

Contents liste available at Cib.Unibo

AlmaTourism

homepage: almatourism.cib.unibo.it

World Sites UNESCO. Management Tourism

Missikoff, O. *
University of Rome LUISS (Italy)

Introduction

The “Dossier Musei 2006” published by the Directorate of Researches and Studies of the Italian Touring Club pointed out as in 2004 the Italian places of historical and artistic interest attracted 29 million arrivals and more than 81 million presences related to tourism.

These figures, presented in the above mentioned publication that, as always, also contained the Top 30 most visited museums in Italy, demonstrated how, with 33.8% of total arrivals and 23.6% of presences, cultural tourism could be confirmed as leading sector among the various types of tourism and its weight, in Italy, looks destined to increase (Fig. 1).

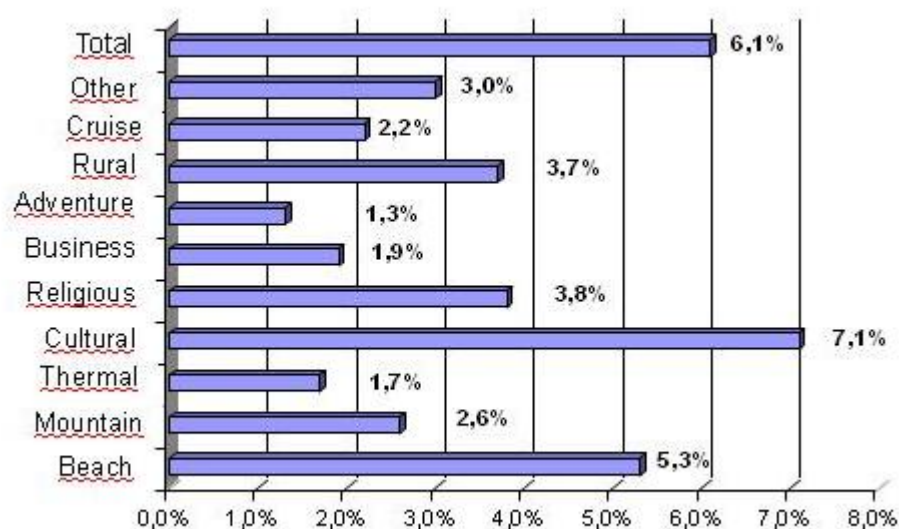


Fig. 1: Var. in % between different segments of tourism market (Assoturismo)

* E-mail address: oleg@luiss.it – Mobile: +39 328 8377545

Looking at the "Dossier Musei 2009", instead, besides detecting a generalized negative trend for the years 2007-2008, easily associated with the international crisis (but positive in a relative sense since the amount of travel related to culture raises, as for accommodations, to a 36% for arrivals and a 25% for presences), we realize however that the traditional problems remain unchanged.

The scenario, in fact, keeps showing a high degree of fragmentation, with a small number of attractors that catalyze the vast majority of flows and resources both financial and intellectual. In addition, the new elements, principally related to the inability to satisfy the contemporary audience that also calls for services and products that could enhance the visit, making it more enjoyable and engaging.

To meet the needs of the demand it is necessary to rethink the communication of cultural heritage, emphasizing the experience that the visitor can live (and, therefore, focusing on how to make it "unique").

Considering for instance the museums, it is about triggering a Copernican revolution that no longer sees the institution as a passive and strict custodian, but rather as an interpreter and broadcaster of what he has to protect, able to speak to unconventional segments of users thus using somehow new logics and skills.

Oversight and relevance of the sector

It is certainly unnecessary to reiterate how relevant the Italian cultural heritage is, compared with that of other countries, European and otherwise. Very useful is instead to analyze how our country is (or rather is not) able to leverage the cultural assets to increase our economy. In Figure 2 is shown the relationship between the number of sites belonging to the Unesco World Heritage List found in major countries, and percentage of GDP provided by tourism.

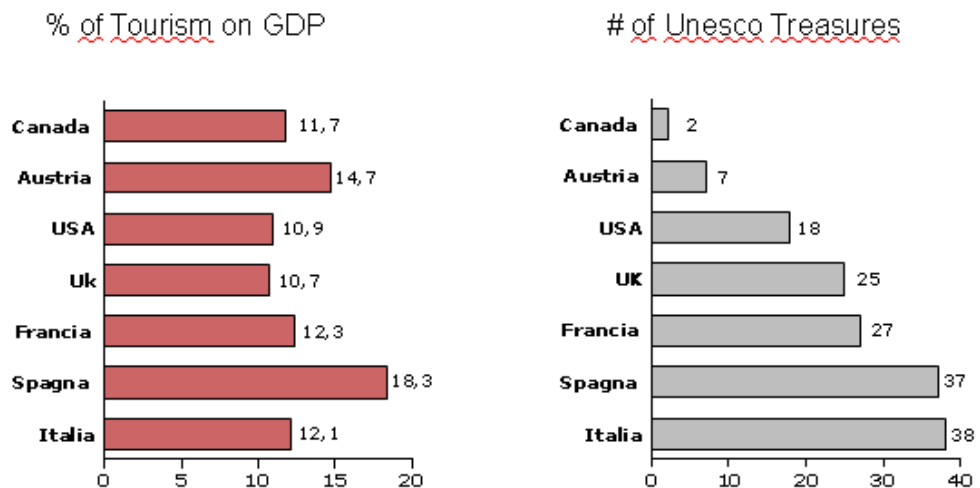


Fig. 2: Comparative table on rel. between UNESCO treasures and % of GDP from tourism

These data indicate that the potential for increasing the profitability of the sector are very high but, obviously, there are obstacles to the achievement of a development at least comparable to that of other industrialized countries.

In the introduction, one of the main critical points has been described: a few very successful points of interest attract the vast majority of tourist flows, with consequent detriment of smaller sites.

Another problem stems from the small size of companies operating in the field of cultural heritage. Again, the great fragmentation of this sector and the absence of enabling infrastructures for supporting the inter-organization cooperation, represent a barrier to growth and innovation in the industry.

This problem, however, is not limited to our country, in fact, as indicated by the results of the "e-Culture Net" project, coordinated by the McLuhan Institute in Maastricht, 95% of Europe's cultural institutions doesn't seem to be able to undertake R&D activities for lack of financial, human and technological resources.

As a consequence, a huge number of cultural resources, which represent not only a potential for economic growth, but the European cultural identity itself, are not in a position to be known, viewed and, therefore, preserved.

A solution often proposed for allowing this "galaxy" of micro-organizations to achieve a sufficient weight to undertake processes of renewal even though, at least so far, and for reasons

In the opinion of the writer, the reasons for the limited benefits brought to the industry by districts lies in the fact that they have so far only considered small segments of the production chain.

In fact, examples of cultural districts in Italy (Messiah, Parco Vega and Val di Cornia), consider either the R&D, upstream segment of the value chain (Messiah and Parco Vega), or to the valorisation, representing the downstream segment (Val di Cornia).

This approach makes it extremely difficult to design organic and productive ways of intervention. Also we can observe the complete absence of a model of governance.

On the contrary, the district model here proposed (the "*Distretto Tecnologico della Cultura*" of the Lazio Region) will consider the productive pipeline of the cultural heritage sector in its entirety, from restoration and conservation, to innovative ways of fruition, through state-of-art models of governance.

Another aspect that deserves a special consideration is represented by the internationalization of the sector. The Italian cultural heritage sector, because of the importance of its historical-artistic and cultural patrimony, can rely on a globally marketable credibility.

This, however, is not enough to make Italian companies (and institutions) really competitive in a global context; in fact, besides guaranteeing the domain expertise, to be taken seriously in consideration Italian organizations need to invest in quality, in the form of new technologies and business models, and apply them to all phases of the value chain.