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## THE ROLE OF EUROREGIONS AS A FACTOR OF SPATIAL INTEGRATION AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT—THE FOCUS ON THE SELECTED BORDER AREA

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**Abstract:** The political changes that affected the European area in the second half of the 20th century conditioned the development of European countries on the principle of Euroregions, as interesting creations of neighboring countries. Formed along the political borders of neighboring countries, Euroregions today play a significant role in the enlargement process of the European Union. At the end of the 20th century, the formation of Euroregions covered the area of the Western Balkans as well. In Podrinje, the border area of Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the formed Euroregions have the goal of reviving and revitalizing rural areas. Tourism, as the most important economic activity, is integrated into the basis of the rural development of these areas. The subject of the research is related to the analysis of the development degree of border rural areas, under the influence of tourism. The research problem is focused on the rural areas of "Serbian" Podrinje. Accordingly, the aim of this paper is to determine the change and burden of rural border area due to the development of tourism, using the indicator of tourist operation (I.T.O.) and the tourist function indices to measure the degree of the development of a destination. The results of the research indicate that three types of tourist destinations have been developed in the studied area: destinations with almost non-existent tourist activity (< 4), with small-scale tourist activity (4–10), and developed and eminently tourist destinations (40–100). The obtained results indicate that 83.3% of the destinations in "Serbian" Podrinje are destinations with almost non-existent tourist activity. These are the destinations where the development of tourism does not affect the transformation of space, but the original and preserved environment is promoted as a tourist attraction.

**Keywords:** Euroregions; regional development; tourism; Podrinje

### Introduction

In the era of European integration, areas along national borders are the subject of contemporary interdisciplinary research. The border of a country, as a line and a bureaucratic feature, which divides areas of different political, economic, ethnic, religious, and other characteristics, ought to consolidate

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and “grow into” the cultural landscape and consciousness of the people (Grčić, 1998). Modern processes of globalization, integration, and regional cooperation, as well as the formation of “Europe without borders”, all have conditioned the “erasure” of state borders. The border areas of certain countries are characterized by the existence of “neutral zones”, free customs zones or planned “Euroregions”, which contributes to the defunctionalization and reduction of the barrier role of the state border (Grčić, 2002; Grčić & Ratkaj, 2003; Stojković, 1991).

The formation of Euroregions has been linked to the area of Western Europe since the second half of the 20th century. The idea of their formation originated over 130 years ago (Marković, 2020). Known as “laboratories” for shaping the future of Europe, they represent the mechanisms of the development of border areas that are usually peripheral and less economically developed in relation to the inland of the country they belong to (Joksimović, 2007; Milenković, 2012; Nađ, Todorović, & Tošić, 2005; Todorović & Tošić, 2006).

Euroregions play a significant role in the enlargement process of the European Union (EU). At the end of the 20th century, the process of their formation intensified in the countries of Central and Southeastern Europe. The border areas of the countries on the EU border have become “testing grounds” for trying out the European integration process. By forming Euroregions, the EU supports the integration of new members through regional, cross-border, or trans-border cooperation programs (Đorđević & Panić, 2004; Todorović, Tošić, & Stojanović, 2004; Tošić, Trkulja, & Živanović, 2010). Border areas that are not covered by the aforementioned programs are now rare in Europe (Sarmiento-Mirwaldt & Roman-Kamphaus, 2013; Tokes & Lenkey, 2013).

One of the main goals of the EU policy in the processes of European integration is a uniform regional development. It is especially focused on border areas which, through the connection with neighboring border areas, can become a central axis of the development within the EU (Tošić & Živanović, 2013). The instruments for reducing regional unevenness, which encourage border areas to cooperate with each other, are cross-border cooperation programs (Mirković, 2012). The EU, through financial funds, short-term initiatives, and sectoral integration, supports the establishment and implementation of cross-border cooperation programs (Tošić & Živanović, 2011).

The border areas of the Western Balkan countries, which found themselves on the borders of the EU in the process of European integration, are gradually growing into areas of stabilization and future cooperation of neighboring countries within the formed Euroregions. At the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century, along the border areas of Serbia, conditions were created for the formation of trans-border Euroregions (Marković, 2020). Special emphasis is placed on the so-called “water” Euroregions, formed along natural hydrological borders, which generally did not reach the expected level of cross-border cooperation. These types of Euroregions were formed in the border rural area of Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

## Literature overview

Conceptual and spatial definition of border areas is closely related to the concept of a border and its function. The character of the state border and the manner of its determination influenced the relations of neighboring countries and their border areas (Stojković, 1991). A special contribution to the understanding of the concept of a border area and the role of a state border in the development thereof was made by Grčić (1998, 2002) and Grčić and Ratkaj (2003).

In the process of European integration, cross-border cooperation as an instrument to reduce regional inequality encourages border regions to cooperate with each other (Mirković, 2012).

Cooperation in the field of use and protection of natural and cultural-historical resources is the basis for cross-border tourist connections (Đorđević & Panić, 2004; Đurđić, 2002; Hardi, Kupi, Ocskay, & Szemerédi, 2021; Kropinova, 2021; Milenković, 2012; Jelinčić & Knezović, 2021; Prokkola, 2008; Rădulescu & Pop, 2017; Stoffelen & Vanneste, 2017; Tosun, Timothy, Parpairis, & Macdonald, 2005; Živak, Đorđević, & Dabović, 2012). Under the influence of tourism, undeveloped border areas are developing into active tourist destinations (Bjeljac, 2006; Bjeljac, Brankov, & Popović, 2009; Gelbman & Timothy, 2010; Kołodziejczyk, 2020; Majstorović, Stankov, & Stojanov, 2013; Malkowski, Mickiewicz, & Malkowska, 2020; Ramsey, Thimm, & Hehn, 2019; Stepanova & Shulepov, 2017; Stoffelen, 2018; Timothy, 2002; Więckowski, 2010). According to some authors, state borders are becoming tourist attractions and cooperation areas of neighboring countries (Hannonen, Tuulentie, & Pitkänen, 2015; Lois & Cairo, 2015; Löytynoja, 2007, 2008; Prokkola, 2010; Timothy, 1995; Woyo & Slabbert, 2019).

With the formation of the Euroregions, Serbia has started cross-border cooperation programs. Cooperation programs are mainly based on specific tourism forms. They aim to activate and include cross-border attractions in tourism flows. The attractiveness of the state border of Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, which has been a highly conflicting area throughout history and the area along which "water" Euroregions were formed during the 20th century, is the subject of modern scientific research. Stepić (1995), Stojkov and Đorđević (2004), Todorović et al. (2004), Tošić and Todorović (2008) and Popović (2015) emphasize the importance and role of the formed Euroregions in the regional and Euroregional development of this area. Although rarely represented, cross-border tourism development programs represent an opportunity for economic development of the border area (Marković, 2020; Nezirović, Bidžan-Gekić, Avdić, & Gekić, 2016; Vuković, Cecić, & Arsić, 2011). Bjeljac, Štrbac, and Čurčić (2006) and Marković, Perić, Mijatov, Dragin, and Doljak (2021) paid the most attention to the study of research area. Bjeljac et al. (2006) analyzed the resource base for the development of different tourism types and types of tourist movements along the border line of Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Markovic et al. (2021) researched the attitudes of the local population about the possibilities of developing cross-border sports and event tourism.

## Study area

The border area between Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina is known as Podrinje. It is a complex area, on the left and right side of the Drina River which is not precisely defined and limited (Stepić, 1995). Administratively, it includes cities and municipalities that face or gravitate toward the Drina River (Popović, 2015). Out of a total of 31 cities/municipalities, 16 are in Serbia and 15 in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The term Podrinje has been in use since 1366, when it first appeared in the title of Bosnian kings (Blagojević, 2005). The name Podrinje is derived from the Drina River, as a natural barrier and border. Throughout history, the border on the Drina has often been established, requiring Podrinje area to develop as a border and not as a cross-border area. Today, the Drina River, in part of its middle and lower course, is the border river (220 km) between Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, which divides Podrinje area into eastern (Serbian) and western (Bosnian-Herzegovinian) sides (Stepić, 1995).

At the end of the 20th century, socio-political circumstances caused the region of Podrinje to remain economically underdeveloped till present (Tošić & Todorović, 2008). In the development strategies of the cities and municipalities of Podrinje, the activity of tourism is recognized and singled out as the basis of future economic development (Jakopin, 2015). Tourism, as an integrative activity, is an effective instrument in encouraging the balanced regional economic development (Marković, 2020). The attractiveness of the area, which Podrinje is famous for, is the basis for the development of tourism (Stepić, 1995).

The development of tourism in Podrinje is a subject and a challenge of cross-border and Euroregional cooperation within the formed Euroregions Drina–Sava–Majeвица (DSM), Drina–Sava (DS), and Drina–Tara (DT) (Figure 1). The established Euroregions include the rural area along the Drina River, which is not fully developed. It is characterized by preserved natural resources which, on the principles of the concept of sustainable development and integral protection, condition the selective economic activation of tourist resources near the border line (Lečić, 2011; Stojkov & Đorđević, 2004; Šimičević, 2007). Internationally

protected natural resources are the most important tourist attractions of the border areas of neighboring countries and the most popular modern destinations (Đorđević, Lakičević, & Miličević, 2018; Timothy, 2000). In the border area of Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina there are significant international Important Plant Area (IPA), Important Bird Area (IBA) & Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest (ASCI), international parks, biosphere reserves, natural resources proposed for UNESCO protection, and other protected natural and cultural assets of national and regional importance, but also established tourist places and centers.

The main goal of the formed Euroregions is nature protection, that is, revival and revitalization of rural areas. Rural development is a priority sector in the economic development of Euroregions. Agriculture and tourism, as the most important economic activities, are integrated into the basis of rural development through the development of agritourism (Marković, 2020).

The research presented in the paper is based on the destinations of Podrinje on the right side of the Drina River, i.e., in “Serbian” Podrinje. It includes cities/municipalities of Podrinje that territorially belong to the Euroregions Drina–Sava–Majeвица, Drina–Sava, and Drina–Tara, on the territory of Serbia. The studied destinations are more attractive in terms of resources and tourism compared to the border destinations on the left side of the Drina River. The research should indicate that the formation of Euroregions did not condition the rapid development of the analyzed border area as a tourist destination, i.e., that it did not



Figure 1. The map of the researched Euroregions and the municipalities belonging to them.

contribute to the disturbance and endangerment of the environment, but to the development of tourism through selective forms. The subject of this paper is to determine the degree of development of border rural areas before and after the formation of Euroregions. Its aim is to identify the change and burden of a rural border area due to the development of tourism in the formed Euroregions. The value of a tourist rural area was analyzed by applying the indicator of tourist operation (I.T.O.). Related to the I.T.O., tourist function indices were used for measuring the degree of the destination development. Interconnected, the indicators indicate the burden on the destination with tourist arrivals, but also the degree of change in rural areas for the needs of tourist development.

## Research methodology

In order to determine the degree of development of the tourist destination and its importance in the tourism market, the following indices of tourist function were used: Defert-Baretje index, index of territorial density of tourism, index of accommodation capacity utilization, index of accommodation facilities development, and index of land use. In that context, the Indicator of Tourist Operation (I.T.O.) was used as well. The degree of destination development was observed for the period 2000–2018. For the purposes of the research, secondary data sources obtained from the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia were used. The obtained data were processed using formulas and presented by a graphical method.

I.T.O. was first used in modern tourism research by Defert (1966). According to the same author, the tourist function of an area can be viewed as the ratio of the number of local population or the number of tourists to the number of accommodation facilities (Papapavlou-loakeimidou, Rodolakis, & Kalfakakou, 2006; Potts & Uysal, 1992).

Using I.T.O., Defert (1967) developed the  $Tf$  index, known as the Defert's tourist function index. The  $Tf$  index analyzes the tourist function of the area and the land development of the destination represented by the ratio of the total number of beds per 100 inhabitants. The  $Tf$  can be calculated according to the following formula:

$$DTFI = Tf = \frac{N}{P} \cdot 100 \quad (1)$$

whereby  $DTFI = Tf$ , the Defert-Baretje index of tourist function,  $N$  is the total number of beds, while  $P$  is the total number of local population.

Defert's tourist function index was improved by Baretje (1978), linking it to the area of the studied location. The Defert-Baretje index represents the ratio of accommodation capacities per 100 inhabitants of the studied area (per  $\text{km}^2$ ). Index values are obtained based on the following formula:

$$DTFI = Tf = \frac{N \cdot 100}{P} \cdot \frac{1}{S} \quad (2)$$

whereby  $DTFI = Tf$  the Defert-Baretje index of tourist function,  $N$  is the total number of beds,  $P$  is the total number of local population, while  $S$  is the area of the studied location in  $\text{km}^2$ .

Based on I.T.O., Boyer (1982), the founder of the Center for the Development of Tourism in Lyon, proposed the classification of tourist destinations into six categories (Table 1). The proposed categories of tourist destinations indicate the degree of their development, i.e., the degree of tourist activity (Marković, 2020).

Table 1

*Classification of tourist destinations according to the Indicator of Tourist Operation (I.T.O.)*

I.T.O.	Category of tourist destination
> 500	new destination with extreme tourist concentration and acitivity
100–500	developed destination with important tourist activity
40–100	developed and eminently tourist destination
10–40	destination with important tourist activity
4–10	destination with small-scale tourist activity
< 4	destination with almost non-existent tourist activity

*Note.* From "Spatial structure of tourist supply and relations between sub-regions: A case study in a coastal region, Greece," by S. Papapavlou-loakeimidou, N. Rodolakis, & R. Kalfakakou, 2006, *Proceedings of 46th Congress of the European Regional Science Association (ERSA) "Enlargement, Southern Europe and the Mediterranean"*, p. 567. Copyright 2006 by the University of Thessaly–Department of Planning and Regional Development and The Greek section of ERSA.

The territorial density of tourism is a direct indicator of the development of the destination. It shows the spatial density and concentration of accommodation facilities, i.e., the degree of tourist development and equipment of the destination (Gheorghie, 2015; Korzeniewski & Kozłowski, 2019; Przybyła & Kulczyk-Dynowska, 2018; Štefko, Vašaničová, Litavcová, & Jenčová, 2018). It is one of the elements of the assessment of the carrying capacities in destinations and of the impact of tourism on the environment of destinations. It is analyzed as the ratio of the total number of beds per 100 km<sup>2</sup>, and is calculated using the following formula:

$$ITD = \frac{L \cdot 100}{S} \quad (3)$$

where by *ITD* is the index of territorial density of tourism, *L* is the number of beds, while *S* is the area of the studied location in km<sup>2</sup>.

The accommodation capacity utilization, as an indicator of uncontrolled development of the destination indicates a rapid growth in the number of beds within the destination, which usually exceeds the needs of tourist demand. The utilization rate of accommodation capacities directly depends on the intensity of destination development and the degree of land development for tourist accommodation (Marković, 2020). The value of *IACU* > 60% shows the profitable operations of tourist and catering facilities, 40–60% shows that the business is on the verge of profitability, and < 40% that the business is not profitable (Belij, Milosavljević, Belij, & Perak, 2014). The index is calculated based on the following formula:

$$IACU = \frac{N \div 365}{L} \cdot 100 \quad (4)$$

whereby *IACU* is the index of accommodation capacity utilization, *N* is the realized number of nights spent per day, while *L* is the total number of beds.

The index of accommodation facilities development is expressed by the ratio of the total number of tourists to the number of beds at the destination, i.e., how many tourists come/use one bed. It is most often used as an addition to the analysis of the accommodation capacity utilization (Krukowska & Świeca, 2018; Starczewski, Affek-Starczewska, Rymuza, & Bombik, 2018). Index values are obtained according to the shown formula:

$$IAFD = \frac{N}{L} \quad (5)$$

whereby *IAFD* is the index of accommodation facilities development, *N* is the total number of tourist arrivals, while *L* is the total number of beds.

The index of land use indicates the burden and pressure on the destination by the total number of tourists and local population, in relation to the tourist spatial planning and the spatial planning for the needs of the local community (Štefko, Vašaničová, Litavcová, & Jenčová, 2018). It is a cumulative indicator of the total number of tourist arrivals and local population, in relation to the area of the studied location. Index values are obtained based on the following formula:

$$ILU = \frac{N + P}{S} \quad (6)$$

whereby *ILU* is the index of land use, *N* is the number of tourists, *P* is the number of local population, while *S* is the area of the studied location in km<sup>2</sup>.

## Results and discussion

Drina–Sava–Majevisa is the first Euroregion of Podrinje. It was formed in 2003 in Brčko District, as part of the Balkans without Borders initiative. The Drina–Sava and Drina–Tara Euroregions were formed in 2013 by the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in South Eastern Europe (SWG RRD; Marković, 2020).

The formation of the DSM Euroregion was aimed at establishing stabilization and at developing cross-border cooperation (CBC) between Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. CBC is an instrument for reducing regional unevenness that encourages border regions to cooperate (Mirković, 2012). In the last ten years, changes in cross-border cooperation programs of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia are the result of established Euroregions, the implementation of IPA cross-border cooperation programs and cross-border projects organized by the SWG RRD (Marković, 2020).

The goal of forming the DS and DT Euroregions is not only to protect the natural values of the environment as important resources for sustainable tourism development, but also to revive and revitalize rural border areas. Environmental protection in the Drina River Basin is supported by the Regional Center for Environmental Protection for Central and Eastern Europe (Marković, 2020).

Agriculture and tourism have been singled out as the most promising economic activities of the formed Euroregions. They are the drivers and the basis of rural development of border municipalities. Not only do they condition the revitalization of rural areas, but they also contribute to better valorization of the border natural and anthropogenic values in the tourism market and to their sustainability (Marković, 2020; Šimičević, 2007).

The rural development of the border area is based on ecological, social, cultural, and economic sustainability. A special emphasis in the rural development of local communities is placed on agritourism, as one of the selective forms of tourism, which is gaining more and more importance at the global level due to the growing ecological threat to the living and working environment (Ćurčić & Ristanović, 2000). For the rural population, agritourism is a complementary occupation and an additional source of income. The motivational basis of this type of tourism are unpolluted nature, organic food, and the possibility of vacation on a rural property with labor (life participating).

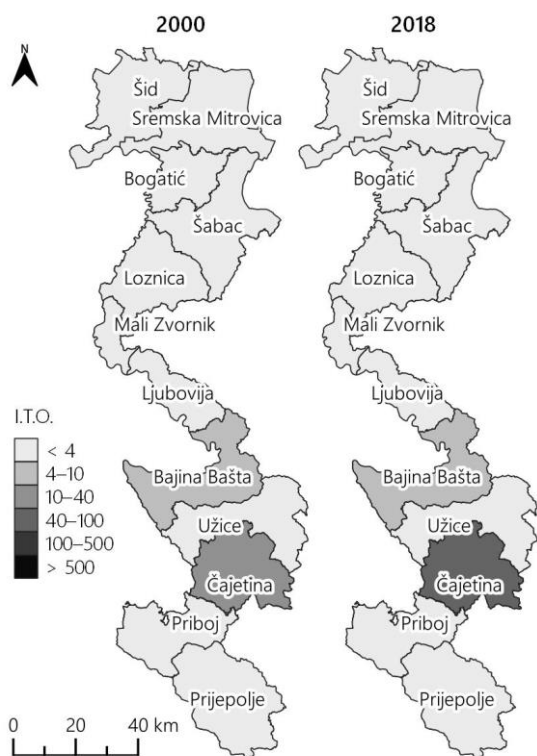


Figure 2. I.T.O. for Serbian municipalities in researched Euroregions.

Table 2

*Destination development functionality indices for 2000*

Municipality	<i>T<sub>f</sub></i>	<i>ITD</i>	<i>IACU</i>	<i>IAFD</i>	<i>ILU</i>
Šid	0.25	14.26	48.74	170.01	80.59
S. Mitrovica	0.22	25.33	19.41	31.70	121.17
Bogatić	0.18	15.36	7.28	12.76	88.80
Šabac	0.26	40.50	14.72	33.39	168.73
Loznica	0.42	596.08	15.89	7.13	184.74
M. Zvornik	0.65	50.54	12.92	28.69	91.89
Ljubovija	0.50	24.44	26.85	31.94	56.69
B. Bašta	<b>6.04</b>	263.89	33.68	24.63	108.67
Užice	1.15	139.58	33.77	39.43	180.12
Čajetina	<b>28.11</b>	679.13	30.37	18.30	148.45
Priboj	1.04	57.79	11.37	14.69	64.26
Prijepolje	0.28	14.27	48.76	36.86	55.59

Note. Bold text denotes the highest values and the categorization of tourist destinations according to I.T.O. Italic text denotes the lowest values and classification of tourist destinations according to I.T.O. indicator.

The border areas of Podrinje, on the right side of the Drina River, are characterized by landscapes of preserved and unpolluted natural environment, but also by established tourist places and centers. The results of the research (2000–2018) indicate that three types of tourist destinations have been developed in the studied area: destinations with almost non-existent tourist activity (< 4), the ones with small-scale tourist activity (4–10), and developed and eminently tourist destinations (40–100). Destinations with important tourist activity (10–40), then developed destinations with important tourist activity (100–500) and new destinations with extreme tourist concentration and activity (> 500) were not observed in the study area (Figure 2).

The values of the *T<sub>f</sub>* indicator (2000–2018) shows that according to the I.T.O., 83,3% of destinations in the “Serbian” Podrinje belong to the category of destinations with almost non-existent tourist activity (< 4). This means that these are mostly destinations where the development of tourism does not affect the transformation of the area, but the original and preserved environment is promoted as a tourist attraction (Stojanović, 2011). The *IAFD*, with its concentration and territorial density (*ITD*), and especially with its architecture, does not endanger the basic elements of the environment of these destinations. Such destinations are not affected by the total number of tourists and local population (*ILU*), as the development of tourism is based on ecotourism and agritourism. Participants in these types of tourist movements are individual tourists, lovers of nature and the rural way of life. Staying on rural estates and visiting protected natural values are the motivational basis of tourist movements to these destinations. They are also one of the oldest motives for tourist movements. International IPA, IBA, and EMERALD areas (Zasavica, Donje Podrinje, Cer, and Danilova Kosa), nature parks (Šargan–Mokra Gora and Zlatibor),



outstanding natural landscapes (Kamena Gora and Ozren–Jadovnik), special nature reserves (the Trešnjica river gorge and the Mileševka river gorge), etc. are tourist attractions and starting points of tourist movements of this category of destinations (Marković, 2020).

In relation to the previously mentioned destinations, the research results indicate that at the beginning of the observed period (Table 2), certain destinations of “Serbian” Podrinje were developing as tourist places and centers. Those were the famous mountain tourist centers of Serbia, Tara Mountain and Zlatibor Mountain.

Tara Mountain (Municipality of Bajina Bašta) belongs to destinations with small-scale tourist activity (4–10), which, according to I.T.O., represents about 8.3% of the studied destinations. It is the most forested ecosystem in Europe. The wider area of the mountain is identified as IPA, IBA, Prime Butterfly Areas in Serbia (PBA), NATURA 2000, and EMERALD area (Đorđević et al., 2018). Due to the diversity of its forest ecosystems, especially relict and endemic ones, in 1981 it was declared as a national park. With Nature Parks of Šargan–Mokra Gora and Zlatibor and Drina National Park (Republic of Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina), it was proposed as a cross-border biosphere reserve, within the UNESCO program Man and Biosphere.

The draft of the Spatial plan for the special-purpose area of Tara National Park (Jugoslovenski institut za urbanizam i stanovanje [JUGINUS], 2019) determines the regimes of I, II, and III degree of protection. Active protection of Tara Mountain ecosystem implies that tourist protection of nature is represented within the regime of the III degree of protection, which according to Stojanović (2011) is applied in the spatial and tourist development of the area. At this level of protection, the development of year-round tourism is planned in the following tourist zones: Predov Krst, Bajina Bašta, Perućac, Kaluđerske Bare, and Mitrovac. Tourism development is based on traditional (residential, transit, congress, cultural-event, sports-recreational, children's, and youth) and modern forms of tourism (wellness & spa, excursion, eco, rural, hunting, fishing, cycling, and hiking), all in line with the concept of sustainable development (JUGINUS, 2019; Stojanović, 2011).

The tourist offer of Tara Mountain is based on the educational, recreational, and tourist function of Tara National Park. The density (*ITD*) and development (*IAFD*) of accommodation capacities are within the mentioned tourist zones. When it comes to the structure of accommodation capacities, it is dominated by private facilities for guest accommodation, as an indicator of the involvement of the local population in the provision of accommodation and catering services for guests. Obsolescence of basic capacities and the presence of private facilities for the accommodation of guests indicate that the degree of their utilization (*IACU*) is in accordance with the degree of the development of the destination. In addition to residential, as the most common type of tourism on Tara Mountain, rural and ecotourism are also developing, which shows that the destination is not burdened by the pressure of the total number of tourists and local population (*ILLU*). Tourism, as a link in connecting the local population with nature protection, contributes to the realization of certain economic effects, both for the local population involved in tourist economy, and for the needs of financing nature protection (Stojanović, 2011).

Unlike Tara Mountain, Zlatibor Mountain is the most developed and the most visited mountain center in Serbia. It is situated on the territory of the Municipality of Čajetina. The development of organized tourism on Zlatibor Mountain is linked to 1893, when the mountain affirmed itself as the first air spa in Serbia, on which it built its future image (Tucović, Marković, Tucović, & Živković, 2016). The spatial development of Zlatibor Mountain is intensified in the second half of the 20th century, with the construction and organization of a tourist center (Kraljeve vode) for the development of sports and recreational, children's, youth, congress, and transit tourism. At the end of the 20th century, Zlatibor

Table 3

*Destination development functionality indices for 2018*

Municipality	Tf	ITD	IACU	IAFD	ILU
Šid	0.70	32.17	8.10	11.79	49.59
S. Mitrovica	0.39	38.71	4.50	10.37	117.51
Bogatić	0.29	20.31	3.59	10.27	71.43
Šabac	0.35	48.43	28.75	44.35	153.05
Loznica	1.94	238.56	30.46	21.25	173.71
M. Zvornik	1.48	91.85	11.61	15.95	76.54
Ljubovija	0.65	23.31	16.09	32.78	43.61
B. Bašta	<b>9.34</b>	337.90	22.01	20.64	105.90
Užice	1.94	214.24	24.67	38.72	193.40
Čajetina	<b>48.91</b>	1,100.93	29.56	30.68	360.28
Priboj	3.03	133.33	6.61	5.38	51.19
Prijepolje	0.37	15.72	5.83	15.34	44.50

Note. Bold text denotes the highest values and the categorization of tourist destinations according to I.T.O. Italic tekst denotes the lowest values and classification of tourist destinations according to I.T.O.

(Jovičić, Berić, Petrović, & Gagić, 2013). Changes in the territorial density (*ITD*) show not only the rapid development of Zlatibor Mountain as a tourist destination, i.e., the degree of tourist development and equipment of the destination (*IAFD*), but also the impact of tourism on the environment of the destination. According to the value of the *Tf* indicator (2018), Zlatibor Mountain is a developed and eminently tourist destination (40–100). It is the most developed tourist destination of "Serbian" Podrinje. *IACU* (2018), as an indicator of uncontrolled development of the destination, indicates a rapid growth in the number of beds, which usually exceeds the needs of tourist demand. It is directly related to the *IAFD*, as it mainly affects the reduction of the accommodation capacities utilization. The index of land use (*ILU*) indicates the burden and pressure on the destination by the total number of tourists and local population (Table 3). The main reason for this situation is the development of Zlatibor Mountain area both for the needs of tourism and for the local community.

In order to protect the natural values and manage the development of tourism, in 2018, parts of Zlatibor Mountain were declared as Zlatibor Nature Park (Uredba o proglašenju parka prirode "Zlatibor", 2017). The Spatial plan for the special-purpose area of Zlatibor Nature Park determines the regimes of I, II, and III degree of protection. International ecologically significant areas of the park (EMERALD, IPA, PBA), and important bird area (IBAnac-68) have also been identified. The development of tourism is defined and reduced to three tourist zones, with clearly defined rules of organization, construction, and architectural design. Intensive development of all the existing types of tourism is related to the central tourist zone, i.e., to the tourist place Zlatibor Mountain, with the most modern accommodation offer. The western and eastern tourist zones are developing through rural and ethno tourism, with accommodation in traditional rural environments and folk architecture (Institut za arhitekturu i urbanizam Srbije, 2019).

## Conclusion

The formation of Euroregions in Podrinje region created conditions for the improvement and expansion of the relations between Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, primarily through the implementation of

Mountain belonged to tourist destinations with the important tourist activity (10–40), which represents about 8.3% of the studied destinations (Table 2).

A new period in the development of tourism on Zlatibor Mountain began in 2007. With the Law on Territorial Organization of Serbia, the tourist center of Zlatibor Mountain (Kraljeve vode) received the status of a mountain town called Zlatibor (Tucović et al., 2016). Non-planned construction of accommodation capacities, which started in this period, is still present today. Rapid development and construction of accommodation facilities, which disturb the natural ambience of the mountain with their architectural appearance, indicate wrong directions of tourism development on Zlatibor

cross-border cooperation programs. Tourism, as the most promising economic activity and the basis of future development, is recognized in the development strategies of cities and municipalities of Podrinje. The implemented IPA cross-border cooperation programs, as well as the projects implemented with the mediation of the SWG RRD, consider the development of tourism through its selective forms (agritourism, ecotourism, and cultural tourism).

The research results indicate that the establishment of water Euroregions was not aimed at mass tourism and rapid development of rural border area, which would lead to its change, but at nature protection and sustainable tourism development. I.T.O. indicates that three types of tourist destinations have been developed in the studied area: destinations with almost non-existent tourist activity ( $< 4$ ), the ones with small-scale tourist activity (4–10), and developed and eminently tourist destinations (40–100). The values of the research indicate the affirmation of tourist places and centers with a well-preserved and unpolluted environment, which is confirmed by the fact that 83.3% of destinations in “Serbian” Podrinje belong to destinations with almost non-existent tourist activity ( $< 4$ ).

Tara Mountain and Zlatibor Mountain, as active tourist destinations of the studied area, had been affirmed on the tourism market long before the Euroregions establishment. Mass tourism and rapidity in the destination development is the most pronounced within the tourist place of Zlatibor Mountain. This led to devastation and endangerment of the environment. In the future, more attention should be paid to the concept of sustainable development, i.e., the establishment of ecological balance. Unlike Zlatibor Mountain, Tara Mountain bases its tourist development on sustainable tourism within Tara National Park, with the fact that it is close to becoming a destination with important tourist activity (10–40) according to its tourist activity and spatial planning.

Tourist development of destinations of “Serbian” Podrinje with pronounced tourist activity should, in accordance with current spatial plans, be reduced and realized within the established tourist zones. Tourism, as an economic activity of future development, should be directed and developed in accordance with the concept of sustainable development, which is the main goal of the formed Euroregions. Modern forms of tourism, in contrast to mass tourism, do not condition the change of purpose of rural land for the needs of tourism development, but contribute to the development of complementary activities, primarily, of agriculture. With the development of ecotourism and agritourism, significant economic effects and benefits can be achieved for the local rural population, which is gradually being included in the tourist economy through cross-border cooperation programs, with the mediation of the SWG RRD. For that reason, the protection of the natural values of the border area should continue to be the priority and goal of the formed Euroregions.

The research results obtained in this paper can be used by the local community, local governments, the Tourism Organization of Serbia, local tourist organizations, tourist agencies, and business entities in the promotion and development of the rural border area of “Serbian” Podrinje. Based on the obtained research results, all stakeholders involved in the implementation of cross-border cooperation can improve the existing situation in accordance with the market needs. The proposed guidelines for tourism development can be practically applied by the responsible institutions in accordance with their activities in the studied area.

The main limitations and shortcomings of this research are related to the spatial coverage of the problem. The research did not cover the rural border area of the Bosnian part of Podrinje. In the future, the research should be extended to the left bank of the Drina River in order to have a more objective and realistic view of the research problem.

Furthermore, in addition to expanding the research area, the trends and the role of the Euroregion in the development of Podrinje should be monitored. Special attention must be paid to the legislative

framework and mechanisms that define cross-border cooperation. Accordingly, it is necessary to improve the cross-border development of projects, strategies and studies, all in order to improve the development of the studied area.

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