

CURRICULUM FOR THE EDUCATIONAL PROFILE *TOURISM TECHNICIAN* AND THE IMPACT OF ECONOMIC POLICY ON THE ENROLMENT OF PUPILS IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROFILE *TOURISM TECHNICIAN* IN SECONDARY EDUCATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

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Abstract: The aim of the research is to compare the curricula for the educational profile *tourism technician*. The educational profile *tourism technician* lasts four years. The 1995/1996 school year is compared with the 2011/2012 school year. There is a total of 99 vocational schools educating tourism technicians with around 8000 pupils. This number of pupils also comprises other educational profiles related to tourism (cooks, waiters, confectioners, etc.). The curriculum for the educational profile *tourism technician* and other vocational profiles includes general education subjects and vocational education subjects. The number of general education subjects and vocational education subjects is the same. The total number of lessons (general education and vocational subjects) was 4677 in 1995, 4630 in 2007 and 4549 in 2012. It is necessary to revise the curriculum and adapt it to contemporary developments in tourism.

Apart from the curriculum, it is interesting to analyse the data reflecting the interest pupils show for this educational profile. The data for four school years, 2004-2008, was analysed and variations in the interest for the educational profile were noted.

Key words: curriculum, enrolment.

INTRODUCTION

The twentieth century is considered to be the century of tourism expansion. All countries have focused on the promotion of both national and international tourism. Tourism experts estimate that in this millennium tourism will be on a par with the leading industries at the moment – car and oil industry. This conclusion is based on the fact that 80% of the workforce in the most developed countries is employed in the service sector which comprises tourism.

Tourism implies constant involvement and education of everybody dealing with it especially as this industry is extremely dynamic and the demands of potential users are constantly increasing. When the quality of service is improved, the diverse needs of users are satisfied. This calls for the on-going education of those working in the field of tourism. In order to find out what kind of education is necessary for workers in the field of tourism, we have analysed the curriculum for high schools offering tourism profiles and investigated the ways they prepare their students for further university education. Tourism does not only imply the offer of tourist destinations but it also comprises many other closely related branches of economy such as catering industry, transport, culture, etc.

This paper will not focus on these related branches but primarily on the education of those directly working in the field of tourism. We will provide the analysis of subjects studied in secondary schools of tourism as well as the number of lessons dedicated to tourism industry. Besides, attention is also paid to the number of lessons in general subjects.

The second part of the paper addresses the enrolment of students at secondary schools of tourism in period 2004 – 2008 school year. The analysis includes three districts in the Republic of Serbia – two relatively undeveloped, Pirot and Zajecar, and Belgrade District which is the most developed of all districts. The results of the analysis will show the scope and nature of the interest for this branch of economy. Certain areas in the Republic of Serbia have been traditional tourist destinations for years. Those are primarily areas with sources of mineral waters such as Arandjelovac, Kraljevo, etc. Widening the range of tourism offerings outside these traditionally known areas sparks the interest of young people for tourism. The economic policy of a country may encourage the young to pursue studies in this field. The planned development and

expanding of the range of tourism destinations may lead to greater employment rate in this field but this implies young and educated workers who will be the worthy representatives of their country.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This paper is based on documents adopted by the National Assembly of Serbia and published in “The Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia – Educational Gazette”, which are official legal documents that educational institutions use when implementing the curriculum in all spheres of education. The database of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia was used in the second part of the paper. The database was used to determine the number of students enrolled in secondary schools of tourism or the number of students who expressed the wish to continue their education in the field of tourism. These indicators will lead us to the data on how the economic policy influences the enrolment of students at secondary schools of tourism.

The methods used in the paper are the analysis of official documents as well as the analysis and synthesis of the data from the Ministry of Education database.

CURRICULA IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF TOURISM

In order to analyse the curricula for the educational profile *tourism technician*, we have started with the analysis of the curriculum published in The Official Gazette – Educational Gazette in 1993, n. 15. Of course, education of tourism technicians dates back earlier than 1993 but we decided to track the development of education in this field starting with 1993 and ending with 2007, when experimental classes were introduced.

The subjects offered in the curricula for tourism technicians were divided into general and vocational subjects. General subjects included mathematics, philosophy, sociology, mother tongue, etc. In 1993, the number of general subjects in all four years of secondary education was 17, while the number of vocational subjects was 14. There was an evident discrepancy between general and vocational subjects. At that time, general education was considered more important than vocational education as it was generally deemed that it is necessary to gain basic knowledge from the field studied and wider vocational knowledge would be obtained through practice.

In the first two years the number of general subjects was greater while in the third and fourth year attention was paid to vocational subjects. Unfortunately, in this period there was no practical teaching, only theory.

Only two years afterwards, a change was introduced into the curriculum but it did not significantly affect general subjects. The number of vocational subjects remained the same as in 1993 but practical teaching was introduced from the second to the fourth year for only one subject – Travel Agency and Hotel Management.

The curriculum which did not fully satisfy the educational needs of tourism technicians had been in force for 12 years when a radical change was introduced in 2007 (The Official Gazette of the RS – Educational Gazette, n. 11/2007). The change primarily lied in the fact that greater attention was paid to vocational subjects while the number of general subjects drastically

decreased, from 17 to 7. The two-level classification of subjects – general and vocational – was also modified and a new category of subjects was introduced – general vocational subjects and

elective subjects. The number of lessons dedicated to practical teaching was also increased so practical teaching now took place not only in the fourth year but third year as well. The second foreign language which had been elective now became a compulsory subject within general vocational subjects. Two compulsory elective subjects were also introduced; one of them being civic education or religious education, and the other one was chosen from a separate list of compulsory subjects in the curriculum.

The curricula published in The Official Gazette – Educational Gazette 15/93 and 6/95 do not significantly differ. These curricula are not student-centred – it is not clear what they should know when they finish their four-year secondary education and what their competencies are for doing a job in a travel agency, a tourist company or at the hotel reception. These curricula were designed primarily for teachers and not for students who are supposed to apply their knowledge in practice.

Students were passive factors in the teaching process, they received facts from teachers and they were supposed to remember and reproduce them on request. Schools were not appropriately equipped with teaching aids and most subjects which imply both theoretical and practical work, such as Information and Communication Technology, were taught without computers. This, naturally, hampered the teaching process. At that time, schools were not equipped as they are today. Although the Rulebook on School Space and Equipment stipulated that each school must

have different teaching aids necessary for learning, there were not enough financial means to meet the demands from the Rulebook.

The Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia decided to modernize the curriculum for the educational profile *tourism technician*. In 2007, a new curriculum was adopted and published in “The Official Gazette – Educational Gazette n. 11/07. This curriculum is fully modernized and adapted to the needs of students who, after the completion of studies, acquire certain skills necessary for practical work. Students are in the centre of educational process.

Certain goals were defined with the aim to modernize instruction and apply new teaching approaches so that both teachers and students have an opportunity to show their initiative. This initiative is reflected in:

- developing and implementing modular vocational education curricula based on standards of profession and needs for knowledge and skills on the labour market;
- developing curricula fulfilling developmental needs as well as needs for generic and life skills of students;
- designing curricula based on precisely defined goals and outcomes which enable individual approach to learning and respect developmental potentials and abilities of students;
- establishing the functional link between the content of compulsory subjects and vocational modules to support and enable successful acquisition of vocational knowledge and skills.

New goals also implied a new approach to teaching, which can be seen from the following postulates:

- adapting the organization of teaching and learning environment to a modular structure of the curriculum with the aim of successful achievement of education outcomes;

- developing a social partnership model through curricular and organizational linking of secondary vocational schools with companies, the labour market and the local community;
- implementing modular curricula through different organizational forms of instruction (theoretical teaching, practice, practical work and block scheduling);
- developing evaluation criteria/standards and grading based on projected learning outcomes;
- improving professional and pedagogical teacher competencies;
- modernizing school infrastructure and enhancing learning environment (Official Gazette – Educational Gazette 11/07).

Students' competencies at the end of the secondary education are projected on the basis of these indicators and they include:

- Practical application of theoretical knowledge;
- Efficient group work;
- Assumption of responsibility for personal continuing education and career advancement;
- Timely and adequate reaction to changes in work environment;
- recognizing of business possibilities in work environment and wider social settings;
- Application of safety and health regulations at work;
- Use of information technology in collecting, organizing and using information in everyday work and life.

Four years after the introduction of the new profile *tourism technician*, the Institute for Education Quality Evaluation carried out the evaluation and the thorough analysis covering students, teachers and school principals from a number of schools.

The evaluation included 15 schools from the entire territory of the Republic of Serbia and focused on the following: opinion of teachers, opinion of students, opinion of school principals, potential shortcomings in the curriculum (which later became evident).

„According to teachers, the greatest quality of this curriculum is the method and work conditions. Teachers are the least satisfied with the quality of curriculum monitoring. What is important is that all aspects of the evaluation are in the positive domain of the scale – values of the aspects with the worst evaluation results are equal or above 3 (range: 1 – 5). The obtained results show that the opinions of two groups of teachers – general subjects teachers and vocational subjects teachers – significantly differ. Namely, vocational subjects teachers give markedly better grades to all the mentioned aspects compared with general subjects teachers. There are no differences between these two groups of teachers concerning other aspects.

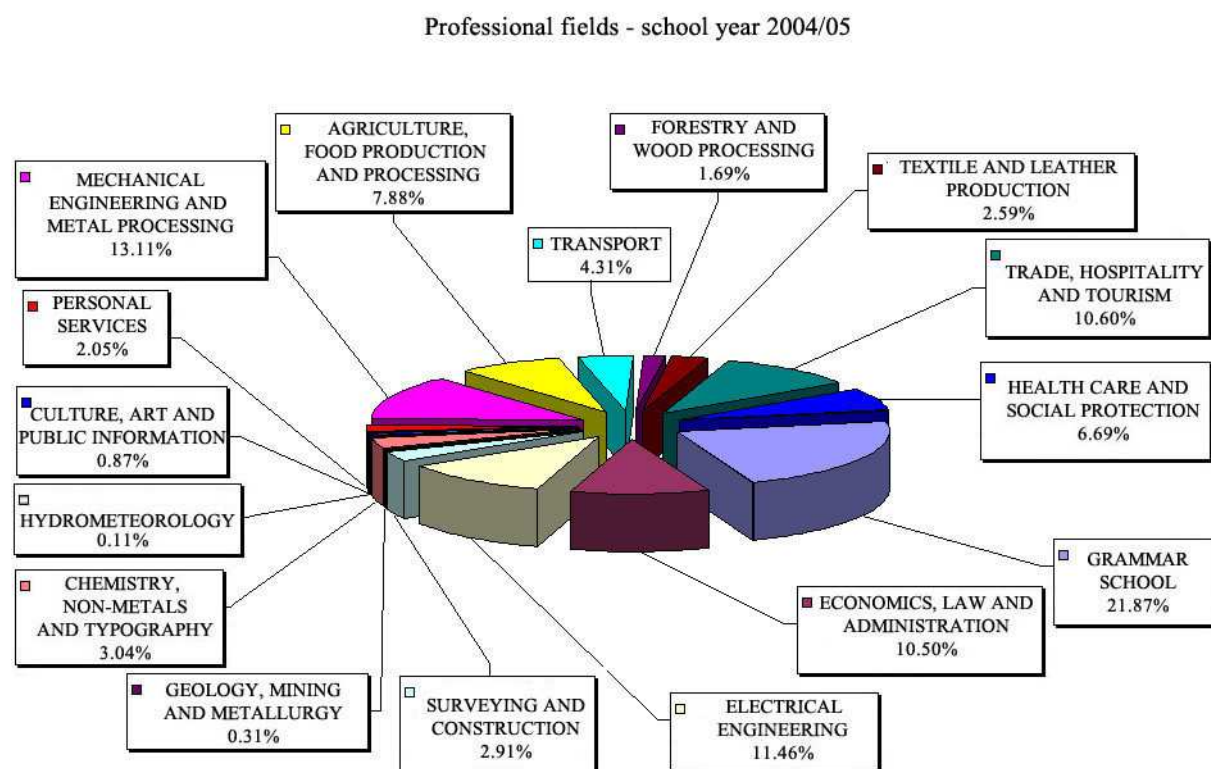
When it comes to the opinion of **students** – a very important target group of this research – the overall quality of the curriculum is marked with 3.70, reflecting the fact that the curriculum has certain negative aspects. The majority of students think that this profile is a good preparation for future professions (68.9%) and that the demands are adapted to their individual abilities (73.5%). Besides, most students have a clear insight into what skills and knowledge they should acquire (72.1%). Although a small number of students think that the relationship between general and vocational subjects is good (10.6%), 44% of students is mainly satisfied with this relationship. Actually, the greatest number of students is satisfied with the quality of teaching and they are least satisfied with the support they get from their teachers.

The answers given by **school principals** of all schools implementing this profile confirm that the interest of pupils for this profile is huge and that students opting for this profile are predominantly those who ended primary school with excellent or very good school performance. School principals say they are satisfied with work and performance of their students and students are very interested and involved. Speaking about the knowledge of students in this profile, all respondents unanimously express positive opinions. Some school principals point to the reactions of social partners and good results on graduation exams as indicators for their positive opinion. School principals also unanimously agreed that the quality of the curriculum is good. Despite this, some school principals point out that certain corrections must be made to improve it and almost half of them stress that certain changes must be introduced. Based on the answers given by school principals, teachers in 6 schools out of 14 suggested certain modifications. The overall conclusion is that school principals are satisfied with the achieved results.” (Institute for Education Quality Evaluation, 2012)

Economic policy and enrolment in the educational profile *tourism technician*

A new enrolment policy was introduced in secondary schools after 2000. The new enrolment policy made it possible to monitor the interest of students for certain educational profiles and professional fields as well as to see in what ways the economic policy of the Government influences the increase in the interest of students for certain professional fields. In order to have a better picture of the influence that the economic policy has on the interest of students, we have decided to monitor the enrolment in the educational profile *tourism technician* in the following three districts: Pirot, Zajecar and Belgrade, in the period 2004 – 2007. The following chart covers the entire territory of the Republic of Serbia.

Chart n. 1

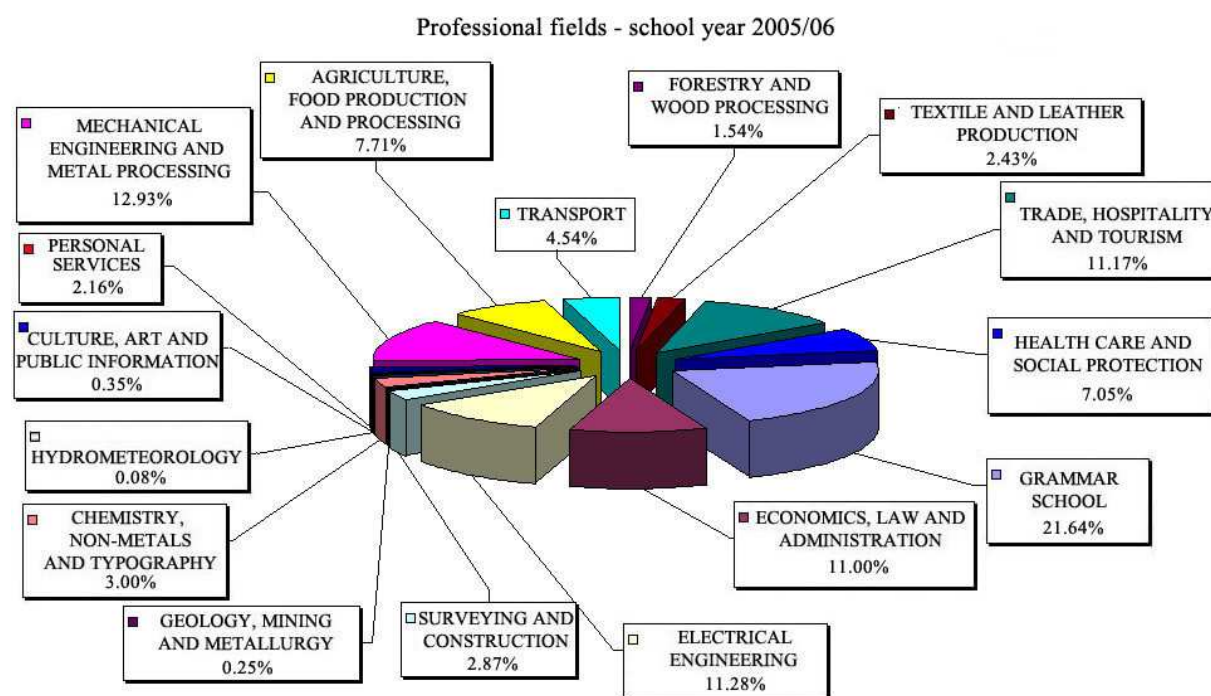


Source: Ministry of Education and Sports Database

The indicators show that the greatest interest is for the enrolment at grammar schools, professional field *mechanical engineering and metal processing*, *electrical engineering* and, at fourth place *tourism*, while students showed the least interest for professional field *geology, mining and metallurgy* with only 0.31%. The very following year the interest for the educational profile *tourism technician* increased because just before the enrolment the Government discussed the possibility of greater investment in tourism and the development of tourism in certain parts of Serbia – in the first place, opening new ski centres and activating long forgotten and neglected spa tourism. The following chart shows the increase in interest for this educational profile and

similar profiles from 10.60% to 11.17% the following school year. This economic policy gave hope to young students for fast and easy employment.

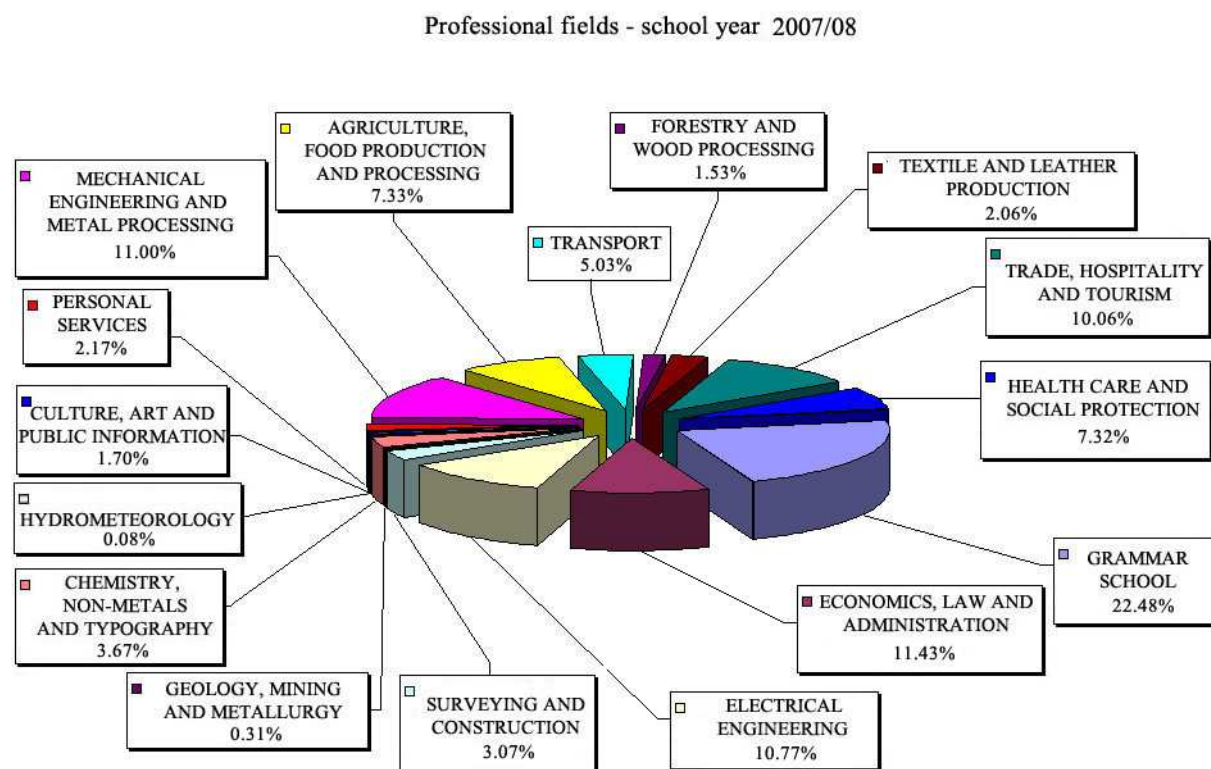
Chart n. 2



Source: Ministry of Education and Sports Database

However, things did not take the expected course. The Government abandoned the concept without any explanation and this affected the interest of students for secondary schools of tourism. There was a drastic decrease in interest from 11.17% to 10.06%, which is more than one per cent compared to the previous year, and around half per cent compared to the year before.

Chart n. 3



Source: Ministry of Education and Sports Database

These indicators tell us that the economic development of a country must be carefully planned and people should not be given false hopes for employment. There are 99 secondary schools in Serbia offering education for tourism technicians. These schools are unevenly distributed in districts and they are built following the logic of potential tourism development at the local level.

Table 1

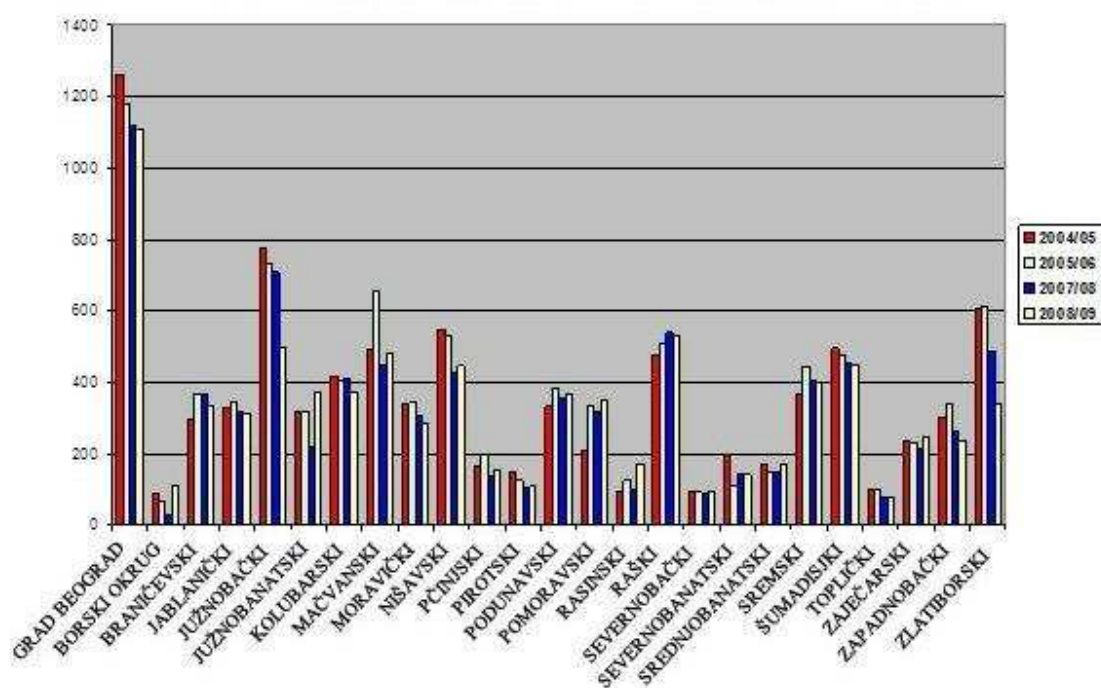
DISTRICT	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS	NUMBER OF STUDENTS			
		2004/05	2005/06	2007/08	2008/09
BELGRADE	6	1261	1178	1119	1110
BOR	2	90	64	31	110
BRANIČEVO	5	296	367	369	336
JABLANICA	4	330	345	317	313
SOUTH BAČKA	6	775	733	708	495
SOUTH BANAT	5	317	317	217	372
KOLUBARA	3	417	407	411	373
MAČVA	8	491	656	451	481
MORAVICA	5	342	344	308	286
NIŠAVA	4	547	531	429	447
PČINJA	3	166	199	137	154
PIROT	3	151	125	107	108
PODUNAVLJE	2	333	385	354	365
POMORAVLJE	4	208	333	318	349
RASINA	3	96	125	102	171
RAŠKA	4	476	509	539	532
NORTH BAČKA	1	94	93	89	95
NORTH BANAT	3	195	109	142	143
CENTRAL BANAT	3	169	146	146	171
SREM	5	369	445	407	401
ŠUMADIJA	6	495	473	455	449
TOPLICA	2	99	102	77	80
ZAJEČAR	2	238	232	214	248
WEST BAČKA	4	302	338	264	237
ZLATIBOR	6	604	610	489	340
UKUPNO:	99	8861	9166	8200	8166

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It can be seen from the above table, particularly in the part relating to the number of students, that the interest for this educational profile in school year 2005/06 increased, and drastically

decreased in the following years because the Government did not implement its initial idea. This can be seen in the following chart as well.

Chart n. 4 Trade, Hospitality and Tourism Enrolled by Age and Districts



Source: Ministry of Education and Sports Database

The previous chart shows the interest of students for the professional field *trade, hospitality and tourism* in all districts of Serbia.

Why did we choose to focus on three districts of Serbia: Pirot, Zajecar and Belgrade? We were guided by the level of development and attraction of tourist destinations. The district of Pirot is the least developed but with relatively good tourism potential. The district of Zajecar is medium developed and with excellent possibilities for tourism. Stara Planina Mountain is an unused potential for ski tourism. Spa tourism is relatively developed in the west of Serbia. Belgrade is an

attractive tourist destination with diverse tourism offerings, and apart from that, it is the most developed district.

Based on the analysed data, we made the profile of the interest of students for the enrolment in this and similar educational profiles. The effects the economic policy has on the enrolment in this educational profile will also be seen.

Before we make the list of students enrolled by educational profiles, we will show the interest of students by professional fields in the above-mentioned districts.

Chart n. 5

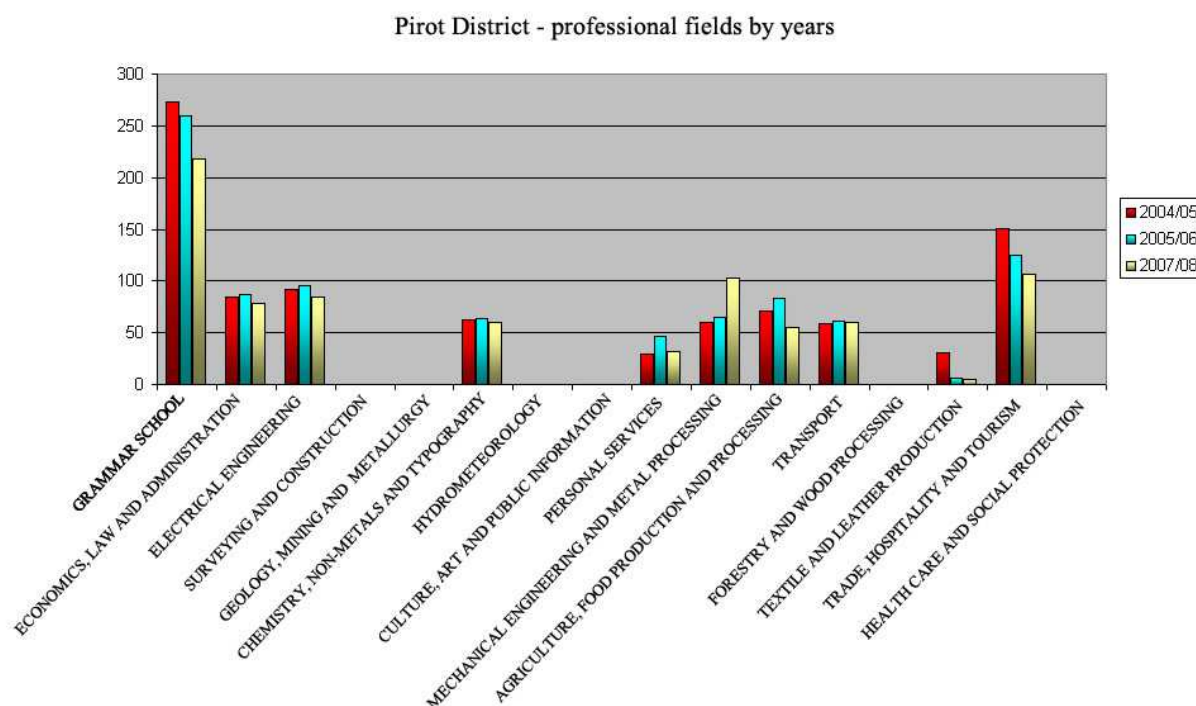
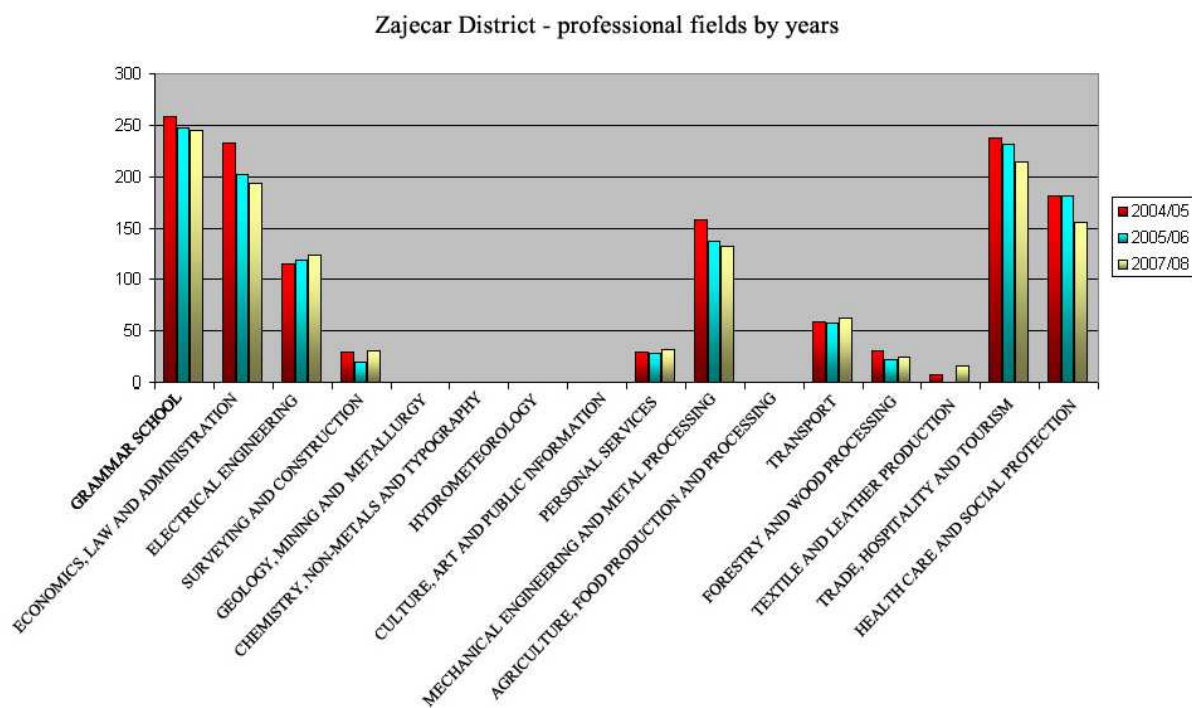
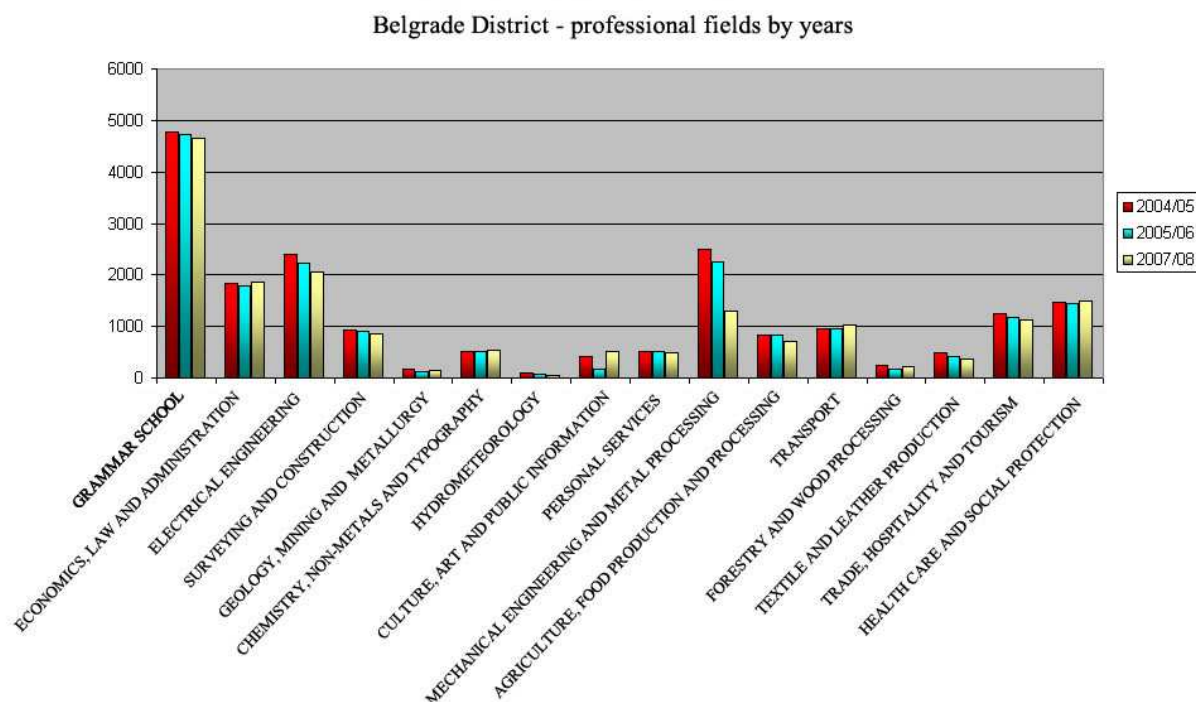


Chart n. 6



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Chart n. 7



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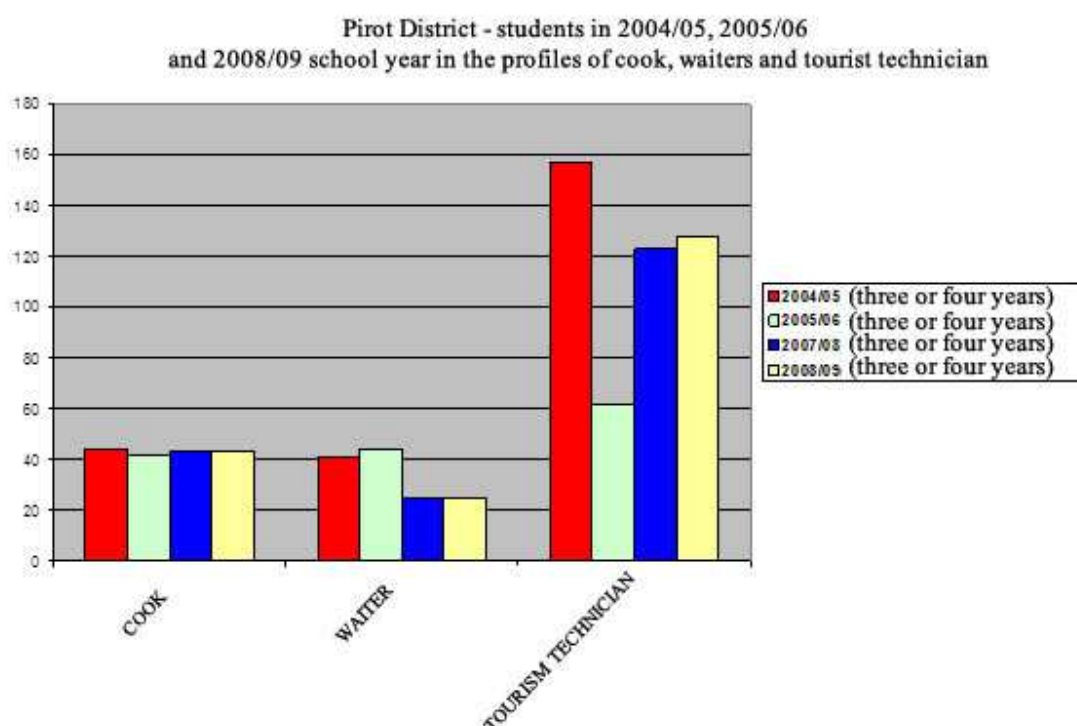
All charts show that the greatest interest is for grammar schools and professional fields: *economics*, *electrical engineering* and *mechanical engineering and metal processing*. However, in Pirot and Zajecar districts, besides the above-mentioned fields of profession, students show great interest for two additional professional fields: *tourism* and *medicine*. The following tables and charts show the interest students show for professional field of tourism in the selected areas.

Table 2

Pirot	COOK	WAITER	TOURISM TECHNICIAN
2004/05 (three or four years)	44	41	157
2005/06(three or four years)	42	44	62
2007/08(three or four years)	43	25	123
2008/09(three or four years)	43	25	128

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Chart n. 8



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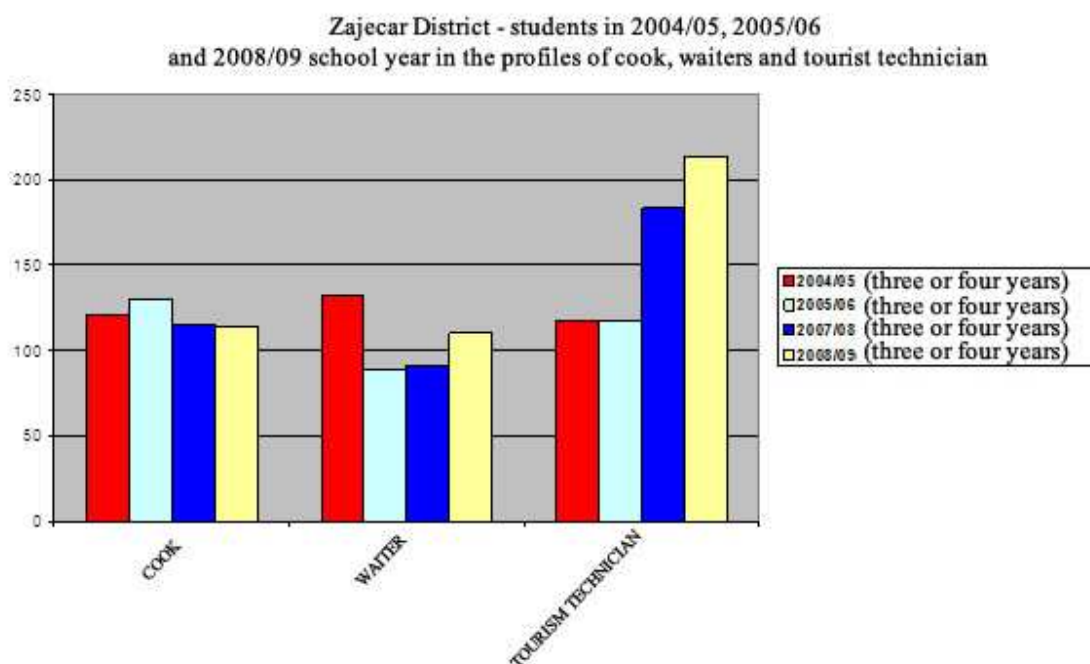
The previous table shows that the interest for the educational profile *tourism technician* is significant, while, when it comes to similar profiles, students express the constant and unchanging interest only for the educational profile *cook*. The enrolment in the educational profile *tourism technician* oscillated from great interest to sharp decline, but it later became stable. This is the characteristic of this region. However, students who enrol in this educational profile are mainly students with excellent or very good school achievement in primary education. This indicates that a number of students will continue their education at universities as this is possible after finishing this educational profile but it is relatively easier to finish secondary vocational school than grammar schools.

Table n. 3

Zajecar	COOK	WAITER	TOURISM TECHNICIAN
2004/05 (three or four years)	121	132	117
2005/06(three or four years)	130	89	117
2007/08(three or four years)	115	91	183
2008/09(three or four years)	114	110	213

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Chart n. 9



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In Zajecar district the interest for all educational profiles is stable and even increasing, which can be seen from the following table.

Table n. 4

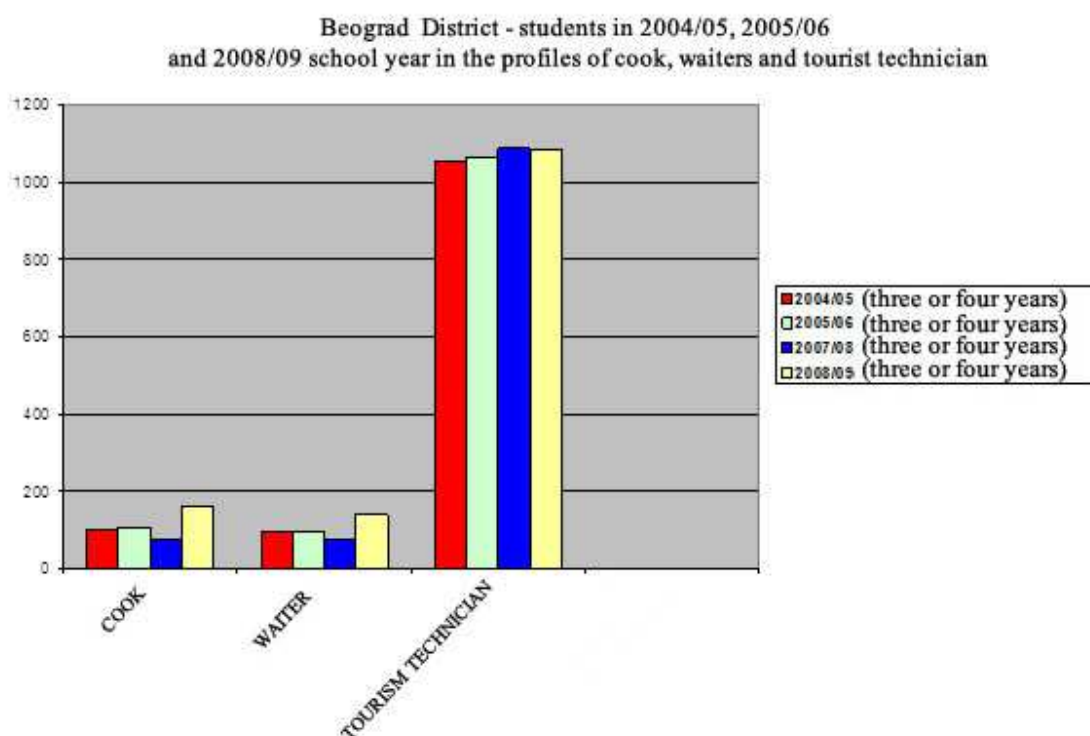
BELGRADE	COOK	WAITER	TOURISM TECHNICIAN
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IN THE CURRICULUM FOR THE EDUCATIONAL PROFILE *TOURISM TECHNICIAN* AND THE IMPACT OF ECONOMIC POLICY ON THE ENROLMENT OF PUPILS IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROFILE *TOURISM TECHNICIAN* IN SECONDARY EDUCATION REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

<u>2004/05 (three or four years)</u>	<u>101</u>	<u>96</u>	<u>1054</u>
<u>2005/06(three or four years)</u>	<u>107</u>	<u>95</u>	<u>1065</u>
<u>2007/08(three or four years)</u>	<u>74</u>	<u>73</u>	<u>1087</u>
<u>2008/09(three or four years)</u>	<u>161</u>	<u>141</u>	<u>1084</u>

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Chart n. 10



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The interest for the educational profile *tourism technician* is constant in Belgrade and the enrolment in similar educational profiles is continuously increasing. This is an indicator that young and educated staff is needed in these areas and that it is relatively easy to find adequate employment. While the economic policy proclaimed by the Government has no significant impact in Belgrade, its influence is strongly felt in other more or less developed areas or, in other words, it has the influence on which schools students choose to attend.

The following tables show the number of students who expressed the wish to enrol in the educational profile *tourism technician*. We will not elaborate on the way of enrolment at

secondary schools because the explanation implies a particular effort. Students' wishes are presented at the territory of Serbia and at the level of selected districts. This is the latest data which rely on previous information so we can monitor the interest of students in the long period.

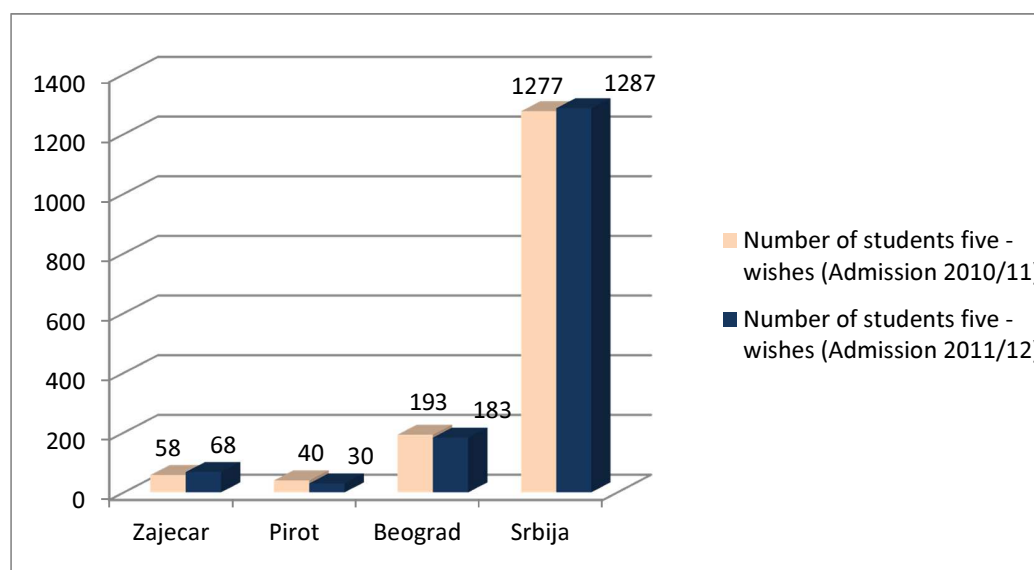
Table n. 5

District	Educational profile	2010/11 Number of students from I - V wish (Enrolment 2010/11)	2011/2012 Number of students from I - V wish (Enrolment 2011/12)
Zajecar	Tourism technician	58	68
Pirot	Tourism technician	40	30
Belgrade	Tourism technician	193	183
Serbia	Tourism technician	1277	1287

Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development Database

The above table shows the number of students choosing the educational profile *tourism technician* as their first, second, third, fourth and fifth wish. It is clear that the students who enrol in this educational profile are only those who are really interested. The chart follows.

Chart n. 11



Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development Database

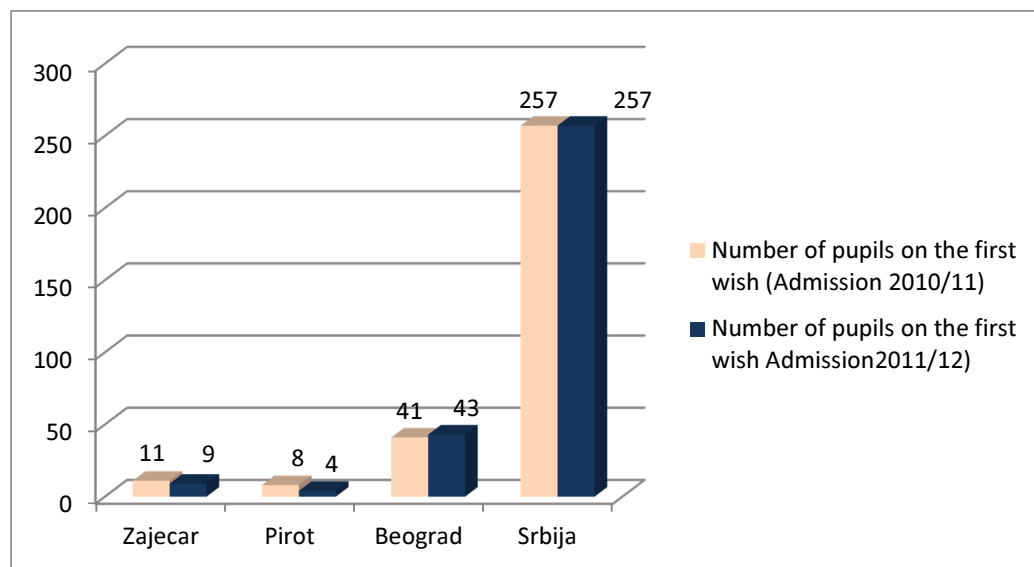
Table n. 6

District	Educational profile	Number of students, first wish (Enrolment 2010/11)	Number of students, first wish (Enrolment 2011/12)
Zajecar	Tourism technician	11	9
Pirot	Tourism technician	8	4
Belgrade	Tourism technician	41	43
Serbia	Tourism technician	257	257

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Table n 6 shows how many students opted for this educational profile as their first wish. This is also represented in the following chart.

Chart n. 12



Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development Database

Table n. 7

Serbia	Wish n. – <i>tourism technician</i>	N. of students by their wishes, enrolment 2010/11
	1	257
	2	275
	3	266
	4	257
	5	222
	Total:	1277

Source: Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development Database

Table n. 8

Serbia	Wish n. - <i>tourism technician</i>	N. of students by their wishes, enrolment 2011/12
	1	257
	2	265
	3	260
	4	252
	5	253
	Total:	1287

Source: Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development Database

These tables show the number of interested students at the level of the entire Republic of Serbia.

The following tables and the chart show the total number of students who expressed the wish to enrol in the educational profile *tourism technician* at the level of the Republic of Serbia.

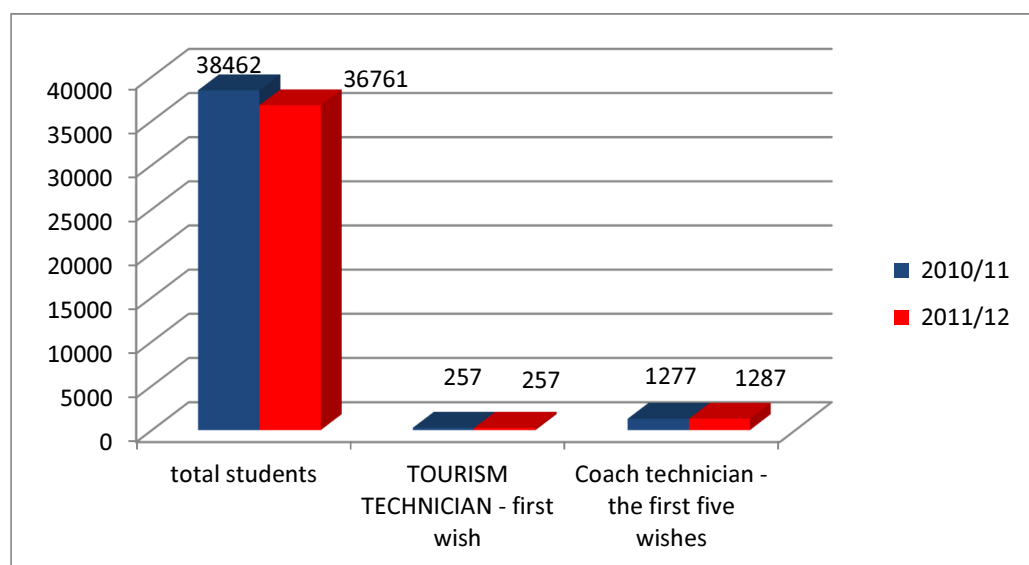
Table n. 9

	Total n. of students	<i>Tourism technician</i> – first wish	<i>Tourism technician</i> – first five wishes
2010/11	38462	257	1277
2011/12	36761	257	1287

Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development Database

Chart n. 13

IN THE CURRICULUM FOR THE EDUCATIONAL PROFILE *TOURISM TECHNICIAN* AND THE IMPACT OF ECONOMIC POLICY ON THE ENROLMENT OF PUPILS IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROFILE *TOURISM TECHNICIAN* IN SECONDARY EDUCATION REPUBLIC OF SERBIA



Source: Source: Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development

Database

In conclusion, it can be said that the interest of students for the educational profile *tourism technician* is significant, but with its economic policy and plans the state must initiate the further development of tourism both on the existing locations and the new ones by providing benefits (e.g. through tax policy) and support. But first of all, as the infrastructure is currently not fully developed, regional roads must be built to make all natural and cultural wealth accessible both to domestic and foreign tourists.

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Databases of the Ministry of Education and Sports