

CULTURAL HERITAGE, NATURAL RESOURCES AND COMPETITIVENESS OF THE TRAVEL AND TOURISM INDUSTRY IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

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ABSTRACT: Competitiveness has become one of the common concepts employed in the recent years to approach and describe the sustainable development of the travel and tourism industry. Cultural heritage and natural resources represent two significant pillars of the tourism's sustainable development: that is why the development of the tourism based on the cultural heritage and natural resources could provide a consistent support for increasing the competitiveness of the Central and Eastern European countries as tourist destinations. The paper assesses how important are and what are the contributions of the cultural heritage and natural resources to the overall competitiveness of the travel and tourism industry and to its performances based on specific data referring to the Central and Eastern European countries.

Key words: cultural heritage, natural resources, tourism competitiveness, Central and Eastern Europe

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