

THE FUTURE OF TOUR GUIDING AND ITS TRENDS IN THE POST COVID-19 SOCIETY

*Andrea Žerajić*¹

Abstract

The corona virus has shaped our everyday life in many ways during the last two years. The COVID-19 pandemic has upended the travel and tourism industries and opened many questions about the future of individuals working in the tourism industry. Traditional well-known concepts must be changed. The urban tourist of the post-covid time will probably travel in a world more digitally mediated than ever before. To stay relevant during the pandemic, business organizations had to apply digital tools. Tourism organizations did the same. Therefore, the position and perspectives of the tour guides whose role has always been an inevitable segment of the touristic offer has been called into question and is significantly threatened. The number of tourists was limited because of lockdowns, which seemingly led to disappearance of the ‘traditional’ guided group tours. This paper aims to provide the description of the position of the tour guides in the world considering the current epidemiological situation and to focus on the future trends that should be developed in this field. It also emphasizes the importance of recognizing new forms of touristic offers that shall influence the way of engaging tour guides, thus considering whether digitalization will somehow suppress the “live performance” of a tour guide.

Key Words: *tour guides, COVID-19, touristic offer, tourism industry*
JEL classification: Z32

Introduction

One of the most significant events of the 21st century is the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. Since the very beginning, it has had a tremendous influence on tourism. According to current estimations, 75 million jobs in

¹ Andrea Žerajić, PhD, professor of vocational studies, Academy of Applied Studies Belgrade, Belgrade, 063/1110777, andrea.zerajic@vhs.edu.rs

tourism are at immediate risk and the industry itself is expected to lose more than 2.1 trillion US\$ in turnover (WTTC, 2020).

According to Klaus-Jürgen & Hauber (2020), the lung disease caused by the pathogen SARS-CoV-2, first appeared in the Chinese city of Wuhan at the end of 2019 and subsequently spread first in China, especially in the province of Hubei. Infections outside of China have been increasing since February 2020 (p. 223). Globally, as of 18 March 2022, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported almost 464,809,377 confirmed cases including 6,062,536 deaths and 10,925,055,390 vaccine doses that have been administered.

As Klaus-Jürgen & Hauber (2020) stated, "studies on the economic impact of epidemics mostly refer to the effects that result directly from a reduction in the supply of labor due to higher levels of sick leave and disease-related deaths. However, indirect effects resulting from measures to contain the epidemic or changes in consumer behavior have so far been of greater importance for the economy. These impair economic activity directly through the cancellation of major events and trade fairs where many people gather in a confined space, and lead to a decline in travel. Quarantine measures can also hinder the production of goods and the production processes sensitive to disruption" (p. 223).

Many people eagerly awaited the year 2022, as the approval of several corona vaccines meant hope for the end of the pandemic. However, new challenges emerged at the beginning of the year: the continued high number of cases combined with a lockdown that was only effective to a limited extent, the slow start of vaccination, the threat of new virus mutations. The corona pandemic is expected to accompany our lives in general and in tourism, especially in the first half of the year. Nevertheless – it can be assumed that life and travel will gradually return to normal. This article gives an overview of the possible development of the tourism in the future focusing on the effects to the tour guides profession.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, tour guides have not been able to work for more than a year. Therefore, a large number of them reoriented to other jobs simply because of existential reasons. During all this time, they received a minimum wage from the state and had to find temporary or permanent employment in other industries. This was also one of the reasons why travel agencies, at the moment when it was possible to organize tours, had a problem of finding tour guides who were available and ready to work. The return of tour guides will have to follow the tourism recovery in the

post-covid period and therefore undergo certain modifications both in perception and realization of this job. The aim of the paper is to emphasize the importance of the adapting to the new trends in tourism in general as a consequence of pandemics which affects especially its actors such as tour guides and to describe the perspective of this profession in the future.

The new concept - A new "post-corona - normality"

Regardless of the exact development of the pandemic in 2021, its effects will continue to change our travel behavior and tourism far beyond 2021 and permanently. All experts agree on this.

The tourism industry is severely affected by the effects of the pandemic (Hall et al., 2020; Gössling et al., 2021). However, global tourism has already been endangered by crises and disasters (cf. 9-11, tsunami in the Indian Ocean, SARS, global financial and economic crisis, etc.). Disasters can be perceived as unexpected, unavoidable events that produce multiple-level effects and physical damage. Changes in the society and ecology have long-lasting global effects regardless of large distances (Haggett, 2000). According to Laws & Prideaux (2005), they are reflected in crises "that disrupt the orderly operation of the tourism industry" (p.2).

The question "Do you still need to travel?" sounds revolutionary for an industry that has become accustomed to the idea that travel is an indispensable element of life for modern people. This notion has consistently been propagated for decades.

According to Kiefl & Kagelmann (2021), Corona could signal a shift, a thoughtful change, and a new definition of travel. After all, in the past nine months, we have learned that it is also possible to travel "without" travel, and that perhaps there are more important things in life than the "non-essential travel" so apostrophized by politics (p. 299).

According to Schippergas (2020), it is apparent that individual aspects of the trend are being viewed from a new perspective, particularly against the backdrop of a crisis-induced "new thoughtfulness" or increased reflexivity in everyday life. Above all, the potential of digitization is being reassessed. In addition, the possibilities of moving away from motorized individual transport are viewed more skeptically. However, many continue to see them as necessary, especially in the light of the backdrop of congestion on the roads. In many cases, there are improved social cohesion and solidarity

in the society. This leads to new opportunities for joint action in the sense of solidarity, i.e., sustainable action, for the benefit of future generations. Noteworthy are experiences with the sudden deceleration of everyday life, made during the lockdown, that show time sovereignty and time prosperity in a new light. In addition, a new everyday myth is emerging – the "healthy environment". Simultaneously, pronounced concerns about the influence of the Corona crisis on the economy are evident. Thus, priorities between economic growth and sustainability – including the resulting dilemmas – are being reassessed. Overall, the Corona crisis has not yet led to any fundamental changes in everyday consciousness and behavioral dispositions. However, it has further exacerbated pre-existing cognitive dissonances, conative dilemmas and emotional conflicts causing discourses on these issues to come to a head. People have become more open to new perspectives and more willing to embrace new approaches to problem solving. For sustainability and resource policy, this results in different conceptual and communicative approaches as well as the particular urgency to intervene now.

As Petra Hedorfer (2020), Chief Executive Officer, German National Tourist Board (GNTB) stated in 2020, the new momentum for sustainability and value has been created through COVID-19: nearly 80 percent of travelers from our major source markets believe that the pandemic will lead to more sustainable tourism. According to Obier et al. (2021), regardless of the exact evolution of the pandemic, its impact will continue to change our travel patterns and tourism permanently. In detail, the following developments can be observed, which will also take effect after the Corona pandemic. In detail, the following developments can be observed, which will also take effect after the Corona pandemic:

Smart services: The emergence of digital offers and applications fueled by the pandemic, e.g., in the fields of art, culture or in everyday work, will remain an important part of the overall tourist experience even after the pandemic and complement analogue experiences. The digitization of tourism is experiencing an urgently needed and significant acceleration due to the pandemic and promotes developments, e.g., for smart visitor guidance / predictive visitor management, which help to balance tourism during and after the pandemic.

Sustainability: This development had a strong impact before the pandemic, and now it has become even stronger: Balanced, sustainable tourism with corresponding offers will become a premise in the future. The

pandemic has once again made it clear that "business as usual" in tourism will no longer be successful. The mobility is undergoing a significant change. The air traffic that has come to a standstill will not return to the old status after the pandemic. People will use train to travel short distances (less than 800 km) more frequently, and the density of low-cost flights will decrease. Whatever one thinks of sustainable tourism – the very idea of which is hardly ever questioned – the impression is that the current crisis was caused by the disadvantages of traditional, insensitive tourism and not by the surprise emergence and global spread of a highly aggressive virus. The extent to which future "sustainable tourism" of whatever kind will deal with the corona virus better, faster and more comprehensively still has to be proven – all the more so since the current protagonists of sustainable tourism never explain which measures, built on the fundamental differences of alternative tourism, would prevent a virus à la Corona. One does not know whether it is (intentional or involuntary) misunderstanding or a lack of understanding of the current events, in any case, in the interpretation of the current tourist wishes, the needs of the people are interpreted as an expression of a (new) sustainable orientation.

Immersive Travel: The need for an authentic experience of the travel destination will become an ever-stronger travel motive and will gain in importance compared to "mass tourism". Hyperlocal offers use the digital possibilities to integrate the local community of the travel destination and satisfy the guest's need for authentic and regional things.

Nature & Outdoor: Nature as a place of longing or outdoor experiences has also become increasingly important and has expanded its leading role as a travel motive even before the pandemic.

Health and safety: Health safety is becoming a permanent travel requirement and appropriate hygiene a basic factor in the quality requirements of guests. Accordingly, health protection and hygiene will be expected from the established quality initiatives in the future.

Fluid boundaries between work and leisure: More flexible working world, fueled by the pandemic, is blurring the boundaries between work on the one hand, and vacation and leisure on the other. More and more offers in urban and rural areas rely on the coexistence of work and leisure, with the invocation of "sustainable" tourism – tourism that conserves natural resources and preserves the basis of life and development opportunities for future generations.

”People want to fly (...). In the end, we will fly again. We want to get out. That is our DNA” (Zeitung, 2020, p. 20), is one of sentences in media that describes the state of mind of people worldwide, affected psychically by all effects of the Corona pandemic.

This arises the question: Will there be post-corona tourism? If so, what will it be like? According to Kiefl & Kagelmann (2021), new ”post-corona - normality” sounds hopeful, but is actually unfounded, since in the opinion of virologists and other medical professionals, the virus will be present in one way or another to an indefinite extent for years (perhaps always) and it will have its impact, as is the case with other infections (p. 289). Assuming this – and unfortunately there are good reasons for it – the future psychological events, what takes place in the heads of people who deal with travel, travel considerations, travel decisions, etc., could be determined by the following areas of tension and opposites (pp. 290-293):

1. *Caution, restraint, mindfulness, abstinence vs. carelessness, joy, fun, desire*: Is the (spontaneous) approach to new situations, new encounters, etc. that is frequent and typical for the holiday, replaced by a general cautious restraint? In a certain way, vacationing thrives on a carefree attitude. Can future travel with a limited fun factor still be a “normal” travel?
2. *Fear vs. spontaneity*: The actions of people before and during vacation are determined primarily by a fear of dangerous virological things that cannot be curbed or is difficult to overcome. Spontaneous action, be it booking or living comfortably on vacation following the usual touristic actions is no longer possible.
3. *Prevention vs. light-heartedness*: It is no longer the simplicity of the proverbial “pack your toothbrush and then drive away” as it used to be what made travel so fascinating, but the overlaying of the attraction of a travel destination with rational action – through the considered making of prevention-oriented decisions, if and when you decide to go on holiday. This includes selecting and taking out insurance, precautionary measures, the choice of the appropriate, virus-closing means of travel (e.g. your own car as a relatively safe cover).
4. *Restriction vs. willingness to spend*: A major attraction of the holiday is the consumption of necessary things on site. This will be superseded by considerations of caution, or to put it simply, there will be no more fun and pointless consumption in the future.
5. *Withdrawal vs. participation*: The advertising of the travel industry and all kinds of visual media suggest that traveling, vacationing, and visiting interesting, attractive and “beautiful” places are easy. This

undoubtedly applies to some of the travel decisions: what matters is the desire to go somewhere. That is always the primary motivation, since it is always about a social experience, about being with other people. This indispensable side of the holiday has become very difficult, if not impossible, by the required social distance. The result is that if people can no longer get to know other people or do things with other people on vacation, then they can stay at home and go to the museum or watch nice films on TV.

6. *Contact avoidance vs. contact search*: The problem of entering contacts, of interactions, which has already been mentioned on various occasions, will play a role. The recommendations that were announced and enforced by administration and norms during the pandemic period and that definitely reduced the number of social contacts will also have an impact in leisure and holiday areas. After all, people were used to it over months, or had to get used to it.
7. *Modesty/sparseness vs. intensity*: The tendency of many people to want to take advantage of everything that is offered during a vacation could increase: Taking a vacation once, including the associated restrictions and difficulties, but then already with “everything in it”: taking advantage of as many offers as possible will increase for understandable reasons. Because it can be assumed that, out of a sense of caution, people will forego multiple trips, travelers will see themselves forced to do as much as possible on site instead of simply enjoying a few selected things. The buzzword “leisure stress”, which was used more frequently in the past, thus takes on a new meaning.
8. *Egoism vs. public spirit*: There is no doubt that the two Corona waves have brought that many people are more concerned about their own health and well-being, but less about the health situation of their fellow human beings.
9. *Distrust vs. trust*: A tourist generally has a lot of trust in vacation. He believes that the trip will take place in an orderly manner, that they will be brought safely to their destination, that his expectations will be met on site and in general, that everything will be that everything will be done in a reasonably "civilized" manner, and so on. This trust has been disturbed severely by Corona. Even before Corona there had already been a few developments in German tourism that had severely damaged people's trust, such as the bankruptcy of the airline Air Berlin⁶ and the insolvency of Thomas Cook, the second largest travel group in Europe (Sept. 2019).
10. The major tour operators, however, continue to practice expedient optimism and repeat that everything is fine: "There is no good reason

why Germans should have to do without their well-earned vacation," said TUI CEO Friedrich Joussen. Nevertheless, the supposedly most beautiful weeks of the year will also be different this year because no one knows if, how and where it will take place in 2021. Only one thing is certain: most people are still waiting to make bookings. In any case, the vacation will be different – distance rules all-inclusive.

11. *Fatigue vs. motivation*: This refers to the fact, particularly discussed in the USA, that many people have developed or are said to have developed the "pandemic fatigue", i.e., a mental tiredness of wanting to deal with the pandemic and all its consequences, irrespective of the fact that the threat, the pandemic and all the consequences associated with it still exist. In any case, this COVID fatigue was on the one hand psychologically tourism-increasing (in the U.S.A., the desire to travel is not impaired, especially on the important national holiday, Thanksgiving Day); on the other hand, it could be a hindrance regarding a new comprehensive "wanderlust". However, there are no hard data on this yet.
12. *"Robotized", technologized services vs. personal contacts*: The abandonment of personal contacts enforced by Corona also affects basic services in hotels and possibly in restaurants. Waiters, hotel cleaners, concierges, etc. will become superfluous and replaced either by robots or by services provided by the tourist/guest.

Possible implications of the Corona crisis on different aspects of the tourism industry

As Jäggi (2021) says, travel is one of the oldest patterns of human behavior. Accordingly, tourism can be understood and interpreted as an economic, but also a social phenomenon as well. The "mobility turn" has attempted to bring both perspectives together.

According to Chemli et al. (2022), currently, different scientific disciplines are analyzing the reporting and the effects of media coverage in a variety of contexts. The tourism industry, strongly influenced by the pandemic, can be mentioned here as a representative example. Therefore, the effects of reporting on travel behavior have been investigated (p. 1). Crisis communication in the media has already been analyzed worldwide in a short period. As a result, at least initial analytical and normative considerations can be derived for changing and shifting coverage. Since travel was severely restricted, especially in spring 2020 and later on in 2021 as well, it is obvious that the tourism sector in particular will be

strongly influenced by the pandemic. Media coverage of the pandemic has an impact on tourism travel, primarily by influencing the attitudes of potential tourists and thus raising awareness (p. 32). This change in attitude and increased awareness can affect travel behavior, such as not planning or embarking on trips to high-profile designated risk areas. These changes in behavior with regard to travel can be recognized in our environment and reconciled with media reporting in Germany.

The COVID-19 pandemic made us change our life priorities. According to Marin-Pantelescu et al. (2021), “tourists are now concerned not only about health and safety in the tourist destination, then also the managers of the tourist destinations are looking for digital solutions to facilitate the development of the tourist actions. Technologies can give us this psychological comfort” (p. 8).

Tourist destinations are based on new technologies to facilitate access of visitors to tourist attractions. The new trends of smart tourist destinations, the ways and means by which a destination may become smart and attractive for tourists and proposes a virtual signposting for visiting tourist attractions.

Moreover, according to Buhalis & Amaranggana (2014), the quality of life in a particular region nowadays depend heavily on innovation, sustainability, accessibility and technology. All these four elements combined can create a smart city. Smart cities emerge as the result of many smart solutions, from smart mobility to smart tourism and leisure.

At the same time, the stringent health security requirements in the ‘new normal’ social life during and post-pandemic times enforce radical changes of tourism, among which virtual tourism gains solid grounds. Virtual tours accessed via smartphones have largely replaced the classical guided tours, lately.

According to Gorynski et al. (2021), the influence of the Corona pandemic has hastened aspects of development of smart cities. There has been impressive development in different areas, such as in urban data platforms or mobility. If city governments want to capitalize on the created momentum, they should concentrate on community adaptability and on needs of citizens that foster quality of life, sustainability, and social justice. To frame the future development of smart cities better, first we should review the previous approaches that municipalities around the world have

taken in recent years. With the outbreak of the pandemic and the premise of adaptability being in the center of attention, we could observe how municipalities have adapted to changing circumstances and how they have positioned themselves more innovatively for the future to meet the demands of public services and the needs of urban society. Using some tools that the smart city possesses, we can explain how technology we have can serve all in urban society to prevent, coordinate and cope with pandemics and other future crises in the future and make cities more adaptable. This includes the need for close collaboration between government, business, academia and civil society to manage the transformation process to a smart city successfully.

What opportunities do we see for sustainable tourism because of the Corona crisis?

According to Gorynski et al. (2021) first is the central and crucial opportunity to become more aware of the impact of our production and consumption choices on the planet, on living beings in the broadest sense, and on social balance.

We hope it will return to basics that we have experienced in this previously unprecedented time of lockdown can continue. Just as the consumption of regional products is increasing, solidarity with producers can also be applied to our decisions regarding travel and tourism, following the idea of "less but better" – for the benefit of local people and smaller local producers.

Basically, the media attention to events or the critical reporting due to holidaymakers who love to party is nothing new for the tourist resort of Ischgl. During the pandemic, in which the ski resort of Ischgl became known in the international media and research as one of the first examples of a "super-spreader" (Gössling et al., 2021), this has again increased massively in intensity.

The “new normal” of travel? Covid as the initiator of a cultural change? A keyword does not necessarily have to make sense. The frequently mentioned so-called “travel in the new normal”, which is supposed to emerge with the hoped-for end of the pandemic, has more of a therapeutic function. At its core, it signals calming, the strengthening of trust in needs and events that have existed for decades and should be passed on for many decades, just 'somewhat different'. If we look at the individual points, it

becomes clear that this is not the case. Nevertheless, on the one hand, numerous special restrictions for the arts and culture sector remain in force, and on the other hand, general traffic restrictions – especially for tourism and the restaurant industry – have a direct and indirect impact on the arts and culture sector. Other special features of the cultural sector, especially preparations and rehearsals for theater and music performances and the like, also prevent a rapid resumption of regular operations, even if restrictions are lifted completely.

According to Pitlik et al. (2020), “the cultural industry is also closely intertwined with the travel industry (gastronomy and accommodation). An attractive cultural offering increases the appeal of a country or region to its attractiveness for national and international tourism. Conversely, increasing attractiveness presumably also leads to increased cultural economic activities within the tourist destination regions. Therefore, legally or factually restricted tourism has a direct impact on the cultural sector in Austria. A return to the “normal operation” of the arts and culture sector remains uncertain for some time to come” (p. 6).

It should also be relatively clear that, because of the international restrictions on travel in the course of combating a further spread of the Corona virus, the cultural sector is also massively affected. The Quarterly Report Q4/2021 of the European Travel Commission ETC of February 2022 predicts a significant slump: the containment efforts throughout Europe have led to severely affected tourism sector. Because of COVID19, tourism lost out on around \$1 trillion of export revenues in 2021, UNWTO estimates. According to UNWTO (2020), it predicts that the tourism industry will recover gradually in 2022. International tourist arrivals globally grew 130% in January 2022. And this was despite the Omicron variant of COVID-19 slowing down the speed of the recovery. Accordingly, even if cultural facilities were to remain open and events were to be permitted demand and value creation in the cultural industry would be impacted significantly.

Current situation of the tour guides and perspectives of the guided tours

The tourism industry and the freelance tour guides are also hit very hard. Trip after trip and travel fair after travel fair have been cancelled. There is still a lot of uncertainty about the summer. There are diffuse travel warnings. We are not able to plan anything. Most tour guides live on

several small jobs, little money, single freelance assignments and with little security. We love our work, are willing to live with little planning security, but of course, you cannot exist only on air and love. According to Žerajić (2020), “the knowledge about the origin and development of traveling in its historical dimension qualifies a tour guide to assess the importance of this aspect of quality of life correctly, which has become immensely important in our society” (p. 522).

The tour operators are also hit particularly hard: to maintain a company in this time, to give reliable information, often to have worked months in advance without pay and now to have to pay back a lot in cancellation costs is hard. In addition, not all the local service providers, hotels, bus drivers, thousands of people involved, have a job anymore. According to Žerajić (2021), “the appearance and spread of the pandemic led to cancellation of tourist trips, which severely affected tourist guides. Presently, the tourism sector in Serbia is experiencing a complete catastrophe, and it has become evident that the recovery of this sector is impossible to predict” (p. 70).

Tour guiding only exists if there are guided tours. It is not enough that the vacationers come and fill the hotels. Whether tourists leave their hotels or not is not only related to Corona, but to the attitude of the guests, the all-inclusive system and the super modern hotels that offer everything to the vacationers. It will take time before people start taking long trips together in a bus again. Therefore, the activity of tour guides will continue to be very limited. For the first time, many are thinking about looking for other work.

Considering very unstable and delicate position of the tour guides in Serbia last two years, the Government of the Republic of Serbia has passed a Decree on determining the program of scheduling and using subsidies to support the work of tourist guides due to business difficulties caused by the epidemic of Covid-19 disease caused by SARS-cov-2 virus ("Službeni glasnik Republike Srbije", 23 / 2021 i 38/2021). It entered into force on March 17, 2021 and defines the right to use grants for tourist guides and tourist companions.

The main goals of the Program are:

1. Preservation of the tourist industry of the Republic of Serbia;
2. Support to providers of tourism professions,
3. Preservation of employment in the field of tourism;

4. Providing conditions for recovery and planning of the tourism industry for the next season as a driving mechanism for other related industries.

The right to a grant can be exercised by tourist guides who:

1. are citizens of the Republic of Serbia;
2. have passed the professional exam for a tourist guide or tourist companion in accordance with the regulations in the field of tourism;
3. have fulfilled the legal obligation to replace the identification card by the day this Decree enters into force, i.e. who possess the appropriate and valid identification card;
4. are not employed, including the company of which they are the founder or member, as well as those who are not employed on the basis of work outside the employment relationship;
5. do not perform entrepreneurial activity independently;
6. are not beneficiaries of pension rights.

Although the pandemic has suspended the work of the travel industry, many guides have worked hard to adjust to the new reality and continue to be the voice of responsible tourism.

The tour guiding profession was almost dead for more than a year, but the tour guides are here to stay. However, they will have to change. The guides of the future will be those with excellent communication and virtual storytelling skills. They will undoubtedly need additional training because an excellent tour guide may not be able to do the job in the virtual environment with the same quality. In addition, intercultural communication will become much more important. Now it is more likely to have people from various places and backgrounds on the virtual tour than before. The guide should be familiar with different cultures and able to communicate fluently and find the best way of getting the message across.

One of the aspects closely connected with the perspectives of the tour guide profession in the future is the culture of an area in general, often very closely connected with the travel industry (gastronomy and accommodation): an attractive cultural offer increases the attractiveness of a country or region for national and international tourism. Conversely, increasing attractiveness probably also leads to increased cultural and economic activities within the tourist destination regions. Legally or factually restricted tourism therefore has a direct impact on the cultural sector. A return to "normal operation" in the art and culture sector remains despite the slow easing also uncertain in the long term.

Discussion and Concluding remarks

Despite constant efforts to change the current tourism industry, mass tourism is still a major form of modern tourism. Hordes of tourists eager to travel after almost two years of deprivation, as well as the tourist boom in many so-called new destinations, clearly show the unsustainability of current approaches to tourism management and planning.

According to Kuhn's (2012) structure of scientific revolutions, this is a time of alternative concepts to theorize and understand our world. Until the hoped-for "normalization", the tourism industry is waiting for new marketing ideas, i.e., for the occurrence of positive developments, which of course cannot be influenced, such as new vaccines and a vaccination sweep of the population, and for changed moods and new willingness to travel (without being able to explain where and how and when this should arise). This assumes (criticized above) that people in this country and in comparable regions would never give up vacations and travel as an indispensable element of their accustomed lives. Thus, the industry – at least most of it – assumes that people in this country are just waiting in the wings, nervously scratching their hooves as to when the time will finally come for them to go out into the world again. It seems that this crisis hastened the new way of understanding the tourism industry. The pandemic may have been disastrous for the economy of this industry, but it has also helped us understand the beginning of a new, more sustainable era for tourism in all levels.

The tourism industry is facing both an opportunity and a challenge. The profession of the tour guides is strongly affected with the same. The relationship of trust with travelers must be restored. We can foresee that the choice of a destination and means of transport will depend upon certain elements that may have been neglected before – guarantees and security in their widest sense. We had seen how crowded guests had been in hotels, experienced broadcasted deaths on cruise ships and guests stranded abroad. With such a background, regional tourism will become more attractive and will flourish. The sense of security is stronger in short distances, while local recreation with familiar cultural circles provides emotional security. However, if trans-regional destinations guarantee high standards in terms of healthcare and transportation, they can also benefit.

The COVID-19 crisis thus not only shows the importance of communication and networking, but also of destination-wide resilience:

A global crisis of this geographical and economic dimension is new for different areas of the tourism industry and so further development of resilience in tourism is required. In particular, the coordination of the actors and the crisis interventions in the first phase must be considered here: Mutual emergency aid in the regions is a first step here before looking at the political leaders in the state and federal government. Normalization in tourism will take a few more years. Not only the arrival figures, but also the content of tourism will be rewritten.

Therefore, it must be concluded that the Covid-19 pandemic has shaken the global tourism industry, which is rapidly searching for innovative technological solutions for the current situation, but also for the post-pandemic period. A particular challenge and threat of this period is the change of the “live word” of a tour guide with digitalization in tourism that either excludes or significantly reduces contacts between a tourist and the tour guide. It is interesting that technological innovations in the management and marketing of smart destinations have proven to be effective in overcoming the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic. It happened both in the field of automation of certain jobs (replacement of human labor with robots) and in managing the safety of tourists and locals (movement monitoring). It also enabled virtual tourist alternatives in conditions of impossibility of physical movement of tourists.

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