

Identifying of potential advantages and disadvantages of the presence of residential construction in the Bulgarian Black Sea resort Saint Saint Constantine and Helena

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Abstract – There are multiple advantages and disadvantages of having residential construction in the otherwise Black Sea tourist resort Saint Saint Constantine and Helena. On one hand, some of the advantages are the improvement of the infrastructure, economic growth, variety of accommodation, improvement of services, increase of property cost and improvement of the standart of living. On the other hand, there are major disadvantages such as the risk of overcrowding, the disturbing of the landscapes, deterioration of the beaches, cultural changes and division and inequity between people due to the high prices of the real estate in the resort. The following article aims to examine some potential advantages and disadvantages and give recommendation on how to improve the current state of the resort and achieve sustainable development. The methods of analysis used are observation, investigation, comparison and personal expert assessment. On this basis we made the conclusions and recommendations in this article.

Keywords – *Tourism, Advantages, Disadvantages, Residential Construction, Resort*

I. INTRODUCTION

St. St. Constantine and Helena resort, located on the Black Sea coast of Bulgaria near the city of Varna, stands out as one of the most attractive and visited places on the Bulgarian Black

Sea coast. However, in recent years, the resort complex has become attractive not only to Bulgarian and foreign tourists but also to construction investors who purchase plots for residential construction projects. As a result, a large number of residential complexes have been

developed and sold, transforming St. St. Constantine and Helena from a seasonal tourist resort into a populated area with a significant number of permanent residents.

Considering that St. St. Constantine and Helena is the oldest Bulgarian resort and a resort of national importance according to Decision No. 45 of the Council of Ministers dated January 25, 2005 (State Gazette, 2005), ranking third in capacity and fourth in terms of visitation on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, there is a need to examine the aforementioned case and explore the potential ways in which residential construction in the resort can impact tourism economically, socially, environmentally, etc.

The objective of this article is to identify the potential advantages and disadvantages of residential construction in St. St. Constantine and Helena.

The main task at hand is to investigate the potential effects of the identified advantages and disadvantages, primarily from the perspective of the resort's potential for expansion and development, increasing its tourism attractiveness, and generating more overnight stays.

The methods used for conducting the study include observation, research, comparison, and personal expert opinion. Based on these methods and the results obtained, the recommendations and conclusions in this article have been made.

II. EXPOSITION

To achieve the objective set in the article, certain potential advantages and disadvantages of residential construction in St. St. Constantine and Helena resort have been identified. The significance of each advantage and disadvantage has been examined, taking into account its potential impact. This will help establish the necessary recommendations and actions to achieve a balanced and sustainable development of the resort in the future.

- **Potential Advantages**

- a) ***Infrastructure Improvement*** - Tourist destinations worldwide, especially in Europe, are evolving and transforming to meet the growing interest in travel and the demand for new and unique experiences (Go & Govers, 2000). One of the key factors influencing the attractiveness of a destination is its infrastructure (Seetanah et al., 2011). In the context of the Black Sea resort St. St. Constantine and Helena, the development of residential construction could significantly enhance and expand the tourist infrastructure in the region.

Investments in residential construction and the realization of housing complexes are expected to lead to significant improvements in the resort's infrastructure. The creation of new residential buildings will necessitate the expansion and improvement of roads, making it easier for tourists

to access the resort and improving their mobility in the area. This will benefit not only the local population but also visitors, who will be able to easily move around the resort area and visit more establishments and attractions. Furthermore, to obtain the necessary permits for the new buildings, investors will have to asphalt the surrounding streets, ensuring infrastructural improvements.

Secondly, the development of residential construction should contribute to the improvement of water supply and sewage systems in the region. To meet the needs of the growing number of users, the infrastructure needs to be modernized and expanded. The construction of new housing complexes will allow investments in the renewal of the water resources and sewage system, ensuring sustainability and quality of water supply.

Thirdly, the development of residential construction will lead to an improvement in the resort's energy infrastructure. Investors in new residential complexes could invest in modern and energy-efficient systems, such as solar panels, for example, contributing to a reduction in energy dependence and improving the resort's ecological footprint. This not only helps preserve the environment but also reduces electricity costs, adding value to residents and tourists.

The development of residential construction in the Black Sea tourist resort St. St. Constantine and Helena could have a significantly positive impact on the region's infrastructure. Potential improvements in roads, water supply, sewage, and energy

efficiency will create better conditions for tourists' visits and stays, ultimately attracting more tourists and improving the resort's economy.

b) *Economic Development* - Studies conducted by several authors unequivocally reveal that residential construction can contribute to stimulating economic growth (Aganbegyan, 2012; Jackman, 2010; Anaman et al., 2007) and creating new job opportunities. The construction of housing complexes and infrastructure will generate the need for workforce in various sectors, including construction, architecture, engineering, and others (Chiang et al., 2015). This will create employment opportunities and economic growth in the region. These jobs will provide new avenues for the local population to pursue, which should have a positive effect on their living standards and the economic well-being of the community.

The development of residential construction could enhance the investment attractiveness of the resort due to a significant increase in the permanent population (consumers). When there is a larger consumer market, investors are more likely to invest their money in the resort, attracted by new business opportunities. Making new investments in hotels, restaurants, shops, spa centers, etc., can stimulate economic growth by creating new job positions and contributing to economic activity in the resort.

Improving the tourist infrastructure through residential construction will enhance the tourist attractiveness of the resort. This, in turn, is expected to increase tourist revenue and stimulate the development of trade and services in the resort, such as accommodation options, dining, entertainment, shopping, etc., thereby boosting economic activity and local businesses' income.

The development of residential construction in the Black Sea tourist resort St. St. Constantine and Helena would contribute to the economic development of the region. The creation of jobs, attracting investments, and increasing tourism activity will have a positive impact on employment, income, and the economic well-being of the community. This will improve the living standards of the local population and contribute to a sustainable economy in the resort.

c) Accommodation Diversity - Residential construction in the resort provides opportunities for diversifying tourist accommodation. This is because a significant portion of property purchases in the resort are made for investment purposes, such as rental properties. This, in turn, offers tourists a greater choice of options for their stay (studios, apartments, luxury villas, etc.) according to their individual needs and preferences (room sizes, amenities and services, different price categories, etc.). This advantage becomes crucial as it has the ability to attract different segments of

tourists (families with children, couples, groups, and individual travelers), especially those who do not wish to be accommodated in hotels. Therefore, the diversity of accommodation is expected to have a positive impact on the tourist attractiveness and increase the tourist flow to the resort, leading to economic growth.

d) Service Improvement - The implementation of residential construction projects creates opportunities for the development of various types of services aimed at tourists and the local population. This is due to the fact that an increase in the local population and tourist flow results in an expansion of the service market (including dining, entertainment, sports and recreational activities, spa and wellness services, tourist excursions, etc.). Additionally, competition among local businesses pushes them to provide increasingly higher-quality services, leading to increased customer satisfaction with the products offered and potential repeat visits.

e) Increase in Property Prices - St. St. Constantine and Helena stands out as one of the most preferred and luxurious places for real estate purchase in the Varna region. The construction of new and modern residential complexes with high construction and furnishing quality in such a prestigious location sparks interest in investing in real

estate and purchasing properties. This is evidenced by the rapid sales realization of properties in newly developed projects, with prices starting from 1500 euros per square meter for green areas and over 2000 euros per square meter for already constructed buildings. This, in turn, leads to an overall increase in the value of properties in the resort, which has a positive effect on the local community and economy. The growth in property value creates new opportunities for selling and renting at higher prices, supporting the development of real estate and related services sectors. On the other hand, the increase in real estate prices results in higher tax and fee revenues, such as municipal property taxes and ownership transfer fees.

- f) ***Improvement of the Quality of Life*** - Based on the advantages mentioned so far, it can be concluded that residential construction contributes to the improvement of infrastructure, provides opportunities for convenient and high-quality tourist accommodation, enhances all types of services, and has a positive effect on tourism and investment attractiveness. Therefore, residential construction improves the lifestyle, quality of life, and well-being of people.

- **Disadvantages**

- a) ***Risk of Overcrowding*** - As a result of the progressive growth of the housing sector and an increase in the number of accommodated tourists, there is a risk of overcrowding in the resort. This problem is associated with a decrease in available space, increasing competition for access to beaches, restaurants, shops, and other public areas. This, in turn, could worsen the quality of services provided, lead to congestion, and result in a shortage of resources to meet the needs of tourists and local residents due to the inability to cope with higher consumption (Jimenez & Hernandez, 2011). It has been proven that overcrowding in tourist destinations has a negative impact on tourist satisfaction and reduces the likelihood of repeat visits and/or recommendations for that destination (Papadopoulou, 2023). Another problem stemming from overcrowding in the resort is the strain on infrastructure (including roads, sewage, water supply, and energy networks). The result can be inefficient functioning, lack of maintenance, and insufficient provision of services to users (Smeral, 2019). This would negatively affect the quality of life and decrease the attractiveness of the resort for both tourists and investors. To avoid these consequences, it is necessary to establish a

balance between the development of the housing sector and the capacity of infrastructure and services. Efforts should be directed towards population management (Smeral, 2019), preserving the quality of services, and maintaining a balance between the tourism industry and the local population to ensure sustainable development of the resort.

b) *Disturbance of Landscapes* - One of the drawbacks associated with residential construction in the St. St. Constantine and Helena Black Sea resort is the disturbance of natural landscapes. During the construction of new housing complexes and hotels, the aesthetics and harmony of the surrounding nature and landscapes are often disrupted. Natural landscapes are one of the main attractions for tourists (Bal & Czalczyńska-Podolska, 2021) in the resort. They are characterized by unique beauty, rich vegetation, and diversity of animal species. The landscapes not only attract tourists with their visual appeal but also serve as important cultural, ecological, and economic assets (Terkenli, 2004). The disturbance of these landscapes due to construction can lead to a loss of aesthetic value and reduced attractiveness of the resort for visitors (Bal & Czalczyńska-Podolska, 2021).

The construction of large housing complexes and hotels often requires the

clearing of a significant portion of vegetation and the destruction of natural ecosystems. This is detrimental to biodiversity and certain plant and animal species. As a result, ecological balance is disrupted, and the long-term sustainability of ecosystems in the resort is called into question. To prevent this, strict control and planning of residential construction within the resort area are necessary, including the provision of green areas, parks, and botanical gardens to create a pleasant atmosphere and compensate for the lost natural landscapes (known as "green compensation") (Cilliers, 2012).

c) *Deterioration of Beaches* - One of the main problems associated with residential construction is the disruption of the natural conditions of the beaches. The construction of new complexes and infrastructure near the beaches leads to changes in natural processes such as sand sedimentation and shoreline erosion (Ruppert, 2005). This can result in a reduction in the width and quality of the beaches, as well as the loss of natural characteristics that make them attractive to visitors. Another problem is the overcrowding of beaches due to increased tourist and local resident flows, which affects the accessibility of the beaches, availability of sunbeds and umbrellas, comfort, space, and water cleanliness.

Therefore, the deterioration and overcrowding of beaches are prerequisites for dissatisfaction among tourists and a decrease in the quality of their stay (Chen & Teng, 2016; Lukoseviciute & Panagopoulos, 2021).

To address the deterioration of beaches, appropriate measures for conservation and management of the beach environment need to be taken. This includes regular monitoring and maintenance of the beaches, redesigning beach infrastructure to provide sufficient space for visitors, and taking actions to preserve sand sedimentation and the shoreline.

To address such problems, scientific literature emphasizes the importance of implementing beach quality assessments as a tool for achieving sustainable coastal tourism. Beach assessment encompasses various aspects such as water quality, cleanliness, safety, aesthetics, and visitor services. By conducting regular assessments, destination managers can identify areas for improvement and implement suitable measures to maintain and enhance the quality of the beaches (Lukoseviciute & Panagopoulos, 2021).

Furthermore, it is important to conduct informational campaigns and educate visitors to encourage responsible behavior and the protection of the beach environment.

This includes proper waste disposal, adherence to beach behavior rules, and the preservation of natural resources.

d) *Disruption of the Resort's Traditional Appearance* - Residential construction often involves the construction of modern and standardized buildings that do not always correspond to the architectural and stylistic characteristics of the resort's traditional appearance. This leads to a disruption of the aesthetics and visual appeal of the resort, losing the uniqueness and identity that sets it apart from other places (Bal & Czalczyńska-Podolska, 2021). On the other hand, as a result of the military operation in Ukraine, many Ukrainians are seeking refuge in Bulgaria and other countries close to Ukraine (Slaviuk & Bui, 2022), and a significant number of properties in the resort area have been purchased by Ukrainian refugees. The integration of new residents who do not share the same traditions and values as the local population can lead to a distancing from the "roots" and traditions of the resort. This undermines the authenticity and character of the resort.

To preserve the traditional character of the resort, it is important to exercise strict control over architectural and construction projects to ensure compliance with local traditions and styles. Additionally,

promoting local culture, cuisine, and customs would contribute to preserving the traditional character and uniqueness of the resort.

- e) ***Increase in Real Estate Prices*** - As already mentioned, residential construction in the St. St. Constantine and Elena resort area leads to an increase in real estate prices. The new buildings and complexes being constructed in the resort typically offer modern and luxury apartments that are sold at high prices. On the other hand, the high demand and strong real estate market push up the value of all properties in the resort area. This makes real estate inaccessible to a wide range of potential buyers, especially those with modest incomes and without their own housing capital. Furthermore, high real estate prices can have a negative impact on the diversity of the potential property market. When prices are unaffordable for a large portion of potential buyers, it creates a limiting effect on the choice of properties. This sets the stage for the emergence of division and inequality among people, emphasizing the "poor-rich" dichotomy. It is necessary to encourage the construction of different types of housing projects (more affordable housing) to achieve a balance and diversity in the real estate market. It is important to ensure diversity in the real estate market to avoid social segregation.

III. DISCUSSION SECTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The presence of residential construction in the tourist resort of St. St. Constantine and Elena has been a subject of debate and discussion. There are significant benefits to residential construction, but it needs to be determined whether they outweigh the mentioned drawbacks that may arise. In this discussion section, we will examine residential construction from both sides and present arguments in support and criticism of proponents of residential construction in the resort.

As a result of the conducted study, it becomes clear that the presence of residential construction in the resort creates opportunities for economic development and the emergence of new jobs. It can also attract new investors and capital to the resort and has the potential to significantly improve the infrastructure in the resort. Additionally, the presence of permanent residents will stimulate both the diversity and quality of tourist services, maintaining local businesses even during slow months.

On the other hand, the increase in population and tourist flow can lead to overloading of the infrastructure and services, which may worsen the quality of life for local residents and visitors to the resort. Furthermore, the construction of new modern buildings can disrupt the aesthetics and traditional vision of the resort, which is distinguished by its natural and cultural heritage.

It is important to note that the successful development of the St. St. Constantine and Elena tourist resort requires a balanced and sustainable approach to residential construction. To prevent adverse consequences and preserve the aesthetics and uniqueness of the resort, strict control and regulations related to residential construction should be implemented in the future. Additionally, investment in infrastructure and service sectors is necessary to ensure high-quality services and satisfaction of the needs of both tourists and the local population.

In conclusion, we come to the realization that in order to maximize the benefits and minimize the negative consequences, it is necessary to take comprehensive measures and recommendations for management and control. Only then can we ensure a balanced development of the resort that meets the needs of tourists while preserving and conserving the beauty and cultural wealth of the resort.

Based on the advantages and disadvantages of the presence of residential construction in the St. St. Constantine and Elena tourist resort presented in this article, we propose the following recommendations for improvement:

1. Land and Construction Management- Strict control over land use and construction is necessary to preserve the aesthetics of the resort and protect natural resources. The implementation of stringent building norms and regulations will help preserve the environment and prevent negative impacts on nature.

2. Infrastructure Management- The resort's infrastructure should be well-maintained and meet the needs of both the population and tourists throughout the year. Investments should be made in expanding roads, improving water supply and energy efficiency, as well as enhancing public services. This will improve the standard of living for residents and enhance the attractiveness of the resort for tourists and permanent residents.

3. Balance between Tourism and Local Needs- To ensure a balance between tourism and local needs, mechanisms for managing tourist flow need to be established. This includes developing diverse tourist products and services to attract different categories of visitors and distributing the tourist flow throughout the year, rather than just during peak seasons.

4. Strengthening the Connection with the Local Community- It is important to include and consider the perspective of the local population in the process of residential construction development in the St. St. Constantine and Elena resort. Active involvement of the local community in planning and decision-making will ensure that the interests and needs of the local residents are taken into account and respected by investors.

5. Supporting Accessibility and Diversity of the Housing Market- Mechanisms and incentives should be provided to diversify the housing market in the resort. This can include

the development of alternative forms of accommodation such as apartment-hotels or guesthouses and bungalows.

6. Improving the Quality of Services-

Continuous improvement of the quality of tourist services is crucial to increase competitiveness and attractiveness of the resort. Training of staff in the tourism sector (including hotels, restaurants, and entertainment venues) should be a priority to ensure high-quality guest service and enhance their experience.

7. Continued Sustainable Development-

Ensuring sustainable development of the resort is of fundamental importance. To achieve this goal, the application of energy-efficient and environmentally-friendly practices in the construction and tourism sectors, as well as the preservation of natural resources and biodiversity, is necessary.

By adhering to these recommendations and implementing careful management, the presence of residential construction in the St. St. Constantine and Elena tourist resort can be optimally utilized to achieve a balance between tourist and local needs and ensure sustainable development of the resort.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the research conducted in this article on the advantages and disadvantages of residential construction in the St. Constantine and Elena tourist resort, we can conclude that residential construction

in the resort should be considered from a dual perspective, recognizing that it brings both opportunities and challenges. The advantages of having residential construction in the resort include the creation of permanent residents who can consume the products offered by businesses year-round and contribute to the economic development of the area. Additionally, residential construction contributes to the diversification of tourist services and creates new opportunities for infrastructure development.

However, it should be noted that the presence of residential construction also has significant drawbacks. The increase in population and tourist flow could lead to infrastructure overload and higher housing prices, which, in turn, could reduce the accessibility of these properties for many potential residents, resulting in inequality, division, and conflicts among them.

To improve the situation and manage the development of the St. Constantine and Elena resort, strict control over land and construction processes, infrastructure management, balanced distribution of the tourist flow, and strengthening the connection with the local community are necessary. Only through balanced and sustainable management of residential construction can we ensure that St. Constantine and Elena maintains its attractiveness as a tourist resort while caring for the environment and the well-being of both tourists and the local population. The recommendations and measures implemented should reflect efforts to achieve

balance and sustainability in the resort, offering quality accommodation and a unique experience for visitors without jeopardizing the region's nature and cultural heritage.

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