

# ADMINISTRATIVE DATA SOURCE FOR ACCOMMODATION STATISTICS IN CROATIA

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*14<sup>th</sup> GLOBAL FORUM ON TOURISM STATISTICS  
23 to 25 November, 2016, Venecija, Italija  
SESSION 2: INNOVATION IN SOURCES AND METHODS*

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## **Introduction**

This document provides an overview of new data source for Monthly survey on tourist arrivals and nights including data on tourist accommodation establishments and their capacities in Croatia.

Until 2016, tourist boards and accommodation establishments sent data on tourist arrivals and nights and accommodation capacities by e-mail or by post. Reporting units for households, crafts and enterprises whose accommodation establishments were classified into rooms to let, apartments, studio-type suites, summer houses and camping sites in households were tourist boards on the basis of records of check-ins and check-outs of guests. Accommodation establishment filled monthly report for all other types of accommodation facilities using data from guest books.

As of January 01<sup>st</sup> 2016, eVisitor system officially became central electronic system for checking in and checking out tourists in Republic of Croatia. For this reason, in 2016 Croatian Bureau of Statistics (CBS) has collected data for survey on the accommodation capacities and their occupancy from two sources, the first being tourist accommodation establishments and second eVisitor system.

In this paper, we will describe how we process data on tourist arrivals and nights as well as data on accommodation facilities in 2016 and our plans regarding future use of eVisitor system as an administrative source for accommodation statistics.

### **1. Data source and methods of data collection until 2016**

Data source on the capacity and occupancy of tourist accommodation establishments in Croatia is a regular Monthly Report on Tourist Arrivals and Tourist Nights (Form TU-11) conducted by Croatian Bureau of Statistics (CBS). The methodology of this survey is based on the recommendations of Eurostat and World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

Since 2011, reporting units can send Monthly Report on Tourist Arrivals and Tourist Nights (Form TU-11) to CBS by post (fulfilling the paper questionnaire) or by e-mail (Excel or txt file). CBS gives detailed instructions to reporting units on using either of these options for sending monthly report in. Almost 95% of reporting units sent data in Excel or txt format via e-mail.

Variables collected by Form TU-11 are: name and address of accommodation establishment; type and category of accommodation establishment; number of rooms, camping sites and apartments; number of beds (permanent and temporarily); number of occupied rooms in hotels and the similar accommodation during the reference month; number of operating days of that facility for the reference month; number of tourist arrivals and tourist nights by country of residence; mode of tourists arrival (individual or organised arrangement).

Reporting units are all business entities (enterprises/trade companies, craftsmen, co-operatives, institutions, associations, etc.) and parts thereof as engaged in providing accommodation services in tourism; health institutions for their facilities in which individuals stay for medical rehabilitation purposes (costs are on individuals themselves); business entities and parts thereof for their vacation facilities; business entities that founded or take care of mountain resorts; business entities that use schools, homes and similar facilities as temporary vacation facilities during school vacations; business entities for sleeping cars and couchettes and business entities in river and sea water transport (only scheduled lines).

Types of tourist accommodation establishments are: hotels, heritage hotels, all-suite hotels, diffuse hotels, integral hotels, spa hotels, special-standards hotels, tourist resorts, tourist apartments, boarding houses, guest houses, camping sites, small camps, quick stop camping, rooms to let, apartments, studio-type suites, summer houses, overnight accommodations, vacation facilities, hostels, mounting lodges, hunting lodges, pupil or student homes and the like (for tourist accommodation), facilities used in Robinson tourism. All this mentioned accommodation facilities are categorised according to the Ordinance on Classification, Minimum Standards and Categorization of Accommodation Establishments. Beside the accommodation facilities categorised by the Ordinance, this monthly survey also encompasses the following establishments offering accommodation services: spas, inns offering accommodation services, vessel cabins, sleeping cars and couchettes as well as uncategorised establishments.

Until 2016, tourist boards were the reporting units for households, crafts and enterprises whose accommodation establishments were classified as rooms to let, apartments, studio-type suites, summer houses and camping sites in households. Tourist Boards were submitted monthly data on accommodation capacities and their occupancy based on records of guest check-ins and check-outs at the level of settlements.

A monthly report for all other types of accommodation establishments were done by accommodation establishments based on the records in guest books.

## **2. Data source and methods of data collection in 2016**

As of January 01<sup>st</sup> 2016, by publishing the Ordinance on Managing Tourist Records and the Form and Content of the Check-in Form for checking in tourists in tourist boards, eVisitor system officially became central electronic system for checking in and checking out tourist in Croatia.

The introduction of eVisitor system, as a central system for checking in and checking out tourists in Croatia, influenced the method of conducting the statistical survey on accommodation capacities and their occupancy.

As already mentioned, until 2016, the reporting units for the accommodation establishments categorized as rooms to let, apartments, studio-type suites, summer houses and camping sites in households were tourist boards.

By introducing of eVisitor system, the former system for checking in and checking out tourists in Croatia in the tourist boards is no longer in use. For this reason, the tourist boards are no longer considered as reporting units for households, crafts and enterprises whose accommodation establishments are classified as rooms to let, apartments, studio-type suites, summer houses and camping sites in households. Croatian Bureau of Statistics receives monthly data on the capacity and occupancy of tourist accommodation establishments from the eVisitor system for those types of accommodation establishments. For all other types of accommodation establishments, the Croatian Bureau of Statistics still gathers data through the Form TU-11.

According to the data on accommodation capacities and its occupancy, in 2015 there were 177,822 accommodation units (rooms and apartments) available to tourist in the accommodation establishments classified as type rooms for let, apartments, studio-types suites and summer houses, with the total of 505,176 permanent beds. According to the type of tourist accommodation establishments, the most tourist nights (30,733,938 or 42.9%) were realized in rooms to let, apartments, studio-types suites and summer houses.

In Croatia in 2015, from the perspective of structure of all accommodation establishments, 51.1% of all accommodation units and 53.6% of all permanent beds are located in accommodation establishments classified as rooms to let, apartments, studio-types suites and summer houses. Therefore, this type of accommodation establishments are very important in Croatia.

During 2014 and 2015, Croatian Bureau of Statistics intensively worked with the Croatian Tourist Board and Ministry of the Tourism on the project "Information system for checking in and checking out tourist in in the Croatian Tourist Board". Croatian Tourist Board formed a working group for this project, where Croatian Bureau of Statistics was one of the members. Through working group meetings, CBS negotiated with the other participants (Croatian Tourist Board and Ministry of Tourism) about the official tourism statistics needs.

First, the Croatian Bureau of Statistics wrote a Project Application, which describes the legal basis for the monthly survey on accommodation capacities and their occupancy and defines the list and structure of variables necessary for continuous monitoring of official statistics on the supply side of tourism in accordance with national requirements and obligations towards the EU Regulation. In addition, CBS forwarded to the Croatian Tourist Board all classifications used in the statistical monthly survey on the capacity and occupancy of tourist accommodation establishments: country code, code and name for type of accommodation facilities, code and name of cities and municipalities by the territorial constitution.

List of variables for the Address book of the accommodation providers and tourist accommodation establishments are: identification of tourist board, name of tourist board, identification of accommodation providers, type and name of accommodation providers, the unique code of the accommodation establishments, the name of tourist accommodation establishments, type and category of the accommodation establishment, capacities of the accommodation establishments (number of rooms, apartments, camping places and/or camping grounds, the total number of beds, number of permanent beds and extra bed), county name and code, town/municipality name and code, settlement code and name, name of the street and house number, phone and e-mail, kind of change, the period of work; status of reporting unit. Type of accommodation providers can be either a natural person (household, family farm) or legal entity.

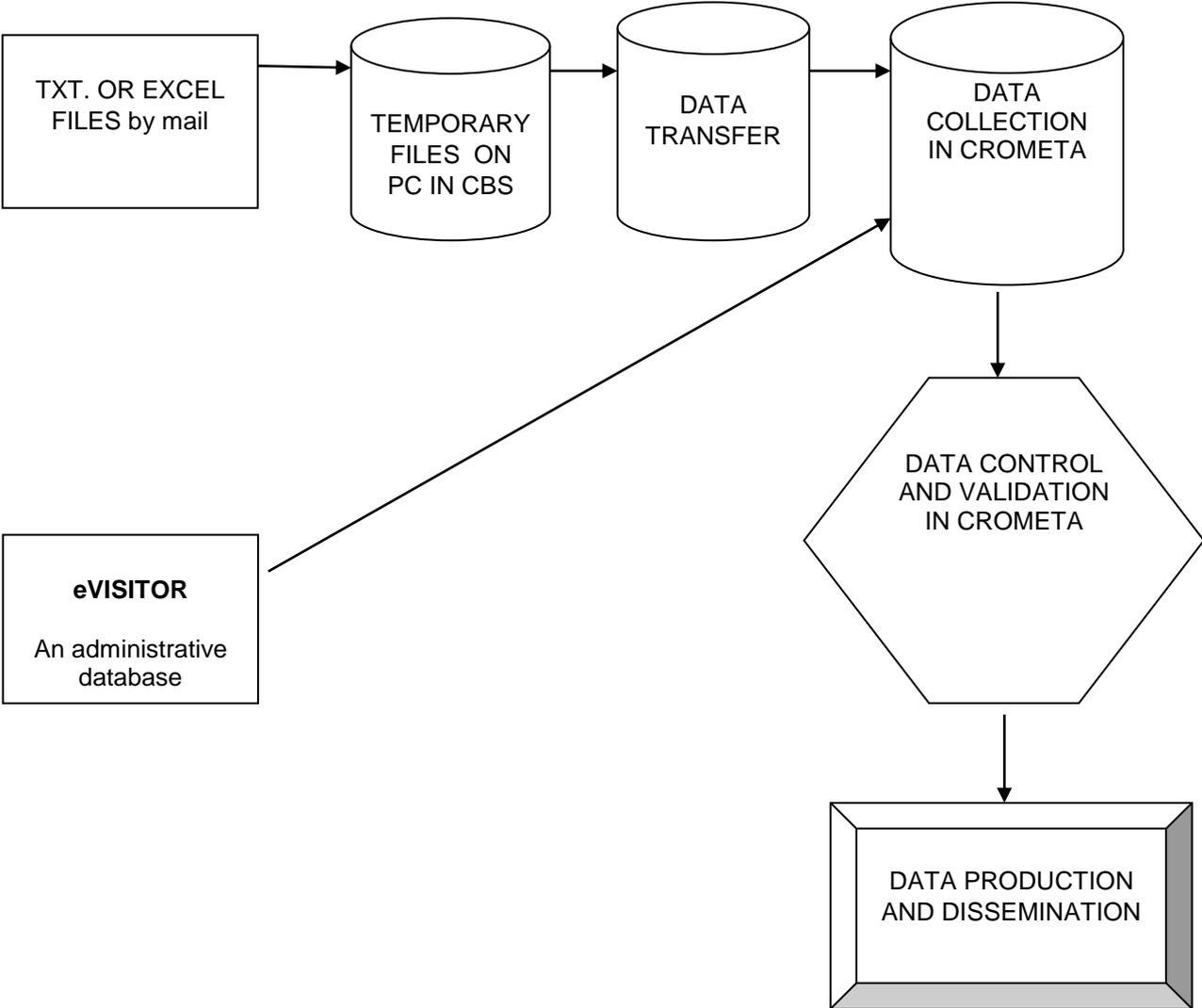
After defining variables for the Address book, CBS defined the list and structure of variables for accommodation capacities and their occupancy:

- 1. List and structure for data on capacities:** number of rooms, number of apartments, number of camping places and/or camping grounds, the total number of beds, number of permanent and extra bed, the total number of occupied rooms in hotels and similar establishments during the reporting month, number of operating days of the establishments during reporting month.
- 2. List and structure for data on Tourist Arrivals and Nights by gender and age group:** total of domestic and foreign tourists by age groups, tourist arrivals and nights of male, tourist arrivals and nights of female..
- 3. List and structure of data on Tourist arrivals and Nights by country of residence**
- 4. List and structure of data on Mode o Tourist Arrivals and Nights:** domestic and foreign tourist arrivals and nights by organisation of tourist arrivals (individual or organised arrangement).

CBS had request to collect additional data through eVisitor system. In order to maintain compliance of Croatian tourism statistics with EU requirements and to reduce burden on the reporting units, CBS asked that the eVisitor system collect data on number of occupied rooms in hotels and similar establishments during the reference month. Providers of accommodation services have to enter the data on the mode of tourists arrival, (individually or organized through the mediation of travel agencies) in the eVisitor system for national statistical purpose. The Croatian Tourist Board has accepted requirement of CBS for the collection of additional data through eVisitor system.

List and structures of variables received from the eVisitor system are the same as the list and structure of variables that CBS collects from accommodation establishments' via e-mail. Additional variables received from eVisitor system are tourist arrivals and nights by tourist age and gender.

**Figure 1. Data collection/Transfer scheme in the Croatian Bureau of Statistics**



According to the agreement between Croatian Tourist Board and Croatian Bureau of Statistics, the Croatian Tourist Board delivers data from eVisitor to Croatian Bureau of Statistics about 10 days after the end of reference month. Then, the Croatian Bureau of Statistics works on processing and analysing data on accommodation capacities for the accommodation establishments classified as rooms to let, apartments, studio-type suites, summer houses and camping sites in households and their occupancy using the same method as before 2016.

Data received from the eVisitor system passes through logical and computational data control. If CBS finds a logical error in data received from eVisitor, they will contact the local tourist board that entered the data on the accommodation establishments and that has access to data on tourists. The most common logical data errors relate to the type and category of the accommodation establishments, to the problem of check-out tourist in the accommodation establishments and problem of seasonal workers. At the level of tourist boards and settlement for these types of accommodation, aggregated data is entered in Crometa system for further processing. Statisticians aggregated data sent to Crometa where Data Collection is. Collected data then passes through the logical-computational control and validation.

Data collected from accommodation establishments over emails in Excel or txt format is processed and compared with the data from eVisitor system by statisticians in Tourism Department. Statisticians compare the following data: identification of the accommodation providers, type the name of accommodation providers, county code and name, town/municipality name and code, settlement name and code, name by accommodation establishment, type and category of the accommodation establishments, data on accommodation capacities and data on tourist arrivals and nights. Statisticians collected data from accommodation establishments sent to the temporary database on server and then make a Data Transfer to Crometa where Data Collection is. Collected data then passes the logical-computational control and validation.

Data from both sources is sent for processing in the Crometa system. Finally, we have useable data for analysis and disseminations.

### **3. Legal basis of the eVisitor system<sup>1)</sup>**

Ordinance on Managing Tourist Records and Form and Content of the Check-in Form for checking in tourists in tourist boards sets the method of keeping a List of tourists applying to Tourist Board, form and content of the electronic application form and checking in and checking out at the tourist board. The Croatian Tourist Board is responsible for establishment and maintenance of eVisitor system.

List of tourists shall be separately recorded for each natural or legal person that provides:

1. overnight stay in an accommodation establishment
2. service of overnight stay on nautical tourism vessel (charter, cruiser);
3. accommodation in the household and rural household.

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<sup>1)</sup> Ordinance on Managing Tourist Records and Form and Content of the Check-in Form for checking in tourists in tourist boards (NN, 126/15)

List of tourists records the data on accommodation providers: Tax code-OIB, Property Code for legal and natural persons, first and last name, details on accommodation establishment (name, type and category, capacity, address).

Also, List of tourists records the data on tourists: first and last name, place, country and date of birth, citizenship, type and number of identification document, residence and address, date and time of arrival, planned date of departure and actual date and time of departure from accommodation establishment.

Croatian Bureau of Statistics has actively participated in the preparation of the Ordinance on Managing Tourist Records and Form and Content of the Check-in Form for checking in tourists in tourist boards.

#### **4. eVisitor system**

eVisitor system is a unique online information system that connects all tourist boards in the Croatia and provides daily insight on tourist traffic, updates in database for accommodation facilities and accommodation providers, reporting for statistical and marketing purposes in real time and provides a better control on tourist tax collection.

eVisitor system has a variety of user of about 300 tourist offices, more than 70 000 various accommodation providers, Croatian National Tourist Board, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Public Administration, Ministry of Interior Affairs, Customs Administration, Tourism Inspection and Croatian Bureau of Statistics. Those institutions can use data from eVisitor system for the realization of its legally set tasks, without additional administrative requirements or barriers.

The purpose of the eVisitor system is to have a central place for tourist records and managing data on tourists in Croatia. Main objectives of the eVisitor system are:

##### **1. Collecting and processing data on accommodation providers and their accommodation capacities in the Republic of Croatia.**

Data on accommodation providers (name, identification number and address) and data on their accommodation establishment (type, category, location, accommodation capacity) are available from Decision on the categorization of tourist accommodation establishments issued by Ministry of tourism or by State administration offices in counties.

##### **2. Allow accommodation providers to check-in and check-out tourist over the Internet.**

Natural and legal persons who act as accommodation providers will be able to make independently, through the information system, tourist registration and cancellation for guests staying in their facilities at any time. In addition, registering tourists in information system will result in an automated guest's book at the level of each establishment.

##### **3. Tourist tax calculation and collection control.**

##### **4. Processing, data analysis and reporting for statistical purposes.**

This will allow us to monitor the movement of tourists with a lag of up to 24 hours, according to one or more criteria such as country of residence, location, gender or age. In addition, access to the database will enable the Croatian Bureau of Statistics and research institutions to conduct further and more complex statistical and other analysis related to the tourism sector.

## **5. Cooperation of public authorities in carrying out legal tasks.**

All interested state bodies such as Customs Administration, Ministry of tourism, Ministry of Internal Affairs, State Attorney's Office and others will have access to the collected data in eVisitor system. Interested public bodies can use collected data for the realization of its legally set tasks, without additional administrative requirements or barriers.

To access the system, it is enough to have a computer that has Internet access (a PC or notebook that has installed Internet browser), tablet, smartphone or by a software interface, that enables direct transfer of data between eVisitor and applications developed by software houses for the accommodation establishment. eVisitor system is a free Internet application.

As per the Ordinance, if accommodation establishments use eVisitor system to register all guest, same are not required to keep an additional guest book on their records and are considered to be fully compliant with the obligation of keeping guest book / tourist list.

## **5. Next steps**

CBS, after eight months of work on the analysing and processing received data from the eVisitor system, concludes that the Croatian Tourist Board needs to work on improving quality of input data on accommodation providers, accommodation establishments, their capacity and check-out tourist data. The quality of the data that the tourist board enters into the system will be improved by introducing basic checks on data entry. By doing so all participants and users will be more satisfied with the quality of data in the eVisitor system.

Data on accommodation providers and accommodation facilities from eVisitor system are useful for updating a statistical business register.

In the coming months, CBS together with Croatian Tourist Board, local tourist boards and Ministry of Tourism will work intensively on improving data quality in eVisitor system.

Benefits of using data from administrative data sources (eVisitor system) for statistical purposes are multiple. Using the data from administrative sources will reduce the cost of data collection, reduce the burden on enterprises and people, improve the timeliness of data submission, improve the data coverage and improve data accuracy.

## **6. Conclusion**

One of the main activities of CBS on improving statistical system is strengthening the role of administrative data sources for statistical purposes.

In 2016, CBS has collected data for survey on the accommodation capacities and their occupancy from two sources, the first being tourist accommodation establishments and second eVisitor system.

Because of all the benefits provided by eVisitor, from 2017 CBS will receive data on the capacity and occupancy for all types of tourist accommodation from the eVisitor system. The results of survey on accommodation capacities and their occupancy ensured that the basic indicators necessary for the analysis of tourism in Republic of Croatia are present.

All users of eVisitor should work together on improving and advancing data quality in the system.

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