

## TIMISOARA - EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE NEEDS TO INCREASE VISIBILITY

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***Abstract:** In the modern world, with rapidly developing technologies and exponential increase in competition - not only between enterprises, but also between countries, a marketing strategy is a must. Constantly changing conditions of the external environment require continuous improvement of urban management models, seeking new approaches aimed at innovative self-development, impose an increase attention in the city marketing policies.*

***Keywords:** European Capital of Culture (ECoC), urban marketing, tourism trends*

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### **Introduction**

The European Capital of Culture is a city designated by the European Union for a period of one calendar year during which it organizes a series of cultural events with a strong pan-European dimension.

The preparation of a European Capital of Culture can be an opportunity for the city to generate significant cultural, social and economic benefits, and can help to promote urban regeneration, change the city's image and increase its visibility and profile on an international scale.

The Commission of the European Union manages the title and each year the Council of Ministers of the European Union formally nominates European Capitals of Culture.

The initiative was developed in 1985 and has been awarded to more than 50 cities throughout the European Union.

The European Capitals of Culture initiative is designed to [7]:

- Highlight the richness and diversity of cultures in Europe
- Celebrate the cultural features of the Europeans share
- Increased European citizens' sense of belonging to a common cultural area
- Foster the contribution of culture to the development of cities

In addition to this, experience has shown that the event is an excellent opportunity for:

- Regenerating cities
- Raising the international profile of cities;
- Enhancing the image of the cities in the eyes of their own inhabitants
- Breathing new life into a city's culture
- Boosting tourism

European capitals of culture have already been designated until 2023:

- 2020 - Rijeka (Croatia) and Galway (Ireland)
- 2021 - Timisoara (Romania), Elefsina (Greece) and Novi Sad (Serbia, candidate country)
- 2022 - Kaunas (Lithuania) and Esch (Luxembourg)
- 2023 - Veszprém (Hungary) (recommended)

The 2021 European Capital of Culture title that Timisoara has earned has to bring many more tourists and their stays extend from current business tourism to leisure and recreational tourism. "At the moment, more business tourism is taking place in Timisoara, as is the case in any of the major cities of the world, the hotels being full of Monday to Friday. We are also worried about the filling of the hotels in the weekend and we have to make sure that at least the tourists who come to business in Timisoara do a pre-tour and a post-tour, stay a little longer, companions in Timisoara", said Gabriela Petcana, member of the National Association of Romanian Tourism Agencies. [5]

### **Research methodology, data, results and conclusions.**

Contemporary trends on the world tourism market show that the number of tourists attracted by the cities is growing. Urban tourism is a growing tourist market and especially attractive cities in

Europe. City tourism development plan should be prepared as an integral part of global economic and social development plan of the city, with the main objective of integrating tourism into existing urban economics development, and at the same time to prevent conflict situations. Tourism development in the city needs a network and cooperative relations between local government, tourist organization, tourist agencies and different organizations / institutions in the city; public-private partnership is a must.[3]

In the last two decades tourism market has faced the significant changes is preferences of tourist, thing that is very obvious today. Tourists are becoming more and more demanding and their attitudes towards leisure. Nowadays people want to travel and see and experience as much as possible during their trip, being short or long.

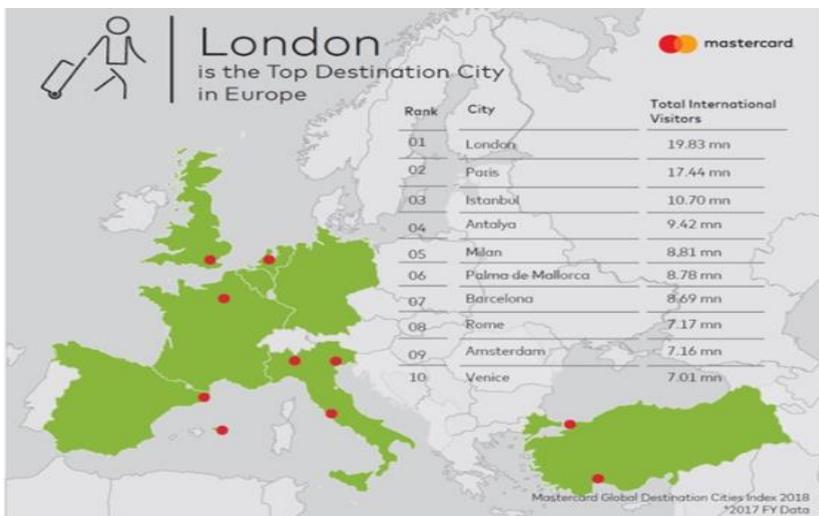
Tourism became a way of informal education for tourists. However, the choice of destination made will obviously depend on the opportunities. Easier, cheaper and faster transport has greatly widened the choice of destination available. The private sector, aware of growing demand and opportunities for profit, has invested in attractions, hotels and catering as well as providing a great deal of infrastructure and attractions, often as deliberate policy to encourage tourism.

The topic of this paper is to analyze how a city can prepare a strategy for an event as being nominated European Capital of Culture.

The old European cities, with great history and cultural heritage, beautiful architecture has popular destinations and has many economic benefits from tourism, but at the same time has to deal with the specific problems that arise with tourism development.

Cities, usually, attract different market segments. Cultural heritage of the city attracts more educated population of tourists. A more elderly population is also likely to appreciate cultural heritage and prefer it to active outdoor holidays. Young people, on the other hand, are attracted to the excitement found in the city, the entertainment, the night life and sport events. The large city is also a destination for the business traveler too.

For the past decade, the Mastercard's Global Destination Cities Index has provided important analysis of travel to and within cities. This year's top cities are Bangkok, London and Paris, once again underscoring the importance of robust infrastructure, both business and leisure attractions and strong local culture.



Source: <https://newsroom.mastercard.com/eu/press-releases/london-tops-europe-in-mastercards-2018-global-destination-cities-index/>

The numbers make a very positive reading for London, which has continued growth in visitor numbers, and the amount they spend. With 19.83 million international overnight visitors, London retains second place this year. Visitors tend to stay in the city for 5.8 nights and spend £ 117 per day, on average.

London continues to dominate Europe in shopping spending by international visitors. People spend more money in London than any other European city, representing 49% of visitors' spending.

The global top 10 destination cities				
	2017 International Overnight Visitors	2018 growth forecast	Average length of stay	Average daily spend (GBP)
Bangkok	20.05 million	9.6%	4.7 nights	£132
<i>London</i>	<i>19.83 million</i>	<i>3.0%</i>	<i>5.8 nights</i>	<i>£117</i>
Paris	17.44 million	2.9%	2.5 nights	£230
Dubai	15.79 million	5.5%	3.5 nights	£410
Singapore	13.91 million	4.0%	4.3 nights	£286
New York	13.13 million	4.1%	8.3 nights	£112
Kuala Lumpur	12.58 million	7.5%	5.5 nights	£95
Tokyo	11.93 million	1.6%	6.5 nights	£118
Istanbul	10.70 million	19.7%	5.8 nights	£83
Seoul	9.54 million	6.1%	4.2 nights	£138

Source: <https://newsroom.mastercard.com/eu/press-releases>

### **Marketing activities, priorities of the European Capitals of Culture**

The rise in visibility and profile of a city on the international scale is one of the top priorities of most ECoC title-holders.

"Selling a city" means promoting the city to potential investors in order to attract investment in the area and create development. It is an expression used in marketing in P.R. and it shows that promoting a city has to be made as if you were selling a commercial product. The same sales principles and techniques are used, as the ultimate goal is to get benefits / results.

To be able to "sell" a city, there must first be an integrated cities development strategy. That is, to have strategic and operational development objectives, to know where you are, where you propose to go and how you get there. Depending on your strengths as a city and what directions you want to develop, you can build the investment offer. This type of promotion is called "city marketing".

Cities, the European Capitals of Culture, have used various means of communication to promote themselves. Therefore, it is necessary to communicate with the public on a monthly, weekly and daily basis.

In preparation for the organization of events related to the title of European Cultural Capital in 2021, Timisoara lost a significant number of tourists along with the whole county last year. After the first 11 months of 2018, compared to 2017, the loss consisted of tens of thousands less arrived in the capital of Banat, but also in the most western county of the country.

Timisoara and Timis are losing their tourist attractiveness. The official data collected by the Timis Regional Statistical Office confirm the decrease in the number of visitors who have chosen to visit the area. Preliminary data for 2018, which comprise the first 11 months of the year, show that 352,613 tourists arrived in Timis, which means a decrease of 20,877 tourists compared to the same period in 2017 when there were 373,490 people.[6]

It should be said that the trend of decline at the local level is quite opposite to that at the national level, where there have been rises; we are talking about an extra six percent after the first ten months of the year. The smallest tourists number in the country were registered in Teleorman County: 9,070.

The 2021 European Capital of Culture title that Timisoara has earned, has to bring many more tourists and their stays extend from current business tourism to leisure tourism.

It is not easy to do so, so both the public and the private sector have to make their contribution in this regard.

City marketing is aiming in creating and maintaining: the attractiveness and prestige of the city as a whole and the appeal centered on the territory of resources.

The concept of city marketing requires focusing on the needs of target groups of consumer goods and service areas. All the structures and companies responsible for the fate of the region should focus on the needs of consumers and target groups of consumers as well as on the creation of the best image compared to other areas for optimal satisfaction of all consumer categories.[4]

## Conclusions

The development potential of the European Capital of Culture program, which induces greater participation of cities within nominated countries is well known.

The Internet has become a mediator for accumulating quality ideas for the development program, which can be critical when deciding on ECoC title-holders.

To ensure the success of policies regarding the rise in visibility and profile of a city on the international scale is needed to ensure a more dynamic view of culture in these policies. The new communication trends have introduced new ways of disseminating information on events in ECoC cities, hence the need to use these trends.

To improve strategies for increasing visibility and the number of tourists, countries can join for support to organizations that aim which aim to develop countries on this axis.

European Cities Marketing is a non-profit organization improving the competitiveness and performance of leading European cities. ECM provides a platform for Leisure, Meetings Industry and City Marketing professionals to exchange knowledge, best practices and widen their network to build new business.

Thus strategies must balance the conflicting demands of culture and economy, locals and tourists, creativity and creativity, and short-term impacts with long-term benefits. In judging "success" clear decisions must be made about the objectives.

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