

Article

What Are the Needs of Senior Tourists? Evidence from Remote Regions of Europe

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Abstract: Tourism is one of the fastest-growing industries in Europe, with growth mostly centered in major cities and urban locations. Nevertheless, remote destinations can also offer tranquility and accessibility, as well as both unexploited and unknown development potential for active senior travelers. The purpose of this paper is to analyze, on the basis of information gathered from 1705 questionnaires, senior touristic behavior, including motivations and decision-making issues for senior travelers in 11 remote regions of nine European countries (Finland, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Spain, Ireland, and Greece). A mixed-methods approach was used to fulfill the research objectives. Both interviews and the survey method were applied to generate data from senior tourists. The present study will focus on the key factors explaining senior tourists' motivations and barriers to travel. The results of surveys conducted within the TOURAGE project indicate the significant potential of remote regions in the development of senior tourism. For senior respondents, a very important reason for going on holiday is the possibility of enjoying rest and silence. Safety, nature, historical sites, quality of services, and easy transportation connections are the top five attraction factors for seniors when choosing a destination. At the same time, according to the interviews, among the important problems negatively influencing the size of the senior tourism market in remote regions are: difficulties in reaching seniors with tourist offers, a lack of promotion of local tourist products aimed at seniors, and finally a lack of financial resources for the implementation of local projects supporting the development of senior tourism.

Keywords: senior tourism; senior travelers; travel motivations



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1. Introduction

The progressively aging population observed in recent years is among the most important social and economic issues of the modern world. Compared to 2000, when the percentage of women over 60 and men over 65 was 14% of the total population, demographic predictions for 2030 anticipate that this share will increase to 24%, amounting to a total of 9 million, 290 thousand people on average in Europe (Zielińska-Szczepkowska and Samusjew 2015). Eurostat forecasts indicate that elderly people will be close to 28% of the population in the European Union in 2050 (Żmuda-Pańska and Siwek 2019).

The increase in the number of seniors, despite differences in individual countries, is global (Urbaniak 2016). At the end of the past century, it was accepted that the aging of the population is a key challenge of the 21st century. This is reflected in the senior policies adopted by the European Union. In 2005, the green paper, *Confronting Demographic Change: A New Solidarity between the Generations* (2005), was published, and three years later the communication entitled *The Demographic Future of Europe—From Challenge to Opportunity* (2008) was published. These documents emphasized that the aging of society can and should be used to increase the competitiveness of the European economy.

The progressing demographic changes influence various aspects of our life, including tourism traffic. The structure of travelers undergoes changes, as well as their expectations, needs, and motivations (Alén et al. 2012; Fu and Zheng 2011; Kim and Kim 2020). Tourism,

being one of the most dynamically growing industries, in order to continue to expand, must account for new trends and regularities. In connection with the clearly noticeable aging of societies, especially in Europe, the tourism of elderly people is an area with high development potential. A wide group of recipients means vast development opportunities in many European regions, especially poorer ones. Regions lying in direct proximity to the border are usually remote, and remain to a lesser or greater degree marginalized in many ways, especially economic and political. The problem of peripheral location is a significant issue assumed by the European Union. In accordance with [Growing Regions, Growing Europe: Fourth Report on Economic and Social Cohesion \(2007\)](#), 26% of all regions are classified as remote regions (20% of the EU) and inhabited by one-quarter of the citizens. In countries of the EU, the main measure for classifying a given area as remote is GDP per capita below 75% of the EU average (according to the purchasing power parity).

In many countries, the direction of development for remote regions that is provided by tourism is treated as one of the elements of multifunctional development. This results from the immense potential from the stimulation of other sectors as well as creating new places of work. Researchers into the development potential of silver tourism in the European Union noticed, as early as 2010, in accordance with the communication, [Europe—The World's No. 1 Tourist Destination—New Political Frameworks for the European Tourism Sector \(2010\)](#), that one of the greatest challenges for the European tourism sector is the progressing demographic change connected with the aging of the population. The continuation of senior policy in the tourism sector has its place in the financial programming period for the years 2014–2020. Although tourism was not included as a thematic objective for the regulation of the European structural and investment funds (ESIF), seeing as how it is more a center or sector of the economy than an objective, the regulation nevertheless anticipates many possibilities of thought-out investment in tourism. Tourism will continue to play a significant role in the planned financing from the ERDF program, as well as in investments connected with the maintenance, protection, promotion, and development of natural and cultural heritage¹.

The silver economy creates a new possibility for dealing with the problems of aging through a proactive approach to the market, which makes use of the production of goods and services resulting from the needs of an aging society. The increasingly better health conditions of elderly people, as well as raising awareness when it comes to assuming physical activity, facilitate the popularization of active tourism ([Zielińska-Szczepkowska and Żróbek-Róžańska 2014](#)). The elderly are undeniably specific clients, who possess large amounts of free time, and are thus a large potential source of economic growth. On the other hand, some of the seniors from remote regions are forced to deal with inadequate financial resources for the realization of long-range tourist expeditions. An answer to their needs may be the poorer border regions of European countries, which are abundant in natural and cultural assets, and which, at the same time, are facing the challenge of adapting their touristic offerings to the needs of the elderly.

The aim of this article is to analyze senior touristic behavior, including an assessment of the motivations and decision-making issues of senior travelers, in 11 remote regions of nine European countries (Finland, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Spain, Ireland, and Greece) based on information gathered from 1705 questionnaires. In addition to presenting the results of the questionnaire studies carried out among seniors, the results of interviews with representatives of the tourism industry and local governments on the topic of the development of senior tourism are analyzed. This publication also makes use of subject literature, as well as statistical data pertaining to demographic forecasts. Strategic documents placed on the website of the European Commission, as well as information on the subject of the international project supporting the development of senior tourism, entitled "TOURAGE—senior tourism development in European remote regions", were also used within the framework of the present study.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Elderly Tourists Segment

Along with the dynamic increase in the touristic activity of the elderly observed in recent decades, the concept of senior tourism has been distinguished. The term is basically used to describe the spatial mobility of elderly people (Oleśniewicz and Widawski 2015). At this point, it is worth defining the concept of old age. In the literature on the subject, there are many explanations of this term. They usually refer to the age at which a given person enters old age, as well as the terminology used to refer to these people: seniors, older adults, baby boomers, or the silent generation. Researchers of tourism define 'senior travelers' as people over the age of 55, with the term 'older adults' referring to people who are retired, typically at the age of 65 and older (Patterson 2006). Many scientific publications, on the other hand, use these two terms interchangeably, without any specific definition which would differentiate between the two. In works concerned with the use of leisure time, attention is drawn to the importance of the change of work status, from active work to a changeover to retirement, as a factor that has a particular influence on changes in the lifestyle of older people (Gee and Baillie 1999; Nimrod 2008). Other researchers on the subject draw particular attention to the age of seniors as well as the history interweaved in their life to date. According to Norman et al. (2001), this is of particular importance in the later tourism preferences of older people. Alcaide (2005 cited in Alén et al. 2012) states that many companies set the senior age at 55 years. According to this perspective, this is the age at which the consumer begins to sense different needs and starts to forecast and plan for aging. They are considered as part of the segment of the elderly in the banking system, which begins to differentiate and specialize treatment for them. Accordingly, this study defines the elderly as individuals who are 55 years old or older, as is usually and consistently defined in gerontology studies.

Regardless of how a senior tourist is defined, attention is also paid to treating the phenomenon of senior tourism more broadly and not limiting it to merely issues connected with age. In the deliberations, a series of elements characteristic of this sector of tourism have been defined, such as the specific motivations of seniors, their large amounts of free time, the seasonality of their travel, and their physical or economic limitations (see Patterson and Balderas 2020; Huber 2019; Otoo and Kim 2018).

The elderly tourist segment in the new panorama of social and business management can undoubtedly be taken as a growing and constantly evolving sector, and much research has been undertaken to unravel its specificities (Amaral et al. 2020). According to Le Serre (2008), the senior tourist segment represents a profitable source of revenue for companies linked to the tourism sector, not only because of its growing size, but also due to the availability of seniors and their time to travel. Otoo and Kim (2018) claim that motivation is the first step in exploring the prospects of the senior tourism segment. Continued research on the motivations of senior tourists reveals different types of motives for which seniors pursue travel.

2.2. Seniors' Travel Motivations

An increasingly high number of researchers on the subject deal with the study of the motivations of elderly people (e.g., Guinn 1980; Tongren 1980; Anderson and Langmeyer 1982; Romsa and Blenman 1989; Zimmer et al. 1995; Norman et al. 2001; Sellick and Muller 2004; Pestana et al. 2020). The tourism sector, seeing the high potential for the development of offers directed towards seniors, makes attempts at market segmentation (Panasiuk 2014). Researchers hoping to meet these needs carry out studies on senior tourists to categorize them, accounting for various factors, such as demographic and psychological factors (Horneman et al. 2002), lifestyle and attitudinal factors (Marthur et al. 1998; Muller and O'Cass 2001), and educational and income levels (Javalgi et al. 1992; Jang and Ham 2009).

Researchers studying tourism classify elderly people in different ways due to their behaviors, indicating diverse types of senior tourists (Table 1).

Table 1. Various classifications and labels for different types of older tourists (own elaboration based on Sedgley et al. 2011).

Authors	Types of Senior Tourists
You and O’Leary (1999)	“passive visitors” “enthusiastic go-getters” “cultural hounds”
Kim et al. (2003)	“active learner” “relaxed family body” “careful participant” “elementary vacationer”
Morgan and Levy (1993)	“pampered relaxers” “highway wanderers” “global explorers” “independent adventurers” “anxious travelers”
Moschis (1996)	“healthy indulgers” “healthy hermits” “ailing out goers” “frail recluses”
Cleaver et al. (1999)	“Nostalgics” “Friendlies” “Learners” “Escapists” “Thinkers” “Status-Seekers” “Physicals”

The existing studies in the field of seniors’ travel motivations are based on the two dimensions of motivation, that is, ‘pull’ and ‘push’ factors (Crompton 1979; Dann 1981; Iso-Ahola 1982; Uysal and Hagan 1993; Uysal and Jurowski 1994; Cha et al. 1995; Klenosky 2002; Chen and Wu 2009). The distinction between push and pull factors appeared in the subject literature in the context of motivation for the first time thanks to Dann (1977), who, based on the work of Tolman (1959), presented the answer to the question of “what makes tourist travel?” He included all outside factors which attract a tourist to a given place, such as, e.g., the sea, mountains, sun, beach, etc., as pull factors. In the context of seniors, other researchers have shown that the main attributes of a destination that attract seniors are: natural, cultural, and historical attractions, and good weather conditions (Norman et al. 2001); security, cost of the trip, and cultural and natural attractions (Wu 2003); places of historical interest, medical service (facilities), and the weather condition (Huang and Tsai 2003).

Push factors, on the other hand, included internal factors stemming from the predispositions of the actual tourists—their values, experiences, and desires, such as sentimentalism, the wish to escape from the hustle and bustle of the city, etc. (Norman et al. 2001; Wu 2003; Huang and Tsai 2003; Jang and Wu 2006; Sangpikul 2008; Chen 2009). In accordance with this theory, people travel because they are “pushed” by internal factors and “pulled” by external factors (Uysal et al. 2008).

According to Uysal and Hagan (1993), individuals are pushed into making a travel decision by motivational variables, as well as being pulled or attracted by the destination area. Pull factors are mainly related to the attractiveness of a given destination, such as beaches, accommodation, recreation facilities, cultural and historical resources, whereas push factors are origin-related and refer to the desires of the individual traveler, e.g., rest and relaxation, health, adventure, or prestige.

Travel motivations according to the push and pull factors for traveling are also an issue that relates to elderly tourists. According to Widiyastuti and Ermawati (2019), the elderly’s travel decisions are influenced by factors arising from themselves (internal factors, such as spiritual needs, health needs and health condition, working, having money, meeting

people, the availability of travel companions, traveling for recreation, etc.) and factors which are offered by the destination (external factors, such as the suitability of the location to the elderly people's condition, accessibility and convenience in accessing information, etc.).

Many studies are striving to answer the question of what senior tourists' motivations for traveling are (Cleaver et al. 1999; Backman et al. 1999; Fleischer and Pizam 2002; Horneman et al. 2002; Huang and Tsai 2003; Jang and Wu 2006). Motivations for travel cover a broad range of human behaviors and experiences, and the typical list of these motivations might include relaxation, excitement, social interactions with friends or family, adventure, status, age, and escape from routine or stress. All of them play a significant role in the decision-making process.

3. Methodology

The distinct deep demographic changes taking place in recent years are not only a topic of scientific inquiry but also a matter of strategic interest, both at the level of individual countries and regions, as well as for actual EU institutions. In 2010, the European Commission, in a communication entitled *Europe, the world's No. 1 tourist destination: A new political framework for tourism in Europe*, revealed for the first time that, in addition to challenges such as economic crisis, climate change, and the development of new technologies, the European tourism sector should also take into account the issues that result from the wide-reaching aging of society. According to the European Commission, tourism will play an immense role in the development of many European regions, especially the poorer ones².

The above changes will require a fast reaction from the tourism sector so that it can maintain its current level of competitiveness. Seniors possess buying power as well as free time. In order to fully take advantage of the economic potential of the silver economy, it is essential to identify the needs of and create an adequate offer for the senior tourist.

A response to the abovementioned challenge was the realization of an international project (entitled "TOURAGE—Developing Senior Tourism in Remote Regions") in 2012–2014, financed by the INTERREG IV C Interregional Cooperation Programme. The project was created thanks to the intense cooperation of regions affiliated in the Network of Eastern External Border Regions (NEEBOR), which in many cases are distant from each other and scarcely populated, whose economic development and employment are faced with great challenges. This was also observed by regional authorities, accounting for the development of tourism in their regional development strategies.

Eleven partners from nine European Union member states were involved in the realization of the project (Figure 1):

- The Regional Council of North Karelia, Finland (Lead Partner);
- The Bourgas Regional Tourist Association, Bulgaria;
- The Region of East Macedonia and Thrace, Greece;
- The Lake Balaton Development Coordination Agency, Hungary;
- The Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County Regional Development and Environmental Management Agency, Hungary;
- The West Regional Authority, Ireland;
- The Vidzeme Planning Region, Latvia;
- The Association of Polish Communes of Euroregion Baltic, Poland;
- The Podkarpackie Region, Poland;
- The County Council of Granada, Spain;
- The Regional Development Agency of the Prešov Self-Governing Region, Slovakia.



Figure 1. Geographical coverage of the partnership of the “TOURAGE—Developing Senior Tourism in Remote Regions” project.

In the first part, an extensive review of the literature (desk research) focusing on the motivation of senior tourists, their needs, and the decision-making process in the case of travel requirements was conducted to identify travel motivations expressed by senior tourists from remote regions of Europe. Information cited in the literature was selected to be included in the questionnaire.

In the second part of the research, a questionnaire was developed to collect quantitative data. A survey was conducted among local seniors. To better understand the needs of this target group, I had to develop an adequate and comprehensive questionnaire for them. With this local senior questionnaire, I sought to identify what kind of traveling habits, motivations, and needs the regional seniors have while they are living on retirement pensions. The aim of the questionnaire was to seek out important information regarding how we should develop the regional touristic services so that they meet the needs of senior citizens.

The questionnaire comprised 22 questions (11 questions on the motivations and needs of senior tourists in Europe, three region-specific questions to bring added value for the local authorities, and eight questions regarding background information on the general characteristics of seniors).

Thanks to the realization of the TOURAGE project, I used different types of occasions to meet with local seniors and ask them for their opinions on tourism-related issues:

- meeting with local senior clubs;
- distributing questionnaires at exhibitions;
- sending questionnaires to local senior groups.

The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part included questions regarding the travel behaviors and trip characteristics of the respondents. It was designed to gather

opinions on travel motivations and the needs of seniors from remote regions of Europe, including questions on the travel preferences of seniors, their travel plans, the sources of information they used in their decision-making process, popular destinations for their holiday trips, the modes of transportation they used when traveling, and the barriers that they feel discourage travel. Senior tourists were also asked to give opinions on a five-point Likert scale (1—no importance to 5—extremely important). One of the questions included seven closed attributes and one open attribute concerning their motivations for traveling, in which seniors were asked to rate the perceived importance of each of the attributes for considering their preferences. The last question of the first part included 31 closed attributes and one open attribute, covering the major touristic components of destination selection, including, for example, accommodation, accessibility, natural and cultural attractions, and public services.

The second part dealt with the personal characteristics of the respondents, gathering data on their gender, age, length of retirement, place of residence, marital status, educational level, and annual income compared to the national yearly average of retirees in each region.

The content validity of questionnaire items was evaluated by tourism professionals from each region and one scientific expert. Subsequently, a pilot test was conducted to assess how well the research instrument works. To increase the variety of respondents, the questionnaire was translated into Polish, Finnish, English, Latvian, Slovak, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Spanish, and Greek.

Questionnaires were distributed and collected in 2014 in the TOURAGE project regions. As a result, 1705 questionnaires were filled and analyzed, amounting to an average of 142 per region (Table 2).

Table 2. Number of filled questionnaires in remote regions.

Region	Country	Number of Filled Questionnaires	Percentage
North Karelia	Finland	183	10.73
Vidzeme	Latvia	177	10.38
Baltic Euroregion—Pomorskie	Poland	154	9.03
Baltic Euroregion—Warmia-Mazury	Poland	47	2.76
Podkarpackie	Poland	150	8.80
Presov	Slovakia	150	8.80
Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg	Hungary	129	7.57
Balaton	Hungary	150	8.80
Bourgas	Bulgaria	150	8.80
Granada	Spain	176	10.32
West Ireland	Ireland	129	7.57
East Macedonia and Thrace	Greece	110	6.44
Total		1705	100

Two seminars dedicated to the elderly in tourism were also organized during the realization of the studies. The participants of the meetings were representatives of local governments, organizations affiliated with and operating on behalf of seniors, academic institutions, and tourism businesses, with whom interviews on the following topics were carried out: the possibility of using the potential of elderly people in the tourism industry, the assessment of the quality of the existing touristic offerings for seniors, the role of local governments in the direction of supporting the touristic activity of elderly people, and the interest of entrepreneurs in the elderly as the recipients of tourism services.

4. Results

4.1. Demographic Characteristics

The seniors answering the questionnaire were mainly women (69%—1176 answers, Table 3). This confirms the demographic fact that women are a majority of elderly people. It also signals that they are more active participants in activities where the questionnaires

were distributed (senior club activities, exhibitions organized for seniors). This higher representation of women also affects the results of the questionnaire, as the answers concerning the motivations and needs of seniors with respect to tourism reveal the interests of women more than men.

Table 3. Demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Demographic Characteristics	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Gender		
Male	529	31.03
Female	1176	68.97
The average age of seniors (68.4 years old)	1590	93.26
The average retirement period (9.7 years)	1504	88.21
Marital status *		
Married	884	51.86
Single	160	9.38
In a relationship	47	2.76
Widowed	414	24.28
Divorced	115	6.74
Education **		
Elementary	305	17.89
Secondary School	438	25.69
Technical/vocational	506	29.68
University degree	350	20.53
Employed as a retirement pensioner ***		
Yes, full time	153	8.97
Yes, part time	107	6.28
Yes, as an entrepreneur	78	4.58
No	1253	73.49
Annual income ****		
Deeply under the average	131	7.68
Under the average	389	22.82
On average	543	31.85
Over the average	329	19.30
More than double of the average	57	3.34

Notes: * 26 of the respondents did not answer; ** 40 of the respondents did not answer; *** 51 of the respondents did not answer; **** 90 of the respondents did not answer.

The average age of seniors answering the questionnaire was 68.4 years (1590 answers). There was a balanced response from young and older senior groups. Therefore, the answers to the questions show good representativeness of all age groups of seniors. The oldest senior answering the questionnaire was a 95-year-old Greek citizen.

The seniors involved (1504 who filled out the question) had been retired for almost 10 years (9.7 years) on average. Most of them were married (52%) and 24% were widowed. When talking about tourism, it is important to understand that a high ratio of this group are single or living alone as a widow (35%). Specific senior club activities and especially tourism group tours target these seniors, who are looking for travel companions.

The responding seniors (1599) had a balanced educational background. Results show that 22% of the respondents had a university degree, 19% had completed elementary school, and 59% had finished secondary education. This balanced level ensured good representativeness of seniors with all types of educational backgrounds in the questionnaire.

One-fifth of the pensioners were still working (9% full time, 6% part time, and almost 5% as an entrepreneur). The high number of full-time employees, in particular, reveals two tendencies. On the one hand, as shown by answers on income level and the main barriers to senior tourism (presented above) in the remote regions of Europe, there is a need for senior employment because of economic reasons. Nevertheless, people working during

the first period of retirement is also a trend in wealthier countries, as senior citizens are feeling active enough to be present on the labor market. Another important message that arises from the answers is that seniors are open to entrepreneurship—78 seniors answered that they were running their own business.

For the question regarding their economic status, only 1449 seniors provided answers, most likely due to its sensitivity (the response rate was 85%). Analyzing the average annual income of respondents is quite critical. Usually, seniors who can afford to engage in tourism are those with at least an average level of earnings, and who can cover their daily costs and have some savings after paying the bills. The annual income of 32% of respondents is average, and a quarter of them reported that they have an income over the average (almost 20%) or even double the average income (more than 3%), although 23% answered that their annual income is under the national yearly average. Critically, how are seniors able to share in the experience of tourism in remote regions of Europe if their incomes do not allow it? This is a question which pertains to a key hypothesis of this study. Significantly, almost 8% of seniors answered that their income is deeply under the average, including especially seniors in Poland, Slovakia, Bulgaria, and Hungary, a disproportionate number of whom categorized themselves as being in this group. This number is a basic signal that, especially in these countries, more attention should be paid to the social tourism of seniors as well as special support schemes.

4.2. Travel Patterns of Seniors

The first six questions of the survey were related more to the general travel patterns of the seniors (Table 4).

Almost 12% of respondents did not travel since having retired. Most respondents prefer to have only shorter holidays, similar to working periods; only a few of them stated that they stay for longer periods (with 9% staying for 2–3 weeks, and only 2% for 1 month or more). The hypothesis that seniors are willing to spend more time on holiday is therefore not true; their travel patterns are quite similar to active citizens, with only a small portion of seniors spending more time on holiday.

The results show that even though the majority of seniors prefer spending their holidays in their home country, there is a huge number of them (one-quarter of seniors) who still prefer to travel abroad during their holidays. This supports the claim that seniors have important market potential. The regional strategies should focus more on how to reach international senior tourists, and how to attract them to the respective regions. The seniors are open to traveling abroad as well during their retirement; this is more a question of whether service providers can understand their specific needs. I will try to answer these questions in addition to what the specific motivations and needs of senior tourists are.

Most of the seniors (44%) prefer to organize their travel individually. There was one important remark on the role of different pensioner organizations and associations, as well as some social tourism schemes being mentioned by respondents. Pensioner organizations (such as Active Retirement Ireland, pensioners' clubs, and thematic pensioner associations) are key players in organizing group travels for seniors. Some other associations (such as tourism, religion, and associations for the handicapped) are also coordinating the travel of seniors (although they are not specifically focusing on seniors in their offers). The social tourism scheme of the National Public Health Organization of Finland and the SOREA program of Slovakia were also mentioned as a specific way of organizing a holiday. Relatives and ex-coworkers are important travel companions, in addition to being mentioned as organizers of holidays.

Personal experiences (16%), family (15%), and friends (15%) are the most important sources of information for seniors making decisions regarding their travels. The media and social media are not relevant sources of information, although the internet was mentioned in more than 4% of the answers as a source of information. For the category of "other", some specific sources of information were mentioned: the role of pensioner organizations (e.g., Active Retirement Clubs for seniors in Ireland, Universities for Seniors in Poland, and

Church Organizations in Poland and Spain) is crucial, though the suggestions of doctors were also mentioned.

Table 4. General travel patterns of the seniors.

Travel Pattern	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Length of holidays		
1–3 nights	398	23.34
4–7 nights	483	28.32
8–10 nights	312	18.30
2–3 weeks	156	9.15
1 month or more	37	2.17
Have not traveled on retirement	201	11.79
No answer	66	3.87
Destination of travel during retirement		
Abroad	402	25.08
In home country	967	60.32
No answer	234	14.60
Organization of holiday trips during retirement		
Travel/accommodation organized individually	641	43.58
Travel/accommodation booked through a travel agency	390	26.51
Package tour/all-inclusive holiday booked via internet	59	4.01
Package tour/all-inclusive holiday booked through a travel agency	120	8.16
Other	31	2.11
No answer	230	15.63
The most important information sources for making decisions regarding travel *		
Own personal experience	616	16.31
Relatives and family	559	14.80
Friends	551	14.59
Recommendations of other people	264	6.99
Guidebooks and magazines	237	6.28
Travel catalogs, brochures	208	5.51
Internet	166	4.40
Travel/tourist agencies	151	4.00
Media (newspaper, radio, TV)	65	1.72
Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, blogs, etc.)	18	0.48
Other	87	2.30
No answer	854	22.62
Usual transportation mode on holiday during retirement		
Airplane	243	15.66
Boat	22	1.42
Train	176	11.34
Bus	543	35.01
Car	337	21.73
Motorbike	0	0
Bicycle	3	0.19
Other	6	0.39
No answer	221	14.25
Travelmates during retirement pension		
Spouse/partner	666	41.89
Own child/children	81	5.09
Grandchild/children	27	1.70
Other relatives	41	2.58
Friend(s)	271	17.04
Alone	104	6.54
Group travel with people you know	157	9.87
Group travel with people you have not met before	13	0.82
Other	13	0.82
No answer	217	13.65

Notes: * Respondents could choose three answers.

To better understand the seniors' decision-making process, it is worth mentioning concrete information sources (mentioned under other sources by seniors): books and dreams from their youth, which can be sources of a decision. This also shows that seniors

are sentimental, and mass media does not provide the direction for their travels in most cases (only 2% of respondents mentioned it as a source of information).

Traveling by bus was the most common mode of transport for seniors (35%). Using their cars for shorter distances was also mentioned (22%). Airplane travel is also popular (16%). Only a few of the respondents reported using more sustainable modes of transport (such as a bicycle or a boat). As another mode of transport, a few of them mentioned camping caravans, which is a way of traveling for longer periods and to more rural locations (e.g., in Poland, Spain, and Ireland).

Besides the spouse/partner (42%), friends are the most common travel mates based on the answers received (17%). Seniors usually travel with friends, either in smaller groups (10%), or with specific travel groups that focus on seniors (1%). It is important to know the people who one travels with, and therefore the third largest group of travel companions were found to be relatives: their own children, grandchildren, or other relatives (more than 9%).

Around 1400 answers relating to the season seniors are willing to travel in were also provided (Table 5).

Table 5. Seasons of senior tourism.

Season	Usually YES	Usually NO	Total
Spring	572	813	1385
Summer	732	676	1408
Fall	696	696	1392
Winter	237	1150	1387

The results show that seniors from remote regions prefer to travel in the summer as well, but traveling in the spring or fall is also an acceptable period for this age group. The results show that winter is the least preferred season for holidays, due mostly to the security aspect connected with the specific weather conditions.

4.3. Motivation and Needs

Three questions in the survey focused especially on the motivation and needs of seniors. These specificities could be important in developing new destinations and services specially designed for senior citizens.

Financial reasons and health problems are the main barriers to travel for seniors (Table 6). Financial issues are a specificity of peripherality and especially low-income areas of Europe, which shows the importance of social tourism programs for seniors. Even in the Finnish region, North Karelia, the respondents gave the highest ranking to this barrier, though it was perceived as such by only 34% of the respondents (contrary to the average level of 74%). It is also interesting that 59% of the respondents consider health problems to be a barrier (the second highest rank). This barrier was noted by only 23% of respondents from the North Karelia region (Finland). Ranked third and fourth highest answers were the lack of time and the lack of interesting locations, respectively, which is interesting seeing as how there is a financial divide behind these answers as well. The lack of time is mentioned more in poorer regions (where seniors are still working), while the lack of proper supply was quoted more frequently in the wealthier regions.

The third group of barriers is the lack of travel companions, insufficient transportation connections, and concerns regarding the safety of the destination and the journey (from 26% to 25%). They are more related to the logistics of senior tourism, and are in line with the belief that this group of people prefers to travel in groups (not alone), looking for a safe holiday, where they can obtain all the necessary quality services, and the destination should be easily accessed by direct transportation links (see answers relating to transportation modes).

Table 6. Barriers to traveling during retirement (Y = Yes, N = No).

Barriers to Traveling during Retirement	Y	N	Y (%)	N (%)
Financial reasons	887	318	74%	26%
I had health problems	659	451	59%	41%
Lack of time	404	554	42%	58%
There was no supply which I'm interested in	295	575	34%	66%
I didn't have a traveling companion	260	672	28%	72%
I was concerned about safety at the destination	225	645	26%	74%
Transportation connections were lacking	221	621	26%	74%
I was concerned about safety while traveling	222	649	25%	75%
Accessibility at the destinations was weak	177	654	21%	79%
I'm not interested in making holiday trips	143	727	16%	84%
I didn't have the necessary travel documents	112	761	13%	87%
Other	42	117	26%	74%

What should also be noted as an important non-barrier factor is that seniors are ready to travel and make holiday trips (only 16% answered that they are not interested in making trips), and they have the necessary travel documents to do so (only 13% do not possess them). Therefore, more active participation in senior tourism activities is more a social (financial and health) issue in remote regions.

For travel motivations, the research findings presented in Table 7 showed that enjoying rest and silence were the most important factor for seniors when they are planning their vacation. This is an important consideration when a certain region plans to expand senior tourism. The region must offer places that are relaxing and provide a safe environment for seniors. Family is also a major motivation factor for going on holidays; in many cases, family members (children, grandchildren) live far away, and holidays can provide a great way of meeting and spending time with family members. Moreover, it is important for seniors (as well as being an important factor for younger generations) to take rest and escape daily routines, and to experience something new.

Table 7. Motivation for holidays.

Motivations for Holiday	No Importance	Not Very Important	Neutral	Some Importance	Extremely Important	Average Importance	Rank
To enjoy rest and silence	81	103	192	429	579	3.96	1
To spend time with my family	130	73	181	362	556	3.88	2
To escape routines	102	67	242	445	492	3.86	3
To improve the quality of life	79	98	296	432	416	3.76	4
To experience something new	138	96	218	479	419	3.70	5
To make friends and socialize	172	176	311	373	302	3.34	6
To look for romance	574	184	261	139	108	2.23	7
Other	83	13	49	46	70	3.03	

The survey allowed the respondents to name any missing holiday motivations. Mentioned here were incentives such as looking for new places to visit, and especially a desire to explore their own country (e.g., Greece, Latvia) and its cultural and natural heritage. It was noted that one important goal was not only to spend time with family on a holiday, but also with friends. Many sports (e.g., golf, skiing) and cultural activities (e.g., art classes, dancing) were also mentioned as holiday motivations. Health and rehabilitation were also listed, together with relaxation and being away from daily practices.

According to the results of the survey, traveling for seniors is not about making new friendships or looking for romance (these ranked last). They are more about traveling with their family and friends, and simply having an enjoyable and relaxing holiday in a new location. This makes for a basic description of what seniors from remote regions expect from a holiday.

Safety, nature, historical sites, quality of services, and easy transportation connections are the top five attraction factors for seniors when choosing a destination (Table 8). Doing sports, snow, making handicrafts, dancing, and camping are the top five non-attraction factors. Based on the analysis of 32 factors, it can be said that a perfect standard for seniors could be formed from the top five attraction factors. Even in previous questions, safety, easy access, quality of services, nature, and historical sites were mentioned, so it can be said that the senior tourists in remote regions may be attracted by these factors.

Table 8. Attraction factors in choosing a destination.

Attraction Factors Choosing a Destination	No Importance	Not Very Important	Neutral	Some Importance	Extremely Important	Average Importance	Rank
Nature	57	44	130	532	642	4.18	2
Historical sites	69	73	221	548	437	3.90	3
Events and festivals	173	232	383	321	192	3.10	17
Local culture	99	131	277	507	292	3.58	8
Gastronomy	151	177	304	364	279	3.35	14
Wellness services	220	199	345	279	209	3.05	19
Healthcare and medical services	132	146	284	377	364	3.53	10
City life	251	268	389	261	95	2.75	24
Country life	199	225	403	289	165	3.00	20
Beach and sun	158	170	296	359	350	3.43	12
Snow	476	233	282	184	88	2.35	29
Religious sites	232	197	326	302	230	3.08	18
Meeting local people	170	186	402	344	171	3.13	16
Visiting friends and relatives	210	155	263	325	363	3.36	13
Doing sports	428	246	309	190	97	2.43	28
Light physical activities	313	209	330	316	135	2.81	23
Heavy physical activities	572	244	279	97	67	2.08	32
Shopping	271	282	349	277	114	2.75	24
Dancing	431	220	297	194	139	2.52	26
Making handicrafts	483	236	302	162	88	2.32	30
Learning new things and educating myself	182	146	290	437	237	3.31	15

Table 8. Cont.

Attraction Factors Choosing a Destination	No Importance	Not Very Important	Neutral	Some Importance	Extremely Important	Average Importance	Rank
Low prices	114	101	264	433	408	3.70	6
Sustainability and environmental friendliness	114	115	367	373	305	3.50	11
Good accessibility of services	92	125	325	430	315	3.58	8
Easy transportation connections	104	85	232	437	455	3.80	5
Safety	49	51	156	406	653	4.19	1
High-quality hotel accommodation	123	83	298	423	378	3.65	7
Cottage accommodation	245	191	375	300	145	2.93	21
Camping	556	189	280	132	86	2.20	31
Quality of services	90	40	200	538	404	3.89	4
Possibility to use mobile guides in the destination	313	146	329	304	135	2.84	22
Other	88	14	59	17	29	2.44	27

Although some touristic offers for seniors are focused on making senior citizens more active, the results of the questionnaire show that they are not interested in being involved in sports, dancing, or art. It is important to say that (which is connected with quality needs) they are looking for higher-quality accommodations (not camping), and would like to have the opportunity to get to know the local culture and become involved in some local activities. The importance of health and medical services is also high.

The studies conducted with the seniors were completed with interviews carried out with 90 participants and two topic-related seminars organized in 2014 by the Baltic Euroregion Association operating in Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship (Poland). Taking part in the meetings were representatives of the TOURAGE project partners from 11 remote regions of the EU, organizations affiliated with seniors, local governments, and entrepreneurs from the tourism industry, as well as the scientific community dealing with the development of tourism. The interviews that were carried out show that the following are among the most relevant problems negatively influencing the size of the tourism market for seniors in remote regions of Europe: problems with getting the touristic offers to seniors because of the low use of the internet—currently one of the most important sales channels—by seniors; the lack of tools in the form of publications with ready tourism packages, and thus the lack of interest among tour operators in the promotion of local offers directed towards the elderly; and finally, the lack of financial resources for implementing local projects supporting the development of tourism for the elderly.

5. Discussion

The progressively aging population in modern societies forces us to draw attention to the social and economic implications arising thereof. Among these, the problems of senior touristic activity are worth focusing upon. Seniors nowadays, despite strongly rooted stereotypes, are an entirely different social group than in past decades. They are better educated, live in better conditions, make use of widely available information, and take interest in an active lifestyle, both occupationally and socially (see: Walker 2004; Śniadek 2006; Patterson 2006). Bai et al. (1999) and Batra (2009) showed that older seniors prefer to travel accompanied. This is supported by the results of this research, according to which

most of the respondents had a secondary education, were economically well off, were willing to make their own travel arrangements, and prefer to travel with a spouse/partner.

According to a study conducted by [Otoo and Kim \(2018\)](#), the senior tourism market can have a positive impact on seasonality, as it provides a solution to bridge the gap between lean and peak tourist seasons. The current study has shown that seniors preferred not only the summer for their trips, but also spring and fall. This feature represents a major opportunity for tourism development in remote regions in the “low season”.

Earlier studies into senior tourism indicated that retirees travel more to visit family and/or friends ([Blazey 1992](#)). This has not been confirmed in this study. Visiting friends and relatives is only ranked thirteenth among the 32 attraction factors considered when choosing a destination. Today, seniors take travel trips primarily because they want to be in nature or visit historical sites. They also attach importance to safety and quality services at the destination.

The research findings show that it is clear that the most important travel motivations of the respondents are rest and silence (3.96), escaping routine (3.86), improving the quality of life (3.76), and discovering something new (3.70). [Esichaikul's \(2012\)](#), [Horneman et al. \(2002\)](#), and [Fleischer and Pizam's \(2002\)](#) studies of senior travel motivations revealed similar findings. According to [Woo et al. \(2016\)](#) senior travelers today are interested in discovering new things and improving their quality of life more than previous generations of seniors.

Safety, nature, historical sites, the quality of services, and easy transportation connections are the top attraction factors of seniors, which is similar to the findings in the study by [Norman et al. \(2001\)](#). A large number of senior tourists still enjoy sun-sea-sand vacations (3.43) and are attracted to historical sites (3.90). The safety of the destination is the most important factor for respondents, which was also confirmed in [Lindqvist and Bjork's \(2000\)](#) study. Most European cities maintain their high standard of safety and, as a result, senior tourists would expect the same level of safety when traveling. The findings of a different study conducted by [Patuelli and Nijkamp \(2016\)](#) identified the key motives of senior travel as culture and nature, which are also very important for seniors from European remote regions.

Interviews conducted with representatives of the tourism industry and local authorities revealed that key among the significant problems negatively influencing the size of the senior tourism market in European remote regions mentioned by the respondents are the difficulties in reaching seniors with tourist offers through the inadequate promotion of tourist packages targeted at the elderly. This is supported by the results of another study conducted by [Amaral et al. \(2020\)](#), according to which it is very important to consider appropriate tools for promoting tourist offers targeted at seniors.

It is worth highlighting that mutual discussion on developing senior regional tourism during the conducted seminars also led to determining strengths and weaknesses of tourism resources, facilities, and services in remote regions of Europe (Table 9). Strengths include: hospitable local communities open to elderly tourists, natural and culinary attractions, historical conditions, low prices of tourist services, the safety of means of transport and stay, and cooperation between different stakeholders in the tourism industry when responding to the needs of seniors. Despite strengths, European remote regions also have some weaknesses, such as a lack of foreign language skills to communicate with senior tourists, limitations to their public transport, lack of English language information boards in places which are attractive to tourists, and insufficient touristic offerings.

Table 9. Strengths and weaknesses of tourism resources, facilities, and services in European remote regions.

Strengths	Weaknesses
People from European remote regions are friendly and polite. They offer a warm welcome and hospitality to senior tourists. They usually respect the elderly as part of their culture.	Some service providers cannot communicate fluently in English, Russian, German, or French (the most popular foreign languages learned by European citizens) with senior tourists. There is a lack of local tour guides who are able to speak the above foreign languages. Local people from remote regions seldom speak foreign languages other than English.
Beautiful scenic sun-sea-sand (e.g., in Spain, Greece, Hungary, and Bulgaria) and natural attractions (e.g., in Finland, Slovakia, and Ireland) which senior tourists can visit year-round. Cultural attractions (e.g., culinary tourism in Latvia; pilgrimage tourism in Poland) are unique and interesting to senior tourists.	Local transportation in remote regions is limited due to economic reasons (the popularity of cars has caused a low demand for public transport among residents). Taxi drivers can be dishonest and attempt to overcharge senior tourists.
Trips to European remote regions are inexpensive and senior tourists receive good value for their money.	Few road signs are in English or a foreign language; the bad condition of roads in remote regions and lack of car rental companies makes it difficult for foreign tourists to move around destinations independently or rent a car and drive around.
Safety standards in transportation systems, such as buses and ferries, are up to standards. Tourist police have been increased and are sufficient in various popular tourist attractions.	Insufficient touristic offerings, including sport and recreation for elderly people, in particular in areas of the countryside in remote regions.
Cooperation between entrepreneurs and social organizations in the area of tourism, sport, and recreation for the elderly people.	Insufficient adjustment of tourist and sport and recreation facilities for the needs of the elderly people. Especially in the countryside, physical facilities and types of equipment for senior or disabled tourists are not adequate or efficient, such as elevators, ramps, and footpaths.
Most tour operators are professional and understand the nature and differences among senior tourists. Tour operators are familiar with major tourist destinations. They can design touristic products according to customer needs. They provide standard services for senior tourists, such as safe transfer/transport services and quality tour guides.	
Hotel staff usually provides friendly services. Senior tourists enjoy privacy, tranquility, and safety in hotels and motels.	

Senior age is accompanied by various changes—physical, psychological, and social—which affect the ability of seniors to explore opportunities to participate in touristic activities. In addition, other constraints, such as lower income and poorer health conditions, also affect seniors' participation in tourism. According to [Huber et al. \(2018\)](#), for that reason, specific social tourism programs are offered to encourage the participation of senior citizens in tourism. This is also confirmed by the conducted research. Based on the results of the questionnaire studies as well as the resources of the remote regions comprising the spatial area of the study, a few propositions for touristic offers for seniors were designed and implemented. Table A1 in the Appendix A presents selected good practices directed

towards the senior tourist. They were divided according to region, type of tourism, and offers. The Vidzeme region (Latvia) has two touristic products based on the resources of the region. Seniors interested in health and exploratory tourism can use the Ligatne Rehabilitation Center created in the Soviet Bunker. On the other hand, tourists interested in history and culture can enjoy the Museum of Regional History and Art in Vamiera. The offer of this place is also addressed to active tourists. Culinary tourism is being developed in North Karelia (Finland), where seniors have the opportunity to taste traditional dishes and experience the lifestyle of the Karelian inhabitants. Due to the natural resources of this part of Finland (forests), active tourism and ecotourism are also being developed here (also aimed at disabled people). Finns are very active in acquiring European funds for the implementation of innovative projects. One of them is the Tourist Guide for the Northern Periphery, which also benefits seniors. The region of Granada in Spain, to attract seniors in the so-called "low season", has special programs called "Alhambra for seniors" and "Tropical Tourism Granada Programme". In Ireland, on the other hand, there is the "Golden years Holiday Programme" offered by one of the hotels located in a seaside resort. These programs are very attractive for seniors due to their lower prices and tailor-made offers. The last example of a tourist offer addressed to seniors is a pilgrimage and culinary tourism program, which is developing in Warmia and Mazury (Poland). The "Saint Warmia" pilgrimage route connects 16 towns that offer religious places for seniors, as well as culinary attractions. The above examples of good practices of senior-oriented touristic products may be an inspiration for other European remote regions.

6. Conclusions and Implications

Today's seniors are a completely different social group than in previous decades. Older people are much better educated, live in better conditions, and benefit from widely available information. They are interested in active lifestyles, both professionally and socially. The seniors answering the questionnaire were mainly married women with an average age of 68.4 years, secondary education, retired, and with an average annual income. The results show that the majority of seniors prefer spending shorter holidays in their home country. This supports a claim that seniors have an important market potential, especially for domestic tourism. Most of the seniors prefer to organize their travel individually. At the same time, personal experience, family, and friends are the most important sources of information for seniors making decisions regarding their travels. Traveling by bus and by car were the most common modes of transport for seniors. They usually travel with their spouse/partner or friends. The results also show that winter is the last preferred season for this age group, and summer is the most preferred one. Because traveling in the spring and fall is also an acceptable period for seniors, it is good information for regions that would like to extend the tourist season by other months. Financial reasons and health problems are the main barriers to travel for seniors. Regarding travel motivations, research findings showed that enjoying rest and silence was the most important factor for seniors during their holidays. It is worth emphasizing that family and friends are also a major motivational factor for going on holidays. The top five attraction factors for seniors when choosing a destination are: safety, nature, historical sites, quality of services, and easy transportation connections. On the other hand, sports, snow, making handicrafts, dancing, and camping are the top five non-attraction factors. According to the representatives of the tourism industry and local authorities, the reason for the low interest in traveling by seniors may be economic, but also the lack of a special offer addressed only to this particular target group.

The findings of this study have some theoretical implications for senior tourism. Most of the research into senior tourism has focused on the travel motivation factors of the elderly in general. The studies of senior traveler behavior usually concern the specifics of respondents who comes from one country or region. This study fills the gap in this respect because it contains a comprehensive analysis of the senior tourists' motivations and barriers to travel from 11 remote regions of nine European countries. Various classifications and labels for different types of older tourists have not yet provided for this type: the safety

vacationer. Considering the results of this study, as well as the current situation related to the COVID-19 pandemic, this type of tourist, especially in the elderly group, is extremely important in the tourism economy nowadays.

The findings of this investigation also provide some important practical implications for planners and marketers. European remote regions must develop certain policy measures and strategies in the public and private sectors. Physical improvement of tourist destinations, the development of easy and convenient accessibility, support for accommodation and attractions, and facility improvement for senior tourists should be taken into consideration if remote regions want to attract more senior tourists. Hopefully, most of the regions which were involved in this research started preparing and implementing special programs dedicated to seniors after the project's completion. That may be good practice for other regions wishing to open up to senior tourism development.

It must be said, however, that, despite efforts and due diligence, this study does not exhaust all aspects of the issue. Therefore, the results that were obtained should be interpreted taking into account the specificity of the assumptions and ranges described. Considering that the conducted study included a sample of only 11 remote regions of nine European countries, this limits the generalizations that can be drawn from its results. At the same time, it should be emphasized that the presentation of the profile of a tourist—a senior coming from peripheral European regions—and their preferences regarding experiences resulting from completed and planned tourist trips, is an important contribution to future research, which can be built upon not only with a larger sample, but also by extending the research to other countries. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on travel by seniors is of particular interest for future research. Tourism and travel have been reduced to a minimum during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is expected that domestic tourism will be the first to recover after the end of the lockdowns, which will lead to a major shift in travel flows. Cities with a high population density, dependent on festival and event tourism, have a disadvantage, while destinations in rural areas have an advantage. The study shows that seniors are very keen to travel to small towns and rural areas. Interesting research questions in the context of further development of the senior tourism market are: which destinations and tourist attractions will benefit from the COVID-19 crisis, how will tourism demand for urban and rural tourism change in the recovery phase, and how important is the issue of sanitary safety in the organization of tourist trips among seniors? These and other questions are novel, and I intend to answer them soon.

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Appendix A

Table A1. Good practices for senior tourists from European remote regions.

Region (Country)	Type of Tourism	Offer
Vidzeme (Latvia)	Health and exploratory tourism	<p>Ligatne Rehabilitation Center—created based on the former Soviet bunker, measuring 2000 m² and built at a depth of 9 m.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rehabilitation, medical, and leisure services for the elderly and disabled from the entire territory of Latvia and abroad (2000 patients); - Rehabilitation offer for people with cardiovascular and pulmonary diseases as well as back and joint problems; - An offer of therapeutic activities for people with neurotic disorders or suffering from Akureyri disease; - An offer of trips around a bunker with communist-style attractions (meals, customs). <p>http://www.rehcentrsligatne.lv (accessed on 22 May 2021).</p>
	Cultural and active tourism	<p>Museum of Regional History and Art in Vamiera—located in the very heart of the historical center of Valmiera within the ruins of the old castle of the Livonian Brothers of the Sword.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The museum offer (over 60 thousand exhibits from various periods document the rich history of the city and region); - Trips, lectures, and various educational programs; - Offers of educational workshops on the topic of herb cultivation and brewing herbal teas; - Walking trips for seniors with a museum guide around the area including a trip on a water taxi on the Gauja river; - An offer of a 30–40 min cruise down the Gauja river through the historic center of Valmiera makes for an interesting touristic offer, especially for handicapped people and the elderly (the tourist attraction was adapted to the needs for people with problems with mobility). <p>http://www.diklupils.lv (accessed on 21 May 2021).</p>
North Karelia (Finland)	Culinary tourism	<p>Karelia a la Carte chain—a collaboration of over 80 small businesses from the agrotourism, culinary, and crafts industry, aimed at creating a widely recognizable brand of promoting the touristic values of North Karelia within the country and abroad.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Culinary trips for seniors connected with visiting cultural heritage objects as well as getting to know the local history and lifestyle of inhabitants living in the area of Karelia; - Cookbook with recipes from Karelian cuisine and a guidebook of the culinary history of Karelia. <p>http://www.pohjois-karjala.proagria.fi (accessed on 22 May 2021).</p>
	Active tourism	<p>Tourist Guide for the Northern Periphery (TG4NP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project will provide site-specific, locally accessible, multimedia information, delivered to visitors of remote areas. Basic services include an introduction to the area and will feature useful information, natural heritage; - Information provided includes links to accommodation databases, weather reports, local eateries, points of interest, and other attractions. This is developed using multimedia content, and addresses the need for the revival of the area's unique culture; - Easily accessible services for the elderly and disabled—all information can be obtained easily, with the use of a mobile phone and, if need be, using speakerphones.
	Ecotourism	<p>Fond of the Forest—Forest Wellbeing Tourism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Touristic offerings based on the virtues of the local biosphere, forests, and local Karelian culture. It connects the natural beauty of Karelian nature with local cuisine, culture, herb cultivation, and herbal medicine. - For the senior tourist, services are connected with active tourism based on nature, tranquillity, and the building of well-being, e.g., the offer of the Nevala agrotourism focused on the development of shepherd tourism and relaxation in peace and quiet. <p>http://www.pohjois-karjala.proagria.fi (accessed on 22 May 2021).</p>
	Accessible tourism	<p>Accessible tourism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ecotourism services are available for the elderly and disabled. - Publication of the guide entitled "Happiness and benefits stemming from accessibility". The guide contains practical advice for entrepreneurs in the tourism industry wishing to modernize their tourism base in terms of improving accessibility to the elderly and disabled. <p>https://www.accessibletourism.org/?i=enat.en.enat_projects_and_good_practices.869 (accessed on 29 May 2021).</p>

Table A1. Cont.

Region (Country)	Type of Tourism	Offer
Grenada (Spain)	Cultural tourism	<p>“Alhambra for Seniors” Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alhambra is at the top of the list of the most frequently visited places, not only in the region but also in all of Spain; the city is famous for the Alhambra Palace, which in 1984, was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List; - Seniors 65+, as well as retirees of the European Union, have the right to a discounted ticket, allowing them to go on a tour of Alhambra (for seniors of the Andalusia region, it is free); - Special sightseeing programs for seniors as well as educational programmes (e.g., historical), are prepared with the needs of seniors in mind. <p>http://www.alhambraGranada.org/en/ (accessed on 21 May 2021).</p>
	Active tourism	<p>“Tropical Tourism Granada” Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Covers 138 territorial government units and is managed by the Delegacy on Employment and Regional Development of the Granada Province Council; - The target group are inhabitants of the region above the age of 65 as well as disabled people residing permanently in the region of Granada; - The regional government is the owner of the hotel complex located in Almuñecar. During the so-called “low season”, seniors can receive free accommodation for 4 days/3 nights. Approximately 3000 elderly people take part in the program annually. - The senior accommodation program covers entertainment, light motor exercises, and social activities. There is great interest in the offer. <p>http://www.turismotropical.com/ (accessed on 21 May 2021).</p>
Mayo (Ireland)	Active tourism	<p>Golden years Holidays Programme—offered by the Westport Woods hotel located in the seaside town of Westport.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An offer of attractive stays for older people above the age of 55 at the end of the tourist season; - The program ensures conveniences for seniors with disabilities, including easy access to the reception and more important rooms, free bus transport between the hotel and train station, free travel by city public transport, as well as individual conveniences for regular guests. <p>http://www.westportwoodshotel.com/about/ (accessed on 21 May 2021).</p>
Warmia and Mazury (Poland)	Pilgrimage and culinary tourism	<p>Pilgrimage route “Saint Warmia”—connects 16 towns offering senior tourists access to places of religious importance: sanctuaries, pilgrim’s routes, and sacred buildings connected with various events of a religious nature, e.g., Gietrzwałd—the only palace in Poland with the revelation of the blessed Virgin Mary. There are also a castle and a cathedral in Olsztyn, Calvary in Głotowo, and a hall church in Dobre Miasto, Stoczek Klasztorny and Święta Lipka—referred to as the Częstochowa of the north, on the border of Warmia and Masuria.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sacred buildings offer cheap accommodation for senior tourists, whereas local restaurants located near the building offer traditional regional cuisine, included in the “Culinary heritage of Warmia, Masuria and Powiśle”; - For motorized tourists, a guidebook and audiobook of the trail has been prepared; - Local travel offices in cooperation with representatives of the hotel, the gastronomical industry, as well as transporters and guide pilots, provide a complex offer for individual people as well as organized groups (including seniors) along the trail of holy places in Warmia. <p>https://www.stoczek.pl/Swiete_miejsc_Warmii (accessed on 20 May 2021).</p>

Notes

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/pl/policy/themes/tourism/ (accessed on 10 March 2021).

² https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/pl/policy/themes/tourism/ (accessed on 10 June 2021).

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