950			
Ordesa y Monte Perdido	1918	156			
Picos de Europa	1918	646			
Sierra Nevada	1999	859			
Tablas de Daimiel	1973	19			
Teide	1954	190			
Timanfaya	1974	51			
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>5,525</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>950</b>

*Source: Processed by authors according to Blažević, I. and Knežević, R. (2006) and [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_national\\_parks\\_of\\_Spain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_national_parks_of_Spain) (12th January 2014)*

The surface area of the Kingdom of Spain equals 504,030 km<sup>2</sup> and of the Republic of Croatia, 56,594 km<sup>2</sup>, which points to the fact that Croatia has 11.2 % of the surface area of Spain. Considered from the aspect of protected areas, it is evidenced that, in Croatia, 1.7 % of total territory is protected and valorised as areas of exceptional beauty and national protection. Considered from the territorial aspect the surface area of protected areas in Spain equals 1.1%, which points to the fact that Croatia:

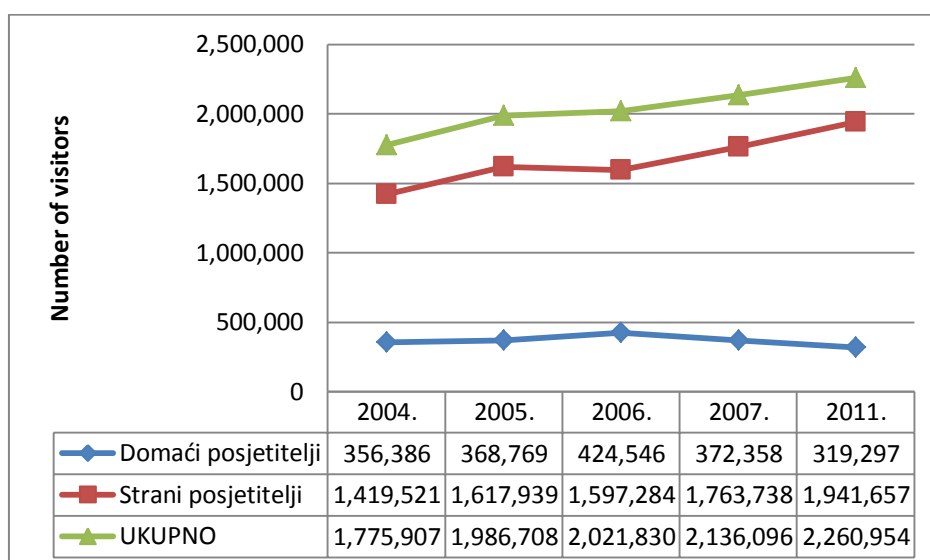
- Has a versatile resource basis, which is recognised as a sensitive area and which is protected as a national park
- Croatian legislation and administration for environmental protection are more actively involved in taking care of the protection of areas and organisation of national parks

From the quoted indicators, it is evident that the Croatian parks are small in terms of their surface areas and that their mutual distances are negligible. For the purposes of a better organisation, their radical reorganisation is proposed, as well as their rationalisation



in the sense of the geographical and theme combining, for example, National park Kornati and Nature park Telašćica and national park Paklenica, National park North Velebit and Nature Park Velebit, given that they are all the components of the Velebit mountain.

Before the Homeland War, almost 2 million people visited the Croatian national parks, of which one half were foreigners. During the Homeland War, the number of visitors was, of course, considerably lower. Only in 2006, national parks attracted over 2 million visitors. In 2011, 2.26 million people visited the national parks in the Republic of Croatia (HINA, 2011) The annual growth tendency is evident from figure 1.



Source: The Republic of Croatia State Institute of Statistics, Statistical information 2012, [http://www.dzs.hr/Hrv\\_Eng/StatInfo/pdf/StatInfo2012.pdf/](http://www.dzs.hr/Hrv_Eng/StatInfo/pdf/StatInfo2012.pdf/), 26th March 2013

**Figure 1: Visitors to the national parks in the Republic of Croatia, 2004-2011**

The data in table 2 shows that, in the period between the years 2004 and 2011, tourist visits in the Croatian national parks were on the increase, from 1.77 million to 2.26 million, which represents a growth of 27.68%. Foreign tourists dominate in the total number of visitors. In the period between the years 2004 and 2011, their number increased by 37.58%. In the total number of visitors in 2011, foreign visitors participated with the share of 85.84%. The data on attendance rate of national parks in the Republic of Croatia clearly point to their attractiveness (Plitvice Lakes National Park was added to the UNESCO World Heritage Register), as well as to their significance in the tourist offer of Croatia. According to the TOMAS research conducted in national parks, “the visitors were most impressed by the intact, preserved nature; they were impressed by the beauty of the waters and the richness and diversity of the flora and fauna. Visitors are particularly satisfied with cleanliness and arrangement of parks, professionalism and kindness of its staff and the system of park touring with interpretation, signalisation and the quality of the hostelry offer”. One of the reasons for the increase in the number of visitors in the parks is also the increasing trend in interest in natural areas and nature experience.

The Tomas (2006) analysis represents the data on the frequency of visits to national parks and it was recorded that, for the majority of visitors to parks, that was their first visit to the park (73%), while the share of repeated visits equals 23%. In respect of the

tourist motivation, as the main motives for visits to parks, the following were identified: familiarisation with natural beauty (50%), desire to visit the park (48%) and holiday and relaxation (29%).

The results of the information channel analysis show that visitors, in order to obtain information, use the Internet (33%) and printed materials – brochures, leaflets and advertisements (16%). As non-formal sources, friends and relatives prevail (38%), as well as their previous stays (22%). The main source for visitors to parks are transit tourists (38%) and stationery summer demand (36%). Approximately 13% of visitors were in a target visit to parks from their place of permanent residence and almost the same number of visitors toured parks within circular trips. Accordingly, the majority of visitors come to parks in their own cars or campers (70%), accompanied by a spouse/partner (42%), family (30%) or friends (24%). Visitors stay in the park approximately half a day (46%) or shorter (27%). One tenth of visitors stay in the park or its surrounding areas for several days, 4 days on an average and stays lasting several days are more frequent than the average stays in the National parks of North Velebit (21%), Kornati (15%) and Plitvice lakes (15%). The research points to the fact that visitors express a greater intention to, within the next two years, visit some of the Croatian national parks rather than its nature parks. The largest percentage intends to visit the national parks of Plitvice lakes (22%) and Krka (25%), followed by the island parks of Kornati (17%), Mljet (16%) and Brijuni (15%) in the next two years.

Considering qualitative solutions of the problem areas of tourist valorisation of national parks in Croatia, Vidaković (2003) proposes an individualised approach to each particular park with resource singularity to methods of its management and organisation, as well as detachment from the partnership between national park management and the political governing option, in the sense that national park management should be relinquished to educated professionals.

Importance of establishment of ownership and legal relationships in protected areas is emphasised, as well as relationships with the local population, which need to be harmonised before the specific area is declared as protected. It is also important to develop good relationships with both the local government and local population, who need to be acquainted with the significance of protected areas and given an active share in their management. Representatives of related scientific fields, tourist economy, local government, Croatian waters and park staff should be included on a voluntary basis in administrative councils in order for quality and professional decisions, directed towards the benefit of protected areas, to be made.

### **3.1. NATIONAL PARK KORNATI**

Kornati is the densest archipelago in the Mediterranean Sea. It consists of 150 islands and is situated in the aquatorium of surface area measuring 320 km<sup>2</sup>. The Islands of Kornati and the south-east part of Dugi Otok (the bay of Telašćica), together with the sea belt measuring 30,000 ha, were declared to be national parks in 1980, on the grounds of a special law (National park Kornati, 2013). Following the amendments to the Law on the National Park Kornati (in 1988), the south-east part of Dugi Otok and the bay of Telašćica, surface area measuring 6,750 ha, were separated from the National park and declared to be a nature park.

For the National park Kornati and Nature Park Telašćica special legal norms are in force, by which preservation, authenticity and spatial unity are guaranteed:

- Nature Protection Act (RoC Official Gazette no. 70/2005),
- Spatial plan of the National park Kornati (RoC Official Gazette no. 118/2003),
- Spatial plan of the Nature park "Telašćica" (Official Gazette of the municipalities of Benkovac, Biograd n/m, Obrovac and Zadar no. 11/92)
- Regulations on internal order in the National park Kornati (RoC Official Gazette no. 38/1996),
- Regulations on internal order in the Nature park Telašćica (RoC Official Gazette no. 38/96)
- Other legal and sub-legal acts by which, directly or indirectly, relationships in protected nature parts are regulated.

The Republic of Croatia government established the public institution of National Park Kornati, with its headquarters in Murter and the public institution of Nature Park Telašćica, with its headquarters in Sali, whose task is preservation, maintenance and promotion of these protected areas.

The Kornati archipelago is a unique group of islands, not only in Croatia, but in the whole of the Mediterranean. All islands are classified into four island chains, distinctively situated in the direction of the geographical position of the Dinara mountain chain (north-west – south-east) and it was named after the largest island, the island of Kornat, which is, at the same time, the central structure of the entire archipelago. The Kornati archipelago spatial basis is made up of two groups – the Žutsko – sitska and Kornati group and, landscape-wise, it is the most precious unity of scattered external chain of islands. This area is unique in the Adriatic Sea and its geographical, ecological, morphological, geo-morphological, floristic and aesthetic values make it an exceptionally rare natural phenomenon. Archaeological excavations revealed the remains of an Illyrian settlement, a roman villa from the 1st century, a roman salt plant, a small church from the 12th and 16th centuries and an Illyrian fortress, which are the foundation for the cultural and historical valorisation.

Since the declaration of the archipelago as a national park in 1980, much scientific research work has been carried out, especially the work relating to the natural heritage. This research work brought into light numerous pieces of information on geological, meteorological, geographical, biological and other characteristics of the archipelago. According to the Tourist Organisation of the Municipality of Murter-Kornati, “up to now, 537 plant species on land, 226 types of benton algae, approximately 850 species of living organisms in the sea, among which 579 invertebrates, 160 kinds of fish, one turtle and three types of mammals have been recorded. It is anticipated that, with further research, the number of all living organisms in the sea, if researched, would range between 2,500 and 3,000. Equally, the described anthropological heritage of the archipelago has been insufficiently researched.”( TO Municipality of Murter-Kornati, 2013 ).

The tourist infrastructure in the park is organised to provide basic services to visitors, i.e. services for supervision and control of visitors' behaviour, information and reception points. Visitors are permitted to walk around the whole park, apart from the areas around the island Purara and the rocks Mala Purara and Volić, which are declared to be a zone of special protection. Visitors to the National park Kornati at all times must appreciate and respect the fact that all of the Kornati islands, apart from the fact that they are protected as the natural heritage, are private property. On the territory of the National park Kornati there are eight arranged and marked hiking paths under the name of “Hiking

trail Kornati”, which lead to the viewing points from where it is possible to see the Kornati archipelago in its entirety, or some of its most attractive parts. In 2012, the National parks Kornati and North Velebit realised an increase in the number of visitors in comparison to other Croatian national parks. In 2012, almost 72 thousand people visited Kornati, which is approximately two thousand, or 2.8 percent more than in 2011 (RoC Ministry of Tourism, 2013 ). The data on the National park Kornati’s budget are unavailable to the general public and therefore it is not possible to compare them with the budget of the Spanish National park Archipelago de Cabrera. However, the key to the allocation of income generated by entry ticket sales is well known. In Croatia, the terms of utilisation of own income realised in the market are proscribed in the manner that at least 15% of that income must be channelled towards covering the institutional costs, at least 30% towards improvement of the institution activity advancement and up to 35% of income is spent on staff salaries.

### **3.2. NATIONAL PARK CABRERA**

Cabrera is an uninhabited island in the Balearic Islands, which is situated in the Mediterranean Sea, on the south coast of Mallorca (Spain). The National park encompasses the maritime part (of surface area measuring 8,703 ha, or 87%) and, in its smaller part, a land belt (of surface area measuring 1,318 ha, or 13%). It is composed of vast sea areas surrounding small stone islands, on which Mediterranean undergrowth grows and the landscape is unbelievably similar to the Kornati archipelago (Vidaković, 2003). Cabrera is the largest island in the small archipelago which includes (from south towards north) the islands of Estells de Fora, L’Imperial, Illa de ses Bledes, Na Redona, Conillera, L’Esponja, Na Plana, Illot Pla, Na Pobra and Na Foradada. It was declared to be a national park in 1991.

The National park Archipelago de Cabrera has an interesting history and this can be seen in an interesting collection of castle ruins. These fortresses were built in order to protect the island and its inhabitants from pirates. Many people fled to the island seeking shelter from pirate attacks. During the Spanish Homeland War (1808-1814), 9,000 French prisoners were kept in remand in the said fortresses, of whom half never managed to return to their homes. There are numerous monuments all over the archipelago coastline which were erected in memory of the French prisoners. The Archipelago de Cabrera represents an excellent destination for history lovers. There are no inhabitants in this archipelago and it is in 100% ownership of the state, as opposed to the Kornati archipelago, which is, in its larger part, privately owned.

Due to its well protected landscape and a limited human presence, the National park Archipelago de Cabrera is home to many animal species. The most numerous animal species are dolphins, sea snails and turtles and, due to an abundance of fish, numerous sea bird species also find their habitat in the archipelago. As a result, the National park is a special protected area for birds. Reptiles are also one of the important archipelago “inhabitants” and the species such as Sargantana lizards can be seen around the whole of the archipelago. The combination of numerous monuments, animal species and the archipelago uninhabited state still does not represent a sufficient motive for arrival of visitors, given that, out of all Spanish national parks, it records the lowest number of visits. 60,000 tourists visit the National park annually, of which 1,400 come for reasons of diving (Casier, 2013). The reason for the stagnation of the total annual number of visitors lies in the park’s restrictive policy, i.e. limitation of the number of daily visitors. The number of

people who can visit the National park in a single day is limited to only 200 and 300 in August. Visits to the archipelago using own vessel is possible only with special permission. Access to the archipelago by boat is also limited to only 50 boats per day. This national park is a forbidden destination for large cruising ships and boats are permitted to moor only in the island port. Diving is strictly limited and controlled; the license issued to divers allows diving for the duration of only one day. Hiking possibilities are numerous. There is a centre for visitors with a shop and a coffee bar, as well as a castle from the 14th century, where the museum is also situated. The "Museo de Cabrera" organises numerous presentations which describe the archipelago nature and etymology, as well as the way in which they work in order to preserve it. Within the museum, there is also a small botanical garden in which it is possible to see rare animal species, which form an integral part of the archipelago. The poor economic situation in Spain has affected the national park Archipelago de Cabrera, which is systematically neglected and disregarded by the state. Up to the year 2010, the National park budget equalled 5 million euros, only to be reduced by a significant 75% since then (Casier, 2013). Regardless of the reduced financial means and the business policy whose primary goal is preservation of the environment and animal species, the National park still realises a respectable number of visits. Comparing this data with realised visits to the Kornati archipelago, it is noted that the Kornati archipelago realises a mere 12% more visits. Realistically, the National park Kornati should realise a much higher number of visits, given the much greater importance of the National park Kornati for Croatian tourism and also given that the business policy is more oriented towards tourism than towards ecology.

By means of comparison with the Spanish model and Spanish national parks, a conclusion can be drawn that Croatian national parks still have a lot of room for advancement. Much more effort must be put into promotion, since they represent attractive destinations for the development of pre- and post-season tourism.

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

With regard to its surface area, Croatia sets up a large number of national and nature parks and, given their resource basis, many natural areas could also become such parks in the future. Protected areas have huge potential for the development of ecotourism and sustainable tourism, which represent the future of world tourism. World tourism trends show a large increase in demand for stays in nature and viewing of natural attractions, pointing to the potential of the development intensity, as well as the positioning in the very top of the world of selective forms of tourism. Area development also brings development of local family economies, which have direct benefits from such a form of tourism. Investments in sensitive zones must be in harmony with all regulations concerning preservation of protected areas and must not subordinate environmental protection to the desire for as large as possible profits. Management of the national parks in Croatia is not ideal and there are many irregularities in management, which points to the problem area of the managerial hierarchy and dependency on political options instead of respecting the profession and science.

In tourism valorisation of national parks, it is of a strategic importance to, in a balanced way, coordinate the relationships and measures of nature protection and tourism valorisation, bringing the central contrasts within permitted tolerances. In order to coordinate the interests of tourism protection, it is essential to link the basic zone of natural phenomenon in which natural values are found, due to which a specific territory is declared

to be a national park, obtaining the status of a well and strictly protected natural facility and the zone of a mixed purpose, which envisages sustainable tourism and recreational construction, hotel zones and other accompanying facilities. A much higher number of tourist facilities should be located in the vicinity of protected areas in order to provide a better quality tourist offer to tourists, the offer which would, as a result, provide far better tourist expenditure. Accommodation facilities in and around protected areas are inadequate, of a low category, needing investment in quality improvement, which is the result of uneven investment, present in Croatian tourism, as well as the problem area of ownership.

It is unrealistic to expect tourism to pull the country out of long-lasting recession, but, by investment in protected, rural and continental areas, it can become one of the prime movers of development, which will, as a result, put the country into a better economic state.

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