

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATIVE TOURISM IN GJIROKASTRA DISTRICT

Irena Boboli¹, Lorenc Koçiu², Robert Çelo³

¹“EqremÇabej” University, Tourism Department, Albania. Email: irena_boboli@yahoo.com

²“EqremÇabej” University Tourism Department, Albania. Email: kociulorenc@yahoo.com

³ “EqremÇabej” University Tourism Department, Albania. Email: bertcela1@hotmail.com

Abstract

Tourism is defined as an industry and for many regions, is an important factor of economic development. In this regard, alternative tourism is seen as an opportunity for development as part of a development strategy including environmental protection and natural resources, preservation of cultural heritage, provision of services, visitors and the participation of residents in developing. The purpose of this paper is to define the tourist values in the district of Gjirokastra and identification of the most important factors which affect the development of forms of alternative tourism. Due to the geographic position and the historical and cultural heritage Gjirokastra has, it provides opportunities for the development of historical-cultural, mountain and agro-tourism. The development of tourism in Gjirokastrawill create conditions where except new investors, will give the opportunity to residents of the area to invest for providing employment, additional incomes, their participation in the development strategy. Also, it will improve the infrastructure and will provide quality services both for visitors and for the residents of the area. In this paper, factors that influence the development of the area will be identified; as well as the challenges for the future of tourism in Gjirokastra, making it an important tourism destination in Albania. At the end of the paper, recommendations and conclusions will be given, concerning the impact of tourism in economic and social development of the area.

Keywords: *Gjirokastrë, development, tourism, alternative tourism, cultural tourism.*