

## Sixty years of tourism higher education and research in Bulgaria

Maria Vodenska <sup>1\*</sup> and Sonia Mileva-Bozhanova <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Faculty of Geology and Geography, Tourism Department, 15 Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd, 1545 Sofia, Bulgaria; tel: 0359 886 829 613 ; e-mail: maria\_vod@mail.bg

<sup>2</sup> Sofia University, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Department Industrial Economics and Management, 15 Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd, 1545 Sofia, Bulgaria; tel: 0359 887 219 612; e-mail: smileva@gmail.com

\* Corresponding author

### Abstract

During the last 60 years Bulgaria has steadily developed and improved its tourism industry. A lot has been done to educate the national workforce to be employed in tourism and hospitality in the country. The paper aims are: to follow the historical development of tourism and hospitality higher education in the country; to outline the present structure of this education with all specifics of the institutions involved in it; to make a comparative analysis of the ratings of these institutions; and to outline the main research topics of tourism and hospitality university lecturers. The results of the analysis show that tourism higher education in Bulgaria is evolving and growing in terms of institutions and also in terms of number of students. Tourism universities and colleges are quite evenly distributed across the country, and a good balance among tourism programs in the main tourism areas (economics, spatial and social tourism development, hospitality) has been achieved. There are many opportunities for research and PhD studies, and the number of libraries and access to international scientific publications and sources is quite sufficient.

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### Introduction

Tourism as a public and social activity is studied by many sciences. Its complex and heterogeneous character, and its diverse manifestations, have brought about the involvement of many science areas in its research, investigation and education. Since the beginning of tourism education and research, several scientific schools have been formed, of which the four dominating schools

are shortly presented in the following approaches: (1) the social school concentrating on sociological and psychological sciences. This school was best developed in western European countries. (2) The spatial or geographical school was characteristic for countries with large territories, for example, the former Soviet Union, where the territorial distribution of tourist resources and their assessment and development was of

significant importance. (3) The economic school was dominant for countries developing inbound international tourism, for which this type of economic activity was a considerable source of foreign currency. The scientific study of tourism originated in continental Europe, which was the first region to experience the impact of mass tourism (Cohen, 1984). One of the oldest educational programs in hospitality, travel and tourism was established in Lausanne, Switzerland in 1893, initially driven by the need for a qualified workforce for the needs of the rapidly growing tourism industry.

Recently, a more balanced and a more comprehensive approach toward tourism research has been adopted, namely the systematic approach, where tourism is regarded and studied as a heterogeneous socioeconomic and spatial system whose elements are finely balanced and which can be analysed, planned and managed in a highly integrated manner. The approach accommodates concepts such as diversity, multiplicity, relationships, synergy, communication flows and interdependency related to market, travel, destination, marketing (Mill, R. and A. Morrison, 1985). This approach is aligned with the widely accepted concept that tourism is an interdisciplinary field of study.

The objective of this article is to characterize the development of scientific research and education in tourism, hotel, and hospitality industry and to describe the impact of the political changes in Bulgaria on these issues mentioned before.

Being a country (together with many other countries around or in close proximity to the Mediterranean) of the 'second tourism generation' Bulgaria reflects in its tourism education and research process the peculiarities of these various approaches. Bulgaria always has been and still is a receptive tourist destination; that is, inbound tourism prevails over outbound tourism in quantitative and monetary values, and this tendency will probably continue in the future. In the 1960s the role of the Bulgarian tourist industry was to provide foreign currency, and in particular, hard currency, which was planned to be used for the improvement of the economic infrastructure of the country (Dyankov, and Rakadjiiska, 2014).

Nowadays, educational institutions of all four approaches – economic, geographical, social and hospitality – can be found in Bulgaria. Students are free to choose among a great variety of institutions offering educational programs in Tourism. The variety of Masters programs is even greater, and offers possibilities for high professional qualification and specialization, and continues to grow.

### **Education history and university ratings**

The economic approach came first to existence in Bulgaria. Bulgaria started its development as an international tourist destination in the late 1950s. Soon it became clear that the country had to train and prepare its own workforce as a response to the needs of the new emerging resort complexes along the Black seaside. For that reason, in 1963, a special school was opened in the Golden Sands (north Black Sea coastline), whose task was to train staff for tourist enterprises such as guides and managers for hotels and restaurants. Two years later, the school was transformed into an Institute for Education and Training for Tourism, whose graduates became either tourist organizers or managers of tourist enterprises. The status of this institute was at an intermediate level between secondary and higher education. A similar institute opened a few years later in Bourgas at the southern coastal line (Dyankov, and Rakadjiiska, 2014).

The University of Economics in Varna (formerly the Higher Institute of Economics) became the earliest higher educational institution in Europe to position tourism as an economic and organizational specialty in 1965 in the first Department of Economics and Organization of Tourism. The duration of the program was scheduled for 4.5 academic years, and until 1990 (the end of the socialist period) more than 700 people graduated in the economics in tourism (Dyankov, and Rakadjiiska, 2014).

Immediately after that (in 1967) the Geography of Tourism program, focusing on the spatial and urban aspects of tourism development, was launched in the Faculty of Geology and Geography at Sofia University. The program duration was five years, and until the democratic changes of 1990, there were more than 600 graduates at Sofia University.

Rakadjiiska (Dyankov, and Rakadjiiska, 2014) estimates that in various tourism establishments (secondary schools, training centres and so on) as a whole for the first 25 years the system of education and training for tourism in Bulgaria provided approximately 15,000 specialists in the field, not including those who gained their certificates at the industry-based job training centres.

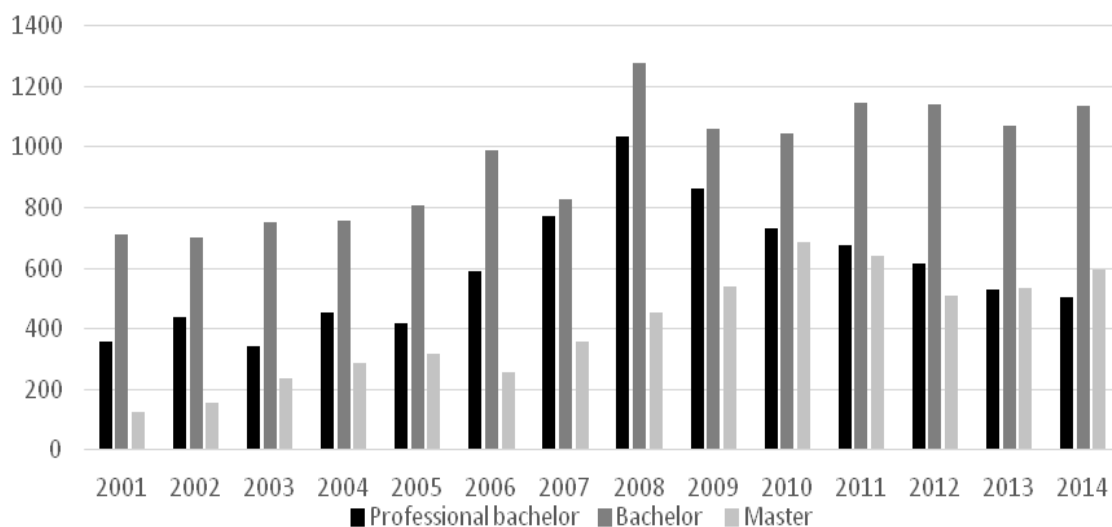
For the period 1965–91 the impetus for the startup and development of Bulgarian higher education in tourism was generally due to the academic efforts of the University of Economics in Varna and of Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski. From this time on the academic and scientific experience of those institutions became a landmark for the establishment and functioning of other Bulgarian higher educational institutions in tourism (Dyankov and Rakadjiiska, 2014).

After the start of the democratic changes in Bulgaria in 1989 and the establishment of a market economy system in the country, significant changes took place in almost every field of social and economic life as well as in the educational system.

During the period 2000–14 officially 27,737

students graduated in various Tourism programs, which represents 3.42 per cent of all those who graduated in higher education in the country. Annually the number of graduates in the field of sport, tourism and hospitality is represented in Figure 1. It can be observed that a maximum of graduates in all degrees was registered in 2008. There was a relatively stable tendency in increasing the number of Bachelors and Masters degree students, and for the first time in 2014 Masters degree students surpassed the number of professional Bachelors (Fig.1). This can be explained by the changes in law, allowing professional Bachelors students to continue their education in higher levels.

After many changes in the educational field in 2002 in the country, a system of professional fields was established, according to which Tourism bearing the Code 3.9 was placed in the professional field of 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences. More specific programs fall under 3.8 Economics (Economy of Tourism) and 4.4. Earth Sciences (Geography of Tourism). In this paper only the higher educational institutions (universities and colleges) accredited under the Code 3.9 Tourism are reviewed.



**Figure 1.** Graduates in tertiary education by educational-qualification degree and narrow field of education (personal services – sport, tourism, hospitality)  
Source: NSI (2015)

**Table 1.** *Tourism studies covered by different professional field*

<b>Professional field</b>	<b>Higher institution/program (specialty)</b>
Economics	University of National and World Economy – Sofia (3); University of Food Technologies – Plovdiv (3); D.A. Tsenov Academy – Svistov (3 programs); University of Agrobusiness and Rural Development – Plovdiv (2 programs: in Plovdiv and Veliko Tarnovo), Trakia University – Stara Zagora (1); Agricultural University – Plovdiv (1)
Sociology, anthropology and cultural studies	University of Veliko Tarnovo (1), Sofia University (1), South-West University Blagoevgrad (1) and Plovdiv University (1); University of Shumen (1)
Business administration	Varna University of Management (2); European Higher School of Economics and Management – Plovdiv (1)
History and archeology	University of Shumen (1); University of Veliko Tarnovo (1)
Public communication and information sciences	University of Library Studies and Information Technologies – Sofia (2)
Biology studies	Trakia University – Stara Zagora (1)
Earth Science	University of Forestry (1)

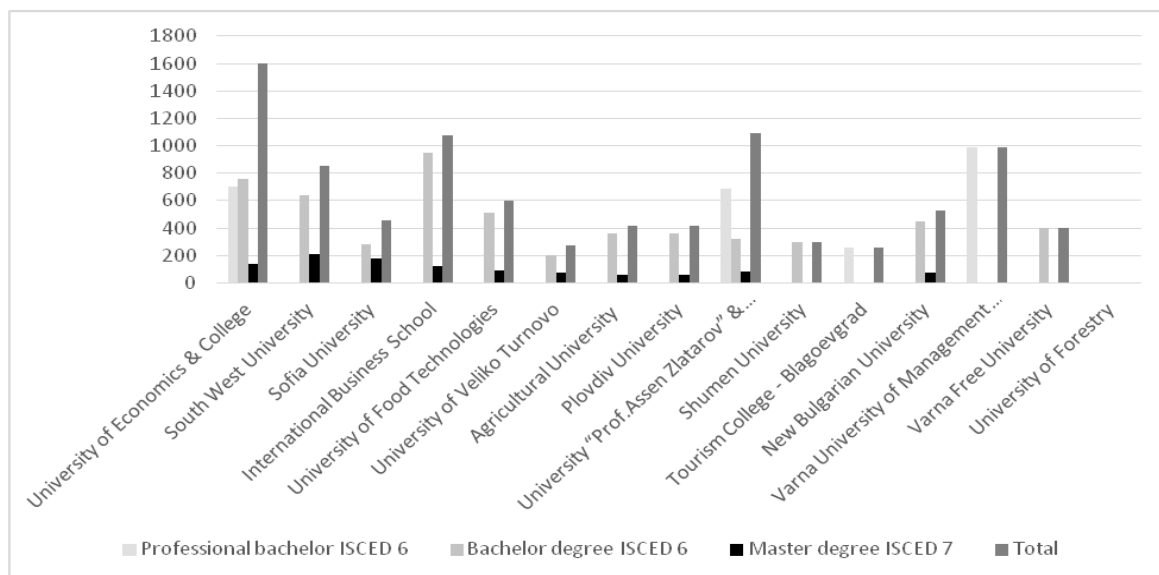
Nowadays there are 17 institutions of higher education officially accredited by the government in the professional field 3.9 Tourism which provide educational services and prepare students in professional Bachelors degree, university Bachelors degree and Masters degree levels (this three-level system was launched in 1997 in compliance with the European educational degrees). Among them there are four colleges (two private and two public), the rest are universities – four of them are private. Bachelors and Masters graduates can continue their education in various PhD programs offered by the universities.

Besides the professional field 3.9 Tourism offered in 17 higher institutions, tourism-related studies in different forms and programs are part of 22 higher institutions (out of 51 total number of universities in Bulgaria). The other professional fields, including education on Tourism specialties/programs are presented in Table 1 (the number in brackets indicates the number of accredited specialties/programs for the respective professional field):

All students (Professional Bachelors, Bachelors, Masters and PhD) have the opportunity to get theoretical and practical education and training in accordance with their wishes and professional interests within the framework of 'Erasmus' European program for mobility and exchange as well as through other international projects and programs.

Bulgarian educational institutions of different types are fairly evenly spread over the territory of the country, and it could be suggested that they meet the general requirements of the business for the preparation of professionals in various tourism fields. Bulgarian higher institutions (including colleges) that train tourism students are mainly concentrated in country regions (districts) with large-scale development of tourism business such as: Varna (three), Burgas (two), Sofia (three), Plovdiv (three), Blagoevgrad (two), Veliko Tarnovo (one), Shumen (one), Dobrich (one), Botevgrad (one) – NEAA (2015). Only some universities in Bulgaria (University of Economics – Varna, Sofia University, University of National and World Economy – Sofia, Southwest University – Blagoevgrad) provide PhD programs in tourism, economy of tourism and geography of tourism and recreation.

The capacity of higher education institutions by degree levels is represented in Figure 2. From the figure some relevant conclusions can be summarized. In terms of capacity and number of students educated (the maximum allowed by NEAA in 2015 being approximately 1000 and above) the major structures are the University of Economics – Varna (together with the Tourism College as part of the university structure), International Business School, A. Zlatarov University-Bourgas (together with the College), Varna University of Management (former International University College) and



**Figure 2.** Capacity for students' education by higher institution and degree

South West University N. Rilski – Blagoevgrad. We consider this criterion to be very important, because the approval of capacity by NEAA is based on a methodology combining infrastructure, academic staff, research achievements and so on. The second group is formed by University of Food Technologies, New Bulgarian University, Sofia University, Varna Free University, Agricultural University and Plovdiv University. In terms of degrees, the main institutions for professional Bachelor formation are two Varna institutions: University of Management and University of Economics, followed by A. Zlatarov University -Bourgas. This development is following the Tourism development in Bulgaria, which is highly concentrated along the Black Sea coast.

In terms of education in Masters degrees, the ranking is for South West University, Sofia University and University of Economics – Varna. South West University has been working and developing as an important institution for the south west region in Bulgaria, and due to the intensive growth of the Bansko mountain resort and demand for workforce there. Sofia University and the University of Economics – Varna are on the one hand the oldest higher institutions in the field of Tourism, with traditions recognized in the country and with a positive reputation, on the other hand they are recognized due to their locations –

Sofia as the capital city and Varna also known as the Black Sea capital of Bulgaria.

There are two ratings of higher education institutions in Bulgaria. The first one is the evaluation given by the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency established in 1995. According to the latest information on the Agency site (NEAA, 2015) the classification of these 17 institutions is presented on Table 2.

The second rating system for higher education institutions was introduced in 2010, and is commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Sciences (<http://rsvu.mon.bg/rsvu3/?locale=en>). It is developed by independent consultants, and draws information from international and national data banks, public opinion polls, and universities' databases. The rankings are dynamic and allow two types of rankings: predefined and customized. The predefined ranking by professional fields is based on a set of preselected indicators (a detailed methodology is available at <http://rsvu.mon.bg/rsvu3/?locale=en#DocsPlace>). In the field of 3.9 Tourism several groups of indicators are implemented:

- ✓ Teaching and learning 5 indicators
- ✓ Science and research 2 indicators
- ✓ Prestige 3 indicators
- ✓ Career and relevance to labour market 9 indicators

**Table 2. Higher educational institutions accredited in the professional field 3.9 Tourism**

No	Name of the institution	Financing	City	Assessment (highest score=10)	Students capacity by degrees			
					Prof. Bachelors	Bachelors	Masters	All
1	University of Economics					760	140	1600
2	Tourism College	State	Varna	9.70	700			
3	South West University	State	Blagoevgrad	9.25		640	210	850
4	Sofia University	State	Sofia	9.18		280	180	460
5	International Business School	Private	Botevgrad	9.13		950	125	1075
6	University of Food Technologies	State	Plovdiv	9.10		510	90	600
7	University of Veliko Turnovo	State	Veliko Turnovo	7.82		200	75	275
8	Agricultural University – Plovdiv	State	Plovdiv	7.65		360	60	420
9	Plovdiv University	State	Smolyan Kardjali, Plovdiv			360	60	420
10	University 'Prof. Assen Zlatarov'	State	Burgas	n.a.		320	80	400
11	Tourism College			4.88	690			690
12	Shumen University	State	Shumen	4.87		300		300
13	Tourism College	Private	Blagoevgrad	4.39	260			260
14	New Bulgarian University	Private	Sofia	n.a.		450	75	525
15	Varna University of Management (former college)	Private	Varna/Dobrich	n.a.	990			900
16	Varna Free University	Private	Smolyan	n.a.		400		400
17	University of Forestry	State	Sofia	n.a.				

Source: NEAA.

**Table 3. Bulgarian university ranking 2014**

	Financing	University	City	Degree	Rating
1	State	Sofia University 'St. Kliment Ohridski'	Sofia	Bachelors, Masters, PhD	57
2	State	University of Food Technology	Plovdiv	Bachelors, Masters	49
3	State	South-West University 'Neofit Rilski' – Blagoevgrad	Blagoevgrad	Bachelors, Masters	47
4	State	University of Economics – Varna	Varna	Professional Bachelors, Bachelors, Masters, PhD	46
5	Private	International Business School – Botevgrad	Botevgrad	Bachelors, Masters	45
5	Private	New Bulgarian University	Sofia	Professional Bachelors, Bachelors, Masters	45
7	State	'St. Cyril' and 'St. Methodius' University of Veliko Tarnovo	Veliko Tarnovo	Bachelors, Masters	43
8	State	Agricultural university	Plovdiv	Bachelors, Masters	41
9	Private	Varna University of Management	Varna/Dobrich	Professional Bachelors	39
10	State	Plovdiv University 'Paisii Hilendarski'	Kardjali, Smolian, Plovdiv	Bachelors, Masters	36
11	State	Prof. 'Assen Zlatarov' University	Burgas	Professional Bachelors, Bachelors, Masters	35
12	State	Shumen University 'Bishop Konstantin Preslavsky'	Shumen	Professional Bachelors, Bachelors, Masters	33
13	Private	College of Tourism	Blagoevgrad	Professional Bachelors	30

Source: Ministry of Education and Science (2014).

In the last four years the first place has always gone to Sofia University 'St. Kliment Ohridski' (Table 3). Two higher education institutions are not included in the ranking due to lack of

adequate data on the indicators allowing for them to be rated: Varna Free University 'Chernorizets Hrabar' – Varna and the University of Forestry.

### Science and Research at Bulgarian Tourism Higher Education Institutions

According to the national ranking system, the science and research activities in higher institutions in the field of Tourism are evaluated through the citation indexes by scientific areas by Scopus and/or Web of Knowledge (2009–13). For Scopus the data is valid as of June 2014, and for Web of Knowledge as for September 2014. The data is dynamic and purchased directly from Thomson Reuters for the needs of the ranking system.

The ranking system distinguishes four higher institutions: the leader Sofia University, followed by the two private colleges, New Bulgarian University and Varna University of Management, and University of Economics – Varna, leading only by number of citations per paper. As shown in Table 4, the publication activity in internationally recognized and cited systems is relatively low at a national level. One possible explanation is the language issue. The NEAA report summarizes that the overall number of publications is growing

**Table 4.** Science and research by scientific area 'tourism' (2013 – 2014)

University	Citation index (Scopus)		Citation index – Web of Knowledge		Number of citations per paper (Scopus)		Number of citations per paper – Web of Knowledge		Articles in scientific journals (Scopus)		Articles in scientific journals – Web of Knowledge	
	2013	2014	2013	2014	2013	2014	2013	2014	2013	2014	2013	2014
Agricultural University – Plovdiv	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Varna University of Management	0	4	0	3	0	3.94	0	5.56	0	10	0	6
University of Economics – Varna	0	0	1	0	0	0	6.75	0	0	0	2	1
College of Tourism – Blagoevgrad	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
University of Forestry – Sofia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
International Business School – Botevgrad	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	15	0	0	0	1
New Bulgarian University – Sofia	1	1	1	1	0.33	0.75	0.33	1.5	3	1	2	2
Plovdiv University 'Paisii Hilendarski'	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sofia University 'St. Kliment Ohridski'	4	4	4	3	2.58	3.33	1.63	2.16	9	9	16	9
University 'Prof. d-r Assen Zlatarov' – Burgas	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
University of Food Technologies – Plovdiv	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
University of Shumen 'Konstantin Preslavsky'	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
South-West University 'Neofit Rilski' – Blagoevgrad	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0

Source: Ministry of Education, Bulgarian University Ranking System.

**Table 5.** *Students/Doctoral students' involvement in science and research*

	Student involvement in science and research*		Student support for involvement in science and research **		Doctoral-to-undergraduate and graduate students ratio***	
	2012	2014	2012	2014	2012	2014
Agricultural University – Plovdiv	43.9	41.38	6	6.25	0	0
St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo	33.33	4.94	5.79	8.65	0	0
Varna University of Management	57.5	70	9.27	9.05	0	0
University of Economics – Varna	50	23.81	7.12	6.88	0	0.95
College of Tourism – Blagoevgrad	38.46	82	8.9	8.9	0	0
University of Forestry – Sofia	32.43	31.15	5.51	5.48	0	0
International Business School – Botevgrad	35	65.52	8.07	6.52	0	0
New Bulgarian University – Sofia	31.71	62.5	7.81	7.93	0	0
Plovdiv University 'Paisii Hilendarski'	45	27.91	5.94	6.57	0	0
Sofia University 'St. Kliment Ohridski'	29.41	38.89	4.78	6.51	0	4.62
University 'Prof. d-r Assen Zlatarov' – Burgas	24.32	32.45	4.84	5.69	0	0
University of Food Technologies – Plovdiv	32.5	50.47	7	8.1	0	0
University of Shumen 'Konstantin Preslavsky'	46	39.05	5.7	8.76	0	0
South-West University 'Neofit Rilski' – Blagoevgrad	52.5	78.1	8.98	8.98	0	0

Source: Ministry of Education, Bulgarian University Ranking System.

\* Percentage of surveyed students who declared that they had participated in at least one science and research activity: scientific research project, conference, writing and presenting a paper, writing and publishing articles or other papers in the particular professional field, based on data obtained through a survey among students.

\*\* Assessment on a 0–10 scale obtained through a survey among students in the particular professional field for the support offered at their university for student involvement in science and research.

\*\*\* Number of Doctoral students per 100 undergraduate and graduate students in the particular professional field, based on data provided by AdminUni.

(NEAA, 2014). Another possible explanation is the lack of funds for library and digital resources access, with the expiry of national subscriptions held by the Ministry of Education and Science (2012–14).

The differences between universities in the field of science and research are based on the official university policy, funding and access to funds for research and, of course, motivation of staff. There is no distinction as in other countries between researcher and lecturer, which is also linked with the number of hours lecturing and time for research. The main sources for science and research are international projects, EU-funded projects and at the national level by the National Fund for Scientific Research. There is no official data about scientific projects in the field of tourism.

Student involvement is relatively high due to the EC project BG051PO001/4.2.04 'Student scholarships and awards' (2001–12) beneficiary Ministry of Education and Science, awarding student grants in various areas, including Tourism. Almost all higher institutions stimulated students to participate in research projects, publications, conferences and so on (Table 5). Another remark is that is very difficult to compare big, state funded universities with smaller, regional institutions and also with colleges. The number of academic staff and capacity for scientific research is completely different.

The greatest number of PhD students (the ratio to undergraduate students) is highest at Sofia University, followed by the University of Economics – Varna. There are relatively few accredited PhD programs in the specific



professional field 3.9 Tourism, while the Sofia University PhD program is 'Geography of recreation and tourism', and in the South West University, it is 'Economics and Management in Tourism'. Some higher institutions are proceeding toward PhD programs accreditation, such as the International Business School-Botevgrad and New Bulgarian University.

Almost all higher institutions' annual conferences cover different scientific fields, including Tourism. All papers and reports are published in conference proceedings, mainly in the Bulgarian language. It is general practice to be edited and published by universities' almanacs/yearbooks/annals, and this is highly evaluated for the accreditation. Specializing in the tourism area, and indexed by Scopus, is the *European Journal of Tourism Research* (EJTR), published by Varna University of Management.

### Conclusion

The historic review of the emergence and development of higher education in the field of tourism in Bulgaria demonstrates a strong correlation with tourism development in the country, the labour market's needs and universities' response to the demand for such education. This can be confirmed by the localization of higher institutions (including their branches and associated colleges) over the territory of the country, mainly concentrated along the Black Sea coastline, major cities and areas with expressed tourism potential. There is a clear tendency for growth, both in terms of institutions and also in terms of number of students. The analysis of the offered variety of Bachelors and Masters programs in the field of tourism reveal a good balance and coverage in the main tourism areas (economics, spatial and social tourism development, hospitality).

More profound analysis, based on the NEAA annual reports (NEAA, 2015) identifies similarity in the academic curricula between different universities. Quite often, curricula and subjects included in them depend and are adapted based on the available academic staff and area of expertise. The analysis of curricula for higher education in tourism allows us to come to the following conclusions:

- ✓ the learning outcomes are very broad
- ✓ they are mainly focused on knowledge, rather than on skills
- ✓ there is a mixture of core skills with many transversal skills. This means that it is very difficult to explicitly formulate from the learning outcomes (curricula) the skills for evaluation and/or comparison.

The universities need to update and work for the right balance between different types of skills: sector-specific skills and transversal and cross-sectoral skills as part of the curriculum and subject included. There is a lack of a commonly accepted general framework for study curricula, and there is a wide number of programs in tourism with different (economic, geographic, regional development, culture and so on) emphasis. On the other side, Bulgarian higher institutions are facing the process of internationalization in education with an exponentially growing number of offered courses.

Another observation from the review of number of graduates reveal an increase in number of Bachelors degree graduates (above 1000 yearly), combined with the tendency for an increase in the numbers of graduates with a Masters degree (almost five times in absolute numbers for 2001–14), surpassing the number of students in the Professional Bachelors degree. This situation can lead to disproportions in the labour market, where the gap to the demand of business is still growing. Another consequence is that higher institutions produce graduates to be employed either by other economic sectors, sometimes in other countries' labour markets.

Regarding the highest Doctoral degree, we can identify an effort for the increase and accreditation of PhD programs in different universities. Tourism for Bachelors and Masters degrees is also covered under different areas of studies, and also for PhD students. There are many opportunities for research and for PhD studies, the number of libraries and the access to international scientific publications and sources is quite sufficient.

In the field of research, the general conclusion is that the presence of Bulgarian authors has relatively limited publication activity in

international journals. According to the SCImago Journal and Country Rank (a portal that includes journals and country scientific indicators developed on the information contained in the Scopus database and Elsevier B.V.), Bulgaria is in 56th place out of 150 countries with a total of 27 publications for the period 1996–2014 under the category tourism, leisure and hospitality management. The possible reasons are the language issue, personal motivation and external stimuli. To stimulate the publications in scientific journals with an impact factor, various universities need to apply the requirement of such publications as a criterion for academic career development.

Research needs access to the main digital libraries in the field of tourism, such as EBSCO, Science Direct, Emerald, ProQuest and others, which is a matter of resources and funding. Until the end of 2014, national access to the main and most important digital libraries was paid by the Ministry of Education and Science. This was an important step forward, and also the only possible solution for a great number of Bulgarian universities (not only in the field of tourism).

Universities are under pressure, and few undergraduate and graduate tourism programs are preparing students for this quickly changing world (Liburd and Hjalager, 2010). This is why the partnership between universities and with business is crucial. The role of education and training systems is to be proactive, not only improving the supply of skills, but also to stimulate the demand for high skills in the market and their utilization in the workplace (Valiente, 2014). Although effort is put into identifying and listing the employability skills, competences and capabilities, the question of how they are to be integrated and developed within academic curricula is still problematic (Zehrer and Mössenlechner, 2009).

The higher education in Bulgaria in the field of tourism will maintain its importance in light of the upcoming trends of tourism development not only in Bulgaria, but worldwide. It will be of vital importance to upgrade curricula and orient them to competency-based education and training, and keep them aligned with the new

market needs for skills, competencies and qualifications, while also teaching and accrediting programs in the English language, or cooperation with other higher institutions from abroad.

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