

ZOLTÁN VERES

EDITORIAL: HEALTH TOURISM FROM DIFFERENT ASPECTS

Welcome to the 2nd double issue of Pannon Management Review in the year of 2016, which has got again a different structure as compared to the standard issues of PMR. In this issue a really actual topic of our ageing society, namely health tourism has been put into the focus from different aspects. Among the leading trends of our era healthy way of life is of strengthening priority. Let us look at *medicaltourism.com* on the topic:

Medical tourism has been around for thousands of years. In fact, archaeological evidence from the third millennium B.C. suggests that people in ancient Mesopotamia traveled to the temple of a healing god or goddess at Tell Brak, Syriato heal eye disorders. A couple millennia later the Greeks and Romans would travel by foot or boat to spas and cult centers all over the Mediterranean. The Asclepia Temples, dedicated in honor of the Greek god of medicine, were some of the world's first healing centers. Pilgrims would come and stay several nights praying that Asclepios would appear in a dream and provide a cure to their ailment.

Some actual facts on global health tourism market in the USA:

- *Medical tourists spend between \$7,475 and \$15,833 per medical travel trip;*
- *48% of respondents would be interested in engaging in medical tourism again at some point in the future;*
- *The cost of medical treatment (85%) and state-of-the-art technology (83%) were the most important factors in their decision to travel abroad for treatment.*

This issue of PMR demonstrates research cooperation of the University of Pannonia in this field with other institutions (in the framework of 676737 COSME programme, co-funded by the European Union). The research explored opportunities and barriers to involvement of new sending areas. It has affirmed that travel activity remains unchanged as a part of values. As for the management aspects of health tourism cross-cultural harmonisation and over the border partnership can be stressed. Managers in the health tourism value chain belong to the core target group of this issue but students, educators and researchers can equally find useful material from the papers.

The papers feature a broad range of research issues. Ilenia Gheno in her paper of *Healthy Ageing in the European Union – Tourism in the Focus* discusses challenges

to be considered in health tourism, as well the resources to be mobilised. She states that from the European perspective it is relevant to share the outcomes of both policy and projects' results that will drive the implementation of national and local solutions for low-season and age-friendly tourism. Zsófia Papp and Katalin Lőrincz under the title of *Health Tourism Trends* argue that health tourism product is to be developed also in line with mainstream trend by providing a contribution to an increased health status, and quality of life. Therefore they attempt to set out some health tourism trends. The paper *Seniors' Participation in Tourism* of Eszter Madarász presents that older adults are a very attractive segment for tourism stakeholders. The reason for that – among others – is that they have an increased awareness of their health status, so health can be a crucial motivator when travelling with tourism purposes. The author Judit Sulyok has contributed with two papers to this issue. In the first one, titled *Perception and Potential of Northern European Health Tourists*, the Reader has got an insight into the results of a primary research. It has been proved that the already affluent travellers are especially interested in the experiences and discovering new places that can support to maintain their good health condition and support a good quality of life. However, in the case of new, emerging destinations, the general tourism image and awareness should be also communicated, in order to reach the target segments successfully. In the second paper, under the title of *Potential of New Health Tourism Product – Stakeholders' View* the conclusions highlight that stakeholders are more 'rational' and focusing on 'hard' factors (e.g. infrastructure, safety), meanwhile potential travellers can be attracted by the emotional benefits, and experiences provided by the destination visited. Finally the last two papers investigate the health tourism destinations of Hévíz and Covasna. The paper *Tourism Product Development in a Mature Destination – Hévíz (Hungary)* written by Orsolya Horváth presents that the main focus of the new health tourism product development is to enrich and rejuvenate the already available offer, the innovation means to target new segments (senior travellers from Northern Europe) by providing new and tailor-made experiences. The last paper *Tourism Product Development in an Emerging Destination – Covasna (Romania)* by Zoltán Albert and Márta Giliga illustrates well that a new health tourism product can support the reputation of the place, and induces further developments in the area.

I hope that the papers in this issue draw the attention of the readers to the topic. I am convinced at the same time that the papers can offer a broad selection on the management problems of health tourism.



Zoltán Veres, Professor of Marketing, at the University of Pannonia, Veszprém, Hungary, Head of Department of Marketing. He was born in Hungary and he received his university degrees from the Technical University of Budapest (Masters degree in Electrical Engineering) and the Budapest University of Economic Sciences (Masters degree in International Business). He obtained his PhD in economics, at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. More recently, he obtained his habilitation degree at University of Szeged, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration.

He worked as project manager of numerous international industrial projects in the Mediterranean region (e.g. Greece, Middle East, North Africa) between 1977 and '90. Since 1990, he actively participates in the higher education. Among others he taught at the College for Foreign Trades; at the Ecole Supérieure de Commerce d'Angers and between 2004 and 2009 he was Head of Institute of Business Studies at the University of Szeged. In 2011 he was appointed professor of Marketing at the Budapest Business School (BBS), Hungary, and between 2010 and 2014 he was also Head of Research Centre at BBS. Since 2014 he is Head of Department of Marketing at the Faculty of Business & Economics of the University of Pannonia, Veszprém, Hungary. From the beginning of this year he is the editor of the Pannon Management Review.

Zoltán Veres has had consultancy practice and conducted numerous research projects on services marketing and project marketing. In 2001 and 2002 he was Head of Service Research Department at the multinational GfK Market Research Agency. He is a member of the research group of the European Network for Project Marketing and Systems Selling, Lyon; Advisory Board member of Academy of World Business, Marketing and Management Development, Perth (Australia); member of Comité Científico del Academia Europea de Dirección y Economía de la Empresa (Spain); Advisory Board member of the Nepalese Academy of Management; member of Board of Supervision at Association for Marketing Education and Research, Hungary; Advisory Board member of McMillan & Baneth Management Consulting Agency, Hungary and consultant of Consact Quality Management Ltd., Hungary.

He has more than 200 scientific publications, including the books of *Introduction to Market Research*, *Foundations of Services Marketing* and *Nonbusiness Marketing*. He has been editor of series to Academy Publishing House (Wolters Kluwer Group), Budapest. Besides Zoltán Veres has been editorial board member of the journals *Revista Internacional de Marketing Público y No Lucrativo* (Spain), *Вестник Красноярского государственного аграрного университета* (Krasnoyarsk, Russian Federation), *Tér-Gazdaság-Ember and Marketing & Menedzsment* (Hungary); member of *Journal of Global Strategic Management*, Advisory Board and Review Committee; member of *Asian Journal of Business Research*, Editorial Review Board.