

**FELIX ROMULIANA: ANALYSIS OF CULTURE-HISTORICAL,  
SPATIAL AND ECONOMIC POTENTIALS**

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**Abstract**

*Eastern Serbia abounds in rich historical heritage and great tourist potential, due to the fact that 17 Roman emperors were born or lived here. Not until the Master plan and its realization in form of tourist route Roman emperors road and Danube road of wine (2015) was this potential utilized and historical treasure shared with numerous tourists around the world. After the development of the tourist arrangement, an increase in the number of tourists followed (positive trend since 2015: increase of 20% in 2017 in comparison to 2015), and the route provided a growth of employment in sectors connected to tourism in Eastern Serbia (this number was 3 times bigger in 2015 in comparison to previous year). Namely, based on the analysis of secondary data collected from publicly available sources, mainly Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, the study concludes that the development of tourism can ensure improvement of living standard and overall economic growth.*

*Key Words: tourism, Eastern Serbia, Roman Empire, development, economic growth, employment*

*JEL classification: Z32*

**Introduction**

It may be unexpected, but one of the greatest chances for the future growth of Serbian tourism lies in the country's history, especially its more distant part, measured by millenniums, which dates back to the fascinating reign of the Roman Empire. Valuable traces were left behind in the territory of our country. Hidden for centuries, sometimes even forgotten and neglected, they are nowadays combined in logical and strategically formed tourist products, and thus given the chance to be

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presented to the world, especially to population who sees travelling as an opportunity to enrich spiritual life.

Seventeen Roman emperors were born in the territory of today's Serbia. They left behind: Sirmium (Sremska Mitrovica), Singidunum (Belgrade), Viminacium (Kostolac), Tabula Traiana and Trajan's Bridge (Đerdap), Diana (Kladovo), Felix Romuliana (Zaječar), Mediana (Niš) and Iustiniana Prima (Lebane) – which have been united in a unique tourist tour. Rich Roman heritage in Serbia and the fact that seventeen Roman emperors were born or lived in this area, are the foundation for culture-historical route *Roman emperors road and Danube road of wine (Put rimskih careva i dunavski put vina)*. Thanks to the cooperation between Serbia and government institutions of neighbouring countries: Croatia, Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary, it is possible to visit all the places of rich antique heritage in one attractive tourist arrangement. Each of the named countries has chosen their Roman localities and wine regions, and by joining all of them, the famous route was formed. This route was certificated in 2015 by Council of Europe, and at that moment it consisted of four of five mentioned countries, while Hungary joined the group in 2017. The route (Serbian part) starts from Sremska Mitrovica (Sirmium) and finishes in Lebane (Iustiniana Prima). This tourist arrangement has outlined the importance of the heritage preservation, possibilities for the sustainable growth and prosperity of local communities on the route.

Spatial plan of the archaeological site Romuliana / Gamzigrad (*Prostorni plan arheološkog nalazišta Romulijana / Gamzigrad*) (Government of the Republic Serbia, 2004a) as well as the Master plan of culture-historical route Roman emperors road (*Master plan kulturnoistorijske rute Put rimskih careva*) – Felix Romuliana (Government of Republic Serbia, 2008) represented the foundation for the public disclosure of this invaluable tourist asset. The document is aimed at actualizing towns, palaces and amphitheatres of Roman emperors, which are located in the territory of Serbia, then to familiarize people with the distant past of the area and to present the ways of activating and promoting interesting tourist contests in one unique arrangement.

Aim of this study is to concisely analyse important culture-historical, spatial and economic characteristics of the mentioned tourist arrangement in Serbia. First part of the study is dedicated to brief description of the culture-historical characteristics of the relevant locations and objects that belong to the route. Second part refers to the spatial and transportation

aspects of the tourist route. Third part focuses on the economic value of the touristic arrangement and critical factors for its success on the tourist market. Finally, the last part is the conclusion containing the most important elements of the study.

### **Culture-historical review**

The idea of the Roman emperors implies connecting all of the places of rich antique heritage and the use of these places for the development of the cultural and archaeological tourism. Roman Empire established its east frontier on the Danube River. The line of military establishments was built along the road, which were used by Roman legions to attack barbaric tribes across the river. Military was followed by the traders and craftsmen, and in a short period of time, towns along the important roads started to appear. Since the third century of the new era, provinces Moesia Superior and Pannonia Inferior, which approximately comprise territory that we call Serbia today, became the centre of all activities in the Roman Empire. Later formed Roman province, Illyricum, was the birth place of seventeen Roman emperors, who ruled the empire in its late period, during the time of the greatest Roman Empire crisis. The culture road of Roman emperors presents ancient Roman towns, roads, ruins and artworks, also including Felix Romuliana, which is part of the UNESCO World Heritage List.

The most significant culture-historical monuments from the Roman period that are located on the Roman Emperors road are: Timacum Minus, Šarkamen, Mediana, Tabula Traiana, Trajan's bridge, Diana, locality Viminacium and Felix Romuliana.

Timacum Minus (Ravna, Gradište, Kuline) was a Roman camp and establishment, and its foundation dates back to the first century of the new era and lasted until the Iustinian's reconstruction of the empire, in the 6<sup>th</sup> century. This is the oldest military establishment in the Timok river area, located north from the city of Knjaževac, in Zaječar district, on the coast of the Beli Timok River.

Šarkamen is a residential-memorial imperial complex, which dates from the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, which is known as the period of tetrarchy (leadership of four people). Complex is located near Negotin, and was built by Roman emperor Maximinus Daia, who wanted to leave legacy in his birth place.

Mediana is an archaeological locality where the palace of the Roman emperor Constantine the Great was located. Palace dates from the 4<sup>th</sup> century and is positioned near Niš, in which the emperor was born. Mediana was a Roman living area, complex of summer residencies, urban villas and very big agricultural land near the road.

Tabula Traiana was located along the road that was built by Roman emperors. It was set by the emperor Trajan in year 100 of the new era, when the road was completed. Trajan's bridge was built by the emperor Trajan in the period between 103<sup>th</sup> and 105<sup>th</sup> year of the new era, during the second attack of Trajan on Dacians. The bridge, parts of the portal and three pillars have lasted to date.

Diana is a Roman establishment that was built by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century of the old era. Beside the military function, Diana also represented an important economic centre of the Roman Empire part, with a developed dock.

Viminacium is a locality positioned near Kostolac, 95 km from Belgrade. Locality consists of the remains of Roman town, which was the capital of Roman province Moesia Superior at the time.

Having in mind that the locality Felix Romuliana is the central locality of the whole route, it is necessary to provide its detailed description. Felix Romuliana was the residence of the emperor Galerius (*Gaius Galerius Valerius Maximianus Augustus*) (297 – 311), the place where he was born and buried (Government of Republic Serbia, 2004b). It is located in Gamzigrad spa, near Zaječar. There were 61 localities found in the area of the archaeological site, with 4 of them in the protected zone. The greatest and the most significant archaeological locality, the palace Felix Romuliana, is positioned on the surface area of approximately 4,7 ha, consisting of the remains of older and the new establishment (walls, towers and gates), palace in the north part with small temple, palace in the north-east part, big temple, spa and other objects in the south part. Archaeological examinations of the locality have not been completed yet and they have lasted to date. The main problem is the lack of equipment for conservation and restauration of the found and researched objects.

Imperial palace is the most preserved example of the Roman palace architecture. The town consisted of the imperial palace, small temple, big temple, spa and horeum. It was built in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century of the new era.

Galerius was born in the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, and he succeeded Diocletian on the throne. The construction of the palace started by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, but Galerius, due to his sudden death in the territory of today Bulgaria, did not have time to move in the palace. His body was transferred to the imperial palace where he was buried next to his mother, Romula. He named the palace after her. Complex with remains of two mausoleums and two tumuli, where Galerius and his mother were buried, is located on hill Magura, 1 km east from the palace. There was no interest for the palace for the long period of time. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century it was found by Baron Von Herder, who was looking for the mines, while, later, Felix Kanitz thought that it was a Castra-Roman military establishment. Since 1953, significant researches have been conducted by the Serbian archaeological team, and soon the mosaics were found, which refuted the theory that this was Castra. Not until 1984, when a fragment that had an inscription Felix Romuliana was found, was it proved that it was an imperial palace. Felix Romuliana can be compared to Diocletian's palace in Split, having in mind their culture-historical significance, but it overall represents a better preserved and richer archaeological site. Some parts of sculptures were also found, such as the head of Jupiter, Hercules, Galerius, made of white marble, which is the proof of the art value of the late ancient period. Locality was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List in the middle of 2007.

Beside the mentioned, other culture-historical monuments and archaeological localities are also positioned on the route (or close to it), dating from the neolith, Roman period and Serbian middle ages. Some of the most important are: Sirmium (Sremska Mitrovica), Singidunum (Belgrade), establishment Pontes in the Djerdap gorge, Iustiniana Prima (today: Caričin grad near Leskovac), prehistoric localities Vinča and Lepenski Vir.

Today, due to activities of Scientific Council for the cultural route *Roman emperors road and Danube road of wine*, followed by activities of Danube Centre for Competition as the project leader for the development of this tourist asset, tourist arrangement concerning Roman historic heritage was developed and it is getting attention from many tourists. Following the flow of the Danube, the route goes through five states (Serbia, Croatia, Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary) and comprises 21 archaeological localities and 13 wine regions. Beside the fact that this is cultural heritage of these countries, this route also has a potential to

become the most attractive member of the cultural route family of the Council of Europe, which has 32 members.

### **Spatial position**

The location and coverage of the tourist arrangement was defined in aforementioned Spatial plan of the Government of the Republic of Serbia. The route passes through the tourist area that lies between the city of Niš – archaeological locality Mediana and Tabula Traiana in Kladovo. The tourist area *Roman emperors road and Danube road of wine* also includes some other important localities: Viminacium (near Kostolac), Sirmium (Sremska Mitrovica), Caričin grad near Lebane and Belgrade (Singidunum), as a tourist centre of the whole area.

Tourist route consists of numerous localities: Naissus/Mediana, Romuliana, Trajan's bridge, Diana, Tabula Traiana and Viminacium. This area lies on the following transportation infrastructure: Niš – Svrljig – Knjaževac – Zaječar – Gamzigrad – Zaječar – Negotin – Kladovo – Donji Milanovac – Golubac – Veliko Gradište – Požarevac (Kostolac), and administratively, it includes parts of the municipalities Niš, Svrljig, Knjaževac, Zaječar, Negotin, Kladovo, Majdanpek, Golubac, Veliko Gradište and Požarevac.

Geographic position of the area is relatively good, because of the nearby Corridor E-75 which passes on the edges of touristic area. However, the shortcoming of the area, which still requires a lot of additional work in the future, is the fact that the transportation infrastructure in the touristic area has not been enough developed. Locality Mediana is approximately 230 km far from Belgrade, Romuliana 250 km, Tabula Traiana 200 km and Viminacium 100 km.

Felix Romuliana, magnificent palace of the Roman emperor Galerius, is located in Gamzigrad, in eastern Serbia, near the city of Zaječar. Gamzigrad is located in the valley of the river Crni Timok, between Kučaj mountain, Rtanj and Tupižnica. Geographic position of the area is relatively good because of the fact that Corridor X is near, although, there is a need for better connection of Zaječar and Knjaževac with the Corridor X.

The potential of the culture-historical heritage is not fully utilized. Some other localities should be also included in the tourist arrangement, such as

Lepenski Vir, Niš fortress, fortress Golubački grad, Čele tower, Fetislam, Kladovo fortress, fortress Ramska and many others. In this way, development of tourism in Serbia would be additionally supported, especially in tourist destinations Donje Podunavlje and Stig-Kučaj mountains – Beljanica, where tourism is observed as a strategic economic branch, which affects significantly structural and economic transformation.

### **Economic-touristic potential**

The route *Roman emperors road and Danube road of wine* in Serbia is positioned as a tour product of high value, that combines both the material and non-material cultural heritage from the Roman period, as well as the natural attractiveness of the Danube, Srem and Eastern Serbia. It is a road that links the locations in Serbia where the Roman emperors were born or lived, from Sremska Mitrovica to Lebane. The concept of a tourist product could be expanded in the following way. Tourists who choose one of the programs that could be called "Ave, Serbia", would visit Roman cities where Roman wine and Dardan cheese would be served, they would ride with Roman cariole and galleys, and would be dressed in rigors. They could also spend time trying to escape the Roman labyrinth. They would receive an "imperial passport" and a special seal at each locality. Roman restaurants would have a "Roman menu," and basements would have the appropriate wines – like the wines from Roman period. Souvenirs with a special stamp would be sold, and all the money from the sale and use of the trademark would be used to further develop the route of the Roman Emperors.

The idea for activating this tourist area dates from 2004 and was given by the representatives of relevant local municipalities. In 2008, a detailed master plan was completed, which provided a comprehensive analysis of several factors and possible development options, costs and anticipated profits. In addition, the master plan served as a platform for the subsequent preparation of individual plans and projects for a specific site or facility. The master plan was necessary in order to take advantage of non utilized but high valued cultural resources, not utilized opportunities from the development of attractive tourist products, as well as encouraging underdeveloped tourism industry, but also to prevent devastation of high value land.

Master plan for developing a thematic cultural route has provided frameworks for a harmonized system of research, protection and tourist use of the route and its key localities, and thus the basis for establishment of small and medium business and the prospective economic development of the region of Eastern Serbia. One of the goals of the master plan was the contribution in the form of a series of additional changes in the life of eastern Serbia. Namely, the realization of the idea of building small hotels and restaurants along this route, and later along the whole route of the Roman Empire covering a large number of countries, opened the space for significant employment of the local population. Among other things, the education system had to be updated in areas near the route, and to offer new, up-to-date and attractive courses for cooks, waiters, hotel management, tourist guides of the archaeological site, etc.

Thanks to the Master Plan, the Scientific Council of the cultural route *Roman emperors road and Danube road of wine*, as well as the Danube Centre for Competence, the Council of Europe certified this route in 2015 for localities and wine regions in Serbia, Croatia, Romania and Bulgaria, while in 2017 the route was expanded by localities in Hungary.

What initiated considerations not only about the improvement of tourist arrangements, which include observing the cultural heritage of Serbia, but also about the necessary investments and restructuring with the aim of developing tourism and economy, was the Danube Conference event in 2009. In order to explain why his luxurious boats with tourists rarely or almost never stop downstream from Budapest, a prominent cruiser showed photographs of tourist spots that were to be evaded. They showed muddy fields, unregulated coasts, but did not show the piers, because they simply did not exist. This was a short but effective lesson to us, given the tendency to develop this kind of tourist offer. Regardless of the archaeological and culture-historical potential of this area, tourism potential can not be realized without providing necessary infrastructure, but also a custom promotion (Lončar & Lončar, 2018).

The Tourist Organization of Serbia (TOS) has paid attention and worked on the design of activities related to the promotion of this culture-historical route. Primarily focusing on this region of Serbia as the driver of the country's tourism, and introducing new ideas, writing a plan for achieving development goals, TOS began organizing events that directed the attention of a large number of domestic and foreign tourists to the cultural heritage in the country of Serbia. Therefore, in 2009, the "Roman

Night" was organized at the Viminacium site, attended by foreign diplomatic corps in our country. Then, to the wider public, only one segment of the rich historical heritage located in the area was presented in an unusual way. The Regional Development Agency for Eastern Serbia has had a significant role in the promotion of this tourist area.

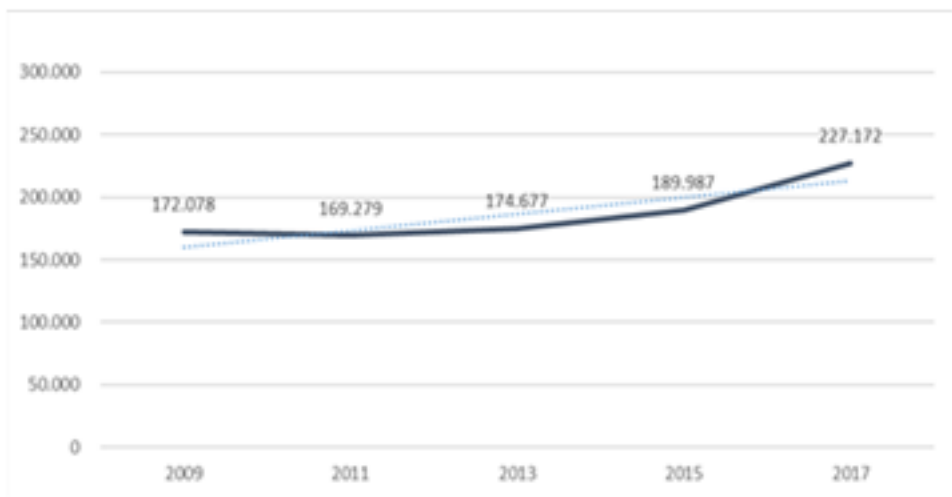
Also, in 2012, the Danube Competence Center presented an exhibition of cultural heritage from the Roman period in four Danube countries (Serbia, Croatia, Romania and Bulgaria) at the 6th International Danube Festival in Ulm. The additional tourist destinations of East Serbia were presented on the exhibition: Majdanpek, Negotin, Golubac and Kladovo. This was of particular importance, given the fact that the expansion of the tourist offer would additionally contribute to attracting new tourists, as well as the development of tourism in this region of the country. General economic development, employment of the population and improvement of living standard is also expected to follow.

Tourism is definitely one of the generators of the economic development of this part of Serbia and a contributing factor to an increase in the quality of life of the local population (Inskip, 1991). There is also potential for further development and, consequently, additional positive impact on the economy and population in this part of the country. Prior to these tourist attractions, the overall economic situation in this area was fundamentally unfavourable. Therefore, it was important to utilize these tourism potentials as soon as possible as a generator of the economic development of the region. In this context, the project represented an entrepreneurial framework with defined strategic orientations of tourism development in the field of cultural tourism, with special focus on ancient Roman heritage in the region. In return, this has encouraged general economic prosperity along the whole route, with even more room for progress and development. This also had a positive impact on economic conditions and improvement of the quality of life of the local population, which had indeed encountered major economic problems in the environment of a worryingly negative natural increase.

Namely, historical data on several economic indicators suggest that the development of tourism, accompanied by an increase in the number of tourists in Eastern Serbia, contributed to an increase in the number of employees, thereby to the reduction of poverty and improvement of the living standard of the population.

Below is an illustration of the trend in number of tourists in Eastern Serbia since 2009, right after the establishment of the Master Plan; followed by investments in the development of tourism. Of special importance is the year 2015, when the routes *Roman emperors road and Danube road of wine* were established, which left a positive mark on the region's tourism. The presented analysis ends in 2017, when the route was extended, improved, and made more attractive for tourists who like visiting cultural and historical sites.

Illustration 1: *Total number of tourists in Eastern Serbia, trend: 2009 – 2017*

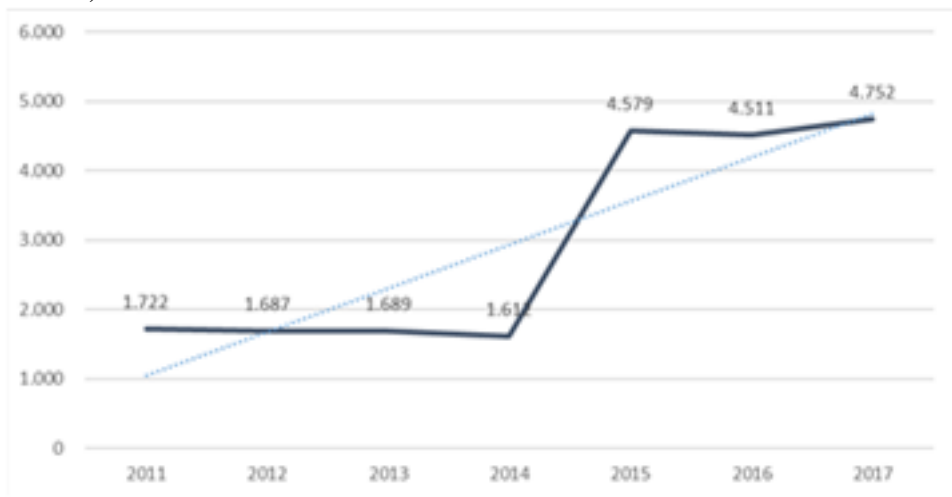


Source: *Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, <http://www.stat.gov.rs/>*

The previous illustration confirms the significance of the Master Plan and the route *Roman emperors road and Danube road of wine* for the tourism and economic development of Eastern Serbia and its municipalities. Namely, in the period after the recognition of the significance of the proposed tourist arrangement encompassing localities and both the cultural and historical heritage of this part of the country, until the improvements needed for the realization of the idea (by 2015) no significant shift in the number of tourists in the region was recorded. However, already in 2015 the growth was recorded, which then continued in the following years, reaching the number of 227.172 tourists, which was almost 20% more than in 2015 and 32% more compared to the beginning of the analysed period.

The development of tourism and increased number of visits to this region in Serbia led to an increase in the number of employees, by opening additional work places in the accommodation and food sector, as well as the arts, entertainment and recreation sector, which are all directly related to the development of tourism. This certainly made an impact on the reduction of poverty and an increase in the living standard in this part of the country. This altogether led to a higher level of population satisfaction with lower tendency towards migration to larger cities.

Illustration 2: *Number of employees in the accommodation and food service sector and the arts, entertainment and recreation sector, Eastern Serbia, trend: 2011 - 2017*



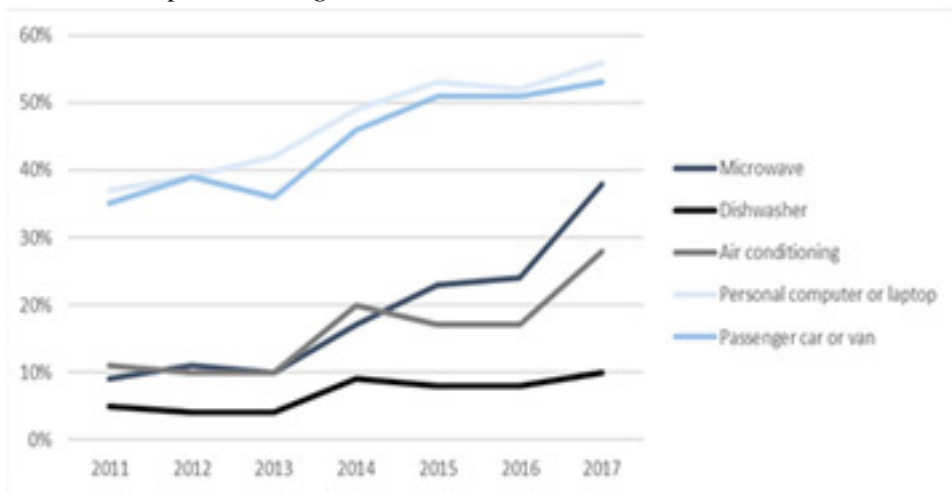
Source: *Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, <http://www.stat.gov.rs/>*

The number of employees in Eastern Serbia in the aforementioned sectors, which is directly related to the development of tourism, significantly increased with the realization of the idea to establish a tourist route *Roman emperors road and Danube road of wine* – year 2015. This indicator of economic development increased almost 3 times in comparison with the year before, while the growth that followed additional route improvement (after the incorporation of Hungary) recorded an increase of 4% in 2017 compared to 2015. Significant growth was expected, due to the fact that tourism fuels development and employment growth in many other sectors, mainly hotels and restaurants. For example, one successful and high-quality hotel has to have employees for the positions of top management, HR function, reception of guests,

household, laundry, hygiene and service consisting of kitchen, catering, bar and room service (Pindzo & Lončar, 2013).

Thus, the development of tourism contributed to increased employment in Eastern Serbia, which is presented by historical data on the previous illustration. However, it is even more important that this increase in employment was accompanied by improvements in living standard. The following illustration shows the percentage of households in Southern and Eastern Serbia that have selected durable consumer goods, as a measure of the living standard of the population.

Illustration 3: *Percentage of population of South and East Serbia supplied with certain permanent goods, 2011 - 2017*



Source: *Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, <http://www.stat.gov.rs/>*

During the period 2011 – 2017 for each of the selected categories of durable consumer goods percentage of the population that has them, as benchmarks of living standard, recorded significant increase. For example, in 2017, 38% of the population owned a microwave oven, which is a growth of 29 percentage points compared to the beginning of the analysed period (2011), and 15 percentage points compared to 2015, the year in which significant progress was made in tourism, due to the development of the route *Roman emperors road and Danube road of wine*, as well as a significant increase in the number of employees in the region - which was the foundation for an increase in the living standard.

Therefore, the quality of life of the population in Southern and Eastern Serbia improved significantly during the analysed period, which was a consequence of the growth of employment and increase in the participation of service activities, tourism and hospitality, in the overall economic activity in this region.

These factors are the drivers of economic development and prosperity. This way the development of tourism contributes to the balanced regional development in Serbia. One of the important principles of the Law on Regional Development (Zakon o regionalnom razvoju, 2015), and the resulting National Plan for Regional Development, as well as the significant goal of the government institutions in Serbia, is to stimulate the equal development of different regions and municipalities in the country, and to increase the living standard for all inhabitants, regardless of the part of the country where they live or work.

Through further improvement of the tourist arrangement, the services of hotel and other accommodation units, restaurants, transport infrastructure and additional investments in marketing activities, Eastern Serbia will additionally fuel economic development and increase in the living standard of the population in the region. This will also contribute to the growth of Serbia's economy and GDP.

In the further development of this tourist area, the experience of other countries could help. Some of the interesting and successful examples that can be consulted are the Gate of Castles through Germany and the Czech Republic and the Valley of Kings along the Loire River in France. From the surrounding area, of significant importance is the experience of tourist workers from Croatia who worked on the realization of the project Travel the steps of UNESCO (Council of Europe, 2005). The analysis of these experiences points to the following conclusions. Firstly, all successful routes are thematically defined and branded as a rounded and unique tourist product. Secondly, routes promote a certain type of tourist attraction (for example, Renaissance mansions) but complement the offer with other amenities (natural resources, specific hospitality services, and similar). Thirdly, all successful routes have a highly developed tourism infrastructure – hotels, restaurants, road infrastructure, guides, bookmarks. Successful touristic routes are characterized by cooperation between tourist agencies and mentioned infrastructure, primarily hotels and restaurants. This is proved by the fact that hotels, using BSC (Balanced Scorecard) for defining and implementing their strategies,

should rely on very important initiative for the tasks that should lead to reaching the set absolute market share target – and that initiative is active cooperation with tourist agencies (Lončar & Lončar, 2017). Fourthly, successful route is characterized by the fact that the management and marketing system is institutionalized, in a way that an organization (usually a special tourist organization), especially created for the purpose of development and promotion of the route, takes care of it. Finally, the experience of successful routes has shown that partnership relations between the private and public sectors are one of the key factors of success. Namely, most projects are implemented in the form of PPP (Public Private Partnership) arrangements with the concession BOT (Build-Operate-Transfer) contracts (Mitrović, 2006).

The institutions directly responsible for the past and potential future development of the tourist potential of Eastern Serbia and its cultural and historical heritage are: the Government of the Republic of Serbia (Ministry of Economy and Regional Development and the Ministry of Culture), the Tourist Organization of Serbia, the municipalities and tourist organizations where tourist sites are located. Mentioned institutions should cooperate closely in order to manage and share responsibilities for activities that would ensure further increase in the number of tourists, employment, living standard and economic development in general. An additional focus should be put on the management and marketing organizations of the route value tourist chain, protection and conservation of the existing cultural heritage and the continuation of archaeological research, the implementation of a marketing plan with the goal of branding and selling a unique tourist product.

### **Conclusion**

The Spatial Plan of the Government of the Republic of Serbia has determined the location determinants of the tourist area of Felix Romuliana. The tourist area through which the route passes is the area that extends from the city of Niš and the archaeological site of Mediana to Tabula Traiana in the municipality of Kladovo. More broadly, the tourist area of *Roman emperors road and Danube road of wine* (part located in Serbia) encompasses other important sites as well: Viminacium (near Kostolac), Sirmium (Sremska Mitrovica), Caričin grad near Lebane and Belgrade (Singidunum), as a touristic centre of the whole area.

The culture-historical route - *Roman emperors road and Danube road of wine* tells a story of the rise and fall of the Roman Empire and the extremely important period of the Eastern Empire when its capital was Sirmium. At that time, Latin Rome, thanks to the emperors born here on the edge of the empire, again became powerful. Some of these traces of power and luxury are also visible today in archaeological sites, on the roads where the emperors were passing, pools with magnificent mosaics where they were swimming, bridges and palaces that they built and golden money that they were minting. Because of everything that Roman emperors left on the ground of their origins, today's tourists will travel to the places of the former Roman Empire to feel that spirit and imagine how life was then. The vision of the development of the tourist route was primarily presented in the Master Plan. This demanded a lot of work to meet the basic requirements for the reception of more tourists, such as the construction of access roads, parking, boarding houses, restrooms, signposting and training of translators and travel guides. A lot has been achieved in this field, which is proven by the establishment of the tourist arrangement *Roman emperors road and Danube road of wine* in 2015. The route originally spread through four countries - Serbia, Croatia, Romania and Bulgaria, while in 2017 Hungary joined the group with its cultural and historical heritage. There is still room and potential for improvements in tourism, as well as for the additional increase in living standard and the economic development of Eastern Serbia and, following, the entire country.

Based on the previous analysis and from the example of the development of the route *Roman emperors road and Danube road of wine*, described in the study, we can conclude that the economic success of such a tourist program requires the fulfilment of several important conditions. Firstly, the tourist product must be positioned on the tourist market, or precisely on the market of cultural tourism, as distinct, different and unique in relation to other cultural tourism programs. Uniqueness can arise from the authenticity of cultural attractions, the identity of the area, the quality of products and services, the kindness of the local population and other elements that make up the value chain of a particular product. The basic motive of the brand of this product should be the Roman heritage and the fact that 17 Roman emperors lived and built in this area. Secondly, the tourist product must be packaged into an integrated arrangement, because only in this way can it attract more tourists. Thirdly, the precondition for realization of the tourist destination must be the construction of basic and supporting infrastructure. Fourth, realization of a thematic route of this

type requires an institutionalized partnership between local municipality, state and tourism organizations (in this case also between governments of different countries). The success of the route depends on the extent to which successful partnerships can be established between public and private, as well as within the private sector. In addition, it is necessary to institutionalize the management and promotion system by establishing a special organization for that purpose. Fifth, it is necessary to carefully create the concept of cultural goods interpretation to tourists as a prerequisite for creating their unforgettable experience. Finally, the basic thematic content should be supplemented by the accompanying tourist offer, taking care not to jeopardize the cultural heritage of this area.

The economic success of such a touristic product cannot be accomplished without the simultaneous realization of cultural and social goals. Cultural goals are reflected through the need to connect cultural attractions, investing efforts in discovering new cultural treasures, increasing the awareness of the local population about the importance of culture-historical heritage and state investments in conservation and protection of existing localities. Social objectives in this context involve more vigorous engagement of local communities as partners in the process, planning of spatial arrangement and development of the area's identity, education of the population on the history of the area in which they live and increased level of participation of the population through employment and inclusion in the development of the tourist offer.

Serbia is a country of natural resources, a magnificent culture-historical heritage, an oasis of peace and recreation. However, without good organization and investments in tourism, infrastructure, marketing, promotion and country hospitality, this potential will remain wasted and hidden from the eyes of many tourists. For the cultural enrichment of people from the country, but also abroad, as well as for the economic development of Serbia, it is necessary to use the example from this study when analysing the possibility of exploiting all tourist potentials of Serbia, but also in analysing the additional improvement of the tourist offer of the routes *Roman emperors road and Danube road of wine*.

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