



BEGINNINGS AND CONDITIONS OF MOUNTAIN TOURISM IN THE R. N. MACEDONIA

Abstract: The desire to climb mountains and discover its secrets and beauties has always attracted people. R. N. Macedonia abounds in mountains and hills for various recreational activities, hiking, hiking, running, cycling, skiing and more. The first recorded conquests of the high mountains in R.N. Macedonia dates back to the 19th century, and the first mountaineering associations and homes were registered in the third decade of the 20th century. Significant and organized development of mountaineering and mountain tourism dates back to the eighties.

The period of social transition has left great shocks in mountaineering and mountain tourism. Macedonian tourism is modestly investing in the development of mountain tourism. Extensive mountaineering requires extensive activity of competent institutions. The modern way of life and work has caused radical changes in the organization of leisure and rest for people. A good example of a quality lifestyle is practicing active recreation through recreation, hiking and sports. For the realization of that, it is necessary to prepare strategic documents, various studies and realization of a series of activities supported by the state.

The presented paper based on different criteria and possibilities elaborates several periods in the development of mountain tourism, classifies the mountains, mountain homes and ski centers that offer various activities познавање на инвестицијата за време, пари и napori. Само што имате реагирани влијанија од планирање на туризам. in terms of promoting mountain tourism, sports and recreation in R. N. Macedonia.

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Introduction

Macedonia, as mountainous country, has excellent natural perconditions for the development of mountainous tourism. However, having mountains does not automatically mean gaining economic benefits. What is needed for successful development of mountain tourism is an investment of time, money and effort. Many countries have realized the benefits of developing mountain tourism.

Mountains are often used as resources for tourism development, primarily offering pleasure, relaxation, sports activities or even the enjoyment of spiritual and psychological needs. Very valuable information and experience for the development of mountain tourism can be obtained from the countries that implement mountain tourism, such as Austria, Switzerland, Germany, Italy, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Serbia and others.

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It has been confirmed by many authors that the natural and geographical features of the mountains are destined for hiking, sports, education and recreation. Thus, mountaineering, sports,

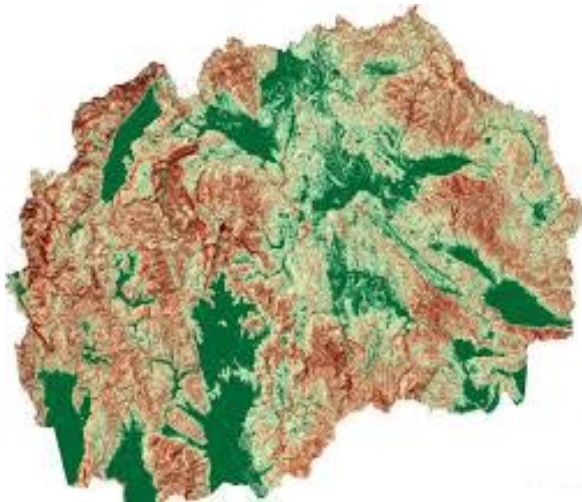
education and recreational tourism have become very attractive forms of tourism that attract millions of tourists.

The purpose of this paper is to present several stylized facts about the beginnings and conditions of mountain tourism in R.N. Macedonia. Although the mountains in RNM have different types of accommodation facilities (hotels, mountain homes and houses, children's resorts, etc.), mountain tourism faces many challenges. The main problems and weaknesses faced by mountain tourism have been identified, and some suggestions have been made that need to be addressed.

The paper is structured in several parts: General characteristics of the Macedonian mountains; Research methodology; Research results; Statistical Analysis of Results and Conclusion.

General characteristics of the Macedonian mountains

According to the morphometric characteristics of the relief R.N. Macedonia is a mountainous country. Most of the territory is occupied by mountains with an area of 11,044 km² or 42.95%, followed by hills with 9,769 km² or 37.99%, and the plains account for 4,900 km² or 19.06%. According to the data, R. N. Macedonia is a mountainous-hilly country with an area of 23,713 km² or 81%, and an average altitude of 829 meters. [1-4].



The mountains are found in all parts of the country and according to the height are divided into: high (over 2000 m), medium (from 1000 to 2000 m) and low (below 1000 m), and according to the occurrence of old or large and young or chain mountains. Macedonia has 26 mountain massifs, of which 14 are higher than 2,000 m, and 5 mountains are higher by over 2500 meters (Korab, Shar Planina, Baba, Jakupica and Nidze). The high mountains have over 300 peaks with a height of over 2000 meters. [1-9].

Map 1. Morphometric appearance of the relief in R.S. Macedonia

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According to the functional characteristics from the tourist point of view, the mountains in RSM are grouped in three groups: picnic and recreational mountains, sports manifestation mountains and mountains with combined meaning.

The recreational mountains are located in the immediate vicinity of the cities, which are mainly in environments for picnickers and recreationists. Due to the proximity, these mountains have tourist and recreational significance.

Sports manifestation mountains are mountains on which winter - sports manifestations are organized, these are mountains where ski centers and tourist settlements are located.

Mountains of combined meaning are the mountains that are close to the emitting places, but also have such valuable tourist motives that attract tourists from the wider region. Usually these mountains are used by the population for picnics and recreation, given the proximity of the permanent place of

residence. Weekends and tourist settlements are located on these mountains and various competitions can be held (cycling, orientation, mountain running, etc.).

Research methodology

The main purpose of the research is to present the beginnings of mountain tourism and the current state of mountain tourism in line with the development and perspectives of mountain tourism. The research is based on the application of quantitative and qualitative methods to determine the value and attractiveness of mountain tourism, especially for mountaineering, skiing, mountain biking, mountaineering and the like. Extensive literature, statistical data, personal mountaineering experience and conversation with authoritative people in mountaineering were used.

Research results

The results of the research are grouped into three parts: **1. First ascents of the mountains; 2. Beginnings of mountaineering; 3. Mountaineering, mountain and ski tourism (1945 to 2020).** This third section presents the basic material and covers the beginnings of mountaineering, ski tourism and other alternative types of tourism present in the mountains.

1. First ascents of the mountains (mid-nineteenth century to 1912)

In this part, the subject of research is not the daily climbing of the mountains by the cattle breeders and the local population who performed part of the daily activity in the mountains, but the climbing of foreign scientists and researchers.

The first recorded and described ascents of the Macedonian mountains by European scientists, explorers and nature lovers, were during the XIX century. The first ascent of Shar Mountain (peak Kobilica) and Pelister was made by the travel writer Ami Bue in 1936. The second recorded ascent was to Mount Nidze, Pelister and Shar Planina, and was carried out by the botanist August Griesebach in 1839. A third foreigner was the travel writer Edmund Spencer who climbed Pelister in 1850 and visited the Great Lake. The fourth travel writer to ascend Pelister in the autumn of 1862 was Henrikh Bart. [10-14]. All the mentioned travel writers left beautiful descriptions with valuable data.

2. Beginnings of mountaineering

During the last decade of the XIX century and until the end of 1912, ie during the Turkish rule, in Skopje, Bitola and other cities in Macedonia there was a tradition in the spring months, on Sundays and certain holidays, citizens and students from city schools to organize excursions and visit the surrounding areas. These picnics have become a habit and they can be considered as the first steps in the development of picnics and later mountaineering. After 1920, the young lovers of the mountains from Skopje, Bitola, Prilep, Tetovo, Veles, Stip and other cities started to visit and conquer the surrounding and distant Macedonian mountains. Thus, a group of mountaineers climbed the high peaks of Korab, Shar Planina, Baba Planina, Jakupica, Nidze and other mountains. Visiting the mountains and climbing the peaks continued outside Macedonia, so in 1928 the mountaineer Trajko Ribarov was the first Macedonian to climb Triglav (2863 m). [15-16].

From 1924 onwards, mountaineering associations were formed in the cities of Prilep, Tetovo, Skopje, Bitola, Kicevo, Ohrid, Krushevo, Stip, Kumanovo, Kocani and Veles. In the period from 1924 to 1939, 18 mountaineering associations were formed. For the beginning of organized activity of the first accommodation capacity on the mountains were: 2 children's resorts on Pelister and Krushevo built in 1926, in 1928 a military resort was built on Ponikva, and the first mountain lodges were built from 1930 to 1938 and were built in total 5 homes. (Table 1) [6, 7, 15-21].

Table 1. Mountaineering associations and sections and mountain accommodation facilities (1924-1939)

No	Mountaineering Association	City	Year	Type of building	Location	Year of construction
1.	"Zlatovrv"	Prilep	1924	Children's resort "Stamparevac"	Pelister	1926
2.	"Ljuboten"	Tetovo	1925	Children's resort "Shula Mina"	Krushevo	1926
3.	"Kozjak"	Prilep	1926-1930	Military resort "Ponikva"	Osogovo	1928
4.	"Southern Serbia"	Skopje	1930-1931	Mountain lodge "Ljuboten"	Shar Mountain	1930
5.	"South Lakes"	Bitola	1930-1931	Mountain lodge "Kajmakchalan"	Nidze	1931
6.	"Pelister"	Bitola	1934	Mountain lodge "Popova Sapka"	Shar Mountain	1934
7.	"Pelagonija"	Bitola	1935	Mountain lodge "Mavrovo"	Bistra	1937
8.	"Bistra"	Kicevo	1935-1936	Mountain lodge "Kopanki" on the place Begova Cesma	Pelister	1938
9.	"Biljana"	Ohrid	1935-1936			
10.	"Korija"	Krushevo	1936			
11.	"Serbian Mountaineering and Tourist Association"	Skopje	1935-1936			
12.	"Serbian Mountaineering and Tourist Association"	Bitola	1936			
13.	"Bregalnica"	Stip	1936			
14.-18.	"Southern Serbia" (sections)	Bitola, Kumanovo, Kocani, Veles, Prilep	1936-1939			

Source: [6, 7, 15-21].

The mentioned accommodation facilities had a small capacity, the resorts with 200 beds each, the mountain lodges up to a maximum of 40 beds, so we estimate that in total in the mentioned locations there were about 800 beds.

Excursion tourism was represented on Pelister and during the Sundays and holidays it was visited by over 500 visitors. Meanwhile, stationary tourism was represented in Krushevo. Krushevo was the only established mountain tourist place, in which besides the children's resort there were several inns and private houses that welcomed guests. The statistical data on the number of tourists in Krushevo speak for themselves. Namely, in the period 1937-1939, a total of 1785 tourists visited it and realized 28575 overnight stays, with a high average stay of 16 days. [22].

The first occurrences for summer vacation in Maleshevo, in Berovo, especially for patients in need of climate treatment, were observed in the time before the Second World War. [23].

In 1927, the first tourist association "Jug" was established in Skopje. In 1934 the Tourist Association "South" - Skopje has 656 members and 8 subsidiaries (Bitola, Tetovo, Kumanovo, Prilep, Ohrid, Veles, Stip, Strumica). This tourist association in 1935 had 711 members and 13 subsidiaries

(plus Kavadarci, Gevgelija, Kocani, Kicevo, Struga). The company also had a mountaineering section. [19,20,22].

In the period of the thirties, the beginnings of ski activities in Bitola, Tetovo and Krushevo were registered in the children's resorts and by the mountain societies. The first attempts at mountaineering were made in 1934 on Nezhilovski steni in the area of Solunska Glava. [15, 16, 19, 20]. Mountaineers from Macedonia planned to climb the high Balkan mountains Rila, Olympus, Pirin and others, but their idea was not realized due to the war.

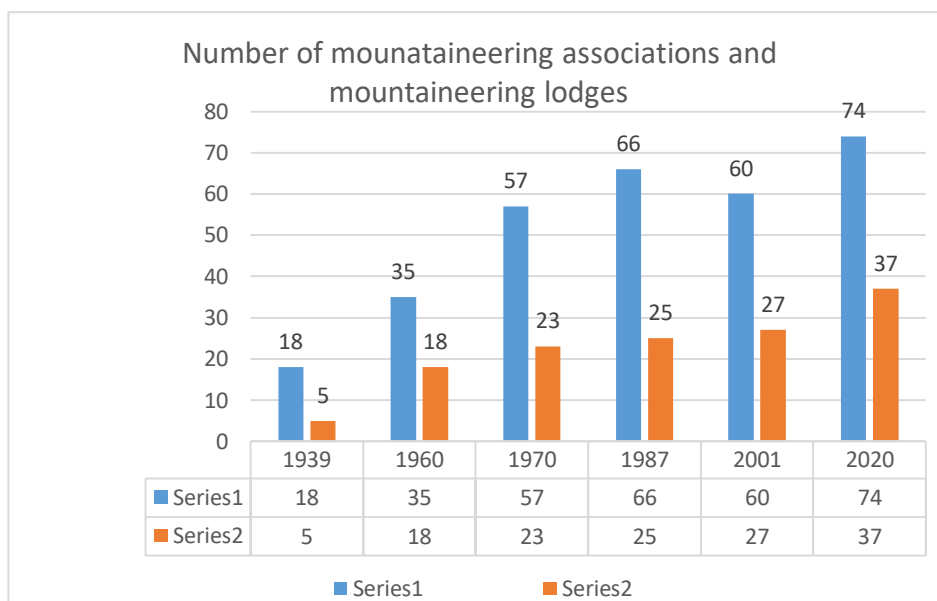
3. Mountaineering, mountain and ski tourism

After the Second World War, the process of restarting and forming new mountaineering societies began. The Skopje Mountaineering Association was first established in December 1944, which was later renamed PD "Skopje - Matica". In Bitola in 1945, the Mountaineering Association "Pelister" was established, which in addition to mountaineering and skiing was also engaged in tourism. More than 2000 people from Bitola joined their proclamation in this association. [20, 21]. Then follow the formation of new mountaineering associations in all cities in Macedonia.

In Krushevo, next to the children's resort "Forest Mina", in 1947 the first mountain hotel "Ilinden" was built, and a little later the hotel "Panorama". [18, 25]. On Pelister, the children's resort or sanatorium "Pelister" continues to operate. [24]. Since the mid-fifties and sixties, several workers' and children's resorts and hotels have been built on Shar Planina (Popova Sapka), Bistra (Mavrovo), Pelister (Begova Cesma) and other mountains. In the fifties and sixties, the old ones were renovated and new mountain lodges were built. Mountaineering as a recreational and sports movement is becoming more widespread, with frequent mountaineering trips and marches to climb the Macedonian mountains, the mountains of other republics and provinces in SFR Yugoslavia, and other mountains in the Balkans, other European countries and the world.

Graph 1 shows the movement of mountaineering associations and mountaineering lodges in a period of eighty years, 18 mountaineering associations and 5 mountaineering lodges in 1939 to 76 associations and 37 mountaineering lodges in 2020.

Graph 1. Numerical movement of mountaineering associations and mountaineering homes 1939-2020



Source: [6, 7, 15, 17, 19, 21, 25, 26, 27, 28].

Viewed by altitude the mountain lodges are arranged: up to 500 m. has 2 homes; 14 homes from 500 to 1000 meters; 13 homes from 1000 to 1500 meters; 5 homes from 1500 to 2000 m. and 3 mountain lodges at over 2000 meters above sea level. [26, 28].

In 1955, the first Macedonian alpine section was established in Skopje, and then alpine sections in Prilep and Kocani. Mountaineers classically practice rock climbing in the canyon of Treska above Matka, but also on other rocks throughout Macedonia. [15, 16].

The beginnings of organized mountain tourism are marked in the late 60s and early seventies of the last century when the first mountain hotels and ski centers were built ("Popova Sapka" and "Mavrovo", then "Pelister" two ski centers, then ski center of "Krushevo", followed by ski center "Ponikva" and last is the ski center "Kozuf" - built less than two decades ago).

It is estimated that about 30 winter sports centers can be built on the high Macedonian mountains with a total leveling of the ski slopes of 115 km, with a maximum capacity of all ski centers of about 115,000 skiers. If we add the number of non-skiers, but only visitors to the ski resorts, then the number will increase to 230,000 total visitors. [32].

Table 2. Overview of active winter – sport centers in the Republic of Macedonia

No	Winter sport center and meters above sea level	Location - Mountain
1.	Ski center "Popova Sapka", 1,710 meters above sea level	Popova Sapka - Shar Planina
2.	Ski center "Zare Lazarevski" 1,240 meters above sea level	Mavrovo – Bistra
3.	Ski center "Kopanki", 1,420 meters above sea level	Pelister- Baba Planina
4.	WSTC "Pelister" with Ski lift 1,300 meters above sea level	Baba Planina
5.	Ski center "Stanich" 1,350 meters above sea level	Krushevo – Busheva Planina
6.	WC "Ponikva", 1,560 meters above sea level	Ponikva – Planina Osogovo
7.	"Ski Kozuf", 1,550 meters above sea level	Kozuf

Source: Topographic map 1: 50 000, MGI, Belgrade, 1973; <http://gis.katastar.gov.mk/arec> ;

In the mountains until the middle of the nineties, a total of 10 children's resorts operated: children's resort "Pelister", "Shula Mina", "Ponikva", "Bunec", "Golak", "Mihaljovo", "Plachkovica", "Suvi Laki", "Maleshevo" and "Pehchevo". [7, 29]. Today, only two of the above are active: "Bunec" and "Mihaljovo".

With the break-up of the former Yugoslavia and the military conflicts of the 1990s, mountain tourism lost its importance. Particular decline in mountain tourism was observed after the military conflict in 2001, when the Republic of Macedonia faced serious problems in terms of construction and maintenance of winter infrastructure (ski lifts etc.).

In the function of mountain tourism are the tourist complexes and weekend settlements located on the following mountains: on the mountain Bistra is located the tourist and weekend settlement "Mavrovo", on Shar Mountain is the tourist and weekend settlement "Popova Sapka", on the Osogovo Mountains is "Ponikva", on the Pelister is "Begova Cesma" and "Nizopole", on the "Maleshevo" and "Bela Voda" are on Maleshevski Planini and Berovo Lake, on the weekend the settlement "Suvi Laki" is on Ograzden, on the mountain Golak is the tourist settlement "Golak", on Jablanica weekend settlement "Gorna Gorica" and others. These settlements have several hundred weekend houses, various accommodation and catering facilities (hotels, villas, apartments, motels, mountain lodges, restaurants, cafes, pizzerias, patisseries, etc.), as well as villas and bungalows of workers' organizations (which today for the most part are not active). [7].

In the Macedonian mountains, in addition to active hiking and skiing, there are trails for cycling, paragliding, rock climbing, mountaineering, mountain running, speleology and more. During the year various events are organized ("Sharplaninski Cup" - international, FIS race in slalom, giant slalom, FIS snobord cup; "Mavrovo Memorial" in Nordic running; "Pelister giant slalom", "Snow City" in Mavrovo and others. During the events, the number of visitors increases several times more than on the days when there is no event. 5-6 locations for mountaineering, a dozen locations for paragliding, speleology and rock climbing. [7].

On several mountains in the country, in addition to sports, cultural and other events are held in the following mountain settlements: Galichnik - "Galichnik Wedding", Vevcani - "Vevchani Carnival", Capari - "Caparski Carnival", Mokreni - "Mokrenski Sredbi", then meetings in Brajcino, Ljubojno, Rostusha, Smolare, Koleshino and others.

According to the State Statistical Office, in 2010 in the Mountain Places, there were a total of 74 types of facilities, of which 46 hotels, 1 motel, 2 workers' resorts, 6 children's and youth resorts, 19 uncategorized accommodation facilities. The mountain places had 1145 rooms and 4414 beds, of which 354 rooms and 1015 beds in hotels, 6 rooms and 15 beds in the motel, 10 rooms and 65 beds in the workers' resorts, 140 rooms with 404 beds in the children's and youth resorts and 265 rooms with 815 beds in uncategorized accommodation. [33].

Also, 75 tourist sites are registered on the mountains in the Republic of Macedonia, and 35 of them have potential opportunities for tourism. In the function of mountain tourism are: ski centers (7), ski-elevator, cable cars (42), mountain hotels (45), mountain weekend settlements (8), mountain lodges (37), mountain children's resorts (4), mountain settlements with over 1000 meters above sea level, (188), and a number of guest houses and cottages. [7,8].

The numerous movement of tourists and overnight stays in mountainous areas for the period from 1953 to 2019 is shown in Table 3 and Graph 2 and 3. The data show a continuous increase in visits and overnight stays. The maximum values of the visit and overnight stays are in 1986. From the table we notice a certain decrease in 1991, the period when Yugoslavia disintegrated, then in 2001, the military conflict in Macedonia, and in 2015, a socio-economic crisis.

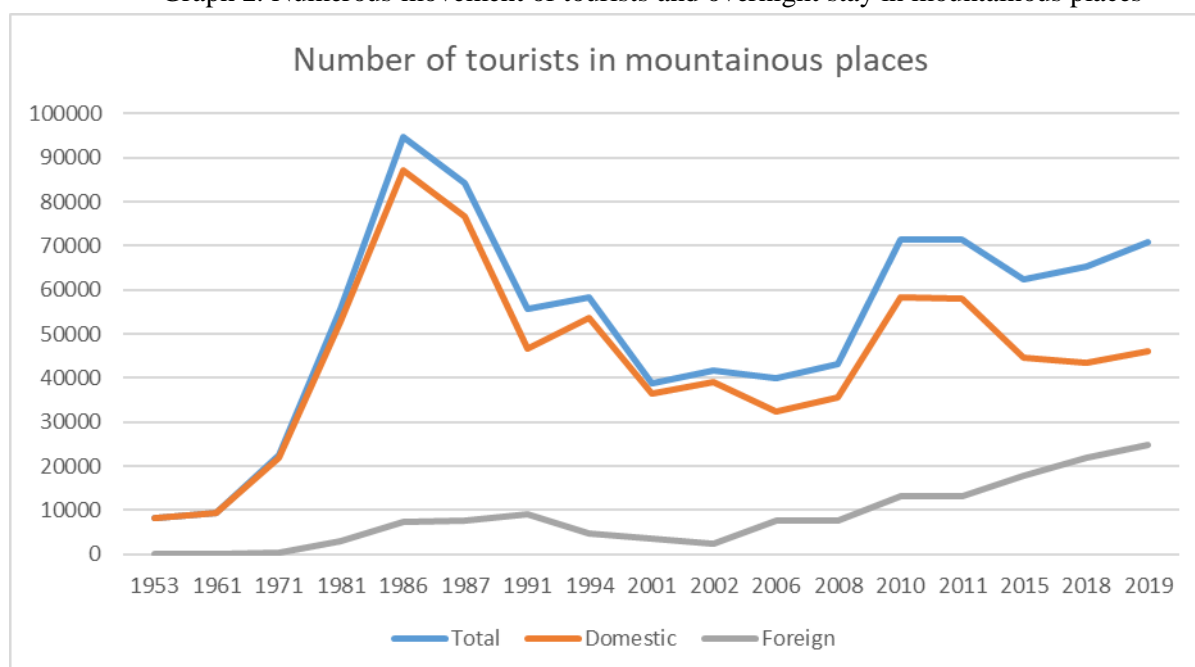
Table 3. Number of visitors and overnight stays in mountain places, 1953-2019

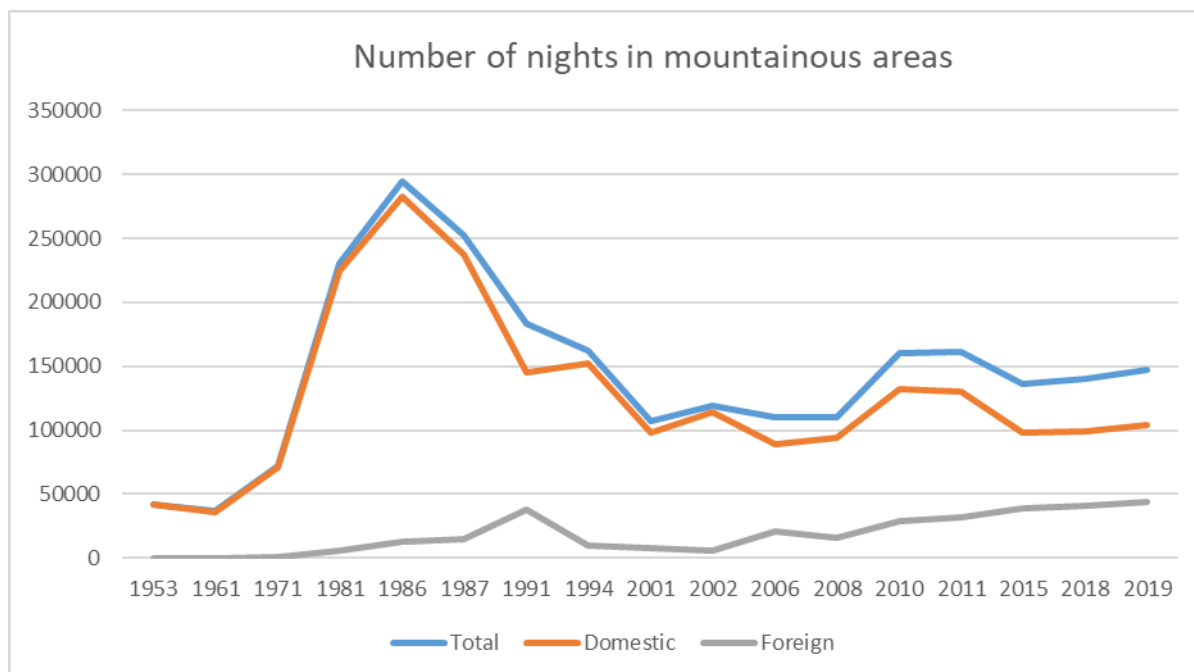
Year	Number of visitors - tourists			Number of nights		
	Mountain places			Mountain places		
	Total	Domestic	Foreign	Total	Domestic	Foreign
1953	8312	8262	50	41642	41523	119
1961	9357	9288	69	36445	36265	180
1971	22436	21989	447	71719	70658	1061
1981	55766	52780	2986	230676	224822	5854
1986	94615	87258	7357	295046	282800	12246
1987	84300	76606	7694	252535	237337	15198
1991	55767	46652	9155	183043	144961	38082
1994	58249	53586	4663	162428	152557	9871
2001	38830	36411	3419	106559	98481	8078
2002	41648	39139	2509	119369	114148	5221
2006	40089	32394	7695	110337	89200	21137
2008	43165	35665	7500	110012	94063	15949
2010	71457	58170	13287	160336	131786	28550
2011	71309	58100	13209	161382	129937	31445
2015	62335	44502	17833	136436	97831	38605
2018	65381	43362	22019	139912	99085	40827
2019	70907	46198	24709	147608	103579	44029

Source: [34].

Domestic tourists dominate throughout the period. Foreign tourists mostly visit the Macedonian mountains during the summer season. Mostly they are tourists from neighboring countries, but also tourists from other European countries and beyond.

Graph 2. Numerous movement of tourists and overnight stay in mountainous places





Conclusion

The potentials for mountain tourism R.S. Macedonia are large due to the natural preconditions of many mountains that have excellent conditions for the development of mountaineering, sports, educational, recreational and other forms of alternative tourism. However, mountain tourism faces various problems of insufficient and outdated accommodation mountaineering facilities, insufficient tourist and other infrastructure, irregular maintenance of the road network and the like.

Our research shows that mountaineering, sports and recreation are necessary for the successful prevention of typical diseases of modern civilization, visible as nervousness due to various tensions, city noise, air pollution and the like.

According to the medical practice, we can add that many Macedonian mountains are good "air-sun bath of the best medicines sun, water, air", which is in abundance and offers them to every visitor. The Latin proverb also applies to the mountains: Quantum satis (Take air if you wish - air, water and sun). The Macedonian mountains, without any exaggeration, have potentials for development of health tourism. Thus, the mountain is suitable for post-operative rehabilitation, but also for diabetics (the most suitable altitude is 800-1000 meters), for relieving nervous tension, respiratory and heart disease (1000-1200 meters), for asthmatics (1200-1400 m.), for anemic (1400-1600 m.) and the like. [35].

From the above we can conclude that the Macedonian mountain tourism has prospects and future challenges. Namely, it can be seen that mountain tourism needs to be modernized in the management of natural resources, their regular monitoring, as well as monitoring of activities that will address any negative impact of visitors made on the resources in the mountains.

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<http://gis.katastar.gov.mk/arec;>
<http://www.igeografija.mk/Portal/?p=2463>)

Macedonian mountaineering association <http://www.mpa.org.mk/>
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