

INVENTORY AND RANKING OF SPORTS AND RECREATIONAL EVENTS IN THE AREAS OF SARAJEVO AND ISTOČNO SARAJEVO

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Abstract: Sports and recreational events across various sports and disciplines represent the most developed and common form of events in Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly in the cities of Sarajevo and Istočno Sarajevo. Through effective organization of these events, Bosnia and Herzegovina lays the groundwork for hosting similar events in the future, as well as for the development of sports and recreational tourism. The aim of this study is to inventory and map all sports and recreational tourism motives, as well as to rank the events by types of sports and disciplines. The analysis includes 115 different sports events from 25 sports disciplines. Due to the variety of indicators and sub-indicators, the "H. du Cros" method was used for the tourist valuation of these events. The results of the valuation indicate that none of the events fall into the category of low market attractiveness. The most valued are the sports events that include world and European championships, as well as the Youth Olympic Games, which significantly contribute to the promotion and branding of the destination, attract a large number of tourists, and impact the development of tourist infrastructure and the increase of employment in the tourism sector. Detailed ranking of these events reveals different levels of importance, highlighting key characteristics, advantages, and disadvantages, which allows for a better understanding of their impact on the development of sports and recreational tourism. This analysis not only identifies the most suitable events for tourism development but also provides valuable insights for future initiatives and investments in tourism.

Key words: sports and recreational events, sports and recreational tourism, tourism evaluation, Sarajevo, Istočno Sarajevo.

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INTRODUCTION

Bosnia and Herzegovina has significant tourism potential and excellent sports facilities. The country is known for its rich cultural and historical heritage, natural attractions, particularly its mountains and a favorable climate. Its strategic location near major European hubs has also played a key role in establishing Bosnia and Herzegovina as an attractive tourist destination. According to UNWTO data, Bosnia and Herzegovina is defined as one of the three tourist destinations in the world with a total tourism market growth potential of 10.5% (for period until 2020). The tourism market of Bosnia and Herzegovina consists of the following types of tourism: winter tourism, cultural tourism, eco, ethnic tourism, adventure tourism, religious tourism, health tourism and coastal tourism. In addition to active vacations, contents such as different types of recreation, sports preparations throughout the year, organization of sports events, sports camps, sports animations by famous and successful athletes and clubs contribute to the strengthening of sports tourism (Đukić & Kojić, 2023). It is obvious that the concepts of tourism and sports are related, so we can say that they even overlap. Sport is an important activity within tourism, and tourism is a fundamental characteristic of sport (Hodžić et al., 2023 according to Hinch & Highman, 2001). Sports recreation plays a crucial role in fulfilling the need for physical activity and healthy movement, which are essential for an enjoyable vacation (Gekić & Bidžan-Gekić, 2015). As a result, the connection between sports and tourism has grown, driven by the rising interest and needs of an increasing number of tourists. To effectively develop sports and recreation tourism in an area, certain factors are essential. These include an intact natural environment, high-quality customer service, reliable transportation, well-maintained facilities and sites, organized entertainment options, a range of accommodation types, a strong tradition of sports participation, established infrastructure, and skilled organizers to manage these specialized forms of tourism. Additionally, visits to sports competitions, sports and recreational events include a larger number of tourist arrivals in the tourist destination in an organized form. All these events attract hundreds of participants and can significantly boost future tourist visits to destination through organized tours. These organized visits can, in turn, help diversify and enhance the existing patterns of tourist visits and stays in the region.

Sarajevo's tourist geographical region is an interesting tourist destination as a result of its geo-traffic position, exceptional and untouched natural beauty, cultural and historical values and favorable climatic conditions (Hodžić & Huremović, 2022 according to Bidžan-Gekić et al., 2016). Sports and recreational events represent the most common and numerous type of events held in the cities of Sarajevo and Istočno Sarajevo. Although these events are recognized as a key part of the activities in these cities, their tourist significance has not been sufficiently researched, which is why they are the focus of this study. The research is based on the identification of all such events held from 2018 to 2022 in Sarajevo and Istočno Sarajevo. Many of these events are traditional, repeating year after year, held on specific

days, or associated with special memories. The identification process involves systematic data collection and analysis to gain a realistic insight into the number, types, and diversity of these events, as well as their impact on tourism and the development of local communities. The methodological approach, which includes listing and providing detailed descriptions of the events, allows for a better understanding of their contribution to the tourist offer of these cities. Sports and recreational events have a multifaceted significance, as, in addition to their direct economic impact (increased number of tourists, higher spending in the local economy, and destination promotion), they also contribute to the preservation of cultural and sports traditions, strengthen social cohesion, and promote healthy living and physical activity among citizens and visitors.

The aim of this paper is to rank sports and recreational events in the cities of Sarajevo and Istočno Sarajevo after conducting a tourism evaluation, based on types of sports and disciplines. The goal is to identify the events that stand out as better than others in terms of economic impact, spatial dispersion of economic effects in tourism, strong destination branding, and significant sports, social, and historical importance, among other factors. The analysis will help determine which events are most suitable for future tourism investments.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The relationship between sport and tourism has deep roots, dating back to ancient times when people competed against each other to prove who was the strongest, fastest, or who could jump the furthest. These competitions led to the organization of the first ancient games, and over time, this phenomenon has significantly evolved. In today's world, it is almost unimaginable to have a life without sport (Saayman, 2012). On the other hand, tourism has become a key factor in the development of sport as it supports the logistics of sports events by providing food, beverages, accommodation, transportation, and specialized services such as travel agencies and tour operators. At the same time, sport is used as a powerful tool for tourism development, establishing a symbiotic relationship between these two sectors. Large sports events and their organization bring numerous changes and socio-economic benefits to the destination where they are held. These changes often relate to the improvement of sports, transportation, and accommodation infrastructure, an increased need for additional labor, as well as a significant influx of tourists who come to attend the event (Pivčević, 2015/16). Additionally, there is an increase in consumption within the tourist destination, further contributing to its economic development.

When considering the economic effects of large sports events, they can be viewed from two perspectives: short-term economic benefits through visitor expenditure and long-term benefits, which include enhancing the image of the sports destination. Major sports competitions, such as the Olympic Games, World Cup tournaments, ATP tennis events, and others, have a significant impact on accelerating economic activity in the host country. The impact of these events extends from the primary and secondary sectors to the tertiary and

quaternary sectors of the economy. In addition to analyzing the economic activities associated with sports events, it is also important to ensure a positive relationship between the local community and the event, making it part of their culture, and ensuring that they recognize both direct and indirect benefits. Citizens, as well as tourists, become potential consumers of products and services generated by a particular event. Moreover, the local population can develop a culture of attending sports events, and their role in volunteer activities and assisting in event organization becomes increasingly important.

When discussing the economic effects of sports events, the starting point for calculating these effects includes direct, indirect, and induced costs. Direct costs encompass investments in the host city, construction of sports facilities, organizational expenses, and similar expenditures. Indirect costs refer to the spending of tourists and local residents related to food, transportation, and other services, while induced costs represent the effects of subsequent spending that arise from direct and indirect costs (Pavlović et al., 2023). Sports events and tourism are interconnected because sports events significantly enhance the attractiveness of destinations, stimulate the growth of local economies, and can contribute to extending the tourist season. Sports tourism has become a vital sector, generating significant economic revenue while also promoting the cultural identity of destinations. This phenomenon has its roots in the mid-18th century, evolving from local competitions to global events (Lewis, 2024).

Sports tourism developed through the industrialization process in the 19th century, when European society transitioned from an agrarian to an industrial phase, and today it is recognized as a dynamic market within the tourism industry (Zarotis, 2019). According to Higham (2021), both sport and tourism share similar developmental beginnings and motivations for recreation, with the shift from a materialistic to a post-materialistic society reflecting an increased demand for sports and tourism experiences. A key component of tourism is sport, which is closely linked to numerous other activities (Hinch et al., 2014). Sports tourism can be active or passive. Active tourism involves physical participation in sports activities, while passive tourism refers to attending major sports events and manifestations (Preuss, 2011).

Sports tourism not only encompasses the experience of sports activities but also creates a unique destination culture, known as sports culture (Pigeassou, 2004). According to O'Reilly (2016), sports events are often used as a tool for promoting tourism as they attract a large number of tourists. International events such as the Olympic Games or the FIFA World Cup serve as significant means for drawing tourists to a particular destination, thus creating a positive image of the host country. The development or enhancement of sports facilities can be a key strategy for opening new markets in sports tourism (Hinch & Hingham, 2004).

From the perspective of the destination, sports tourism focuses on the development and promotion of sports events with the aim of achieving economic and social benefits. For

tourists, this involves traveling to participate in sports events or simply to watch them (Getz, 2008), thereby contributing to the social well-being of the community and extending the life cycle of the destination (Getz & Frisby, 1998). Various studies have confirmed that the improvement of a destination's image is closely linked to the organization of various events, thereby increasing the destination's attractiveness and its tourism potential (Ritchie & Smith, 1991; Pyo, 1995; Jeong & Faulkner, 1996). Sports tourism is not limited to international events, but also includes local, regional, and national events. Gibson (1998) emphasized that travel associated with sport is one of the fastest-growing segments of the tourism industry. He also suggested the existence of a "symbiotic relationship" between sport and tourism, where both sectors mutually encourage growth and development. Tourism is, directly or indirectly, part of large global industries, including sport, sports equipment, promotions, as well as the development of infrastructure and superstructure (Saayman, 2012).

Zagnoli & Radicchi (2009) identifies participation in predefined sports activities or attendance at such activities as a key characteristic of sports tourism. The motivations of sports participants and tourists are often very similar (Weed, 2004), with primary sports tourists making up the main target group, as sport is the primary reason for their travel, positioning them as the most important segment in the sports tourism market (Perić, 2010). This group is not homogeneous, although professional athletes often represent a typical group, where their travel motivations are related to training and competitions, either at the national or international level. Participation in sport is the main purpose of their travels, while the experience of the destination is, in most cases, secondary, except when it involves quality infrastructure and necessary conditions for engaging in sports activities. Sports events and sports tourism in Bosnia and Herzegovina are increasingly intertwined, significantly contributing to the country's economic development. The evolution from mass tourism to selective forms reflects consumer preferences focused on health and active recreation, particularly in the growing number of sports facilities and infrastructure (Hodžić et al., 2023).

Sports and recreational tourism in Bosnia and Herzegovina aims to satisfy the human need for movement, play, active recreation, and entertainment, which, according to Knežević (2024), results in the development of a habit of active and purposeful use of free time, contributing to health preservation and increased life expectancy. A large number of various sports and recreational events are held in the cities of Sarajevo and Istočno Sarajevo. Numerous sports and sports associations are registered and operate in these areas. Given the position of the capital city of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo is the center of sports in all its segments, with a lasting image as an Olympic city. Sarajevo hosts the largest number of official sports events. Since athletes from Sarajevo participate in all league competitions, there are many regular league tournaments. Sports and recreational events in different sports and disciplines are held at sports-recreational facilities, other areas, and designated roadways. In the city of Istočno Sarajevo, good conditions have been created for athletes and

sports professionals, and members of associations participate in league competitions at the level of the Republic of Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and abroad

RESEACH METHODOLOGY

In planning the sustainable development of sports tourism in a specific destination, it is essential to conduct a tourism valuation of sports centers and sports-recreational events, assessing their value from a tourism perspective. Many sports and recreational events and facilities hold significant potential to be developed into attractive tourism products. However, decisions regarding their inclusion in the tourism offer are often made based on insufficient information and incomplete assessments of local resource capacity to position them as primary tourist attractions. For these reasons, the overarching goal of this research is to inventory sports-recreational events in the cities of Istočno Sarajevo and Sarajevo, identify and rank the most spatially and functionally significant events, and perform a tourism valuation using the Hillary Du Cros method. By analyzing existing data, information from official city government websites, tourism organizations, sports associations, and media platforms, sports-recreational events were identified and categorized according to criteria such as the event name and type, location, timeframe, organizer, participants, and media coverage. A multi-criteria model was employed for ranking these events, incorporating aspects such as cultural, sports, and tourism significance, as well as the events' contribution to promoting the destination, particularly in positioning the cities of Sarajevo and Istočno Sarajevo as prominent tourist destinations. The research encompassed 14 mixed-type sports and recreational activities organized by various sports and recreational associations and events, including alpine skiing, biathlon, speed skating, ice hockey, curling, cross-country skiing, snowboarding, figure skating, futsal, handball, street basketball, volleyball, athletics, and tennis.

The tourism valuation of sports-recreational events was conducted using the Hillary Du Cros method, developed in 2000. This method's primary purpose is to examine the potential for integrating cultural resources into the sustainable development of tourism (Lakićević & Srđević, 2011). Hillary Du Cros introduced a destination tourism valuation process, including sub-indicators for cultural tourism and their gradation levels, specifically tailored for the tourism sector and the management of sports-recreational centers, as well as for assessing the robustness of sports-recreational centers to accommodate visitors. Some fundamental criteria of this valuation method were modified and adapted by the authors to suit the valuation of specific sports-recreational events which involve multiple sports and sporting disciplines. Based on the aforementioned principles, a matrix with 9 fields, labeled as $M(i, j)$ (where $i, j = 1, 2, 3$), was constructed. Each cultural asset was assigned to a specific field within the matrix, depending on the score obtained in the prior evaluation process (Du Cros, 2000). The matrix cells were defined as follows:

Tab. 10. Market Attractiveness/Robustness Matrix

Indicator	Market appeal			
	Overall score	0-20	21-40	41-60
Robustness	0-20	M(3,1) - low cultural significance/robustness and low market appeal	M(3,2) - low cultural significance/robustness and moderate market appeal	M(3,3) - low cultural significance/robustness and high market appeal
	21-40	M(2,1) - moderate cultural significance/robustness and low market appeal	M(2,2) - moderate cultural significance/robustness and moderate market appeal	M(2,3) - moderate cultural significance/robustness and high market appeal
	41-60	M(1,1) - high cultural significance/robustness and low market appeal	M(1,2) - high cultural significance/robustness and moderate market appeal	M(1,3) - high cultural significance/robustness and high market appeal

Source: du Cros (2000).

Based on the matrix, which facilitates the assessment of the tourism significance and preservation capacity of sports-recreational sites, events with the greatest potential for further tourism investment have been identified in the cities of Istočno Sarajevo and Sarajevo. These events, distinguished by their authentic sporting, cultural, and historical values, can serve as key pull factors for attracting tourists. Their development and promotion have the potential to significantly extend the tourist season and increase the average length of stay for visitors in these cities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

At the level of the Sarajevo Canton, a total of 572 sports organizations have been recorded, encompassing 57 different sports, including associations for sports recreation for persons with disabilities and institutional sports organizations. Estimates indicate that the total number of participants in sports activities is approximately 30,200. Athletes are categorized by age groups: seniors, juniors, cadets, and pioneers. Sports with the highest number of registered organizations include football, basketball, karate, swimming, mountaineering, and taekwondo.

The city of Sarajevo stands out as a leading center of sports activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, hosting the largest number of organized official sports events in the country. Furthermore, due to the active participation of Sarajevo's athletes in league competitions at

all levels, a significant number of regular league competitions has been recorded. Within the six municipalities of Istočno Sarajevo, 85 sports clubs and associations have been registered, bringing together approximately 4,000 athletes. Members of these organizations actively participate in league competitions at the levels of the Republic of Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and on the international stage. Most sports in the region are supported by established sports federations at both the state and entity levels, which play a key role in organizing tournaments, competitions, and other sporting events. This support significantly contributes to the development of sports and the promotion of the destination (Zukić, 2022).

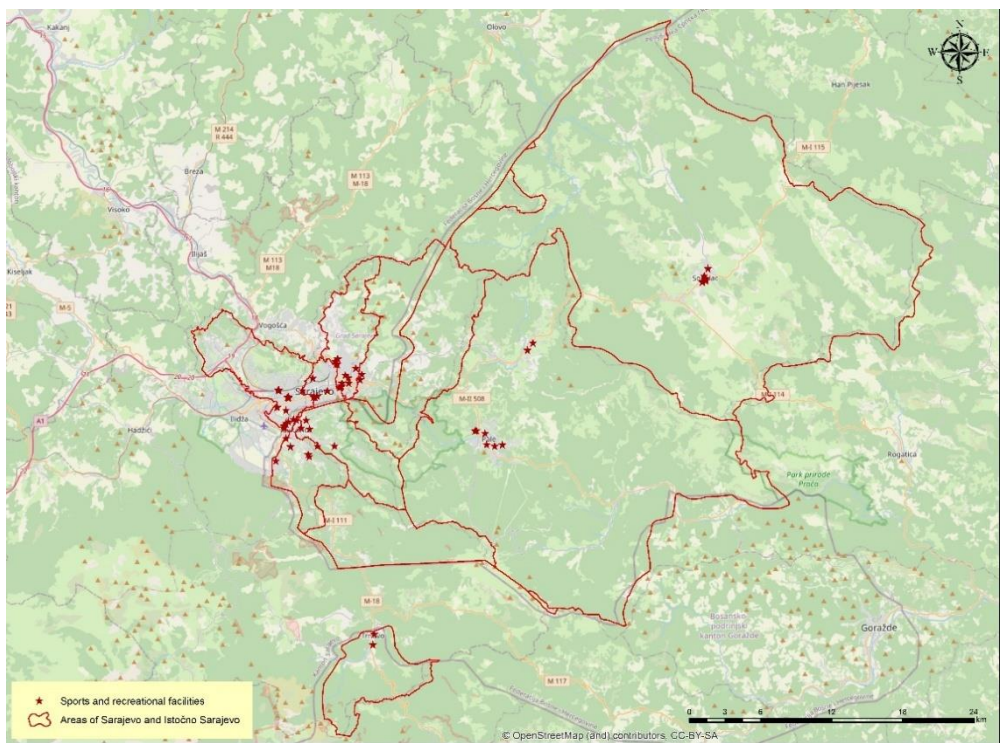


Fig. 1. Sports and recreational facilities in the areas of Sarajevo and Istočno Sarajevo
Source: Authors based on the geodatabase of the GIS Center at the University of Sarajevo – Faculty of Science, 2024.

The municipality of Centar stands out as a leader in organizing sports events, with the highest share of 23.91% of the total number of events. This statistic highlights its pivotal role as the most active municipality in this domain. The municipalities of Novi Grad and Novo Sarajevo share second place, each contributing 17.39% of the events, underscoring their significant role in the development of sports activities in the region. The municipalities of Stari Grad and Pale have an identical share of 10.87%, placing them among moderately active

organizers of sports events. Istočno Novo Sarajevo accounts for 8.70% of the events, while Trnovo and Sokolac contribute 4.35% each. The smallest share is recorded by Istočna Ilidža, with only 2.17%. An analysis of these data points reveals an uneven geographical distribution of sports activities. Larger and centrally located municipalities, such as Centar, Novi Grad, and Novo Sarajevo, organize a significantly higher number of events compared to smaller and peripheral municipalities. This disparity reflects disproportionate access to resources and infrastructural capacities.

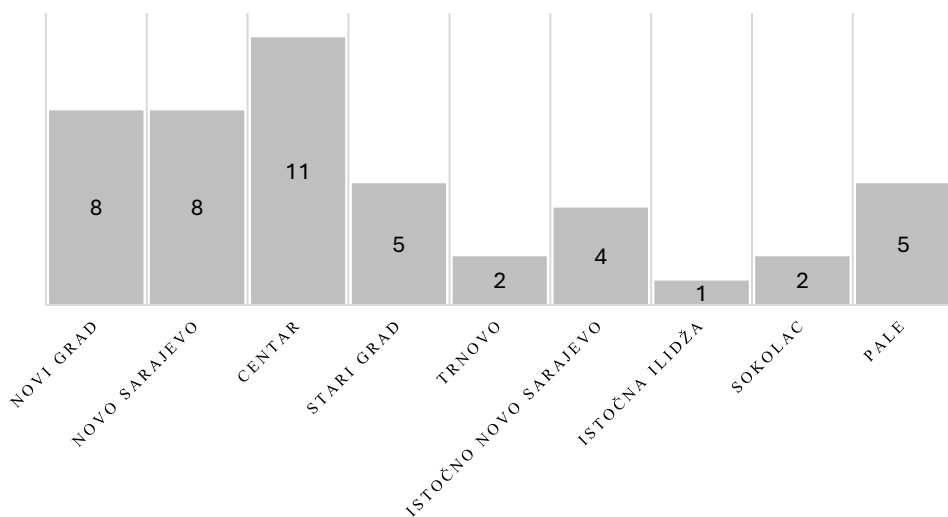


Fig. 2. Number of sports and recreational events in the areas of Sarajevo and Istočno Sarajevo

According to the adapted valuation by Hillary du Cros (2000), sports and recreational events that involve multiple sports and disciplines, which belong to this category within the territories of the cities of Sarajevo and Istočno Sarajevo, include: Youth Sports Games, Sports Games OAZA, Sports Festival "Sport Fest 2020", Sports Festival "Sport Fest 2021", and EYOF 2019 Sarajevo and Istočno Sarajevo (table 2).

Tab. 11: Tourist valuation of sports and recreational events in shooting, rhythmic gymnastics, bowling, chess, and events that include multiple sports disciplines

Sports and recreational events in areas of Sarajevo and Istočno Sarajevo	
<i>Market attractiveness (1)</i>	
Ambience	4
Well known outside the local area	2
Important national symbol	1
An interesting story about the event can be told	1
It possesses certain traits that clearly differentiate it from other events (specificity)	2
It complements other tourist products at the destination, or in the region	4
Tourist activity in the region	5
The destination is associated with sports	3
<i>Factors of importance in designing a tourist product (2)</i>	
Good transport from the population center to the event venue	5
Urbanization assessment	5
Proximity to other sports and recreational attractions	4
Service amenities, parking, marked roads to sports facilities, refreshments, availability of information	4
Service amenities, parking, marked roads to sports facilities, refreshments, availability of information	4
<i>Sports and recreational significance (3)</i>	
Aesthetic value, including architectural value, if it concerns a building	4
Historical value of the event	0
Sporting value of the event	3
Social value of the event	1
Rarity of the sports and recreational event at the destination, or in the region	2
Representativeness for the destination	2
<i>Robustness (4)</i>	
Assessment of equipment and services	3
Existence of a sports and recreational center management plan	3
Accessibility assessment	5
Regular monitoring and maintenance	4
Potential for ongoing investment and consultation with key stakeholders	3
Potential negative impact of a large number of visitors on the physical condition of the sports and recreational center	3
Robustness	21-40 M(2,1)
Market Attractivness	41-60 M(1,3)

Source: Authors based on du Cros, 2000.

The tourist valuation of sports and recreational events, conducted through the application of the Hillary du Cros method, resulted in a final matrix that places the listed events in the M(1,3) category, indicating high cultural significance and robustness, as well as high market appeal. This category includes events such as shooting, rhythmic gymnastics, bowling, chess, and those that involve multiple sports disciplines. These events showcase a variety of sports, such as football, basketball, handball, volleyball, street basketball, athletics, beach volleyball, tennis, table tennis, and many others, thus achieving high sports significance.

The duration of these events typically spans several days and takes place in large sports and recreational centers, as well as other specialized venues such as Olympic pools, stadiums, and halls. The ambiance and aesthetic value of these locations have been rated highly due to their accessibility, urban setting, and proximity to other sports, recreational, and tourist attractions. Most of these events have an international character, making them recognizable and representative of the destination. Specific events, such as the Sports Games OAZA, which include competitions for persons with disabilities, further contribute to the inclusivity and social significance of these events. All these manifestations represent a potential for further investment from stakeholders.

Among the evaluated events, the European Youth Olympic Festival (EYOF) stands out, receiving the highest ratings. Sarajevo and Istočno Sarajevo had the honor of hosting this prestigious event, which represents a European youth competition in winter Olympic sports. The EYOF took place over several days and included numerous events, such as the opening and closing ceremonies, the lighting and journey of the Olympic torch, and competitions in various sports disciplines. The venues for the event included the "Asim Ferhatović Hase" stadium, the "Zetra", "Skenderija", and "Peki" halls, as well as the ski resorts of Bjelašnica, Jahorina, and Igman. All venues were adequately equipped and organizationally prepared, providing excellent conditions for both athletes and visitors.

The European Youth Olympic Festival (EYOF) brought together 904 athletes from 46 countries, members of the European Olympic Committee, who competed in 8 sports and 32 disciplines across 7 venues. The competitions included alpine skiing (Bjelašnica, Jahorina), biathlon (Jahorina), speed skating (Skenderija Hall), ice hockey (Zetra Hall), curling (Peki Hall), cross-country skiing (Igman), snowboarding (Bjelašnica), and figure skating (Skenderija Hall).

Due to its organizational complexity, international reputation, and impact on the promotion of sports and tourism, EYOF is an exceptionally significant event. Its realization had a substantial influence on the tourist image of the destination, promotion of the country, an increase in the number of overnight stays, and economic benefits generated through the spending of participants and visitors. This event, following the 1984 Winter Olympics in Sarajevo, deserves the highest rating in the tourism valuation and ranking of sports and recreational events.

CONCLUSION

Sports and recreational events represent the most widespread form of tourism in the cities of Sarajevo and Istočno Sarajevo. Given the need for appropriate infrastructure in accommodation, dining, as well as spaces and equipment to host these events, large urban centers have recognized the potential of event tourism as a significant source of income. Local authorities actively support sports events through financial assistance, which not only promotes the city but also attracts new visitors, increases employment, and contributes to the economic development of the local community.

A wide range of sports events is organized within these cities, including football, basketball, handball, volleyball, tennis, swimming, chess, and many others. According to the results of the evaluation, the most valuable event among them is the European Youth Olympic Festival (EYOF), which received the highest ratings. These events have significant economic, sports, historical, social, and tourist importance, and they make a notable impact on the number of overnight stays and the promotion of the destination. Sports events, such as world and European championships and the Youth Olympic Games, are the most representative events that provide significant promotion and branding for the destination, attracting a large number of tourists and stimulating the development of tourist infrastructure and employment in the tourism sector.

Through the successful organization of these events, Bosnia and Herzegovina creates opportunities for further development and the continuation of similar events in the future. Therefore, event tourism, especially in the context of sports events, should not be overlooked, but rather intensively researched and included in tourism evaluations, with the support of tourist organizations and tourism statistics. With detailed analysis and organization, sports events can become key tourism products. Tourist organizations can use these events to promote their destinations, for example, through advertising materials on sports fields or during large international events.

Sports and recreational events should be subjected to detailed research and integrated into tourism development strategies. Their promotion and inclusion in tourism development by tourist organizations must be a priority to ensure their long-term sustainability and success.

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