

## NEWS IN CRUISE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**ANTOCI Natalia, PhD., Associate Professor**  
**Moldova State University**

**GALANTI Roberto, PhD., Professor**  
**Saint Cyril University, Malta**

### **Abstract**

*The popularity of cruises has been increasing in recent years, especially among those who can afford the luxury and adventure of exploring the world at sea. If at the beginning cruises were available to the segment of tourists with high incomes and constituted a form of luxury tourism, now a cruise is available for any tourist for any budget. The types of tourism have diversified and everyone can make their choice according to their wants and needs. When we talk about any budget, this would mean that travel agencies offer great discounts for a cruise, from a one-week cruise to a cruise around the world for 3 years.*

**Key words:** *personal development, tourist heritage, tourist trip.*

**JEL:** Z38, D00.

Tourism has grown enormously in recent years and is a high earner of the world economy that manifests itself in a variety of forms and types. The tourism activity has developed on several levels, such as from economic development to cultural enrichment, from infrastructure development, to increasing the standard of living of the population, to the development of transport, the liberalization of visa regimes, the diversification of the tourist offer and the globalization of the economy. Due to this fact, most of the countries that have important tourist resources and manage them properly, represent a priority area of economic development.

It can be achieved in various ways, including visiting cities or rural areas, sports activities or spending time on the beach, cruises or in mountainous areas. It has a positive economic impact on tourist destinations, helps to develop infrastructure and services, to protect cultural and natural heritage, and to improve the quality of life of the population. [1, p.12]

Cruising is a popular option for those who want to explore multiple destinations in one trip. In the beginning, when cruises first appeared, they were quite simple and offered few basic services, and as the years progressed, the ships became more powerful and technologically advanced, with many more amenities.

The main factor that made this evolution possible is technological progress, which allowed, on the one hand, the reduction of operating costs and, accordingly, prices, and on the other hand, a diversification of ship production in terms of type, capacity, comfort, safety. [1, p.196]

It currently offers a wide range of facilities, including on-board activities, entertainment shows, port excursions, swimming pools, voyages, spa treatments, restaurants, theaters, shops, cinemas, visiting exotic destinations, ports outside the country's borders.

Ships are constantly growing, various types of ships have appeared and with varied leisure, security is stronger which makes people inspire confidence and travel in an unusual way, and more and more ships appear that use less polluting technologies, and greater attention is paid to environmental impact. Tourist cruises continue to be more and more popular, and have more and more offers, attracting more and more tourists. They are considered floating cities that offer tourists dream vacations, even for people with average incomes, but also for the youth. In recent years,

cruise tourism has changed from a luxury market to a mass market, aimed at a wider and younger audience. [2 p.79] Thanks to cruises, there are many jobs for both directly officers, staff, crew, people in the offices of cruise companies and indirectly, equipment suppliers, transport agents, airlines, hotels.

Cruising originated in 1844 when the Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Company first offered sea trips to various destinations in Europe. And on June 29, 1900, the first cruise ship appeared that offered trips at any time of the year, in the Mediterranean and the Orient. The idea of cruises belongs to the German Albert Ballin. The ship had 120 luxury cabins, and on board passengers could enjoy a library, a gym and even a room dedicated to photographers. Based on this success, cruises were born and other shipping companies began to follow the example. In 1980 the ships were being modernized and more facilities began to appear, such as casinos, bars, restaurants, swimming pools, gyms. [3, p. 53]

Before the Covid pandemic, cruise tourism had grown by 30 million tourists every year. While the cruise industry grew 96% year-on-year to 13.9 million, it doesn't compare to pre-pandemic levels in 2019, where there were 29.7 million passengers globally. It was an even worse year for travel brokers specializing in cruise vacations. Global spending in 60 major cruise markets has increased by 65% since the beginning of last year, resulting in total revenues of \$19.4 billion. However, this was still far from pre-pandemic levels in 2019, which were around \$29.8 billion, 35% more than the 2021 figure. To cut costs, many ships were retired between 2019 and 2021. Cruise ships are the most expensive assets, which makes this practice a necessity for many firms to stay on the growth line.

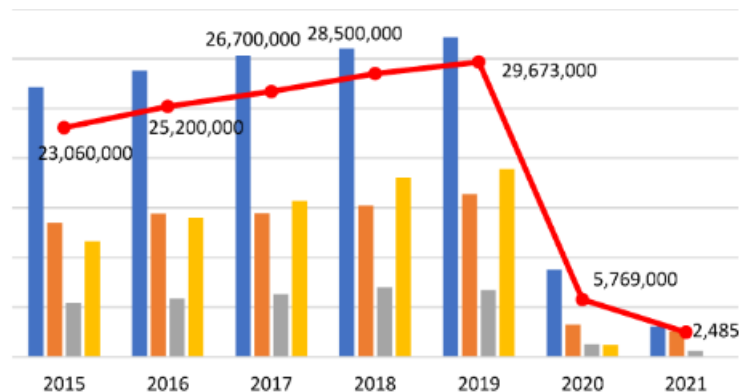


Figure 1.1 The impact of the Covid 19 pandemic on cruise tourism and global passenger numbers.

During the pandemic, the cruise industry has seen innovative new cruise ships and a new competitor in the form of Virgin Voyages. New cruise ships built before the pandemic have appeared, resulting in an exciting time for loyal cruise travelers to try out new ships, services and onboard experiences. In 2021, just 13.9 million passengers went on a cruise, 53% lower than pre-pandemic levels in 2019. Many cruise lines introduced safety measures, travelers were required to submit a Covid test, at thus the number of passengers in the ships was limited to ensure the passengers and crew. It is already gradually returning to normal and remains to this day a popular way to explore the world by sea. [3]

Water transport is less used because the travel speed is very low and the cost of travel is high. Shipping represents 2-3% of international tourist traffic. It is now done more in the form of cruises, which have transformed from travel to leisure. Tourist products offered by maritime companies:

- Maritime crossings;
- Trips that include round-trip transport and stay services (accommodation, meals) in each stopover;

• Cruises, tourist products that offer sea and river circuits with departure and arrival in the same port (circuit) [1 p.101]

### **The tourism industry of cruises**

Since the beginning of the century, ships as a means of tourist transport were more often used by people with high incomes and constituted a form of luxury tourist consumption. But because there were several models of ships, even simpler ones, most people with low incomes could also enjoy such a service. Back then, traveling by water was a hobby. As a variant of naval tourism, the cruise in the basin of some intercontinental seas (Mediterranean, Caribbean, Sea of Japan) is very common.

Naval-river and maritime transports have been practiced since ancient times and are the second oldest after road transports. The appearance of maritime ships in the first half of the 19th century led to the establishment of the first maritime transport companies that provided regular passenger services between Europe and North America. After the Second World War, the first floating hotels were set up for cruises, from commercial liners: France, Queen, Elisabeth I and II, Queen Mary.

Maritime cruises hold the most important share in the volume of naval tourist transport. The largest world cruise markets still remain the Caribbean basin, which holds a share of about 29% of the volume of the respective world markets, and the Mediterranean Sea basin with 17% of it. They are joined by South-East Asia and Oceania, where sailing along the shores or between islands allows you to get to know the marine tourist resorts.

A substantial increase in this type of tourism is also known on the European Atlantic coast (Norwegian Sea, North Sea, Baltic Sea), including the Canary and Azores islands; American Atlantic seaboard; the American Pacific coast (Alaska and Canada).

In addition to the famous transatlantic cruises (with a duration of 12 days and carried out by package boats, such as the Queen Mary 2), thematic cruises (in which there is an interference between vacation, leisure and education such as the cruises from Alaska, the area of the Norwegian fjords), cruises for the practice of water sports or extreme sports, but also cruises on the navigation channels of Europe (France, Germany, Belgium), North America, Asia.

Cruise tourism is also practiced on some important hydrographic arteries in Europe (Rhine, Rhon, Danube, Vitava, Vistula, Volga), Asia (Chang Jiang, Huang He), Africa (Nile), South America (Amazon), America North (Mississippi, St. Lawrence, Great Lakes Complex. Also, a significant traffic of tourists is registered on the river sectors that transit the main cities in Europe: Thames - London; Seine - Paris; Danube - Budapest.

[3 p.208]

Over the years, several forms have appeared in the tourism market, which has generated interest and satisfied the needs of several categories of tourists. Currently, the number of ships operating worldwide exceeds 250, and more than half of these operate out of US ports, nearly 175 ships are largely concentrated in the United States and Great Britain, currently they owning about 1/2 of the cruise services market. [1 p.79]

In recent years, cruises can also be found in "fly-cruise" service packages, integrated into arrangements that attract about 80% of the cruise ships interested in the contemporary tourism business. Passengers are taken by the cruise company on a chartered plane to a warm water port, from where they can sail. This overcomes the problem of bad weather and seas difficult to navigate (eg the Bay of Biscay, can be an unpleasant area to cross by water, at any time of the year), and ensures passengers that they can enjoy the sun and calm seas in the Mediterranean or The Caribbean, from the very first day of your cruise vacation. [2 p.197]

**The advantages of cruise tourism from the tourist's perspective are:**

- Has the opportunity to visit several destinations in one stay, without having to deal with transport, accommodation or luggage
- Has access to a wide range of services and facilities on board the vessel, such as entertainment, relaxation, fitness, spa, restaurants.
- It has the comfort and safety offered by modern vessels, which are equipped with stabilizer systems, security and medical assistance
- Has the opportunity to meet new people and different cultures, by interacting with other passengers or with the inhabitants of the ports visited

**In general, we differentiate cruises into two sectors:**

Cruises are divided into two categories:

• **River cruises,**

They are carried out on rivers or lakes

• **Sea cruises**

They take place at sea.

Cruise ships range from boats or yachts for small groups to cruise ships with thousands of passengers. Many times, the country of origin of the passengers influences the organization of the cruise. Germans prefer cruises with several stops in interesting ports, and for those in the UK, staying at sea is an important factor. North American passengers prefer short cruises with lots of fun activities on board. [3]

The use of naval transport for the creation of tourism products presents a number of advantages such as:

- The required fixtures and fixed equipment are relatively inexpensive;
- The host country must not make very large investments;
- New jobs are created in land transport (taxi, bus transport);
- The prices of the service packages offered are relatively lower, and the services are more attractive and more diversified (numerous stopovers, entertainment, parties on board and on land) [2 p.196]

**Cruises are classified into several types:**

• **Mini cruises**, it is suitable for those who want to experience a cruise and do not have much time at their disposal. They are shorter cruises than the classic ones, which usually last between 2-4 days.

• **Classic cruises**. This is the most common type of cruise, allowing passengers to explore different destinations and ports in one trip. These cruises include on-board relaxation and entertainment options, as well as destination excursion options.

• **Family cruises**, ships are equipped with facilities for all family members: water parks, ice skating, spa, comedy shows.

• **Luxury cruises**, includes huge and luxurious lobbies arranged under the baton of great decorators, exceptional finishes, high-class restaurants, personalized bars and clubs and casinos worthy of the French Riviera, performance halls.

• **Theme cruises**, these include cruises that specialize in a particular area such as food cruises, wine cruises, golf cruises, history buffs, world city cruises and more. Here we can also mention chess, dance, astral cruises.

• **Adventure and exploration cruise**, in such cruises the aim is the adventure and the expedition, better said the destination and not the ship.

• **Cruises for couples**, for a romantic getaway - white beaches, ancient ruins and magical sunsets across the ocean.<sup>4</sup>

- **Cultural Cruises:** Focuses on exploring historical and cultural destinations, including museums, temples, cathedrals, palaces and monuments [2].

Popular cruise destinations include the Caribbean, Mediterranean, Alaska, Europe, Asia and Australia. In general, longer journeys are more in demand and include a greater number of destinations. It also allows passengers, at each new stopover, to discover new cultural impressions throughout their journey and explore exotic areas, visit unusual ports seen in the movies, and gives them an experience of rare splendor. Cruising is considered a megatrend of international tourism, having a remarkable development in recent years. Royal Caribbean International's Oasis-class ships are the largest cruise ships in the world today, carrying nearly 6,300 passengers. While the cruise market is dominated by the Americans, there are few specialized agencies in Europe compared to the approximately 1,200 distributors in the US that focus on selling cruises, and Miami is considered the cruise capital of the world.

Cruise tourism is suitable for any age group and current cruise prices are around an average of around \$200/person/day, which is considered a relatively low price compared to the cost of other day-to-day tourism services by a customer.

#### **Environmental impact**

Tourism, being a consumer of space and tourism resources, participates in influencing the environment and tourism potential. This fact is due either to the pressure exerted directly by tourists on the landscape, flora, fauna or other touristic objectives that can partially or totally modify them, or through the misconception of their exploitation. The impact of tourism on the environment is constantly manifested. Therefore, sustainable development constitutes a framework in which the evolution of tourism activity must be located and, depending on its coordinates, ways and means specific to tourism must be implemented to ensure its implementation. We note that the impact of tourism on the environment occurs in various directions related to the creation of conditions for the practice of tourism. These impact directions are manifested on: the relief; the soil layer; climate; water, vegetation; fauna. [8 p.106]

Ships consume between 60 tonnes and 150 tonnes of viscous liquid, which is used as fuel and as a raw material in the manufacture of heavy diesel fuel, due to the enormous mass that must be moved and especially the consumption of electricity generated on board necessary for their services (hotels, catering, air conditioning, leisure). Ships use a highly polluting fuel that contains notably three thousand times more sulfur than car diesel. Marine fuels emit significant amounts of CO<sub>2</sub>, sulfur oxides and nitrogen oxides, as well as particulate matter containing carbon black, heavy metals and other toxic substances. This means they should install better pollution-reduction technologies, such as diesel particulate filters that prevent vessels from burning heavy fuels, they must use cleaner fuels. Industry is a contributor to climate change and should not make matters worse by adding acidic waste to a warming ocean

Some ports ensure the installation of electrical connections to power ships, for example Marseille - one of the ports most affected by this pollution - which must be equipped by 2025. Some cruise lines and shipyards use the liquefied natural gas used on the most recent lines, such as AIDAnova and Costa Smeralda launched in 2018 and 2019, which limit harmful pollution.

#### **Conclusions**

The cruise tourism industry has a positive economic impact on the global economy, provides jobs, helps develop infrastructures, increase the standard of living of the population and develop transport. With the appearance of several types of cruises, and the facilities that the ships offer, the interest and number of passengers who want to choose this unusual type of vacation increases. Compared to other classic products, a cruise offers customers the opportunity to visit multiple destinations and locations without changing accommodation or transportation.

On board the ship, tourists have fun and spend their free time in the most varied possible ways. Although many consider that a cruise is intended for the 50+ public, as a trend in cruise tourism we

find that every year cruises become more and more popular among young people. Cruise tourism has not only advantages, but also disadvantages, which, in turn, takes the first place in environmental pollution, due to the viscous liquid, which is used as fuel and as a raw material in the manufacture of heavy diesel. In the paper I listed how this process could be improved and methods to prevent environmental pollution.

**Bibliografie:**

1. Jeleu Viorica, *Turism Internațional* București, 2012, 364 p.
2. Nedelcu Adrian, *Geografia turismului* Editura Universitară București, 2015.
3. Pîrvu Ramona Costina, *Turism Internațional. Aspecte economice și sociale*, Craiova 2012, 240p.
4. Sava Cipriana, Ogarlaci Monica, *Turism Internațional* Universitatea Creștină „Dimitrie Cantemir” din București, 2012, 96p.

*Corresponding author:*

**ANTOCI Natalia**

*ID ORCID: 0000-0002-7433-106X, email: natalia.antoci@usm.md*