

УДК: 338.487:640.412]:303.71(497.7)“1991/2021“

DYNAMICS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOURIST TURNOVER AFTER THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

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Abstract

Characteristics of tourist turnover represent an important element for the evaluation of the tourism economy, more precisely, they represent the result that shows whether, how much and how much an area is tourist attractive and visited, and thus the number of visitors and occupancy of catering facilities.

By analyzing tourist arrivals and night spent, we can see the state of tourism, simply put, whether we are going in the right direction or not, and if there are oscillations, the reasons should be found and removed.

The dynamics and development of tourist turnover after the independence of the Republic of North Macedonia is characterized by the phase of independent development of tourism (market management), which covers the time from the independence of the Republic of Macedonia until today. The research shows that in the period from 2011 to 2020, tourist turnover is growing. A large increase in tourist turnover was recorded after the "Skopje 2014" Project. As a result of the "COVID 19" pandemic, in 2020, a large drop in tourist turnover was recorded compared to 2019.

Keywords: *Tourism, visits, night spent, tourists.*

Introduction

The importance of tourism in the Republic of North Macedonia is part of the primordial curiosity and activity of man to understand the world around him. Tourism offers people a meaningful use of free time in spaces that, with their natural and social characteristics, represent the basis for new attractive experiences and vacations. Tourism as an economic branch is a significant challenge for the economic development of countries.^[1]

By analyzing the arrivals and night spent of tourists, we can see what the situation is in tourism, more specifically, whether we are going in the right direction or not, if there are irregularities, we should find those that negatively affect the development of tourism.

Tourism is very important for many countries, due to the income generated by tourist consumption of products and services, from taxes collected from the tourism industry, as well as from the possibility of employment in tourism-related service activities. Therefore, the analysis of tourist turnover is of crucial importance for tourism planning. Tables and graphs best show how tourist turnover moved from the independence of the Republic of North Macedonia onwards. They are indicators of certain unevenness and variations in the number of visitors and their structure.

Macedonian tourism has been on the rise for the last ten years (before the COVID 19 pandemic) and promotes the country as an interesting tourist destination in the Balkans. At the same time, it aroused the interest of visiting guests from several countries around the world

Methodology

When researching data and evaluating the dynamics and development of tourism, several methods were used in data processing: statistical, synthesis, comparative, analytical methods, etc.

^[1] <https://macedonia-timeless.com/mac/zanas/zanas/informacii-turizam/>

For research purposes, primary data sources published by the State Statistics and Communications Office, as well as secondary data sources (papers, reports, etc.) were used. Tables and graphs for the number of tourists were processed according to data from the National Bureau of Statistics.

Data on tourists and night spent were obtained based on regular monthly reports of catering and other business entities that provide accommodation services to tourists, or mediate in the provision of these services. The source of data are guest books, which these business entities are obliged to keep according to legal regulations.^[2]

Case study development

The development of tourism after the independence of the Republic of North Macedonia is characterized by the stage of independent tourism development (market management), which covers the time from the independence of the Republic of Macedonia until today.

When analyzing this phase, the following points should be considered:

military conflicts in the immediate environment,

- ✓ blockades and sanctions,
- ✓ transitional period,
- ✓ organizational restructuring
- ✓ military conflicts within our country^[3], and
- ✓ spread of various diseases.

In the period following the independence of the country until 2013, tourist turnover is in constant and variable decline. The reasons for the decrease in tourist turnover are of a different nature, primarily due to the newly emerging political, security and economic conditions on the Balkan Peninsula. What had the greatest impact on tourist turnover were: the disintegration of the former common state (SFRY) with wars, sanctions against Serbia, the war in Kosovo, NATO's intervention in the former SRY and the security and political crisis in Macedonia in 2001.

In addition to all the positive social, cultural, and economic impacts that tourism has, it is still the most "sensitive" to impacts such as military actions, terrorism, natural disasters, and calamities, as well as the spread of various diseases that limit or prevent tourist travel. It was the crisis with COVID-19, which appeared at the end of 2019, that led to the declaration of a global pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO), and due to the spread of this virus, destinations around the world are limited in various ways. movement of people to prevent the spread of disease. The pandemic (a disease that spread to large territories), besides changing the lifestyle of people in the world, also led to the stagnation of economic activities in the entire economy.

Data from the World Health Organization at the United Nations show that by August 4, 2022. 493,392,853 cases of COVID-19 were registered in the world, including 6,165,833 deaths.^[4]

In our country until August 4, 2022. 296,222 cases of patients with COVID-19 were registered, including 8,581 deaths.^[5]

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is the most important international organization dealing with the tourism and hospitality sector on a global level. It is directly related to other organizations in the United Nations. There is almost no country in the world that is not a member of this organization. Its goal is to improve the status of world tourism and its future development. This organization predicts a 65-80% drop in tourism in 2020 compared to 2019, due to the crisis caused by COVID-19.^[6]

By early April 2020, most countries had closed their international and, in some cases, internal borders, halting international travel indefinitely and transforming the tourism industry in a way not seen outside of wartime (Prideaux, Thompson, & Pabel, 2020). From the first day, the Government of the Republic

[2] State Institute of Statistics of the Republic of North Macedonia

[3] Basics of tourism, prof. Dr. A. Stojmilov, Skopje 1999

[4] <https://covid19.who.int>,

[5] <https://koronavirus.gov.mk/stat>

[6] Krristijan Dzambazovski; Dejan Metodijeski, Follow-up study on the effects of the health-economic crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic on the tourism and hospitality sector, with recommendations for dealing with the economic consequences, N. Macedonia, November 2020

of North Macedonia paid serious attention and monitors the situation with coronavirus infections in accordance with WHO recommendations and issues measures to protect all citizens of the country (Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, 2020b). The state of emergency was accompanied by drastic measures in the fight against the pandemic: closure of borders and airports, restriction of free movement (curfew), especially on weekends and religious holidays, sanitary protocols (mandatory wearing of protective masks), etc. North Macedonia opened its borders to all countries on June 26, 2020 (Marija Mitevska, Radio Free Europe, 2020).^[7]

Since the outbreak of the crisis related to COVID-19, the number of tourists in North Macedonia has decreased by 60.55% in 2020 compared to 2019.

Research results and discussion

Statistical data on tourism in the Republic of North Macedonia show constant growth in the last ten years. Statistical data related to the tourism and hospitality sector refer to the number of tourist visits and night spent.

Table 1: Number of tourists in N. Macedonia, 1991-2021

Number on tourists for period 1991-2021								
Year	Total	Index	Domestic	%	Index	Foreign	%	Index
1991	710,278	100.00	415,955	58.56	100.00	294,323	41.44	100.00
1992	585,699	82.46	366,637	62.60	88.14	219,062	37.40	74.43
1993	647,728	91.19	439,537	67.86	105.67	208,191	32.14	70.74
1994	613,154	86.33	427,740	69.76	102.83	185,414	30.24	63.00
1995	503,837	70.94	356,830	70.82	85.79	147,007	29.18	49.95
1996	476,205	67.04	340,068	71.41	81.76	136,137	28.59	46.25
1997	451,871	63.62	330,534	73.15	79.46	121,337	26.85	41.23
1998	575,080	80.97	418,410	72.76	100.59	156,670	27.24	53.23
1999	549,630	77.38	368,842	67.11	88.67	180,788	32.89	61.43
2000	632,523	89.05	408,507	64.58	98.21	224,016	35.42	76.11
2001	333,308	46.93	234,362	70.31	56.34	98,946	29.69	33.62
2002	441,712	62.19	318,851	72.19	76.66	122,861	27.81	41.74
2003	483,151	68.02	325,459	67.36	78.24	157,692	32.64	53.58
2004	465,015	65.47	299,709	64.45	72.05	165,306	35.55	56.16
2005	509,706	71.76	312,490	61.31	75.13	197,216	38.69	67.01
2006	499,473	70.32	297,116	59.49	71.43	202,357	40.51	68.75
2007	536,212	75.49	306,132	57.09	73.60	230,080	42.91	78.17
2008	605,320	85.22	350,363	57.88	84.23	254,957	42.12	86.62
2009	587,770	82.75	328,566	55.90	78.99	259,204	44.10	88.07
2010	586,241	82.54	324,545	55.36	78.02	261,696	44.64	88.91
2011	647,568	91.17	320,097	49.43	76.95	327,471	50.57	111.26
2012	663,633	93.43	312,274	47.06	75.07	351,359	52.94	119.38
2013	701,794	98.81	302,114	43.05	72.63	399,680	56.95	135.80
2014	735,650	103.57	310,336	42.19	74.61	425,314	57.81	144.51
2015	816,067	114.89	330,537	40.50	79.46	485,530	59.50	164.97
2016	856,843	120.63	346,359	40.42	83.27	510,484	59.58	173.44

^[7] Goran Kitevski; Dejan Iliev- Tourism in covid-19 pandemic in North Macedonia: experiences and perspectives, Third International Scientific Conference, Challenges of tourism and business logistics in the 21st century, ISCTBL, Shtip 2020

2017	998,841	140.63	368,247	36.87	88.53	630,594	63.13	214.25
2018	1,126,935	158.66	419,590	37.23	100.87	707,345	62.77	240.33
2019	1,184,963	166.83	427,370	36.07	102.74	757,593	63.93	257.40
2020	467,514	65.82	349,308	74.72	83.98	118,206	25.28	40.16
2021	702,463	98.90	408,500	58.15	98.21	293,963	41.85	99.88
Total	19,696,184		10,865,385	55.16		8,830,799	44.84	
Average	635,361		350,496			284,864		

Source: State Statistical Office of the Republic of North Macedonia (Prepared by: V. Tasevski)

In the analyzed period from 1991 to 2021, 19,696,184 visitors visited our country, of which 55.2% were domestic tourists, and 44.8% were foreign tourists, i.e., an average of 635,361 visitors per year, of which 350,496 were domestic and 284,864 were foreign visits.

In 1991, which we take as the starting year, the Republic of North Macedonia was visited by 58.6% of domestic visitors and 41.4% of foreign visitors.

During the security and political crisis in Macedonia in 2001, a drop in tourist visits by 53.07 percent was recorded. The total number of tourists is 333,308, of which 234,362 (70.3%) are domestic, and 98,946 (29.7%) are foreign guests.

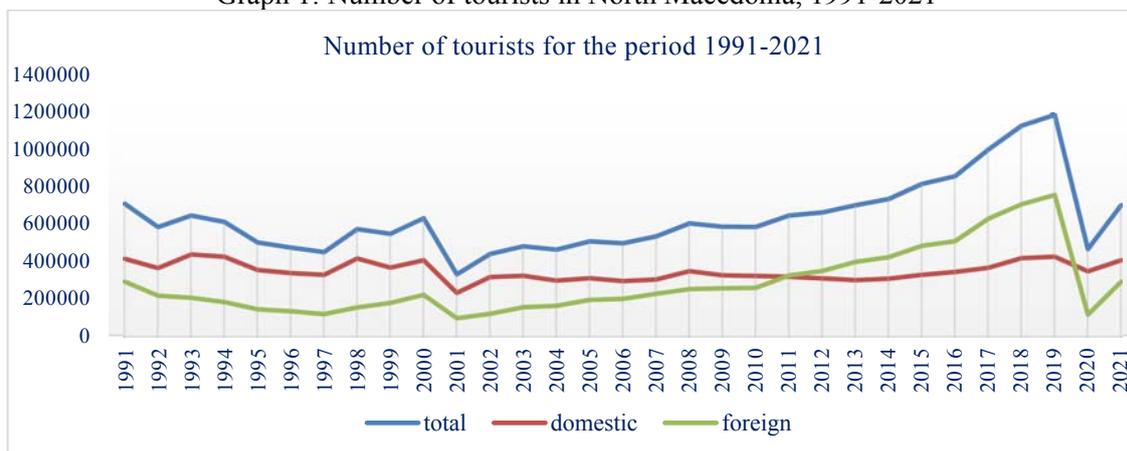
The number of tourists in 2019 compared to 2011 is higher by about 82.98%, and in 2020 compared to 2019 it is lower by 60.55%.

From table 1 and graph 1, it can be concluded that in 2011, a historical cross-section was made where the number of foreign tourists is greater than the number of domestic tourists. Compared to 1991, the index of foreign tourists is 111.26, i.e., an increase of 11.26 percent, and by the start of the pandemic in 2019, the increase in foreign tourists is 157.4 percent, i.e., a total of 757,593 tourists.

The number of tourists in 2011 was 647,568, in 2019 1,184,963, and due to the impact of the "COVID 19" pandemic, the number of tourists in 2020 is 467,514.

For the period from 2011 to 2020, foreign tourists, about 57%, and domestic tourists, about 43%, account for a higher percentage of total tourist turnovers.

Graph 1: Number of tourists in North Macedonia, 1991-2021



Source: State Statistical Office of the Republic of North Macedonia (Prepared by: V. Tasevski)

Domestic tourists in 2019 were 427,370 or 36%, and foreign tourists in the same year were 757,593 or 64% of the total number of tourists.

The number of foreign tourists in 2020 decreased in absolute number to 118,206 or with a share of 25% in the total number of tourists. The number of domestic tourists in 2020 was 349,308, which is an increase of 75 percent.

From 2011 to 2019, the number of domestic tourists increased by 33.51%, and in the period from 2019 to 2020, the number of domestic tourists decreased by 18.27%.

The number of foreign tourists in 2019 compared to 2011 increased by 131.35%, and the number of foreign tourists in 2020 compared to 2019 decreased by 84.4%. Although after the covid pandemic, various mutants developed strains of infection from COVID 19, tourist movements are on the rise. Thus, in 2021, compared to 2020, the number of tourists increased by 50.25%.

The period that is the subject of the analysis of tourist turnover in the Republic of Seventh Macedonia can be divided into three periods:

- from 1991 to 2000
- from 2001 to 2010
- from 2011 to 2020

From table 2, it can be concluded that in the first decade from 1991 to 2000, which we take as the starting year, 5,746,005 tourists visited our country, of which 67.4% were domestic tourists with 3,873,060 visits, and 32, 6% of foreign tourists. with 1,872,945 visits.

In the second decade for the period from 2001 to 2010, compared to the first (1991-2000), the total number of tourists decreased by 12.15% and amounted to 5,047,908 visitors, of which 61.36% were domestic tourists, and 38.64% of foreign tourists, which is 4.13% more compared to the previous decade.

Table 2: Number of tourists in North Macedonia by periods 1991-2000, 2001-2010 and 2011-2020

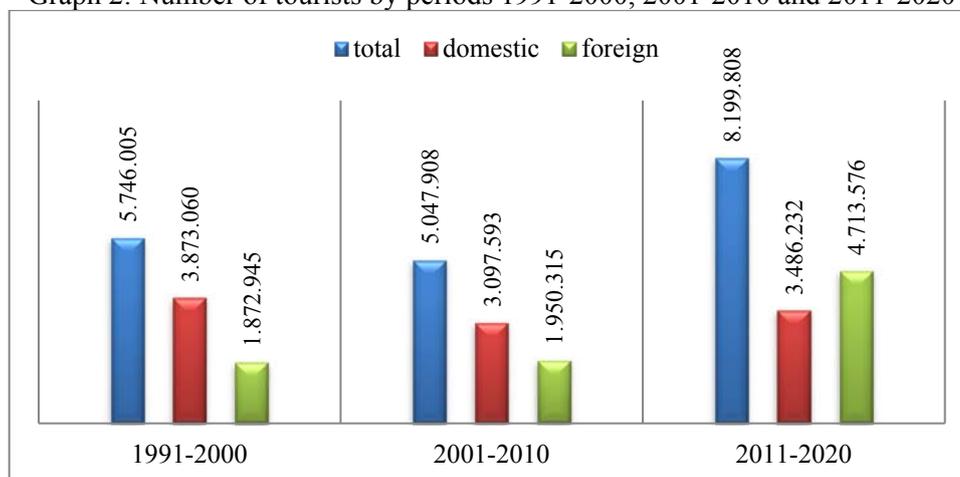
Number on tourists								
Period	Total		Domestic			Foreign		
	Tourists	Index	Tourists	%	Index	Tourists	%	Index
1991-2000	5,746,005	100.00	3,873,060	67.40	100.00	1,872,945	32.60	100.00
2001-2010	5,047,908	87.85	3,097,593	61.36	79.98	1,950,315	38.64	104.13
2011-2020	8,199,808	142.70	3,486,232	42.52	90.01	4,713,576	57.48	251.67

Source: State Statistical Office of the Republic of North Macedonia (Prepared by: V. Tasevski)

According to the data of the State Statistics Office RNM, in the third decade for the period from 2011 to 2020, compared to the first decade (1991-2000), the number of tourists in our country recorded an increase of 42.7%, of which 42.5% are domestic tourists, and 57.5% are foreign tourists. The number of foreign tourists increased by 151.67 percent. This decade is a decade of prosperity and development of tourism after the independence of the Republic of North Macedonia.

From table 3 and graph 3, it can be concluded that on average in the period 1991-2021 in the Republic of North Macedonia, 2,204,079 night spent were achieved, of which 1,595,038 night spent were domestic tourists (73.6%) and 609,042 night spent. spent by foreign tourists (26.4%). In this period, tourists spent an average of 3.47 nights, of which domestic tourists spent 4.55 nights, and foreign tourists spent 2.14 nights.

Graph 2: Number of tourists by periods 1991-2000, 2001-2010 and 2011-2020



Source: State Statistical Office of the Republic of North Macedonia (Prepared by: V. Tasevski)

In 1991, which we take as the starting year, tourists in the Republic of Macedonia had 2,740,484 nights spent or an average of 3.89 night spent per day, of which 78.97% were domestic and 21.03% were foreign guests.

During the security and political crisis in Macedonia in 2001, the number of night spent fell by 54.22 percent. The total number of night spent is 1,254,582, of which 1,041,831 (83.04%) are domestic and 212,751 (16.96%) are foreign guests. This year saw the biggest drop in the number of foreign night spent compared to 1991, by as much as 63.09%.

Table 3: Number of nights spent in North Macedonia, 1991-2021

Number of nights spent								
Year	Total	Index	Domestic	%	Index	Foreign	%	Index
1991	2,740,484	100.00	2,164,146	78.97	100.00	576,338	21.03	100.00
1992	2,139,631	78.07	1,757,255	82.13	81.20	382,376	17.87	66.35
1993	2,706,373	98.76	2,343,710	86.60	108.30	362,663	13.40	62.93
1994	2,476,998	90.39	2,141,468	86.45	98.95	335,530	13.55	58.22
1995	1,804,310	65.84	1,528,561	84.72	70.63	275,749	15.28	47.85
1996	1,696,930	61.92	1,419,665	83.66	65.60	277,265	16.34	48.11
1997	1,587,146	57.91	1,321,622	83.27	61.07	265,524	16.73	46.07
1998	2,426,461	88.54	2,066,923	85.18	95.51	359,538	14.82	62.38
1999	2,313,142	84.41	1,838,748	79.49	84.96	474,394	20.51	82.31
2000	2,434,639	88.84	1,940,772	79.71	89.68	493,867	20.29	85.69
2001	1,254,582	45.78	1,041,831	83.04	48.14	212,751	16.96	36.91
2002	1,850,384	67.52	1,575,664	85.15	72.81	274,720	14.85	47.67
2003	2,006,867	73.23	1,660,667	82.75	76.74	346,200	17.25	60.07
2004	1,865,434	68.07	1,504,845	80.67	69.54	360,589	19.33	62.57
2005	1,970,041	71.89	1,527,053	77.51	70.56	442,988	22.49	76.86
2006	1,917,395	69.97	1,474,550	76.90	68.14	442,845	23.10	76.84
2007	2,019,712	73.70	1,501,624	74.35	69.39	518,088	25.65	89.89
2008	2,235,520	81.57	1,648,073	73.72	76.15	587,447	26.28	101.93
2009	2,101,606	76.69	1,517,810	72.22	70.13	583,796	27.78	101.29
2010	2,020,217	73.72	1,461,185	72.33	67.52	559,032	27.67	97.00
2011	2,173,034	79.29	1,417,868	65.25	65.52	755,166	34.75	131.03
2012	2,151,692	78.52	1,339,946	62.27	61.92	811,746	37.73	140.85
2013	2,157,175	78.72	1,275,800	59.14	58.95	881,375	40.86	152.93
2014	2,195,883	80.13	1,273,370	57.99	58.84	922,513	42.01	160.06
2015	2,394,205	87.36	1,357,822	56.71	62.74	1,036,383	43.29	179.82
2016	2,461,160	89.81	1,407,143	57.17	65.02	1,054,017	42.83	182.88
2017	2,775,152	101.27	1,480,460	53.35	68.41	1,294,692	46.65	224.64
2018	3,176,808	115.92	1,685,273	53.05	77.87	1,491,535	46.95	258.80
2019	3,262,398	119.04	1,684,627	51.64	77.84	1,577,771	48.36	273.76
2020	1,697,535	61.94	1,444,605	85.10	66.75	252,930	14.90	43.89
2021	2,313,543	84.42	1,643,083	71.02	75.92	670,460	28.98	116.33
Total	68,326,457		49,446,169	72.37		18,880,288	27.63	
Average	2,204,079		1,595,038	73.60		609,042	26.40	

Source: State Statistical Office of the Republic of North Macedonia (Prepared by: V. Tasevski)

In 2011, a large increase in night spent by foreign tourists began. Their night spent increased by 31 percent compared to the initial year in 1991. While in 2019, the number of foreign night spent increased by 173.76%.

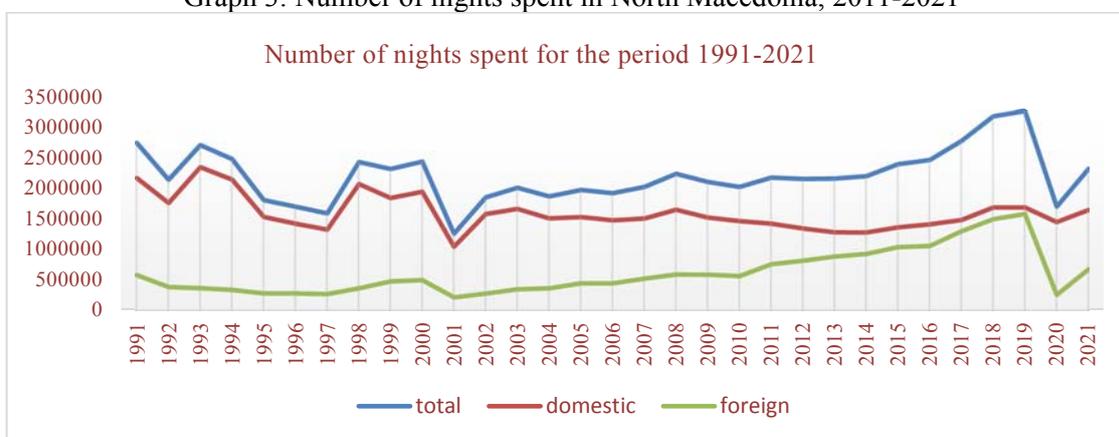
The number of night spent in 2011 was 2,173,034 which is 20.71% lower than in 1991. This year, the number of night spent by foreigners increased by 31 percent. They achieved 755,166 night spent or an average of 2.3 nights.

The number of night spent in 2019 compared to 2011 is higher by about 50.13%, and the number of night spent in 2020 compared to 2019 is lower by about 48%. The highest number of night spent was achieved in 2019, the total number is 3,626,398 with an average of 2.75 night spent and is 19% higher than the initial year in 1991.

The number of night spent by domestic tourists in 2019 was 1,684,627 or 52%, and the number of night spent by foreigners in the same year was 1,577,771 or 48% of the total night spent.

In 2021, the number of night spent increased by 36.3% compared to the previous year, 2020.

Graph 3: Number of nights spent in North Macedonia, 2011-2021



Source: State Statistical Office of the Republic of North Macedonia (Prepared by: V. Tasevski)

From table 4, it can be concluded that in the first decade from 1991 to 2000, which we take as the starting year, tourists in our country had 22,326,114 night spent, of which 83% were domestic tourists, and 17% were night spent by foreign tourists.

Table 4: Number of nights spent in North Macedonia by periods 1991-2000, 2001-2010 and 2011-2020

Number of nights spent								
Period	Total		Domestic			Foreign		
	night spent	index	night spent	%	index	night spent	%	index
1991-2000	22,326,114	100.00	18,522,870	100.00	100.00	3,803,244	100.00	100.00
2001-2010	19,241,758	86.18	14,913,302	86.18	86.18	4,328,456	86.18	86.18
2011-2020	24,445,042	109.49	14,366,914	109.49	109.49	10,078,128	109.49	109.49

Source: State Statistical Office of the Republic of North Macedonia (Prepared by: V. Tasevski)

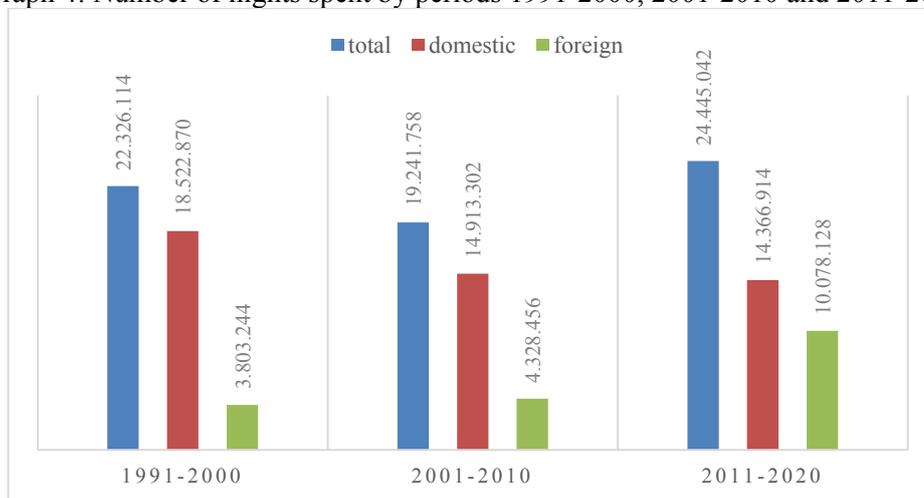
In the second decade for the period from 2001 to 2010, compared to the first decade (1991-2000), the total number of night spent decreased by 14% and amounted to 19,241,758 night spent, of which 77.5% were domestic tourists, and 22.5% were foreign tourists, which is 13.8% more compared to the previous decade.

In the third decade for the period from 2011 to 2020, compared to the first decade (1991-2000), the number of night spent in our country increased by 9.5%, of which 58.8% were domestic tourists, and 41.2% overnight stay. stay of foreign tourists. The number of night spent by domestic tourists is lower by 22.44%, and the number of night spent by foreign tourists is higher by 165 percent. The graphic representation of the number of night spent per period is shown in Graph 4.

Tables 5, 6 and 7 show the comparative foreign exchange inflow by basic tourism for 2018-2019, 2019-2020. and 2020-2021.

In table 5, it can be stated that the tourism-based inflow in the Republic of North Macedonia in 2019 compared to 2018 increased by 3,75%.

Graph 4: Number of nights spent by periods 1991-2000, 2001-2010 and 2011-2022



Source: State Statistical Office of the Republic of North Macedonia (Prepared by: V. Tasevski)
 Foreign exchange inflow based on tourism in 2020 compared to 2019 is lower by 36.34% (Table 6).

Table 5: Foreign exchange inflow of basic tourism for 2018-2019

Foreign exchange inflow in USD	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
2018	64.71	87.15	147.14	82.62	381.55
2019	63.27	90.62	154.16	87.87	395.92
%	-2.23%	3.98%	4.77%	6.35%	3.75%

Source: Agency for Promotion and Support of Tourism, <http://tourismmacedonia.gov.mk/statistika>

Table 6: Foreign exchange inflow of basic tourism for 2019-2020

Foreign exchange inflow in USD	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
2019	63.24	90.62	154.16	87.87	395.92
2020	63.74	37.61	80.61	70.09	252.05
%	0.74%	58.50%	47.71%	20.23%	36.34%

Source: Agency for Promotion and Support of Tourism, <http://tourismmacedonia.gov.mk/statistika>
 In table 7, it can be stated that the inflow on the basis of tourism in 2021 compared to 2020 is higher by 52.76%.

Table 7: Foreign exchange inflow of basic tourism for 2020 – 2021

Foreign exchange inflow in USD	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
2020	63.74	37.61	80.61	70.09	252.05
2021	72.4	72.79	153.62	86.2	385.04
%	13.59%	93.54%	90.57%	22.98%	52.76%

Source: Agency for Promotion and Support of Tourism, <http://tourismmacedonia.gov.mk/statistika>

In the Republic of North Macedonia, a study was conducted on the effects caused by COVID-19 on the tourism and hospitality sector with recommendations for solving the economic effects. The research was conducted by the Chamber of Commerce of Macedonia, the Chamber of Commerce of Northwest Macedonia, and the Chamber of Commerce for Information and Communication Technologies - MASIT and the Union of Chambers of Commerce of Macedonia. The study shows that from August to September 2020, there is a massive cancellation of arrangements and a drastic drop in the number of expected tourists from abroad. Almost 100% of hotels canceled reservations for April, May, and June, for July 2020 group bookings were canceled by 89% of hotels, for August 2020 by 69% of hoteliers, and for September by 50% of respondents. And there are also cancellations for December and January 2021. In order to improve the situation in the tourism sector, according to the study, it is necessary to encourage domestic tourism by introducing special subsidized arrangements and conducting a strong campaign to encourage domestic tourism.^[8]

Conclusion

The dynamics and development of tourism after the independence of the Republic of North Macedonia is characterized by the phase of independent development of tourism (market management), which covers the time from the independence of the Republic of Macedonia until today.

In the period after the country's independence until 2013, tourist turnover is in constant and variable decline. The reasons for the decrease in tourist turnover are of a different nature, primarily due to political-security, economic and health conditions.

In the analyzed period from **1991 to 2021**, 19,696,184 visitors visited our country, of which 55.2% were domestic tourists, and 44.8% were foreign tourists, i.e. an average of 635,361 visitors per year, of which 350,496 were domestic and 284,864 were foreign visits. A total of 68,326,457 overnight stays were achieved, of which 72.4% were overnight stays by domestic tourists, and 27.6% were overnight stays by foreign tourists. In this period, tourists spent an average of 3.47 nights, of which domestic tourists spent 4.55 nights, and foreign tourists spent 2.14 nights.

In 1991, which we take as the starting year, 710,278 tourists visited the Republic of North Macedonia, of which 58.6% were domestic and 41.4% foreign tourists. Tourists had 2,740,484 overnight stays or an average of 3.89 overnight stays per day, of which 78.97% were domestic and 21.03% were foreign overnight stays.

The period that is the subject of the analysis of tourist turnover in the Republic of North Macedonia can be divided into three periods:

1. From **1991 to 2000**, the period in which 5,746,005 tourists visited our country, of which 67.4% were domestic and 32.6% were foreign tourists. Tourists spent 22,326,114 nights, of which 83% were domestic tourists and 17% were foreign tourists. Tourists spent an average of 3.9 nights, of which domestic tourists spent 4.8 nights, and foreign tourists spent an average of 2 nights.
2. From **2001 to 2010**, the period in which, compared to the first decade, the total number of tourists decreased by 12.15% and amounted to 5,047,908 visitors, of which 61.36% were domestic tourists, and 38.64% foreign tourists, which is 4.13% more compared to the previous decade. A total of 19,241,758 overnight stays were achieved, of which 77.5% were domestic and 22.5% were foreign overnight stays. Tourists spent an average of 3.8 nights in total, of which domestic tourists spent 4.8 nights and foreigners 2.2 nights.
3. From **2011 to 2020** is the third decade in which, compared to the first decade (1991-2000), the number of tourists in our country increased by 42.7%, of which 42.5% were domestic tourists, and 57, 5% foreign tourists. The number of foreign tourists increased by 151.67 percent. This decade is a decade of prosperity and development of tourism after the independence of the Republic of North Macedonia. Tourists spent 24,445,042 overnight stays, of which 58.8%

[8] A study on the effects caused by COVID-19 on the tourism and hospitality sector with recommendations for addressing the economic effects. The research was carried out by the Chamber of Commerce of Macedonia, the Chamber of Commerce of North-West Macedonia, the Chamber of Commerce for Information and Communication Technologies - MASIT and the Union of Chambers of Commerce of Macedonia

were domestic tourists, and 41.2% were foreign tourists, which are 141.68% more, compared to the previous decade. Tourists spent an average of 3 nights, of which domestic tourists spent 4.1 nights and foreigners 2.1 nights.

During the security and political crisis in Macedonia in 2001, a drop in tourist visits by 53.07 percent was recorded. The total number of tourists is 333,308, of which 70.3% are domestic and 29.7% are foreign tourists. A decrease in the number of overnight stays by 54.22% was recorded. The total number of overnight stays is 1,254,582, of which 83.04% are domestic and 16.96% foreign guests. This year saw the largest drop in the number of foreign overnight stays compared to 1991, by as much as 63.09 percent.

In 2011, a historical cross-section was recorded where the number of foreign tourists (51%) was higher than the number of domestic tourists (49%). The index of foreign tourists compared to 1991 is 111.26, i.e. an increase of 11.26%, and by the start of the pandemic in 2019, the increase in the number of foreign tourists is 157.4%. The number of overnight stays in 2011 was 2,173,034, which is 20.71% lower than in 1991. This year there was a noticeable increase in the number of overnight stays by foreigners of 31 percent. They achieved 755,166 overnight stays or an average of 2.3 nights.

The number of tourists in 2019 compared to 2011 increased by about 82.98%, and due to the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic in 2020 compared to 2019:

- The number of tourists decreased by 60.56%.
- The number of domestic tourists is lower by 18.27%.
- The number of foreign tourists is lower by 84.4%.
- The number of overnight stays decreased by 48%.
- The number of domestic overnight stays is lower by 14.25%.
- The number of foreign overnight stays by 84%.
- Tourism-based inflow decreased by 36.34%.
- There is a big drop in tourist turnover, and thus the entire tourism and hospitality sector is directly affected and plunged into crisis.

Although different mutated strains of the COVID 19 infection have developed after the Covid pandemic, tourism is on the rise. Thus, in 2021, compared to 2020, an increase in the number of tourists by 50.25% and an increase in overnight stays by 36.29% were recorded.

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