

complex. In addition, the 13 National Parks set up in August 2002 by the late President Omar Bongo Ondimba, make it possible to create a wide range of tourist products to broaden the offer in tourism.

Gabonese tourism is fully expanding, and must therefore develop its organisations in order to:

- modernise and strengthen the existing reception facilities in the provinces and in the vicinity of the nature reserves;
- revitalise the activity of travel agent for enhanced tourism chartering,
- involve those economic operators who have the capacity to promote tourism in the country, particularly abroad.

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## THE COMPETITIVENESS OF GREECE AND UKRAINE ON THE GLOBAL MARKET FOR TOURISM

International tourism market over the past half-century has become one of the fastest growing sectors of the world economy. According to the World Trade Organization, in 2012 the share of tourism in global exports of services accounted for 25.5% (down from 31.9% in 2000), the share of transport services 20.5% (down from 23.2% in 2000), and the share of all other types of commercial services (trade, finance, credit, insurance, information, audit, consulting and other business services) accounted for 54.9% (up from 44.8% in 2000).

In 2012, total world exports of services reached \$ 4.35trn, including total exports of tourism services in value of \$ 1110bn. In their turn, exports of travel services include \$200bn received in international passenger traffic, whereas total export earnings from international tourism (travel and passenger transportation travel) amounted to \$1.31trn. Currently, the share of international tourism accounts for 30% of world exports of services and 6% of total exports of goods and services [1].

The number of international tourist arrivals grew from 25 mn people in 1950 to 1.087 mn people in 2013 (at the rate of 6.5% per year). The number of employees in hotel and restaurant sector makes 110 mn people [2]. According to the UNWTO, the growth of international tourism in 2014 will make 4 to 4.5% [3].

Earnings from tourism in Western countries make up a significant portion of total exports of services – from 5% in the USA to 45% in Greece and Portugal. Major exporters of tourist services also include Austria, Great Britain, Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Switzerland in the developed world, as well as Egypt, China, Mexico, Thailand, and Turkey among developing and post-socialist countries [2].

According to the WTO, in 2012 the share of Europe in global exports of travel services was 38.6% (\$ 428bn), of which the EU accounted for 33.2% (\$ 369bn); the share of Asia was 29% (\$ 332bn), North America – 17.4% (\$ 193bn), Middle Asia – 4.6% (\$ 51bn), South America – 4.4% (\$ 48bn), Africa – 3.8% (\$ 43bn), and the CIS – 2.2% (\$ 24bn).

Top leaders in 2012 by the number of tourist arrivals were France (83 mn persons), followed by the USA (67 mn), China (57.7 mn), Spain (57.7 mn), Italy (46.4 mn), Turkey (35.7 mn), Germany (30.4 mn), the UK (29.3 mn), Russia (25.7 mn), and Malaysia (25 mn).

In terms of earnings from foreign tourism, the leaders in 2012 were the USA (\$126.2 bn), followed by Spain (\$55.9 bn), France (\$53.7bn), China (\$50 bn), Macau, China (\$43.7 bn), Italy (\$41.2bn), Germany (\$38.1bn), the UK (\$29.3bn), Hong Kong (\$32.1bn), and Australia (\$31.5bn) [4].

In 2013, Greece ranked 16<sup>th</sup> in the world ranking of countries in terms of tourist arrivals which increased from 16.95 mn in 2012 to 17.92 mn people in 2013. In 2012 Ukraine ranked one position higher – 15<sup>th</sup> place by the number of tourist arrivals with 23 mn tourists. In 2012, the travel and tourism sector of Greece employed 688.8 thou people, which is twice as much as in Ukraine (350 thou people).

By earnings from international tourism, Greece ranked 23rd in 2012 (after the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea, and Japan) with foreign exchange earnings being \$12.9 billion higher than those in Ukraine (\$ 4.8 bn). Thanks to growth in the number of tourists by 5.4% in 2013, foreign exchange earnings in Greece exceeded \$16.3 bn [4, 5, 6, 7].

Tourism industry is a promising sector of the Greek economy as it accounts for 16.4% of GDP, covers 51.2% of trade deficit, produces \$ 34 bn in aggregate demand, and employs every fifth employee in Greece [8].

Thanks to rapid development of international tourism in recent years, the Greek government developed a new system of attracting and encouraging foreign investment in tourism and foreign tourist arrivals in all embankments and mountain areas of Greece in order to further stimulate the expansion of this industry.

The new system of attracting foreign tourists focused on improving the international ratings of Greece's overall competitiveness in the tourism sector, as well as improving the various factors of the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI) – the index developed by the World Economic Forum, which seeks not only to measure factors and policies, but also to determine the attractiveness of the sector for the development of travel and tourism (T&T).

To determine the overall tourism sector competitiveness of countries, the World Economic Forum uses a special system of evaluation indices, based upon more than 70 different factors, combined into 14 major groups: policy rules and regulations; environmental sustainability; safety and security; health and hygiene; prioritization of travel & tourism; air transport infrastructure; ground transport infrastructure; tourism infrastructure; ICT infrastructure; price competitiveness in the T&T industry; human resources; affinity for travel & tourism; natural resources; and cultural resources [9].

Table 1 provides a comparison of 2013 Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Indices (TTCI) for Greece and Ukraine and their positions in the global rankings.

In 2013, Greece occupied 32nd place in the world and European tourism, losing three positions since the last assessment in 2009 due to worsening economic and financial crisis and difficulties in the country.

In particular, Greece held 3rd position after Austria and Italy and before Spain, Switzerland and Croatia thanks to great tourism infrastructure; 13th place in terms of health and hygiene conditions; 20th place with good air transport infrastructure; and 25th place in terms of rich cultural resources, which characterise Greece as a still strong advanced country with strong affinity for national tourism compared to many other European countries and a positive attitude towards tourists [9].

*Table 1.*

**Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI)  
for Greece and Ukraine in 2013**

Country	Greece		Ukraine	
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
World Final rating	4.75	32	3.98	76
Subindex A: T&T regulatory framework				
Policy rules and regulations	4.2	98	3.9	114
Environmental sustainability	4.5	72	4.3	92
Safety and security	4.7	69	4.7	77
Health and hygiene	6.4	13	6.6	8
Prioritization of Travel & Tourism	5.2	28	4.2	84
Subindex B: T&T business environment and infrastructure				
Air transport infrastructure	4.7	20	2.8	78
Ground transport infrastructure	4.0	58	3.5	73
Tourism infrastructure	6.8	3	4.6	50
ICT infrastructure	4.3	33	3.1	70
Price competitiveness in the T&T industry	3.5	127	4.0	110
Subindex C: T&T human, cultural, and natural resources				
Human resources	5.0	50	4.9	65
Affinity for Travel & Tourism	4.8	55	4.3	101
Natural resources	4.2	40	3.0	102
Cultural resources	4.3	25	2.1	80

Source: World Economic Forum 2013.

To assure its further development, the Greek tourism industry needs to implement a number of measures to improve its competitiveness in tourism and create a new concept of state development programs in three areas: a) public policy and regulation, b) safety and security, c) price competitiveness in the travel and tourism industry. It also needs to recognize international tourism among main priority industries that will drive the development of Greek economy out of the crisis. The introduction of new economic mechanisms to support new foreign investors, conducting innovative tourism business and a specific budget support for the financing of European programs can attract more tourists in the coming years, as well as increase foreign currency earnings which will help the country to repay external debts.

Ukraine improved its global rankings, rising from 85th position in 2012 to 76 th position in 2013. However, it needs to improve all positions in the rankings of the country's overall tourism sector competitiveness (except for the very high 18 th position in the ranking in terms of health and sanitation), which can be achieved only

upon solving all economic and political problems of the country and its association with the European Union, which will help it to improve all sectors of the economy and develop other economic activities, promoting Ukraine to higher positions in the tourism rankings.

Today, the strategy of tourism development in Ukraine should become a priority, in view of the country's reorientation towards the Western European market, in order to attract new investors into the country's tourism business, bring organized groups of Western tourists, develop new state programs aimed at tourism sector development, and to assure the required quality of tourist products in all major tourist cities of Ukraine.

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## **TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AS A TOOL FOR POVERTY REDUCTION ABSTRACT**

The importance of tourism for job creation and poverty reduction cannot be overestimated. Today, tourism is beginning to be recognized as a major source of economic growth and a tool for poverty reduction especially in poor countries.