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Addressing the Security Concerns of Locals and Visitors for the Sustainable Development of Tourist Destinations

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Abstract: Tourism has long been recognized as a crime generator. This poses a dilemma in the sustainable development context: is continued tourist expansion sustainable if it generates increased law and order problems? Using the example of Brașov, Romania, this article considers the ways in which criminal justice agencies and the tourism sector have operated in partnership to ensure the security of both local residents and visitors. We argue that the success of the initiative depends on multi-agency working at the local level, but that the involvement of local residents is also crucial. This commitment may be tested as the nature of tourism changes. The research consists of an analysis of primary and secondary data. The results revealed that among the main security issues mentioned by tourists are not only robberies and other social and situational features that contributed to tourists feeling anxious or unsafe, but also the need to have access to good health services and easy access to money changing facilities, information centers, *etc.* Some improvements are suggested for the local Sustainable Development Strategy of Brașov.

Keywords: sustainable development; secure tourism destination; safety in tourism; stakeholders in tourism; crime reduction; community safety

1. Introduction

For a sustainable development of tourist destinations, there are a number of key factors that must be taken into consideration. In addition to factors like managing dynamic growth, climate change, poverty alleviation, and support for conservation, tourists' and residents' security is a crucial consideration. Uncertainty regarding security can determine significant fluctuations of touristic flows, so residents' and tourists' safety becomes a global problem for a sustainable tourism [1]. Even with the best efforts, a tourist destination cannot develop or be revived unless it offers a high level of safety and security [2].

There is a clear relationship between tourism and crime [3]. Tourists are commonly associated with creating crime and disorder that alienate local residents [4–7]; they are often the victims of crimes [8–10], and resorts frequently experience high rates of crime [11–15], especially as they expand to attract international visitors and mass tourism. Yet in an expanding tourist market [16], and with a recession impacting traditional industries, tourism is increasingly seen as a panacea for ailing urban economies. The key question, then, is how centers can expand their tourist base without corresponding

increases in crime and disorder that affect local residents and/or tourists. Following from this, how can justice be shaped so that locals and visitors alike benefit from enhanced security?

The need to adopt tourism-based crime policies was recognized by the UN over 20 years ago at the 1991 UNWTO conference in Buenos Aires. However, policies aimed at increasing tourist security are the exception rather than the rule [17–23], and where they exist may raise serious concerns about community justice. A consistent finding in the literature is that local residents blame tourism for many of the crime and disorder problems in their area and for threatening both traditional values and quality of life [24–28]. In the UK, Newquay provides a good illustration of this, where local people have protested at the “threat” posed to their town by the hedonistic culture brought by young tourists, a problem they felt was not acknowledged by criminal justice and tourism agencies [4,7]. However, as Johns (2007) [29] has persuasively argued, if tourists are seen to receive enhanced treatment at the hands of policing and the legal system while the needs of locals are ignored, this may only aggravate the level of disenchantment local residents hold towards tourists.

The need to tackle the problems associated with crime and security in tourist cities is recognized in the European Forum for Urban Security (EFUS) initiative on “Security and Tourism” [30], of which the research discussed here is a part. This is the first European project of its kind to address tourism and crime and is distinctive in focusing on *cities* where tourism is an important feature of the economy rather than tourism resorts in general. Seven partner cities were enrolled in the project: Alba (Italy), Barcelona (Spain), Braşov (Romania), Brussels (Belgium), Munich (Germany), Rome (Italy), and Saint-Denis in Paris (France). This article addresses security and tourism in one of these cities, namely Braşov.

Braşov is an ideal example because, despite a long history as a tourist center, it can still be characterized, in Prideaux’s (1996) [14] terms, as in the early stages of tourist development. However, tourism expansion has been prioritized at county level and comes under the mayor’s office for Braşov itself, meaning that there is clear ownership of the program and a commitment to safer tourism. The EFUS initiative is characterized by a commitment to multi-agency partnerships, involving both the public and private (hotel) sectors, and the tourism and security sectors, and incorporating a willingness to include the local population in discussions about future plans. However, while during the audit process agencies worked together, at this stage, there is no long-term commitment to partnership at the local level. The only institutional involvement refers to several agencies that work in an individually way, with no integrated actions.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Setting the Scene: Braşov—the City and Its Tourism

Braşov is located in the central part of Romania, about 166 kilometers north of Bucharest. Its population numbers approximately a quarter of a million, with a further 120,000 living in the wider Braşov metropolitan area.

Industrial development in Braşov started in the inter-war period, with the opening of an aeroplane manufacturing plant. After the war, the plant was converted to the manufacture of agricultural equipment. Industrialization accelerated in the Communist era, with heavy industry predominating. Since the fall of communism in Romania, Braşov underwent a period of economic stagnation and deindustrialization, but more recently the municipality has been able, aided by a substantial use of EU structural funding, to reinvent itself as one of the main tourist attractions of the country.

Braşov in fact has a long history as a tourist center. It sits within the Transylvania region and is surrounded by the Southern Carpathian Mountains. The city itself has a number of tourist attractions, including the old Town Hall Square, with its colorfully painted and ornately trimmed baroque structures, and the Black Church, the largest Gothic church in Romania. The old city can be viewed by taking the cable-car from the city walls to the top of Tâmpa Mountain. Within the wider metropolitan area, some 10–15 km from Braşov, is the popular Romanian ski resort of Poiana Braşov, which is due to

host the junior Winter Olympics and is currently bidding to host the 2020 Winter Olympics. Hotels in the city of Braşov are also a popular choice over the Christmas vacation. Braşov consequently has a twelve-month tourist season.

Analysis of available data show an increase in tourism in the last decade: from 2003 to 2010, the number of rooms designated as tourist accommodation grew by 52%, from 1925 rooms to 2918 rooms and the number of tourists (Romanian and foreign) grew by 36%. It has a significant medical tourism market and attracts Jews to its historic religious sites. It also hosts some special events, including an Oktoberfest. Nevertheless, at present, a large majority of its visitors come from within Romania. Tourism statistics are minimal, but an analysis of tourists visiting the wider metropolitan area in one month, January 2014, showed that only 11.4% were foreigners, mostly from elsewhere in Europe (78.6%), with the others mainly from Asia (12.5%) and North America (5.4%). This may be misleading, since it covers only winter tourism, but perhaps one reason for this profile is the lack of a nearby international airport, a condition that is likely to change since the building of a local airport has received official approval.

Plans for the further development of tourism are detailed in the strategic program for the development of the municipality, named *Braşov 2030*, which includes a specific objective for the 2013–2030 period of “developing Braşov as a safe tourist destination.”

2.2. Research Methodology

The research described herein formed part of an initiative run by EFUS into “Security and Tourism” in seven European cities. The projects run through EFUS allow for different participating cities to focus on different policy options and use a variety of research methods. The Braşov approach was therefore unique and consists of an analysis of primary and secondary data—in the latter case, using material from both the police and the city tourism department, in the former, through quantitative and qualitative surveys of tourists, local residents, and stakeholders. The research sought to assess the problems caused and faced by tourists and the policing response in order to ensure a safe environment for local residents and tourists alike.

There were six main components to the research:

- an analysis of recorded crime in Braşov city over a period of five years, compared with Romania as a whole.
- a short questionnaire survey of 444 tourists, drawn from those staying in hotel accommodation, aiming to identify the risks perceived during their visit to Braşov and possible solutions. A slight majority (53%) were male. The most common age group was 36–45 (32%), with 36% below this age and 32% 46 or older. Because uncertainty and fears related to a tourist destination were considered to be felt more intensely by foreign tourists, disproportionately stratified sampling was adopted in which the foreign tourists were over-represented. Consequently, the structure of the sample was: 30% foreign tourists, 70% Romanian tourists.
- an on-line public debate on the issue of assuring security in tourism, using a forum of 100 local residents.
- qualitative marketing research, using two focus groups of 10 local people each, to study the relationship established between tourists and residents in Braşov city and the social/economic impact on residents resulting from tourism.
- qualitative research using a focus group of 10–12 stakeholder specialists in public security and tourism—and representatives of the local administration—aiming to identify ways to reduce the crime level and to develop possible strategies.
- a public debate on security in tourism, involving over 60 persons: specialists in security and tourism, representatives of the local administration, residents, tourists, *etc.*

3. Results

3.1. The Crime Problem

Both official statistics and the international crime victimization survey suggest that crime and victimization levels are not especially high in Romania, especially compared to other former Warsaw pact countries [31–33].

Nevertheless, while crime levels appear to have fallen steadily in many developed societies in the 2005–2010 period despite the recession [34], in Romania, the pattern has been mixed, with crime falling in the 1999–2005 period and then rising [35].

The recorded crime rate per 100,000 population for Romania was 422 incidents in 1990, 1774 incidents in 1998, 963 incidents in 2005, and 1397 incidents in 2009. The Central Region, which includes Braşov, has experienced a similar trend, albeit more extreme, so that by 2011 the crime rate, at 1490 incidents, was the highest in the country. On a more local perspective, both Braşov county and the municipality of Braşov have recorded an increase in the level of crimes and have been the highest in the ranking of the whole Central Region for numbers of reported crimes. Thus, Braşov county saw an increase in its crime rate from 1332 incidents in 2010 to 1868 incidents in 2011. Each year, the Braşov county police calculate a “coefficient of crime” for each town in the county. Figures for 2012 and 2013 demonstrate the concentration of crime in Braşov city: the coefficient of crime is some 11–12 times that of any other town from Braşov county.

These patterns may be at least partially due to a greater willingness of victims to report crimes over time or in certain locations; however, without comparable victim survey data, this is hard to assess. Certainly, though, the extreme shifts in crime rates between years suggests that there is more going on than just changes in the numbers of crimes committed.

Equally, police data provide no details of whether the victims are local residents or tourists, and there are no available victim surveys of visitors to Romania either. Thus, for example, risk may be high for local residents but low for tourists, and crime rates in general might be rising while crime against tourists is declining, or *vice versa*. Moreover, while international evidence suggests that tourists experience relatively high rates of victimization [8–10], there is a common perception abroad that tourists are specifically targeted by criminals in Romania, as illustrated in the international media and official foreign sources. For example, a report by the U.S. Department of State in 2010 alleged that visitors to Romania were particularly vulnerable to robberies and thefts from one’s person and various confidence scams involving criminals impersonating police officers or otherwise gaining the trust of tourists [36]. Such reports are arguably misleading [37], but may nonetheless deter significant numbers of foreigners from visiting the country [3], as happened in Florida in the 1980s [38,39]. This possible threat to a developing tourist market in Braşov provides ample motivation for local government to address community safety concerns, including those of both local people and tourists.

3.2. Ensuring Public Safety

The public institutions involved in assuring security work in an integrated structure. There are currently three principal police organizations in Romania involved in security issues: the national police force, the gendarmerie, and the local police, of which the latter two feature in Braşov. The gendarmerie has a public order mandate but also prioritizes the prevention and detection of crime. Within Braşov, it has a primary responsibility to maintain order in the ski area and at major sporting events. It also covers serious crime reported within the city. The local police of Braşov city comes under the authority of the Braşov Local Council. It is responsible for preventive patrols and community policing, according to Romanian law. There are 144 officers that comprise the local police, based in one Head Office and nine separate Police Divisions. One of these, the Tourist Police Department, was established as a dedicated unit in 2010. Operating somewhere between a “tourism-specific police operation” and a “tourism police unit” [40], it includes 27 officers and is based in the historic quarter of Braşov, albeit its responsibilities have been extended to provide support for the gendarmerie in other

areas such as the ski resorts, sport-related leisure centers such as the football and hockey stadiums, and other mass tourism events. When incidents are reported to the police or city hall, they are registered by both the gendarmerie and local police; unless the incident is minor, they will normally be dealt with by the gendarmerie. The Tourist Police may act to support tourist victims, but its main function is crime prevention through uniformed patrols of the tourist area.

The Tourist Police Department is only one of a number of measures aimed at tourism-related crime and disorder in Braşov. While private policing [20,41] and specialist victim support [42]—in fact, Romania is one of the few E.U. member states with no generic victim support services [43]—are not features of the Braşov toolkit, other crime reduction measures such as target hardening and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) feature prominently. The following are some particular examples:

- **CCTV.** Despite mixed results from different evaluations [44,45], CCTV can be a useful part of a crime reduction strategy and has been deployed in some tourist areas [17,21]. There is a recently installed network of CCTV cameras operating throughout Braşov, with dual control rooms in the gendarmerie and local police headquarters. There are 36 cameras throughout the city, with four located in the historic quarter, with a particular emphasis on tourism security.
- **Street lighting** can also be a useful deterrent [46]. In Braşov, the City Hall controls a new street lighting system. The municipal council, in conjunction with the local police, systematically time the street lights in tourist areas so as to ensure that areas through which tourists pass after dark are sufficiently well-lit.
- **Smart City.** This is an urban development strategy run by City Hall in partnership with residents, local businesses, NGOs, and public bodies, using IT to improve services for both residents and tourists by providing information on the city and responding to problems (including, for example, crime and antisocial behaviour) reported by members of the public.

3.3. Perceptions of a Safer City

Funding for the initiative was insufficient to allow any victim survey to be conducted. Rather, the research focused on *perceptions* of the city as a safe tourist destination. Three core constituencies were surveyed: the key policy makers and practitioners in the city, local residents, and tourists. Essentially, four aspects can be disaggregated:

- the impact of tourists on urban security;
- the nature of security for tourists;
- the extent to which Braşov provided a safe tourist destination;
- measures to improve Braşov's image as a safe environment.

3.3.1. The Impact of Tourists on Urban Security

Unlike some other urban tourist destinations, such as Barcelona, in which, during the initiative, an example headlined in the international media concerned young Italian males wandering naked through the streets [47], Faliraki (Crete), and the Gold Coast (Australia) [7], tourists are not seen as providing a law and order problem. The police and other partners in the initiative did not see tourists as contributing to public disorder, and local people did not appear to feel that tourists threatened their lifestyles to any significant extent. Nevertheless, some negative aspects were specified: for example, some tourists were perceived as not respectful of local regulations regarding litter and graffiti, noise, and the cultural and natural heritage of the city. This suggests that foreign tourists might have been seen as more of a problem. However, interviews with local residents indicated that the picture was more complex than this. While a word association technique revealed that foreign tourists had different approaches to Braşov and different expectations, as Table 1 illustrates, in general they were seen as having higher expectations and being more critical when these were not met, whereas some

Romanian tourists were seen as “uncivilized” and “there to have fun,” more suggestive of a hedonistic tourist culture.

Table 1. Residents’ perceptions of Romanian and foreign tourists.

Romanian Tourist	Foreign Tourist
Friendly uncivilized there to have fun with medium financial possibilities	well informed picky with high expectations with high financial possibilities open-minded

Source: Braşov’s Safety Audit in the European Forum for Urban Security (EFUS) project.

It may be that public security policies in Braşov have helped contain any public order problems that might be caused by tourists. However, it is most likely that Braşov’s stage in the “tourism life cycle” [14] allied to its tourist profile, meaning that it has not encountered the problems associated with mass tourism, especially youth tourism associated with a hedonistic lifestyle. The introduction of an international airport, increasing foreign tourist numbers, and changing the profile of tourists may alter this.

3.3.2. The Nature of Security for Tourists

Interestingly, both local residents and those involved in public order and the tourist industry interpreted security more broadly than a focus on crime and disorder. It was perceived to include security from any of the concerns that might trouble tourists and make them feel less “at home” in their environment—for example, health, and the availability of good, inexpensive health care; food quality; trust, and the feeling that one is not being exploited (e.g., by taxi drivers); finance and the ease of changing currency or using credit cards; and orientation, *i.e.*, knowing where one is, and the availability of information centers, maps, and signage in appropriate languages. In a crime context, respondents also cited the need to be able to trust the police, an emphasis on safety in tourist accommodation, and a clean and well-lit public environment, particularly around the public transport system and safe parking facilities.

3.3.3. The Extent to Which Braşov Provided a Safe Tourist Destination

The survey of tourists included five questions that directly related to safety. Firstly, respondents were asked, “When you decided to visit Braşov, how worried about your safety were you?” On a five-point scale, where 5 equates to “worried,” they averaged 1.88 points, with a high number of respondents rating 1 (“not worried”).

Secondly, they were asked about their concerns when they decided to visit Braşov across a range of issues, and four referred to crime scenarios (see Table 2). As is clear from Table 2, while pickpocketing was rated as the greatest concern, in no case did tourists rate the security concern as above average.

To assess the differences between Romanian and foreign tourists’ concerns, the means of each group were compared. The findings are presented in Table 3. In order to analyze the statistical significance of the differences between the groups’ means, the Student’s *t*-test for independent samples was applied in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The results indicate that all of the differences are statistical significant (Sig. ≤ 0.05), except for the risks of kidnapping and diseases (e.g., flu, viruses, and hepatitis). Thus, even though the perceived risks were relatively low, there were some significant differences between Romanian and foreign tourists. Foreign tourists were relatively more concerned about safety than Romanian tourists, and this applied to both crime-related and other issues. This is perhaps unsurprising where foreign tourists were in a less familiar environment, but, again, in no case did foreign tourists average above the scale midpoint.

Table 2. Safety concerns of Braşov tourists.

Safety Issues	Mean
Pickpocketing/theft from person	2.5508
Access to good medical care	2.3560
Crowds	2.2773
Robberies	2.1986
Car-related theft	2.1290
Public transport	2.1276
Transport by personal car	2.0975
Diseases (flu, viruses, hepatitis)	1.9797
Strikes, demonstrations	1.6991
Kidnappings	1.6742

Source: Braşov's Safety Audit in EFUS project. Note: The results are based on the responses to the question "When you decided to visit Braşov, how concerned were you about your safety regarding the following aspects?" (Means on five-point scale where 1 equates to no concern).

Table 3. Comparison of safety concerns of Braşov tourists.

Safety Issues	Country of Origin	Mean
Transport by personal car	Romania	1.9671
	Other	2.3869
Public transport	Romania	1.9371
	Other	2.5474
Strikes, demonstrations	Romania	1.5479
	Other	2.0288
Crowds	Romania	2.3366
	Other	2.1460
Access to good medical care	Romania	2.2376
	Other	2.6159
Car-related theft	Romania	2.0198
	Other	2.3669
Pickpocketing/theft from person	Romania	2.3960
	Other	2.8857
Robberies	Romania	2.0990
	Other	2.4143
Kidnappings	Romania	1.6172
	Other	1.7986
Diseases (flu, viruses, hepatitis)	Romania	1.9605
	Other	2.0214

Source: Braşov's Safety Audit in EFUS project. Note: The results are based on the responses to the question "When you decided to visit Braşov, how concerned were you about your safety regarding the following aspects?" (Means on five-point scale where 1 equates to no concern).

Thirdly, they were asked to rate their level of security while in Braşov, again, on a five-point scale (where very secure scored 5): the mean score was 3.87, with over half rating Braşov as 4 and over a fifth as 5 (see Table 4).

Fourthly, they were asked if they could cite any situations where they felt in danger. Only 5% said they ever felt in danger. The most commonly cited situations involved dogs in the street, beggars, pickpockets, traffic, poorly lit areas (especially at crosswalks), unofficial taxis overcharging, and plaster falling from the old buildings. A final question in this section asked was whether tourists had been troubled by beggars, with 51% answering in the affirmative.

Overall, the findings suggest that tourists held positive attitudes towards Braşov as a tourist destination and saw it as a safe environment. Thefts from one's person/robberies were the main crimes to elicit concern, and begging the most commonly perceived public nuisance. This was a relatively short survey. However, this suggests that crime and security are not major concerns for tourists,

implying that current initiatives are effective and that new policy initiatives should be directed at maintaining this situation rather than tackling any major ongoing problems.

Table 4. The tourists' feelings of personal safety during their stay in Braşov.

Level of Safety	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1—Very low safety level	9	2.0	2.0
2—Low safety level	19	4.3	6.3
3—Neutral	91	20.5	26.8
4—High safety level	227	51.1	77.9
5—Very high safety level	98	22.1	100.0
Total	444	100	

Source: Braşov's Safety Audit in the EFUS project.

3.3.4. Measures to Improve Braşov's Image as A Safe Environment

Asked to suggest ways in which Braşov might further develop as a safe city, most of the stakeholders that participated in the focus groups believed that the local police should play a pivotal role, with local government and the private (tourism) sector seen as having important contributions to make. There was also a strong feeling that the local population should be more directly involved in future planning. Despite the partnership work demonstrated through the audit, there was a common feeling that interagency cooperation could be improved. With particular reference to foreign tourists, inadequate provisions for non-Romanian speakers and the lack of an airport were cited as concerns. However, public support for increased tourism development was marked with a feeling that the city could do more to promote itself as a holiday destination and, indeed, a safe holiday destination. This involved providing more information, in the relevant languages, on the attractions, but also on sources of help should problems arise. There was also concern to improve aspects of the city that left a negative impression on tourists, like graffiti and the overall appearance of the bus and train stations. What is striking here is the extent to which residents embraced the idea of further tourist development and the fact that they identified policies that would improve the city for both tourists and themselves.

4. Discussion

The impact of tourism on crime and disorder is commonly acknowledged for the touristic destinations sustainable development, but little of the research that has been conducted on a local level has been designed to inform policy-making. The EFUS initiative is a major innovation in this respect. Ironically, one of its major findings is to highlight the paucity of hard data available. This is well illustrated in Braşov, where tourism data was minimal (compared with other cities in the initiative), and police statistics provided no information on whether or not tourists were overrepresented as either victims or offenders. In this respect, Braşov was no different to almost all the other cities involved in the initiative (the exception, Barcelona, started recording whether victims (but not offenders) were tourists in 2014), and the need for better official statistics is clear. However, the program in Braşov engaged with the university in investigating the views and feelings of tourists, local people, and key stakeholders. This was in many respects a model for other cities to follow.

Tourism is generally associated with increased crime and disorder, but the pattern varies between different cities and resorts. In Braşov, the perceptions of tourists and local people alike were that crime and disorder were not tourism-related. This may, however, change as the quantity and quality of tourism change. From a community safety perspective, it is thus an ideal time to assess the current situation and plan for the future. Braşov has done this in a systematic way that incorporates the views of local people, giving them a sense of ownership of future developments. The experiences of local people in other tourist resorts, where local people feel disenfranchised and threatened by mass tourism may thus be avoided if the perspectives of local residents, not just those involved in tourism, continue to be sought.

The research conducted for the audit generated some notable findings. Firstly, it was clear that security was perceived more broadly than through a crime lens, incorporating, for example, access to good health services and easy access to money changing facilities. Secondly, while the Braşov initiative identified useful partnership working at the local level, especially where the Town Hall had responsibility for both local police services and tourist development, it was clear that both the key stakeholders and public felt that interagency cooperation could be improved. This might cover infrastructure development but also problems that impinged directly on tourists, such as robberies, and other social and situational features that contributed to tourists feeling anxious or unsafe, such as begging, the feeling of being cheated by taxi drivers, and the conditions around the Braşov railway station. In such situations, it was seen as important for agencies to work together to address the problems. These findings are in line with the literature, which reveal that the tourists are exposed mainly to property crime and robbery due to different lifestyles adopted during the holiday and their poor integration in the local community, which make them isolated from forms of social support and protection [3,8,9,11].

Starting from the above findings, in developing tourism as part of the local Strategy for Sustainable Development of Braşov city, it was felt that improvements should include:

- *Better touristic information:* The authorities should be involved in opening some tourist information centers/offices and in the creation of a touristic orientation system to facilitate tourists' access to different touristic objectives or institutions. This would include better use of the internet.
- *Better safety advice:* Tourists' awareness of the various risks should be raised, including information and recommendations concerning units of accommodation and catering, sanitary units, cab companies, means of transport, routes, etc. As the different local constituencies appreciated, however, this latter point is hostile to fortune. Too great an emphasis on security information can induce a sense of fear among tourists.
- *Better guidelines for stakeholders:* Thus, the emphasis also needs to focus on safety advice for stakeholders. A document of good practice was therefore seen as an invaluable aid to creating, at the local level, a safe and high quality touristic environment, one in which tourists could coexist with local residents.

In order for these efforts to succeed, close collaboration between public authorities, private sector operators (stakeholders), residents of Braşov, and all other interested entities in tourist activity is crucial. The city has already created an environment within which tourists feel safe and locals do not consider them a threat. As tourism expands, cooperation between the Town Hall, police, the tourism sector, and local citizens is key to ensuring that the costs of further tourism sustainable development do not outweigh the benefits. Community justice entails creating a just environment for all the different constituencies present in that environment. In the case of tourist resorts, this implies addressing the needs of both tourists and local people. The beginning of this collaboration is represented by establishing the specific objective of creating a multi-agency center under the supervision of the City Hall. This center will start the collaboration between stakeholders with the objective to integrate their efforts to assure touristic safety. All these goals will be part of the local strategy for a sustainable development, in which a significant part will be dedicated to the tourism development and safety. After the adoption of this strategy, we can assert that the goal of the EFUS initiative will be fully attained.

5. Conclusions

From our research, we can conclude that the local safety audits in tourist destinations are an ideal way to collect relevant data from various sources, including secondary data on crime and tourism as well as primary data collected from tourists and destinations' stakeholders (local authorities, economic agents, residents, etc.). Such audits can provide the basis of the local long-term strategy for sustainable development. Thus, the strategy will be based on the main actors' expectations and could address their concerns regarding local security.

Without this, sustainable development cannot make abstractions about the security needs both at the society and individual level. Looking at tourist destinations, this issue is recognized as a global problem for sustainable tourism by the United Nations and the World Tourism Organization [1], being debated on a large scale in the specialty literature. The results of our research underline the major concerns of tourists and residents regarding tourist safety and are useful from both an academic perspective and for policy makers involved in designing local strategies for sustainable development irrespective of the tourist destination in which it is going to be applied. The main pillars that should be addressed according to the research results are infrastructure and access facilities, personal safety, tourist services, and cooperation between residents, tourists, and local authorities.

Even if, as is mentioned, the participating cities focused on different policy options and research methods, some similar issues resulted from the audits held in the EFUS project [48]. For example, Brussels faces pickpocketing and car thefts problems, which have been included in a special campaign called “Safe in the City,” meant to reduce these phenomena. A special department, BRAVVO, in charge of crime prevention has been established at the municipal level. The Munich City Hall is also confronted with similar problems, especially during the events that concentrate a large number of people: trades, fairs, and festivals. One of these events, Oktoberfest, concentrate millions of people that drink millions of liters of beer. In order to assure the visitors’ security, the municipality put various safety plans into practice, including a special program called “Safe Oktoberfest for Women and Girls.” An important part of the security strategy is the round tables organized after every event with stakeholders’ participation in order to evaluate the event’s shortcomings and to design plans for future improvements of the event’s organizing actions.

In conclusion, it can be noticed that both common and specific issues regarding tourist destinations safety exist. These issues claim proper strategies in order to accomplish three major objectives [48]: “to raise awareness among tourists of risk prevention and local customs; to improve the way tourists are welcomed and the support they receive in case of an incident; and to foster peaceful coexistence between tourists and local residents.” The main limitations to this research emanate from the limited budget assigned to the audit, which was not enough for quantitative research. Future research directions should take into consideration quantitative research among residents and companies in order to test on a statistical basis the importance of the issues raised by the qualitative research. Such tests can give a greater weight to the findings and further inform the city’s sustainable development strategy.

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