

Features and Trends of Greece Tourism Industry

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to provide a general outlook of the hospitality industry in Greece and demonstrate how the travel and tourism industry contributes to the economy and employment of Greece. In this paper, it is presented and analyzed all the relevant information regarding the trends, the direct and indirect impacts of Greece's travel and tourism industry as well as the hospitality industry on Greece's GDP and employment by examining the statistics about travel, tourism and hospitality in Greece, bank of Greece, Eurostat, Insete Regional and National Data and Elstat - the Hellenic Statistical Authority. Tourism is an activity linked to many sectors of the economy. It requires the contribution of economic, social, technological, cultural and environmental factors and is therefore described as an extremely multifaceted field. Below are research and statistics on tourism's economic impact, spending and attendance. Hospitality and tourism are a vital sector for the economy of many countries, offering significant opportunities for growth and prosperity. The provision of hospitality services to visitors traveling for leisure, business or cultural reasons has become a large-scale industry.

Keywords: Tourism Industry; Arrivals; Expenditure; Gross Domestic Product; Employment

1. Introduction

Greece is one of the most popular destinations in the world and acts as a magnet for tourists, especially in the summer months. At the same time, the tourism industry is a strong and constantly evolving sector for the Greek economy. For this reason, the aim of this paper is to highlight the main characteristics of the tourism industry while simultaneously presenting some wider factors that affect it. Greece is a country where the tourism industry is very competitive, as well as job creation. The study and understanding of the structure of the tourism industry, the way of operation and organization of tourist hotel businesses are of enormous importance for the economic development of the country.

Hospitality and tourism are a vital sector for the economy of many countries, offering significant opportunities for growth and prosperity. The provision of hospitality services to visitors traveling for leisure, business or cultural reasons has become a large-scale industry. The year 2022 marks a period of change in Greek tourism. Despite a significant drop in visits of 14.4% compared to 2019, the UK and Germany remained the main destinations. Areas such as the South Aegean and Crete were more preferred, while tourism contributed significantly to the country's GDP, amounting to 11.5% of Greece's total GDP.

Greece's travel and tourism sector contributes significantly to the country's GDP. Some of the country's economic resources are boosted by tourism-related revenue, which is used to expand local businesses, promote cultural events and develop infrastructure. The priorities for the future development of the industry include the use of new technologies, the promotion of green and the diversification of tourism offers. The implementation of digital technologies and tools are changing the global economic and business landscape. The success of the digital transformation is largely defined on the digital strategy developed by business leaders, who are not only promoting a culture that supports change but new inventions as well (Kyurova, 2022). The hotel sector is the main driver of employment and the economy in Greece. The country continues to attract millions of tourists due to its rich natural and cultural resources, which has a positive impact on both the economy and society.

2. Tourism Sector after the Covid-19 Pandemic

Research in Wuhan, China's seafood and animal market in late December 2019 led to the COVID-19 (new coronavirus) pandemic on January 13, 2020. People who come into contact with one another can spread the coronavirus via sneezing and coughing, which release droplets from the respiratory system. Wuhan was where the coronavirus initially surfaced, but it quickly spread throughout China. Due of China's large population and worldwide travel, the virus, which spreads swiftly, quickly reached numerous countries (Velavan and Meyer, 2020). According to the WHO, the coronavirus initially infected China, the United States, Italy, Spain, Germany, France, Iran, the United Kingdom, Turkey, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Canada, Austria, and Korea before spreading to 210 nations overall. Numerous people worldwide have died as a result of the virus, which spreads swiftly due to interpersonal interaction. Many nations have begun implementing different steps to stop the coronavirus from spreading since they are unsure of when the epidemic will finish and because it is spreading quickly.

Following the onset of the epidemic, nations mainly limited admission and leave and closed their borders. Foreigners were not allowed to enter the country at all when international travel was outlawed. Workplace closures caused manufacturing to stop, which in turn

caused an economic catastrophe. Furthermore, risky locations have been closed, particularly social ones where the virus might spread quickly, such schools, mosques, churches, museums, parks, restaurants, hotels, and cafes (Kuipers et al., 2021). Curfews were put in place to stop people from remaining away from home and getting in touch with others during this process, and collective activities like concerts, outings, sporting events, and entertainment events that bring people together were canceled (Kivilcim, 2020). Those infected with the COVID-19 pandemic are advised to remain at home for 14 days and be placed under quarantine as part of the precautions implemented.

The COVID-19 pandemic's global expansion has had a significant impact on national economies in this new evolving process. Countries have suffered economic losses and job losses as a result of COVID-19. Income losses have resulted from the detrimental impacts of numerous industries that contribute to a nation's economic development and foreign exchange inflows (Atay, 2020). A dynamic industry that is swiftly impacted by world events, tourism plays a major role in the development of nations. The tourism industry is impacted by global events including terrorism, conflict, and natural catastrophes (Acar, 2020). Epidemics are another circumstance that has a significant impact on the tourism industry. The tourism industry has been one of the most impacted by COVID-19, which has impacted the entire world. Travel restrictions during this process have had a serious impact on the tourism industry, which contributes significantly to economic development and gives countries foreign exchange inflows. People no longer feel safe traveling, so they have begun to stay at home and stop engaging in tourism-related activities (Eryüzü, 2020).

A United Nations World Tourism Organization assessment that looked at how the COVID-19 epidemic affected the travel industry found that, globally, the number of visitors fell by 22% in the first few months of 2020. According to some estimates, the tourist rate could drop by 60–80% by the end of 2020 (UNWTO, 2020). A decrease in tourist visitation in these circumstances may result in the following issues, per the UNWTO report:

- Loss of 850 million to 1.1 million international tourists.
- Loss of export income between 910 billion and 1.2 trillion dollars from tourism sector.
- Loss of employment between 100 and 120 million in the tourism sector.

The number of tourists will decline as a result of their refusal to engage in tourism-related activities because of travel restrictions and security worries. Both the tourism industry and the economies of nations that rely heavily on tourism for their revenue will be greatly impacted by this circumstance (Alaeddinoglu and Rol, 2020). When the COVID-19 crisis is

viewed through the lens of tourism, the fact that tourist places are unsafe owing to crowded and social settings and that travelers' security concerns stemming from the pandemic have led to cancellations of reservations. Due to this circumstance, businesses involved in transportation, lodging, and food and beverage establishments, including cafes and restaurants, have closed, halting both domestic and foreign travel activities. As a result, visitor spending has decreased, which in turn has decreased demand for travel (Bakar and Rosbi, 2020).

In the context of COVID-19, the pandemic process had a detrimental impact on the travel and tourism industry as well as the nations that generate revenue from it. It also had an adverse effect on the transportation industry, travel agencies, tour operators, tour guides, lodging, food and beverage operators, and those employed in these industries. According to Aydin and Dogan (2020), the normalization process aims to minimize the negative effects of the epidemic on the tourism sector by taking precautions in various areas, particularly to ensure social distance rules and hygiene rules, in order to mitigate the damage that may arise from COVID-19.

3. The Travel and Tourism Sector's Contribution to Post-pandemic Safety Motivation

COVID-19, starting in China, has taken the whole world under its influence in a short time. The death of millions of people due to the epidemic and the inability of people to leave their homes for a long time have led to various anxiety and anxiety problems. Safety motivation, which significantly affects people's travel behavior, has become a more important criterion with the epidemic (Ranasinghe et al., 2020). There has been a significant decrease in the security motivation of the tourism sector due to the effect of spreading faster in crowded and social environments. Countries have started to take various measures to reduce the spread of the epidemic.

The primary measures implemented in the beginning were curfews, quarantine procedures, travel limitations, intercity transit prohibitions, social area closures, and the closing of national borders. Demand for tourism was also impacted by tourists' concerns, anxieties, and worries about the health risks the pandemic caused (Wachyuni and Kusumaningrum, 2020). The tourism industry has begun implementing a number of internal initiatives to boost travelers' incentive for security and to guarantee the recovery of demand for travel. Developments to enhance travelers' feelings of security and motivations are part of the global normalization movement, which effectively encourages travel.

According to Cetinkaya et al. (2020), the following decisions were made by lodging establishments during the "new normal" period in an effort to boost guest security

motivation and boost tourism industry revenue:

- In addition to posting signs reminding people to observe social distance in crowded situations, lodging facilities also give textual information about the procedures and steps followed before a guest is welcomed.
- Thermal cameras and noncontact thermometers are installed at the doors of lodging establishments, which accept visitors up to the number specified by the social distance regulations.
- Throughout the stay, guests are given the tools they need to follow personal hygiene guidelines, and information on chronic illnesses and if they have had COVID-19 in the previous 14 days is documented.
- The kitchen staff's social distance guidelines are followed when serving food at open buffets in lodging facilities. Nonetheless, there is a 1.5-meter gap between the dining tables and a 60-cm gap between the chairs.
- The operational staff undergoes routine health examinations, and it is guaranteed that they have received hygienic training and are considerate of the visitors' personal safety.
- After guests have left, lodging establishments make sure to thoroughly clean every area.

By maintaining the highest standards of hygiene, the tourism industry sought to reduce any negative elements that can endanger the health of visitors and encourage them to stay safe during COVID-19. In this regard, the implementation of hygiene regulations in lodging establishments, management of business entrances and exits, social distance practices, sterilization of common areas (bedroom, separation between beach and pool sun loungers, swimming pool, gym, animation hall, dining and drinking area, and kitchen), staff-focused measures, contactless payment, hygiene measures, and other guest safety measures has begun (Yenisehirlioglu and Salha, 2020).

Tourist attractions have reopened and some regulations have been established with the start of the new normalization period (Farzanegan et al., 2021). According to the established guidelines, both visitors and authorities must wear masks, observe the social distance guidelines, and be mindful of the hygienic guidelines. The food and beverage industry is another area where different steps are tried to influence tourists' security reasons and lessen their worries. To spread clients and keep them from getting sick, food and beverage

establishments should plan and set up tables and chairs according to the social distance rules. Disinfectant stands must be positioned, particularly near the business's entrances and exits.

Regular disinfection is necessary in places used for eating. Aprons, masks, visors, and gloves are examples of hygiene gear that business employees should wear (Cetin and Coskuner, 2021). In addition to bringing the service equipment to the tables in a packaged and disposable manner, the drinks that will be delivered to the guests should be closed (Dündar et al., 2020). Ventilation of the surroundings should be done with caution, though. The precautions used in food and beverage outlets are intended to reduce tourists' fears and concerns while also having a beneficial impact on their motivation for security. It has been decided to observe the social distance norm and to travel by leaving empty seats among the passengers in the transportation sector, which plays a significant role in the tourism industry. Additionally, mask wearing is required during the entire trip, and all necessary hygienic supplies are supplied. The car is cleaned and rendered sterile for the subsequent journey. Tourist guides have a crucial role to play in enhancing the perception of visitor safety. By providing the required warnings to safeguard the social distance, educating the tourists, and providing hygienic precautions, the tour guides will have a significant impact on the tourists' impression of security because they will be with them the entire time (Türker and Karaca, 2020).

The COVID-19 epidemic caused travelers to experience higher levels of stress and anxiety, necessitating actions in every aspect of the travel industry. Because of the precautions implemented, travelers were encouraged to engage in tourism by the security motivation, which was notably successful in lowering the desire to travel among those under epidemic control. The steps implemented to enhance the security incentives for travel during the COVID-19 epidemic have also had a positive impact on the growth of the travel industry. The steps implemented to alleviate tourists' anxiety when engaging in tourism activities during the outbreak encourage safer travel and lower the risk of contracting the coronavirus (Aydın and Doğan, 2020).

The actions taken to boost security motivation will result in a fresh image for tourists, which will influence them to have new experiences and boost their desire to travel. Following the pandemic, actions that boost travelers' drive for security will boost their engagement in tourism-related activities and offer a chance to boost the purchase of tourism-related goods and services (Özdemir, 2020). Given that people spend nearly all of their time at home during an epidemic, the actions made in the tourism industry will also have an impact on travelers' plans to visit and refer others. Over time, this circumstance can have an impact on the recuperation of the economic development power supplied by the tourism industry.

4. Basics characteristics of the tourism industry in Greece

The tourism industry indirectly affects other economic sectors with higher demand for products and services through multiplier effects. The varied charm of Greece's history, culture, magnificent islands and natural wonders, together with the evolving nature of digital tourism, make the nation a popular travel destination on a global scale. To attract tourists, the quality of services provided by accommodation, catering and vehicle rental and tour services is a decisive factor. At the same time, investments in the improvement of transport connections are necessary to facilitate tourism in areas with greater growth potential (Buhalis, 2023).

According to the ELSTAT statistics for 2019, Attiki recorded the most overnight stays of 6,473,146 and the highest seasonality (3.07). Then Crete with 23,573,083 overnight stays and 1.82 seasonality, the South Aegean with 20,054,482 overnight stays and 1.77 seasonality and followed by the Ionian Islands with 9,235,127 overnight stays and 2.14 seasonality. The majority of tourists are from the European Union, while in recent years attendance from the USA and China has also increased significantly. The most popular destinations in Greece are Athens, Crete, Santorini, Mykonos and Rhodes. Hospitality services in Greece are varied, as there are many types of hotels, accommodation, rental apartments, camps, cruise ships.

In 2019, the tourism industry contributed 10.3% to the country's Gross Domestic Product. The following year due to the COVID-19 pandemic that hit the country, the tourism industry suffered significant losses, with the number of arrivals decreasing by up to 76.5% compared to 2019. The direct and indirect effects on the Greek economy are severe since the loss of revenue from tourism is estimated at 14.4 billion. euros in 2020, according to a report processed by PwC. Nevertheless, in the following years the Greek tourism industry recovered, after a 50% increase was observed for 2021 and in 2022 the numbers came close to those of 2019.

The hotel sector is the main driver of employment and economy in Greece. The country continues to attract millions of tourists due to its rich natural and cultural resources, which has a positive impact on both the economy and society. It is important to recognise that, despite its achievements, the tourism sector still faces obstacles such as the consequences of the pandemic, environmental issues and the requirement for sustainable development. It will be presented an overview of the main characteristics and trends of the travel and tourism industry in Greece.

Number of Arrivals

In recent years, Greece has seen a sharp increase in the number of foreign tourists. The high rates of arrivals show how desirable the country is as a travel destination.

Tourist Expenses

Tourists in Greece usually spend a lot of money on activities, food, accommodation and shopping. Spending by tourists in the last 9 months has reached over €17.9 billion as they contribute significantly to the country's income.

Nationalities of Tourists

Tourists from all over the world, especially from Europe, visit Greece. Germany, the UK, France and Russia are the countries where most travelers come from.

Destinations

Well-known travel destinations such as Mykonos, Santorini, Rhodes, Kos, Crete and Athens remain to be popular. However, there is also an increase in the curiosity of tourists in lesser-known parts of the country.

Accommodation Types

There are many different types of accommodation, including standard room rentals, Airbnb properties and luxury hotels.

Contribution to GDP

Data from the Hellenic Statistical Service show that tourism constitutes a significant part of GDP. Since tourism-related expenses directly support the country's economy, confirming that this industry is among the largest.

Example: Eurostat data for 2019 show that Greece's GDP benefited from tourism at a rate of about 20%.

Investments in Infrastructure

Government spending on roads, airports, and other infrastructure to improve travelers' experience is encouraged by tourism.

Example: Projects such as airport renovations increase air connectivity and make it easier to travel to familiar places.

5. Features of the tourism and hospitality industry in Greece

Japan According to the World Tourism Organization (2023), tourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon that involves the movement of visitors to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or professional reasons. Annually, various destinations in Greece receive tourists of various nationalities by implementing their accommodation in accommodation types and making corresponding expenses.

The table below (Table 1) presents both the nationalities of visitors to Greece and the number of arrivals for the year 2022 (excluding cruises).

Table 1. Tourist Arrivals and Nationalities

Arrivals of non-residents from abroad by country of origin (in thousands) Countries of origin 2022		
<i>Eurozone countries</i>		11.567
Austria		614
Belgium		502
France		1.758
Germany		4.352
Spain		291
Italy		1.413
Cyprus		733
Netherlands		1.059
Others		846
<i>EU countries outside the Eurozone</i>		5.429
Denmark		274
Romania		1.379
Sweden		428
Czech Republic		419
Other		2.929
<i>Other Countries</i>		10.849
Albania		860
Australia		112
Switzerland		483
United Kingdom		4.485
USA		1.089
Canada		181
Russia		36
Others		3.595
Total Arrivals		27.836
Popular Destinations: South Aegean, Macedonia, Crete, Ionian Islands		

Source: Greek Border Survey, 2023

At the same time, the following table (Table 2) highlights the expenditure for the year 2022 by country of origin.

Table 2. Tourist Expenditure

Expenditure of non-residents in Greece by country of origin (in million €) Countries of Origin 2022		
<i>Eurozone countries</i>		8.039
Austria		455
Belgium		360
France		1.277
Germany		3.256
Spain		180
Italy		927
Cyprus		398
Netherlands		669
Others		517
<i>EU countries outside the Eurozone</i>		1.967
Denmark		162
Romania		567
Sweden		289
Czech Republic		241
Others		708
<i>Other Countries</i>		7.252
Albania		283
Australia		160
Switzerland		425
United Kingdom		3.127
USA		1.200
Canada		229
Russia		41
Others		1.785
Total Expense		17.257

Source: Greek Border Survey, 2023

In the following Table (Table 3), we can see arrivals and revenues from cruises.

Table 3. Cruise Arrivals and Revenues

2022	ARRIVALS	REVENUES (€)
1 st Trimester	7.661	5.961.393
2 nd Trimester	501.494	113.358.487
3 rd Trimester	1.009.959	173.508.502
4 th Trimester	521.139	84.468.805
TOTAL NUMBER	2.040.253	377.297.187

Source: Insete Intelligence, 2023

To conclude, the different types of accommodation are listed.

Table 4. Types of Hotel Accommodation

HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS	
MAIN	NOT MAIN
Hotels	Tourist Furnished Villas
Camping	Tourist Furnished Residences
Youth Hostels	Furnished Rooms for Rent
Complex Tourist Accommodations	
Condo Hostels	
Hotel Tourist Accommodation within the Traditional	

Source: Nomoskopio, 2023

The following table (Table 5) confirms the significant contribution of the tourism industry to GDP. Greece's tourism industry contributes significantly to the country's GDP, as for 2022 its contribution is estimated at 25.3% to 30.5%, taking into account the multiplier benefits (Insete Intelligence, 2023).

Table 5. Direct and Indirect Tourism Benefits

CATEGORY OF EXPENDITURE	2022 (in million €)
Expenditure of Inbound Tourists	17.462
Expenditure of Cruise Tourists	379
Expenditure of Tourist Companies	105
Air transport	2.067
Shipping	122
Domestic Tourism	2.038
Investments	1.741
DIRECT TOURISM IMPACT	23.194 €
% GDP	11,50%
Multiplier	2,2
INDIRECT AND DIRECT RESULT	52.611 €
% GDP	25,30%
Multiplier	2,65
INDIRECT AND DIRECT RESULT	63.373 €
% GDP	30,50%
GDP	208.030 €

Source: Insete Intelligence, 2023

At the same time, the tourism industry, apart from its significant contribution to the country's economy, seeks to address the problem of unemployment. The employment rate in the accommodation and catering sector, thanks to tourism, is estimated at 36.7% to 44.2% of the total (with a multiplier corresponding to GDP 2.2 or 2.65) (Insete Intelligence, 2023).

6. Tourism in Greece and its contribution to the economy and employment

Tourism is an economic, cultural and social condition in which people move in a way or country other than where they live every day. These people are called visitors and tourism is closely linked to their activities, some of which have to do with tourism expenditure. In Greece, the phenomenon of tourism is deeply rooted as it exists for thousands of years, from the movements of antiquity for religious, athletic and recreational reasons to today's movements mainly for recreation and entertainment. At the same time, in recent years it has been growing rapidly, thus strengthening the hospitality industry and contributing to the

economy and employment. Specifically, the largest figures are recorded in 2018 where 30.123 arrivals, 227.012 nights and 15.663 expenses were recorded, in 2019 with 31.348 arrivals, 232.464 nights and 17.680 expenses and finally in 2022 with 27.836 arrivals, 216.949 nights and 17.257 expenses. The dominant countries are Germany, UK, USA, France and Italy (Insete, 2023).

Regarding the economy, in 2022 the contribution corresponds to 11.5% of GDP, in 2021 to 8.3% and in 2019 to 12.6%. Moreover, taking into account the multiplier benefits, the total contribution is estimated in 2022 between €52.6 and €63.4 billion, i.e. 25.3% to 30.5% of GDP. In 2021, it ranged between €33.0 billion and €39.8 billion. So, at 18.2% to 21.9%, while in 2019 it was at 50.8 and 61.2 billion. i.e., 27.7% to 33.4% of GDP (Insete, 2023). At the same time, it reduces unemployment, since from 2013 to 2022 the percentage of employed persons aged 15-24 and 45-64 reached 14.6% and 34.8% respectively, with full-time employment reaching 9.9% and part-time employment reaching 18.4% (Insete, 2023).

According to the research of the analysts of the national bank (2023), Greece in this summer period reached 16.9 million tourists, 2% more compared to the corresponding arrivals of the year 2019. The results of the research showed that the arrivals of tourists from the USA stood out, recording an increase of 24% compared to the year 2019. At the same time, there was a 2% increase in the stay of foreign tourists in hotels in Greece, and a 3% increase in the stay of Greeks compared to the year 2019, covering a total of 77% of the available beds of Greek hotel units, 8% more compared to the year 2019. Regarding the costs per arrival, the analyzes showed that there was a decrease of 6% compared to those of the year 2019, considering that the accuracy led to the limitation of the costs of the tourists.

According to the assessment of the president of the Association of Greek Tourist Companies Dr. Andreas Andreadis (Digrindakis, 2023), for the year 2024 no reduction in luxury tourism is foreseen and so far the booking rate is around 20%. Furthermore, as stated in the article by the Minister of Tourism Olga Kefalogianni (Kefalogianni, 2023), the future aspirations of the Minister of Tourism are aimed at reducing the environmental footprint and protecting the "identity" of tourist destinations. It also emphasizes the importance of increasing visitor numbers throughout the year and highlighting tourist destinations that cover more geographical parts of Greece, so that the country becomes a pole of attraction for tourists from all over the world. Based on Christina Lainopoulou's article (Lainopoulou, 2023), Eurobank's estimates show that the contribution of tourism receipts in 2023 is expected to be greater than that of 2019, judging by the good performance of the first semester. Eurobank also considers that if "secondary effects" are included, the contribution of tourism to the Greek economy approaches 20% of the country's GDP.

Based on the research of the analysts of the National Bank (2023), an increase of 9.7% was found in the net recruitments in the period January-August in relation to the corresponding period of the year 2019. The analysts themselves argue that this increase is due to the increase in tourism in this summer season, where the number of arrivals was 2% higher compared to the arrivals of the year 2019. The number of arrivals in Greece is directly related to the percentage of the country's total incoming tourism. In particular, in 2022, Greece was a pole of attraction for over 27 million visitors and thus the importance of the tourism industry for the country's economy becomes apparent (Insete, 2023). Greek tourism, with its "sun and sea" development model, shows strong seasonality in arrivals and receipts and is not sustainable in the long term. The main contemporary trends estimated to affect tourism internationally are a) technological development and digitization, b) demographic developments and c) sustainability (Insete, 2021). Greek tourism should follow the trends. Its development should be based both on the quality upgrade and on the differentiation of the offered tourist product.

The tourism industry is one of the most important factors for a country's economy, not only because of its direct but also its indirect effects on GDP. The tourism industry has direct effects on GDP, but it also contributes to increasing levels of demand for other industries of the economy such as agriculture, manufacturing and financial sectors. The increase in demand for travel has created a need for shipping routes, vehicle rental services and communications such as telecommunications, ready meals and others (Cooper, 2016). The high level of revenue generated by the tourism industry allows citizens to purchase homes and invest in the construction and housing industry.

The Greek tourism industry should aim for high quality services so that we get more revenue from the increased spending of visitors. To achieve this, we will have to provide a product with valuable services and infrastructure, respecting the exceptional characteristics of the natural environment, and highly qualified human resources, so as to justify its increased prices. A very important goal for 2025 is to reach 30,000,000 arrivals and 450,000 new jobs. The sustainability of tourism products depends on the protection of the natural environment, the built environment and the cultural heritage. Tourism is the only opportunity for the development of the country that must maintain its momentum for many generations (Tourismtoday.gr, 2023). The scientific community underlines that the human dimension of open innovation is still under-studied, and this field of research is highlighted as a promising area (Galiulina & Touate, 2023). The evolution of artificial intelligence opens up new horizons. Its application in areas such as customized travel promotion can improve the guest experience. An innovative application of artificial intelligence is the use of chatbots. Chatbots can act as helpful tools for travelers, offering personalized information on attractions, restaurants, activities and more, advising based

on each traveler's interests. In addition, through artificial intelligence, they can offer personalized advice on local culture, customs and even suggested routes, thus improving the experience of travelers and creating a more personalized tourism experience (Gr traveler, 2021).

Basic additional directions that contribute to the protection of the natural environment are the following:

1. The limitation of off-plan building (any building should only be allowed within clearly defined spatial zones).
2. The withdrawal of inactive tourist buildings which pollute the environment as well as the tourist product of the country.
3. Establishment of architectural/aesthetic specifications for much wider areas of the territory than those so far protected by special regimes, in order to initiate the restoration of the aesthetics of the built environment.
3. Expansion and development of the institution of special bodies for the management of protected areas, establishing the involvement of tourism bodies in them, given that these bodies are the cohesive link required for the substantial involvement of local societies in the protection of the natural environment.
4. Establishment of a legal obligation of local authorities to keep the environment clean.

In the last 10 years we have seen large investments in the renovation and creation of hotel units with a high level of service in order to attract guests with a larger financial surface. After the experience of Covid 19, protocols were established for the proper functioning of the accommodation as well as the safety of the guests. Many of these have remained for the benefit of the visitor with a positive sign in the hotel industry (Reynolds, Rahman & Barrows, 2021). We come across green and environmentally friendly accommodations with alternative ways of managing energy and natural resources.

The role of technology in the development and the offered services of an accommodation have a dominant role. In all search engines there are filters related to the technological benefits that an accommodation can offer, they also contribute to economies of scale and control of important areas of a hotel such as energy management, simplification of customer transactions and faster service. In a very short time, artificial intelligence and robotics will provide benefits in many areas of hotels. The role of hoteliers as well as the hotel chamber is pivotal in terms of the development and refinement of the services offered. The hotel chamber contributes to the promotion of the hotel product at international exhibitions around the world and also conveys

through newsletters and conferences modern techniques for upgrading and training hoteliers.

7. Discussion and Concluding Remarks

The year 2022 in Greek tourism was distinguished by a succession of challenges and opportunities. Although there was a decline in visits nationally, some areas remained popular destinations for visitors. The United Kingdom and Germany stood out as the main destinations of arrivals. At the same time, the impact of tourism on the economic sector remained significant, accounting for 11.5% of the total GDP of Greece. Tourism, faced with challenges such as adapting to new trends and sustainable development, is evolving as a critical factor for the economy, calling for further analysis and adaptation to maintain its competitiveness (Bank of Greece Eurosystem, 2022).

Tourism acted as a countermeasure during the critical years, countering recession and unemployment, and subsequently contributed to the country's positive growth trajectory. The global COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictive measures resulted in a significant decrease in tourism worldwide and in Greece, critically affecting the economic activity in the tourist areas and the economy in general. The rapid recovery of tourism in 2021 and 2022 in Greece led to a rapid recovery of GDP and economic activity in tourist areas, making the country a globally recognized tourist destination. Finally, the tourism sector remains an object of considerable interest for investment, while the wide variety of tourist destinations throughout the country contributes decisively to the formation of income in many areas. At the same time, tourism shows strong seasonality due to the dominance of summer vacations, which are the main tourist product of the country.

The tourism industry in Greece is an important economic pillar for the country since it offers economic development. Greece is affected by climate change which can bring adverse weather conditions, a factor that is taken into account by tourists when choosing their destination. At the same time, technological development and especially the advancement of artificial intelligence can be integrated into the Greek tourism industry and offer automations that tourists will find as "efficient", ultimately leading to the satisfaction of their choice. In general, the Greek tourism industry is large, as indicated even by the country's GDP percentages, so it must evolve its processes and offer sustainable and green options, in order to attract the interest of even more tourists who are environmentally sensitive (Economic Post, 2022).

Greek tourism, an important factor for the Greek economy and employment, is at a critical juncture. It has shown resilience so far, recovering from the financial crisis and the pandemic, but in the future it will need to be able to deal with other unforeseen crises and

gain a competitive advantage. In order to do this, there should be a targeted tourism policy, based on monitoring and analysis of the elements of today's reality and the corresponding body that will design and implement it (Ministry of Tourism). The state should set the appropriate legal framework (restrictions-incentives) and allocate where necessary the necessary funding. Stakeholders, government agencies and associations, businesses and local communities should be adequately communicated and represented. The new tourism policy will aim at diversifying the tourism product with alternative forms of tourism, lengthening the tourist season, a more balanced spatial distribution, crisis management instruments, the full integration of technology into the sector, the adoption of environmentally friendly practices and the training of human resources.

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