

Political and Economic Factors Affecting Tourism Demand between Countries: A Case from Bosnia Herzegovina and Turkey

Füsun İstanbullu Dinçer

İstanbul University, İstanbul, Turkey
fusuni@İstanbul.edu.tr

İsmail Kızılırmak

İstanbul University, İstanbul, Turkey
ismailk@İstanbul.edu.tr

Suna Mugan Ertuğral

İstanbul University, İstanbul, Turkey
sunam@İstanbul.edu.tr

Gürel Çetin

İstanbul University, İstanbul, Turkey
gurelc@İstanbul.edu.tr

Tourism is a rapidly growing industry with economic, social and political outcomes. Cultural exchange, peace, goodwill and understanding are considered as positive impacts of international tourism flows. Natural and cultural attractions, geographical proximity, convenient transportation systems, safety and security issues impact tourism demand to a destination. Although it lacks the attention it deserves; international politics and economic relations are also important factors affecting tourist flows between countries. In this context Turkey has been playing a pioneer role in establishing stronger relations with Balkan countries. This paper explores impact of political and economic agreements on incoming tourism in the light of Bosnia Herzegovina and Turkey within the past decade.

Besides having land in Balkans geographically, Turkey has strong historic, cultural and political ties with Balkan geography. Those relations that were established during the reign of Ottoman Empire in the region have been developing during the Turkish Republic as well. Bosnia Herzegovina is not an exception of this relationship. Common culture and heritage with Turkey made Bosnia Herzegovina among popular destinations for Turkish Citizens. Although there was a considerable amount of migration to/from

Bosnia Herzegovina and Turkey, there still is a large amount of Turkish origin citizens in Bosnia Herzegovina and vice versa.

Over the last ten years both Turkey and Bosnia Herzegovina have been undergoing a major transformation both economically and politically. Turkey and Bosnia Herzegovina have also been enjoying rapid tourism growth for the past decade, despite global problems such as economic crises (e.g. mortgage funds), acts of terrorism (e.g. 9/11), wars and conflicts (e.g. Iraq), epidemics (e.g. H5N1) an extreme weather conditions (e.g. volcanic ash clouds). The current situation and reasons behind the development of bipolar tourist movements within these countries are discussed based on economic and political facts and tourism statistics. Revealing the political and economic factors affecting tourism demand between countries might provide a better understanding of prediction and management of international tourism flows.

Keywords: Political and Economic Factors, Tourism, Bosnia Herzegovina, Turkey.