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## TOURISM AND LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT ON THE DODECANESE

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**Abstract:**

The Southern Sporades Island of Greece, or the Dodecanese as they came to be called around of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the islands of the south-eastern Aegean, lie scattered between Crete and Asia Minor. Their two age-old and brilliant civilizations are historically-linked with these islands, which, great or small, inhabited or now uninhabited, number more than twenty, all bearing the traces of human habitation upon them. Today main characteristic of these islands is strong development of tourism.

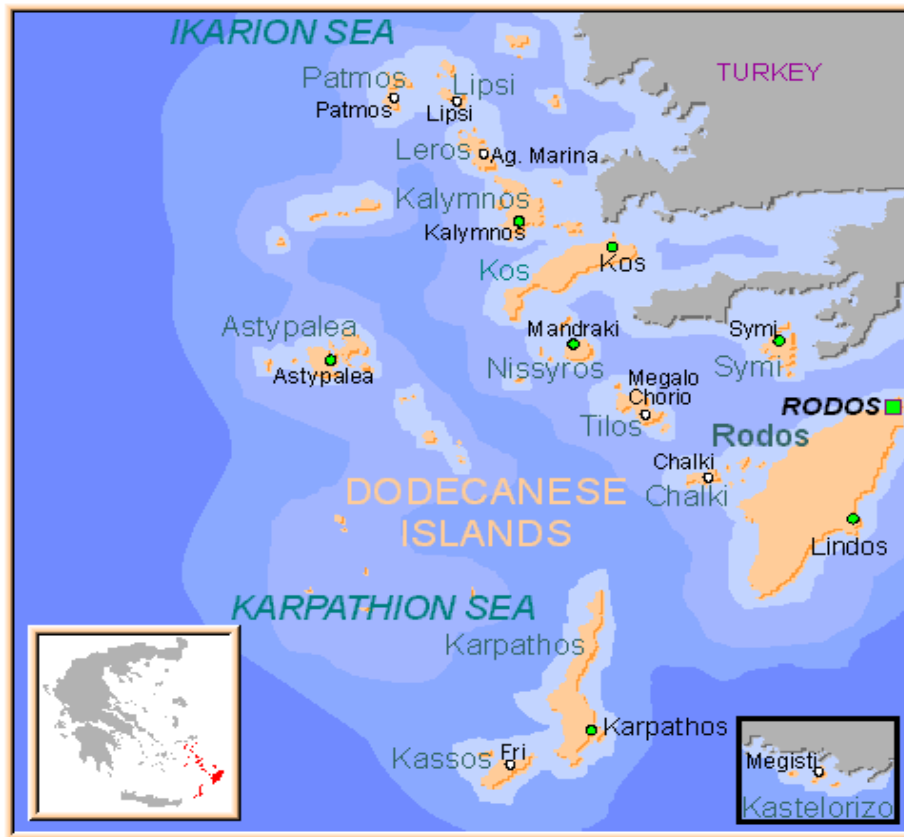
*Key words:* Dodecanese, Tourism, Local Government, Self-Government.

The Greek archipelago, serving as a bridge to link East and West, a crossroads and a meeting-point for three continents - Europe, Asia, Africa - and three different worlds, was the birth-place of the most ancient civilizations. For centuries it attracted peoples to settle within its borders and was bustling with life at periods when mainland Greece was in decline.

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**Map 1:** Archipelago of Dodecanese



## TOURISM AND LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

The activation of representatives of Local Self-government implies the interest and the profit, would add, that they have Local Authority to contribute in the confrontation of problems that occupies the Greek Tourism, so much in national, as in regional level. The forecasted discussions between the representatives of local Hotels unions and Local Authority of their region will confirm her need between them collaboration, will locate in the individual regions the questioning of tourism that composes her total the national questioning and they will seek ways and strategies of more effective intervention in the confrontation of problems of their region (Dubin, 2002).

The Dodecanese and particularly Rhodes constitute characteristic case of collaboration between local tourist factors of private sector and Local Authority for the promotion and resolution of problems that occupies the region. Here it will be supposed we mark that, after a period of experimentations regarding the interference of Local Authority in clearly speculative tourist activities or provided that their state ensures more favorable motives, they intervenes they that hesitate the private initiative or those that hide danger of creation of monopolistic situations. (Dubin, 2002).

The Municipal Constructional Enterprise of Municipalities Rhodes and Halki, that undertook it restores traditional houses and it changes in Hotels and it manufactures and exploits a line of refreshment stands in beaches of municipal limits and in municipal parks, the Municipal Hotels Enterprise of Municipality Rhodes, that undertook it renovates the traditional Hotel of Rhodes, and the Municipal Tourist Enterprise of Municipality Nisirou, that was created with a view to modernize the Municipal Hotels and the group of Municipal therapeutic Baths, they constitute examples of enterprising initiatives that are moved in the frames of the above places regarding the role of Local Authority in the space of tourist enterprises (Dubin, 2002).

The collaboration of Local Authority with the Hotel Unions is expressed mainly in the sector of projection and publicity of their region. Beyond the autonomous energies of Municipalities of Dodecanese, that are materialized or by their Services or by special Tourist Organisms that have created certain Municipalities and concern the organization tourist and recreational events and the attendance in tourist reports, this organisms participate also in collective efforts (The group of authors, 1995).

The Municipality of particularly Rhodes the last years collaborates closely with the Union of Hotel keepers Rhodes and with the other tourist and commercial Organizations of island, in the frames of Prefectoral Committee of Tourism in programs of projection and publicity of Rhodes that is financed by their Local Authority and the tourist – commercial organizations of island. This informal collaboration has been enacted with the recent law for tourism (N. 2160/1993 article 1, paragraph 13), with which are ensured and the necessary resources for the tourist projection of each Prefectoral region (The group of authors, 2002).

The publicity and the projection of region Dodecanese are a important sector, where the collaboration of Local Authority and Hotels Unions has given samples of very good results. However the collaboration is not limited only in this sector. All the subjects that are related with the economy and more specifically with the tourist growth of Dodecanese are the subject of dialogue with their Local Authority. The land-planning distribution of activities, the manufacture of work of infrastructure, the urban growth, circulatory, the management of aquatic resources, the better organization of city of Rhodes, the confrontation of local environmental problems. It is consequently thankful the economic situation of current attendance of representatives of Local Authority in the congress, because is offered the possibility are reported the problems of region that are connected immediately or indirectly with the tourism, is also confirmed by the two sides the will for continuation of the good until today collaboration and are examined ways of more effective intervention of Local Authority in the promotion and resolution of problems of tourism of region Dodecanese (Dubin, 2002).

The region of Dodecanese constitutes undeniably the first international tourist destination of country, not only from opinion of number of visitors, but mainly from opinion of tourist density, after in each resident correspond 8 Hotel customers and 1,9 Hotel beds. Rhodes and Kos belong in the most famous international tourist centers of Mediterranean and the visitors have direct access in them with planes of booked flights (charters) that connect this island with all almost the countries of Europe and Middle East. Direct aces have also the visitors of Karpathos that with the international Airport include also this dynamically in the international tourist destinations. It is calculated that a percentage that exceeds the 90% of foreigner visitors of islands of Dodecanese belongs in the organized mass tourism that it is trafficked in via the international airports of Rhodes, Kos and Karpathos. Other tourist unit they constitute the islands

Kalymnos, Leros, Patmos, that is found in the same coastal axis and accepts in bigger percentage internal tourism. These functions autonomously with visitors that exhaust there their interruptions and they are included in the circuit of organized tourism, that the last time has turned his preferences to the islander destinations that maintain their traditional physiognomy (Dubin, 2002).

The remaining small islands of Dodecanese constitute small hearths of tourism that entertain mainly visitors of one day and certain orders of departing tourists, that seek places quiet and isolated in order to pass their interruptions. These islands are supplied by the big tourist centres of region, as: Simi, Tilos, Halki, Kastellorizo, Nisiros, Kasos, Astypalaia, Lipsi, Agathonisi (Dubin, 2002).

As appears from the above tourist units, the Dodecanese constitutes a single tourist system that is subdivided in three subsystems: that corresponds in the cosmopolitan international tourism, in the most secular but traditional – Greek tourism and in the simple – solitary naturalist tourism. It is three forms of tourism that are offered and alternative and additionally, make that it lends in the tourism of Dodecanese a particular dynamism, as acquires the possibility of being possible to satisfy all tendencies of current tourist demand (Dubin, 2002).

From opinion of clientele, according to the nationalities of visitors that arrived with organized teams and resided in hotels at the last two years, the sovereign place possess the Germans the British and Italians, that they cover above the 60% of total arrivals from the abroad. Important presence the last years have the Dutchmen, the Austrians and the Italians, the Scandinavians, that in the past covered the 45% of tourist movement of Rhodes, today was limited in a percentage lower than the 15%, make that puzzles the tourist factors of region, which with a line of coordinated energies try, so that recovers the Dodecanese this traditional tourist market. Interest for the region they present the last years and countries of Eastern Europe (Hungary, Czech Republic, Russia, Serbia) as well as Middle East (Israel, Egypt etc) countries that are connected with charters directly with Rhodes and Kos (Dubin, 2002).

The distribution of the nationalities in their individual destinations of Dodecanese does not present important differentiations, apart from the Dutchmen, Italians and Austrians, that comparatively appear to prefer the small islands for their interruptions. The preferences of small islands assembles also the internal tourism, which represents hardly the 13% of total tourist movement and covers the 30% of this visitors of islands, while the corresponding percentages for Rhodes are 14% and for the Kos 8% which, should be stressed, was before 15 years the first tourist centre for Greek tourists (Dubin, 2002).

From side of potential of lodgings for the hospitality of tourists the Dodecanese at year 1995 allocated 117.996 beds from which the 85.839 (72,7%) belong to the 919 hotels and the 32,157 (27,3%) in rented rooms, that function with permanent permission the Greek Touristic Organization, exist accordingly with certain estimates and 15.000 roughly beds of this category that function without authorization and constitute said illegal hotels. This number quantitatively corresponds in the current tourist demand, which in favor covers, make that discourage the creation of new Hotel units (The group of authors, 1995).

However with the current developmental arrangement that suppressed the subsidies of sector and with the prohibitory high interest-rates of Hotel loans, it is not possible is expressed investment interest for new hotels. However, for certain old Hotel units problem modernization, which is proposed it becomes via line of finances, tax and

urban motives, in order to render competitive in the requirements of modern tourist clientele (The group of authors, 1995).

What results as general ascertainment of qualitative character from the study of tourist data of region is the tourism the last years presents stagnation from side of number of arrivals and bending from side of economic output. This is confirmed from continuously decreased, when is calculated in constant prices, expense of tourists who visit the Dodecanese, from the reduced medium annual employment – plenitude of hotels and still from the damage that they present the last years the balance-sheets of Hotel enterprises (The group of authors, 2002).

These worrying phenomenon's puzzle the tourist and particularly Hotels organizations, as they see losing tourist product his competitiveness, of course and other coincidental factors, as it is: the economic recession, the high inflation, the followed policy of hard drachma, the high interest-rates and other This are the reason that is today overwhelmed efforts is extended the tourist clientele, are promoted new forms of tourism, to lengthen the tourist period, is developed the wintry tourism etc Efforts that aim in the confrontation of problems of region (Dubin, 2002).

The problems that occupy the tourism of Dodecanese in the present developmental phase and under from the effect of tourist economic situation are many and it is not possible they are developed in all the extent in a congress. Thus therefore from the things the proposal is limited in certain basic problems that are publics for all the islands and many from them are included in the frames of responsibility of Local Authority (Dubin, 2002).

1. The determination of uses of ground constitutes basic condition for the confrontation of serious problem of tourist capacity that is connected immediately with the further growth of Dodecanese. It is imposed consequently with initiative of Local Authority are drawn up for all the islands total land-planning studies, from which it will result who regions can be developed tourist, who forms are offered for growth and if the conditions of market ensure the viability of new tourist activities (Dubin, 2002).

2. The promotion of work of infrastructure for all the islands constitutes equally important factor for the improvement of offered tourist services. The modernization of airports and particularly Rhodes that presents vital problems, of necessary harbor work in Rhodes and in the other small islands (Nisiro, Tilo etc.) in order to facilitate the approaches of cabotage boats, the manufacture of dam of Gadoyra in Rhodes and programmed barrages in the arid islands for confrontation of water shortage, the work of road construction in all the islands and the work of sewerage and biological cleaning, constitute certain from the basic infrastructures that should immediately be promoted (Dubin, 2002).

3. The implementation of special tourist infrastructures that will promote the alternative forms of tourism, as they are: the congress, marine, athletic, therapeutic, politic, ecologic etc. Such infrastructures are the marinas of Rhodes and Kos, the golf Afantou, the Casino of Rhodes, the Jppokratejo Congress Centre in the Kos, the Hydrotherapeutic of Kallitheas and Nisiros, the Athletic Centre of Karakonerou, the Forestal Parks of Prophet Ilias in Rhodes and Antimaheias in Kos and other (Dubin, 2002).

4. I confrontation of environmental problems, that is connected immediately with the quality of tourism, they is direct priority and to a large extent it belongs in the responsibilities of Local Authority. The reformation of big mainly tourist centers of Rhodes and Kos (cities), the circulatory regulations, foot-path, the spaces of green, the

parking, the confrontation of noise pollution and aesthetic pollution, the protection and cleanness of beaches, are certain from the intense environmental problems that should be faced without delay (The group of authors, 2002).

5. The elongation of tourist period and particularly the creation of essential conditions for the growth wintry tourism in the two big international tourist centers, Rhodes and the Kos, it constitutes basic factor that will stimulate the tourist movement and mainly will ease the Hotel enterprises, which today the 50% of their annual productive capacity of are only activated.

6. The tourist promotion and projection of region, particularly in the present phase of tourist economic situation, are essential as long as never previously. It should be coordinated the efforts of all islands and it is presented and is appeared all the Dodecanese as single destination with the particularities of each island. This coordination can become via the Prefectoral Committee of Tourism, which already has been enacted and been possible to ensure also economic resources. The tripartite collaboration (EOT, OTA, tourist-commercial orders) in the sector of promotion and projection, that for enough years made action Rhodes, constitutes a tried organizational form that functions effectively and can cover the region. Already we find in development a program of this collaboration for the period 1993-1994 that it covers apart from Rhodes and other islands of Dodecanese (Dubin, 2002).

7. The tourist education and generally the professional training dealing with the tourism constitute a other important factor for the improvement of quality of tourism of region Are necessary are upgraded so much the ASTER, what the provided education corresponds in the requirements of one modern manager, what the Basic Faculty of Rhodes, which is necessary to create also a Annex in the Kos, in order to is satisfied constant demand of tourist factors of island. Also needs a upgrade of all system of provided today training, or this is provided via the intensive education or via the seminars. The role of Faculties of Tourist Professions here is decisive (Dubin, 2002).

In conclusion be supposed particularly and a line of special problems that they immediately occupy the Hotels enterprises from the resolution of which will also depend on a big degree to their competitiveness. Such pressing problems are: "The regulation of due Hotel obligations to the banks at such way, in order that the enterprises are rendered competitive and mainly viable" (The group of authors, 2002).

The guarantee of finances, tax and urban motives with the under training new developmental law, that will ensure the modernization of Hotel units of all of without exception regions of Dodecanese, what can correspond in the requirements of current tourist clientele.

The reject of tax of functional cost of Hotel enterprises with increases of taxes and municipal dues of (water supply, sewerage, cleanness etc.) that render the enterprises not competitive (The group of authors, 1995).

With this analysis we tried to give a more general picture of questioning of tourism of Dodecanese, that expresses in some high degree the questioning of Greek tourism in his total, to sensitize the factors that are involved in the tourist circuit and to reaffirm the need of collaboration with their Local Authority and to ask their subscription for the resolution of problems of tourism, that is publics for all of us.

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