



ASSOCIAÇÃO DE POLITÉCNICOS DO NORTE (APNOR)
INSTITUTO POLITÉCNICO DE BRAGANÇA

Rural Tourism Destination Competitiveness: Portugal vs Belarus

Yuliya Karalkova

Final Dissertation submitted to *Instituto Politécnico de Bragança*

To obtain the Master Degree in Management, Specialisation in Business
Management

Supervisors:

Paula Odete Fernandes

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Bragança June 2016.



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Abstract

This research presents a study aimed to evaluate the performance and competitiveness of tourist destinations in Portugal and Belarus within regions. The evaluation was performed under an analytical tool, Market Share Analysis proposed by Faulkner (1997). In addition, it was used some descriptive statistics.

The conducted analysis concluded, with respect to the evolution of the destinations tourism that Açores Island is the most prosperous market for the majority of countries, because most countries staid in the zone of Performing market. North, Lisbon and Algarve regions are maturity markets for the most countries, because they stay in Stagnant markets zone. Centre and Alentejo regions could be attributed Emerging markets for the majority of countries once are developing markets. The major market share is occupied by Portugal practically for all regions, except islands. It is also necessary to underline, that the research was made only within two years (2013 and 2014), because of the lack of necessary information in previous years. In the case of Belarus, it could be mentioned, that rural market of this country is developing (but still mostly with neighbour countries), because the number of entities, participating in rural tourism is growing as the number of foreign tourists.

Keywords: Tourism, Rural Tourism, Competitiveness, Agritourism, Market Share.

Resumo

O presente trabalho científico apresenta um estudo que tem como objetivo analisar o desempenho e competitividade dos destinos turísticos em Portugal e na Bielorrússia. Para tal, aplicou-se a Análise da Quota de Mercado desenvolvida por Faulkner (1997). Ainda, recorreu-se à produção de estatística descritiva.

Os resultados permitem concluir, no que diz respeito a evolução dos destinos turísticos, que a Ilha dos Açores é o mercado mais próspero para a maioria dos mercados emissores uma vez que é um mercado em Crescimento. As regiões Norte, Lisboa e Algarve são mercados em maturidade para a maioria dos países pois encontram-se posicionados no quadrante dos mercados em Maturidade. As regiões do Centro e Alentejo encontram-se posicionados no quadrante de mercados Emergentes, uma vez que se encontra a ganhar quota de mercado. A maior quota de mercado é ocupada por Portugal praticamente em todas as regiões, exceto nas ilhas. Torna-se importante destacar que o horizonte temporal foi de apenas dois anos (2013 e 2014) dada a ausência de informação para os anos anteriores. No caso da Bielorrússia, poderia ser mencionado, que o mercado rural deste país está a desenvolver-se, pese embora que os principais mercados emissores são os seus países vizinhos, uma vez que se registou um crescimento do número de instituições a participar no turismo rural e bem como um crescimento do número de turistas estrangeiros.

Palavras-chave: Turismo, Turismo Rural, Competitividade, Agroturismo, Quota de Mercado.

Реферат

Данная работа представляет собой исследование. Целью которого является оценка эффективности и конкурентоспособности туристических направлений в Португалии и Беларуси в разрезе областей. Оценка была проведена в рамках аналитического анализа, в ходе которого, был использован анализ доли рынка, разработанным Вильямом Фолкнером (1997). Также, в ходе исследования была применена описательная статистика.

Проведенный анализ показал, что для Португалии, наиболее перспективным рынком для развития сельского туризма являются Азорские острова для большинства проанализированных стран, поскольку данные страны находятся в зоне восходящего рынка. Такие регионы как Север, Лиссабон и Алгарве представляют собой застойные рынки для большинства стран участвующих в анализе, так как они находятся в зоне развивающихся рынков. Такие регионы как Центр и Алентежу можно отнести на счет растущих рынков для большинства проанализированных стран. Португалия занимает основную долю рынка практически во всех регионах, за исключением островов. Необходимо также подчеркнуть, что исследование было проведено в пределах только двух лет (2013 и 2014), из-за отсутствия необходимой информации за предыдущие годы. В случае Беларуси, можно отметить, что сельский рынок этой страны развивается (но до сих пор в основном за счет туристов из соседних стран), так как число организаций, участвующих в сельском туризме растет, как и количество приезжающих туристов.

Ключевые слова: Тризм, Сельский туризм, Конкурентоспособность, Агротуризм, Доля Рынка.

Resumen

En este trabajo científico se presenta un estudio que tiene como objetivo analizar el desempeño y la competitividad de los destinos turísticos en Portugal y Bielorrusia. Para ello, se aplicó el Análisis de Cuota de Mercado desarrollado por Faulkner (1997). Conjuntamente, se recurrió a la producción de estadísticas descriptivas.

Los resultados muestran, en relación con el desarrollo de los destinos turísticos, la Isla Azores es el mercado más próspero para la mayoría de los mercados de origen, ya que es un mercado en Crecimiento. El Norte, Lisboa y Algarve son destinos maduros para la mayoría de los países, ya que están situados en el cuadrante de los mercados de Madurez. Las regiones del Centro y Alentejo están posicionados en el cuadrante de los mercados Emergentes, una vez que están ganando cuota de mercado. La cuota de mercado más grande está ocupado por Portugal en casi todas las regiones excepto en las islas. Es importante tener en cuenta que el horizonte temporal fue de sólo dos años (2013 y 2014), dada la falta de información para los años anteriores. En el caso de Belarús, se podría mencionar que el mercado rural de este país se encuentra en desarrollo, pero los principales mercados son sus vecinos, ya que ha habido un creciente número de instituciones a participar en el turismo rural y bien como el número de turistas extranjeros ha crecido.

Palabras clave: Turismo, Turismo Rural, Competitividad, Agroturismo, Cuota Mercado.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

APC - agricultural production cooperative

B&B – Bed and Breakfast

CAP – Common Agricultural Policy

EU – European Union

MSA – Market Share Analysis

OECD -Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

PLC – Public Limited Company

pp. – percentage points

RTDA – Rural Tourism Development Association

RTP – Rural Tourism Partnerships

SO – Specific Objective

UK – United Kingdom

UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNWTO – United Nation World Tourism Organization

US – United States

USTA – United States Touristic Agency

WCED – World Commission on Environment and Development

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Introduction

Tourism is one of the biggest economic sectors in majority of the countries, and endows to the economic increase. It is also a very rival area, which course tourism players to give better customers services in order to stay competitive. In rural tourism, an escalating niche in the tourism market, numerous elements of environmental constructs, such as natural resources, cultural heritage, infrastructure, environmental quality and environmental preservation, fulfill a key role in promoting the sustainability and competitiveness of rural tourism destinations. Moreover, the regards of regional fellowships toward tourism extension impact its prosperity or flop.

Therefore, this research regarded rural tourism destination competitiveness of Portugal and Belarus within regions. The conclusions of this research also give useful data to tourism intermediaries and policy planners about the significance of environmental attributes and community maintenance in direction of the extension of tourism destination competitiveness, especially in the scope of rural tourism. The evaluation was performed under an analytical tool, Market Share Analysis, proposed by Faulkner. For the calculation of the MSA, it was used varying the overnight stays in the Portuguese rural areas, empowered by the National Institute of Statistics, for the period from 2013 to 2014, and indexes of number of tourists visiting rural areas, overnights spend by them and number of entities participating in rural tourism for Belarus. Also these indexes (used for Belarus evaluation) were used for comparison between Belarus and Portugal.

The sections of this research are organized in the following order. Section 1 represents the general information about tourism in a whole and rural tourism in particular, as well as description of peculiarities of rural tourism in Portugal and Belarus. Section 2 reviews research methodology and objective of the study, as well as description of data collection and data analysis from rural tourism context. Section 3 demonstrates the data analyses and obtained results. After that Conclusions, limitations and implications of this study as well as suggestions for future research are presented.

1. Literature Review

1.1 The concept of rural tourism

Day by day tourism becomes more and more popular global leisure activity and has been emerged as one of the most dynamic and fastest growing industries all over the world, which represents around 6% of international trade both in goods and service and contains 30% of the world's export of commercial services (Daniloska & Hadzi Naumova-Mihalovska, 2015). In both developed and developing countries, tourism is supposed to be a vital mean of growth in economic, social and cultural activity and regions development (Hall, 1994). It is also a highly competitive environment, which forces tourism players to provide better services for customers in order to stay competitive.

However, at the same time, there is still no consensus concerning the clear definition of this term. Nearly every institution defines the word Tourism in their own way. In this research would be mentioned a few of them, beginning with the very first one, which was published in 1905, and finishing with definitions created at present times. These tracking further will give better understanding of how much the attitudes to tourism have changed throughout the century.

The first definition of the term Tourism was given by German scientist Guyer-Feuler (1905). He supposed, that Tourism is a unique phenomenon to modern age, which is dependent on the people's growing need for a change of a place and relax, the desire of identification of art and nature beauties, and the belief, that nature gives happiness to human, which helps nations and communities' income to each other, thanks to the extension in commerce and industrialization, the communication and transportation tools' which became excellent (Guyer-Feuler, 1905). Taking into account this phrase it could be defined that development of the tourism as a field of economy started in the beginning of XX century. The next definition, which catches attention, was created by Macintosh and Goeldner (1986). These authors defined tourism as a collection of activities, services and industries which bring experience in travel, comprising transportation,

accommodation, institutions for eat and drink, retail shops, entertainment businesses and other hospitality services accommodated for individuals or groups traveling away from home (Macintosh & Goeldner, 1986). This statement shows the development of Tourism during 80 years. After half a century, researchers began to include in etymology of the word not only possibility of relax and change the place, but also spheres, which accompanying it, such as: transportation, accommodation, etc. And, finally, it is necessary to draw attention to the modern definition of this term. Nowadays World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) gives the following general definition to this term: "Tourism is the activities of persons identified as visitors" (UNWTO, 2014). The main reason for such generalization of the term lays in huge differentiation of tourism division recently.

For example, modern society marked out around 80 different types of Tourism. Here are some of them: Adventure travel, Agritourism, Alternative tourism, Archaeological tourism, Bookstore tourism, Christian tourism, Culinary tourism, Curative tourism, Cultural tourism, Dental tourism, Ecotourism, Extreme tourism, Geotourism, Heritage tourism, Medical tourism, Music tourism, Rural tourism, Sex tourism, Space tourism, Sport tourism, Jungle tourism, Forest tourism, Wine tourism, etc. (Sucheta, 2013).

As further in the work it will be spoken about the rural tourism and its competitiveness, it is necessary to pay attention to the kinds of tourism, which are closely related to it, but, at the same time, have several differences, to avoid mixing of these terms in the future.

Agritourism includes any agriculturally based operation or activity that lead visitors to a farm or ranch. Commonly it contains taking part in a wide range of farm-based activities, including buying products directly from a farm, navigating a corn maze, slopping hogs, picking fruit, feeding animals, food processing, 'petting' farms, roadside stands, shearing sheep, mowing, as well as visiting agriculture-related festivals, museums, and other similar attractions or staying at a bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation on a farm or ranch. This type of tourism has its roots in Italy, where such projects were highly supported by government from the 1985. In this country farmers even received tax breaks to give host to travelers (Biuso, 2007).

Culinary tourism or food tourism is the food examination as the purpose of tourism. According to Long, this type of tourism differs from agritourism (but, there are a lot of researchers, who think differently and combine these two types of tourism), in that culinary tourism is considered a subset of cultural tourism (cuisine as a manifestation of culture), whereas agritourism is thought-out a part of rural tourism, but culinary tourism and agritourism are inextricably connected, as the roots of cuisine can be found in agriculture. Anyway, culinary/food tourism is not restricted to gourmet food, but also to track the tradition of food preparation and reception of products characteristic to the distinct area (Long, 2004).

Ecotourism is a form of tourism that includes visiting fragile, pure, and comparatively undisturbed natural zones, intended as a low-impact and usually small scale alternative to conventional commercial (mass) tourism. Its purpose could be traveler's education, provision of funds for ecological conservation, or to directly retrieve the economic extension and political

empowerment of regional communities, and stimulate consideration for different cultures and for human rights. Since the 80s ecotourism has been measured as a crucial intention by environmentalists, so that next generations could experience destinations comparatively unaffected by human interference (Honey, 2008). Ecotourism typically comprises travel to destinations where flora, fauna, and cultural heritage are the ultimate attractions. Anyway, in addition to estimating environmental and cultural factors, an essential part of ecotourism is the incitation of recycling, energy efficiency, water preservation, and formation of economic capacity for regional fellowships (Randall, 1987). According to the World Tourism Organization nowadays, ecotourism is growing three times faster than the tourism industry in general (UNWTO, 2014).

Geotourism is a form of natural area tourism that concretely centers on landscape and geology. This term was first defined in Great Britain in 1995. It contributes tourism to geosites and the retention of geo-diversity and a comprehension of Earth sciences over appreciation and studying. It could be reached by means of independent attendance of geological features, use of geo-trails and standpoints, guided tours, geo-activities and protection of geosite visitor centers (Newsome & Dowling, 2010).

Jungle tourism is a subcategory of adventure travel determined by dynamic diversified physical means of travel in the jungle locations of the earth. Whereas common in many respects to adventure travel, jungle tourism belongs particularly to the context of location, culture and performance. Due to the Glossary of Tourism Terms, jungle tours have become a general element of green tourism in tropical destinations and are an accordingly new appearance of Western trans-border tourism (UNWTO, 2014).

Wilderness and forest tourism – tourism based on the formation of tourism infrastructure in forest locations with the opportunity of using the particular tourism output.

Speaking about sports tourism, it should be mentioned that rural locations could be a significant area for the maintenance of suburb sports, such as: cycling, fishing, climbing, water sports, winter sports, tourism orientation. Practicing some of these sports require a policy of tourism management (water sports, cycling, horse riding) others, however, can appeal tourists with a minimum technical elaboration, connected with the natural direction of favorability and particularly the quality of reception (winter sport fishing, mountaineering, tourist orientation).

Adventure tourism becomes accents, when the goal is to practice activities denoted particularly as extreme sport.

Wine tourism, Vinitourism, Enotourism or Oenotourism belongs to tourism which aim is or holds the degustation, consuming or obtaining of wine, usually at or near the source. Where other kinds of tourism are usually passive in nature, enotourism may consist of wineries visits, wine degustation, vineyard walks, or even taking an active part in the crop. Vinitourism is a comparatively new form of tourism. Its history varies vastly from area to area. Most visits to the wineries take place at or near the site of wine is producing. Tourists typically learn the history of

the winery, see how the wine is produced and taste the wines. At some wineries, at the same time living in a little guest house at the winery is also proposed. Many tourists purchase the wines produced by the winery at the premises, accounting for up to 33% of their annual sales (USTA, 2007).

Religious tourism may also have an impact on rural tourism development by outlining some definite purpose. Valuable effects are well known in this respect, religious pilgrimages accomplished by large (e.g. Lourdes - France, UK Stonehenge, etc.) number of people.

In recent circumstances (air and water pollution, smog, radioactive fallout, ozone holes, etc.) curative tourism becomes more and more popular each day. Its extension is favored by the essence of conducive climatic conditions (no pollution, atmospheric calm prevailing, and negative ionization), the existence of mineral springs with therapeutic properties, thermal water, the salt mines, potentially related with the capacities of application of remedies preserved in popular 'medicine' (Biany et al, 2013).

And, finally, it's time to describe rural tourism. It is also clear from the evidence analyzed above that the rural, is still often identified with agriculture, but is no longer an agricultural productive field. Agriculture seems increasingly depicted as marginal, or forsaken, being replaced with other activities as tourism and leisure. Rural tourism principally concentrates on actively participating in a rural lifestyle. Some researchers also attach this type of tourism to ecotourism. In the current environment, all the kinds of tourism have very close relations, and usually just follow each other. Principal contextual feature of rural tourism is that it meets the needs of people, who live in cities for open area and let them fresh knowledge of nature and rural lifestyle, and therefore is in contradiction with urban area. Rural tourism is accomplished on the space that is originally used as a living and laboring area of rural population and agricultural producers that is space vested with tillable, fallowed and populated area outside the cities. It composes of the conventional village and rural architecture, along with whole rural landscape where traditional culture, distinct cognition and capabilities, lodging, clothing, nourishment, national dances, songs and legends are cultivated and created. The unity of all these elements performs the distinguishing and essential part of the tourist importance that have to be integrated into rural tourism sentence.

Several rural villages may alleviate tourism because many countrymen are hospitable and eager to welcome (and from time to time even host) tourists. Partially it occurs because agriculture is becoming notably mechanized and consequently, needs less handheld labor. At the same time, this trend is generating economic tension on some countrymen, which in its turn produces young people to shift to urban locations. There is howsoever, a part of the urban population that is concerned in visiting the rural locations and conception of the lifestyle (Daniloska & Hadzi Naumova-Mihalovska, 2015). To sum up, all that has been discussed above, it could be noted, that rural tourism is a multi-faced performance, which takes place in an environment out of strongly urbanized locations. It is an industry segment characterized by small scope tourism business, established in locations where land use dominated by agricultural occupations, forestry or natural locations (Lane, 1994).

Consequently, in an attempt to aggregate all previously mentioned definition, rural tourism has to have following features (Roberts & Hall, 2001):

- Located in rural areas;
- Functionally rural-built on the rural world's particular characteristics of small and medium size enterprise, uncovered area, connection with nature and the natural world, inheritance, 'conventional' communities and 'conventional' practice;
- Rural in scale (e.g. either in terms of houses and locations and, consequently, usually small- scope);
- Conventional in nature, escalating deliberately and organically, and linked with regional households. It is usually very substantially managed regionally and developed for the long term of the location;
- Of many various types, representing the multipurpose pattern of rural environment, economy, history and location.

Several authors, use the term 'green tourism' instead of rural tourism, to distinguish it from other forms of tourism, such as 'white tourism' connecting winter sports, 'blue tourism' in case of sea holidays and 'tourism of lights' for urban tourism description (Glavan, 2003).

To attract travelers, villagers have to think about the tourist activities, which they may propose to their guests. Yet, archiving sustainable rural evolution and establishment of appealing rural destinations demands much more than natural resources or conducive circumstances for relaxation in nature. Here it is written about different types of services to travelers accompanied with regular approach to conserving the environment.

As it was already written above, rural tourism could be considered in a different way. Hereinafter to extract rural tourism as a separate type of tourism, the meaning of two researchers, who suppose, that rural tourism unites (includes) others kinds of tourism will be presented. For example, according to Smith and Eadington (1992) rural tourism includes:

- Agritourism, in which visitors are able to see and take part in traditional agricultural activities without demolishing the ecosystems, the host bases;
- Ecotourism, as a kind of tourism that represents natural resources while sustaining the values and regional population welfare,
- Cultural, ethno or cultural heritage tourism, mostly connected with culture, history and archeology of the location destination,
- Natural tourism, primarily for its recreational value (hunting, fishing, horse riding etc.) or activities associated with events, festivals, etc..

As, two previous sections have been already explained above, now it is necessary to pay attention to cultural, ethno or cultural heritage tourism. It is considering to be one of modern tourism industry's most dynamically proceeding branches, in today's world tourism market either from the theoretical or the practical standpoint. Cultural tourism in rural areas is principally bound to culture, history and archeology of the destination. This kind of rural tourism focused on

regional customs and villagers as the key attractions and could be separated into two types: the primary and ordinary type, is where visitors experience culture through museums and formalized performance of music and dance in theatres. The second kind is more anthropological and includes a high tourist's inducement for learning from local culture rather than merely viewing its separated display. This kind of tourism is usually associated with, or is a part of, ecotourism. One interesting fact about this kind of tourism is that, it is considered to be interior and international tourism with since for the visitors it is pleasing to visit both historical monuments and monumental heritage, including cultural landscapes, which are disposed in the rural spaces. At the same time, cultural tourism gives them a possibility to experience the places and activities that veraciously present the cultural heritage of regional fellowships. A higher share of this kind of tourism is marked in younger categories, particularly students, school tourism as learning or discovery (Stronza, 2001).

And for sure it is necessary to mention a few words about natural tourism, which mostly cited to the process of visiting rural locations for the aim of enjoying the landscape, including plant and animal wildlife. Nature-based tourism can be both passive, in which spectators tend to strictly observe the nature, or active (increasingly popular in recent years), where tourists participate in outdoor refreshment or adventure travel activities.

The rise of rural tourism reflects as common enlargement of all kinds of tourism as a variety of tourist experiences, tightly connected with the growth of a lifestyle-led and leisure-oriented society at the same time, and with the prevalent mobilization of tourism as a strategy for rural elaboration and recovery (Walmsley, 2003).

According to the European Union, a quarter of the EU population travels to a rural area within their holidays. Moreover, while focusing on natural and cultural resources, rural tourism provides visitors with an alternative to 'sun and sand tourism'. Recently instead of three S (sun, sea, sand) - come three L (landscape, lore, leisure). If considered in a wider environment of a destination's frame this orientation gives tourism providers the possibility to vary and supplement their offers whilst spreading the advantages of tourism more extensively (Sharpley, 2002).

Now it is time to raise the question connected with the meaning of 'rural areas', because each country gives various values to that term. For example, in some European countries such as Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and France, the term rural locations represents divers spaces, coastal and mountain areas. In Italy, for example, this term attributes to rural locations that are neither urban nor sea, but contains mountains. In Ireland and the UK, rural locations are actually all non-urban spaces. In Spain, Portugal and Greece, there is a trend to understand the rural parts, used for rural production (Biany et al, 2013).

Continuing speaking about rural tourism, it is needed to clear up differences between rural and urban tourism, which are presented in the following table:

Table 1. Differences between rural and urban tourism.

Rural tourism	Tourism in urban
takes place in an open space	an acute lack of space
rural settlements have less than 10 000 inhabitants	Over 10000 people
is sparsely populated	Extremely populated
outdoor activities	Indoors
underdeveloped infrastructure	Well defined;
family businesses	national or international scale
activities extended to agriculture	Independent
distance between work and home is small	Significant
influenced by seasonality and agricultural works	is less affected by seasonality
number of people who attend rural areas is small	Significant
relationships between host and tourist are personal	Formal
amateur management	Professional
equipment and old buildings generally	New
relaxing atmosphere, quiet, new, no templates	trends of industrialization, automation and oversimplification, lack of personalization of services, reducing tension and keeping warm hospitality and urban stress

Source: Adapted from Barbu (2013, p.127-128).

At the local level it is common to classify geographic units by the proportion of their population that is rural into the following three kinds: predominantly rural (50%), significantly rural (15-50%) and predominantly urbanized regions (15%), (OECD, 1994).

From the other point of view, rural tourism should be seen as a continuum of various types of tourism subject to the region/location where it occurs. That is, the inquiry for rural tourism is immediately connected with the distinct feature of rural locations. It looks like rural regions not far from urban locations are very likely to present several urban tendencies, whereas circumferential rural locations whereas attracting lower levels of tourists can propose more possibilities for more rural-specific tourism activities. For example, farm tourism is characteristically rural, whilst cultural tourism is usually a more urban type of tourism. In contrast, wellness tourism located in the middle of these two forms of tourism (Pollermann & Neumeier, 2014).

But still in spite of development of different types of tourism and especially grows in rural tourism sectors in these latter days it needs a huge governmental and civil support. The principal concept here is laying in an idea of sustainable development of rural locations. The conception of sustainable development in on the whole has been around for centuries but it was not till 1987 that established use of the term 'sustainable development' received international consideration and acknowledgment, when it was determined as development that meets the necessities of the present without compromising the opportunity of next generations to meet their proper needs. It

goes without saying that here such concept as provision of balance between the economy, the environment and society are included.

In financial terms, rural tourism not only grants complementary revenue for agricultural producers and farmers, but it also facilitates either employment conservation or job formation for the population within rural locations. New working places are typically obtainable not only in hotels and catering services, but also in transport, retailing, and in information/heritage exegesis (Daniloska & Hadzi Naumova-Mihalovska, 2015).

Politicians as institutions often put much expectations in tourism as an instrument for rural elaboration. Escalating world tourism is an effective source of revenue and employment and in some cases one of few accessible options (Sharpley, 2002). At the same time, due to Professor of Ljubljana University Mihalič (2002) mostly, employment within tourism is seasonal, low in status, and low paid, raising questions about if it could grant satisfactory sustenance (Mihalič, 2002).

Because of the abundance of so called “green” form of tourism, global households commenced to organize Rural Tourism Partnerships (RTP), which are characterized by vertical and horizontal collaboration, mutual investments and interchanges of human, social and economic capital between two or more tourism agents to settle a problem or establish a possibility that they are not able to address on their own (Bramwell & Lane, 2000).

In many European countries rural tourism is very popular nowadays, and they even have a special classification system of tourist accommodation units. It goes without saying, that rural tourism is a booming tourism industry in many parts of the world, but mostly in developed countries, and has essentially expanded since the 1970s, either in terms of demand or of supply (Lane, 2009). In most countries there are regulations at national level, and only in Belgium, Spain and Italy regulations at regional level exist, and in Finland there are not regulations of this nature at all.

The classification of lodging tourism units connected with rural tourism is as an encrypted type such as to synthesize the degree of comfort and the range of services based on reputation, moral climate and a set of requirements, criteria and norms of services. Not only classification frames vary from one Member State to another, but also there is a considerable multiplicity of forms of tourism accommodation units with lodging connected with rural tourism (Foris, 2014).

Table 2. Types of tourism structures related to rural tourism accommodation and classification categories used in the different States of the European Union (cont.).

No.	Country	Types of accommodation tourism units	Classification categories/Structures types
1	Austria	Guest House, bed and breakfast, Apartment	1 - 5 stars
2	Belgium	Guest room, open-air, Recreation Complex (structure), holiday	1 - 5 stars
3	Bulgaria	Complex (and religious) holiday, Family Hotel, Bungalow and Camping, houses for rent, rooms, vacation homes and houses	Complex (and religious) holiday: 3 - 5 stars, Family Hotel: 1 - 3 stars, Bungalow and Camping: 1 - 2 stars, Houses for rent: 1 - 3 stars, Separate rooms, holiday homes and houses: 1 - 3 stars
4	Cyprus	Tourist village, Tourism villa, camping Ground, Traditional House (Hotel and Apartment Hotel), Tourist Apartment	Tourist village, Tourist Villa: Deluxe, A, B, C –categories Camping ground A, B, C –categories Traditional House (Hotel and Apartment Hotel), Tourist apartment: no stars Other categories: Star Hotel and Guesthouse
5	Croatia	Camping and other types of accommodation: rooms and apartments	1 - 5 stars
6	Czech Republic	Bed and breakfast, Camping, Cottage, Bedroom for Hikers	1 star: Tourist 2 stars: Economy, 3 stars: Standard, 4 stars: First class, 5 stars: Luxury
7	Denmark	Hostel	1- 5 stars
8	Estonia	Guest house, tourist villages and camps, holiday home, apartment for visitors, B&B	1 - 5 stars
9	Finland	Chalets	-
10	France	Camping, rooms, Houses, Holiday Villages Tourist Villages, Residential, Residential Amusement Parks	Accommodation classified pursuant valid norms by July 2009: Hotel 0 stars. Tourist residence: 1 - 4 stars. 1 - 5 stars
11	Germany	Guest houses, bed and breakfast, Inn, Tavern etc.	G-classification
12	Greece	Main structures: furnished apartment, Camping-secondary structures: rooms for rent, furnished apartments, furnished house and mansion	- Furnished apartments and rooms for rent: 1 - 5 stars, -Camping: A, B, C categories
13	Ireland	Guest House, Hostel for holiday, Holiday Camp, campers and camping, Holiday Cottages, holiday apartment	-accommodation units (Guest houses): 1 - 4 stars -accommodation units Guest houses) - ungraded, with symbols U,N, R
14	Italy	non-establishment: B&B, Youth Hostel, private House, Alpine Refuge-outdoor shelters-tourist village, Camping, these categories may vary from one region to another	- Most regions have adopted a system based on six categories of classification: from 1 star to 5 star Deluxe, based on a minimum required score of each category, -10 regions using a system based on 5 categories of classification: from 1 star to 5 stars deluxe based on classification criteria.
15	Latvia	The Guest House, the-Other categories: Camping	Guest House: I-IV categories, Camping: I-III categories
16	Lithuania	The Guest House, the-other: camping, rest home, nursing home, for health center, tourist center, the home of free time	Guest House: 1 - 4 stars
17	Luxembourg	Hotel	1 - 5 stars

Table 2. Types of tourism structures related to rural tourism accommodation and classification categories used in the different States of the European Union (cont.).

No.	Country	Types of accommodation tourism units	Classification categories/Structures types
18	Malta	Holiday village guest house, B&B establishment	Holiday Village: 2-5 stars, Guest House: standard or comfort, B&B establishment: 2-3 stars
19	Great Britain	Hotel: Hotel-guest accommodation units: B&B, House, farmhouse, Inn, Restaurant with rooms, Campus-Hostel: Hostel accommodation, Activity, sleeping cabin, shed, Camping-self-catering apartment, Caravan, holiday-holiday park: camping and tourist Park tourist village -	There are four classification systems, distributed for: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Most of the systems is based on the star system. England: 1-5 stars, Scotland, Wales: 0-5 classes
20	Holland	Camping and Bungalow Park	1 - 5 stars
21	Poland	Bed and breakfast/guest house, Camping, tourist Home, Bivouac Pension: 1-5 stars, Camping: 1-4-star Guest House/House for tourists, the bivouac: I-III categories	Pension: 1-5 stars, Camping: 1 – 4 - star Guest House/House for tourists, the bivouac: I-III categories
22	Portugal	tourist structures: Inn, tourist village (holiday), tourist Apartment (holiday) Holiday Villa, tourist structures in rural areas (cabins, structures for agritourism, rural hotels), Camping and caravans-hosting local units	- tourist structures: Inn: located in a national park or monument of public interest: the 4- star hotel, located in a building of regional or local public interest or historical or architectural value: 3-star tourist village: 3-5 stars, tourist Apartment
23	Romania	Hostels, tourist complexes, apartments and rooms for rent, bungalow, cottage, camping, tourist village, a tourist stopover, apartments and camping,	- tourist and agritourist pensions pensions: 1- 5 daisies (flowers)- bungalow, cottage, apartment or tourist rooms for rent: 1 - 3 stars camping, tourist village, a tourist stopover, apartments and camping type: 1 - 4 stars
24	Slovakia	Guest House-Apartment, holiday village, Camping and campsites, private accommodation	Guest House: standard and budget (economic), which correspond to categories of classification of the hotels of 1, 2 and 3 stars, House-apartment: 2-, 3-star holiday village: economic, medium, superior Camping and campsites: four classes, private accommodation: rural tourism and agritourism
25	Slovenia	Pension, Inn, Campground, apartment, 1st floor, Holiday House, private rooms, accommodation at the farm House	Camping: 1 - 5 stars, Pension, Inn, second floor, Holiday House, private rooms: 1 - 4 - star accommodation on the farm House: 1 to 4 apples.
26	Spain	Camping, private rooms, retreat, guest houses, rural homes	Secondary group: -private rooms, rural Houses: 1 - 3 stars-guest houses: no category. In some regions, the grading system can be included in a "higher class" for private rooms and rural Houses-silver stars.
27	Sweden	Hotel, Hotel Garni	1 - 5 stars
28	Hungary	Bed and breakfast, camping, holiday house, hostel, tourist board	1 - 5 stars

Source: Adapted from Foris (2014, p.41-43).

European rural spaces, on a whole, have incurred complicated processes of reorganization, mostly owing to more global dynamics of change. Those processes supplement additional layers of intricacy to an already highly variegated subject. One of the crucial changes treats with transformations in the agricultural sector (such as its streamlining in some rural locations and its

descent and desertion in other territories) that induced a set of changes in socioeconomic and demographic dynamics in mentioned above territories. The subsequences of these processes have varied consequently to countries, regions and even regions within countries (Silva et al, 2016).

It is important to underline that rural tourism is very important to regional development, and point out three main reasons why it is necessary to develop tourism in the rural areas of the regions:

- It brings economic advantages to the rural locations: economic increase, economic variety and equalization, employment creation, decrease out-migration and even re-population, enhancement of common services, infrastructural development, regenerate handicrafts, traditions and cultural identities, escalating capacities for social relations and exchange, defense and enhancement of both natural and built environment, escalating recognition of rural priorities and potential by policy-makers and economy planners (Roselyne et al, 2006);
- Increase participation of the people in the extension of tourism: the tourism activities need to be organized by the participation of many people, so one key possibility is to elaborate tourism enterprises where they inhabit. Rural people can become supervisors of the process of rural tourism and this way they will be directly engaged into the extension process of their community;
- Shortage of other viable disjunctives: having in mind that rural locations have few economic opportunities, rural tourism is one of the few segments that could be appropriate for them. The everyday activities on the farm, the present structures-houses, etc. may be used to draw on tourists and provide extra revenues (Cvetanovska-Gugoska et al, 2013).

Extension of tourism in rural regions needs high-grade infrastructure in terms of quality of water, electricity, roads and tails ablation. Of distinct significance are elements in communal infrastructure such as clinics, shops, post offices, various services and etc.. Educated people should work in providing services to rural tourism, proficiency and experience should grant safety for the visitors and provide quality tourist service that the guest demands. It should be accented that ineluctable is splendid knowledge of the regional culinary details, vines and drinks, conventional handicrafts, cultural and other heritage (Gračan et al, 2010).

But the generality of rural locations does not have sufficient cultural, natural or other attractions appropriate for proceeding extraordinary unique selling suggestions, apparently discerning the region from other areas creating opportunities for the extension of an economically prosperous, or relatively intensive, rural tourism (Deller, 2010).

That is why to attract the attention of potential tourists it is very important to implement the regional branding. The process of branding helps a region to establish its distinction, to contribute itself, to attract attention and to differentiate from others. Destination branding perform the process of proceeding and utilizing a unique distinction and personality that discerns from

rivals over an affirmative image, whose goal is to capture the entity of the destination in order to support its core values.

In order to continue describing tourist destination branding, it is necessary to mention what a tourist destination involves. As determined by the International Agency for Tourism, it presents a terrain consisting of a set of touristic attraction elements that is equipped with housing, nutrition and entertainment facilities for visitors for a definite period of time. The latter presumes that, in several occasions, the countryside can be merely the occurrence for outdoor activities, such as survival and geo-caching games with the help of technological appliances, jet boating, surfing, or adventure tourism, for which the rural nature of the setting may not be pivotal to the visit (Roberts & Hall, 2001).

The next thing to do is to consider the importance of rural marketing. Rural marketing is defined as a function which govern all those activities in asserting, promoting and reorganizing the purchasing power of rural people into an efficient require for peculiar goods and services and there by reaching the aims of the organization. Rural marketing represents more complicated activity, than simple marketing, that needs above all a viable strategy for performance and dynamic targeting of obtainable resources. The advancement of rural proposal should be within the region as a whole. The activities have to be directed to different locations. One of those locations is communication and marketing, with the capability to establish a Platform for communication as a primary step ahead of collaboration network development, which pretends to be currently missing. Plain visibility of the regional brands is essential. Moreover, the on line booking as a postulate for collaboration is one of the most significant tools of rural marketing. Then, there are other forms of marketing tools used such as: trade shows, presentations, printed materials (brochures, flyers ...), public relations, advertising (newspaper, magazines) etc.. All these tools have to include data about the advertised proposal, such as enumeration of lodging (hotels, private pensions...), different tour packages (wellness, spa packages, hiking, skiing, camping, mountain biking). Prioritization of target group should always be arranged in terms of how to prepare the proposal. Various target groups have different demands, so they have to be appealed in different manners. In this scope, the sales managers of the rural supplies may be truly beneficial. These managers have to be well disciplined and prepared of introducing the customer to all the opportunities (Cvetanovska-Gugoska et al, 2013).

Finally, tangible symbols of the non-conventional experience, in the form of souvenirs, strengthen colorful memories of the experience over time, upgrades the tales later told to friends and family (Hu & Yu, 2007). These therefore compose relevant experience marketing tools.

The experiential data nowadays displays a considerable variation in the way the rural has been performed and promoted within the last three decades, passing from a submission of these locations as 'old', 'static', 'unchanged' and 'untouched' (until the middle of the 90's) to its presentation as 'young', 'active', 'experiential', 'enthusiastic' and 'emotional', much more oriented to external consumptions than to regional features and populations. This distinction is in conformity with the fundamental policy (either European or national) guidelines and

represents, to a definite degree, the turn from 'the old rural' to the 'new rural', thus also presenting the route of many of the actual rural reconfiguration processes (Figueiredo et al, 2014).

It is obvious that rural tourism makes it feasible to use the village area, agricultural environment and infrastructure in an efficient way. Changes of rural landscape are also linked with adaptation, refunctioning and preserving of old habitation formations, of architecture of the area, consequently also with preserving regional capacity, traditions and folklore. However, preserving cultural distinction does not mean insulating the rural fellowship from civilization. Conversely, there is a trend to expand new relationships, to operate in accordance with social standards and remarks new values introduced e.g. by visitors (Jaszczak & Žukovskis, 2010).

European Union, through different institutions establishes and by elaborating various projects maintaining rural extension and agritourism as an element of rural development. The EU principal goal is to ensure the extension of a tourism product that would directly boost farmers and regional fellowships and preserve the rural heritage.

In EU regional extension policy, tourism practiced at farms granted the support by EU structural and regional extension funds, endorsement in financing investments in tourist infrastructure, natural parks elaboration, sports and promoting agritourist services. The tourist activities extension in rural locations can help to enhance the employment and revenue alternatives and the attractiveness of rural locations (Trinca et al, 2012).

Further, some actions towards the development of rural tourism and agritourism taken by EU will be named. The primary step in this area was taken by The Council of Europe, who launched the campaign for "Rural World". The Parliamentary Assembly Report retains all Member States to advance rural tourism which can facilitate reaching a social contract that will assure a union of European policy, eco-cultural and social equilibrium between town and city. Rural tourism is fulfilled in those regions appropriate for financial help from the Structural Development Fund and the European Union Regional Fund. For example, in the framework of European Union maintenance in order to obtain the aims of rural extension, the most significant place is intended by measures to stimulate rural tourism and professional education in tourism sphere. This includes financing investments consigned to establish tourism facilities such as lodging in peasant farms, natural parks extension and sports activities (Bachtler, 2002).

And, finally it is necessary to move to European programs concerning rural tourism development. To foster the rural tourism in EU countries and in others non-European countries, several programs have been developed, including:

- The "Expert" Program, which is based on the principles of innovation, sustainability and efficiency. The engaged sector was the sector of 'specialized tourists' such as: professional organizations, schools, universities, groups with a distinct occupation. After the first year of maintenance, Rural Tourism Development Association (RTDA) was established in order to foster the rural and cultural tourism and to proceed the projects of "EXPERT" Program. The

project admitted the extension of rural tourism activities taking into account the environmental vindication, and formation of a network covering 17 countries;

- The "The Village I Love" Program deals with the problems in rural tourism by arranging competitions. The report is available to everybody and it is a good means of data and a good enquiry source for regional authorities which aspire to expand rural tourism in their region;
- "European Rural Tourism Network" Program contains three elements: technical support for elaborating a network of tourist lodging, attainments of European rural tourism market, formation of an information program and promotion of tourist residences in each country.

To reach sustainable extension, tourist destinations have to control the development, which means that it is required to establish strategy of elaboration, which would designate goals, and then reach those objectives. Rural tourism should not be abandoned to evolve spontaneously, because that could produce irretrievable harm to the environment. Accordingly, it is indispensable to assure extension management based on strategies that will contain all carriers of the proposal. To target dormant tourists by proposing rural tourism in specific area it is essential to dissect the situation, resolve on present and possible opportunities of forming high quality proposal that will meet the visitor's requirements. Perception of significance of the environment protection, the demands of visitors for higher quality and rivalry in the supply, adduces to the necessity of implementing norms in further developing service in rural households and suggest quality inspection of products (Gračan et al, 2010).

Nevertheless, governmental regulations are not the only thing that influence on touristic flow in rural areas. Due to Peña, Jamilena, Molina (2012), who made a research on a topic "The perceived value of the rural tourism stays and its effect on rural tourist behaviour", visitors assign great value to the impact of the rural tourism enterprise's activities on rural sustainability. This question is important because, although the enterprise's activities on the rural locations do not propose the visitors any direct advantage, the significance assigned by guests to rural sustainability makes it a part of the deliberate value rural tourism of the proposal supplied by the enterprise. The scale indicates that visitors do truly assign a value to such activities. As considers people pay a lot of attention to decor and architecture in keeping with the rural locations, and also to the functional advantages and donations perceived by the visitors. These advantages and donations are significant in the consuming of a tourism-based product, in terms of adapting them to the distinct features of rural tourism. In respect of the affective element, the 'emotional' measurement implies the advantages deliberated by visitors, based on their gratification of the rural trial and their connection with, and contribution to, the prosperity of the regional population; the 'social' measurement comprises the advantages perceived by visitors based on amplification and enjoying their social attitude with fellow tourists and with members of the regional population; and the 'educational' measurement represents the advantages perceived by guests by a sensation of discovery and learning in respect to the actions assumed to maintain the sustainability of the rural environment, the rural way of life, regional culture and straight contact with nature (Peña et al, 2012).

And so heritage is nowadays identified as a considerable resource for rural extension, which is why the elements of an area are crucial components for the visitor's assessment of a locality. Landscape itself is thus interpreted as a guest's asset, in the meaning that it could represent a useful progress tool, something to be evaluated and preserved for rural tourism (Carvalho, 2003).

Further in the research Portuguese and Belarusian rural tourism will be compared.

1.2 Development of rural tourism of Portugal

Situated in the Western part of the Iberian Peninsula, Portugal is a country with one of the most antique and sustainable territorial frontiers of Europe (Silva & Leal, 2015). Until the end of the XXth century tourism based on the 'sun and beach' has been the main commodity of the Iberian Peninsula (Loureiro & Francisco, 2009). The conception is determined as a paid set of activities and services provided in rural regions, in foundations with family nature aiming at sentence of a complete and varied tourism commodity in rural locations (Agapito et al, 2012).

In the Portuguese case, extension of rural areas had been further strengthened by the country's assumption to the European Union (EU) in 1986, whose orientations – particularly the realization of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), in which many of the European rural territories were admitted as places for nature preservation and multifunctional areas – led to the amplification of the 'deruralization' process of the country, as well as to the desolation and decadence of many rural areas (Figueiredo, 2008). In these latter days, western and particularly Portuguese remote rural locations are increasingly considered as multifunctional areas, where efficient activities, such as agriculture or forestry, are occasionally as prominent as the (growing) consumption-oriented activities as leisure and tourism (Figueiredo & Raschi, 2012). Besides leisure and tourism, new functions of the countryside contain environmental protection and the conservation of both customs and memories and of the built patrimony and inheritance (Silva, 2012). Those locations are nowadays 'beyond agriculture'. However, around 50% of Portuguese area may be measured as brittle and declining rural locations (Oliveira -Baptista, 2006).

In Portugal, tourism is a strategic sector in the country economy. Indeed, with a view to enhance the destination's attraction for tourism, the National Strategic Plan for Tourism (Ministério da Economia e da Inovação, 2007) pinpointed nature-based tourism as one of the ten national strategic products.

Nowadays in Central Portugal occurs a "Program of Schist Villages" (which emerged from the development of the "Network of Schist Villages" - Rede de Aldeias do Xisto), under the "Operational Plan for the Central Region of Portugal" (an instrument for structuring extension in the region for the period 2000-2006, backed by subsidization from the European Union – "Community Support Framework III"). This initiative embraces above twenty hill villages (district micro-areas), apportioned amid thirteen municipalities in the sub-regions of Pinhal Interior, North and South, Beira Interior South and Cova da Beira. It concerns the recovery of a group of hill

villages (e.g. roofs and facades renovation, modernization of social areas, urban furniture installation, road surfaces and footpaths renovation, insertion of basic infrastructure systems) to maintain a network of sites of tourist interest. These communities are now integrated into a system in concordance with, a (visitors) extension scheme, implying the region generally, which also covers the scenic roads that connect the villages, and provides, moreover, panoramic routes, recreation parks and stopping areas with charts describing the landscape, belvederes. Based on the "Village Plans", a peculiarity of territorial administration that is disquieted with micro- locations (peripheral, and revealed economic, social and demographic feebleness), the objective is to strengthen and incite offers for intervention (with financial maintenance from the European Union and the Portuguese Government), which goal is to requalify such areas, refine the life of the people, enhance their self-respect and encourage their potentialities (initial and particular) (Carvalho, 2004).

The regional fellowship also plays an active role in establishing the rural tourism experience, supporting visitors to detect and relish a keener experience of these places. Residents can share their cognition of a region's history, culture and nature inheritance, or suggest possibilities of closer binding with their way of life (by accepting visitors in their homes) or with regional products (by promoting, realization or enabling them taste these products) (Sáez, 2007).

A regular and significant reduction in the resident population, as well as its growing age, has become a prevalent and specific characteristic in numerous parts of the European countryside. In Portugal, such process has influenced all the inland and mountain areas, where demographic denudation had already led to the fractional, or in many occasions, to the total, desertification of hundreds of villages (Ribeiro & Marques, 2002). In spite of Portugal constantly being associated with seaside tourism, particularly the South, where the Algarve region accounts for the significant quantity of visitors' overnight and housing accommodation (INE, 2012), the country is a destination of reliefs. These reliefs are distinguished by a variety of culture, physical geography, and biology that can be operated in order to invigorate the tourism sentences (Agapito et al, 2014).

The majority of the rural visitors in Portugal are old-aged tourists on a day trip who arrived in coach tours, but there are also groups of friends and families (with and without children) who attend the villages absolutely and arrive by car. They often arrive here on the advice of a family member or friend who has said them that 'it is worth a visit', or occasionally, or because they saw the place in a tourist guidebook. But very often in villages houses no longer procure corresponding living conditions as they did before, and they perceive that they can no longer afford to refine them as before, because of binding disciplinary arrangements; there are few young people; unemployment influences on a considerable share of the population of working age; admission to medical aid is usually difficult, because there are no health centers or pharmacies; children have to go to schools in other villages; public transport inclines to be occasional; and tourism income is low (Silva, 2012).

Nowadays in Portugal prevails several forms of rural lodging units, such as: Turismo de habitação - manor houses or residential houses of admitted architectural value, of adequate measuring, with character furniture and decoration; Turismo Rural – rustic houses having the features of the rural environment in which they are situated; Agroturismo – houses and the outhouses on the farm, visitors being able to participate in the work of the farm or in supplementary types of entertainment, Turismo de Aldeia – Village tourism; and Casa de Campo – Country Cottages (Ribeiro & Marques, 2002).

Like in majority of other European countries, rural locations in Portugal have incurred essential changes over the course of latest decades as an outcome of increasingly global socioeconomic movement of alteration. Even if the results of these processes of alteration that have occurred in rural locations may vary, in accordance with countries and areas, one of its most apparent symbol has been the deprivation of the monopoly enjoyed by agricultural activities. This apparent gave place to a rural no longer seen as a generative area but increasingly represented as an intake and expendable space in which leisure and tourism activities shoulder an overriding part. In consequence of these modifications, many Portuguese rural locations, especially distant ones, are nowadays seen, either in social or in institutional terms, as post-agricultural and intake-oriented areas. These locations may be defined as low solidity spaces, populated by aged, retired and with low degrees of literacy populations. Definitely due to their remoteness and mustiness which configure processes of constancy of definite rural and rurality characteristics (customs, cultural heritages, exemplary architecture characteristics, landscape accompaniment, etc.) that urban populations increasingly value, these locations are nowadays at the center platform in terms of leisure and visitor's activities (Figueiredo et al, 2014).

Further, to make the theory more visible, one typical touristic Portuguese village (Aldeia da Pedralva) and the activities provided by the creator of this village will be describe. This village was bought and rebuild by a Portuguese manager, who decided to participate in rural tourism business. The major activities are tourists' activity in trekking, biking, bird-watching and surfing. Particular programs aligned at seniors conformed these to correspond their participants' capacities. Workshops on photography, Portuguese gastronomy, and yoga classes on the beach are embedded in the activities, which can be also a disjunctive to the partners of bird-watchers, surfers, bikers or trekkers, who are not comfortable with these more physical activities. Because one of the project's goals is transferring regional cognition to visitors, the program's activities feature regional conductors, and the regional grocery shop and saloons utilize local products. Besides, the visitors are also countenanced to interact and purchase fish and shellfish straight from regional fishermen who teach them how to cook it. Moreover, the trail activities goal is to give information about regional history, traditions, products, handicraft and gastronomy (Agapito et al, 2012).

1.3 Belarussian experience in rural tourism

And now Belarussian experience in rural tourism will be presented. This year, rural tourism in Belarus reached thirteen years from the beginning of its development. Despite the fact that Belarus – is the only country in Europe where there is neither the sea nor mountains, it has a significant potential for the development of this type of tourism – there are 20 thousand rivers and 10 thousand lakes, 36% of the territory - forests, 7% - national parks. At the same time, many villages where almost nothing has changed since the XIX century. By the number of agricultural land per capita (0.9 hectares), including 0.6 hectares of arable land, the Republic of Belarus is superior to other European countries, on average 2 times (Molchan, 2008).

Usually these kind of tourism propose accommodation in so-called agro cottages (farmsteads), where you can hunting and fishing, boating, ride a horse, cycling or hiking in the surrounding area; get acquainted with the rural way of life, learn how Belarusians lived in the old days, visit the ethnographic museums; watch the national cultural traditions (music, dance, folk games); make your own souvenirs from Belarus (usually from straw); and of course, try the ancient Belarusian dishes and beverages.

Belarus has enough natural potential for the development of eco- and agro-tourism. Landscape-ecological evaluation of its territory, based on the account of differences of structure, stability and functioning of natural complexes, showed that 46.3% of them are typical, 32.8% - essential, and 20.9% - unique (Belstat, 2015).

Today in Belarus you can find around two thousand farmsteads. Many rural houses for tourists are located at or near the national parks "Bialowieza Forest", "Naroch", "Pripyat". There you can take part in the ancient national ceremonies, such as Kalyada, Pancake Day or Midsummer. You can even get married in Belarusian traditions. If you are interested in a life of Belarusian peasants and want to try to imagine the old classes, the owners can offer you to go to the hay early in the morning (after mowing is sure to be a fresh breakfast in the meadow), feed the animals at the home farmstead, check the cell to bee apiary or bake a bread. And of course, in the farmsteads you will take a steam bath, with the prepared fragrant twigs and herbs, and also get acquainted with folk recipes and the secrets of care (Agrotourism in Belarus, 2016).

Every year on the third Sunday of May is held so-called Open Day in Belarusian estates. On this day estate owners show their houses, talk about the services offered, the sights, and prepare refreshments. Many of the protesters are developing special programs with excursions and exclusive dishes.

The famous British travel edition «TravelMail» named Belarus among the top 10 tourist destinations in 2009 (along with Australia, the US, Egypt, Poland, Mexico, United Arab Emirates, the Caribbean and the Galapagos Islands, Malaysia).

Rural tourism in Belarus is becoming increasingly popular. Today, owners of farmsteads, farmers, artisans, representatives of the tourist industry are clustered, offering a wide range of services, creating a unique tourist offer and its own brands.

In Belarus for tourists equipped dozens of interesting nature trails and routes extending from 1 to 250 km. Some of them can cross on foot, others – using a bike, horse or car, and another – with a help of a motor boat, rowing boat or kayak.

For those tourists, who like photo shooting Unusual Safari Park operates in Mogilev. On the territory of 120 hectares you can see fields and forests, glacial canyons and ponds inhabited by about 200 wild animals. In the park is situated mini-railway and runs outdoor walking train with which you can watch the animals (Tourism and relax in Belarus, 2016).

Many rural houses are situated near the hills. For those who like skiing, Belarus is becoming more popular every year. In our country, there is no mountain ranges, but there are high hills and steep ravines, slopes are perfect for skiing and snowboarding. Belarus has moderately mild climate with snowy winters, there is no danger of avalanches, equipped with the highest level of the track, as well as the proximity to the ski slopes.

As in many sources scientists consider Religious tourism as a part of rural tourism, it is necessary to mention, that in Belarus there are many churches under the protection of UNESCO.

In the National Tourism Development Program in the Republic of Belarus for 2006 - 2010 years, farm tourism was highlighted as one of the most important areas of development. Before the experts, the owners of farmsteads, the authorities pointed out a number of objectives: the creation of tourist villages with traditional folk architecture on the basis of existing rural settlements, located in the scenic area; increased use of the reserves of the rural population by organizing the rural tours with accommodation and meals in the village houses, country estates; creation of agrituristic systems based on agricultural production cooperatives, etc.

Among the factors that influenced the development of this form of tourism in Belarus, it should be noted:

- The growth of citizens' mobility by increasing the number of personal vehicles;
- More effective organization of free time (weekends, more frequent and shorter holidays);
- Dynamic growth and the level of stress in modern urban life;
- The diversity and growth of the quality of services offered by the owners of tourist structures in the rural areas of their specialization (Klisunova, 2004).

According to research conducted by the UN, 82% of the citizens of Minsk would like to participate in ecological travel, which indicates the presence in the domestic market demand for agro-tourist services (Nechaeva, 2005). An important factor in the development of agro-tourism is the country's geographical position. Every year, 10 million foreigners cross the Belarus as transit passengers, including 5.5 million – by car and 4.5 million - by rail, which is a significant transit potential of tourism. Due to the fact that in Belarus are two international highways, agro-tourist objects could be involved in the maintenance of transit drivers and passengers, (UNITER, 2015).

In general, it had been already marked the first experience of agro tourism enterprises by model type "guest house", "tour with accommodation in a typical home," "National Village", "VIP-village", "village inn" and others.

In the sector of rural tourism activities have developed three types of entities:

- 1) Hosts of rural homesteads, registered with the local authorities;
- 2) Farmers, combining farming with the reception of tourists in their houses and estates;
- 3) Large agricultural companies (APC, PLC).

Formed following target groups (categories) of clients' farmsteads:

- 1) Domestic tourists-citizens;
- 2) Foreign tourists;
- 3) Corporate groups associated common place of work;
- 4) Companies, consisting of friends and acquaintances;
- 5) Families;
- 6) Mobile teams engaged on a multi-day cycling, water routes.

And now it is necessary to move to the Belorussian legislation, connected with rural tourism. Presidential Decree № 372 "On measures to develop rural tourism in Belarus" was signed June 2, 2006, which exempt founder farmsteads from taxation, and prescribed soft loans for rural tourism entrepreneurs from Belagroprombank. Since 2008, the Belarusian agro tourism can engage not only the residents of rural areas, but cities and towns with a population up to 20 thousand people. To support promising trend, the future owners of the estates are trained at public expense. They held workshops with the community, "Agro - and eco-tourism" (Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus, 2006).

The National Tourism Development Program for 2011-2016 on the territory of Brest region is allocated 5 tourist zones, which developed a general plan of development. This is the "Euroregion" Bialowieza Forest ", tourist and recreational zone "White Lake", cultural and tourist area "Polesie", transit-tourism zone "Brest-Baranovichi-border area", "Telehanskij" tourist-recreational zone.

Still there are some difficulties in implementing rural tourism in Belarus. For example, regarding foreign investment, it should be noted that foreigners are not very interested in investigation in Belarusian rural tourism. Taking into account the level of incomes of Belarusians, they do not see Belarusians as large customers. Therefore, it is necessary to organize the flow of foreign tourists in Belarus. The second problem is the lack of a positive international image of Belarus, an uncoordinated program of promotion and marketing concept. Also one of the significant problems - the visa regime. And the problem is not so much in monetary costs as in time gap. Among the environmental factors that contribute to the development of a smaller agritourism in Belarus in comparison with the EU countries, it should be noted shorter favorable period for the summer holidays. Seasonality of demand, meanwhile, can be mitigated by offering tourists in the off-season various entertainment programs based on ancient festivals, rites and customs.

For example, the "dead season" in terms of demand in February and March can be attractive because of the celebration of the carnival, the wires of winter and other Public Holidays.

To make rural tourism more popular among foreigners it is necessary to think about: placing the agro-cottages in the places with favorable ecological situation; concentration of hotel stock near highways to attract transit tourists; the concentration of accommodation facilities in areas of transport accessibility to major cities, including the regional center; selection of unique natural ecosystems to create recreation. It is also necessary to mention that without the development of the domestic eco-tourism and development of skills, methods and range of tourist services in the domestic agrituristic areas it is impossible to reach the successful development of international agro-tourism, which requires, among other things, knowledge of foreign languages, and cultural characteristics of other countries.

2 Research Methodology

2.1. Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is comparison of situation on rural markets of Portugal and Belarus and to observe the competitiveness of rural markets. The research focuses on forms of rural tourism and its driving forces, its advantages and what makes rural tourism successful. It provides some examples of rural tourism in Portugal and Belarus. The work gives data about various geographic regions and stages of tourism development. The study also highlights some points for further research and extension of rural tourism.

To answer the main objective of the study there were fixed the follow specific objectives (SO):

SO₁: There are tourism rural competitiveness between each region of Portugal;

SO₂: There are tourism rural competitiveness between each region of Belarus.

2.2. Description of Data Collection

Due to the fact, that in Belarus rural tourism is quite a new phenomenon, it was necessary to implement different kinds of research for observed in this work countries. Data in both cases was collected from web site of National Institute of Statistics of Portugal and of Belarus.

For Belarus in a whole was taken into account the quantity of incoming people from different countries during the four-year period (from 2009 until 2013), as well as quantity of entities participating in rural tourism by regions (Minsk, Brest, Vitebsk, Gomel, Grodno, Mogilev).

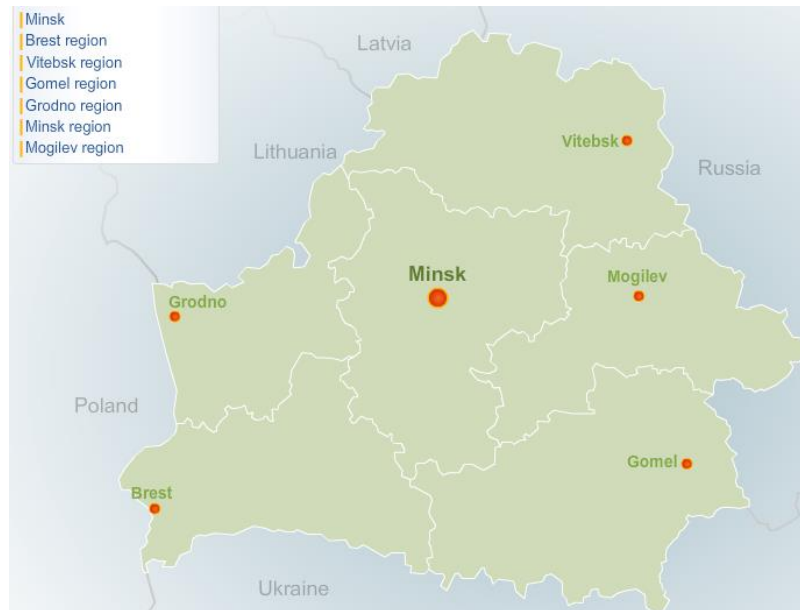


Figure 1. Map of Regions of Belarus.

Source: Agrotourism in Belarus (2016).

On the base of obtained information, for Portugal in a whole and its each region in particular for the 2013-2014 period, the Top 5 countries which visitors spent the most number of nights in rural tourism areas were chosen. Eventually the whole data set included 7 countries (Portugal, Germany, France, Spain, Netherlands, United Kingdom and Belgium), because of the difference in Top 5 for each region (North, Centre, Lisbon, Alentejo, Algarve, Açores, Madeira).



Figure 2. Map of regions of Portugal.

Source: Overview map of EU Countries (2016)

In these research were used the following variables: Market bias index, Change index, average rate, grows rate and/market share rate.

2.3. Description of Data Analysis

During the data analysis of Portuguese rural tourism competitiveness, Bill Faulkner, (1997) Market Share Model was implemented, because this type of analysis provides valuable background for verification of particular target markets and provides valuable diagnostic information for strategic planning. The base of this method is an index that repulses the movements of the marketplace and variations in the destination's performance with respect to this market, while at the same time permitting for the givens that place extensive limits on the destination's general competitiveness. This method was widely used in 1960 to compare the economic development of regions.

The main point of this analysis is that it represents results in terms of the change in market share obtained, and it could be seen in the context of general change in the market. At the same time, by centering on modification over a period of time, the opportunity of ephemeral or accidental occasions twisted the picture is diminished.

As it was already mentioned above, for analysis was chosen quantity of nights spent by tourists in rural areas of Portugal, but this methodology could also be used with purpose of trip, age, sex and other criteria.

During the research, it was used the following dimensions of the analysis (Faulkner, 1997; Águas, Grade & Sousa, 2003; Fernandes, 2005; Fernandes & González, 2007; Fernandes et al., 2008):

- An index of market share with respect to each major market or, in other words, market bias index (B); in examined case this index means the degree to which the market share of Portuguese regions with respect to a Portugal as a whole deflects from its share of spending nights of tourists generally. This index is calculated as following:

$$B_{ik} = \frac{\left(X_{ijk} / \sum_{i=1}^n X_{ijk} \right)^{-1}}{\left(\sum_{j=1}^n X_{ij(k)n} / \sum_{i=j}^n \sum_{j=i}^n X_{ij(k)n} \right)} \quad [1]$$

Where,

B_{ik} , Market bias index for destination i in year k ;

X_{ijk} , Tourists numbers to destination i from market j in year k ;

n , Number of markets (origins) and destinations.

- An index of change (C) in the tourists received from each market relative to the change in that market generally.

$$C_{0-k} = \left[\left(\frac{X_{ijk}}{X_{ij1}} \right) - 1 \right] - \left[\left(\frac{X_{jk}}{X_{j1}} \right) - 1 \right] \quad [2]$$

Where,

C_{0-k} , index of change of market share between moment 0 and the moment k ;

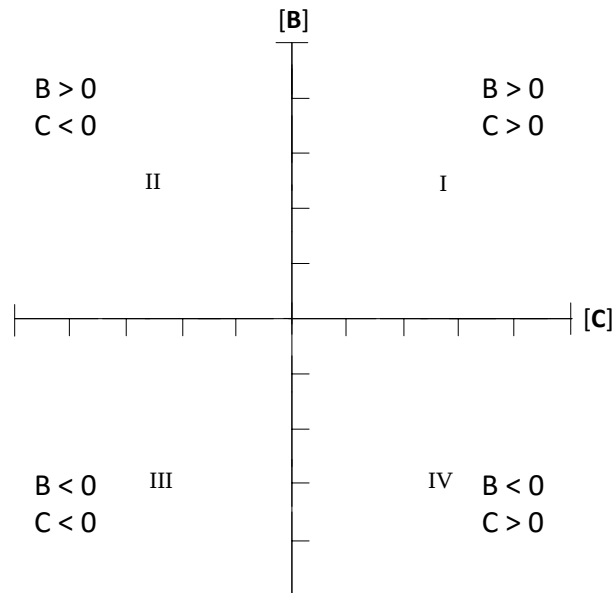
X_{jk} , total foreign tourists from market j in year k ;

X_{ijk} , tourist's quantity to destination i from market j in year k ;

$1 \dots k$, between year 1 until year k .

For analysing the competitiveness of Portugal in the sphere of rural tourism, the data was united in Tables according to year (2013 and 2014), countries (Portugal, Germany, France, Spain, Netherlands, United Kingdom and Belgium) under analysis and region (North, Centre, Lisbon, Alentejo, Algarve, Açores, Madeira).

The most important reason for choosing that method was a possibility to present the value of these two indices in the evaluation within graphs, where Market Bias Index (B) is on the vertical axis and the Change Index (C) is on the horizontal axis (Figure 3). On the plot it is very important to look at the position of each point, here it means one of four quarters, because each quarter has its own meaning.



Note: [B], Market Bias Index.
[C], Change Index.

Figure 3. Market Share Typology.

Source: Adapted from de Faulkner (1997, p. 29).

Follow it will be described the strategies for each Quadrant (Faulkner, 1997; Águas, Grade & Sousa, 2003; Fernandes, 2005; Fernandes & González, 2007; Fernandes et al., 2008):

Quadrant I ($B > 0$; $C > 0$) - Performing Markets: origins, where the destination already had a share above average and where market continues to gain market share.

Quadrant II ($B > 0$; $C < 0$) - Stagnant Markets: backgrounds, where the target has a quota market above average but begins to decrease.

Quadrant III ($B < 0$; $C < 0$) - Declining Markets: backgrounds, where the target has a quota of below the market average and reducing continuous.

Quadrant IV ($B < 0$; $C > 0$) - Emerging Markets: origins, where the destination part of a market share is below average, but that is beginning to gain market share.

Because of lack of statistical information connected with Belarus rural tourism competitiveness different approach was implemented for analyses. The main idea which was used in that case is the following: to calculate and compare the percentage of such parameters as quantity of the subjects of rural tourism within regions, the number of tourists served by the subjects of rural tourism and the average length of stay in days during the period from 2009 until 2013.

After made research a comparison between Portugal and Belarus was made, with the indexes examined in case of Belarus.

3. Rural Tourism Empirical Results Analysis

3.1. Characterizations Regions of Portugal

As it was described in the section 2, the following tables for the North region of Portugal in accordance with two years' period were obtained:

Table 3: Overnights spent by foreign tourists in rural areas of Portugal within North region.

2013 (10 ³)		Countries	2014 (10 ³)		Annual Growth Rate (%)	
Portugal	North		Portugal	North	Portugal	North
400.407	132.847	Portugal	443.52	131.91	10.77	-0.71
78.46	9.681	Germany	93.61	11.49	19.31	18.69
46.28	17.971	France	58.12	20.61	25.58	14.68
35.79	13.841	Spain	47.89	20.85	33.81	50.64
45.71	8.557	Netherlands	40.77	8.16	-10.81	-4.64
34.142	11.948	United Kingdom	36.45	11.02	6.76	-7.77
29.043	8.292	Belgium	34.07	8.92	17.31	7.57
670	203	Total	754	213	12.54	4.93
745	226	Total of Portugal	856	240	14.90	6.19

It could be easily seen, that in one year the number of visitors, who participated in rural tourism grew as for Portugal as a whole as for the North region in particular, except Netherlands towards Portugal and North region, and UK and Portugal with respect to North region. The biggest decrease is observed for UK in North region and Netherlands for Portugal as a whole, while the highest grows could be overseen with Spain for both Portugal and North region. The main difference between these 2 years lays in changes in Top 5 of visiting countries; Spain reached 1 level and obtained the forth place, while Netherlands lost 1 level and lowered to the fifth place in 2014.

Table 4: Market Share for 2013 and 2014 for North region.

2013		Countries	2014	
Portugal	North		Portugal	North
53.8%	58.8%	Portugal	51.8%	55.0%
10.5%	4.3%	Germany	10.9%	4.8%
6.2%	8.0%	France	6.8%	8.6%
4.8%	6.1%	Spain	5.6%	8.7%
6.1%	3.8%	Netherlands	4.8%	3.4%
4.6%	5.3%	United Kingdom	4.3%	4.6%
3.9%	3.7%	Belgium	4.0%	3.7%
100%	100%	Total of Portugal	100%	100%

From the Table 4 it is obvious that fluctuation in Market Share within one year between countries participating in rural tourism in Portugal is not very huge, around 1-3 percentage points (pp.). The largest share in both 2013 and 2014 years was occupied by Portugal, in spite of the fact, that in 2014 its share was a little bit reduces compared with 2013 year. The small decrease in market shares could be also seen in UK and Netherlands around 1 pp. The largest increase was shown by Spain for North region with 2.6 pp.

Table 5: Overnights spent by foreign tourists in rural areas of Portugal within Centre region.

2013 (10³)		Countries	2014 (10³)		Annual Growth Rate (%)	
Portugal	Centre		Portugal	Centre	Portugal	Centre
400.407	80.105	Portugal	443.52	92.56	10.77	15.5
78.46	4.608	Germany	93.61	5.609	19.31	21.7
46.28	6.617	France	58.12	10.21	25.58	54.3
35.79	5.304	Spain	47.89	6.64	33.81	25.2
45.71	5.91	Netherlands	40.77	6.41	-10.81	8.5
34.142	3.315	United Kingdom	36.45	3.37	6.76	1.7
29.043	3.587	Belgium	34.07	5.15	17.31	43.6
670	109	Total	754	130	12.54	18.7
745	122	Total of Portugal	856	146	14.90	19.7

As it could be seen from the Table 5, that in one year the number of foreign tourists grew as for Portugal as a whole as for the Centre region in particular almost for all countries, except Netherlands. As data of Portugal was considered before, here and further will be given analysis only for specific regions. The biggest annual grows in Central region was shown by France with 54.3% and Belgium with 43.6%, the smallest one by UK, which raise only for 1.7 pp.

Table 6: Market Share for 2013 and 2014 for Centre region.

2013		Countries	2014	
Portugal	Centre		Portugal	Centre
53.8%	65.7%	Portugal	51.8%	63.4%
10.5%	3.8%	Germany	10.9%	3.8%
6.2%	5.4%	France	6.8%	7.0%
4.8%	4.3%	Spain	5.6%	4.5%
6.1%	4.8%	Netherlands	4.8%	4.4%
4.6%	2.7%	United Kingdom	4.3%	2.3%
3.9%	2.9%	Belgium	4.0%	3.5%
100%	100%	Total of Portugal	100%	100%

From the Table 6 it is obvious that fluctuation in Market Share within one year between examined countries for Centre region also (as it was explained for the North region above) is not very huge, around 1-3 pp. The largest share in both 2013 and 2014 years (more than 50% of the Market) again was occupied by Portugal, despite the fact, that in 2014 its share was a little bit reduced in comparison with 2013 year (for 2.3 pp). The largest increase was shown by France for Centre region with 1.6 pp, while Germany kept its position on the same level. The small decrease in market shares could be also seen in UK and Netherlands around 1 pp.

Table 7: Overnights spent by foreign tourists in rural areas of Portugal within Lisbon region.

2013 (10 ³)		Countries	2014 (10 ³)		Annual Growth Rate (%)	
Portugal	Lisbon		Portugal	Lisbon	Portugal	Lisbon
400.407	13.427	Portugal	443.52	15.09	10.77	12.4
78.46	2.935	Germany	93.61	2.58	19.31	-12.1
46.28	2.659	France	58.12	3.21	25.58	20.7
35.79	3.098	Spain	47.89	3.79	33.81	22.3
45.71	2.567	Netherlands	40.77	2.1	-10.81	-18.2
34.142	3.108	United Kingdom	36.45	2.34	6.76	-24.7
29.043	1.186	Belgium	34.07	0.91	17.31	-23.3
670	29	Total	754	30	12.54	3.6
745	35	Total of Portugal	856	37	14.90	5.7

As it could be seen from the Table 7, that in one year the number of foreign tourists fall for the Lisbon region almost for all countries, except Portugal, France and Spain. The biggest annual grows in Lisbon region was shown by Spain with 22.3%, and the hugest decrease by UK and Belgium, which fall for 24.7% and 23.3% accordingly.

Table 8: Market Share for 2013 and 2014 for Lisbon region.

2013		Countries	2014	
Portugal	Lisbon		Portugal	Lisbon
53.8%	38.4%	Portugal	51.8%	40.8%
10.5%	8.4%	Germany	10.9%	7.0%
6.2%	7.6%	France	6.8%	8.7%
4.8%	8.9%	Spain	5.6%	10.2%
6.1%	7.3%	Netherlands	4.8%	5.7%
4.6%	8.9%	United Kingdom	4.3%	6.3%
3.9%	3.4%	Belgium	4.0%	2.5%
100%	100%	Total of Portugal	100%	100%

From the Table 8 it is obvious that fluctuation in Market Share within one year between examined countries for Lisbon region is not very huge, around 1-3 pp. The largest share in both 2013 and 2014 years is occupied by Portugal with 40.8%. The largest increase was shown by Spain for Lisbon region with 1.3 pp, what allow it to reach the second place in Market share. The small decrease in market shares could be seen in Germany, UK, Belgium and Netherlands around 1-2 pp.

Table 9: Overnights spent by foreign tourists in rural areas of Portugal within Alentejo region.

2013 (10 ³)		Countries	2014 (10 ³)		Annual Growth Rate (%)	
Portugal	Alentejo		Portugal	Alentejo	Portugal	Alentejo
400.407	132.695	Portugal	443.52	162.45	10.77	22.4
78.46	13.722	Germany	93.61	14.64	19.31	6.7
46.28	4.77	France	58.12	6.86	25.58	43.8
35.79	7.291	Spain	47.89	9.52	33.81	30.6
45.71	8.313	Netherlands	40.77	7.19	-10.81	-13.5
34.142	5.031	United Kingdom	36.45	6.53	6.76	29.8
29.043	3.213	Belgium	34.07	4.16	17.31	29.5
670	175	Total	754	211	12.54	20.7
745	186	Total of Portugal	856	234	14.90	25.8

As it could be seen from the Table 9, that in one year the number of foreign tourists grew for the Alentejo region for all countries, except Netherlands. The biggest annual grows in Central region was shown by France with 43.8% and Spain with 30.6%, while the only decrease was demonstrated by Netherlands with 13.5%.

Table 10: Market Share for 2013 and 2014 for Alentejo region.

2013		Countries	2014	
Portugal	Alentejo		Portugal	Alentejo
53.8%	71.3%	Portugal	51.8%	69.4%
10.5%	7.4%	Germany	10.9%	6.3%
6.2%	2.6%	France	6.8%	2.9%
4.8%	3.9%	Spain	5.6%	4.1%
6.1%	4.5%	Netherlands	4.8%	3.1%
4.6%	2.7%	United Kingdom	4.3%	2.8%
3.9%	1.7%	Belgium	4.0%	1.8%
100%	100%	Total of Portugal	100%	100%

From the Table 10 it is obvious that fluctuation in Market Share within one year between examined countries for Alentejo region is not very huge, around 1-2 pp. The largest share in both 2013 and 2014 years is occupied by Portugal around 70%. The largest decrease was shown by Germany for Alentejo region with 1.1 pp. The small increase in market shares could be seen in France, UK, Belgium and Spain around 1 pp.

Table 11: Overnights spent by foreign tourists in rural areas of Portugal within Algarve region.

2013 (10 ³)		Countries	2014 (10 ³)		Annual Growth Rate (%)	
Portugal	Algarve		Portugal	Algarve	Portugal	Algarve
400.407	25.518	Portugal	443.52	26.642	10.77	4.4
78.46	7.379	Germany	93.61	9.38	19.31	27.1
46.28	2.606	France	58.12	3.42	25.58	31.2
35.79	3.973	Spain	47.89	4.51	33.81	13.5
45.71	7.177	Netherlands	40.77	6.09	-10.81	-15.1
34.142	6.226	United Kingdom	36.45	7.57	6.76	21.6
29.043	9.189	Belgium	34.07	9.68	17.31	5.3
670	62	Total	754	67	12.54	8.4
745	67	Total of Portugal	856	74	14.90	10.4

As it could be seen from the Table 11, that in one year the number of foreign tourists grew for the Algarve region for all countries, except Netherlands. The biggest annual grows in this region was shown by France with 31.2% and Germany with 27.1%, while the only decrease was demonstrated by Netherlands with 15.1%.

Table 12: Market Share for 2013 and 2014 for Algarve region.

2013		Countries	2014	
Portugal	Algarve		Portugal	Algarve
53.8%	38.1%	Portugal	51.8%	36.0%
10.5%	11.0%	Germany	10.9%	12.7%
6.2%	3.9%	France	6.8%	4.6%
4.8%	5.9%	Spain	5.6%	6.1%
6.1%	10.7%	Netherlands	4.8%	8.2%
4.6%	9.3%	United Kingdom	4.3%	10.2%
3.9%	13.7%	Belgium	4.0%	13.1%
100%	100%	Total of Portugal	100%	100%

From the Table 12 it is obvious that fluctuation in Market Share within one year between examined countries for Algarve region is not very huge, around 1-2 pp. The largest share in both 2013 and 2014 years is occupied by Portugal around 40%. It could be mentioned, that Germany, France, Spain and UK increased their market share, while other countries a little bit reduced.

Table 13: Overnights spent by foreign tourists in rural areas of Portugal within Açores region.

2013 (10 ³)		Countries	2014 (10 ³)		Annual Growth Rate (%)	
Portugal	Açores		Portugal	Açores	Portugal	Açores
400.407	12.031	Portugal	443.52	11.34	10.77	-5.7
78.46	12.929	Germany	93.61	17.37	19.31	34.3
46.28	3.784	France	58.12	4.35	25.58	15.0
35.79	1.391	Spain	47.89	1.47	33.81	5.7
45.71	3.546	Netherlands	40.77	3.83	-10.81	8.0
34.142	2.343	United Kingdom	36.45	2.38	6.76	1.6
29.043	2.192	Belgium	34.07	3.38	17.31	54.2
670	38	Total	754	44	12.54	15.4
745	49	Total of Portugal	856	57	14.90	16.3

As it could be seen from the Table 13, that in one year the number of foreign tourists grew for the Açores region for all countries, except Portugal. The biggest annual grows in this region was shown by Belgium with 34.2% and Germany with 34.3%, while the only decrease was demonstrated by Portugal with 5.7%.

Table 14: Market Share for 2013 and 2014 for Açores region.

2013		Countries	2014	
Portugal	Açores		Portugal	Açores
53.8%	24.6%	Portugal	51.8%	19.9%
10.5%	26.4%	Germany	10.9%	30.5%
6.2%	7.7%	France	6.8%	7.6%
4.8%	2.8%	Spain	5.6%	2.6%
6.1%	7.2%	Netherlands	4.8%	6.7%
4.6%	4.8%	United Kingdom	4.3%	4.2%
3.9%	4.5%	Belgium	4.0%	5.9%
100%	100%	Total of Portugal	100%	100%

From the Table 14 it could be concluded that Açores has the highest fluctuation from all the regions of Portugal around 1-4 pp. This region differs from others, because of the country, which occupies the biggest market share. The largest share in both 2013 and 2014 years is occupied by Germany around 30%, while in other regions this place taken by Portugal. It could be mentioned, that only Germany and Belgium increased their market share, while other countries a little bit reduced.

Table 15: Overnights spent by foreign tourists in rural areas of Portugal within Madeira region.

2013 (10 ³)		Countries	2014 (10 ³)		Annual Growth Rate (%)	
Portugal	Madeira		Portugal	Madeira	Portugal	Madeira
400.407	3.784	Portugal	443.52	3.53	10.77	-6.7
78.46	27.205	Germany	93.61	32.56	19.31	19.7
46.28	7.874	France	58.12	9.44	25.58	19.9
35.79	0.895	Spain	47.89	1.12	33.81	25.1
45.71	9.644	Netherlands	40.77	6.98	-10.81	-27.6
34.142	2.171	United Kingdom	36.45	3.23	6.76	48.8
29.043	1.384	Belgium	34.07	1.88	17.31	35.8
670	53	Total	754	59	12.54	10.9
745	60	Total of Portugal	856	68	14.90	13.3

As it could be seen from the Table 15, that in one year the number of foreign tourists grew for the Madeira region almost for all countries, except Portugal and Netherlands. The biggest annual grows in this region was shown by UK with almost 50% and Belgium with 35.8%, while the hugest decrease was demonstrated by Netherlands with 27.6%.

Table 16: Market Share for 2013 and 2014 for Madeira region.

2013		Countries	2014	
Portugal	Madeira		Portugal	Madeira
53.8%	6.3%	Portugal	51.8%	5.2%
10.5%	45.3%	Germany	10.9%	47.9%
6.2%	13.1%	France	6.8%	13.9%
4.8%	1.5%	Spain	5.6%	1.6%
6.1%	16.1%	Netherlands	4.8%	10.3%
4.6%	3.6%	United Kingdom	4.3%	4.8%
3.9%	2.3%	Belgium	4.0%	2.8%
100%	100%	Total of Portugal	100%	100%

From the Table 16 it could be concluded that Madeira has the highest fluctuation within Netherlands around 5 pp. This region also as Açores differs from others, because of the country, which occupies the biggest market share. The largest share in both 2013 and 2014 years is occupied by Germany with almost 50%, while in other regions, except Açores, as it was already mentioned before, this place was taken by Portugal. It could be pointed out, that unlike Açores, where only Germany and Belgium increased their market share, within Madeira only Portugal and Netherlands reduce their Market Share, while other countries increase.

Table 17: Market Bias index [B], for 2014.

Country	North	Centre	Lisbon	Alentejo	Algarve	Açores	Madeira
Portugal [PT]	6.1	22.4	-21.3	34.0	-30.5	-61.6	-90.0
Germany [DE]	-56.2	-64.9	-36.2	-42.8	15.9	178.7	337.9
France [FR]	26.5	3.0	27.8	-56.8	-31.9	12.4	104.5
Spain [ES]	55.3	-18.7	83.1	-27.3	8.9	-53.9	-70.6
Netherlands [NL]	-28.6	-7.8	19.2	-35.5	72.8	41.1	115.5
United Kingdom [UK]	7.8	-45.8	48.5	-34.5	140.2	-1.9	11.6
Belgium [BE]	-6.6	-11.4	-38.2	-55.3	228.7	49.0	-30.5

Table 18: Change index [C].

2013/2014	North	Centre	Lisbon	Alentejo	Algarve	Açores	Madeira
Portugal [PT]	-11.47	4.78	1.62	11.66	-6.36	-16.51	-17.48
Germany [DE]	-0.62	2.41	-31.40	-12.62	7.81	15.04	0.37
France [FR]	-10.90	28.72	-4.86	18.23	5.65	-10.63	-5.70
Spain [ES]	16.83	-8.62	-11.47	-3.24	-20.29	-28.13	-8.67
Netherlands [NL]	6.17	19.27	-7.39	-2.70	-4.34	18.82	-16.82
United Kingdom [UK]	-14.53	-5.10	-31.47	23.04	14.83	-5.18	42.02
Belgium [BE]	-9.74	26.27	-40.58	12.17	-11.97	36.89	18.53
Total Portugal	-8.67	4.71	-9.25	10.84	-4.52	1.36	-1.63

The results obtained in calculating the Market Bias index, and Change in Market Share index, are presented in Tables 17 and 18. These values represent the coordinates for the origins / destinations represented in the following figures (from 3 to 10). The analysis of the following graphs shows the evolution of the main origins destinations.

3.2. Regions Competitiveness of Portugal

To show the competitiveness it is necessary to produce a graph based on Chance Index, Market Bias Index and Market Share for 2014, presented in previous section.

In the plot, presented below the bubbles formed by countries represent the Market Share, occupied by countries. It could be seen that the biggest share in North region is taken by Portugal, the smallest by Netherlands. The graph shows that only Spain is located in the zone of Performing market, while the majority of countries (France, United Kingdom and Portugal) are situated in the zone of Stagnant market or so called zone of uncertainty. Concerning Germany and Belgium, these countries laid in the zone of Declining market or failure, and Netherlands belongs to Emerging market.

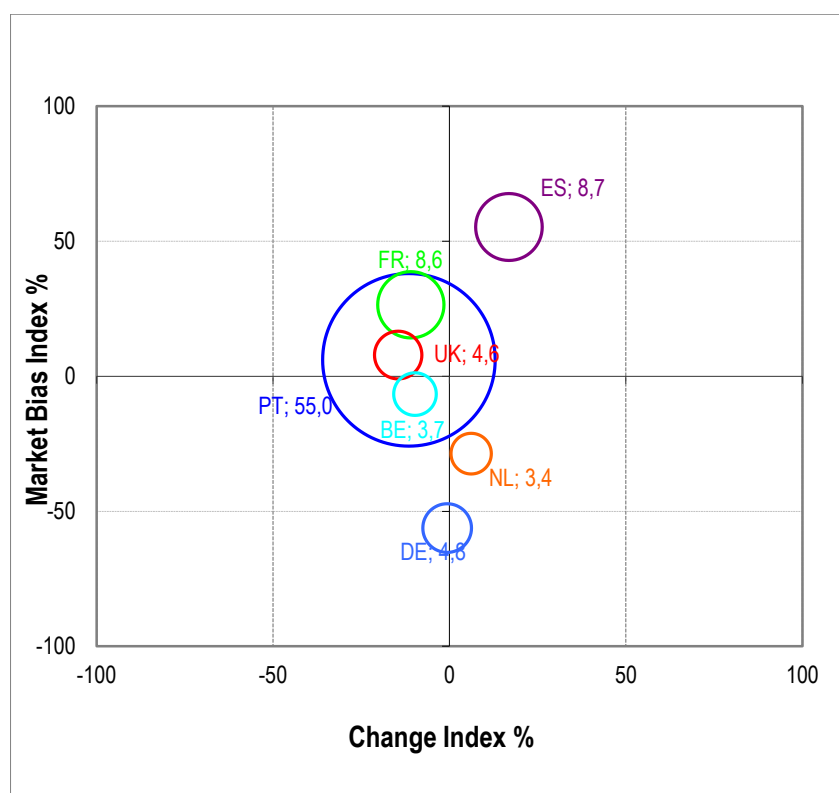


Figure 4. Analysis of Origins in the Destination North.

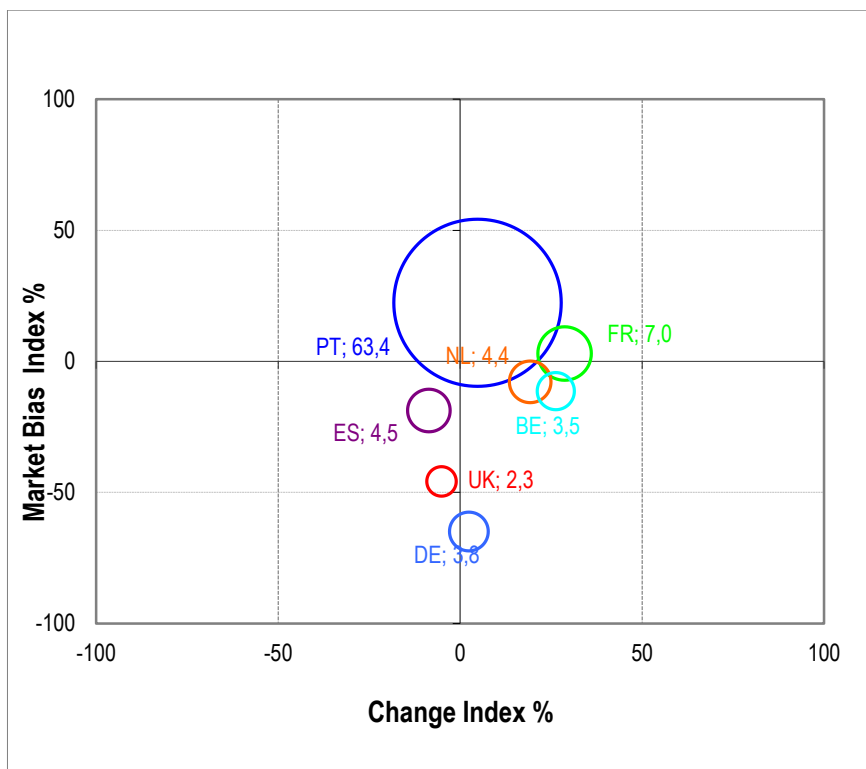


Figure 5. Analysis of Origins in the Destination Centre.

The graph shows that for Centre region most countries are located in the third and fourth quarter. Only Portugal and France are focused in the zone of success or zone of Performing market. Still the main Market Share is taken by Portugal, the smallest by UK. In the Declining Market are resided such countries as Spain and United Kingdom. Germany, Belgium and Netherlands belong to Emerging market.

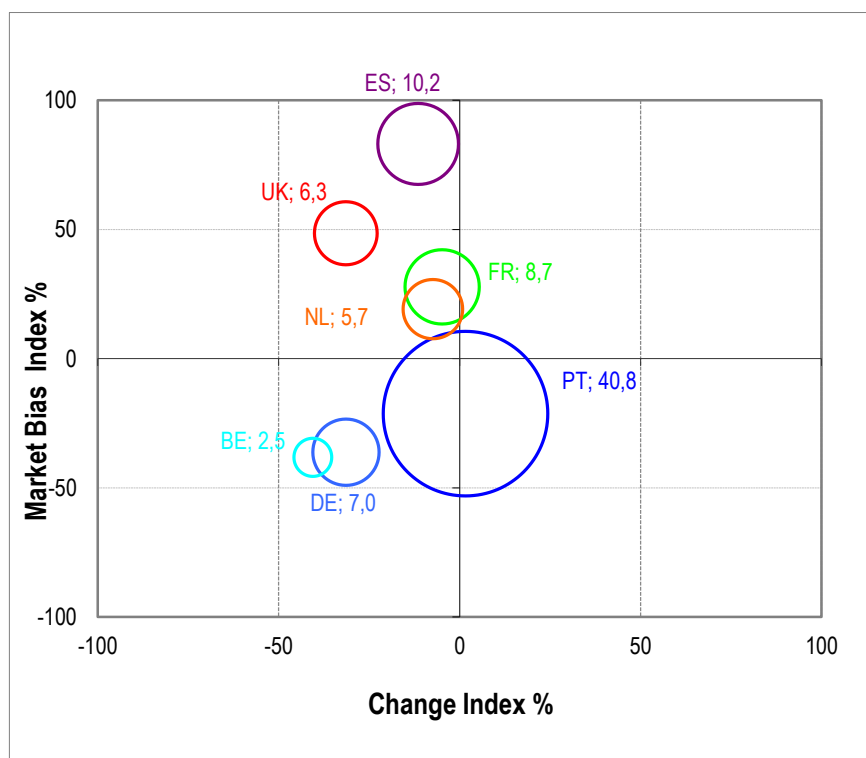


Figure 6. Analysis of Origins in the Destination Lisbon.

The graph shows that for Lisbon region all countries are located in the third and second quarter, e.g. between Stagnant (the majority of countries: Spain, France, Portugal, Netherlands and United Kingdom) and Declining (Germany, Belgium) markets. Again the main Market Share is taken by Portugal, but the smallest by Belgium.

The graph presented below shows that for Alentejo region all countries, except Portugal, which is located in the Performing Market, are located in the third and fourth quarter, e.g. between Emerging (France, Belgium and United Kingdom) and Declining (Germany, Spain, Netherlands) markets. One again the main Market Share is taken by Portugal, but the smallest by Belgium.

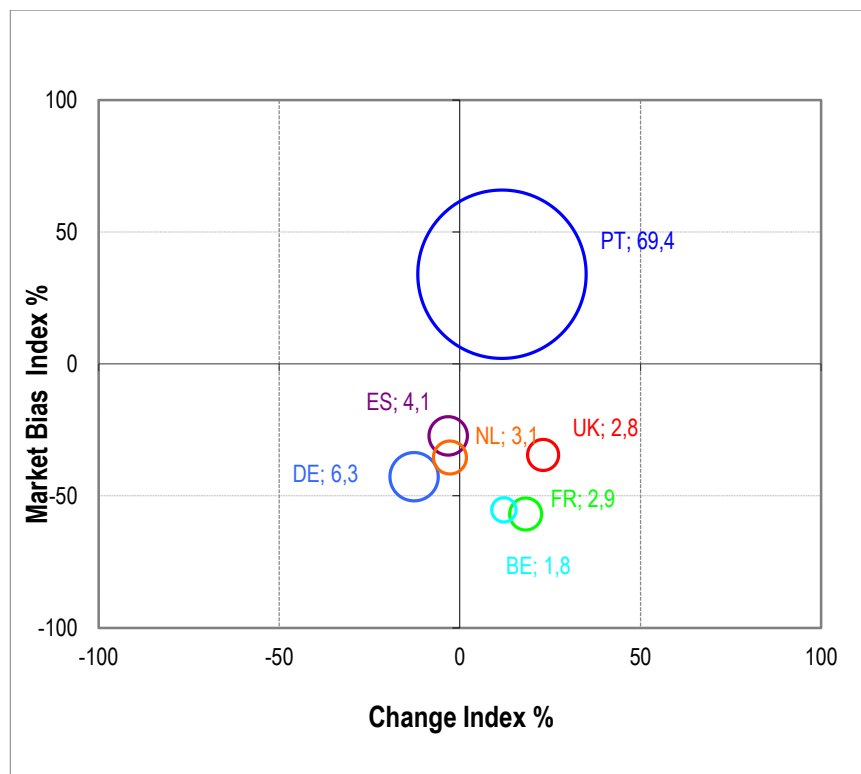


Figure 7. Analysis of Origins in the Destination Alentejo.

The Figure 8 shows that for Algarve region most countries, on the contrary with Aletejo region, are located in the first and second quarters, except Portugal, which is located in the Declining Market, and France, which occupies Emerging market. Thus, United Kingdom and Germany laid in Performing or success market, while Spain, Netherlands and Belgium occupied Stagnant one. One more time the main Market Share is taken by Portugal, but the smallest by France.

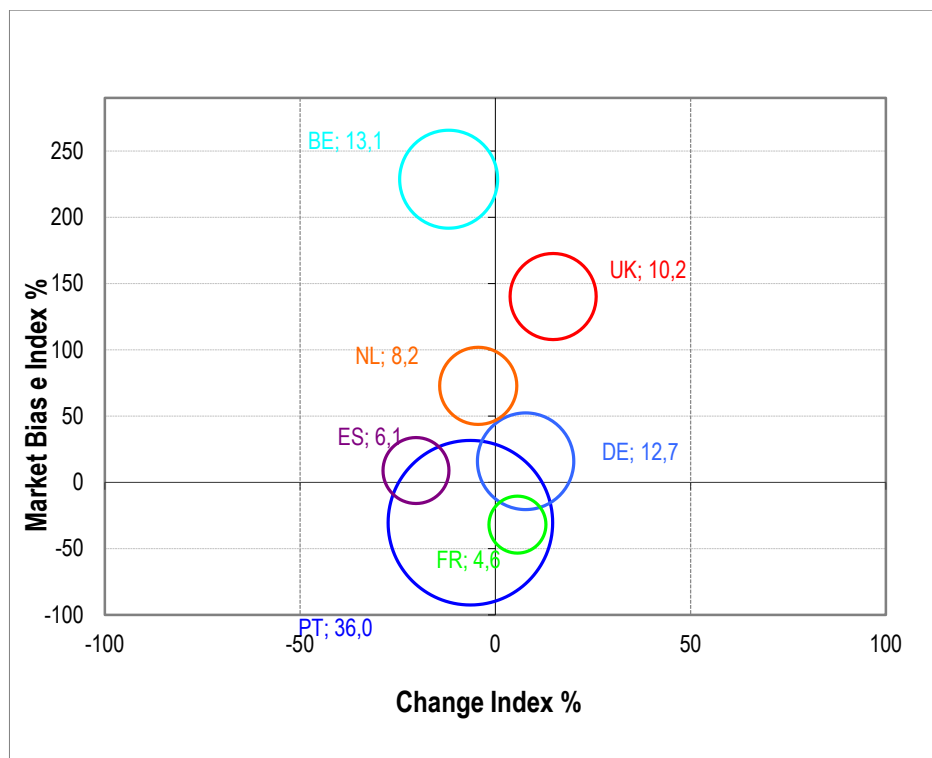


Figure 8. Analysis of Origins in the Destination Algarve.

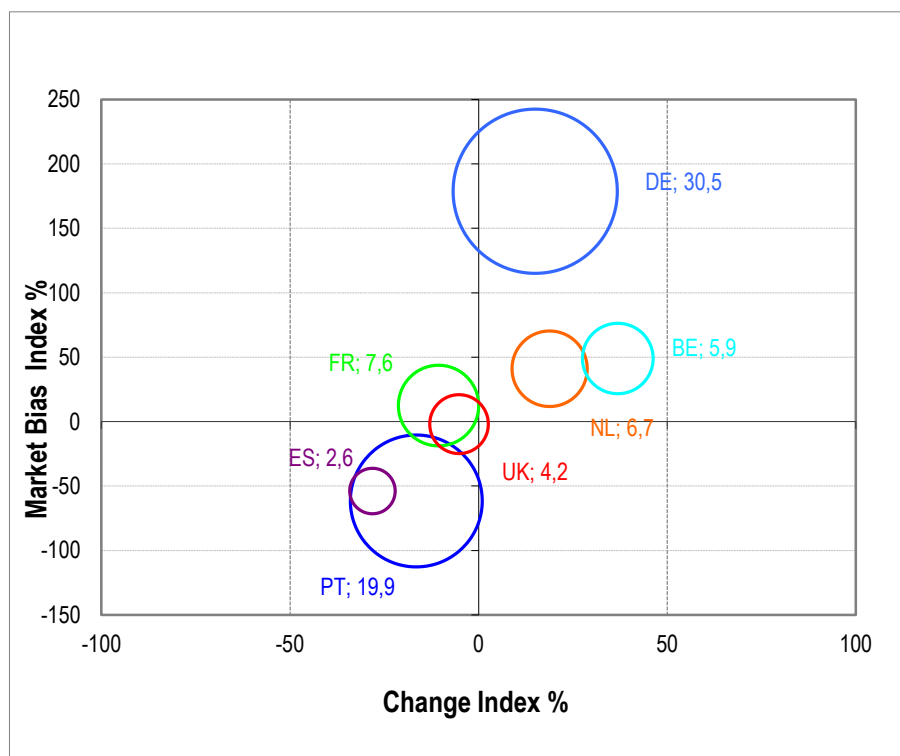


Figure 9. Analysis of Origins in the Destination Açores.

The graph shows that for Açores region the main Market Share is taken by Germany, and the smallest by Spain. Such countries as Germany, Belgium and Netherlands represent Performing Market (staying in the first quarter), while France occupy Stagnant market (second quarter).

United Kingdom, Portugal and Spain are located in the zone of Declining market. In Açores region no one country is situated in Emerging market zone (fourth quarter).

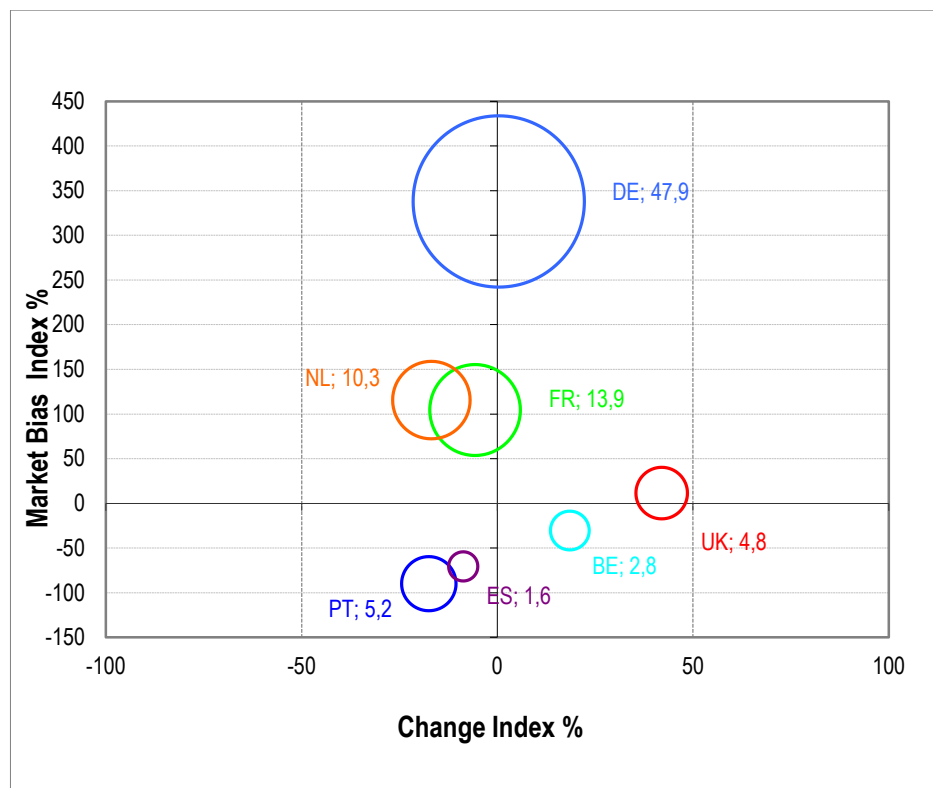


Figure 10. Analysis of Origins in the Destination Madeira.

The graph presented below shows that for Madeira region the main Market Share is again, as in a case with another island region Açores, taken by Germany, and the smallest by Spain. Only Germany and UK were situated in the first quarter, or zone of Performing market. Such countries as France and Netherlands are located in the zone of Stagnant Market, Portugal and Spain represent Declining Market for Madeira region, and the Emerging Market is occupied only by Belgium.

To answer the specific objective 1, which is mentioned below, the analysis showed above was produced; the results of analysis show, that for each region of Portugal the rural tourism is competitive but for different countries (in connection with the quadrant in which these countries are situated).

“SO₁: There is tourism rural competitiveness between each region of Portugal”

3.3 Characterizations Regions of Belarus

Due to the Table 19, it could be mentioned, that the main grows for a whole Belarus appeared during 2009/2010 years and composed 35%, the smallest grows but still grows was shown by entities within last years of examination 2012/2013 and compiles 6%. But taking into account the grows within 5 analysed years, it is obvious, that the quantity of entyties partisipating in rural tourism grew evidently by 103%.

Table 19: Analysis of the number of rural tourism entities by regions in Belarus.

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2009 - 2010	2010/ 2011	2011/ 2012	2012/ 2013	2009/ 2013
Belarus	927	1 247	1 576	1 775	1 881	35%	26%	13%	6%	103%
Regions										
Brest	146	151	178	199	253	3%	18%	12%	27%	73%
Vitebsk	273	322	359	401	449	18%	11%	12%	12%	64%
Gomel	60	131	332	358	289	118%	153%	8%	-19%	382%
Grodno	156	180	185	229	246	15%	3%	24%	7%	58%
Minsk	214	255	304	412	482	19%	19%	36%	17%	125%
Mogilev	78	208	218	176	162	167%	5%	-19%	-8%	108%

The grows rate also varies from region to region, for example, the biggest grows in entities within regions in 5 years period was shown by Gomel region with 382%, the smallest one by Grodno with 58%. But it is also necessary to mention, that in 2012/2013 period for several regions a negative tendency was shown: Gomel (-19%) and Mogilev (-8%) regions have negative annual growth rate during the period of 2012/2013.

The largest growth within 2 years period (2009-2011) was shown by Gomel region, which is situated in the south-eastern part of Belarus, and have borders with Russia and Ukraine. And even in spite of small decrease in 2012/2013, this region kept the highest rate for 2009/2013 years comparison.

In 2011/2012 years period the hugest growth was shown by Minsk region, which is situated in the centre of the Republic, and in the 2012/2013 years period the leading position was taken by Brest region, which takes place in the southwestern part of the country and have borders with Ukraine and Poland.

Table 20: Key performance indicators of rural tourism in Belarus.

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
The number of tourists participated in rural tourism	70 001	119 214	144 851	222 566	271 716
Belarusians	65 256	108 528	123 435	184 093	234 532
Foreigners	4 745	10 686	21 416	38 473	37 184
The average length of stay in days	3	3	7	4	5

From the Table 20 it should be mentioned, that the longest residence of tourists took place in 2011 year and constituted one week or 7 days, the shortest was during 2009-2010 year period. As for ratio of belarusian and foreign tourists participated in rural tourism, it should be underlined that the difference in proportion is decreasing.

Table 21: Annual growth rate of key performance indicators of rural tourism in Belarus.

	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2009/2013
The number of tourists participated in rural tourism	70%	22%	54%	22%	288%
Belarusians	66%	14%	49%	27%	259%
Foreigners	125%	100%	80%	-3%	684%

As it could be seen from the Table 21, the biggest annual growth of visitors was shown in the period of 2009/2010 years 70%. It is necessary to point out, that annual growth of foreign tourists exceeds annual grows of belarussian tourists participated in rural tourism, during 4 years period for 30-80%. But in the period of 2012/2013 years the annual growth rate of foreign tourists showed negative tendency (-3%), while annual growth rate for belarusian tourists continued to be positive (27%). In the period of 2010/2011 years a small decrease in growth could be seen for both belarussian tourists and foreigners, but the rate of five years period shows a huge grows for each indicator.

Table 22: Number of tourists participated in rural tourism of Belarus by countries of permanent residence.

Country	Year				
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Russia	3 443	8 247	15 253	27 784	31 309
Ukraine	198	417	1 791	2 706	1 494
Moldavia	13	47	532	25	169
Poland	204	302	822	3 191	986
Lithuania	179	402	394	1 562	856
Germany	154	290	391	852	529
Latvia	94	108	186	97	314
Israel	51	66	115	98	137
Italy	15	89	104	72	72
China	6	13	25	156	67
France	48	60	150	285	50
Netherlands	60	52	181	99	33
Finland	2	6	20	517	28

As it could be seen from the Table 22, there is no evident trend within countries concerning year, because within some countries the number of tourists has been growing from year to year (for example Russia), while others had the major growth in 2011 or 2012 years, and then showed a huge decrease in visitors. It also can't be underlined the year of maximum growth for all countries, but it could be pointed out, that in 2012 (Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania, Germany, China, France, Finland) and 2011 years (Netherlands, Italy, Moldavia) most countries had the highest flow of tourists.

Table 23: Annual growth rate of tourists participated in rural tourism of Belarus.

	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2009/2013
Russia	140%	85%	82%	13%	809%
Ukraine	111%	329%	51%	-45%	655%
Moldavia	262%	1032%	-95%	576%	1200%
Poland	48%	172%	288%	-69%	383%
Lithuania	125%	-2%	296%	-45%	378%
Germany	88%	35%	118%	-38%	244%
Latvia	15%	72%	-48%	224%	234%
Israel	29%	74%	-15%	40%	169%
Italy	493%	17%	-31%	0%	380%
China	117%	92%	524%	-57%	1017%
France	25%	150%	90%	-82%	4%
Netherlands	-13%	248%	-45%	-67%	-45%
Finland	200%	233%	2485%	-95%	1300%

From the Table 23 it should be mentioned that within 5 years period all countries show huge annual grows, except Netherlands, which has decrease with 45%. Taking into account Netherland it is necessary to say, that it showed decrease almost in each period, except 2010/2011 years. While within other countries, except Russia, which shows stable increase, fluctuation begins from 2011/2012 years.

To answer the specific objective 2, which is mentioned below, the analysis showed above was produced; the results of analysis show, that for each region of Belarus the rural tourism is competitive, within grows of entities, participating in rural tourism, as well as growing number of tourists.

SO₂: There is tourism rural competitiveness between each region of Belarus.

3.4 Comparison between Belarus and Portugal

While comparing these two countries, it is necessary to mention their territory. Belarus has the territory of 207 595 km², while Portugal occupies the territory of 92 151 km². At the same time in Portugal there are more regions than in Belarus, and what is more important, two regions are

presented with islands. Below the Table with quantity of entities participated in rural tourism in both countries are presented.

Table 24 show, that Belarus has more enterprises occupied in rural tourism, mostly situated in the south (Vitebsk region; 449) and centre (Minsk; 482) of Republic. In the case of Portugal on the contrary, more entities are located in the North region (322). However, if take into account the territory of both countries, it becomes obvious, that each of them has almost the same number of entities per square kilometre: 110 items for Belarus, and 111 for Portugal.

Table 24: Quantity of enterprises occupied in rural tourism in Portugal and Belarus.

	2013		2013
Portugal	832	Belarus	1 881
Regions			
North	322	Brest	253
Centre	145	Vitebsk	449
Lisbon	28	Gomel	289
Alentejo	182	Grodno	246
Algarve	37	Minsk	482
Açores	74	Mogilev	162
Madeira	44		

From the Table 25 it could be seen, that the number of visitors depends if the countries have borders between each other or no. For example, Belarus borders with Russia and Poland, that is why the quantity of visitors from these countries are higher, while numbers of tourists from other countries are bigger for Portugal, because all these countries are located in European Union. At the same time, the number of all foreign tourists are higher for Portugal.

Table 25: Number of tourists participated in rural tourism by countries of permanent residence.

	Belarus	Portugal
	2013	2013
Russia	31 309	1350
Poland	986	820
Germany	529	19480
Italy	72	3050
France	50	17550
Netherlands	33	12400
Finland	28	420
Total	271 716	324 150

To sum everything written above, it should be concluded that between two countries, Portugal nowadays is more competitive than Belarus in examined sphere, because of the higher number of entities, participating in rural tourism and number of foreign tourists.

Conclusion, Limitations and Strategic Orientations

This research regarded rural tourism destination competitiveness of Portugal and Belarus within regions. To answer this question an analytical tool was applied, as well as Market Share Analysis, proposed by Faulkner.

During the analysis it was found that Açores are the most prosperous market for the majority of countries, because most countries (Germany, Belgium and Netherlands) stay in the zone of Performing market, what means that they are located in the area where shares of these countries are above average and where market continues to gain market share.

North (France, United Kingdom and Portugal), Lisbon (Spain, France, Portugal, Netherlands and United Kingdom) and Algarve (Spain, Netherlands and Belgium) regions could be attributed to Stagnant markets for the majority of countries located in the second quadrant. It means that the target of these countries have a quota market above average but begins to decrease.

Centre (Germany, Belgium and Netherlands) and Alentejo (France, Belgium and United Kingdom) regions are supposed to be developing markets for the most countries, because they stay in Emerging markets zone. Stagnant Markets are origins, where the destination part of a market share is below average, but that is beginning to gain market share.

Madeira region occupies several markets at the same time: Performing market (Germany and UK), Stagnant Market (France and Netherlands) Portugal and Spain represent Declining Market.

There were two specific objectives underlined in the beginning of the research:

“SO₁: There is tourism rural competitiveness between each region of Portugal”

“SO₂: There is tourism rural competitiveness between each region of Belarus”

To answer the specific objective 1, which is mentioned above, the analysis showed above was produced; the results of analysis show, that for each region of Portugal the rural tourism is competitive but for different countries (in connection with the quadrant in which these countries are situated).

To answer the specific objective 2, which is mentioned above, the analysis showed above was produced; the results of analysis show, that for each region of Belarus the rural tourism is competitive, within grows of entities, participating in rural tourism, as well as growing number of tourists.

Within comparison between two countries it was found out, that Portugal nowadays is more competitive in examined sphere, because of the higher number of entities, participating in rural tourism and number of foreign tourists.

It is also necessary to underline, that the research was made only within one year, because of the lack of necessary information of previous years published in INE web site.

In the case of Belarus, it could be mentioned, that rural market of this country is developing, (but still mostly with neighbor countries), because the number of entities, participating in rural tourism

is growing as the number of out bounding tourists. The main limitation in example with Belarus is lack of necessary information in statistical digests. The research, provided with Portugal is recommended for Belarus too, it means, applying the Faulkner tool.

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