
TOURISM AND AIR TRANSPORT POST TERRORISM? ANALYSIS OF ROMANIAN OUTBOUND TRAVELLERS AFTER EUROPE'S TERROR ATTACKS

Neagu Florentina-Ştefania¹, Stoenescu Cristina² and Gál Tünde³
¹⁾²⁾³⁾ *Bucharest University of Economic Studies*

E-mail: stefianieneagu15@gmail.com; E-mail: cris_stoenescu@yahoo.ro;

E-mail: tunde.gal@gmail.com

Abstract

Terrorism has always had a considerable impact on tourism development in general and also on the evolution of air transportation worldwide. In many cases, terrorists directly target tourist attractions and highly transited places, such as airports, for a more powerful impact. In this context, it is clear that terrorist attacks influence the evolution of both the tourism and the airline industry and that, in order to recover from such events, implementing a common rehabilitation strategy is a necessary measure to be taken by the authorities.

Over the past three years, many different terrorist attacks have affected several European countries during the tourist season and also some incidents were reported around the elections. These events have directly influenced the tourist dynamics in the area, including the perception of Romanian tourists traveling to Europe for tourism or business purposes. Since the emergence of low-cost airlines, which offer affordability, convenience and wide network coverage in Europe, air travel has become one of the preferred transportation mode for Romanian tourists. Moreover, low-cost airlines contributed to the development of new forms of tourism, especially in Europe, such as short haul city tourism, visiting friends or relatives or second residences. In this context, it is clear that the recent attacks in Europe have influenced the dynamics of tourism and air travel in Europe and have affected Romanian travelers' perception. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the impact of terrorism on air travel and tourism and to identify the necessary measures in order for a destination to recover following these major negative events.

In order to achieve this objective, an analysis of secondary data has been made from scientific publications, journals, websites as well as of statistics regarding the Romanian travel preferences.

Key words

Air transport, Terrorism, Tourism development, Tourist behaviour

JEL Classification

Introduction

International tourism is an important contributor to the world economy. For many developing countries, travel and tourism is the sector representing the main export industry. Moreover, there is a bilateral relationship between air travel and tourism. Air travel has always been an important factor supporting the progress of international tourism and also contributing to the development of new forms of tourism such as: short haul city

tourism, stopover tourism, visiting friends and relatives. On the other hand, tourism development generates more air travel and the airline networks and the airport infrastructure are directly linked with the number of tourists that a destination is planning to attract. In this context, negative events, political and social instability are phenomena that have a major impact on the airline industry, the tourism industry and the economy of a region or country. The major threats to the industry are socio-economic problems which in most cases lead to an increase in the crime rates, political instability, but, the threat of terrorism remains on an even higher alert. This paper explores the relationship between terrorism – air travel – tourism, from different angles:

- The impact of terrorism on tourism
- The strategies implemented by tourism organizations for the recovery of the tourism destination after a terror attack
- Terrorists' interest in targeting tourist attractions
- The impact of terrorism on air travel and terrorists' interest to target airports and airplanes
- The impact of terrorism on the tourist behaviour

Moreover, the paper also focuses on investigating the way the recent terror attacks in Europe have influenced the evolution of tourism in the concerned countries and all over Europe.

In order to achieve the above mentioned objectives, an analysis of secondary data from various scientific publications, journals, websites and statistics has been done.

Tourism - terrorism relationship

According to Pizam & Mansfeld (2006), there are three dimensions of the relationship between tourism and terrorism:

- Terrorist acts directed towards civils but affecting sometimes tourists as well
- Terrorist acts towards economic targets related to tourism activities
- Terrorist acts targeting tourists and tourist destinations

In many cases, terrorist target tourists and mass tourist destinations because tourists represent the values and ideologies that terrorists are fighting against (Paraskevas & Arendell, 2007), because politically, an attack on them represents an attack on their governments (Richter & Waugh, 1986 in Paraskevas & Arendell, 2007) and in order to attract wider international media attention and to make a bigger statement (Liu & Pratt, 2017). Moreover, in some countries, tourism is the main source of economic prosperity and a terrorism act would affect the whole economy and the political establishment of the country (Paraskevas & Arendell, 2007). The impact of terrorism on tourism is negative and multifaceted, affecting the destination itself, the tourism industry, host governments, governments of generating markets (Pizam & Mansfeld, 2006). From this perspective, terrorism has an important impact on the tourism industry, affecting it both directly and indirectly.

First of all, terrorist attacks damage the destination image and discourage tourists from visiting (Pizam & Mansfeld, 2006; Liu & Pratt, 2017), altering tourism demand patterns (Backer, D., 2014). In this context, destination organizations should conduct recovery marketing strategies integrated with crisis management activities (Backer, D., 2014), as well as implement destination-specific anti-terrorism strategies (Paraskevas & Arendell, 2007; Liu & Pratt, 2017). Although frequent terrorist acts in a region might lead to the collapse of a tourism destination, it is considered that the negative impact following an act of terror may be transitory and the destination can rebound (Paraskevas & Arendell, 2007).

Terrorism also has an indirect impact on tourism, considering that acts of terror become a major concern for local, regional and national governments, which might change their

policies towards the future of the sector (Pizam & Mansfeld, 2006). Following a terrorist attack, governments will either diminish their involvement in tourism development due to the high risk involved or they will invest in improving security measures and promoting tourism, in an attempt to overcome the tourism crisis (Pizam & Mansfeld, 2006).

Moreover, the decline in tourism numbers and tourism expenditure might determine a decrease in foreign investment, which will reduce the capital stock required for a continued economic growth (Enders & Sandler, 1996 in Liu & Pratt, 2017). Both these two aspects affect the development of tourism on a long term. In addition, terrorist attacks may destroy the public infrastructure (airports, roads, bridges) (Liu & Pratt, 2017), which is essential for the unfolding of tourism activities. After an attack, tourism services may also become degraded, due to the decrease in the number of employees and the lack of funds for maintenance (Pizam & Mansfeld, 2006). Furthermore, transnational tourism companies (hotels, restaurants) might cease their operations in a certain region, following terrorism acts, which impacts the destinations and their marketing infrastructure (Pizam & Mansfeld, 2006).

Terrorism acts might also determine airlines to discontinue their service to specific destinations, which will have a negative impact on the accessibility (Pizam & Mansfeld, 2006).

The airline travel – terrorism relationship

There is a co-dependent and bilateral relationship between air travel and tourism (Duval, 2013; Bieger & Wittmer, 2006; Graham et al., 2008, Stoenescu, 2017). It is considered that air travel is an important part of the tourism industry, supporting its development but, at the same time, air travel contributed to the emergence of new forms of tourism and has been an important factor in the development of international tourism. Moreover, air transport has an important role in facilitating the growth of other industries, including tourism (Mitra, D. et al., 2017). In 2015, air transport represented over 54% of all international arrivals, compared to 39% representing road travel, 5% water and 2% rail (UNWTO in OECD, 2016). In addition, according to ICAO (in OECD, 2016), international air traffic measured in terms of Revenue Passenger Kilometres (RPKs), is expected to be 2.6 times higher in 2030 than in 2010.

The bombing on the Russian airplane from the Sinai Peninsula to Saint Petersburg, the attack carried out on March 2016 in Brussels Zaventem Airport and the attack taking place on June 2016 in Ataturk International Airport in Istanbul are some examples from the last years testifying the interest that terrorist have on the aviation industry (Azani et al., 2016).

The aviation industry represents an attractive target for terrorists because, along with other transportation means, it has an important psychological effect on the population and it can also paralyze transportation at the international level (Azani et al., 2016).

Terror attacks against the aviation industry started in 1960 with the wave of Palestinian terrorism but it was in September 2001 that this phenomenon began to be at the frontline of international media (Azani et al., 2016). In fact, from that moment, terrorism determined important changes in the airline industry such as intensifying the security checks and the screening processes, limiting the amount of liquids and aerosols onboard, introducing full body scanners, removing laptops and tablets from luggage for better screening.

As security filters has improved, terrorists started to target airports instead, in particular the area before the security screening, taking advantage of the fact that it is a highly transited space and that most of the times it is very crowded, because of the complex screening processes taking more time than before. Some of the terrorist attacks taking place in airports during the last years were:

- On the 24th of January 2011, a bomb exploded in the arrival area of Domodedovo International Airport in Moscow, with 35 casualties; the attack was conducted by a group from the Caucasus area, led by Doku Umarov
- On the 2nd of March 2011, in Frankfurt Airport (Germany), a bus transporting a US military group has been attacked by an airport employee, in the terminal 2 area, leading to two deaths and 2 injured.
- On the 18th of July 2012, on the Sarafovo Airport in Burgas (Bulgaria), a group of Israeli tourists have been involved in a bombing which took place in a bus after their arrival with a charter flight.
- On the 15th of December 2012 and on the 8th of June 2014 two terrorist attacks took place in Pakistan, in Bacha Khan International Airport and Jinnah in Kharachi.
- On the 22nd of March 2016, two explosions hit Zaventem Airport in Brussels and a third one at the Maelbeek metro station, next to the EU Headquarters, with a total of 34 deaths and 316 injured (The Guardian, 2016).
- On November 13rd, 2015, in about three hours almost simultaneously three terrorist attacks took place at different locations in Paris. On the 14th of July 2016, a French citizen with Tunisian origins drove his truck into the crowds celebrating the National Day of France on the Promenade des Anglais in Nice. The attacker had not previously been in the evidence of the authorities for suspicions of terrorism.
- On the 28th of June 2016, three kamikaze terrorists blew up their explosive vests in the arrivals area of the International Airport Ataturk in Istanbul, causing 42 deaths and 239 injuries. The two airport attacks were caused by terrorist affiliated to the Islamic State (CNN, 2016).

In this context, additional measures have been taken by airports worldwide, in order to prevent similar attacks from happening. The EU increased the regulations on the implementation of the security standards in Europe, thoroughly and rigorously screening airport employees, implementing stricter inspection of travellers (Azani et al., 2016).

Moreover, as screening processes are becoming more complex, IATA started working with airports and partners across the value chain to implement self-service options in airports for faster travel, in order to reduce passenger waiting time and fluidize airport traffic, in an attempt discourage terrorists.

Tourist behaviour and terrorism

Peace and safety are two important factors in travelers' decision in choosing a destination (Liu & Pratt, 2017). Some of the identified consequences of terrorist attacks on tourism behaviour are: trip cancellation, replacing risky destinations with safer ones.

On the other hand, it has been argued that terrorist attacks may support the development of "dark tourism", increasing tourism demand in low to moderate political-risk countries (Liu & Pratt, 2017). The impact terrorist attacks have on tourists depends on their attitude to international travel, their risk perception level and income (Sonmez & Graefe, 1998 in Liu & Pratt, 2017). According to Pizam & Mansfeld (2006), there are several factors determining the perceived risk of traveling to a destination affected by security issues:

- The objective facts taking place at the destination;
- The image projected by the media;
- The tourism operators (i.e., travel agents and tour operators);
- Personal information sources (i.e., friends and relatives);
- The subjective acceptable risk of each traveller

While some tourists might be concerned with security threats and cancel or postpone their trip after an attack, others might be less affected and continue their travel to that destination

(Liu & Pratt, 2017). Referring to the income as an important factor in choosing a destination, in the aftermath of an act of terror, tourism companies might reduce prices and offer incentives to attract tourists. In terms of main transportation means used, most of the tourists generally choose to travel by air because of the costs, the convenience of the flight, the length of the trip and the higher level of comfort (Ali, 2007). Still, their decision can change depending on factors such as: meteorological events, pandemics, political instability, terrorist attacks.

According to a research conducted by in 2018 by International SOS and Ipsos Mori Reputation Centre on 1000 respondents from the business environment, it has been shown that international events determine them to change their already established trips, 58% of them being influenced by terrorist attacks, 43 % of them by extreme weather conditions and natural disasters, 42% by the overall risk in that country. Out of the total number of the respondents, 63% consider that travel risk have increased during last year and estimate a 52% of the risk level for next year. Although the perceived risk of travelling has increased, 48% of the respondents consider that various measures have been taken in order to address these risks. Among the measures taken are: the improvement of security, the update of the travel risk policies, implementing programs tracking tourists, investments in communication systems in crisis situations (SOS International, 2017).

Research Methodology

In order to see to what extent terrorist attacks in Europe have influenced the perception of Romanians traveling abroad, an analysis of the Romanian tourists has been done from two perspectives. First of all, the research took into consideration the number of Romanian tourists participating to external tourism activities in three countries Belgium, France, Turkey, through two categories of travel agencies: tour operators specialized in the organisation of tourism programs and activities, commercialized directly or through other travel agencies and agencies with sale activity, selling tourism programs created by tour operators.

Secondly, the data of the annual publication Air transport of passenger and goods for the years 2015-2017 has been analysed, as well as the data of the global leader in hotel, tourism and leisure consulting company Horwath HTL, which made it possible to have a better insight of the way tourists' perception has been influenced by the recent terror attacks.

Results and discussions

The terrorist attacks which occurred recently in France, Belgium, Turkey, causing deaths and casualties among locals and tourists, have been widely publicized through international media agencies, affecting in many cases the tourists 'decision when planning a trip to these countries and influencing tourists' overall perception of traveling in Europe, in terms of safety.

According to INS, the number of Romanian tourists who traveled in Europe decreased from 1,169,162 in 2015 to 1,080,154 in 2016. Although the number of tourists decreased, the number of Romanian tourists choosing to travel by airplane increased from 21% in 2015 to 30% in 2016, while the proportion of tourists who use the road decreased from 78% to 69%. This can be explained by the fact that air travel became a convenient and affordable mode of transportation in Europe, mostly due to the development of low-cost airlines. Moreover, low-cost airlines were important factors in the development of new forms of tourism, such as „short haul city tourism”. In 2016, 90.1% of the Romanian tourists traveled for holidays, 2,6% for business trips and professional reasons, and 7,2% were persons in transit. Of the total number of tourists, 99.4% chose holiday destinations in Europe.

Table no 1. Number of Romanian tourists taking part in external tourist actions organized by travel agencies, by destination country

Travel agencies	Continent and origin country for foreign tourists	Years		
		2014	2015	2016
		MU: Persons		
Tour operator agencies	Belgium	1238	6167	1867
	France	15230	18920	17631
	Turkey	66895	63700	69867
Sale activity agencies	Belgium	647	230	275
	France	13410	14506	16495
	Turkey	38575	34927	32713

Source: authors' processing, based on INS data.

As it can be seen in (table no. 1), the number of Romanian tourists traveling to Belgium and France decreased in 2016 comparative with 2015. Regarding Turkey, the number of tourists traveling through tour operators increased in 2016 compared to 2015 for tourists who choose to travel with tour operator agencies and sale activity agencies. In the case of France, the number of tourists traveling with tour operator agencies increased, while the number of those who chose the agencies with sales activity decreased.

On the other hand, the statistics indicate that the overall number of Romanians travelling to Turkey has decreased in 2016 with almost 7% (fig. no.1). In this context, it is clear that Romanians travelled less to Turkey on their own but felt safer to purchase a travel package from tour operators. Statistics also indicate that, despite the terror attacks and political instability, Turkey remained a tourist attraction for Romanians also in 2016.

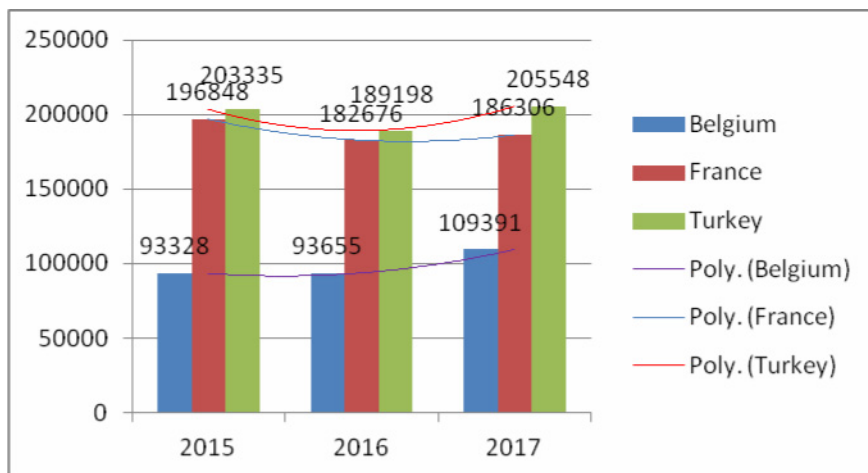


Fig. no 1. Number of Romanians travelling to Belgium, France and Turkey

Source: authors' processing, based on INS data.

Moreover, in all three cases, it is obvious that, in 2017, the number of Romanian tourists has increased. This can be explained by the fact that, in the case of terrorist attacks, the impact is visible immediately but is not lasting if there are no more incidents that occur. In addition, after the attacks, all three countries have implemented strategies in order to minimize the damages and promote tourism. After the Nice attack, there has been a 10% decrease in the number of tourists but the French government launched the program “Cote D’Azur now”, in

collaboration with representatives of the tourism industry, in order to re-establish France as an important tourism destination. A budget of 1 million euros has been allocated for this.

After the implementation of “Cote D'Azur now”, the number of foreign tourists who visited France in 2017 increased by 11.2%, according to the latest report published by the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies of France (INSEE) the number of hotel accommodation nights increased by 5.2%. After the attack on Zaventem Airport (Belgium), a collaboration between Brussels Airlines, Brussels Airport, SNCB and several local travel agencies has been signed, in order to implement a Belgian touristic image rehabilitation program called “Hi Belgium Pass”. This program allows passengers flying with Brussels Airlines from the 50 airports in Europe to Brussels Airport (The Bulletin Belgium, 2017) to benefit of various facilities. As far as Turkey is concerned, not only the number of Romanian tourists has decreased, but also tourists from other countries.

In order to attract more tourists, the Turkish government promoted the country to the World Travel Market in the UK, the Ministry of Tourism hired several people to answer questions, to distribute brochures to more than 100 exhibitions attended by representatives of tourism in Russia, Germany and the Netherlands. Moreover, the government increased subsidies for airlines that bring tourists to certain airports in Turkey (Horwath HTL, 2017). According to the press release published by the Turkish National Institute of Statistics (TÜİK), following these measures of promotion, tourism revenues in 2017 increased by 19% compared to 2016 as a result of the increase in the number of foreign tourists.

Since 2017, the number of Romanian tourists traveling in France, Belgium and Turkey began to increase as a result of programs implemented by these countries to revive the image of tourist destinations, but also because no other major incident has been registered. In Belgium there was no another major terrorist attack since the one in Zaventem Airport, and the fact that Brussels is the headquarters of the European Commission, the EU Council, NATO and Eurocontrol makes the country recover faster from the attack and attract both leisure and business tourists, also after the measures taken, such as increasing the number of police forces on the. Being one of the great economies of Europe (Claveria & Poluzzi, 2016) and implementing higher control measures in the big shopping centers, public institutions and all the tourist attractions have contributed to France recovering from the negative impact of the terrorist attacks. In the case of Turkey, after the bombing at Ataturk Airport there were several terrorist car bombings in the middle of the city, attacks on foreign tourists in a club on the night of 31st December 2017, as well as political instability, which could make tourists be skeptical about travel safety. At present, the security situation is unstable both in Ankara, Istanbul, but also in the south and south-east of the country due to political instability and Turkey's military interventions in the Syrian African region, which could make Turkey become in the future a target for Syrian terrorist groups (Akman, 2010). But, even in these conditions, the number of Romanians travelling to Turkey has increased in 2017.

Conclusions

Terrorism acts have a considerable influence on tourism and on tourists' perception of a destination. Nevertheless, isolated terrorist attacks, even major, impact tourism on a short term and tourist destinations have the possibility to recover if they adopt an image rehabilitation program and a strategy developed between the important stakeholders. This could be seen also in the case of Romanian tourists. In 2016, when the terror attacks occurred, most of the countries encountered a decrease in terms of the number of tourists but in 2017, all countries have implemented specific programs to re-establish themselves as important tourism destinations and managed to attract more tourists.

Moreover, although some of the recent terrorist attacks took place in airports (Belgium, Turkey), air travel remains one of the preferred transportation mode for Romanians,

especially because of the low-cost airlines which started to operate on many Romanian airports, at very affordable fares. From this angle, although terrorism has a strong impact on tourism, destinations can rebound by implementing recovery programs and improving security in airports and public places.

References

- Akman, P., 2010. *Psychosocial intervention in response to bombings in Istanbul*. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 5, pp. 1716-1720.
- Ali, E., 2007. *Determinants of Choosing an Airline by a Traveller -An Analysis from New Zealand Perspective*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.econbiz.de/Record/determinants-of-choosing-an-airline-by-a-traveller-an-analysis-from-new-zealand-perspective-ali-ershad/10005487680>> [Accessed 29 March 2018].
- Azani, E., Lvovsky, L.A. and Haberfeld, D., 2016. *Trends in Aviation Terrorism*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.ict.org.il/UserFiles/ICT-trends-aviation-terror-aug-16.pdf>> [Accessed 15 April 2018]
- Claveria, O. and Poluzzi, A., 2016. Tourism trends in the world's main destinations before and after the 2008 financial crisis using UNWTO official data. *Data in Brief*, 7, pp. 1063-1069.
- CNN, 2016. *Istanbul terror attack: Erdogan says Turkey will not be divided*. [online] Available at: <<https://edition.cnn.com/2016/06/29/europe/turkey-istanbul-aturk-airport-attack/index.html>> [Accessed 29 March 2018].
- Horwath HTL, 2017. *Special Market Report Turkey* [online] Available at: <<https://www.hospitalitynet.org/file/152008136.pdf>> [Accessed 16 April 2018].
- Iancu, L., 2013. *Câți români merg anual în vacanță pe Coasta de Azur. Suma cheltuită de aceștia în locația de lux*. [online] Available at: <<http://www.mediafax.ro/economic/cati-romani-merg-anual-in-vacanta-pe-coasta-de-azur-suma-cheltuita-de-acestia-in-locatia-de-lux-10604384>> [Accessed 24 March 2018].
- International SOS and Ipsos Mori Reputation Center, 2018. *Business Resilience Trends Watch 2018*. [online] Available at: <<http://learn.internationalsos.com/travelriskmap2018>> [Accessed 23 March 2018].
- International SOS, 2016. *Travel Risk Map 2017*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.internationalsos.com/newsroom/news-releases/travel-risk-map-2017-nov-15-2016>> [Accessed 23 March 2018].
- Mitra, D., Pham C. and Bandyopadhyay, S., 2017, *The Effects of Terror on International Air Passenger Transport: An Empirical Investigation* [online] Available at: <<https://files.stlouisfed.org/files/htdocs/wp/2017/2017-002.pdf>> [Accessed 15 April 2018]
- National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies of France (2018) Press Release No 33 of 7 February 2018. *Au quatrième trimestre 2017, la fréquentation touristique croît fortement (+7,8 % sur un an, après +4,1 % au trimestre précédent)* [online] Available at: <<https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/3322395>> [Accessed 18 May 2018].
- National Institute of Statistics of Romania, 2016. *Annual Publication Tourism demand of Romanian Residents 2016*. [online] Available at: <<http://www.insse.ro/cms/en/content/tourism-demand-romanian-residents-semi2016>> [Accessed 10 April 2018].
- Paraskevas, A. and Arendell, B., 2007, *A strategic framework for terrorism prevention and mitigation in tourism destinations*. *Tourism Management*, 28, pp.1560–1573

Resh, A., 2016. *Terrorist attack in Nice: the Côte d'Azur launches a program to boost tourism*. [online] Available at: <https://www.tourmag.com/Terrorist-attack-in-Nice-the-Cote-d-Azur-launches-a-program-to-boost-tourism_a83447.html> [Accessed 24 March 2018].

The Bulletin Belgium, 2017. *Tourism sector launches “Hi Belgium Pass”*. [online] Available at:<<https://www.thebulletin.be/tourism-sector-launches-hi-belgium-pass>> [Accessed 12 April 2018].

The Guardian, 2016. *Brussels: Islamic State launches attacks on airport and station—as it happened*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2016/mar/22/brussels-airport-explosions-live-updates>> [Accessed 24 March 2018].

Turkish National Institute of Statistics, 2018. Press release No 27613 of 30 April 2018. *Tourism Statistics, Quarter I: January-March, 2018*. [online] Available at: <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=27613>> [Accessed 10 May 2018].