

New Trends and Opportunities for Central and Eastern European Tourism

Puiu Nistoreanu
The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania

A volume in the Advances in Hospitality, Tourism,
and the Services Industry (AHTSI) Book Series



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*Ana Mihaela Pădurean, Faculty of Business and Tourism, The Bucharest Academy of
Economic Studies, Romania*

Political changes that took place in the 1990s brought up the opening of tourism markets for Eastern European countries leading to a boost in the role of tourism in the economic and social sectors. This dynamic is reflected in the main tourism indicators, starting from the number of arrivals, revenue volume, degree of endowment with accommodation equipment, as well as in the competitiveness monitor aimed at a multitude of aspects. Concurrently, the complexity of tourism resources and their attractiveness represent the starting point in the elaboration of tourism development and promotion measures, which must take into account the harmonisation of all categories of local interests from local authorities and private companies to NGOs and population, thusly providing an adequate framework so that tourism can realise its effect as a multiplier for the economy.

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Socialist Architecture: Dissonant Heritage of CEE in the Concept of Sustainable Tourism

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Paweł Piotr Piotrowski, University of Economics in Katowice, Poland
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The goal of the chapter is to draw attention to the need to preserve selected examples of architecture built in 1945-1991 in the European Union countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The meanings assigned to the objects evolve, and along with social changes and changing awareness, architectural and urban value of the buildings from this period is more and more often noticed. Consequently, growth of their significance for development of tourism can be expected. On the other hand, they often constitute a dissonant heritage, and thus, more and more of them are demolished. This chapter presents the concept of dissonant heritage and justifies the relationships between characterised architecture. Attention is focused on the relationships between the need to protect it and the concept of sustainable development (including sustainable tourism). Examples of cities that have relatively big resources of this architecture are identified, and an attempt to classify them is made. Then tourist offer of these cities is analysed with respect to the use of the discussed architecture.

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This chapter aims to study the perspectives on the foreign language skills based on the Romanian tourism and hospitality young workforce views. Qualitative and quantitative methods help collect data to identify the main barriers to foreign language learning, the fluency in English and a second language and the willingness to learn a second language when necessary, and the young workforce's openness and readiness for exotic foreign languages. The results show that English is a requirement within the labor market in the tourism and hospitality sector that the young workforce knows about and that knowing a second foreign language may act as a differentiator within the labor market. China is gaining ground as a tourism market with many Chinese tourists traveling the world. This brings about a new challenge for the tourism staff: that of acquiring new exotic foreign languages. It is well understood that tourists prefer to use their native tongue or a world language such as English.

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This chapter analyses the significance that tourists, on the one hand, and the business environment, on the other hand, lend to the concept of sustainable development in tourism. Starting from this point, the chapter highlights the characteristics of the sustainable development of tourism in the coastal areas of Black Sea. Sustainable development has been conceptualized by a set of four variables: economic, socio-human, ecological, and institutional-technological. The main results of the research show that both tourists and members of the business environment attach the greatest importance to the institutional-technological variable, focusing primarily on collaboration and communication between decision-makers and executives. Regarding the stakeholders, both tourists and the business community indicate local governance and central government as the main factors responsible for sustainable development. Following the research, a possible list of actions was proposed.

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The 1990s represent the starting point for a lot of changes not only in tourism but in the whole economy of any EEC. Before that, Eastern European countries had similar tourism developments with some differences between the types of mountain development due to some specificities according to the national policies of the sector. A short overview of the mountain tourism current situation is presented in the beginning. The tourism market is a very challenging one with rapid changes due to shifts in customers' preferences, new technologies, seasonality. The authors also presented the latest trends in mountain tourism in terms of supply and demand. The possibilities for future mountain tourism development in Romania are presented at the end of the chapter starting from the results of the previous analyses. Some of them are specific for Romania, but others can be applied to all mountain destinations (with or without minor adjustments).

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The tourism domain has represented, for a long time, one of the main sources of revenue for the different destinations that have awarded a special focus to its development and enrichment. Its types of impacts, whether economic, social, or environmental, bring both great benefits and pose a certain level of risk. Regardless of the latter, people will be always willing to travel to get to know new cultures, and there will always be competition between destinations at the time of attracting and maintaining tourism flows. The last decades have been marked by the emergence of a new tourist flow (i.e., the Chinese outbound segment), which brings great economic potential to the Central and Eastern Europe region. To this end, this chapter focuses on presenting the current situation of the presence of the Chinese segment within CEE and some of the specificities of their tourist consumer behavior.

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We live in a world that is constantly evolving, which is taking place with an astonishing speed. Over the past 30 years, there have been concerns that have tried or are trying to promote the slowdown. Such a current is the slow movement, promoted initially by Carlo Petrini and which today has millions of followers worldwide. Under the slow umbrella there were developed many ideas, some with high impact such as slow food, CittaSlow, and others. In the chapter, the author makes an inventory of the evolution of the slow current and puts this evolution in a logical structure. In his research, the author uses the international databases as well as the multimedia resources available. The chapter underlines that the slow movement has its best results in the tourism industry, for which this movement is so important. The author points out three main directions of evolution, which may constitute points of interest for future research, especially in the direction that has connection with slow food, slow tourism, and CittaSlow.

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The chapter aims to study a new form of tourism, business tourism and the MICE industry, which in Romania and Eastern Europe is in the process of development, having a major economic contribution to the growth of the economy of the communities where it is taking place. The business and industry tourism sector MICE (M-meeting, I-travel incentive/reward, C-convention or congress, E-exhibition, fair, event) is an industry that governs the economic market confirms the markets of Europe and the United States of America as a success story through the regeneration of urban cities and the superior quality of services. The aim of the research is to analyze the social and economic implications generated by the business tourism sector and the MICE industry in order to increase the level of development of the communities where they are taking place.

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An important component of the anthropic resource category, slow, is represented by the gastronomic component, namely through ethno-cultural events organized throughout the country. As a result of the research, the authors learned that a wide range of festivals and events are organized on the territory of Romania that are promoting the traditional products specific to the different regions. These constitute the main ways to promote tourism for the areas in which they occur. The authors found that Romanian tourists are eager to know their country and that is why these manifestations have real success. Wine-related resources form a real promotional tool for slow current and especially for and slow food. The presence of these resources fits perfectly between two important components of slow movement, namely slow tourism and slow food. The authors, therefore, have a moving part and a feeding component that when combined give to the tourist products of a much greater value than if there was a tourist product for each component.

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Daniel Avram, The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania

This chapter addresses the main trends of rural tourism and focuses on the development of this niche in Romania, one of the countries in Central and Eastern Europe that has a real potential to become a reference destination internationally. The analysis is based on the breakdown of statistical indicators and changes in the demand structure to assess the evolution of rural tourism activity objectively. Thus, elements such as the evolution of accommodation structures in rural areas, the number of overnight stays by agro-tourists, as well as changes in the profile of tourists that can influence the activity of rural tourism have been included. Also, there are examples of rural destinations that have made their mark on Romania as providers of rural tourism services that have echoes at the international level.

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Valentin Toader, Babeş-Bolyai Univeristy, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

Starting from concepts like sustainable development, sustainable tourism development, and sustainability, the chapter introduces important strategies for assessing sustainable rural development. Also, based on OECD and Eurostat taxonomy regarding innovation, it explains the two types of innovation: product and process (production, distribution, marketing, communication, management, and product/process development). In order to answer the question "How do firms innovate?" the authors draw attention to best practices of innovation in rural tourism. The aspects that are discussed mainly, but not exclusively, focus on the creation of tailor-made products, property renovation, marketing business skills development, information technology solutions, involvement in socially responsible activities, and the use of networking and collaborative behavior. Starting from different approaches of successful innovation in rural tourism identified in the scientific literature, the chapter emphasizes relevant case studies/best practices from the Central and Eastern European areas.

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Romanian Newly-Nominated WHS and Current Tourism Development in the Associated Rural Localities..... 223

Cornelia Pop, Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

Cristina Balint, Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

The aim of the chapter is to investigate the current status of tourism development within the rural localities adjacent to the newly nominated natural world heritage sites (WHS) in Romania. The general methodology will be that of a case study, combining deductive and inductive approaches and the critical interpretation based on the available data. The results show a modest to non-existent tourist infrastructure and shallow tourist activity in the rural area adjacent to the 12 locations of the new natural WHS. The findings also show a low level of awareness regarding the WHS designation among the local authorities and the absence of real cooperation between the custodians of the related protected areas and the local communities. The new WHS locations have a long way ahead to become attractive and sustainable tourist destination by applying adequate destination management which should include the special status of these rural destinations.

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Rural Tourism and Its Dimension: A Case of Transylvania, Romania..... 246

Monica Maria Coroş, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

This chapter aims at identifying the role and perspectives of rural tourism in one of Romania's most attractive destinations, Transylvania. Rural tourism and rurality are conceptualized, followed by a literature review on the major pillars of rural tourism. Identified elements are linked to Transylvania's resources aiming at assessing its rural tourist potential, focusing on the area's rural tourism supply and demand. Potential recommendations include to work on the further development of rural and agritourism in Transylvania's multicultural villages, building promotion strategies around success cases such as Mărginimea Sibiului, Sâncraiu, Şirnea and the entire Bran-Fundata-Moieciu area, Viscri and the Saxon heritage, the UNESCO Heritage sites. Nature and wilderness are important differentiation elements. The success of any destination can only be achieved based on the joint efforts of all stakeholders. Thus, DMO strategies are formulated. To be internationally competitive, Transylvania must capitalize on its unique assets and it must provide diversified and integrated services.

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Typical Aspects of the Traditional Food Behavior Within the Romanian Rural Environment 273

Puiu Nistoreanu, The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania

Bogdan Gabriel Nistoreanu, The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania

Liliana Nicodim, University Ovidius Constanta, Romania

The Romanians' food behavior has certain peculiarities specific to the various geographical areas in which the Romanian society has developed. An analysis of the traditional diet is—up to this date—modest. But taking into account the very varied geographic conditions, the existing resources, sometimes abundant, sometimes modest, of the troubled history of the Romanian people, it is easy to understand how the way of life and the culinary habits in Romania were shaped throughout history. This chapter explores typical aspects of traditional food behavior in rural Romania.

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<i>Alina Cerasela Avram, The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania</i>	

This chapter aims to enhance general knowledge about the impact of rural tourism on the wellbeing in a country that is known to have an impressive potential both on spa and rural tourism. The approach will take into consideration the new profile of tourists in recent years and the dynamism of the tourism field in Europe. Based on the research that the author has made in recent years on health tourism and wellbeing, expanding the scientific approach to the rural area represents the next step in her approach, given the potential of this field in Romania. The chapter will address the ways of capitalising on the rural tourism resources in Romania through the specific activities of the concept of “rural wellbeing tourism.” This model has been successfully developed and implemented in the Nordic countries, Austria, Switzerland, Iceland, and Canada, and it is considered a way to generate highly competitive tourism products.

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Foreword

This masterpiece, entitled *New Trends and Opportunities for Central and Eastern European Tourism*, edited under the strict supervision and most competent coordination of Prof. Puiu Nistoreanu, PhD from the Bucharest University of Economic Studies presents different perspectives and contemporary approaches on the role and relevance of tourism from emerging markets. The chapters address some specific aspects from Central and Eastern European Countries, where tourism is gaining an increased role in the development of the societies. Empirical studies, as well as best practices from developed countries are transposed to emerging markets and potential action plans and strategies are discussed. Policy makers in such countries might take into consideration the approaches presented in this book in order to enhance the tourism industry and to strengthen its role in modern society. The book has a great potential in enhancing the tourism industry.

In the chapter “Typical Aspects of the Traditional Food Behavior Within the Romanian Rural Environment” written by two authors from the Bucharest University of Economic Studies (Puiu Nistoreanu and Gabriel Bogdan Nistoreanu) the emphasize is put on the peculiarities and specificities of the Romanian food behavior which strive out from the traditional gastronomy. Cultural, social, historical, geographical aspects regarding the food behavior and the way Romanians like to prepare different dishes are highlighted and explained by the authors, as „*The culture of a people can be known through the open window of their kitchen*”. The authors explain the roots of the Romanian cuisine and culinary art by pointing out its origins, as well as the connections with foreign cultures and the major influences that were encountered in history. The chapter also deals with the most common food resources that are to be found in different Romanian menus. At the end, the authors present how the food behavior differs from a region to another and how food resources are included in menus of Romanian agro-touristic guest houses.

A quite interesting perspective regarding the challenges of young people in acquiring foreign language skills is discussed by Andreea Fortuna Şchiopu from the Bucharest University of Economic Studies in the chapter “Tourism and Hospitality Young Workforce: The Challenge of Acquiring Foreign Language Skills.” The author analyses based on a qualitative and quantitative research how young professionals from tourism and hospitality industry from an emerging market, Romania, relate to foreign languages as a communication tool in order to boost the activities of this sector and to attract tourists from more and more countries. The focus of the chapter is also on some exotic languages, such as Chinese/Mandarin. After presenting the importance and relevance of foreign language skills by people working in the tourism sector worldwide, the chapter debates which if these languages are the most important ones in the hospitality and tourism. As Chinese outbound tourists surpassed 100 million in 2014, it becomes more and more important for tourism and hospitality businesses around the world to hire workforce which can communicate with this growing market segment. The tourism industry in Romania must adapt to this

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market trend, so therefore the author performed a focus group with representative of several Romanian travel agencies as well as survey among students in order to analyze the willingness of young people to acquire foreign languages to improve their ability to communicate with tourist from non-English speaking countries. The study reveals that both there are several major challenges that must be surpassed by the industry, but that for a proper development of the Romanian tourism sector, knowing more foreign languages is a must for the young workforce.

A different perspective regarding tourists from China is presented by Ana Maria Nica from the Bucharest University of Economic Studies in the chapter “The Chinese Incoming Segment: Opportunity for the Central and Eastern European Market.” Chinese tourists play nowadays a more and more important role for tourism businesses around the world, as they like to visit and spend time and money in different foreign destinations, such as those from Central and Eastern European Countries. The chapter analyses the tourism flow, tourism expenditure, and tourism expectations of Chinese tourists that might choose emerging destinations, like Romania, for their next visit. The author describes several best practices from different countries in the region that were able to adapt and benefit from successfully implementing a business strategy aimed at attracting such tourist to their destinations. These lessons and best practices might be transposed to the Romanian context, which might perhaps develop as the next major destination for Chinese tourist.

A rather new form of tourism is the rural wellbeing one, which is investigated by Alina Cerasela Avram from the Bucharest University of Economic Studies in the chapter “The Impact of Rural Tourism in Wellbeing: Romania’s Case.” After presenting the theoretical debate regarding this form of tourism, its main characteristics, advantages and disadvantages, its present developments in the European Union and in Romania, by also highlighting the conditions which must be fulfilled by localities in order to become rural wellbeing destinations, the author presents some aspects and opportunities that might boost the rural wellbeing tourism in Romania. There are, of course, different aspects that ease the development of the wellbeing tourism in Romania, but also others that need to be further improved. A very comprehensive research is done regarding some wellbeing destinations in Romania, which might enhance the proper positioning of Romania as a tourism brand.

Daniel Avram from the Bucharest University of Economic Studies also analyses the tremendous changes that have undergone the rural tourism: “Changes in Rural Tourism: What’s New?” In his approach, he presents Romania’s rural tourism potential as it comes out from the numerous natural resources and the uniqueness of the cultural heritage which could very successfully transform Romanian villages into a reference destination for world rural tourism. The author presents the role and importance of the rural tourism for the national economy and highlights how different rural areas from Romania could benefit from more international and domestic touristic flows, if there would be a better emphasize on the rural touristic destinations. The development of a national strategy for presenting the features, benefits, advantages and potential of rural tourism destination could lead to an increase in tourist flows.

A team of three authors from the Bucharest University of Economic Studies and the Institute of World Economy of the Romanian Academy of Sciences (Daniel Bulin, Claudia-Elena Țuclea and Robert-Ionuț Dobre) investigate the “Sustainable Tourism Development in the Black Sea Coastal Areas: A Research on Romanian Tourists and Tourism Operators.” Their very novel and interesting research is aimed at providing some very relevant information regarding the concept of sustainable tourism development from both the tourist perspective, as well as from that of tourism organizations. The research context regards the coastal areas of the Black Sea. After describing the economic, environmental, socio-cultural and technological dimensions of tourism sustainable development in coastal areas, the authors investigate

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the stakeholder's responsibility operating businesses in the coastal area. Furthermore, they offer some measures and strategies aimed at supporting and generating sustainable tourism development in the Black Sea coastal areas and lastly, they conduct empirical investigations regarding tourists' and tour operators' perception over the dimensions, responsibilities and directions of sustainable tourism development in coastal areas. The study concludes with some recommendation for policy makers in the industry.

A group of authors from University of Economics in Katowice (Paweł Piotr Piotrowski, Małgorzata Kieźel and Joanna Wiechoczek) approach a quite common, but important issue for countries in Central and Eastern Europe: "Socialist Architecture: Dissonant Heritage of CEE in the Concept of Sustainable Tourism Development." The urban landscape of cities from CEE is very much influenced by the socialist architecture. Although some of these buildings can be considered ugly and inappropriate for traditional city-centers, as they deploy a minimalist architectural style, they represent nowadays a very common and important heritage. Sustainable tourism could and should find proper ways of not only preserving the best examples of them, but also of develop proper strategies in order to reconsider them as potential tourist destinations. The authors highlight in the chapter the premises that make socialist architecture consistent with the concept of dissonant heritage, the relationships between socialist architecture and the concept of sustainable development and sustainable tourism, the CEE cities that could develop to important destinations for socialist architecture. In the end the authors propose some strategies in order to include socialist architecture in touristic offers.

Another very interesting form of tourism is represented by the "Slow Movement and Its Forms of Evolution in Contemporary Society" written by Gheorghe Georgica from the Bucharest University of Economic Studies. In this chapter the author reveals. Slow movement becomes more and more related to tourism as it aims in preserving regional cuisine and traditional gastronomy, local farming, as well as traditional food preparation techniques. The author presents its main characteristics, advantages and disadvantages, as well as its relations to other related concepts, such as: *slow food*, *slow tourism*, *slow money*, *slow city*, *slow parenting*, *slow media*, *slow travel*. They all play a major role in tourism and hospitality, as stressed people nowadays could take into consideration the advantages of the slow movement and select travel destinations depending on the "slowness" degree they exhibit. Furthermore, the author also analyses how the slow movement could be transposed into specific strategies by organizations from hospitality and tourism.

A second chapter on the concept of Slow movement written by Liliana Nicodim and Puiu Nistoreanu from the Bucharest University of Economic Studies presents "Romania as a Destination for Slow Seekers." Based on the "*Slow Food Manifesto for Quality*" which considers that the entire offer of different organizations should rely on three principles: good, clean and fair. This movement encourages stakeholders from a touristic destination to cooperate and to provide better services for incoming tourists and others. The authors present the concepts of slow movement linked to tourism and highlight different best practices from around the world. Based on that, they emphasize how slow movement can have a positive contribution for the development of tourism destinations in Romania. The chapter is full of best practices which might be transposed into an action plan and into a national strategy aimed at promoting this kind of tourism into a national strategy for attracting and accommodating tourists in Romania.

Two authors from the Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, Romania (Cornelia Pop and Cristina Balint) analyse how the Romanian newly nominate World Heritage sites are linked to the current tourism development in the associated rural localities. The authors discuss the role and importance of natural protected areas as World Heritage Sites, as they might be considered a major factor in enhancing the attractivity, visibility and prestige of tourism destinations. World Heritage Sites are becoming more and

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more important for international tourists which are eager to visit and explore them. The authors present the characteristics, advantages and importance of such World Heritage Sites for the development of the Romanian Tourism especially in rural areas. The authors propose some specific actions and plans in order to convert such rural areas in very attractive tourism destinations.

The relevance and significance of “Mountain Tourism at the Beginning of the 21st Century, Where to?” Is approached by Mihail Ovidiu Tanase from Bucharest University of Economic Studies and by Liliana Nicodim from Ovidius University, Romania. Their chapter analyses mountain tourism in destinations across Eastern Europe, located in Carpathian Mountains, Dinaric Alps and Balkan Mountains. As mountains cover 24% of the world’s land surface it is more than necessary to develop proper strategies in order to enhance the international visibility and prestige of such areas. The authors present the features and advantages offered by such destinations. A very comprehensive overview of large ski resorts and other mountain destinations in CEE countries is presented in the chapter. Furthermore, the authors also describe different sports and recreational activities that might be pursued by tourists in mountain destinations across CEE countries. The chapter ends with best practices regarding the development of this sector in Romania and valuable proposals for combining mountain tourism with other types of tourism in order to increase the attractivity of Romania as a tourist destination.

Adina Letiția Negrușă and Valentin Toader from the Babeș-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca, Romania analyze some “Innovative Solutions for Sustainable Development of Rural Tourism in Central and Eastern European Areas: Types of Innovation in Tourism and Hospitality.” In the chapter they describe how the innovation process can contribute to the sustainable development of rural tourism. In this respect they present different best practices from developed and emerging markets and highlight how innovation of tourism activities can be used for the development of tailor-made products, property renovations, business skills development, information technology solutions, involvement in socially responsible activities or the use of networking and collaborative behavior. By presenting best practices from Central and Eastern European countries the authors highlight the importance played by innovation for new business strategies of tourism organizations.

Manuela Liliana Mureșan proposes a change of perspective in tourism, as she analyses the “Economic and Social Features of the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) Industry Development and Business Tourism.” The author describes the MICE industry and how it is relevant for the development of tourism, tourism businesses and activities. She analyses the potential of MICE industry for tourism at an international, regional and national level and how MICE might increase the attractivity and international positioning of destinations on the touristic travelling map. Furthermore, she explains how MICE is related to business tourism, and how a MICE destination might be influenced by the features of an event. In the end, the author analyses this industry in the context of the emerging market Romania, which might develop as a very attractive MICE destination at international level. She also gives some relevant suggestions and recommendations for policy makers in the field.

Ana Mihaela Pădurean from the Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies presents in the chapter “Aspects of the Tourist Movement in Eastern European Countries” more best practices on the tourism industry which might be also transposed to other emerging and/or developed destinations in order to increase touristic flows, as well as the attractivity of this sector. The author analyses and comments the major tourism indicators in different Central and Eastern European countries, highlighting how they can contribute to the transformation of each of them into major touristic destinations. In the end, the author draws some relevant recommendations for countries in order to increase their international attractivity for international tourist. While Romania and Moldova should enhance their transport infrastructure, in

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Slovakia the tourism sector should be more sustainable. Some improvements regarding the development of natural and cultural resources are more than necessary in Moldova, Ukraine, Latvia and Lithuania.

Rural tourism is also the subject of the chapter written by Monica Maria Coroş from the Babeş-Bolyai University “Rural Tourism and Its Dimension: A Case of Transylvania, Romania.” After carefully presenting the theoretical foundation of rural tourism, its main features and advantages, the author offers here a very broad perspective on various best practices of rural tourism from Transylvania. Rural tourism in Romania is faced with multiple challenges regarding the infrastructure, the limited services and probably also an insufficient and badly coordinated promotion of this service sector. However, different local communities managed to find proper solutions in order to enhance their positioning and to be easily found by domestic and international tourists. In the future, rural tourism in Transylvania might benefit from tasty foods and wines, diverse and picturesque landscapes, friendly and welcoming people, preserved natural sites, etc. Pursuing a national strategy for promoting Transylvania as a key destination for rural tourism would also contribute in attracting more tourist to this very impressive region.

The book *New Trends and Opportunities for Central and Eastern European Tourism* is of great usefulness for both academics and practitioners. As it is full of definitions of various concepts related to tourism, it also presents the features, advantages and disadvantages of such concepts. Furthermore, the authors present numerous best practices from emerging and developed markets, which can be easily transposed to other markets and contexts. They propose strategies, action plans and measures to implement those concepts into reality. By their approach, the authors try also to promote Romania as a very attractive tourism destinations, tourist friendly and open, with lots of interesting resorts. Although the infrastructure might still represent a potential challenge for incoming tourist, people’s warmth besides the uniqueness of places and destinations remains the major reason for visiting this part of Eastern Europe.

Dan Cristian Dabija

Department of Marketing, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Babeş-Bolyai University, Romania

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As well-known, tourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon that involves the people's movement to countries or places outside their usual environment, for personal, professional or business purposes. These people are named visitors (and they can be either tourists or day-visitors/day-travelers, residents or non-residents), and tourism refers to their activities, which entail some tourist expenses, as widely admitted by both scholars and specialists.

Obviously, tourism activities determine certain repercussions upon the economy, upon the natural and built environment, upon the local population of the destination and upon the tourists themselves. Thus, multiple impacts are generated, of the range and variety of production factors necessary to create the goods and services purchased by visitors, respectively of the range of agents interested in or affected by tourism; consequently, it is necessary to adopt an integrated approach to tourism development, management and control. This approach is highly recommended for the formulation and implementation of national and local tourism policies, as well as for the establishment of the necessary international agreements or of other tourism mechanisms.

Practice has proven that tourism generates, directly and indirectly, an increase of the economic activity in the visited places (and not only), mainly due to the growth in the demand of goods and services that must be produced and provided. From this perspective, the multiplier effect of the tourism activities in the areas where tourism exists is discussed and researched. Within the economic analysis of tourism, a distinction must be made between the "economic contribution" of tourism, which refers to the direct consequences of tourism and which can be measured and the "economic impact" of tourism, a much broader concept, which represents the synthesis of the direct, indirect and induced effects of tourism and which must be evaluated by applying various models. Economic impact studies are aimed at quantifying the economic benefits, namely the net increase of the residents' wealth resulting from tourism activities, measured in monetary terms, above the level that would exist.

As a phenomenon, tourism has become a mass practice, as global tourist flows correspond to an economic and political logic and are reflected in elaborated power relations, assuming the most sophisticated strategies. This is because, for the moment, on one hand the beneficial effects of the multiplier effect of tourism activities carried out in certain areas, regions, countries are discussed and, on the other hand, over-tourism is brought up in the case of other destinations.

Tourism has proven vital for many countries, such as Egypt, Greece, Lebanon, Spain and Thailand, and for some island nations (Bahamas, Fiji, Maldives) due to the consistent financial input from business exchanges of goods and services and due to the generated employment opportunities in the service industry associated with tourism. The industry of services includes transport services (air transport, cruises, railways, taxis) and hospitality services (accommodation, including hotels and resorts, food-

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services, entertainment services, such as parks, casinos or malls, respectively music and theater halls that also generate revenues).

At the beginning of the second decade of the 2000's, the World Tourism Organization highlighted a galloping development towards what we now call mass tourism. Thus, if in 1950 the tourist flows registered values of only about 25 million international tourist arrivals, two decades later they increased to 278 million, so that later in 2000, these mobilities already involved 687 million people, to finally pass one billion in 2012.

The last decade of the 20th Century is marked by a prodigious expansion of the tourist area. As in 1989 the walls fell, the borders opened, the bipolar world came to an end. The Young Westerners became curious to discover the countries of the Central and Eastern Europe which had been long rooted behind the Iron Curtain, such as East Germany, Poland, Hungary, Romania and so on.

Consequently, one may discuss about new territories that open for tourism. Furthermore, we are witnessing a continuous expansion and the geopolitical context seems very favorable, too: it is the period of China's opening (with 17,877 foreign visitors registered in 1965, then over 20 million in 1995, 31.2 million in 2000 and 60.7 million in 2017); this is the post-apartheid era in South Africa (the second destination in African tourism, following Morocco, with its 8.4 million tourists in 2011); a new player appears on the global tourist market, Vietnam (with 1.4 million tourists in 2000 and 6 million in 2011); not to mention the positioning of new destinations in Caribbean (like Cuba and Dominican Republic) on mass tourism (World Tourism Organization, 2019).

Now, at the end of the second decade of the 21st Century, tourism is increasingly becoming a mass phenomenon. From Paris to Shanghai, from Buenos Aires to New York, tourism is omnipresent today. Omnipresent in a small number of places that concentrate more and more tourist flows. Omnipresent in political discourses in which cities and regions compete with ingenuity to capture these flows.

The phenomenon of globalization influences all fields of activity, including tourism, which has obviously changed dramatically since the end of the 20th Century, being one of the most evolving sectors of activity. In the midst of these highly dynamic movements of the global tourism market, we are witnessing the evolution and development of worldwide tourism, at which point a group of researchers from several Eastern European universities interested in Eastern European tourism paradigms have grouped around the Academic Research Center for Tourism Services (CACTUS), The Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies – The Faculty of Business and Tourism, Department of Tourism and Geography – at the international conferences it organizes every two years. They have set out to analyze “New Trends and Opportunities for Central and Eastern European Tourism”.

The exchanges of information, the researches undertaken over a period of almost 10 years on the trends and opportunities in the European tourism – but especially in the Eastern European countries – led them to joining their efforts in order to achieve a fresco of contemporary tourism in this part of the world.

In order to improve the tourism industry and to strengthen its role in the contemporary society, tourism-related decision-makers from European countries could and should consider the approaches presented in the study comprising the chapters of our book. The book can be considered a genuine x-ray of the tourist industry and it has a great potential of improving the European tourism activity.

The chapters of the paper proposed for editing bring together the assumption of a conceptual instrument, the results and the substantive procedures of a global way of looking at the tourism phenomenon in which the scientific researches of the academic community presented during the second decade of the 21st Century.

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Thus, various aspects were approached in turn, taking into account the new trends registered in the tourist practice of Central and Eastern Europe, such as the ones that follow:

- ***Aspects of the Tourist Movement in Eastern European Countries:*** The chapter analyzes and comments on the main tourism indicators from different Central and Eastern European countries, highlighting how they can contribute to the transformation of each one of them into major tourist destinations. Recommendations relevant to increasing international tourist attractiveness are also elaborated. Some of these emphasize that Romania and Moldova ought to improve their transport infrastructure, while in Slovakia the tourism sector should become more sustainable. On the other hand, improvements in the development of natural and cultural resources are needed in several cases, such as: Moldova, Ukraine, Latvia and Lithuania.
- ***Socialist Architecture: Dissonant Heritage of CEE in the Concept of Sustainable Tourism Development:*** The chapter addresses an important problem for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe: socialist architecture. The analysis of this aspect, specific to the former communist states, points out that some of the inherited buildings may be considered ugly and unsuitable for the traditional centers, since they have a minimalist architectural style, but, on the other hand, they represent today a common and important heritage. Sustainable tourism can and should find appropriate ways of preserving not only their best examples, but also to develop appropriate strategies to reconsider them as tourist destinations. A good example from this point of view is the city of Berlin (Germany). The premises that make socialist architecture consistent with the concept of dissonant heritage, the relations between socialist architecture and the concept of sustainable development and sustainable tourism, the CEE cities that could become destinations sought for socialist architecture are highlighted. Prior to the conclusion, strategies for the inclusion of socialist architecture in the tourist offers of former communist countries are offered.
- ***Tourism and Hospitality Young Workforce: The Challenge of Acquiring Foreign Language Skills:*** The analysis presented is based on a qualitative and quantitative research concerning how young professionals in the tourism and hospitality industry in Romania refer to foreign languages as a communication tool, to stimulate the activities of this sector and to attract more and more tourists from many other countries. The research focuses on exotic languages, such as Chinese/Mandarin. The importance and relevance of possessing foreign language skills by persons working in the tourism sector worldwide is emphasized; the chapter analyzes which these languages are and tries to establish their importance for hospitality and tourism activities. As tourists from China have exceeded 100 million in 2014 (World Tourism Organization, 2019), it is becoming increasingly important for tourism and hospitality companies around the world to employ a workforce that can efficiently and effectively communicate with this growing market segment. The Romanian tourism industry will have to adapt to this market trend. The focus group realized with representatives of several Romanian travel agencies, followed by the survey-based research addressing students, with the purpose to analyze young people's desire to acquire foreign languages, to improve their ability to communicate with tourists from non-English speaking countries, highlighted this new trend. The study reveals that for a proper development of the Romanian tourism sector, the knowledge of several foreign languages is a necessity for the young workforce.
- ***Sustainable Tourism Development in the Black Sea Coastal Areas: A Research on Romanian Tourists and Tourism Operators:*** Novel and interesting points of view and relevant pieces of information are presented to the reader regarding the concept of sustainable tourism development

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– both from the tourist’s perspective and from that of the tourism organizations. The research addresses the coastal areas of the Black Sea, presenting the economic, environmental, socio-cultural and technological dimensions of the sustainable development of tourism in the area of the Black Sea. The responsibilities of stakeholders operating in the coastal zone are evaluated. Furthermore, measures and strategies are offered regarding the appropriate ways of supporting and generating sustainable tourism development in the coastal areas of the Black Sea. The empirical investigations related to the perception of tourists and tour operators on the dimensions, responsibilities and directions of sustainable development of tourism in coastal areas are also noted. The study concludes with some recommendations for decision makers in the hospitality industry and tourism service providers active in the Black Sea areas.

- ***Mountain Tourism at the Beginning of the 21st Century, Where to?*** An analysis of mountain tourism, in Eastern European destinations, located in the Carpathian Mountains, the Dinaric Alps and the Balkan Mountains, is more than welcome. Mountains cover about 24% of the earth’s surface, thus it is necessary to create and develop appropriate strategies to increase the international visibility and prestige of these areas. As a result, is introduced to the features and benefits provided by these destinations to the mountainous world. Through an overview, a comprehensive and efficient presentation, the reader is enabled to experience a tour of the major ski resorts and other mountain destinations in the CEE countries. Various sports and recreational activities, which can be undertaken by the tourists of the mountain destinations in CEE countries, are also described. Finally, a series of good practices regarding the development of mountain tourism in Romania are brought up together with recommendations for the combining of mountain tourism with other types of tourism, in order to increase the attractiveness of the Romanian mountain tourism offer.
- ***The Chinese Incoming Segment: Opportunity for the Central and Eastern European Market:*** Chinese tourists are playing an increasingly important role for tourism companies around the world, as they want to visit, spend time and spend their money worldwide, in the most different tourist destinations, among these destinations there are the Central and Eastern European countries, too. The analyses of the tourist flows, of the tourist expenses and of the expectations of the Chinese tourists in choosing an emerging destination, reveal that Romania could be the destination of one of their coming visits. Thus, some good practices are identified and described from different countries in the region, which have been able to adapt, and which benefit from the successful implementation of a business strategy, aiming at attracting this flow of tourists to their countries. These suggestions and best practices can be transposed in the Romanian context, so that Romania can become one of the next choices of Chinese tourists.
- ***Slow Movement and Its Forms of Evolution in the 21st Century:*** The slow movement, as tasting of life, vacations, moments spent in nature or outside the city’s turmoil, is increasingly related to tourism. The slow motion of the spare moments, those moments outside the productive activities, follows the preservation of the regional cuisine and the traditional gastronomy, of the local agriculture, as well as of the traditional techniques of food preparation. One may find here a presentation of its main features, advantages and disadvantages, as well as its relationships with other related concepts, such as: slow food, slow tourism, slow money, slow city, slow parenting, slow media, or slow travel. All play a major role in tourism and hospitality, as stressed people nowadays take into account the advantages of slow movement and select their future travel destinations depending on the degree of “slowdown” they present. Of course, an analysis of the way in which

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the slow movement can be transposed into specific strategies by hospitality and tourism organizations, by the local administration, NGOs is also elaborated.

- ***Economic and Social Features of the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) Industry Development and Business Tourism:*** The reader is provided a description of the MICE industry, of its relevance for the development of tourism, businesses and tourism activities, in a certain locality, area, country. The analysis of the potential of the MICE industry for tourism at international, regional and national levels, of how it can increase the attractiveness and international positioning of the respective destinations, on the tourist map, shows why for some there is MICE, and other destinations shall be concerned about this industry only from now on. The author aims at explaining how MICE is related to business tourism and how a MICE destination can be influenced by the features of an event. Before “the curtain is pulled”, the author analyzes this industry in the context of the emerging Romanian market, which can be expected to also develop as an internationally attractive MICE destination. This analysis is completed by suggestions and recommendations targeted at decision makers in this specific field.
- ***Romania: A Destination for Slow Seekers:*** A new approach to the concept of slow motion presents Romania as a destination for the seekers of slow destinations and especially for those who come to discover the traditional Romanian cuisine, as it used to be prior to the introduction of technology in the kitchen. The approach is based on the “Slow Food Manifesto for Quality”, which assumes that the entire offer of the different providing organizations should rely on three principles: good, clean and fair. This is the philosophy of returning in time and encouraging interested parties, from a tourist destination, to cooperate to provide better tourism services to their guests. The chapter presents the concepts of slow movement related to tourism, highlighting different good practices around the world. Based on these, it is highlighted how slow movement can make a positive contribution to the development of tourist destinations in Romania. The reader finds abundant good practices that can be transposed into an action plan, into a national strategy, aimed at promoting this type of tourism, in order to attract and retain tourists in Romania.
- ***Changes in Rural Tourism: What’s New?*** Like in a kaleidoscope, the analysis of the potential of rural tourism in Romania highlights the presence of numerous natural and anthropic resources, the uniqueness of its cultural heritage, which could lead to the successful transformation of Romanian villages into top European and global destinations for rural tourism. The role and importance of rural tourism for the national economy of the practicing countries of such services are well-known and widely recognized; taking into account the benefits of the multiplier effect produced by domestic and international tourist flows, a sharper focus of local communities in this direction would eventually lead to the emergence of new Romanian rural tourist destinations. The elaboration of a national strategy in this respect could exploit a number of features and would generate benefits and advantages for areas with potentially favorable development of new rural tourism destinations, all generating tourist flows. The development of tourism would thus lead to a further development of the entire village community, supporting the increase of the standard of living and civilization in the Romanian countryside.
- ***Innovative Solutions for Sustainable Development of Rural Tourism in Central and Eastern European Areas: Types of Innovation in Tourism and Hospitality:*** The innovation process can contribute to the sustainable development of rural tourism beyond any doubt. In this regard, the authors present different best practices from both developed and emerging markets, emphasizing how the innovation of the tourist activities can be used for: the development of custom products,

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the renovations of properties, the development of the business competencies, the implementation of information technology solutions, the involvement in social responsibility activities, or for the use of networks and of the collaborative behavior of the participants in the provision of tourist services. The presentation of best practices from various Central and Eastern European destinations, emphasizes the importance of innovation for the new business strategies of the tourism organizations, to break away from their daily routine, monotony and formalism, in order to keep the fresh air of the rural destinations.

- ***Romanian Newly-Nominated World Heritage Sites Are Linked to the Current Tourism Development in the Associated Rural Localities:*** The role and importance of protected natural areas, as world heritage sites, are regarded from the perspective of their appreciation as a major factor in increasing the attractiveness, visibility and prestige of those tourist destinations which possess them. From this point of view, world heritage sites are becoming more and more important for international tourists eager to visit and explore them. The authors have in mind the characteristics, advantages and importance of these world heritage sites for the development of Romanian tourism, especially of those located in rural areas. A series of specific actions and plans are also recommended for the conversion such rural areas into attractive tourist destinations, due to the natural heritage they possess, as well.
- ***Rural Tourism and Its Dimension: A Case of Transylvania, Romania:*** After providing a conceptual framework for rural tourism and presenting its main characteristics and advantages, the author offers an insight into the various good practices of rural tourism in Transylvania. Romanian rural tourism faces multiple challenges in terms of infrastructure, limited services, insufficient and poorly coordinated promotion, however, different local communities have managed to find suitable solutions to improve their positioning and to be more accessible to both domestic and international tourists. The years to come shall show whether the rural tourism in Transylvania has wisely capitalized on its tasty foods and drinks, diversified and picturesque landscapes, nature and humanism, preserved natural sites, its specific endowment to practice responsible tourism, and if these destinations have developed according to the expectations of those visitors who are eager to gain knowledge and experience while travelling.
- ***Typical Aspects of the Traditional Food Behavior in the Romanian Rural Environment:*** This chapter aims at highlighting that the particularities and specificity of the Romanian food behavior step apart from the traditional gastronomy. Cultural, social, historical, geographical aspects regarding food behavior and the way Romanians like to cook different dishes are analyzed; these are highlighted and explained, as the authors consider that “The culture of a people can be known through the open window of his kitchen”. The roots of Romanian cuisine and culinary art are discussed, aiming at outlining its origins, as well as its links with foreign cultures and major influences throughout history. The most common food resources, which can be found in different Romanian menus, are presented during the analysis. Not lacking interest is the way in which the food behavior differs from one region to another or the way in which the local food resources are included in the menus of the Romanian agritourism pensions.
- ***The Impact of Rural Tourism on Wellbeing: Romania’s Case:*** The research addresses a new form of tourism, discussing its main characteristics, advantages and disadvantages, its current developments in the European Union and in Romania. The conditions that must be met by rural localities, tourism practitioners, in order to become rural welfare destinations are highlighted. The analysis highlights aspects and opportunities that can stimulate rural tourism in Romania. It is

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obvious that the Romanian experience in terms of tourism development in rural communities can facilitate the development of wellness tourism in Romania, but there are other aspects that need to be improved in the future. The text presents a very comprehensive research regarding some welfare destinations in Romania, which could eventually correct and improve the positioning of Romania as a tourism brand.

While discussing the new trends and opportunities registered in the practice of tourism in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the authors have tried to validate or invalidate varied hypotheses, they have aimed at obtaining answers to a series of amazing questions, and they have come to sketch perspectives, even forecasts of the coming periods.

Seeking answers leads to new topics of reflection, to which the presence of social networks is added. These have become an integral part of the social practices of a large part of the world's population. Their use will change tourism practices and determines people to face and put up with new challenges.

Social networks change tourism practices at many levels. They increase the circulation of images, that contribute to the structuring of both the information and the imagination of our contemporaries, as "digital natives" are also "digital nomads". Had it not been so, in the fall of 2017, the Scottish Tourism Council would not have opened the "first Instagram travel agency" named #Scotspirit. This offers tourists itineraries solely based on photos taken by the network's users. More comments, fewer guides and mystifications, just pictures, assumed not "lying"..., that can be quickly and simply verified.

The same social networks have also changed accommodation services bringing up alternative hosting practices and providers such as: Airbnb, Couchsurfing, woofing. Despite all of these, many people still address travel agencies in search of a contact or for consulting services. Similarly, it would be inaccurate to assume that paper travel guides are gone, as nearly 8 million travel guides were sold in 2017 in France, even though in 2014 there had been sold 10 million. This only proves that the freedom to decide how one travels is on an increasing trend.

Instead of a conclusion, the authors prefer to remind the reader some of the landmarks of the development of global tourism, as of the end of the last Century, as backed up by the UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organization) reports. Thus, in the early 1970s, Europe recorded two thirds of all international tourist arrivals, and North America registered just a little under 20%. How do figures look today?!? Europe accounts for nearly 50% of the total global tourist arrivals and tends to represent only 40% by 2030. In contrast, Asia-Pacific (accounting only 2% of the global tourist arrivals in 1970) already captures 22% of the international tourist flows and is heading towards gathering 30% of the entire number of international tourists (World Tourism Organization, 2011; UNWTO Commission for the Middle East, 2012).

But what happens at national level? Developments are even more symptomatic, as revealed by the data published by the UNWTO: while the United States of America have always been among the 5 most visited countries, Canada, the 2nd regional player in 1970, has nowadays entered the ranking of the top 15 worldwide destinations. On the other hand, China, the 10th most visited country in 1990, now ranks 4th or even 3rd, if we also consider Macao and Hong Kong. The challenge of 2020 will be to establish if France shall remain the 1st worldwide tourist destination (a place it has occupied since 1990) or if China will take over this first place (World Tourism Organization, 2011; UNWTO Commission for the Middle East, 2012).

Generally speaking, one may learn that the last few years have revealed signs of concern. It is high time to reflect on the fact that, paradoxically, a massive tourist exploitation of places and regions can

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lead to the disappearance of precisely what represented a destination's major attraction(s). This is the consequence of a major contradiction of a tourism growth so intensive and strong capable of hiding more damages than we might think of.

On one hand, the tourist arrangement of a place requires the development of transport, housing, food products infrastructures and to ensure the space for public access, a redevelopment of the so-called degraded natural areas. These transform the spaces whose "a priori" attraction is based on their authenticity, low density, apparent savagery.

The increasing trend of the tourist flows thus means their standardization under the effect of the triple needs of security, access and consumption, hence the feeling of frustration that can be sensed. But this frustration is today that of a gentle and internationalized elite that often travels abroad.

One of the benefits of the book is that it brings to the attention of students (from all three cycles – bachelor, master, doctorate) from outside Eastern Europe, the preoccupations of tourism research in the universities and research centers of former communist countries, three decades after returning to Market economy. Another benefit is the dissemination of information and the availability of coherent and current information related to some of the region's tourist destinations. The third major benefit is the meeting with another type of analysis of the tourist phenomenon, the Eastern European tourist offer, the contemplations and opportunities of the contemporary period.

This book is aimed at a wide public interested in European tourism and especially in the former socialist countries' tourism, with emphasis on the Romanian one. The book is equally addressed to university students (from all three cycles – bachelor, master, doctorate), to tourism professors and researchers, to tourism practitioners (tour operators, travel agencies, carriers), tourism journalists, economic analysts, politicians, policymakers, members of the diplomatic corps, initiated travelers, any politically named or elected authorities, etc.

Puiu Nistoreanu

The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania

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Chapter 1

Aspects of the Tourist Movement in Eastern European Countries

Ana Mihaela Pădurean

Faculty of Business and Tourism, The Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies, Romania

ABSTRACT

Political changes that took place in the 1990s brought up the opening of tourism markets for Eastern European countries leading to a boost in the role of tourism in the economic and social sectors. This dynamic is reflected in the main tourism indicators, starting from the number of arrivals, revenue volume, degree of endowment with accommodation equipment, as well as in the competitiveness monitor aimed at a multitude of aspects. Concurrently, the complexity of tourism resources and their attractiveness represent the starting point in the elaboration of tourism development and promotion measures, which must take into account the harmonisation of all categories of local interests from local authorities and private companies to NGOs and population, thusly providing an adequate framework so that tourism can realise its effect as a multiplier for the economy.

INTRODUCTION

Until the 1990's, tourism in Eastern Europe has had particular aspects dominated by the traits of socialist economy, in which tourism was perceived as a planned and centralised activity, subordinate to political ruling, whose assets (patrimony) belonged to the state. Tourism flows were "controlled" through the fostering of domestic tourism, within the confinements of the borders of that country, comprised of the internal tourism flow and the incoming flows. Freedom of movement was limited by the restrictions to travel in other than socialist countries on the one hand, and mostly impossible approvals of tourist visa applications. The majority of travel restrictions took place until 1953, and since the 1960's, a boost registered in tourism flows, both related to outgoing flows to socialist countries, as well as to incoming flows - foreign tourists being preferred for the foreign currency infusion to tourism payments. (Banaszkiewicz, Graburn & Owsianowska, 2016, Ibrahimova, 2012, Radulescu & Stanculescu, 2012)

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Starting with the '90's, the political changes that lead to overturning communist regimes "opened the borders", and, consequently, lead to the significant increase in tourist departures. In the following section, the analysis refers to and East-Central and Eastern European countries.

East-Central Europe is circumscribed to the Carpathian mountain range, the Carpathians being the main element of this area, that represents the direct continuation of the Alps and it includes: The Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary and Romania. Eastern Europe is bordered from North to South by the White Sea, the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, and from West to East by the Northern Bug at the border with Poland and Ural mountains. What is specific to the area, from the point of view of the relief, is a low diversity, wide plains entangled with hills and plateaus. Eastern Europe includes the following countries: Moldova, Baltic States, Ukraine and Russia (Glavan, 2000)

Background

Specialty literature includes a series of preoccupations aimed at the research of tourism on Eastern European countries, starting from their history, to the trends for the future. Research has studied the particularities of tourism until the 1990's, showing the development directions that manifested in that period - domestic tourism, social tourism (Radulescu & Stanculescu, 2012), trade union tourism (Banaszkiewicz, Graburn & Owsianowska, 2016), the influence of socialism in the economy, but also the impact of joining the EU (Hosney, Zurub et al., 2015) and, consequently, tourism in the post-socialist era (Ibrahimova, 2012). Furthermore, tourism is also considered from the geopolitical perspective, but also from the sustainable development standpoint (Hall, 2017), identifying the current conditions in the Eastern European countries (Egon Smeral). Howard Hughes*, Danielle Allen. An important role can also be played by regional agreements in the development of tourism changes (Minciu, 2004; Glavan, 2000). Simultaneously, the literature highlights the importance of measuring the impact tourism has from the economic and social perspective, the statistics made available by international bodies complete the analysis of tourism in Eastern European countries (World Tourism Organization, World Travel & Tourism Council, European Travel Commission, World Economic Forum, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Euromonitor International, Encyclopedia Britannica etc.)

OVERVIEW ON TOURISM

The **Czech Republic** is situated in East-Central Europe and its relief is prevailed by the old Bohemian plateau. Its central position in Europe is especially favourable to transit tourism, but its navigation on Vltava and Elbe compensates it being land locked. The most important tourism areas are: Prague, Bohemia (Central, South, West, North and East) and Moravia (Glavan, 2000, p.87). Tourism attractiveness is granted by the landscape diversity, wooded mountains, protected natural areas, laic and religious monuments, castles, fortifications, etc. Prague, also called "the Golden City", "City of a Hundred Spires", is an important cultural and transit landmark, the birthplace of Franz Kafka and Rainer Maria Rilke. Other important tourism centres: Karlovy-Vary - famous spa resort from 1348, Plzen - the city of beer, Brno - also called "the Pride of Moravia". An important preoccupation in tourism politics is protecting the natural heritage through the preservation of rare or endangered species - the mouflon ("Czech Republic", 2019).

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The following are UNESCO heritage sights: Gardens and Castle at Kroměříž, Historic Centre of Český Krumlov, Historic Centre of Prague, Historic Centre of Telč, Holašovice Historic Village, Holy Trinity Column in Olomouc, Jewish Quarter and St Procopius' Basilica in Třebíč, Kutná Hora: Historical Town Centre with the Church of St Barbara and the Cathedral of Our Lady at Sedlec, Lednice-Valtice Cultural Landscape, Litomyšl Castle, Pilgrimage Church of St John of Nepomuk at Zelená Hora, Tugendhat Villa in Brno ("Czechia. Properties inscribed on the World Heritage List", 2019)

The 1989 Velvet Revolution meant that Czechoslovakia was a communist country no more and opened towards market economy, which led to the Czech Republic and Slovakia becoming the successors of the federal state. If until 1989 the main tourist issuing countries for the Czech Republic were Eastern European countries, the liberalization of the market contributed to a redirection of tourism flows, therefore Western European countries and the USA became the main issuing countries ("Czech Republic", 2019).

Slovakia is crossed by the Western Carpathians and by plains to the South. Its main river is the Danube that receives a series of tributary streams. In Slovakia there is one of the largest national parks - National Park of High Tatras. Tourism attractiveness stems from the diversity of resources, the exceptional natural landscape, as well as a cultural and historical heritage. The following are among the main tourist attractions: national parks (High Tatra, Pieniny, Low Tatra), the Slovak Metalliferous Mountains, glacial or anthropic rivers and lakes, spa resorts, caves, etc (Glavan, 2000, p.90).

UNESCO heritage sites are the following: Bardejov Town Conservation Reserve, Historic Town of Banská Štiavnica and the Technical Monuments in its Vicinity, Levoča, Spišský Hrad and the Associated Cultural Monuments, Vlkolínec, Wooden Churches of the Slovak part of the Carpathian Mountain Area, Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe, Caves of Aggtelek Karst and Slovak Karst. ("Slovakia. Properties inscribed on the World Heritage List", 2019).

Tourism has registered a considerable boost after 1990, and, presently, the main areas issuing tourists being Western Europe and North America. ("Slovakia", 2019).

Poland is situated to the North of Central Europe, has access to the Baltic Sea and its main forms of relief are: The Great Polish Plain, Lublin-Lwow and Polish Plateaus, Sudetes Mountains, Polish Sub Carpathians and Carpathian Mountains (Glavan, 2000, p.93). Tourism attractiveness stems from the picturesque landscape as well as countless cultural and historical landmarks. Renowned representatives of universal heritage are: N. Kopernic, Marie Curie, Fr. Chopin. Furthermore, Krakow University is one of the oldest in Europe ("Poland", 2018). Among the most important tourism areas are: Northern Poland (Baltic seashore, Pomerania, Masuria), Poznan - Warsaw, Krakow Plateau - Lublin, mountainous areas of Poland. (Glavan, 2000, p.93)

Poland owns 14 UNESCO sites: Auschwitz Birkenau German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940-1945), Castle of the Teutonic Order in Malbork, Centennial Hall in Wroclaw, Churches of Peace in Jawor and Świdnica, Historic Centre of Kraków, Historic Centre of Warsaw, Kalwaria Zebrzydowska: the Mannerist Architectural and Park Landscape Complex and Pilgrimage Park, Medieval Town of Toruń, Muskauer Park / Park Mużakowski, Old City of Zamość, Tarnowskie Góry Lead-Silver-Zinc Mine and its Underground Water Management System, Wieliczka and Bochnia Royal Salt Mines, Wooden Tserkvas of the Carpathian Region in Poland and Ukraine, Wooden Churches of Southern Małopolska, Białowieża Forest. ("Poland. Properties inscribed on the World Heritage List", 2019)

Hungary is situated in East-Central Europe at the intersection of important communication routes, which generates a greater development of transit tourism. Plain relief and low hills are predominant and mineral waters, which are of great value, are widespread throughout the territory. Furthermore, national parks and reservations attract numerous visitors. Tourism attractiveness stems from cultural and historical

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resources and Balaton Lake. The most important tourism areas are: Budapest, also called “Pearl of the Danube”, Balaton (the largest lake in Central Europe and the plain to its South), Northern Hungary and Eastern Hungary. Tokay is an important winegrowing centre, in Visegrad there is the largest and most beautiful castle ever built by Matthias Corvinus, and the resorts in Karcag, Debrecen, Sarvar, Gyula are internationally famous. (Glavan, 2000, p.96; “Hungary”, 2019)

UNESCO heritage sites are the following: Budapest, including the Banks of the Danube, the Buda Castle Quarter and Andrásy Avenue, Early Christian Necropolis of Pécs (Sopianae), Fertő/Neusiedlersee Cultural Landscape, Hortobágy National Park - the Puszta, Millenary Benedictine Abbey of Pannonhalma and its Natural Environment, Old Village of Hollókő and its Surroundings, Tokaj Wine Region Historic Cultural Landscape, Caves of Aggtelek Karst and Slovak Karst. (“Hungary. Properties inscribed on the World Heritage List”, 2019)

Tourism has an important bearing in the Hungarian economy, its main tourist issuing countries are: Austria, Croatia, Germany, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Ukraine, road transportation being predominant. (“Hungary”, 2019)

Romania is situated in the South-Eastern part of Europe and is characterized by a great diversity of its natural resources - one third belongs to the mountainous area, one third is a wooded area and the rest - hills and plains. Rich in metal deposits, oil reserves, it has access to the Black Sea and its hydrographic network is rich and extremely attractive from the perspective of tourism, - the Danube being an important resource for tourism. The main tourism areas of Romania are: - the Carpathian Mountains covering approximately 35% of the country’s surface and that stand out due to a great landscape diversity, with alpine and glacial sceneries, as well as to an important speological potential with over 10,000 caves, which ranks Romania third in Europe. Romania also benefits from a good accessibility granted by rivers, valleys and basins, - The Subcarpathian hills and plateaus with a valuable balneal potential, ranking Romania among the first in Europe, - The plains with the seashore of the Black Sea stretching over 245 km and the Danube Delta, which has been included on the UNESCO heritage list as a Reservation of the Biosphere for the exceptional value of its ecosystems. Additionally, Romania has a rich anthropic potential due to its archaeological remnants (Greek, Dacian, medieval citadels), historical monuments and art - the monasteries from Bucovina with exterior frescos, the wooden churches in Maramures, the fortified citadels in Transylvania, castles and religious buildings, as well as popular art and tradition that stand out through originality and diversity. (Minciu, 2004; Erdeli & Istrate, 1996). Simultaneously, Romania is one of the main wine producers in Europe, and its most famous vineyards are Odobesti, Panciu, Nimoresti (“Romania”, 2019). UNESCO heritage sites are the following: Churches of Moldavia, Dacian Fortresses of the Orastie Mountains, Historic Centre of Sighișoara, Monastery of Horezu, Villages with Fortified Churches in Transylvania, Wooden Churches of Maramureș, Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe, Danube Delta (“Romania. Properties inscribed on the World Heritage List”, 2019).

Moldova is situated to the East of Prut river, having the following tourism regions on the left bank of Dniester river: - Edinet - Ocnita, types of tourism practiced there being wandering tourism with cultural aspects, rest and recreation, balneary treatments, sport fishing, etc. - Lakes with great landscapes and balneary value, - Codru, highly wooded area with the highest altitudes in Moldova and with several subdivisions: a) Orhei, with spectacular calcareous landscapes with reef-like cliffs, dendrological park, vineyards and winecellars, fishing stock, mineral waters, monasteries and monastic cells dug in limestone, (15th - 18th centuries), manors, etc. b) Telenesti with a cultural and historical potential, folk crafts, mineral waters etc., c) Calarasi, with a picturesque landscape, mineral waters, natural reservations, manors,

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castles, etc. d) Hancesti with an important natural, cultural and historical potential. Another valued area for tourism is Chisinau - the capital along with the periurban area with a landscape and scientific potential (Capriana) etc., e) Soroca and Camenca with spectacular landscapes - Nistru ravine, caves, mineral waters, churches, citadels etc., f) Dubasari for recreational and treatment tourism, g) Cahul - reservations, vineyards, h) Vulcanesti - Cainari with mineral waters, vineyards, cultural remnants, i) low Nistru with important tourism centres at Tiraspol, Tighina, Causeni (Glavan, 2000, p. 99). The diversity and beauty of natural and anthropic resources are not supported by specific infrastructure - accommodation, recreation treatment equipment in accordance with international requirements ("Moldova", 2019). Moldova owns 1 UNESCO site: Struve Geodetic Arc. ("Republic Moldova, Properties inscribed on the World Heritage List", 2019).

Ukraine is situated in the South-Western part of Eastern Europe having access to the Black Sea and Sea of Azov. In 1991, Ukraine gained its independence from the Soviet Union in the aftermath of its dissolution. The Chernobyl nuclear accident affected the environment for a very long period of time, vast areas being contaminated with radioactive isotopes. For a long time, tourism represented an important sector of the economy, especially in the South of Crimea. The seashore of the Black Sea has numerous resorts, Odessa being the most important. Other important areas for tourism: East-Central Ukraine - main city, Kiev, attracts numerous visitors along with Western Ukraine – the Chernivtsi Oblast being the main cultural centre. (Glavan, 2000, p. 110; "Ukraine", 2019).

Ukraine owns 7 UNESCO sites: Ancient City of Tauric Chersonese and its Chora, Kiev: Saint-Sophia Cathedral and Related Monastic Buildings, Kiev-Pechersk Lavra, L'viv – the Ensemble of the Historic Centre, Residence of Bukovinian and Dalmatian Metropolitans, Struve Geodetic Arc, Wooden Tserkvas of the Carpathian Region in Poland and Ukraine, Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe ("Ukraine, Properties inscribed on the World Heritage List", 2019).

The **Russian Federation** is situated on two continents - Eastern Europe and Asia - being the most widespread territory on the planet. European Russia's relief is predominantly made up of plains, and Asian Russia's mountains and plateaus. Russia has over 20 national parks, the most important being *Pechora-Ilych*, *Sikhote-Alin*, *Barguzin*. Russia has the longest river in Europe, the Volga, the largest lake, Ladoga, and the deepest lake in the world, Baikal. The transition to a market-based economy was swift; thusly services started covering more than half the Gross Domestic Product. Tourism employs several million people, Russia welcoming over 20 million tourists annually. Russia's tourism heritage is valuable due to its complexity and diversity, and it is divided as European Russia and Asian Russia. European Russia benefits from the following areas important for tourism: Moscow, the largest European city and Smolensk, Volga, renowned for its beautiful landscapes, the Baltic seashore with Saint Petersburg, also called "the Venice of the North". Other important areas for tourism: The White Sea-Barents with two cities attracting tourism activities - Murmansk and Archangelsk, the Caspian seashore from Novorossiysk up to Sochi and Ural Mountains. Siberian Russia (Asian) is comprised of Western Siberia - the largest city being Novosibirsk, Central Siberia - land of industrial giants, Eastern Siberia - with persistent frost, arctic sea coast, tundra and taiga, its tourist centre being Petropavlovsk and whose main tourist attractions are polar nights and days, tundra landscape, dog-led sleigh rides. Sahalin Island is also an important tourist centre due to Oha. (Glavan, 2000, p. 112; "Russia", 2019). Russia owns 28 UNESCO sites:: Architectural Ensemble of the Trinity Sergius Lavra in Sergiev Posad, Assumption Cathedral and Monastery of the town-island of Sviyazhsk, Bolgar Historical and Archaeological Complex, Church of the Ascension, Kolomenskoye, Citadel, Ancient City and Fortress Buildings of Derbent, Cultural and Historic Ensemble of the Solovetsky Islands, Curonian Spit, Ensemble of the Ferapontov Monastery,

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Ensemble of the Novodevichy Convent, Historic and Architectural Complex of the Kazan Kremlin, Historic Centre of Saint Petersburg and Related Groups of Monuments, Historic Monuments of Novgorod and Surroundings, Historical Centre of the City of Yaroslavl, Kizhi Pogost, Kremlin and Red Square, Moscow, Struve Geodetic Arc, White Monuments of Vladimir and Suzdal, Central Sikhote-Alin, Golden Mountains of Altai, Lake Baikal, Landscapes of Dauria, Lena Pillars Nature Park, Natural System of Wrangel Island Reserve, Putorana Plateau, Uvs Nuur Basin, Virgin Komi Forests, Volcanoes of Kamchatka, Western Caucasus (“Russian Federation, Properties inscribed on the World Heritage List”, 2019).

Lithuania got its independence from the USSR in 1991, it has access to the Baltic Sea and its history is extremely interesting. The most important tourism areas are: Vilnius - city whose history spans over millennia, Kauna - old medieval citadel, Pirciupius - memorial city, Trakai - the ancient capital city. (Glavan, 2000, p. 106). Lithuania also boasts of important balneary resources - therapeutic mud and mineral waters (“Lithuania”, 2019). UNESCO heritage sites are the following: Curonian Spit, Kernavė Archaeological Site (Cultural Reserve of Kernavė), Struve Geodetic Arc, Vilnius Historic Centre (“Lithuania, Properties inscribed on the World Heritage List”, 2019).

Latvia is a Baltic country situated by the Gulf of Riga, which has gained its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. Important centres for tourism are: Riga - an extremely beautiful city, the city of parks and gardens, forests, an educational and cultural centre that boasts of approximately 200 cultural and historical landmarks, Sigulda - important balneary resort, Salapils - fascist memorial ensemble, Rundola and Tesis - rich in historic remnants, as well as the coast of the Baltic Sea, with renowned spa resorts (Glavan, 2000, p. 107; “Latvia”, 2019). Latvia owns 2 UNESCO sites: Historic Centre of Riga and Struve Geodetic Arc (“Latvia, Properties inscribed on the World Heritage List”, 2019).

Estonia is the Northernmost of the Baltic countries. It has gained its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 and 9% of its territory is comprised of an island and 1500 lakes. Among the most important tourism areas are: Tallin - trading, industrial, touristic city with over 4500 historical monuments, the Lower City with a giant horseshoe-shaped tower (24 metres in diameter), Tartu - the oldest Estonian city, Piarnu - resort famous for its long beaches, Haapsalu - islanded city with medieval buildings, Pirita - resort with a long beach, Viliandi - medieval city (13th century), the Gulf of Finland with calcareous shores. The majority of tourists come from Finland during the summer season (Glavan, 2000, p.108; “Estonia”, 2019). Estonia owns 2 UNESCO sites: Historic Centre (Old Town) of Tallinn and Struve Geodetic Arc. (“Estonia, Properties inscribed on the World Heritage List”, 2019).

Belarus is situated in the superior basin of Dnieper river and its relief is predominated by plains. In 1991, Belarus gained its independence from the Soviet Union in the aftermath of its dissolution. Tourism attractiveness stems from the cultural heritage in its large cities: Minsk, Gomel, Vitebsk offering mainly cultural and recreational tourism. Compared to its neighbouring countries, tourism in Belarus is less developed, its most interesting landmarks being Belovezhskaya Forest and Hero Fortress for the courageous defence made there by Soviet soldiers against invading Nazis in 1941 (Glavan, 2000, p. 109; “Belarus”, 2019). UNESCO heritage sites are: Architectural, Residential and Cultural Complex of the Radziwill Family at Nesvizh, Mir Castle Complex, Struve Geodetic Arc and Białowieża Forest.

In a nutshell, one could state that tourism potential of the countries analysed stands out due to diversity, complexity, originality, despite the fact that tourism-specific infrastructure does not measure up to the value of natural and anthropic resources. As observed, tourism is a priority for central administrations in many of the countries analysed, even though investment and promotion efforts are still at a modest level.

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ECONOMIC SCALE ON TOURISM

It is well known that tourism has an important bearing in the economy, playing an important role in the economic and social development. The impact of tourism in the economy is emphasized by the connection it has with the other branches, as well as by being amongst the main macroeconomic indicators. Its contribution to the Gross Domestic Product proves the production increment and the value added by tourism in the service provision process, which, implicitly, leads to the development of other branches. In 2018, tourism contributed 10.4% to the global GDP and the number of workplaces was 319 million, which is approximately 10% of the total workforce (The World Travel & Tourism Council, 2019). The same report ranks the following 5 countries with respect to the absolute volume of the tourism industry: USA, China, Germany, Japan and United Kingdom. When it comes to Eastern European countries, the situation is as follows:

The best ranking among the Eastern European countries is held by Russia, a predictable situation for that matter, considering the giant geographic and economic disparity in the whole region. The lower values could be explained by modest preoccupations on behalf of the authorities with respect to the incoming policies, as well as to promoting the tourism offer on the international market.

Examining the contribution of tourism to the economy, it can be stated that the best values, above the international average are owned by Estonia, country with intense tourism activity, its main issuing countries being Finland (45%), Russian Federation (10%), Latvia (7%), Germany (6%) and Sweden (4%), important tourist issuing countries with high level of travel expenses. Good values when it comes to the Contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP are registered also by Czech Republic and Hungary, countries with extremely favourable geographic position for transit tourism.

When it comes to Eastern European countries, if by the '90's domestic tourism played a significant role in tourism flows, political changes lead to the liberalization of tourism flows and, consequently, the

Table 1. Total travel & tourism contribution to GDP, 2017

Country	Ranking (185 countries)	US\$ Millions (real 2017 Prices and Exchange Rates)
Czech Republic	52	16,829.2
Slovakia	77	6,082.0
Poland	41	23,866.8
Hungary	60	10,991.8
Romania	59	11,185.7
Moldova	168	295.0
Ukraine	83	5,452.2
Russian Federation	16	76,059.7
Lithuania	114	2,308.3
Latvia	105	2,762.2
Estonia	94	3,919.4
Belarus	96	3,408.2

Source: (The World Travel & Tourism Council, 2019)

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Table 2. Contribution of tourism to the economy

Country	Contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP (% of Total economy)	Contribution of Travel & Tourism to Employment (% of Total employment)	International Visitor Impact (% of Total exports)
Czech Republic	7.8	9.2	4.3
Slovakia	6.4	6.2	3.0
Poland	4.5	4.5	4.6
Hungary	8.5	9.0	6.4
Romania	5.3	6.3	3.3
Moldova	3.2	2.8	11.0
Ukraine	5.4	4.9	3.5
Russian Federation	4.8	4.6	3.5
Lithuania	4.9	4.8	3.6
Latvia	8.3	8.1	5.9
Estonia	15.2	15.3	10.9
Belarus	6.4	6.1	3.0

Source: (The World Travel & Tourism Council, 2019)

unrestricted affirmation of the interest to travel for tourism purposes. The following indicators are used to analyse the tourism flows: number of arrivals, bed-nights, average stay duration, tourism flow density etc.

As table no. 3 shows, with a single exception - Ukraine, all countries registered a boost in the International Tourist Arrivals compared to 2010, the most dynamic being Belarus, Moldova, Lithuania,

Table 3. International tourist arrivals

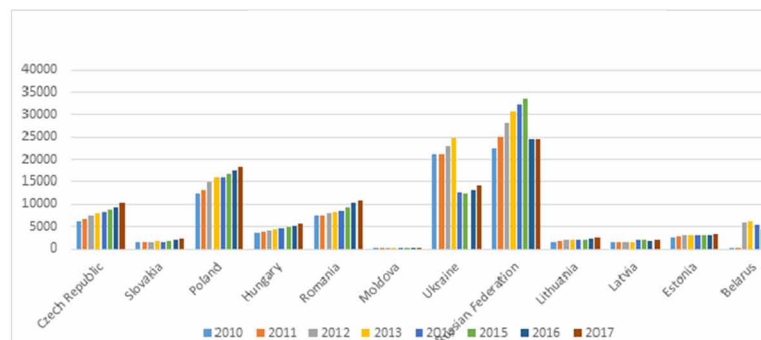
Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Change (%)
	(1000)								2017/2010
Czech Republic	6334	6715	7647	7852	8096	8707	9321	10160	160,40
Slovakia	1327	1460	1528	1670	1475	1721	2027	2162	162,92
Poland	12470	13350	14840	15800	16000	16728	17471	18258	146,42
Hungary	3462	3822	4164	4388	4618	4929	5302	5650	163,20
Romania	7498	7611	7937	8019	8442	9331	10223	10926	145,72
Moldova	64	75	89	95,6	93,9	94,4	121	145	226,56
Ukraine	21203	21415	23013	24671	12712	12428	13333	14230	67,11
Russian Federation	22281	24932	28177	30792	32421	33729	24571	24390	109,47
Lithuania	1507	1775	1900	2012	2063	2071	2296	2523	167,42
Latvia	1373	1493	1435	1536	1843	2024	1793	1949	141,95
Estonia	2511	2823	2957	3111	3160	2961	3131	3245	129,23
Belarus	119,3	116	6129,9	6241,8	5374,9	4385,6	10935,4	11060,2	9270,91

Source: (The World Bank, 2010-2017)

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Figure 1. International Tourist Arrivals

Source: Made by the author based on The World Bank statistics



Hungary as a consequence of central authorities’ efforts to promote the tourism offer concurrently with the increase of the foreign tourists’ interest to the cultural heritage in these areas.

From the point of view of international tourism receipts (see table no. 4), the situation at the level of the region analysed presents similarities with the evolution of arrivals, Ukraine registering a dramatic decrease compared to 2010. A relative depression is registered by Czech Republic. The decrease of receipts can be caused by the financial crisis, currency depreciation, decrease of the average stay duration concurrently with the drop in the amounts spent by each tourist, increase of the interest for exotic destinations, lack of coherent investment policies in the field of tourism together with modest promotion actions or armed conflicts (Ukraine) for which tourism is “paying” the price of recession. Accelerated growth rhythms are registered by Estonia, Moldova, Romania and Belarus, the latter due to the simplification of travel visa formalities.

Table 4. International tourism receipts current US\$)

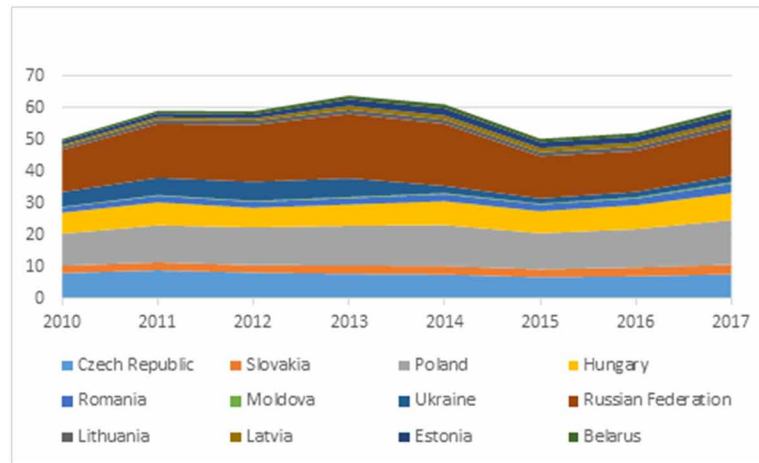
Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Change (%)
	(billion)								2017/2010
Czech Republic	8,068	8,93	8,174	7,792	7,614	6,766	7,041	7,693	95,35
Slovakia	2,335	2,514	2,366	2,702	2,642	2,48	2,802	2,995	128,27
Poland	10,037	11,649	11,888	12,432	12,924	11,355	12,052	14,083	140,31
Hungary	6,595	7,239	6,149	6,671	7,483	6,929	7,48	8,453	128,17
Romania	1,631	2,016	1,904	2,048	2,225	2,097	2,172	2,999	183,87
Moldova	0,222	0,253	0,279	0,324	0,328	0,300	0,343	0,439	197,75
Ukraine	4,696	5,406	5,988	5,931	2,264	1,662	1,723	1,999	42,57
Russian Federation	13,239	16,961	17,876	20,198	19,451	13,204	12,82	14,983	113,17
Lithuania	0,958	1,321	1,317	1,374	1,383	1,31	1,405	1,587	165,66
Latvia	0,64	0,771	0,745	1,19	1,298	1,279	1,282	1,082	169,06
Estonia	1,065	1,256	1,286	2,022	2,278	1,885	1,942	2,144	201,31
Belarus	0,665	0,747	0,986	1,156	1,23	1,013	1,019	1,134	170,53

Source: (The World Bank, 2010-2017)

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Figure 2. International tourism receipts (current US\$)

Source: Made by the author based on The World Bank statistics



The statistics provided by Eurostat regarding the payment balance shows that the positive balance reflects a favourable ratio between revenue collection and expenditure and, concurrently, outlines the statute of tourist receiving country, since it is a known fact that, traditionally, receiving countries have a rich and valuable tourism potential, which can attract important flows of visitors. Generally, a negative balance indicates the statute of tourist issuing country, but, in the case of Romania, the situation is explained by the fact that Romanians cannot find an adequate travel offer at the level of their requirements in their own country, however, Romania continues to remain a traditionally receiving country.

Another analysis indicator of tourism flow is the number of departures which, in the majority of countries analysed, has registered considerable growth after the ‘90’s, due to the political and social changes in Eastern Europe that generated the free circulation of people among others. Therefore, it is explainable to observe the desire of people to see new places after their freedom of movement had been restricted. Consequently, outgoing tourism flows registered a positive, accelerated dynamics, superior to the evolution of international tourist arrivals.

Table 5. Travel receipts and expenditure in balance of payments, 2017 (million EUR)

Country	Receipts	Expenditure	Balance 2017
Czech Republic	6161	4823	1338
Slovakia	2588	2125	463
Poland	11279	7818	3460
Hungary	5485	2177	3308
Romania	2236	3075	-839
Lithuania	1169	984	185
Latvia	838	639	199
Estonia	1443	1106	337

Source: (European Statistical Office, 2018)

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After the ‘90’s, outgoing tourism flows continued to rise as a consequence of the appetite for knowledge manifested through tourism. Another reason is the limited tourism offer from their countries, doubled by an advantageous price-quality ratio in other countries. It is worth mentioning that the economic recession influenced this indicator since the decrease in the standard of living lead to the decrease in the number of tourists travelling to other countries. Table no. 6 presents a detailed state of affairs.

As evidenced, in the majority of countries analysed, the flow of departures is higher than the flow of arrivals due to the rise of the competitiveness on the tourism market, which also generates a diversification of tourism offers in neighbouring countries among others.

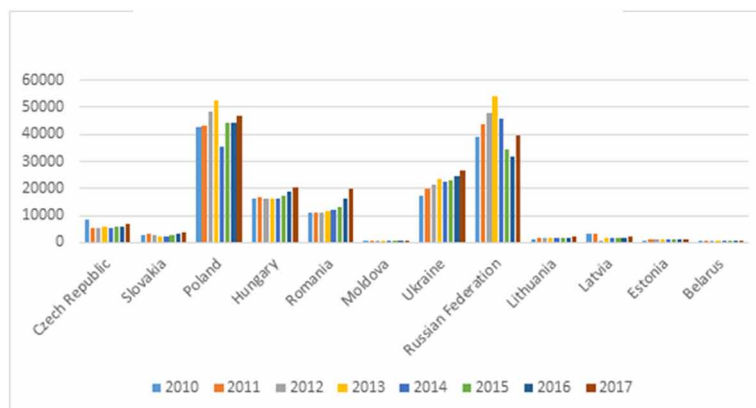
Table 6. Number of departures

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Change (%)
	(1000)								2017/2010
Czech Republic	8670	5280	5420	5780	5650	5860	6030	6780	78,20
Slovakia	2690	3290	2690	2130	2410	2780	3100	3870	143,87
Poland	42760	43270	48290	52580	35400	44300	44500	46700	109,21
Hungary	16080	16630	16140	16040	16340	17280	18900	20300	126,24
Romania	10910	10940	11150	11360	12300	13120	16130	19950	182,86
Moldova	11,72	13,61	14,68	15,76	18,06	18,98	17,7	22,9	195,39
Ukraine	17180	19770	21430	23760	22440	23140	24670	26440	153,90
Russian Federation	39320	43730	47810	54070	45890	34550	31660	39630	100,79
Lithuania	1410	1530	1710	1760	1790	1860	1950	2030	143,97
Latvia	3330	3260	183	1780	1850	1720	1940	2060	61,86
Estonia	955	1050	1150	1170	1430	1250	1340	1280	134,03
Belarus	415	320	493	708	741	671	467	706	170,12

Source: (The World Bank, 2010-2017)

Figure 3. Number of departures

Source: Made by the author based on The World Bank statistics



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Regarding the place tourists come from, it is known that the most part of tourism flows come from neighbouring countries. Consequently, the main issuing country for Belarus is the Russian Federation, for Romania – Moldova, etc.

Due to the disparities between these countries from the standpoint of the population or the surface, an additional analysis indicator is used, which is Density of tourism flows. This indicator shows the degree of demands for destination areas (Minciu, 2004) and it is calculated as a ratio between the number of arrivals and the population of the receiving country (D1), generally, the value of this indicator being subunitary. However, in certain situations, the number of arrivals can be higher than the number of inhabitants, especially with the occasion of internationally important events - Olympiads, championships, sports events, etc. Simultaneously, the tourism flow density can also be calculated in proportion to the surface of the receiving country (D2), by dividing the number of arrivals to the surface, certain higher values possibly indicating the need for efforts regarding the optimisation of tourism flows.

Another way to calculate density (Tourism Density Index) is the ratio of the overnight stays by tourists to the size of the territory (Eurostat, 2010). This indicator is used to increase the comparability between countries with very different territory dimensions. Amongst European cities, Brussels registers the highest value (31,113 nights/sq.km.) followed by several other European cities registering a value higher than 16,000 nights/sq.km.: Inner London (27,331), Malta (24,559), Vienna (23,374), Prague (23,293) and Berlin (16,455).

As shown in the table below, Estonia registers the highest value of D1, on the one hand due to its valuable cultural heritage and, on the other hand, due to a less numerous population.

When it comes to *travel motivations*, a European Commission study performed on the European tourist - Flash Eurobarometer 432 in 2016 shows that sun or beach (39%) and visiting family, friends or relatives (38%) were tourists' preferences for their holidays, and natural potential represents the reason for which tourists return to a certain destination. Nature was mentioned in 31% of cases, city trips - 27%,

Table 7. Tourism density index, 2017

	Population (1000)	Total Area (sq. km)	International Tourist Arrival (1000)	D1	D2
Czech Republic	10616	78865	10160	0,957	0,129
Slovakia	5447	49034	2162	0,397	0,044
Poland	38434	312679	18258	0,475	0,058
Hungary	9749	93030	5650	0,580	0,061
Romania	19438	238397	10926	0,562	0,046
Moldova	3330	33843	145	0,044	0,004
Ukraine	44690	603549	14230	0,318	0,024
Russian Federation	144825	17125	24390	0,168	1,424
Lithuania	2807	65286	2523	0,899	0,039
Latvia	1919	64573	1949	1,016	0,030
Estonia	1319	45227	3245	2,460	0,072
Belarus	9845	207595	11060,2	1,123	0,053

Source: (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019, D1 and D2 – calculated)

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and culture 26%. Approximately one in ten respondents mentioned the following as a reason for vacation: wellness, spa or health treatment (13%), sports activities (12%), events (9%). The following section presents vacation options for tourists in the area analysed.

What stands out is the fact that the reason for travel with the highest percentage, as well as the most common is Visiting Family, Friends and Relatives. Another important reason for travel is nature (mountain, lake, landscape). The smallest percentages were registered by the Specific Events category (sporting events, festivals, clubbing etc.). Another element analysed by research was the reason to return to the visited destination. Therefore, the majority of respondents who indicated “nature” as a reason to return come from Czech Republic (59%) and the fewest were the respondents from Moldova (23%). Accommodation quality was mentioned the least in Estonia (16%) as well as Moldova (18%). Cultural as well as historic landmarks are an important reason to return to a tourist destination for the respondents in Latvia (39%). The way in which tourists are welcomed matters a lot for the respondents in Latvia (30%), and very little for the ones in Slovakia (11%), Lithuania and Estonia (13%). By correlating the travel motivations with the current context of tourism in each country presented in the first part of the chapter, we can notice a series of causes that generate the movement of tourism flows. On the one hand, the tourism offer is limited and, for this reason, residents travel in other countries and, on the other hand, there are tourism products tourists cannot afford in their own countries. It is worth mentioning that intraregional sunlust and visiting family, friends, relatives flows are predominant.

Another important phenomenon for demand is seasonality, that is the concentration of tourism flows in time and space. In 2017, Europeans spent a third of overnight stays by tourists in July and August (EUROSTAT, 2019).

As shown in the table above, in the analysed countries, tourism flows are more focussed in the summer season, July and August being tourists’ favourites for vacations. Therefore, it can be stated that, with some exceptions, Eastern European countries are also registering evolutions close to the European average (EUROSTAT, 2019).

Table 8. Tourists’ motivations for vacation (%). Highest percentage per item. Highest percentage per country.

Country	Sun Beach	Visiting Family Friends Relatives	Nature	City Trips	Culture	Wellness Spa Health Treatment	Sport Related Activities	Specific Events
Czech Republic	31	32	55	19	24	19	24	9
Slovakia	38	29	35	20	24	25	16	8
Poland	40	41	49	42	16	8	19	11
Hungary	38	39	30	31	13	28	5	11
Romania	32	35	35	19	15	13	6	6
Moldova	24	39	15	32	10	9	5	6
Lithuania	32	41	38	27	25	12	6	7
Latvia	20	48	39	35	35	21	11	20
Estonia	23	49	28	20	36	12	10	8

Source: (Flash Eurobarometer 2016)

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Table 9. Share of tourist’s nights spent in tourism accommodation establishments during the busiest and the slowest months of the year, 2018 (%)

Country	Share of the Nights Spent in the Two Busiest Months (%)				Share of the Nights Spent in the Two Slowest Months (%)			
	Share	Month	Share	Month	Share	Month	Share	Month
Czech Republic	14	Jul	14	Aug	6	Jan	6	Nov
Estonia	14	Jul	12	Aug	6	Feb	6	Jan
Latvia	14	Jul	14	Aug	5	Feb	5	Jan
Lithuania	14	Jul	14	Aug	5	Feb	5	Jan
Hungary	15	Jul	15	Aug	5	Feb	5	Jan
Romania	17	Aug	15	Jul	5	Feb	5	Jan
Slovakia	14	Aug	13	Jul	6	Dec	6	Jan
Poland	14	Jul	14	Aug	6	Jan	6	Mar

Source: (European Statistical Office, 2019)

Regarding the average length of stay of the trips (obtained by dividing the number of nights spent by the number of trips that were made each month), Europeans had their longest trips in July (an average of 7.3 nights) and August (an average of 6.6 nights) (EUROSTAT, 2019).

It is well known that capitalizing on the potential of tourism is contingent upon the development of tourism-specific infrastructure, which includes equipment for accommodation, food service, recreation, treatment, as well as transport for tourists. Simultaneously, the development of tourism equipment generates the development of tourism, since there is an interaction that specialists take into account in their appraisals of the tourism market. In this context, it is important to underline the fact that the number of accommodation units in Eastern European countries has registered a boost in the ‘70’s-’80’s concurrently with an intensification of preoccupations for payment collections from international tourism that was generating foreign currency. Presently, accommodation establishments from the analysed area is dealing with a series of problems either being its ageing, or the fact that there still are property disputes, restorations or decommissioning as a consequence of their infringing the comfort category criteria. Table no 8 presents a situation of the number of accommodation units and the degree of occupancy.

It is noticed that Poland and Czech Republic have a good degree of endowment, which can be explained through a higher level of tourism reflected as well as in the public policy. Furthermore, the activity performance is also important, reflected in the occupancy rate, higher values being registered by Estonia, followed by Czech Republic and Hungary, countries with intense tourism activity, the latter two also benefitting from a favourable geographic position in Europe.

Not lastly, the comparative analysis of tourism also requires an approach starting from several criteria, to which end we have used the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index. It measures four broad factors of competitiveness. These factors are organized into subindexes, which are further divided into 14 pillars: a) The Enabling Environment subindex, which captures the general settings necessary for operating in a Country: - Business Environment, Safety and Security, Health and Hygiene, Human Resources and Labour Market, ICT Readiness, b) The T&T Policy and Enabling Conditions: - Prioritization of Travel and Tourism, - International Openness, - Price Competitiveness, - Environmental Sustainability, c) The Infrastructure subindex: - Air Transport Infrastructure, - Ground and Port Infrastructure, - Tourist Ser-

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Table 10. Tourist accommodation establishment, 2017

Country	Number of Establishment (units)	Number of Bed Places (Thousands)	Net Occupancy Rates of Bed-places (%)
Czech Republic	9007	716	43.3
Slovakia	2772	186	25.9
Poland	10681	774	32.8
Hungary	4457	419	35.9
Romania	7762	339	27.4
Lithuania	2971	81	34.6
Latvia	1131	53	35
Estonia	1500	62	44

Source: (European Statistical Office, 2019)

vice Infrastructure, d) The Natural and cultural Resources subindex, which captures the main “reasons to travel”: - Natural Resources, - cultural Resources, - Business Travel.

In 2017, the analysis of competitiveness for Travel & Tourism has shown that Europe continues to register important growth, ranking 6 countries among the first 10 in the world, mainly due to tourism resources, infrastructure and safety. However, there are still disparities among regions. In the Eastern Europe, price competitiveness is a strength, but the sub-region has not yet invested enough in air connectivity and cultural resources. When it comes to Eastern Europe, the global situation is as follows:

The highest rank is occupied by Estonia, followed by Czech Republic and the weakest results are registered by Ukraine as well as Moldova.

If we are referring to Enabling Environment, the highest scores belong to Hungary, Slovakia, Russia, Ukraine, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Czech Republic as well as Moldova for Health and hygiene and to Romania, Poland, Czech Republic, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania and Hungary for Safety and security.

Table 11. The travel & tourism competitiveness index 2017 ranking

Country	Rank	Score	Change Since 2015
Czech Republic	39	4,22	-2
Slovakia	59	3,9	2
Poland	46	4,11	1
Hungary	49	4,06	-8
Romania	68	3,78	-2
Moldova	117	3,09	-6
Ukraine	88	3,5	does not apply
Russian Federation	43	4,15	2
Lithuania	56	3,91	3
Latvia	54	3,97	-1
Estonia	37	4,23	1

Source: (World Economic Forum. 2017)

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Furthermore, for Tourist service infrastructure the countries with high scores are: Czech Republic and Estonia. Ukraine registered a low score for Natural resources, Moldova for Air transport infrastructure, Ground and port infrastructure, Natural resources and cultural resources & business travel. Slovakia registered a low score for Air transport infrastructure and cultural resources & business travel. Latvia and Lithuania have low scores for Natural resources and cultural resources & business travel and Estonia for cultural resources & business travel.

Regarding the T&T policy and enabling conditions, the Czech Republic registers good scores on all components: (Prioritization of T&T, International openness, Price competitiveness, Environmental sustainability), the same with Poland, thusly approaching the Western European average; a favourable situation is also registered by Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Ukraine.

Concerning Prioritization of T&T, Romania and Moldova are registering low scores and, when it comes to the International openness section, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary have scored well and very well, while Moldova and Russian Federation have scored low.

The analysis performed emphasizes that Eastern European countries boast of a complex and diverse tourism potential, attractive natural and anthropic resources, which makes them important receiving countries for the demand for tourism coming from Western Europe as well as USA. However, at the same time, the absolute value volume of tourism does not measure up to the attractiveness of resources, and competitiveness reaches lower levels in most countries in this region, none of them ranking among the first 35 countries in the world.

There are several problematic directions for authorities responsible for the development of tourism in Eastern European countries: - in some countries, tourism-specific infrastructure is largely outdated, deteriorated, despite the rapid pace in which new constructions appear, - the cultural heritage is degraded, - difficulties in applying sustainable development policies. On the other hand, at a European level, growing attractiveness for tourism destinations, concurrently with increasingly greater mobility of people eager to travel to as many places as possible leads to overcrowded areas in Europe, generating discomfort for residents. The negative effects of mass tourism are well known – increase of rents, pollution, disruption of traffic, deterioration of tourism landmarks, spike in crime rates, which generates dissatisfaction amongst inhabitants. Consequently, in some places, local authorities have had to intervene through local regulations for the optimization of tourism flows, while other destinations choose to promote education among tourists in order to obtain an adequate holiday behaviour that respects the local community. This is also the case of Amsterdam where “Stad in balans” – City in balance represents a concept that reunites a package of measures meant to minimise the negative impact of tourism on its inhabitants and to contribute to the growth of their quality of life through a series of actions aimed at directing tourism flows in less crowded areas, the increase of the tourist tax as well as its proper distribution, the increase in the percentage of green spaces to the detriment of parking spaces etc. In other areas, the pressure of the population was even greater – Barcelona, Venice etc. Among the Eastern European countries, only Prague is dealing with being overcrowded, ranking 6th with 8.806 million visitors in 2017 in the classification of the most visited European cities, 1st place belonging to London, with 19.842 million visitors. (Euromonitor International, 2018). For now, there is no discussion about restrictive measures and public local efforts focus on directing tourists to peripheral areas as well, by promoting attractive tourism offers. On the other hand, however, Eastern European countries require intensified efforts for the development of tourism on the international tourism market, also considering the current trends regarding the sustainable development of tourism, the need to preserve and restore the cultural heritage, raising the interest gastronomic tourism Experiential travel and a search for the authentic, the dynam-

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ics in the Millennials' requirements in their tourism consumption behaviour, the increasing scale of new technologies in promoting and marketing tourism products.

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the particularities of tourism in Eastern European countries, they require intensified efforts for the development of tourism, concurrently with actions towards the enhancement of the infrastructure. The invaluable richness of the natural and anthropic potential determines the emphasis on development based in sustainable principles, which, however, must be doubled by an adequate material endowment that would ensure the provision of tourism services in competitive conditions, from measures aimed at the access to destination areas, to the restoration and preservation of the cultural heritage that is extremely valuable in many cases. As it has been seen with two exceptions (Czech Republic and Estonia), the occupancy rate has modest values up to 40% added to a modest and specific infrastructure, which is further reflected in the Travel and Tourism sector competitiveness. Simultaneously, it is important to study the profile of visitors, thusly providing information about the way tourism flows are formed from the issuing countries together with actions of marketing places, which would promote the natural and cultural advantages on the international tourism market as a differentiator in the conditions of increased competition doubled by the enhancement of consumers' requirements. Concurrently, encouraging small family businesses, especially in the field of traditional jobs from the rural areas, but not exclusively, could mitigate the disparities between the regions and could absorb the workforce laid off from other sectors. Not lastly, it is necessary to unite the regional efforts so that tourism can become the driving force for the global economic system, such as the development of the sister cities networks.

Additionally, the measures taken must be correlated with the level of tourism development from the point of view of competitiveness in this sector on the international tourism market and also considering the particularities (specificity) of tourism in every country. As shown in the analysis performed, there are countries where the performance level for many sections in the competitiveness index is very high (for example, Poland, Czech Republic), but their development model cannot be taken over as is by the other countries that are not registering equally good performances. Therefore, it is necessary that each country elaborate its own tourism policy. Therefore, tourism policy can be directed to promoting niche tourism opposed to mass tourism, which shall contribute to the preservation on the valuable natural and cultural heritage (Romania, Moldova, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, etc.) emphasizing on the gastro-nomic vacations that would equally capitalize upon local customs and traditions. Another form of tourism that can provide the competitiveness of tourist destinations is the one in natural parks and reservations (Slovakia, Poland, Russian Federation, etc.) along with myths and legends (Estonia, Lithuania, etc.). Another important aspect is the simplification of tourism visa application, which most certainly shall contribute to increasing the incoming flows.

An overview of The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index shows the areas that are in need of improvement and where the central administrations responsible with elaborating the tourism policies must intervene in order to remedy the shortcomings. The first aspect is related to The Enabling Environment sub index, which captures the general settings necessary for operating in a country. Interventions are necessary especially in the countries that have registered low scores: Moldova and Romania. The second field is represented by The T&T Policy and Enabling Conditions sub index, which captures specific policies or strategic aspects that impact the T&T industry more directly. It is necessary that the

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following countries adopt measures that would improve the current situation: Moldova and Romania. Infrastructure is also an important field where a series of countries have a modest standing and that does not rise to tourists' current expectations. This field is in dire need for sustained measures: Slovakia and Moldova. Not lastly, Natural and Cultural Resources has a significant importance for tourism, their quality having the power to motivate tourism flows or not. Improvements are necessary in: Moldova, Ukraine, Latvia, Lithuania.

All this can be applied by central authorities through a public-private-partnership with the help of NGO's and of the population through an ensemble of coherent measures referring to the management of destinations and provided that local communities be the main beneficiary, the central focus of strategies in the field of tourism.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Future research could be the elaboration of the integrated development model, including recommendations for all stakeholders – for every country from the region analysed, provided that said model be elaborated separately for receiving countries and for issuing countries. Additionally, future research could be aimed at the identification of the most appropriate distribution channels for tourism products in each of the countries analysed.

CONCLUSION

An overview of tourism in Eastern European countries argues for the priceless value of natural and anthropic resources, without it being reflected, with several exceptions, in the competitiveness of this sector.

As shown throughout the chapter, Eastern European countries have attractive natural and anthropic resources, special landscapes, which could generate important incoming flows, under the condition that tourism attractiveness is supported by efforts in the way of providing adequate conditions for tourism, in the context of a major escalation of global competition. The insufficient infrastructure elements, lack of concern for providing sustainable development, as well as a low prioritization of the tourism sector become very apparent in the unsatisfactory economic results. Despite the common history Eastern European countries have because of the communist period, the current period marked by globalisation requires a strong stance on the international tourism market when it comes to each country's cultural identity as a trademark in the management of tourist destinations.

This is the reason for which it is necessary to unite all local stakeholders' efforts so that tourism may become one of the important drivers of the economy.

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Chapter 2

Socialist Architecture: Dissonant Heritage of CEE in the Concept of Sustainable Tourism Development


Paweł Piotr Piotrowski

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6579-066X>
University of Economics in Katowice, Poland

Małgorzata Kieźel

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9560-6384>
University of Economics in Katowice, Poland

Joanna Wiechoczek

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8090-3346>
University of Economics in Katowice, Poland

ABSTRACT

The goal of the chapter is to draw attention to the need to preserve selected examples of architecture built in 1945-1991 in the European Union countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The meanings assigned to the objects evolve, and along with social changes and changing awareness, architectural and urban value of the buildings from this period is more and more often noticed. Consequently, growth of their significance for development of tourism can be expected. On the other hand, they often constitute a dissonant heritage, and thus, more and more of them are demolished. This chapter presents the concept of dissonant heritage and justifies the relationships between characterised architecture. Attention is focused on the relationships between the need to protect it and the concept of sustainable development (including sustainable tourism). Examples of cities that have relatively big resources of this architecture are identified, and an attempt to classify them is made. Then tourist offer of these cities is analysed with respect to the use of the discussed architecture.

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Socialist Architecture

INTRODUCTION

Architecture developed in 1945 - 1991 is one of characteristic features of the landscape of cities in Central and Eastern Europe, found in the countries previously belonging to communist bloc. For visitors to these countries, housing estates of multi-storey tower blocks, usually located in city outskirts are its most visible representation. However, the architecture is not only typical of residential buildings. It is also reflected in many public utility buildings located in city centers, that were built for the needs of public administration, culture, sport and recreation or leisure. They are not only individual facilities and buildings, but often broader urban concepts that were to change the character of the cities. Their examples include buildings representing the style of socialist realism and socialist modernism. The discussed architecture constituting specific heritage of the cities of this part of Europe, often raises negative feelings because of the period in which it emerged. Thereby, it is becoming dissonant heritage now. This leads to demolition of its valuable examples and transformation of urban concepts which will make it impossible for future generations to learn about, and evaluate the heritage. Because the concept of sustainable development assumes enabling future generations to meet their needs, the needs also include cognitive need met through tourism activity among others. This is even more emphasized in the concept of sustainable tourism that indicates the need to preserve natural and cultural heritage. Due to this, examples of this architecture that have especially excellent value should be identified and protected. At the same time, it is necessary to create tourist products that will expand knowledge and enable understanding of the architecture, which will consequently allow to understand the ideas and circumstances that accompanied its emergence, that were not necessarily related to the socialist system itself. In connection with the above, the following objectives of this chapter are formulated:

1. Identifying the premises that make socialist architecture consistent with the concept of dissonant heritage.
2. Showing relationships between socialist architecture and the concept of sustainable development and sustainable tourism.
3. Identifying cities in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe which belong to the European Union and have relatively rich resources of socialist architecture, as well attempting to classify them.
4. Diagnosing the level of use of socialist architecture in creation of tourist offer of identified cities.

Background

As mentioned in the introduction, architecture that occurred in 1945-1991 mainly represents the styles of socialist realism and socialist modernism. In the period between the end of World War II until 1956, socialist realism was the predominant style¹. Its characteristic features include rescaling, maintaining symmetry and the use of many diverse ornamental elements such as attics, colonnades, pilasters or high ground floor giving the building a monumental character. On the other hand urban design represents wide roads and huge squares which were supposed to be the centre of the residents' lives. The architecture of socialist realism was to be socialist in its content and national in its form (Basista, 2001). Its examples can be found in all analysed countries except for the countries of former Yugoslavia where it was not adapted due to the policy of non-reliance on the Soviet Union (Galusek, 2015). After 1956, socialist realism was condemned and abandoned. The concept referring to modernism started to be de-

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veloped. It is often commonly described as socialist modernism, even though its assumptions have not been precisely described in the literature on the subject (Rusu, 2017). The architects representing this style were inspired by modernist style that was also described as international. Its origins go back to the 1920s and it is characterised by extensive use of concrete, steel and glass in structures of buildings, as well as access to light and space for its users. Its forerunners, including Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe or Walter Gropius postulated abandonment of ornaments and the need to make the form of the building follow its function. If the period of domination of socialist realism architecture can be considered coherent in terms of style even though details referring to traditions of given countries were used (Sumorok, 2017), in socialist modernism, other styles, including brutalism, were also distinguished. It was characterised by exposing materials the buildings were made of. The fact that 1960s and 1970s were the period of intensive space exploration that is usually described as the “Space age” was also important. It was initiated by launching of Sputnik by Soviet Union in 1957 and affected not only politics, science, technology but also culture, including architecture. It inspired many architects also in the countries of the communist bloc (Chaubin & Molino, 2011) and thus buildings whose style referred to, for example, spaceships were constructed. A similar style was observed in the United States where it was described with the notion of *Googie architecture*. It was the futurist architecture especially common for motels, coffee houses and petrol stations. Its characteristic features include for example upswept roofs, geometric shapes, and bold use of glass, steel and neon (Ulaby, 2011).

In the case of some buildings, like the Parliament Palace in Bucharest, eclectic style was applied. It means that influences of various architectural styles, for example neoclassicism, are visible in them.

Selected examples of the discussed architecture became the landmarks of some cities. Among them we can indicate the Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw (Poland), Bridge of the Slovak National Uprising in Bratislava (Slovakia) or the Palace of the Parliament in Bucharest (Romania). These building cannot be missed because of their size and location, often in the most representative parts of cities. They are usually visitors’ must-see places, included in offers of local tourist guides. On the other hand some buildings from this period are demolished, urban structures created at the time are transformed, other buildings are constructed with no respect to the character of the surroundings, or they are thermo-modernised, and consequently, their coherent colour design is changed. This is often done despite protests of a part of local community and architectural circles. Observing these changes one can have the impression that it is not assumed that in the future selected architectural projects can perform an important role in recognising how buildings were constructed in the second half of the 20th century. The buildings are nowadays a dissonant heritage mainly due to the communist period in which they were constructed.

Over the years the mainstream approach was that only what is large, old and aesthetic should be protected. However, since 1960s the spectrum of heritage that should be protected started to be expanded (Battilani, Bernini, & Mariotti, 2018). Nowadays, heritage represents all resources of the past that are used in contemporary times (Ashworth & Graham, 1997). In this view, the analysed architecture constitutes specific heritage of cities in this part of Europe, however it often raises negative feelings. Therefore it fits well with the concept of dissonant heritage (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996). The authors mentioned above define dissonant heritage as heritage-related dissonance, discord or lack of integrity. They emphasise that the importance of heritage is not rested in the very objects but in the meaning attributed to them. These meanings evolve over time, together with social transformations and changing awareness concerning a given place (Tunbridge, 1998). Thus dissonance of the heritage has primarily emotional dimension. It is often associated with its commercial use in tourism (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 2017). There are various examples of heritage that is used in tourism but at the same time is perceived as dis-

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sonant. For example former penal colonies and concentration camps like the Auschwitz Concentration Camp, architecture of totalitarian regimes like the Fascist architecture in Berlin or former industrial or military architecture like the Churchill-Roosevelt bases on Malta (Ashworth, 2004). Socialist architecture is also perceived as such heritage (Balockaite, 2012; Banaszekiewicz, 2017a; Ciarkowski, 2017b; Dragičević-Šešić & Mijatović, 2014; Ingerpuu, 2018).

Due to its devastation, the possibility to satisfy cognitive needs of future generations is limited. This, in turn refers to the concept of sustainable development, especially sustainable tourism, which draws attention to the need to preserve not only the natural but also cultural heritage.

The notion of sustainable development was first defined in the so-called Brundtland Report. It was assumed in the definition that *sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs* (WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT & United Nations, 1987). Over time this notion evolved and even though there is consensus about the general assumptions of the concept, it is variously interpreted due to focussing on specific, i.e. economic, social or environmental, and also often political aspects (Ciegis, Ramanauskiene, & Martinkus, 2009). With regard to the general concept of sustainable development, when it comes to the environmental aspect, the primary emphasis is on natural environment and the capability to recover its resources. In the case of sustainable tourism, which is a sub-concept of sustainable development, such an approach seems to be too narrow. This is because development of tourism depends on natural as well as cultural heritage located in the destination place. Limiting the scope only to natural heritage would cause narrowing sustainable tourism only to eco-tourism (Dzwonkowska, 2011). The above mentioned cultural heritage plays a special role in urban tourism in which architecture is one of resources of this heritage. It is also indicated by World Tourism Organisation that mentions the goal no. 11 of Sustainable Cities and Communities among *Sustainable Development Goals*. It emphasises relationships between tourism and preservation of natural and cultural heritage (UNWTO, 2019). This is consistent with the need to ensure meeting the needs of future generations because they also comprise cognitive needs achieved through tourist activity among others.

LITERATURE STUDIES

Literature analysis allows to state that the issues linking the notion of dissonant heritage, sustainable tourism and socialist architecture have not been sufficiently recognised. In Scopus database, when the key words of “dissonant heritage” and “sustainable tourism” are linked, only one response is obtained (Bartilani et al., 2018). In the case of “socialist architecture” and “dissonant heritage”, two publications can be found (Ingerpuu, 2018; Vasileva & Kaleva, 2017). No responses are found if the notions of “socialist architecture” and “sustainable tourism” or broader term “Sustainability” are entered. In the case of any of these combinations no examples of publications on these issues are found in Sciencedirect database.

In the case of the first of the indicated works, social aspect of sustainable tourism is focused on (Bartilani et al., 2018). At the same time the study concerns the architecture of fascist period in Italy, which is more distant in time than communist period in Central and Eastern Europe. In the case of socialist architecture as dissonant heritage, the studies concern the issue of conservation of this heritage and related problems (Ingerpuu, 2018; Vasileva & Kaleva, 2017), as well as problems associated with building local identity in cities that emerged in 1945 – 1991 (Balockaite, 2012; Young & Kaczmarek, 2008). It should be stated that studies concerning architecture and sustainable tourism most often concern the issues related

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to building hotel facilities that will have limited impact on natural environment (Astiaso Garcia, Cumo, Sforzini, & Albo, 2012; Feio & Guedes, 2013). There are few studies referring to the use of socialist architecture in tourism; furthermore, it should be emphasised that these works are usually limited to one country, whereas in others, several cities from various, usually geographically neighbouring countries are described more comprehensively (Banaszkiewicz, 2017b; Braşoveanu, 2016; Dragičević-Šešić & Mijatović, 2014; Gams, 2016; Ivanov, 2009; Pavličić, 2016). Literature analysis proves that the issue of socialist architecture as dissonant heritage of Central and Eastern Europe has not been analysed in the context of sustainable development concept, including sustainable tourism. At the same time there are no works that would present the use of this architecture for tourism in all countries of Central and Eastern Europe that currently belong to the European Union², and thus have similar conditions for using this heritage in this economy sector.

SOCIALIST ARCHITECTURE IN TOURISM

Architecture of Communism as Dissonant Heritage

The period between the end of the World War II and the beginning of 1990s is the time when the countries of Central and Eastern Europe were the countries belonging to the Soviet bloc. It significantly affected the functioning of societies in these states. Industrialisation, often irrational from the economic point of view was increasing. Construction of industrial plants created new workplaces which caused influx of rural population to cities. Urbanisation processes brought emergence of new cities, which also significantly affected the structure of existing cities. Urban and architectural transformations in some cases also resulted from the wish to destroy the heritage of industrialists who were identified with hostile capitalism. The need to build blocks of flats justified and accelerated these transformations (Sumorok, 2017). These changes also affected leisure time. Mass recreation was an important element of a socialist country (Ciarkowski, 2017a), because previously, it had an elite character. In socialist countries, providing recreation to such a big group of people demanded development of tourism infrastructure. Therefore, actually in each country that belonged to the former communist bloc, resorts (mountain and/or seaside) that were considerably extended in post-war time can be found. The character of these changes resulted in the fact that architecture performed a significant role in this process. This role was not only limited to its utilitarian, but also ideological function. It was typical of political systems of totalitarian nature (Ciarkowski, 2017b).

As stated in the introduction, heritage dissonance primarily results from emotional premises and creation of various narrations around them. Regarding tourism, the narration depends on the entity creating the offer based on this heritage – private or public (Gams, 2016). In the case of private entities operating for commercial purposes, the narration is built in compliance with expectations of tourists who look for unusual experiences. Due to this, products applying this type of architecture often focus on showing life in the period of communism in a “distorting mirror”. In the case of public entities, the narration of educational character is prevailing. It is associated with showing negative features of anti-democratic system in which buildings were emerging, and warning generations that have not experienced functioning in this system against its negative features. Socialist architecture constitutes only the background for these narrations, and it is not the subject of interest in itself.

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It should be noticed that beside emotional dimension, dissonance of socialist architecture can also result from the premises of functional nature. This architecture is often not visually attractive for a potential recipient. Grey colours are predominant, and ornaments are usually limited to few mosaics and reliefs. The buildings are deteriorating which is affected by poor quality of materials used for their construction. Considerable changes in the initial design of architects were also often demanded, which limited the scope of functions and usability of the buildings. Some amenities intended for residents were abandoned to make construction costs the lowest as calculated per usable area. Due to blackouts or difficulties related to heating in the premises during communism, their residents enclosed balconies to improve thermal efficiency of flats, which negatively affected aesthetic value of elevation. Since the fall of communism, deteriorating elevations have often been covered with huge billboards which causes even greater impression of chaos, mismatch between the buildings and the surroundings as well as their redundancy. Due to the lack of appropriate protection and the fact that this heritage is not too distant in time for most of the society and people managing cities, their considerable number was reconstructed or completely demolished.

On the other hand, there are more and more scientific and popular scientific works, as well as publications in dedicated Internet portals showing that architecture of that time also has a specific value (Chaubin & Molino, 2011; Skřivánková, Švácha, Novotná, & Jirkalová, 2017; “SocialistModernism,” n.d.; Springer, 2015; Trybuś, 2011). They should enable its understanding. Actions aimed at placing the examples of this heritage on the UNESCO list are conducted by International Council on Monuments and Sites (International Council on Monuments and Sites. Deutsches Nationalkomitee., 2013). It is also important that some housing estates that emerged in this period offer high living comfort thanks to large spaces and many green areas (e.g. Gheorgheni housing estate in Cluj Napoca (Romania), or housing estates in Tychy (Poland)). However, practice shows that the use of this heritage for the needs of tourism can encounter problems of not only social nature resulting from little knowledge about it, but also political ones, especially when it is explicitly identified by the authorities with the political system in which it emerged. Then all actions supporting its promotion can be perceived as the wish to promote communism (Gams, 2016).

Socialist Architecture in the Context of Sustainable Development and Tourism

The notion of sustainable development is used in many areas of science. Thus, as mentioned above, its various approaches, and consequently many diverse definitions are found in the literature. Therefore, it can be concluded that it is interdisciplinary and at the same time multidimensional, and that is why it has not been explicitly (precisely) defined yet. Due to adopted research subject, in this case study the focus is specifically put on the perception of sustainable development in tourism. Furthermore, the case study considers the approach to the concept in architecture and urbanism because it is possible to link it at the same time with tourism and dissonant heritage of socialist architecture.

The concept of sustainable development is defined in the literature in a narrow and broad approach. In the narrow definition that focuses on the aspect of natural environment, it is most often perceived as the system of actions characterised by rational use, shaping and protection of the environment (Dubel, 1996).

Apart from environmental aspect, the broad definition also comprises social and economic (and sometimes even political) aspects. In this approach sustainable development is perceived as:

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- Durable improvement of the quality of life of present and future generations through shaping appropriate proportions in management of three types of capital including natural, human and economic capital (Piontek, 2000).
- Development in which the superior goal is to ensure decent life to present and future generations through satisfying basic material needs and aspirations, as well as providing conditions for development of the potential existing in people; the goal of the development is self-improvement of an individual and not civilizational development in itself (WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT & United Nations, 1987).
- *Social and economic development which integrates political, economic and social activities while maintaining natural balance and permanence of basic natural processes in order to guarantee the possibility to satisfy basic needs of particular communities or citizens of the existing generation and the generations to come* (Environmental Protection Law, 2001).

Analysing the above-mentioned definitions of sustainable development, common features of the concept can be indicated. Generally, it refers to socio-economic development, oriented on meeting human needs and aspirations as well as improvement of the quality of their life while taking into consideration determinants of environmental character (especially natural (ecological), as well as social and economic determinants).

Dynamic growth of tourism observed in the world since the end of the 20th century³, the change in tourists' behaviours towards active individual tourism or in small groups (under the influence of transition from the "3S" model of relaxation / travelling – sun, sand, sea, and moving towards "3E" model – entertainment – excitement – education among others) and the growth of awareness of ecological problems among tourists significantly affect tourism development. Due to the fact that it is closely related to natural and also social (especially cultural) as well as economic environment it should function and evolve according to the paradigm of sustainable development. Thus it seems necessary to implement the concept of sustainable development also in tourism sector.

The concept of sustainable tourism was formulated in April 1995 by the World Travel Organisation (WTO), Environmental program at UN, UNSECO and the European Commission. It was included in the document entitled "Lanzarote Charter for Sustainable Development" (the document was the result of debates conducted during world conference on sustainable tourism, organised on the Spanish island of Lanzarote)⁴.

The concept of sustainable development with reference to tourism assumes that all tourism-related actions must be compliant with the principles of sustainable development, which consequently should support social, environmental and economic development. To achieve this, the goals of these actions should focus on (Panfiluk, 2011):

- Full integration with natural, cultural and social environment.
- Cooperation on all levels, i.e. from local and regional, to national and international (in vertical and lateral structure).
- Cultural enhancement of every tourist destination place.
- Improvement of the quality of life of local communities.
- Restoring environmental balance as a result of support in the sphere of technological and financial cooperation.

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- Enhancement and intensification of promotion of environmentally friendly tourism management system.
- Implementation of actions minimising the negative impact of transport on the environment.
- Introduction of actions limiting resource-intensity of tourism sector.

Analysing definitions of sustainable tourism, various trends in its perception can be noticed⁵. The case study is only focused on definitions that comprehensively consider the paradigm of sustainable development. And thus in compliance with the recommendation of the Council of Europe, sustainable development should be understood as *any form of tourism development or activity which respects the environment, ensures long-term conservation of natural and cultural resources, is socially and economically acceptable and equitable* (Council of Europe, 2006). On the other hand the EUROPARC Federation⁶ defines sustainable development as each form of development of tourism, tourist activity, and management that supports ecological, social and economic integrity of areas, and preserves natural and cultural resources of these areas for future generations in unchanged condition. According to Swarbroke (Swarbrooke, 1999) sustainable tourism is tourism that is well-functioning in economic terms which does not destroy resources and considers the needs of local residents it depends on, and whose future development depends on.

On the basis of the analysis of the above-mentioned definitions it can be stated that the main objective of sustainable tourism is to harmonise the natural environment of a given area and the needs of local communities (present and future) with the needs and expectations of tourists and tourism sector, while considering their correlations as well as the synergy effect occurring in the process of development of business activity. Sustainable development in tourism should therefore be mainly based on *balanced and harmonious relationship between social needs, economic activity and the environment* (Council of Europe, 2006).

Holistic Model of Sustainable Tourism for tourist region is based on general assumptions of sustainable development (Fitzgerald, Flanagan, Griffin, Morrissey, & Kennedy-Burke, 2012). It comprises various recommendations associated with implementation of actions in the sphere of sustainable tourism, whereas from the point of view of the subject of research of this case study, it focuses is on development of pro-ecological infrastructure, implementation of the policy of environmentally-friendly energy management, restoring the areas their primary character and the use of natural building materials, shaping the landscape in accordance with local character and traditions as well as taking care about the quality of architecture and building materials among others (Council of Europe, 2006).

Analysing the concept of sustainable development and also sustainable tourism, it can be noticed that they do not directly refer to architectural aspects and related heritage. Supposedly this is why the architecture is described in the context of the above-mentioned notions at most with reference to the use of renewable energy sources for supplying power to buildings or their construction in technologies that enable reduction of the negative influence of tourism on the environment (Astiaso Garcia et al., 2012; Feio & Guedes, 2013). However, there is no focus on the need to preserve architectural heritage, now being considered dissonant, for future generations. On the other hand, as it is noticed by Landorf (Landorf, 2009), heritage constitutes a tool supporting sustainable development of societies. Specific paradigms of sustainable tourism consider the aspects of cultural enhancement of every tourist destination as well as care about the quality of architecture. Therefore, in this context it seems that some objects of socialist architecture, especially those more original, can have significant emotional (positive), socio-cultural and historical value⁷, therefore they should be preserved. This would certainly require appropriate revitalisa-

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tion (i.e. in the way preserving their authenticity), so that they would not lose their specific character on the one hand, and on the other hand they would correspond to the present environmental determinants. Then, there is an opportunity of greater interest of the entities of tourism sector and market in them. The fact that as G. Bruno states modernist buildings *are not getting older with ease, charm and elegance* is also a problem in the context of their preservation for the future (Klein, 2008).

On the other hand, the chance for preservation of socialist architecture can be seen in development of alternative tourism. Tourists engaging in this type of tourism look for authenticity, therefore objects of socialist modernism stimulate their growing interest. This results in creation of modernist architectural routes, for example in some Polish cities (Krakow and Katowice), however this is rather a niche tourism sector.

Considering the subject of research of this chapter, a reference should also be made to the concept of sustainable development in architecture and urbanism. The notion in this sphere concerns the concept of city management, the priority objective of which is meeting the needs of its community, and also future generations while considering the importance of preservation, recreation and development of natural as well as social environment. Implementation of the paradigm of sustainable development in building industry should therefore enable creation of conditions of the so-called “good residence” or in other words good living space. In many cases this represents constructing new elements of architecture and / or revitalising specific facilities, selected housing estates or even whole city quarters (districts). Implementing this type of activities in urban space, aspects of natural ecology (care about natural environment and social health), as well as social ecology (care about healthy social relationships, which is associated with appropriate creation of the functional area and focusing on spatial behaviours typical of a given culture) should be taken into account. Therefore it is recommended that contemporary new and revitalised building, developed in compliance with the principles of sustainable development should be based on the concept of “6L”, typical of modernism, and proposed by Sayce et al. (Sayce, Ellison, & Parnell, 2007). This concept emphasises longevity (i.e. deliberate construction and use of better materials, which allows for longer and cheaper operation of buildings); flexibility (loose-fit) of the project (this is about the possibility of easy modification, modernisation and adaptation of the building to the needs of individuals and community); energy efficiency (low energy or carbon low) (pro-ecological attitude that considers the whole world eco-system, which means rational and aware use of new technologies and alternative energy sources); location (location sensitive or alternative in terms of location) (designers should remember about natural and cultural context and easy access; positive aesthetic impressions (likeability or likes by occupiers) (is associated with meeting expectations of the residents and other local communities as the result of efficient operation and functionality of buildings); external delivery and acceptance (loveability) (concerns expected aesthetic experiences and satisfaction that are associated with residing in appropriately designed buildings). Due to the fact that the concept of “6L” needs to take many complex aspects into account in the designing process of buildings, it can be interpreted in various ways. However, its implementation generally demands taking a broad perspective on the approach to architecture. Facilities designed according to this concept can perform not only social but also cultural functions as a result of creation of a new quality and “added value” (e.g. in the form of giving an object a symbolic meaning, which is important from the point of view of building relationships between individuals as well as social groups and a specific place that constitutes the basis for their local identity) (Sekula, 2008).

Referring socialist architecture to the concept of sustainable development in urbanism, whose implementation should result in creation of good living space with reference to the aspects of natural and social

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ecology, it can be supposed that preservation, for future generations, of many still existing buildings that represent this type of architecture will be extremely difficult, especially, if they are perceived by local or supralocal community as dissonant (or rather unwelcome) heritage. This results from the fact that most buildings do not meet the requirements of sustainable constructions. Their revitalisation, according to these requirements (if it were possible at all from the point of view of technological, ecological, functional, etc, aspects), would demand enormous investments that would have to be made by the owners or administrators of these facilities. Certainly, this significantly reduces the chances that this architecture will be preserved for future generations.

Summing up, as regards socialist architecture and the concept of sustainable development, including sustainable tourism, and additionally sustainable urbanism, its evaluation cannot be unequivocal. Considering environmental and socio-cultural aspects it should be stated that buildings that represent the style of socialist modernism were made of materials of poor quality, usually not environmentally-friendly, they often had a lot of glazing, thus they were characterised by poor energy efficiency. This causes that they do not have good influence on the natural environment. Furthermore, many of them are characterised by poor functionality and / or poor aesthetics and thus they do not meet social needs on expected level. It needs to be mentioned that buildings from that period often emerged as a result of demolition of objects that were often valuable for local communities. On the other hand, there are many examples of such architecture that is highly rated by specialists. They are an important proof of a specific stage in the development of the world architecture. Therefore before their demolition or substantial modification, this should be taken into consideration, and following the principles of sustainable development, first existing resources should be used and only then new buildings should be constructed.

Research Methodology

Research conducted to achieve the objectives of this chapter included three stages. The first was identification of cities located in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe that have relatively wealthy resources of socialist architecture. For this purpose, webpages presenting examples of such architecture were used (“ATRIUM,” n.d.; “Socialist Modernism,” n.d.; “Soviet Modernism 1955-1991,” n.d.). The analysis showed similarities among cities in different countries which resulted in dividing them into 4 groups. Then the Authors chose the best examples in each of the selected countries. It allowed to identify 41 examples of cities in which architecture of socialist realism and / or socialist modernism is found (table 1).

The second stage was the analysis of the webpage content of national tourism organisations (NTO) of the studied countries of Central and Eastern Europe and official webpages of cities (identified in the first stage) presenting their offer addressed at tourists and visitors. The goal of the analysis was to identify offers that would directly refer to the heritage of this architecture. These offers could have the form of signposted or unmarked routes, publications, tourist products created on the basis of socialist architecture (e.g. thematic walking tours with a guide) or information about individual objects.

It was complemented by the analysis of the offers presented in the portal GetYourGuide (“Get Your Guide,” n.d.) conducted in the third stage of research. This portal enables the sale of tourist products offered by local guides among others. The analysis in the third stage of research was conducted on 7th May 2019. The offer of all cities identified in the first stage was searched for between 1st and 30th June 2019. The focus was on the offers in which socialist architecture is the key element and not just an addition. Therefore attention was paid to pictures illustrating the offer as well as the presence of the key

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words such as *socialist*, *communist* or *architecture* in product descriptions. In the case of *architecture* the search was focused on such offers that at least in the title referred to specific architectural styles or architects' names associated with the analysed period.

Cities with Socialist Architecture

Identification of cities conducted in the first stage showed that there are the largest concentrations of architecture of socialist realism and socialist modernism in several groups of cities. Firstly in the cities that performed the function of capital cities of independent countries in 1945-1991 and cities that were the capital cities of federations (Yugoslavia) or republics (the USSR). Due to the function they performed, the most representative buildings were constructed in those cities. Sometimes it was a consequence of various types of events. In the case of Warsaw (Poland) it was a result of considerable destruction brought by the World War II. In Tallinn (belonging to the USSR at the time) it was a result of organisation of Olympic Games in Moscow in 1980 when sailing competitions were held on coastal waters of the present capital city of the independent Estonia. In Bucharest (Romania) the need to rebuild the city was partly justified by destruction caused by the earthquake of 1977. In the present capital cities of the studied countries, television towers were often built at the time, and until now, they have been an attractive viewing points, enabling tourists to admire the city panorama (e.g. Berlin or Tallinn).

Tourist resorts represent the second identified group of cities. As above-mentioned, mass recreation was an important element of socialist countries. Actually, in every country belonging to the former communist bloc, resorts, especially those located at the seaside can be found. They were considerably extended in post-war time (Pärnu in Estonia, Jurmala in Latvia, Palanga and Druskininkai in Lithuania, Ustroń in Poland). Building structures in the Romanian part of the coast of the Black Sea completed between 1960s and 1970s represent a specific example here. It was oriented on providing services to two tourist segments – travellers for relaxation and for health reasons. Beside domestic tourists, tourist resorts located by the Black Sea were also supposed to attract foreign tourists. However nowadays the offer of tourist resorts on the Romanian coast is considerably far from what contemporary tourists expect due to poor standard of the facilities. They are most often one or two star accommodation places (Simon, Mazilu, Andrei, & Severineanu, 2011).

The third identified group comprises cities or districts that emerged especially as a result of industrialisation of cities after World War II. Due to specific character of economies of communist bloc countries, significant emphasis was put on raw material industry sectors (e.g. mining and steel industry), because raw materials were their key export. The city of Most and Poruba district in Ostrava (Czech Republic), Nowa Huta in Krakow (Poland), Dunaújváros (Hungary), Eisenhüttenstadt (Germany), or smaller towns in Baltic republics – Elektrėnai, Visaginas (Lithuania), Sillamäe (Estonia), Seda (Latvia) are examples of such cities / districts. It is noticed that cities often built from scratch, as a result of transformation, for example from small villages, do not have rich heritage coming from before the communist period (Balockaite, 2012).

The fourth identified group included cities in which there are interesting examples of such architecture, however, they do not strictly represent any of the above groups, or single buildings that due to their unique character are worthy greater protection and promotion. Some of these facilities were promoted by tourists. A futuristic monument erected on the mountain summit of Buzludzha in Bulgaria can exemplify this type of objects. Despite its poor technical condition it still attracts interest.

Cities as divided into the above-mentioned groups are presented in table 1.

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The classification of cities presented above can be completed with the division based on the use of the buildings for tourism. Three groups can be distinguished here:

1. Buildings that constitute a tourist attraction themselves, e.g. television towers, planetariums, etc. built to generate tourism or supposed to provide inhabitants' recreation.
2. Facilities built for the purpose of providing services for tourism that now perform the function of accommodation or gastronomy facilities – they are most often found in resorts.
3. Buildings that do not have tourist functions but are interesting in terms of architecture, e.g. housing estates, administrative buildings.

Tourist Offers of the Analysed Cities

Analysing tourist offer on the level of websites of National Tourist Organisations it can be noticed that their offer is most apparent on NTO pages of Baltic countries. Separate sub-pages or information about examples of such architecture can be found only in their case. On the webpage of Latvian NTO (“Soviet legacy in Latvia,” n.d.) among thematic sightseeing suggestions, there is a section concerning Soviet legacy. It includes both towns (Seda), public utility facilities such as television tower in Riga, and military buildings. This offer is similarly presented on the Lithuanian webpage of NTO (“Soviet architecture,” n.d.) where one can find descriptions of several examples of such architecture. In the case of Estonia,

Table 1. Cities that have examples of socialist architecture

Country	Capital City (First Group)	Resorts (Second Group)	Industrial Cities/Towns/ Districts (Third Group)	Other (Fourth Group)
Bulgaria	Sofia		Dimitrovgrad	Buzludzha
Croatia	Zagreb			
Czech Republic	Prague	Karlovy Vary	Most Ostrava (Poruba)	
Estonia	Tallinn	Pärnu	Sillamäe	
Germany (only former German Democratic Republic part)	Berlin	Warnemunde/Rostock	Eisenhüttenstadt	Dresden
Hungary	Budapest		Dunaújváros	Győr
Latvia	Riga	Jurmala	Seda	Sigulda
Lithuania	Vilnius	Palanga Druskininkai	Elektrėnai Visaginas	
Poland	Warsaw	Ustroń	Nowa Huta (Cracow) Jastrzębie Zdrój Tychy	Katowice
Romania	Bucharest	Coastline resorts (Littoral)		Iași Cluj-Napoca
Slovakia	Bratislava		Nova Dubnica	
Slovenia	Ljubljana		Velenje	

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tourists can find an article with selected 10 facilities built in Soviet period (“TOP 10 most bizarre Soviet buildings in Estonia,” n.d.); however its title suggests that the examples of this architecture should not be approached too seriously. In the case of other analysed countries, information about single objects of this type can only be found on the Polish site of NTO where, for example such places as Nowa Huta district or the Palace of Culture and Science are mentioned among the top 10 attractions Krakow and Warsaw (“Poland.travel,” n.d.).

Various approaches to the heritage of socialist architecture can be noticed while analysing the offer of certain cities (figure 1).

A signposted tourist route supported with a webpage can be considered the most developed offer. Tychy located in the southern part of Poland is the only example here (“Unikatowe Nowe Tychy - About Tychy and the Tychy treasury of architecture,” n.d.). It was supposed to be a model socialist city. Information about signposted route in the city can be found in Polish and English on the webpage devoted to the project. It is divided into three parts according to the period of emergence of the studied architecture of socialist realism, tradition and modernism, modernism and postmodernism. There is also a downloadable guidebook on the page, but it is only available in Polish.

Slightly less developed offer can be found for such cities as Berlin, Bratislava, Eisenhüttenstadt, Kraków, Tallinn, Velenje oraz Warsaw. Among these cities, the most diversified offer can be found in Berlin. Among sightseeing suggestions, tourists can find is a route devoted to international style of East Germany (“DDR International Style,” n.d.). It comprises 12 buildings representing the above-mentioned style, but their description is available only in German. On the webpage there is also a proposition of a visit to a flat presenting the housing standards and household equipment from the GDR period (“Museumswohnung WBS 70,” n.d.). Furthermore, in the case of Berlin, television tower is indicated among the top 10 city attractions, whereas Zeiss Grossplanetarium is mentioned among other attractions. On the other hand in the case of German Eisenhüttenstadt and Slovenian Velenje, there are publications downloadable on PDF format including the route devoted to architecture of the analysed period. With regard to the first of the cities it represents the architecture of socialist realism. The page mentions that the unique architecture results from the fact that it was to be the first socialist city in Germany. There is also a leaflet in German with a route over the city (*Eisenhüttenstadt - Die Planstadt zu Fuss entdecken*, 2018). The guidebook is also available only in German. In the case of Slovenian Velenje we deal with the modernism architecture. The city that emerged as a result of development of coal mining industry was perceived as the most modern city of Yugoslavia. On its webpage, the heritage of this period is quite strongly emphasised, even though it is not the only attraction there (“Velenje Slovenija,” n.d.). A

Figure 1. Level of use of socialist architecture in tourist offer of cities



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guidebook of the city modernist architecture, inspired by the concepts of Le Corbusier (Poles, 2013) is available in Slovenian and English. Tallinn is also an interesting example. Tourists can find an offer of a sightseeing tour entitled Masterpieces of Soviet Architecture (“Estonian Centre of Architecture,” n.d.) on its webpage (“Visit Tallinn official city guide,” n.d.). It is important that the walking tour is not conducted by a private entity but by Estonian Centre of Architecture which implies that the theme is approached seriously. Television tower is also mentioned among the most important attractions of the city. On the other hand in the case of tourist routes proposed by Krakow webpage, there is Nowa Huta Route (“Nowa Huta Route,” n.d.). There is an interactive map of the Route as well as descriptions of several facilities in the district that is one of the best examples of socialist realism architecture. Modernism Route also functioning in Krakow is also interesting (“Szlak Modernizmu,” n.d.). It is a bottom-up initiative, supported by public funding, however there is no information about it on the official webpage of the city. Information about modernist architecture with division into various periods, as well as an e-guidebook and dedicated downloadable mobile application can be found on the Route webpage. In the case of Bratislava and Warsaw a similar approach to this type of architecture is noticed. Official city webpages with tourist information (“Visit Bratislava,” n.d.; “Warsaw - Official Tourist Website,” n.d.), present propositions of walking tours / trips related to the heritage of the period, for example *Post-Communist Bratislava Tour*; *Retro Tour* in Bratislava, or *In the footsteps of socialist-realist Warsaw* in the second of the above-mentioned city. Additionally, single objects are indicated as one of the greatest tourist attractions of the two cities. In the case of Warsaw it is the Palace of Culture and Science, which is listed among top 10 city attractions. As regards Bratislava, the restaurant commonly called UFO and located on The Slovak National Uprising Bridge, is mentioned among top 10 attractions in the city, as well as Slavin which is a monument devoted to Russian soldiers who lost their lives while liberating the city. Finally, the building of Slovak Radio that reminds of an inverted pyramid is also listed among the city attractions.

Cities in which only single buildings representing analysed styles are mentioned constitute another group. It includes Bucharest, Ostrava, Prague, Riga, Sofia, Ustroń and Vilnius.

As regards Bucharest (“Bucharest City Info,” n.d.), the Palace of Parliament is indicated among the most important, recommended attractions, whereas Poruba district, built in socialist realism style is mentioned on Ostrava webpage among 14 places worth visiting in the city. The district is also mentioned as an architectural attraction of the city (“OstravaInfo,” n.d.). Considering Prague, there is only information about Prague Congress Centre mentioned among the objects of contemporary architecture (“Prague.eu,” n.d.). Riga webpage suggests only one building that should be visited. It is Latvian Academy of Sciences observation deck (“LiveRiga,” n.d.). On Sofia webpage there is a section concerning places worth visiting in terms of architecture. Several buildings constructed in the analysed styles can be found there. They include The Building of Festivalna Hall and the Building of the Central Department Store among others. There is information about their location and sometimes a link to external webpages (“Welcome to Sofia,” n.d.). As regards Ustroń, a town located in the Polish mountains, sanatorium route is mentioned on its webpage even though it is not sufficiently described. The resort district in Ustroń was built in 1970s and 1980s and is perceived as one of the most outstanding architectural masterpieces of the 20th century (Ibanez Lopez & Anderson, 2012). There is also information about a documentary about the construction of the district (“Ustroń,” n.d.), however the webpage is available only in Polish. As regards Vilnius, television tower is mentioned among the top 20 city attractions, and planetarium building is also recommended as the place worth seeing (“Vilnius Tourist Information Center,” n.d.). The situation is slightly different in Budapest where all monuments of dictators from this period were

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placed in Memento Park. This park is one of the major attractions of the city (“Budapest - Official tourist information,” n.d.).

No information was found about architecture of this period that would be worth seeing in terms of tourism in other analysed cities. This group of cities include the capital cities (Ljubljana and Zagreb) as well as towns that as a whole or in considerable part emerged under the influence of industry development. They are Dimitrovgrad, Dunaújváros, Elektrėnai, Jastrzębie-Zdrój, Most, Nova Dubnica, Sillamäe, Seda oraz Visaginas. Most often there is no information about architecture of this type in cities / towns that are resorts. Among the places listed in table 1., there was such information only about Ustroń. The above-mentioned industrial cities are especially interesting examples. They often do not have pages dedicated to tourism, or the offer is provided only in native language. There are also examples where the issues of the heritage of socialist architecture are completely ignored. The examples include cities of Baltic republics, e.g. Elektrėnai, Seda, Sillamäe, Polish Jastrzębie-Zdrój, or the Czech city of Most. Their webpages either emphasise attractiveness of the city surroundings, or they present only heritage coming from the period before the growth of the cities in communist period.

ATRIUM - Architecture of Totalitarian Regimes of the 20th century In Europe's Urban Memory, deserves specific attention while speaking about the access and promotion of the discussed heritage. It is one of Council of Europe's European Cultural Routes (“ATRIUM,” n.d.), and even though it goes beyond the analysed architecture in terms of the theme⁸ and space⁹, it ought to be mentioned here due to several reasons. This is because cities located in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, i.e. Bratislava, Bucharest, Dimitrovgrad, Dunaújváros, Nova Dubnica, Győr, Sofia and Velenje analysed in the paper are found on ATRIUM route. The Italian city of Fiori is the leader of the project that has been functioning since 2013. Recent activities presented on the project website (as of 31st June 2019), come from Italy, and on the basis of published activities it can be stated that actions implemented by cities from Central and Eastern Europe are definitely less intensive. Among analysed cities, only in the case of Velenje it can be noticed that the project of the Route had its consequences in development of the offer for tourists in the form of the abovementioned guidebook. Considering other cities, there are no materials on the level of cities that would refer to the route, or information on their webpages that the cities are a part of the route.

The analysis of offers for cities presented in GetYourGuide service complements the conducted study. In the case of each capital city, except for Ljubljana, such an offer was available. Socialist architecture was most often considered in offers focused on showing specific character of life in communist countries. It was often a presentation of life aimed at emphasising absurdities of that time. Using vehicles from that period was very often a specific element of this offer. The examples include Bucharest (*Red Patrol Communist Tour of Bucharest in a Dacia*) and Warsaw (*Private Tour by Communist Van Palace of Culture & Science*). Trips or booking of television towers (Berlin and Tallinn) were also frequent. The only offer that was strictly oriented on architecture of that time was the Berlin offer called *East Berlin and the Wall: Walking Tour Karl-Marx-Allee 2-Hour Tour*. It should be noticed that outside capital cities, actually there are no offers focussed on the architecture of that period. Krakow (Nowa Huta district) and Dresden are the only exceptions. It is also characteristic that in the case of considerable number of cities there is no sightseeing offer on the analysed websites. This concerns such cities as Dimitrovgrad, Dunaújváros, Eisenhüttenstadt, Elektrėnai, Jastrzębie-Zdrój, Most, Nova Dubnica, Nova Gorica, Ostrava, Seda, Sillamäe, Ustroń, Velenje, Visaginas, or cities of the Romanian coast¹⁰.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Presented analysis showed that research on the role and significance of socialist architecture in the sphere of tourism, especially sustainable, should be continued. The trends of further research could be divided according to the research subject area as well as applied research methods.

In the case of research subject it should be emphasised that deliberations presented in the first part of the chapter and concerning potential premises for approaching socialist architecture in terms of dissonant heritage, need in-dept research and analyses regarding the question of which of them constitutes the main barrier in the use of this heritage in tourism. It can be done through the research conducted among representatives of local authorities or residents. Additionally, it would be important among others, to identify the reasons why cities belonging to ATRIUM route, located in the analysed area, in a definite majority do not take actions aiming at development of a tourist offer on a local level. Performance of in-depth studies would also allow to create models of tourism development in the analysed cities. It would also be equally important to recognise opinions of the very tourists about this heritage both with reference to the cities that present such an offer and also the towns that have the heritage and therefore could develop such an offer. In the case of the latter group of cities, it would be useful to recognise, with the help of the workers in information centres and offices, whether tourists are interested in this type of heritage.

On the other hand, as regards applied research methods, previously conducted studies concerning the subject of heritage of socialist architecture were rather focused on the analysis of the content of webpages and did not include marketing studies (e.g. in the form of interviews with representatives of local authorities, workers in tourist information centres, managers of tour operator managers and travel offices, etc., or questionnaires targeted at for example tourists, residents, etc.). Due to this, conducted research should also be expanded in terms of the methods.

CONCLUSION

Analysis conducted for the need of this case study shows that architecture of 1945-1991 that emerged in the countries of former communist bloc, is used for tourism purposes in a limited scope. Its potential in many analysed cities (especially those being capital cities or resorts) can be evaluated as quite significant, especially if it constitutes a completion of their basic tourist offer.

The chapter identifies the main premises for approaching socialist architecture in terms of dissonant heritage. If in the assumptions of the concept of dissonant heritage the premises of emotional character, related to building various narration around the objects are the most important, as regards the heritage, functional premises related to the features of the architecture including potentially poor level of its visual attractiveness are also noticed. Furthermore, it is explained why preservation of this type of architecture is essential from the point of view of sustainable development, and especially sustainable tourism. It emphasises the need to preserve not only natural but also cultural heritage for future generations. At the same time it is indicated that several features of this architecture do not support its preservation from environmental point of view.

41 examples of cities that have relatively wealthy resources of this architecture and are located in Central and Eastern Europe were identified within conducted research in the countries belonging to the European Union. They were divided into three major groups, i.e. capital cities, resorts and cities that emerged as a result of industrialisation processes. The analysis of the use of socialist architecture

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in tourist offer of these cities allowed to formulate several conclusions. Socialist architecture seems to be most often used in development of tourist offer in capital cities of the studied countries, or possibly in cities popular with tourists (such as for example Krakow that is the Polish city most often visited by domestic and foreign tourists). Therefore it is only a complementation for the tourist offer in these cities, whereas it is not perceived as attractive itself. It is proved by poor development of the offer based on this heritage in cities located far from the cities enjoying considerable interest of tourists (post-industrial cities) or providing services to tourists mainly oriented on resting (resorts). It is especially surprising in the case of the first group of cities. Development of a tourist product based on this architecture could firstly raise tourists' interest in the city, and secondly become its distinguishing feature due to the fact that such architecture is still rather seldom included in tourist offers. However, it would require greater activity of local authorities and entities shaping and promoting tourist offer. In the case of some projects, e.g. the route in Tychy one can get the impression that there is no big interest in this project which is proved by the webpage dedicated to it. It should be noticed that in the case of resorts, creation of products based on this architecture could constitute important complementation of their tourist offer for people staying there to rest.

It is noticed that this architecture is the basis for creation of the offer related to presentation of specific character of life in the communist countries and not due to the fact that it can be interesting in itself. Using it in this way can additionally depreciate its architectural value. In the future, considerable transformation of the examples of this architecture can become a greater problem. Due to this, actions aimed at preservation of its best examples should be implemented as soon as possible. Now they do not have great tourist significance apart from several exceptions, but in the future they can enable meeting tourists' cognitive needs even though it is hard to expect that it should be tourism of mass character.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Central and Eastern Europe: The countries located in the central part of Europe that have common cultural and historical roots. They include such countries as Estonia, Latvia, Poland Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Belarus, Ukraine, the countries of former Yugoslavia, Albania, Bulgaria and Romania. Additionally, as regards the subject area of the chapter, this group also includes Germany in the area of the former German Democratic Republic.

Cultural Heritage: Tangible and intangible resources that are a result of actions of present and past generation.

Dissonant Heritage: The concept representing discord or lack of agreement or coherence with reference to given heritage.

Socialist Architecture: The whole architecture that occurred in the countries belonging to socialist bloc – the USSR, People’s Republic of Poland, German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Albania.

Socialist Modernism: A type of modernist architecture observed in the countries of communist bloc.

Socialist Realism: Style in art (including architecture) operating in the Soviet Union since 1934, and after 1945 also in other socialist countries; it was binding until 1956.

Sustainable Development: Development, the goal of which is to ensure balance between economic, social and environmental growth in the way that enables the present, and future generations to meet their own needs.

Sustainable Tourism: The concept of management in tourist regions (directly considering the principles of sustainable development), based on optimal use of resources of the environment and tourist infrastructure, respect for its socio-cultural authenticity (including preservation of heritage and cultural identity), promotion of local traditions and also ensuring socio-economic benefits to all interested parties (stakeholders).

ENDNOTES

- ¹ In the case of countries that before World War II belonged to the USSR, this period had started earlier.
- ² Interesting examples of the architecture from this period can also be found outside the countries that now belong to the European Union, e. g. Novi Beograd in Beograd (Serbia) or in countries of former Soviet Union.
- ³ Tourism belongs to one of the fastest growing industries in the world. See more: <https://www.europarc.org/sustainable-tourism>
- ⁴ General guidelines concerning sustainable development in tourism sector were developed a little earlier, in 1992 by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) and World Travel Organisation (WTO). They were included in the document entitled “Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism industry” (Gontar, 2016).
- ⁵ Sustainable tourism is sometimes identified with eco-tourism or green tourism; however this approach does not comprise majority of the principles of sustainable development (it is reduced only to subordination of actions in the sphere of tourism to ecological aspect).
- ⁶ It is the network for Europe’s natural and cultural heritage.

Socialist Architecture

- ⁷ Some objects of socialist architecture could be considered historic. However, to make them such, they would need to have specific values. Avrami, Mason and De La Torre (2000) consider cultural and historic, or cultural and ethnic values related to economic aspects of heritage to be such values.
- ⁸ This concerns the architecture of fascist Italy.
- ⁹ It includes Italy and Albania among others.
- ¹⁰ To find the offer of the city, Mamaia and Constanta were entered here.

Chapter 3

Tourism and Hospitality's Young Workforce: The Challenge of Acquiring Foreign Language Skills

Andreea Fortuna Șchiopu

The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania

ABSTRACT

This chapter aims to study the perspectives on the foreign language skills based on the Romanian tourism and hospitality young workforce views. Qualitative and quantitative methods help collect data to identify the main barriers to foreign language learning, the fluency in English and a second language and the willingness to learn a second language when necessary, and the young workforce's openness and readiness for exotic foreign languages. The results show that English is a requirement within the labor market in the tourism and hospitality sector that the young workforce knows about and that knowing a second foreign language may act as a differentiator within the labor market. China is gaining ground as a tourism market with many Chinese tourists traveling the world. This brings about a new challenge for the tourism staff: that of acquiring new exotic foreign languages. It is well understood that tourists prefer to use their native tongue or a world language such as English.

INTRODUCTION

Currently, tourism is one of the most dynamic sectors of the world's economy. United Nations World Tourism Organization UNWTO (2018) announced that in recent years international tourist arrivals grew more than its 3.8% forecast per year for the period 2010 to 2020 (7% in 2017). Destinations in Central and Eastern Europe also recorded solid growth (UNWTO, 2018). In terms of age, the over 60s tourism market is still increasing, but new generations such as Millennials and Generation Z are gaining ground and will form the largest part of domestic and international tourists by 2040 (OECD, 2018). These new

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segments bring on new requirements and preferences for unique, customized, and sustainable travel experiences (OECD, 2018).

Another trend that is changing tourism is the growth of the Chinese market based on China's economic growth and diversifying consumer demands, with more and more Chinese traveling around the world. Moreover, China is the leader in global outbound travel in terms of expenditure (UNWTO, 2018). These developments require specific responses from the tourism industry, especially regarding strategic approaches and workforce training. Romania is trying to better promote its resources and the Minister of Tourism was wishing to attract a large number of Chinese tourists to the country (Ziare.com, 2018). As far as human resources, a special requirement relates to their foreign language skills given the fact that tourists prefer to use their native tongue or a world language such as English.

This chapter explores the foreign language skills issue in the Eastern European area, namely in Romania, based on qualitative and quantitative research. The central research question of this chapter is "How do young professionals in the tourism and hospitality industry relate to the foreign languages issue and what is their view on foreign languages as a tool in this industry?". It was already shown that foreign language skills have great value when communicating with people from countries where those languages are spoken (Leslie & Russell, 2006), becoming critical in the tourism and hospitality industry. Therefore, another research interest is to study young professionals' willingness to acquire foreign languages to improve their ability to communicate with people from different cultures.

For a better depth and breadth of understanding, a mixed methods research approach was applied, that is a combination of "*elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches*" (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017). In particular, a focus group with young representatives of the Romanian tourism and hospitality industry was organized and a detailed discussion of the focus-group results is offered in this chapter.

Next, a survey was conducted to identify the major dimensions attached to the foreign language issue. First, the perception of foreign language barriers among the young workforce is studied. Fluency in more than one foreign language may generate a competitive advantage in the complex global hospitality market (Tziora, Giovanis, & Papacharalabous, 2016). Consequently, another objective of the study is to identify what is the fluency in a second foreign language and the willingness of the Romanian tourism students, the future tourism professionals, to study a second language.

Considering its growth potential, China represents a big opportunity for Eastern European tourism industry. In Romania, the Minister of Tourism acclaimed in 2018 (Ziare.com, 2018) that he wishes to In order to cater to this market segment, one condition is to learn the language of this country. The most popular language in China is Mandarin Chinese (Sawe, 2018), with almost 80 percent speakers out of China's total population. Therefore, another objective is to identify the Romanian tourism students' willingness and readiness for exotic foreign languages such as Mandarin/Chinese. These young professionals and future professionals in the tourism and hospitality industry are the ones that represent a big segment of the workforce that could cater to the Chinese tourists that might come to Romania.

Last but not least, the survey addresses what can be done to encourage training and acquiring new language skills, what are the most efficient methods to learn a new language adapted to the characteristics of the studied segment (tourism students, the future workforce in tourism and hospitality).

The author offers a thorough analysis of the survey results in this chapter. Based on the responses, the businesses from the industry and national authorities can better understand the sector and what can be done to become more competitive in the human resource area.

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This is a novel research approach; very few studies exist in the literature regarding foreign languages skills use in the Eastern European tourism industry. Moreover, no studies regarding exotic foreign languages such as Mandarin/Chinese were developed in the Eastern Europe. The author tries to fill this research gap by taking into account the willingness of young tourism professionals to study such an exotic language. This research approach has also managerial implications. Given the rise of the Chinese tourists segment in the global tourism market, Chinese language skills might differentiate countries such as Romania and help them attract more Chinese tourists.

This chapter offers an answer to the authorities and operators in the field regarding the view of young professionals or future professionals in the tourism and hospitality industry on foreign languages, their actual knowledge of such languages and willingness to invest time in improving such skills.

The chapter is organized in a logical manner, starting with a short background and continuing with details on the research method, the research results (focus group and research results), solutions and recommendations, and conclusion.

BACKGROUND

Foreign Language Skills in Tourism and Hospitality Industry

Given the growth in the tourism sector and the new developments, one of the main requirements for getting a job in this domain is the foreign language proficiency or the ability to communicate with the tourists in their own tongue or an international one. Tourists prefer unique, customized, sustainable travel experiences (OECD, 2018) and communication skills play an essential role in creating those experiences.

Leslie & Russell (2006, p. 1399) review the literature and conclude that among the benefits of foreign language competence to organizations the most important are: improved business relationship, higher flexibility of workforce, better communication with customers and business clients which prefer to speak in their mother tongue, and a potential competitive advantage. In terms of tourism advantages, communication is essential since it influences the customer experience. Yet it is a topic that has caught little attention from the researchers in this sector (Blue & Harun, 2003 as cited in Leslie & Russell, 2006).

Professionals and professional organizations touted that communication and foreign language skills are essential for tourism staff, to create “the ultimate guest experience” (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training [Cedefop], 2005, p. 71).

Holmqvist et al. (2014 as cited in Tziora, Giovanis, & Papacharalabous, 2016) showed that language had an emotional correlation with tourist' attitudes and impacted the intent to tip or suggest the service to others. They found out that guests were less likely to give tips or recommend the business when they received the service in a language other than their tongue. Tourists feel more in control when they use their own language.

Even though the customers are becoming more informed, educated, and sophisticated, some countries have labor or skills shortage making it difficult for the industry to recruit and hire staff. One category that is lacking is that of foreign language skills. The language barriers hinder the progress and long term success of the hospitality industry (Tziora, Giovanis, & Papacharalabous, 2016). Foreign language skills are obviously critical for entering the tourism and hospitality industry and for offering the right experience to tourists.

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In Europe, English is the best known foreign language followed by German, Russian, French, and Spanish (Mejer, Boateng & Turchetti, 2010). In Romania, more than 90% of pupils are learning English and 75% of them are learning two foreign languages in secondary school, but the self-perceived knowledge of foreign languages is low (Mejer, Boateng & Turchetti, 2010). These skills are valued by employers in the tourism sector, but businesses identified a shortage of appropriate qualified candidates (Leslie&Russell, 2006). Some European national tourism organizations recognized the lack of foreign language skills as a permanent trouble and even as a competitive disadvantage (Cedefop, 2005). Many practitioners state that the workforce could improve their level of knowledge of foreign languages, especially in the less common ones area.

Booming Chinese Tourists Flows and the Necessity of Using Chinese

In 2014, Chinese outbound tourists surpassed 100 million in 2014 (UNWTO, 2017). With 129 million people spending their holidays abroad, China is one of the world's largest markets for foreign tourism (Stan, 2018). United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2018) showed that Chinese tourists' overseas spending reached US\$ 257.7 billion in 2017, placing China as the top spender in international tourism. UNWTO forecasts that China will account for a quarter of the international tourism by 2030 (Smith, 2018), being the fastest-growing outbound travel market in the world (Pope, 2019). This growth is sustained by rising income, easier visa regulations, promotional efforts by destination countries and greater travel experience of Chinese tourists (Chen, 2018).

In terms of travel services, in 2016, the EU exported of almost EUR 7 billion to China and imported EUR 3 billion from China, therefore having a positive balance of EUR 4 billion (Eurostat, 2018). Tourism from China to the EU is booming, it has actually tripled in ten years (Eurostat, 2018), with one of the highest rising rates. The tourists from China spent in the EU a number of almost 25 million nights in 2016 (Eurostat, 2018). When they travel to the EU, the Chinese tourists want to see more than one country (Stan, 2018). Lately, the Eastern Europe is also participating to this trend with increasing numbers of Chinese tourists, due to simpler visa conditions, cheaper flights and fear of terrorist attacks in other famous destinations such as France or Germany (Stan, 2018).

In Romania, the percentage of nights spent by Chinese tourists out of the total nights spent by guests from outside the EU in 2016 was around 2%, while the average in the EU is 6% (Eurostat, 2018). Even though now the share of the Chinese tourists is low, the growth potential is high. Moreover, the Romanian Minister of Tourism aims to attract a large number of Chinese tourists to the country (Ziare.com, 2018).

In terms of preferences, Chinese tourists look for enjoyment and gaining an authentic life experience (UNWTO, 2017). A survey organized by Nielsen (2017) confirms that experience is the primary priority for Chinese tourists, more important than vacation costs or even tourist attractions. World Tourism Cities Federation & Ipsos (2018) undertook a research on the Chinese outbound tourism market and concluded that this market was undergoing major changes in terms of destination selections, purpose of travel, structure of the group, and consumption.

When considering their personal concerns, the Chinese tourists fear most they would have to face language barriers, followed by worries about property safety and cultural issues (World Tourism Cities Federation & Ipsos, 2018). Even though tourists can use different apps which might solve some of the communication barriers and facilitate travel, they still have high concerns regarding language differences (44.8% of the 8,374 respondents). Consequently, many countries and companies have started improving their service through expanding the staff foreign language skills and adapting their communication

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and information delivery to the features and concerns of the new tourists. There are destinations that already address this trend by adjusting their offer. For example, *VisitBritain's GREAT China Welcome* campaign was launched in 2014 to urge operators to make their attractions "China-ready" by offering information in Mandarin or Cantonese and adapting their offers to cultural differences (Smith, 2018). Another example is represented by New Zealand with its *China Visitor Insight* program in 2015 to help the tourism industry change its capabilities to respond to the influx of Chinese travelers (OECD, 2018). Following the New Zealand example, Fáilte Ireland has also developed a "China-Ready Programme" to ensure that tourism operators are prepared for the needs of Chinese visitors (Pope, 2019).

When it comes to the Chinese luxury travelers, the communication becomes even more important. Parulis-Cook (2019) cites Ivy Aiwei Jenkins, an experienced tourism professional, who states that "There is always an essential element of human touch between yourself and your guests for high-end hospitality, and that is valued even more by the Chinese when they travel abroad." Speaking their own language might make a big difference in the employees' relationship with the Chinese tourists.

World Economic Forum (2017) notes that English remains the first choice when dealing with foreign language to be studied, but suggests that the next picks should be Mandarin Chinese, French, German, Spanish, and Portuguese. These five languages can bring a competitive edge to employees on the labor market and might help individuals in their personal modern lives.

THE RESEARCH METHOD

The main aim of the research is to explore the perspectives on the foreign language skills based on the Romanian tourism and hospitality young workforce's opinions and future professionals' opinions. This research takes into account the new trends from the industry such as the need to create a memorable guest experience and the remarkable growth potential of the Chinese Market. The latter brings about a new challenge for the young workforce: that of acquiring an exotic foreign language such as Chinese. In the Romanian tourism and hospitality sector, English is seen as the primary foreign language needed to do a job that involves interacting with tourists. A second foreign tongue might be seen as an advantage. In order to understand how the young workforce relates to all these issues, a primary research was developed.

Afresh, the central research question of this chapter is "How do young professionals in the tourism and hospitality industry relate to the foreign languages issue and what is their view on foreign languages as a tool in this industry?". Another research interest is to study young professionals' willingness to acquire foreign languages to improve their ability to communicate with people from different cultures.

A mixed methods research approach seemed a good way to understand the issue and answer the central research question of this chapter. "*The overall goal of mixed methods research, of combining qualitative and quantitative research components, is to expand and strengthen a study's conclusions and, therefore, contribute to the published literature*" (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017). Moreover, by combining quantitative and qualitative research, the author might offset the weaknesses of both methods and strengthen their advantages (Bryman, 2012).

Creswell (2008) shows that in a qualitative study, investigators use research questions, not objectives or hypotheses and, in a quantitative study, researchers use quantitative research objectives and hypotheses, and sometimes objectives. Since both research approaches permit the use of research questions and not hypotheses nor objectives, the central research question of this chapter is narrowed through a few associated simple research questions assigned separately to the qualitative (focus group) and quantita-

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tive (survey) part of the research. Therefore, this study based on mixed methods has a central research question detailed in several simple research questions.

In the first phase of the research, the author's choice was a qualitative method materialized in a focus group organized with representatives of the young workforce in Romania. As a research method, the focus group helps better understand the attitudes and opinions of the participants and have a first understanding of the issue before applying a quantitative research instrument. The qualitative approach can be the first choice in a study since the views of the people researchers study may be seen as the "point of departure" (Bryman, 2012). This qualitative research step offers important insights into what are the relevant subjects that should be included in the quantitative stage of the study when some hypotheses might be tested. The opinions expressed in the focus group may be used to craft a relevant quantitative instrument (questionnaire) to be applied to a larger pool of people. Moreover, the focus groups create a social environment in which the opinions and attitudes are articulated and give new insights on and a deeper understanding of the studied issues (Breen, 2006).

The group involved in this stage was made up of 12 young professionals working in travel agencies, hotels and other operators within the hospitality industry such as sports facilities. Focus groups most often have 6 to 10 participants per group (Morgan, 1997). Though, the author invited more than 10 participants to the session in order to reduce the risk of absence and to have a more diverse working force from the tourism and hospitality industry. Since 12 people were interested to participate in the study, the author decided to conduct the session with all of them. Taking into account the fact that this step was structured into a few clear categories, with definite subjects and research questions (a guide), the number of members was not an impediment. The ethical standards were respected; the author asked the participants' consent to use their opinions in a research paper and explained the aim of the study.

During the focus group, the participants were asked to discuss the issue of foreign language knowledge in tourism and hospitality industry, the degree of knowledge, the willingness to invest time in studying an exotic foreign language. The opinions described by using this method are diverse and relevant for the chosen topic and can be used to depict the way the young force within the tourism and hospitality industry see the foreign language importance and complexity.

The research questions attached to the focus group are:

- How do the tourism and hospitality young professionals view foreign languages as a tool to do their job?
- How do the tourism and hospitality young professionals feel about investing time and effort in acquiring an exotic language?

The second phase of the research intended to identify the main attitudes toward foreign languages among the young workforce from the tourism and hospitality industry in Romania and understand their level of foreign languages knowledge, their outlook on investing time in studying a second foreign language. A special case is represented by Chinese: the author planned to study the willingness of the young workforce to adapt to the evolving market trends by learning an exotic foreign language such as Chinese/Mandarin. Given this aim, a survey among the current young employees from the industry and the tourism students was conducted.

The research questions attached to the survey are:

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1. What are the main barriers to foreign language acquisition as perceived by the young workforce in tourism and hospitality?
2. What is the fluency in a second foreign language and the willingness of the Romanian tourism students to study a second foreign language?
3. What is the young workforce's openness to acquiring an exotic foreign language such as Chinese in order to get an attractive job in tourism and the hospitality industry?
4. What are the most efficient techniques to learn a new language based on the preferences of the young workforce?

Following these research questions, a questionnaire was designed with nominal, ordinal and 7-points scales of attitude to measure variables such as barriers to foreign language acquisition, level of knowledge of foreign languages, willingness to study a second foreign language, openness to acquiring an exotic foreign language such as Chinese/Mandarin, opinions on the most efficient learning techniques.

The sample was comprised of 419 tourism students and young professionals from the tourism and hospitality industry. All of them were students or graduates of the Business and Tourism Faculty of the Bucharest University of Economic Studies. This higher education institution is one of the main providers of tourism education in Romania, so reaching these students and graduates was not only easy to do in an organized manner, but also relevant to the aim of this chapter. One assumption of the research was to study the perspectives of the young workforce from the tourism and hospitality industry to understand their view on foreign language skills and language acquisition challenges. Most practitioners from this field have tourism studies and many of them are students or graduates of the Business and Tourism Faculty.

The data from the survey was analyzed using the SPSS program, based on frequencies, descriptive statistics and chi-square tests at a 0.05 significance level.

THE FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

The participants think foreign languages represent an essential skill employees need to use in tourism and hospitality given the fact they interact with people from all over the world. Moreover, this skill is necessary based on the growth potential of this industry. With regard to the most important themes mentioned in the focus group, the young employees from the this domain consider English to be a critical skill in the sector and a second foreign language to be an advantage to differentiate them within the labor market. English is a must in tourism and hospitality; without this ability an employee would not be able to communicate with the tourists and would not be able to do his job. Knowing English brings new hiring and promoting opportunities, and influences the chance to become a manager in tourism. A second foreign language helps professionals not only improve their career, but also experience new thing, interact with more people on a deeper level, and accumulate more relevant information.

As far as acquiring an exotic language such as Mandarin, most participants agreed on the fact that such a language is attractive from the return on investment point of view and might improve their results. Though, when asked if they would be willing to invest time in studying it, their answers are moderate. Some participants say they would invest time and effort, some say they might. A few even think that it is not worthwhile to make the effort and investment given the low wages in the industry. They think a better choice would be to improve their knowledge of a second foreign European language.

Some notable quotes are:

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“Learning foreign languages should be a strategic objective for those interested in working in tourism and hospitality”.

“In tourism, English is the main communication channel between clients and employees”.

“English used to be a plus on the job market, but now it is a must”.

“English should not be considered a foreign language anymore”.

“A second foreign language improves your self-confidence and gives you satisfaction in your job”.

“An exotic language might be the differentiator between a good and excellent tourism agent”.

“Knowing an exotic language represents a major opportunity to acquire information that is not accessible to everybody”.

“Knowing exotic languages represents a way to create solid connections with foreigners”.

“The business in the field should invest in helping their employees learning the foreign languages that most help their growth”.

An unexpected finding is that some employees think the businesses should become proactive and should invest in training their employees with regards to foreign languages. Furthermore, they should choose a few strategic markets and support their employees in learning those specific languages. In this way, the operators may differentiate themselves from their competitors and grow organically.

THE SURVEY RESULTS

The sample was comprised of 419 tourism students and young professionals from the tourism and hospitality industry, from which 95 are employed in this industry with average employee tenure of 9.69 months. The average age of the respondents is 20.9 years, the youngest being 18 and the oldest 31, confirming also the assumption under which the study involved the young workforce from the chosen domain. For the rest of the sample (324 students), their intention to work in this field was measured and the results show that more than half (55.5%) are determined to get a job in the afore-mentioned industry. The rest do not know or are unsure. From the 419 respondents, 169 are males (40.4%), 249 are females (59.6%), and one did not declare the gender (data is missing) as presented in Table 1.

Research Question 1

1. What are the main barriers to foreign language acquisition as perceived by the young workforce in tourism and hospitality?

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Table 1. Profile of the respondents

Gender	Number	Valid %	Age	Number	Valid %
Male	169	40,4	18	1	,2
Female	249	59,6	19	29	7,0
Total	418	100	20	158	37,9
Missing	1		21	119	28,5
			22	55	13,2
			23	44	10,6
			24	9	2,2
			27	1	,2
			31	1	,2
			Total	417	100
			Missing	2	

One of the objectives of the research is to study the perceptions of foreign language barriers among the young workforce in the tourism and hospitality industry. In terms of the main reasons that prevent respondents from improving their knowledge of foreign languages, the most important are lack of time or money, lack of interest or drive, age, unawareness of the importance of this skill, old teaching methods, lack of self-confidence, difficulty of the learning, and the stress involved. The lack of time, money and interest appears in almost 80% of the cases, being the most important barriers to improving the knowledge of foreign languages among the existing or prospective young workforce in tourism and hospitality.

Coupled with the answers of the focus group participants, one of the solutions to this problem might be the involvement of the companies in the training of their employees. They might offer courses for their employees and even allow them to attend classes during their working hours.

Research Question 2

2. What is the fluency in a second foreign language and the willingness of the Romanian tourism students to study a second foreign language?

First, the respondents rated their fluency in English as this was the assumed first foreign language needed as a norm when working in tourism and hospitality. In order to measure this fluency a well-known scale was used: beginner, elementary, pre-intermediate, intermediate, upper intermediate, advanced. The results presented in Table 2 show that the assumption under which English is the most important foreign language verifies. Almost 25% of the respondents rated them as advanced, 30% as upper-intermediate and 29.5% as intermediate in their English fluency. Given the fact that almost half of them know English well and almost one third speak English at a conversational level, the conclusion is that they meet one of the industry's main requirements in terms of essential skills to work in tourism and hospitality. Proficiency in English is a key element of hospitality practitioners' success.

The same scale was used to rate the fluency in another foreign language such as French, Spanish, and German. The results presented in Table 2 show that English is the best known foreign language by

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Table 2. Young workforce fluency in different foreign languages %

	Beginner	Elementary	Pre-intermediate	Intermediate	Upper Intermediate	Advanced
English	2.6	4.3	8.9	29.5	30.2	24.5
French	39.3	27.3	14.7	10.8	4.4	3.4
Spanish	46.5	18.6	15.0	14.2	4.1	1.6
German	62.9	15.7	10.2	6.8	3.9	.5

Source: realized by the author based on the SPSS reports

young people involved in tourism and hospitality followed by French, Spanish, and German. This might be explained by the fact English is the first foreign language studied in school in Romania. Moreover, Romanians learn a second foreign language from a list of European languages such as the ones aforementioned, French being on the top of that list. Many Romanians say they learned Spanish from the TV Latino soap-operas famous in the post-communist era.

A few respondents also mentioned another foreign language that they know such as Italian, Russian, or Turkish.

Even though most respondents agree that English is essential in tourism and hospitality (71.8% strongly agree and 21.3% agree), they consider a second foreign language as a skill to differentiate them within the labor market (as seen in Table 3). This proves that they are connected to the realities of the labor market and know what they have to do to be successful. Their willingness to study a second language is moderate to high, with 61% of them intending to make the effort to improve their foreign language skills with a second tongue. 27% are somewhat unsure and almost 10% do not have an opinion on this subject.

The descriptive statistics presented in Table 4 support the same perspective, the mean being close to the upper limit, showing the respondents' agreement with the statements that describe their attitudes toward foreign languages. The highest conformity is with the first statement "English knowledge is essential to work in tourism and the hospitality industry" (a mean of 6.6 out of 7).

These results concur with the focus group participants' opinions in considering English a critical skill in the sector and a second foreign language to be an advantage to differentiate them within the labor market and with the literature where English is seen "as a lingua franca in international tourism and travel context" (Zahedpisheh, Abu Bakar & Saffari, 2017, p.87). Tourism and hospitality professionals

Table 3. Young workforce attitudes toward traditional foreign languages – frequencies %

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
English knowledge is essential to work in tourism and the hospitality industry.	.5	.2	.7	1.0	4.5	21.3	71.8
Knowing a second foreign language is an asset to differentiate me in the labor market.	.2	.0	.2	1.7	9.6	42.6	45.7
I intend to make sure that I know a second foreign language at a competent level.	.2	.0	2.2	9.6	26.8	37.3	23.9
Legend: 1 – Strongly disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Somewhat disagree, 4 – Neither agree or disagree, 5 – Somewhat agree, 6 – Agree, 7 – Strongly agree							

Source: realized by the author based on the SPSS reports

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Table 4. Young workforce attitudes toward traditional foreign languages – descriptive statistics

	N	Min	Max	Mean	St.dev.
English knowledge is essential to work in tourism and the hospitality industry.	418	1	7	6.60	.817
Knowing a second foreign language is an asset to differentiate me in the labor market.	418	1	7	6.31	.779
I intend to make sure that I know a second foreign language at a competent level.	418	1	7	5.70	1.029
Legend: 1 – Strongly disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Somewhat disagree, 4 – Neither agree or disagree, 5 – Somewhat agree, 6 – Agree, 7 – Strongly agree					

Source: realized by the author based on the SPSS reports

take this skill seriously and, apparently, the young representatives of the tourism workforce involved in the research know it well enough and plan to meet these requirements.

Research Question 3

3. What is the young workforce’s openness to acquiring an exotic foreign language such as Chinese in order to get an attractive job in tourism and the hospitality industry?

The survey continues with questions regarding the youth’s openness to learning an exotic foreign language which they rated based on a 7 steps Likert scale. The respondents rated their openness to the idea of acquiring a foreign language in order to obtain an attractive job in tourism and hospitality (Table 5).

When the language in case was represented by an exotic one such as Chinese/Mandarin 33% were somewhat open, 18% open and 10.8% definitely open, but for another language the grades are higher with 23% somewhat open, 33.8% open and 33.8% definitely open to the idea. This idea is also depicted in Figure 1. The foreign languages that the young workforce wants to learn are French, Spanish, German, and even Arabic, Japanese, or Turkish.

The young workforce readiness for exotic foreign languages such as Chinese/Mandarin was further studied through an additional series of statements (Table 6 and Table 7). Tourism students and young professionals rated the worthiness and effort of studying an exotic language such as Chinese/Mandarin

Table 5. Young workforce’s openness to acquiring an exotic foreign language or another language – %

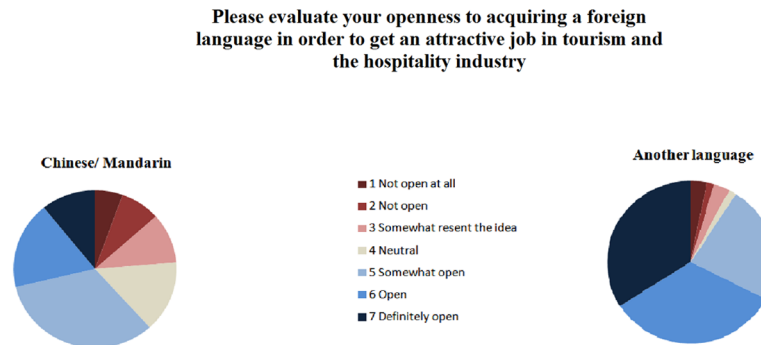
Please evaluate your openness to acquiring a foreign language in order to get an attractive job in tourism and the hospitality industry	Chinese/ Mandarin (Agreement)	Another Language	
		Agreement	Examples
1 Not open at all	5.5	3.1	French (2.1%)
2 Not open	7.9	1.5	Spanish (1.9%)
3 Somewhat resent the idea	10.3	3.1	German (1.4%)
4 Neutral	14.6	1.5	Arabic (1.1%)
5 Somewhat open	33.0	23.1	Japanese (0.9%)
6 Open	17.9	33.8	Turkish (0.9%)
7 Definitely open	10.8	33.9	Italian (0.7%) Russian(0.7%)

Source: realized by the author based on the SPSS reports

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Figure 1. Young workforce's openness to acquiring an exotic foreign language or another language

Source: realized by the author



taking into account the tourism forecasts and the salaries from tourism and hospitality. Given the growth potential of Chinese tourism flows, the respondents somewhat agree that acquiring an exotic language like Chinese/Mandarin is worth the effort (25.2% somewhat agree, 26.1% agree and 14.1 strongly agree). Furthermore, they are not discouraged by the lower wages in tourism and industry. Though, they think it would be difficult to find time to lean an exotic language such as Chinese (18% somewhat agree, 12.7% agree and 5.3% strongly agree).

The results are similar in Table 7 for the same three statements, based on the descriptive statistics. The mean score of 4.98 translate into a moderate agreement with the first statement “Taking into account the tourism forecasts, I believe that acquiring an exotic language like Chinese / Mandarin is worth the effort” for most of the respondents.

The second statement has a 3.02 mean which translate into the belief of the respondents that they think it is somewhat worthwhile spending time studying an exotic language even though the salaries in tourism and hospitality sector are not really high. Last but not least, the 3.70 mean for the third statement leads to a neutral conclusion in terms of respondents’ attitude towards the difficulty of learning an exotic language (e.g. Chinese/Mandarin).

Table 6. Young workforce attitudes toward exotic foreign languages – frequencies %

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Taking into account the tourism forecasts, I believe that acquiring an exotic language like Chinese / Mandarin is worth the effort.	2.4	3.8	7.0	21.3	25.2	26.1	14.1
I do not think it is worthwhile spending time studying an exotic language (e.g. Chinese / Mandarin) taking into account the wages from tourism and hospitality industry.	21.3	26.3	14.4	20.1	6.2	8.4	3.3
It would be hard for me to invest time in acquiring an exotic language (e.g. Chinese / Mandarin).	14.6	17.0	11.8	20.6	18.0	12.7	5.3
Legend: 1 – Strongly disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Somewhat disagree, 4 – Neither agree or disagree, 5 – Somewhat agree, 6 – Agree, 7 – Strongly agree							

Source: realized by the author based on the SPSS reports

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Table 7. Young workforce attitudes toward exotic foreign languages – descriptive statistics

	N	Min	Max	Mean	St.dev.
Taking into account the tourism forecasts, I believe that acquiring an exotic language like Chinese / Mandarin is worth the effort.	417	1	7	4.98	1.433
I do not think it is worthwhile spending time studying an exotic language (e.g. Chinese / Mandarin) taking into account the wages from tourism and hospitality industry.	418	1	7	3.02	1.691
It would be hard for me to invest time in acquiring an exotic language (e.g. Chinese / Mandarin).	417	1	7	3.70	1.787
Legend: 1 – Strongly disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Somewhat disagree, 4 – Neither agree or disagree, 5 – Somewhat agree, 6 – Agree, 7 – Strongly agree					

Source: realized by the author based on the SPSS reports

Contingency tables were used to test the association between the abovementioned attitudes and other variables such as the gender of the respondent or its employment status in the industry. Apparently, the gender has no association with the young workforce’s attitudes toward different aspects of foreign languages. This is based on the p-value from the Chi-Square tests table which is greater than the chosen significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) for all the tested cases (Table 8).

The conclusion is that there is not enough evidence to support an association between gender and the respondents’ attitudes toward traditional or exotic foreign languages. For all the tested relationships (all six statements in Table 8 and gender) the p-value was higher than 0.05; only one relationship came close with the p-value of 0.08 but did not actually meet the significance threshold of 0.05.

On the other hand, the employment status (employed or not-employed, just student) is associated with some attitudes toward foreign languages as seen in Table 9. The relationship between these statements and the employment status in tourism and hospitality industry of the respondents were tested also based on contingency tables and Chi-Square tests.

Table 8. Chi-Square tests for young workforce attitudes toward foreign languages and their gender

	Pearson Chi-Square	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
“English knowledge is essential to work in tourism and the hospitality industry” & Gender	5.529	6	.478
“Knowing a second foreign language is an asset to differentiate me in the labor market” & Gender	9.850	5	.080
“I intend to make sure that I know a second foreign language at a competent level” & Gender	9.138	5	.104
“Taking into account the tourism forecasts, I believe that acquiring an exotic language like Chinese / Mandarin is worth the effort” & Gender	7.343	6	.290
“I do not think it is worthwhile spending time studying an exotic language (e.g. Chinese / Mandarin) taking into account the wages from tourism and hospitality industry” & Gender	4.427	6	.619
“It would be hard for me to invest time in acquiring an exotic language (e.g. Chinese / Mandarin)” & Gender	8.490	6	.204

Source: realized by the author based on the SPSS reports

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Based on these results, three variables associate with the employment status in the tourism and hospitality industry:

- Perception of a second foreign language as an asset to differentiate an employee on the labor market (Chi-square = 13.267, p = 0.021).
- Intention to acquire a second foreign language (Chi-square = 12.421, p = 0.029).
- Perception of the worthiness of the exotic foreign languages in the context of the forecasts about the growth potential of tourism and hospitality industry (Chi-square = 26.733, p = 0.000).

Moreover, three variables are not linked with the employment status:

- Importance attached to English as a necessary skill in tourism and hospitality & employment status (Chi-square = 6.653, p = 0.354).
- Perception of the worthiness of the exotic foreign languages given the wages in tourism and hospitality industry & employment status (Chi-square = 11.081, p = 0.086).
- Perception of the difficulty of the foreign language learning process & employment status (Chi-square = 11.715, p = 0.069).

These significant differences between young employees and tourism students might be translated into a more realistic look of the more experienced young professionals. Having experience in the tourism and hospitality sector makes the young workforce understand better the importance and relevance of foreign languages for a successful career.

Table 9. Chi-Square tests for young workforce attitudes toward foreign languages and their employment status in tourism and hospitality industry

	Pearson Chi-Square	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
"English knowledge is essential to work in tourism and the hospitality industry" & Employed in tourism and hospitality or not	6.653	6	.354
"Knowing a second foreign language is an asset to differentiate me in the labor market" & Employed in tourism and hospitality or not	13.267	5	.021
"I intend to make sure that I know a second foreign language at a competent level" & Employed in tourism and hospitality or not	12.421	5	.029
"Taking into account the tourism forecasts, I believe that acquiring an exotic language like Chinese / Mandarin is worth the effort" & Employed in tourism and hospitality or not	26.733	6	.000
"I do not think it is worthwhile spending time studying an exotic language (e.g. Chinese / Mandarin) taking into account the wages from tourism and hospitality industry" & Employed in tourism and hospitality or not	11.081	6	.086
"It would be hard for me to invest time in acquiring an exotic language (e.g. Chinese / Mandarin)" & Employed in tourism and hospitality or not	11.715	5	.069

Source: realized by the author based on the SPSS reports

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Research Question 4

4. What are the most efficient techniques to learn a new language based on the preferences of the young workforce?

The survey also addressed the topic of the most important techniques that can be used to improve the foreign language knowledge. The answers (presented in Table 10) of the current young workforce and tourism students, as the future workforce in tourism and hospitality, may identify what methods can be used to encourage the acquisition of new language skills.

Respondents view individual learning with a teacher as the most important technique to learning a foreign language (29.9% rate as very important and 40.2% as extremely important), as seen in Figure 2. This proves that Romanians think the best way to learn another tongue is tutoring, based on a one-on-one relationship between the teacher and the student. Teaching in small group is also valued, but is seen as less efficient in comparison with the individual learning (31.1% see it as very important and 15.1% see it as extremely important).

Using technology and the Internet during classes and encouraging the active involvement in the group are efficient ways to acquire a new tongue. The online courses and the use of role play and virtual world are mainly seen as moderately important. Finally, respondents suggested other learning techniques for improving foreign language knowledge such as movies, games, journeys, or students' exchanges.

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The universities offering tourism programs should modernize their program and curricula to focus more on the communication and foreign languages skills. Now, many higher education institutions offering tourism program do not have extensive foreign languages classes. By including such classes, they might help students overcome some of the recognized barriers and increase employment opportunities within the tourism and hospitality industry. As the survey suggests, the main barriers that hinder the improve-

Table 10. Importance of different learning techniques in acquiring foreign languages

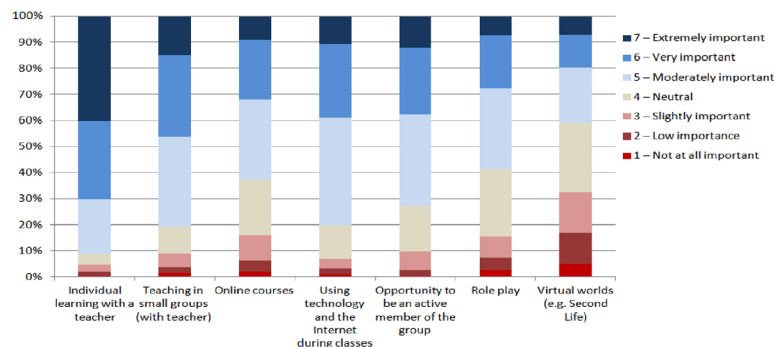
	Frequencies %							Mean
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Individual learning with a teacher	.5	1.4	2.9	3.8	21.3	29.9	40.2	5.94
Teaching in small groups (with teacher)	1.4	2.4	5.2	10.3	34.4	31.1	15.1	5.35
Online courses	1.9	4.3	9.6	21.6	30.7	22.8	9.1	4.80
Using technology and the Internet during classes	1.0	2.2	3.8	12.9	41.0	28.3	10.8	5.19
Opportunity to be an active member of the group	.5	2.2	6.9	17.7	34.9	25.6	12.2	5.10
Role play	2.6	4.8	7.9	26.3	30.6	20.3	7.4	4.68
Virtual worlds (e.g. Second Life)	5.0	11.8	15.6	26.6	21.3	12.5	7.2	4.14
Legend: 1 – Not at all important, 2 – Low importance, 3 – Slightly important, 4 – Neutral, 5 – Moderately important, 6 – Very important, 7 – Extremely important								

Source: realized by the author based on the SPSS reports

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Figure 2. Preferences toward learning techniques for foreign language acquisition

Source: realized by the author



ment of foreign language knowledge within the existing or prospective young workforce in tourism and hospitality are lack of time, lack of money or lack of interest (almost 80% of the respondents). The universities may reduce the effect of at least the first two barriers through adapting their tourism programs in terms of including more foreign language classes. The end result would be a better qualified and more knowledgeable workforce.

The participants to the focus group suggested another possible solution materialized in a higher involvement of tourism operators in the training of their employees. The companies might offer training programs for foreign languages to their employees based on their strategic objectives. Flexible programs might help in allowing employees attending classes during working hours. Even though it might seem counterproductive, this move might have a positive impact on a long term and might give them a competitive edge. For example, if they invest in developing their employees' Chinese skills, they might attract a higher number of Chinese tourists in comparison with their competitors and increase their revenues.

In order to improve the competitiveness of the country, the Ministry of Education might undergo a campaign to raise the awareness of the students with regards to the necessity of foreign languages learning. It might also sustain a program based on partnership with different organizations interested in offering free courses in order to improve the competence of the workforce and finally the competitiveness of each partner.

The teachers should choose different teaching techniques to improve the efficiency of the classes; they should combine face-to-face interactions and the active involvement of the pupils in the group with the use of technology, the Internet and other modern applications.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The lack of research on the foreign languages topic makes this chapter very useful to tourism university students, professors and researchers, and tourism practitioners (tour operators, travel agencies, etc.). It might also help policymakers in crafting ways to improve the competitiveness of the tourism sector or even of the entire country. This study is valuable since it creates an image of the young workforce attitudes toward traditional and exotic foreign languages. Moreover, it shows that there is a significant difference between the outlooks of the respondents based on their employment status. Finally, this chapter shows

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that English is a necessity in tourism and hospitality, a second foreign language makes a difference and is an important asset especially for those interested in managerial positions, and supports the idea that Chinese may be a major language in this sector in the near future.

CONCLUSION

Even though the world is now driven by technology, the authenticity of the experience remains a must in the tourism and hospitality industry. One of the essential elements that contribute to the creation of a memorable and authentic experience remains the communication; addressing a guest in their mother tongue might be a differentiator on the present complex market. Therefore, the foreign language skills are essential within the tourism and hospitality industry.

The foreign languages skills bring about opportunities on the labor market and increase the likelihood of becoming a manager in the tourism sector. English is a must. Knowing a second foreign language may act as a differentiator on the labor market from the standpoint of the employee. It helps professionals not only improve their career, but also experience new things, deepen their relationships, and accumulate more relevant information in their professional and personal lives. Chinese may also be a differentiator on the market but more from a company's standpoint.

The main barriers to foreign language acquisition as perceived by the young workforce in tourism and hospitality are the lack of time, lack of money and lack of interest. But this does not mean the tourist students do not realize the importance of English and other foreign languages to be successful in the tourism and hospitality industry. Some attitudes toward foreign languages are associated with the employment status in the industry translating into a more realistic outlook on the importance and relevance of foreign language skills among the young professionals. Having worked in the tourism and hospitality sector influences the choices made during the survey.

Tourism and hospitality young workforce in Romania understands the importance of foreign language skills and plans to meet the requirements of the industry even if it means investing time in developing this communication ability and studying more than the traditional English.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Barrier to Foreign Language Acquisition: A reason that hinders the foreign language learning.

Exotic Foreign Language: A foreign tongue that is not common within this geographic area such as Chinese/Mandarin or Japanese.

Fluency in a Foreign Language: The ability to appropriately use a foreign language.

Readiness to Acquiring a Foreign Language: The openness and willingness of people to invest time and effort into studying a foreign language.

Second Foreign Language: Another tongue utilized in addition to Romanian and English. The assumption is that, in Romania, English is the most important foreign language known and used in tourism and hospitality, assumption verified based on the survey results.

Tourism and Hospitality Young Workforce: The current young employees from tourism and hospitality industry and tourism students. The assumption made is that tourism students would continue their studies with a job in this sector.

Traditional Foreign Language: A foreign tongue that is widespread within this geographic area such as English, French, German, or Spanish.

Chapter 4

Sustainable Tourism Development in the Black Sea Coastal Areas: A Research on Romanian Tourists and Tourism Operators

Daniel Bulin

*Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania & Romanian Academy, Institute for World
Economy, Romania*

Claudia-Elena Țuclea

Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania

Robert-Ionuț Dobre

Romanian Academy, Institute for World Economy, Romania

ABSTRACT

This chapter analyses the significance that tourists, on the one hand, and the business environment, on the other hand, lend to the concept of sustainable development in tourism. Starting from this point, the chapter highlights the characteristics of the sustainable development of tourism in the coastal areas of Black Sea. Sustainable development has been conceptualized by a set of four variables: economic, socio-human, ecological, and institutional-technological. The main results of the research show that both tourists and members of the business environment attach the greatest importance to the institutional-technological variable, focusing primarily on collaboration and communication between decision-makers and executives. Regarding the stakeholders, both tourists and the business community indicate local governance and central government as the main factors responsible for sustainable development. Following the research, a possible list of actions was proposed.

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Sustainable Tourism Development in the Black Sea Coastal Areas

INTRODUCTION

The complexity of tourism in relation to sustainable development in coastal areas requires a balance between economic results, attention to environmental fragility, adaptation of technology and the satisfaction of both tourists and locals. From an economic point of view, the objectives of sustainable development of tourism in coastal areas imply qualitative performance, controlled utilization of resources and the competitiveness of products and services offered. The environmental dimension of tourism development is better described by the planning of optimal landscaping, supporting forms of eco-friendly tourism and managing tourism flows. The socio-human side is supported by an increase in the quality of life of the local population, by superior and better-paid jobs, by the quality of the experiences lived by tourists. These are the results of proper services, uniqueness and innovation, the care for future generations, determined by tourists and residents' behaviour and attitude. The institutional-technological dimension means collaboration between stakeholders, free and equal access to information and the implementation of technological improvements in tourism.

The process of sustainable development in tourism depends mainly on the involvement and cooperation between policy makers and implementation factors, but also on society's attitude. Good local governance is the key to development; destination-based decisions are based on real, current information and address the socio-economic needs of tourist areas. However, central authorities, professional tourism organizations, tour operators or tourists and the resident population should sustain touring activities in various forms. Also, the academic institutions and international organizations may improve this framework of cooperation through generating ideas and guiding principles.

In order to achieve the objectives of sustainable development in coastal areas for tourism, there are some measures that have to be implemented: improving the quality of services and diversifying the supply, but also improving the transport infrastructure and the accommodation facilities.

Above all, in coastal areas the sustainable development of tourism is a problem of balance between support capacity and tourist traffic, between the spatial arrangement of territory and touring arrangement, between the utilisation of sea and beaches for tourism purposes and environmental protection. We live in a pragmatic world in which money dictates the course of action, therefore the success of sustainable development means finding beneficial solutions for the environment and society to demand and supply equations.

The chapter analyse the significance of the concept of sustainable tourism development that is given by both tourists, and the business environment. Starting from this point, there will be defined the characteristics of the tourism's sustainable development in the coastal areas of the Black Sea.

The chapter stands on a quantitative research whose objectives are:

- Characterizing the dimensions of the sustainable development of tourism in coastal areas: the economic dimension, the environmental-ecological dimension, the socio-human dimension and the institutional-technological dimension.
- Measuring the extent to which each stakeholder is responsible for the sustainable development of tourism in coastal areas.
- Evaluating measures and directions of action that support and generate sustainable tourism development in the Black Sea coastal areas.
- Defining the sustainable development of tourism in coastal areas in relation to its economic, social, ecological and institutional dimensions.

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- Identifying the tourists' and tour operators' differences of perception in relation to the dimensions, responsibilities and directions of sustainable tourism development in coastal areas.

Background

Researches on sustainable development have addressed different issues: measuring indicators and variables (Christie, 2005; Castellani & Sala, 2010), forms of durable tourism (Tsaur, Lin Yu, Lin Ye, 2006), tourism as an impact factor or tourism as a variable (Zamani-Farahani & Musa, 2008), the relationships between stakeholders (McDonald, 2009; Williams & Ponsford, 2009; Erkus-Ozturk & Eraydin, 2010). There also are a lot of different approaches on sustainability of tourism - responsible tourism (Timothy, 2012), sustainable growth in tourism destinations (Tyrväinen et al., 2014; Pérez et al., 2017), sustainability performance (Huang & Coelho, 2017).

Christie (2005) identified the socio-cultural, political, legal, economic and institutional variables that have a significant impact on the sustainability of coastal areas.

Rojo (2009) sums up the arguments for a direct relationship between the environment (the management of the environment) and economic outcomes: cost reduction (long-term environmental non-compliance could generate additional costs), resource efficiency, competitiveness through differentiation, improving the image in relation to stakeholders. The future sustainable tourism depends on how all stakeholders are acting (Williams & Ponsford, 2009).

Williams and Ponsford (2009) used the case study as a research method to demonstrate that the relationship between tourism and the environment can be controlled only by stakeholders' involvement and collective action.

Erkus-Ozturk and Eraydin (2010) have defined five sets of relationships that can be established among tourism operators: business efficiency relationships (reservations, transport, financial), advertising (advertising, cultural, nature conservation and promotion), problem solving relations (legal, managerial and administrative), public awareness relationships (educational programs, conferences), consumption relations (supply of food, textiles, furniture, electronic products).

Development of tourism in the coastal areas depends to a large extent on the analysis, planning and implementation of local measures and actions designed to ensure compliance with the principles of sustainability.

Gossling (2002) names the following global consequences of tourism on the environment: land cover and use changes, energy consumption, biotic changes and extinction of wild species, change and dispersal diseases, changes in the perception and understanding of the environment and water use.

Edgell et al. (2008) considers that the sustainable development of tourism along the coasts implies the following: proper coastal management practices, clean air and water and healthy ecosystems, maintaining a recreational environment in safe and secure conditions, beach restoration, including the "feeding" them with sand brought from elsewhere, right policies for the conservation of wildlife and habitats, anthropic environment protection - history, heritage and culture, educational awareness programs and community awareness to promote sustainable practices in tourism.

Although there are discussions and controversies regarding how to achieve the goals of sustainable development of tourism in coastal areas, the interest in the area is common and is divided between tourism operators and developers, tourists and the local community, respectively non-profit organizations and even education institutions.

Sustainable Tourism Development in the Black Sea Coastal Areas

The studies on sustainable tourism development addressed different target groups - institutions (Ali-pour, Kilic, 2005), public and private actors (Erkus-Ozturk & Eraydin, 2010) or tourists and managers (Vogt & Fesenmaier, 1995)

Erkus-Ozturk and Eraydin (2010) studied the relations between different public and private actors in respect with tourism development. The main actors are hotels, travel agencies, tour operators, air-lines, while tourism associations and tour guides can be defined as supporting actors (Erkus-Ozturk & Eraydin, 2010).

Using the questionnaire, Vogt and Fesenmaier (1995) analysed the perception of the tourist services from both tourists and tenders - managers and hotel and restaurant owners. A quantitative study of 271 residents of Upchurch and Teivane (2010) which analysed their perception of tourism activity based also on questionnaire technique.

Main FOCUS OF the CHAPTER

In order to achieve these objectives, there have been performed two quantitative researches, whose results will be shown as it follows.

The first research aimed to find the perception of tourists on the concepts of sustainable development and responsible stakeholders for this type of tourism development in the Black Sea coastal zone. The number of respondents was 339.

The second research was performed among the representatives of the business environment, the total number of respondents being 85.

Both researches used a distributed on-line questionnaire (isondaje.ro platform), later the link being distributed throughout social media and via e-mail. A limitation of this data collection is the lack of control over the identity of the respondents (especially in the study of tourism operators as a target group).

The questionnaire was structured as follows: (1) identification questions (respondent gender, age); (2) classification questions (level of education, the category in which the respondent is included); (3) information field-the definition of sustainable development given by the World Commission for Environment and Development; (4) six closed questions, with ordering variants of semantic differential type, the first four of them with 5 qualitative variables, the last two with 7 and 12 variables, respectively.

Research Among the Tourists

The perception of the tourists on the characteristics of sustainable development and the stakeholders with responsibility in the development of tourism in the Black Sea coastal area was identified by the answers gathered from the 339 respondents, the structure of the sample being presented in table no. 1.

The surveyed tourists expressed their opinion on the characteristics of sustainable development proposed by the research team, starting from the variables identified by Christie (2005), namely: economic, socio-human, ecological and institutional-technological variables that have a considerable impact on the sustainability of the areas coastal. The respondents also commented on the stakeholders who are responsible for the sustainable development of tourism in the Black Sea coastal areas. These results will be presented below.

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Table 1. Sex and education of respondents

		Education Level			
		Highschool	Bachelor	Master/PhD	
Gender	Feminine	Number	39	99	115
		% Gender	15.4%	39.1%	45.5%
		% Education	75.0%	73.3%	75.7%
		% Total	11.5%	29.2%	33.9%
	Masculine	Number	13	36	37
		% Gender	15.1%	41.9%	43.0%
		% Education	25.0%	26.7%	24.3%
		% Total	3.8%	10.6%	10.9%

Source: table computed by the authors based on the research's results

Characteristics of Sustainable Development

Sustainable development has been questioned based on the following features:

- **Economic Characteristics:** Balanced economic development, through quality, not through quantity (Econ1), higher capitalization of resources/tourist areas (Econ2), Low unemployment (Econ3), High competitiveness (Econ4), and balanced income distribution (Econ5).
- **Socio-human Characteristics:** Respect for the next generations, tourists and the local community (Soc1), Cultural Identity (Soc2), Equal Opportunities/Avoidance of Discrimination (Soc3), Unique Experiences for Visitors (Soc4), High Quality of Life for the Local Community (Soc5).
- **Ecological Characteristics:** Tourism activities with low influence (Ecol1), optimal arrangement of the territory (Ecol2), High weight of niche tourism (Ecol3), reduced seasonality (Ecol4), Forms of alternative tourism (Ecol5).
- **Institutional-technological Characteristics:** Research, development, and innovation in tourism (InTh1), Collaboration and Communication between Policy Makers and Implementation Factors (InTh2), Close Link between Business and Social Partners (InTh3), Free and Fast Access to Information (InTh4), Modern Technology Applied in Tourism (InTh5).

The main research results on the characteristics of sustainable development are presented in Table 2. *Higher capitalization of tourist resources and areas* is essential for over 46% of tourists, with the highest share of all economic size characteristics. *Balanced economic development, pursuing quality and not necessarily quantity*, was rated as essential or of high importance in the proportion of 45%. Almost 25% of responses to *high competitiveness* as a factor of sustainable development are critical, but over 50% consider it to be of high importance. *Balanced income distribution* and *low unemployment* are perceived by almost 40% as being of high importance.

Regarding the socio-human dimension of sustainable tourism development, also characterized by five attributes, the percentage results of the distribution of the response on the determined scale are presented in table 3.

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Table 2. Economic characteristics of sustainable development, study on tourists

Economic Dimension	Balanced Economic Development, Through Quality, Not Through Quantity		Higher Capitalization of Resources/Tourist Areas		Low Unemployment		High Competitiveness		Balanced Income Distribution	
	Evaluation	%	Cumulative	%	Cumulative	%	Cumulative	%	Cumulative	%
Essential/Critical	44.5	44.5	46.3	46.3	15.9	15.9	24.5	24.5	17.1	17.1
High importance	44.8	89.4	39.2	85.5	38.1	54.0	51.3	75.8	38.3	55.5
Medium importance	6.2	95.6	9.1	94.7	35.4	89.4	18.0	93.8	31.3	86.7
Low importance	2.7	98.2	0.9	95.6	8.0	97.3	3.5	97.3	10.6	97.3
Irrelevant	1.8	100.0	4.4	100	2.7	100	2.7	100	2.7	100

Source: table computed by the authors based on the research's results

Nearly half of respondents believe that *respect for future generations, tourists and local community* is an essential feature of the social dimension of sustainable tourism development in coastal areas of the Black Sea. In a significant proportion, the *cultural identity* of the tourist areas, the capacity of the destinations to bring novelties and to generate *unique experiences for tourists*, respectively the guarantee of *a high standard of living for the host community*, are perceived as critical elements or at least of high importance in the sustainable socio-human development. Another feature of the social dimension - *the ability to offer equal opportunities to all categories without discrimination*- was rated as medium (33%) or high (34.5%).

In relation to the ecological dimension of sustainable tourism development, the distribution of responses on the five characteristics on a scale from essentially to irrelevant was as seen in Table 4.

Almost 80% of tourists appreciate that *arrangement of the territory in tourist areas* is essential (31.3%) or high importance (47.8%) for tourism sustainability. *Low-impact tourism activities* account for as much as 27% perceived as essential, respectively high in ecological development and over 30% of medium importance. The development of the tourism industry through *the alternative forms of tourism*

Table 3. The socio-human characteristics of sustainable development, the study of tourists

Socio-human Dimension	Respect for the Next Generations, Tourists and the Local Community		Cultural Identity		Equal Opportunities/Avoidance of Discrimination		Unique Experiences for Visitors		High Quality of Life for the Local Community	
	Evaluation	%	Cumulative	%	Cumulative	%	Cumulative	%	Cumulative	%
Essential/Critical	48.7	48.7	32.7	32.7	18.6	18.6	31.6	31.6	30.1	30.1
High importance	32.7	81.4	38.6	71.4	34.5	53.1	38.9	70.5	41.0	71.1
Medium importance	13.3	94.7	20.6	92.0	33.0	86.1	17.7	88.2	23.0	94.1
Low importance	1.8	96.5	2.7	94.7	11.2	97.3	7.4	95.6	4.1	98.2
Irrelevant	3.5	100.0	5.3	100	2.7	100	4.4	100	1.8	100

Source: table computed by the authors based on the research's results

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Table 4. Ecological features of sustainable development, study on tourists

Ecological / Environmental Dimension	Tourism Activities with Low Influence		Optimal Arrangement of the Territory		High Weight of Niche Tourism		Reduced Seasonality		Forms of Alternative Tourism		
	Evaluation	%	Cumulative	%	Cumulative	%	Cumulative	%	Cumulative	%	Cumulative
Essential/Critical	27.1	27.1	27.1	31.3	31.3	15.9	15.9	10.9	10.9	20.1	20.1
High importance	27.1	54.3	54.3	47.8	79.1	31.9	47.8	30.7	41.6	38.3	58.4
Medium importance	31.9	86.1	86.1	15.3	94.4	46.0	93.8	47.8	89.4	33.9	92.3
Low importance	9.7	95.9	95.9	3.5	97.9	3.5	97.3	8.6	97.9	5.6	97.9
Irrelevant	4.1	100	100	2.1	100	2.7	100	2.1	100	2.1	100

Source: table computed by the authors based on the research's results

and the high share of the *niche tourism* is of medium and high importance in the proportion of over 30%. Also, almost 48% of tourists appreciate that *low seasonality* is an element of medium importance in the sustainable development of tourism from an ecological perspective.

The results of the characterization of the technological and institutional dimension of sustainable, percentage and cumulative development are presented in table 5.

More than 45% of the *collaboration and communication between decision-makers and implementation factors* considered it essential, with almost 40% of the high-profile responses. *Free and fast access to information* is also perceived as essential for 42% and of high importance for 43% of the respondents. The following technological and institutional features: *tourism research and development, the close link between business and civil society representatives and modern technology applied in the tourism industry* are assessed to be at least of high importance in relation to sustainable development.

To assess the relative importance of the characteristics in the sustainable development of tourism, each of the dimensions considered was assigned values for each of the response options (5 - essential/critical; 4 - high importance; 3 - medium importance; 2 - low importance; 1 - irrelevant), calculating

Table 5. Institutional-technological characteristics of sustainable development, study on tourists

Institutional-technological Dimension	Research, Development, and Innovation in Tourism		Collaboration and Communication Between Policy Makers and Implementation Factors		Close Link between Business and Social Partners		Free and Fast Access to Information		Modern Technology Applied in Tourism		
	Evaluation	%	Cumulative	%	Cumulative	%	Cumulative	%	Cumulative	%	Cumulative
Essential/Critical	33.9	33.9	33.9	45.7	45.7	37.5	37.5	41.9	41.9	36.3	36.3
High importance	43.4	77.3	77.3	38.6	84.4	41.6	79.1	43.4	85.3	43.4	79.6
Medium importance	17.1	94.4	94.4	9.7	94.1	15.9	95.0	10.3	95.6	13.6	93.2
Low importance	3.5	97.9	97.9	4.1	98.2	3.2	98.2	3.5	99.1	4.1	97.3
Irrelevant	2.1	100	100	1.8	100	1.8	100	0.9	100	2.7	100

Source: table computed by the authors based on the research's results

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the weighted average and then arithmetic on each dimension. The average results for each feature and module (the most common response) are shown in table 6.

The balanced economic development through quality and not quantity and the higher capitalization of resources/tourist areas characterize the most powerful economic dimension of the sustainable development of tourism, registering average scores of 4.28 and 4.22 respectively, superior to the group average (3.91). *High competitiveness* is another feature of the economic dimension that records an average score equal to that of the group (3.91) and has the “high importance” mode. Therefore, it can be seen that the sustainable development of tourism from the perspective of the economic dimension is characterized by: balanced development, superior capitalization and competitiveness.

Regarding the socio-human dimension of the sustainable development of tourism, *the respect towards the next generation or intra-generation, towards the tourists and the local community* has the highest

Table 6. Assessment of the dimensions of the sustainable development of tourism, study on tourists

Dimension	Characteristic	Average	Module
Economic dimension	Balanced economic development, through quality, not through quantity	4.28	High importance
	Higher capitalization of resources/ tourist areas	4.22	<i>Essential/Critical</i>
	Low unemployment	3.57	High importance
	High competitiveness	3.91	High importance
	Balanced income distribution	3.57	High importance
Socio-human dimension	Respect for the next generations, tourists and the local community	4.21	<i>Essential/Critic</i>
	Cultural Identity	3.91	High importance
	Equal Opportunities/ Avoidance of Discrimination	3.55	High importance
	Unique Experiences for Visitors	3.86	High importance
	High Quality of Life for the Local Community	3.94	High importance
Ecological dimension	Tourism activities with low influence	3.63	Medium importance
	Optimal arrangement of the territory	4.03	High importance
	High weight of niche tourism	3.55	Medium importance
	Reduced seasonality	3.40	Medium importance
	Forms of alternative tourism	3.69	High importance
Institutional-technological dimension	Research, development, and innovation in tourism	4.04	High importance
	Collaboration and Communication between Policy Makers and Implementation Factors	4.22	<i>Essential/Critic</i>
	Close Link between Business and Social Partners	4.10	High importance
	Free and Fast Access to Information	4.22	High importance
	Modern Technology Applied in Tourism	4.06	High importance

Source: table computed by the authors based on SPSS analyse of data

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score - 4.21, the “critical/essential” answer having the highest frequency. *The cultural identity* of the tourist areas and *the living standards of the local community* are above the average (3.89), ie 3.91 and 3.94, respectively, and are characterized by the most frequent “high importance” response. So, we characterize the social dimension of the sustainable development of tourism in coastal areas through *inter and intra - generational respect, cultural identity and quality of life*.

The ecological dimension records the lowest average score (3.66). Within this dimension, *the optimal arrangement of the territory* records a higher average score, 4.03. Also, a higher average score is registered by the characteristic of *durable tourism forms* - 3,69. We can therefore appreciate that the environmental-ecological dimension of tourism is characterized by the importance given to the arrangement of the territory and the promotion and development of sustainable forms of tourism.

The highest average score was recorded for the institutional-technological (4.13), characterized by “high importance” (in four of the five attributes) and “critical”. Values higher than average are recorded by collaboration and communication between policy makers and implementation factors, respectively *free and fast access to information*, both 4.22, the first being “critical,” the second of “high importance.” We can characterize the institutional-technological dimension through: collaboration and cooperation, respectively information.

Stakeholders Responsible for the Sustainable Development of Tourism in Coastal Areas

Regarding the stakeholders in charge with the sustainable development of tourism, the results of the tourists’ evaluation (as a percentage) on a “to a very large extent” to “not at all” scale are presented in table 7.

Local governance is perceived as responsible for the sustainable development of tourism in the Black Sea coastal areas by almost 90% of respondents. In proportion of over 30% (33.6%), *tourists and the resident population*, respectively *tourism professional organizations* (30.1%) are “very largely responsible” for the sustainable development of tourism; the option “a large extend” is also very used (professional tourism organizations - 77.6%, tourists and resident population - 33%). Almost 80% of respondents appreciate that the *central government* is responsible for the sustainable development of tourism “at very large extent” and “at large extent” (50.1% and 28.9% respectively), while the *business environment* is perceived as responsible “at large extent” and “at very large extent” by two thirds of tourists (40.1% and 26.8% respectively). *The academic and scientific environment*, and *international organizations*, are perceived as having an average role in the sustainable development of tourism, recording significant weightings for the “at some extent” option (33% and 36.3% respectively) and “at a large extent” option (31.9% and 32.2% respectively).

In order to compare the average results for each category, there were assigned options first (5 to a very large extent, 4 to a large extent, 3 to some extent, 2 to a small extent, and 1 to not at all), and then were calculated weighted average.

From the tourists’ point of view, responsibility for the sustainable development of tourism in coastal areas rests upon the following delimited categories (in descending order of weighted averages):

1. **Local Governance:** The highest average (4.29), the most common option - “a very large extent”.
2. **Central Government and Professional Tourism Organizations:** Characterized by close averages (4 and 3.99 respectively) and corresponding to the most common option - “to a large extent”.

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Table 7. Stakeholder Responsibility, Study On Tourists

Stakeholder	Weight	A Very Large Extent	A large Extent	Some Extent	A Small Extent	Not at All
International organizations	%	18.3	32.2	36.3	10.6	2.7
	Cumulative	18.3	50.4	86.7	97.3	100
Central government	%	28.9	50.1	14.7	4.4	1.8
	Cumulative	28.9	79.1	93.8	98.2	100
Local governance	%	48.7	37.8	9.1	2.7	1.8
	Cumulative	48.7	86.4	95.6	98.2	100
Tourism professional organizations	%	30.1	47.5	16.5	3.5	2.4
	Cumulative	30.1	77.6	94.1	97.6	100
Scientific and educational environment	%	21.5	31.9	33.0	10.6	2.9
	Cumulative	21.5	53.4	86.4	97.1	100
Business environment	%	26.8	40.1	18.0	12.1	2.9
	Cumulative	26.8	67.0	85.0	97.1	100
Tourists and local population	%	33.6	33.0	21.5	9.1	2.7
	Cumulative	33.6	66.7	88.2	97.3	100

Source: table computed by the authors based on the research's results

- Tourists and Resident Population:** The average score was 3.86, but the most frequent response was “a very large extent”.
- The Business Environment:** Is characterized by a score of 3.58 and the “a large extent” option being the most common.
- International Organizations:** Respectively the *scientific, research and academic environment*, are rated as having an average role in the sustainable development of tourism, being characterized by the lowest scores (3.53 and 3.58 respectively), the most frequent answer being “some extent”.

Table 8. Assessment of stakeholders responsible for the sustainable development of tourism, study on tourists

Indicator	International Organizations	Central Government	Local Governance	Tourism Professional Organizations	Scientific and Educational Environment	Business Environment	Tourists and Local Population
Average	3,53	4,00	4,29	3,99	3,58	3,76	3,86
Module	Some extent	A large extent	A very large extent	A large extent	Some extent	A large extent	A very large extent

Source: table computed by the authors based on SPSS analyse of data

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Directions of Action in the Sustainable Development of Tourism in the Black Sea Coastal Areas

There were evaluated 12 actions and measures meant to support the sustainable development of tourism in the Black Sea coastal areas. The results (as a percentage) per option (from “to a very large extent” to “not at all”) and cumulative (in decreasing order of options) are shown in table 9.

Analysing the cumulative weights for the two most important measures that can contribute to the sustainable development of tourism in the Black Sea coastal areas, we can make the following observations:

Table 9. The extent to which some measures can support the sustainable development of tourism in coastal areas, the study of tourists

Measure	Weight	A Very Large Extent	A Large Extent	Some Extent	A Small Extent	Not at All
Arrangement/ rearrangement	%	42.8	44.0	10.0	1.2	2.1
	Cumulative	42.8	86.7	96.8	97.9	100
Improving the basic infrastructure	%	51.6	37.8	7.7	1.8	1.2
	Cumulative	51.6	89.4	97.1	98.8	100
Increasing the quality of services	%	64.6	27.4	4.1	2.1	1.8
	Cumulative	64.6	92.0	96.2	98.2	100
Diversification of the offer for the tourists	%	35.7	39.8	18.3	2.7	3.5
	Cumulative	35.7	75.5	93.8	96.5	100
Adequate legislative framework	%	33.6	40.1	18.0	5.6	2.7
	Cumulative	33.6	73.7	91.7	97.3	100
Policies and strategies	%	38.9	36.0	20.6	1.8	2.7
	Cumulative	38.9	74.9	95.6	97.3	100
Public-private partnerships	%	23.6	47.5	22.7	3.5	2.7
	Cumulative	23.6	71.1	93.8	97.3	100
Supporting young entrepreneurs	%	31.9	42.8	19.2	3.5	2.7
	Cumulative	31.9	74.6	93.8	97.3	100
Increasing the access to information	%	29.5	42.5	19.5	5.9	2.7
	Cumulative	29.5	72.0	91.4	97.3	100
Accountability and education	%	36.9	46.9	10.6	3.8	1.8
	Cumulative	36.9	83.8	94.4	98.2	100
Collaboration / countries joint coastal strategies	%	22.7	45.7	22.7	6.2	2.7
	Cumulative	22.7	68.4	91.2	97.3	100
Groups for local action	%	23.3	44.2	26.3	4.4	1.8
	Cumulative	23.3	67.6	93.8	98.2	100

Source: table computed by the authors based on the research's results

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- According to the principles of sustainable development, almost 87% of tourists consider that *the arrangement and re-arrangement* of tourist destinations can contribute from a very large extent (42,8%) to a large extent (44%) to the sustainable development of coastal areas.
- More than half (51.6%) of the respondents believe that *the improvement of the basic infrastructure* would support in a very large extent the sustainable development of tourism, while another 37.8% consider that these improvements would support the development in a large extent.
- *The increase in the quality of tourism services* is perceived by 65% of tourists as a factor that would contribute in a very large extent to the sustainable development of tourism, 92% of the respondents appreciating its importance at least in a large extent.
- Three quarters of the respondents consider that *the diversification of tourist offer* would support in a large extent (35.7%) and in a very large extent (39.8%) the sustainable development of coastal areas as tourist destinations.
- *Creating a good legislative framework* is a prerequisite for the sustainable development of tourism: 33.6% of respondents appreciate it as important in a very large extent and another 40.1% as important in a large extent.
- Nearly three quarters of tourists consider that developing and implementing *coherent policies and strategies* can contribute in a large extent (36%) and in a very large extent (38.9%) to the sustainable development of tourism in coastal areas.
- *Support and consolidation of public-private partnerships* would support in a large extent (47.5%) and in a very large extent (38.9%) the sustainable development of tourism, according to the opinion of the tourists.
- *Encouraging young entrepreneurs* is targeted by three-quarters of the respondents: 42.8% of their total believe that this would support the sustainability of tourism development in a large extent and another 31.9% in a very large extent.
- *Increasing the access to information* for all categories involved in tourism activity is perceived as a direction of action that would contribute in a large extent (42.5%) and in a very large extent (29.5%) to the development of tourism in coastal areas.
- Over 80% of respondents believe that *the accountability and education of tourists and local population* would contribute in a large extent (46.9%) and in a very large extent (36.9%) to a balanced development of tourism.
- *Collaboration between the coastal states*, the design and implementation of joint strategies could contribute in a large extent (45.7%) and in a very large extent (22.7%) to the sustainable development of tourism in the region.
- The establishment and development of networks of *local action groups* could contribute in a large extent (44.2%) and in some extent (26.3%) to the sustainable development of tourism in coastal areas.

Then it was calculated the weighted average score by assigning values to each option to characterize the selected directions and measures (5-very large extent, 4-large extent, 3-some extent, 2-small extent, 1-not at all). The resulted averages and modules are presented in table 10.

On the basis of the average score obtained by each feature and the most common response, the following sets of actions can be delimited by priority:

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Table 10. Evaluating measures to support the sustainable development of tourism in coastal areas

Characteristic	Average	Module
<i>Arrangement/ rearrangement</i>	4.24	Large extent
Improving the basic infrastructure	4.37	Very large extent
Increasing the quality of services	4.51	Very large extent
<i>Diversification of the offer for the tourists</i>	4.01	Large extent
Adequate legislative framework	3.96	Large extent
<i>Policies and strategies</i>	4.07	Very large extent
Public-private partnerships	3.86	Large extent
Supporting young entrepreneurs	3.98	Large extent
Increasing the access to information	3.90	Large extent
<i>Accountability and education</i>	4.13	Large extent
Collaboration / countries joint coastal strategies	3.80	Large extent
Groups for local action	3.83	Large extent

Source: table computed by the authors based on the research's results

- Priority level I. Highlighted by the module “very large extent” and a weighted average higher than 4. *Increasing the quality of tourism services* (4,51), *improving the basic infrastructure* (4,37) and developing and implementing *policies and strategies* for sustainable development of tourism (4.07) are perceived as the main measures and directions of action that should be pursued in order to achieve the sustainability objectives.
- Priority level II. Described by weighted average of over 4 but characterized by the module “large extent”. The *arrangement/rearrangement* of tourist destinations according to the principles of sustainable tourism development (4.24), *the diversification of tourist offer*, but also *the accountability and education of the tourists and the resident population* (4.13) complete the general framework of directions of action for the sustainable development of tourism in coastal areas.
- Priority level III. Another set of actions designed to support the sustainable development of tourism in coastal areas, characterized by the “large extent” module and a weighted average score of 3.90-4 are: *supporting young entrepreneurs*, creating a *favourable legislative framework* (3.96) and *increasing access to information* for all categories involved in tourism activity (3.90).
- Priority level IV. The additional directions of action, not negligible (both due to the “large extent” response rate and a good average score - 3.80-3.90) are: *supporting and strengthening public-private partnerships* (3.86) the development of networks of *local action groups* (3.83) and *co-operation between coastal states / the design and implementation of common strategies* (3.8).

Research in the Business Environment

The second research was performed among the representatives of the business environment, the total number of respondents being 85. In relation to the education level of the respondents, the following structure emerged: there are 49.4% with bachelor degree, 45.6% postgraduate student, and 4.7% high school graduates.

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Table 11. Classification of respondents, study on business environment

Gender	No.	%	Education level	No.	%	Operator	No.	%
Feminine	51	60.0	High school	4	4.7	Travel agency	35	41.2
Masculine	34	40.0	Bachelor	42	49.4	Hotel	50	58.8
Total	85	100	Master/PhD	39	45.9	Total	85	100
			Total	85	100			

Source: table computed by the authors based on the research's results

Of the total of 85 respondents, 35 are travel agents (agency managers or travel agents) and 50 representatives of hotels or other accommodation units (managers, sales managers etc.)

The first step in the analysis of the results was to test the existence of a statistically significant link between travel agencies and hotels in relation to the assessment of sustainable development features, responsibilities and directions of action. To accomplish this task it was used the Mann-Whitney test was used¹.

As the value attached to the test is greater than 0.05 in all cases, with one exception², the assumption is null. Therefore, it can be noticed that there are no significant differences in assessing the dimensions of sustainable tourism development, responsibilities and proposed action lines by agencies and hotels.

Characteristics of Sustainable Development

The results of the characterization of the economic dimension of sustainable development, as a percentage and cumulative, are presented in the following table.

More than 95% of respondents believe that the *higher capitalization of resources* and areas as tourist destinations is essential (47.1%) or has high importance (48.2%) for the sustainable economic development of tourism in coastal areas. 50% of respondents perceive *balanced economic development* on quality principles as having high importance, and another 37% as critical for the sustainability of tourism. Its high *competitiveness* and *balanced income distribution* are perceived by more than half of respondents as being of high importance in the sustainable economic development of tourism. *Low unemployment* has high importance (47.1%) and medium importance (30.6%) for the sustainable development of tourism.

In relation to the socio-human dimension of sustainable development of tourism, the distribution of responses around the five characteristics on a scale from “essential” to “irrelevant” is shown in Table 14.

More than 90% of respondents believe that *respect for the future generations*, tourists and the local community is essential or has high importance in sustainable development. Over 85% of respondents consider that the *uniqueness of the experiences* lived by tourists has high importance (43.5%) and is essential (42.4%) for the social and human sustainability of tourism. Several characteristic are considered as of medium importance for tourism in relation to the socio-human dimension of its development, being situated between 40% and 50%: *avoiding discrimination* and giving opportunities to all people (50.6%), *the living standards* of the local community (48.2%) and *the preservation of local cultural identity* (44.7%).

Concerning the environmental-ecological dimension of the sustainable development of tourism, also characterized by five attributes, the results of the distribution of the responses (as a percentage) on the determined scale are presented in table 15.

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Table 12. Statistical testing of differences of opinion between travel agents and hotels

Name	Mann-Whitney U	Sig. value	Name	Mann-Whitney U	Sig. value
Econ1	873.5	0.988	International organizations	693	0.089
Econ2	735.5	0.159	Central government	812	0.540
Econ3	783.5	0.380	Local governance	841.5	0.741
Econ4	753.5	0.239	Tourism professional organizations	742.5	0.197
Econ5	850	0.808	Scientific and educational environment	770.5	0.322
Soc1	694	0.072	Business environment	780.5	0.367
Soc2	750	0.228	Tourists and local population	847	0.790
Soc3	857.5	0.866	Name	Mann-Whitney U	Sig. value
Soc4	822.5	0.609	Arrangement	746	0.188
Soc5	855.5	0.851	Infrastructure	857.5	0.848
Ecol1	871.5	0.973	Services	816	0.524
Ecol2	837	0.706	Offer	741	0.180
Ecol3	870	0.961	Legislation	748	0.213
Ecol4	854.5	0.845	Politics	824	0.608
Ecol5	852.5	0.826	Partnerships	769.5	0.318
InTh1	869	0.954	Entrepreneurs	725	0.157
InTh2	772.5	0.311	Information	720	0.127
InTh3	719.5	0.130	Education	810	0.529
InTh4	816	0.557	Cooperation	690	0.076
InTh5	604	0.009	Groups	851	0.816

Source: table computed by the authors based on SPSS analyze of data

The arrangement of the territory in line with the principles of sustainable development is considered to having high importance (54.1%) or being even critical (31.8%) in tourism. More than half of respondents believe that *the promotion of alternative forms of tourism* is of high importance (52.9%) for the development of sustainable tourism. According to the results, *tourist activities with low impact* (48.2%), *development of niche tourism* (45.9%) and *reduced seasonality* (44.7%) have a high importance for tourism development.

In relation to the sustainable development of tourism, the share of technological and institutional characteristics on a scale from “essential” to “irrelevant” is shown in table 16.

A good *cooperation and communication* between decision-makers and executives is perceived as essential (51.8%) and of high importance (35.3%) in the sustainable development of tourism in coastal areas of the Black Sea, with just over 1% of respondents considering it of low importance. More than 90% of respondents believe that *free and fast access to information* is critical (44.7%) and of high importance (47.1%) compared to the sustainable development of tourism. Although perceived slightly differently (according to Mann-Whitney test value), *modern technology applied to tourism* is essential or high important for the respondents. *The relationship between the business community and the social partners* is perceived to be of high importance (49.4%) or even essential (30.6%) in the context of a sustainable

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Table 13. Economic characteristics of sustainable development, study on the business environment

Economic Dimension	Balanced Economic Development, Through Quality, Not Through Quantity		Higher Capitalization of Resources/Tourist Areas		Low Unemployment		High Competitiveness		Balanced Income Distribution	
	%	Cumulative	%	Cumulative	%	Cumulative	%	Cumulative	%	Cumulative
Essential/Critical	36.5	36.5	47.1	47.1	11.8	11.8	22.4	22.4	12.9	12.9
High importance	50.6	87.1	48.2	95.3	47.1	58.8	50.6	72.9	50.6	63.5
Medium importance	9.4	96.5	2.4	97.6	30.6	89.4	21.2	94.1	30.6	94.1
Low importance	2.4	98.8	1.2	98.8	9.4	98.8	4.7	98.8	4.7	98.8
Irrelevant	1.2	100	1.2	100	1.2	100	1.2	100	1.2	100

Source: table computed by the authors based on the research's results

Table 14. The socio-human characteristics of sustainable development, study on the business environment

Socio-Human Dimension	Respect for the Next Generations, Tourists and the Local Community		Cultural Identity		Equal Opportunities/Avoidance of Discrimination		Unique Experiences for Visitors		High Quality of Life for the Local Community	
	%	Cumulative	%	Cumulative	%	Cumulative	%	Cumulative	%	Cumulative
Essential/Critical	45.9	45.9	36.5	36.5	18.8	18.8	42.4	42.4	28.2	28.2
High importance	45.9	91.8	44.7	81.2	50.6	69.4	43.5	85.9	48.2	76.5
Medium importance	5.9	97.6	16.5	97.6	21.2	90.6	11.8	97.6	20.0	96.5
Low importance	2.4	100	2.4	100	7.1	97.6	1.2	98.8	3.5	100
Irrelevant	0	100	0	100	2.4	100	1.2	100	0.0	100

Source: table computed by the authors based on the research's results

Table 15. Ecological characteristics of sustainable development, study on the business environment

Ecological / Environmental Dimension	Tourism Activities with Low Influence		Optimal Arrangement of the Territory		High Weight of Niche Tourism		Reduced Seasonality		Forms of Alternative Tourism	
	%	Cumulative	%	Cumulative	%	Evaluation	%	Cumulative	%	Cumulative
Essential/Critical	17.6	17.6	31.8	31.8	12.9	12.9	14.1	14.1	14.1	14.1
High importance	48.2	65.9	54.1	85.9	45.9	58.8	44.7	58.8	52.9	67.1
Medium importance	25.9	91.8	11.8	97.6	36.5	95.3	29.4	88.2	24.7	91.8
Low importance	7.1	98.8	2.4	100	2.4	97.6	8.2	96.5	5.9	97.6
Irrelevant	1.2	100	0	100	2.4	100	3.5	100	2.4	100

Source: table computed by the authors based on the research's results

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Table 16. Institutional-technological characteristics of sustainable development, study on the business environment

Institutional-technological Dimension	Research, Development, and Innovation in Tourism		Collaboration and Communication Between Policy Makers and Implementation Factors		Close Link Between Business and Social Partners		Free and Fast Access to Information		Modern Technology Applied in Tourism	
	Evaluation	%	Cumulative	%	Cumulative	%	Cumulative	%	Cumulative	%
Essential/Critical	31.8	31.8	51.8	51.8	30.6	30.6	44.7	44.7	42.4	42.4
High importance	43.5	75.3	35.3	87.1	49.4	80.0	47.1	91.8	38.8	81.2
Medium importance	24.7	100	11.8	98.8	20.0	100.0	5.9	97.6	15.3	96.5
Low importance	0	100	1.2	100	0	100	1.2	98.8	3.5	100.0
Irrelevant	0	100	0	100	0	100	1.2	100	0	100

Source: table computed by the authors based on the research’s results

Note: * The value of Mann-Whitney test for InTh5 suggests significant differences between travel agencies and hotels opinions

development. *Research and innovation* in the tourism industry is of at least of average importance in the development of the technological-institutional dimension, being perceived as essential by more than 30% of the respondents.

Following the same pattern as in the previous study (for each of the dimensions considered were assigned values for each of the response options as follows: 5 - Essential / Critical, 4 - High importance, 3 - Medium importance, 2-Low importance, 1-irrelevant), the characteristics of sustainable development in relation to tourism in the coastal areas were assessed based on the weighted average, respectively the arithmetic mean of each dimension, and the most frequent response (module).

Characterized by the highest average scores (4.39 and 4.19) and “high importance” as the most frequent response, the capacity for *high capitalization of natural and anthropogenic resources*, respectively *the development based mainly on quality*, characterize the economic dimension of development sustainable tourism in coastal areas of the Black Sea. *High competitiveness* (3.88), *balanced distribution of income* (3.69) and *low unemployment* (3.59) obtained scores below the average (3.95), but were characterized by the high frequency of the option high importance, joining the first two feature in completing the ideal frame of the sustainable development of tourism. Therefore, we can assume that the sustainable economic development of tourism is based on quality principles and the capitalization of potential, at least in the perception of the Romanian tourism operators.

Inter-generational or intra-generational respect in reported to the relationship tourist-local population, *the creation of novelty and unique experiences* for visitors and *the cultural identity of the destinations* recorded the highest weighted average scores (4.35, 4.25, and 4.11), being accompanied by the majority of the “essential/critical” and “high importance” options. *High quality of life* for the local community (4.01) and *the avoidance of discrimination* and equal opportunities (3.76), recorded values situated under the average of the socio-human dimension (4.11), but they have the same module – high importance. So, we can see that the sustainable socio-human development of tourism implies responsibility towards future generations, novelty and uniqueness, maintaining in the same time the cultural identity of the destinations.

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Table 17. Assessment of the dimensions of the sustainable development of tourism, study on the business environment

Dimension	Characteristic	Average	Module
Economic dimension	Balanced economic development, through quality, not through quantity	4.19	High importance
	Higher capitalization of resources/tourist areas	4.39	High importance
	Low unemployment	3.59	High importance
	High competitiveness	3.88	High importance
	Balanced income distribution	3.69	High importance
Socio-human dimension	Respect for the next generations, tourists and the local community	4.35	Essential/critical
	Cultural Identity	4.15	High importance
	Equal Opportunities/ Avoidance of Discrimination	3.76	High importance
	Unique Experiences for Visitors	4.25	High importance
	High Quality of Life for the Local Community	4.01	High importance
Ecological dimension	Tourism activities with low influence	3.74	High importance
	Optimal arrangement of the territory	4.15	High importance
	High weight of niche tourism	3.65	High importance
	Reduced seasonality	3.58	High importance
	Forms of alternative tourism	3.71	High importance
Institutional-technological dimension	Research, development, and innovation in tourism	4.07	High importance
	Collaboration and Communication between Policy Makers and Implementation Factors	4.38	Essential/critical
	Close Link between Business and Social Partners	4.11	High importance
	Free and Fast Access to Information	4.33	High importance
	Modern Technology Applied in Tourism	4.20	Essential/critical

Source: table computed by the authors based on SPSS analyse of data

In relation to the ecological dimension of the sustainable development of tourism, *the optimal arrangement of the territory*, keeping the principles of sustainable tourism development, records a weighted score above the average of the group (4.15 > 3.76), being characterized by “high importance” as a prevailing response. The following characteristics, listed in descending order, having average values lower than that of the overall dimension (between 3.58 and 3.74), but characterized by the same module (“high importance”), define the sustainable ecological development of tourism: *the preponderance of tourism activities with low impact on the environment* (3.74), the encouragement of *alternative forms of tourism* (3.71), the high share of *niche tourism*, in the opposite direction to mass tourism (3.65) and *low seasonality* (3.58). We can appreciate that the ecological dimension of the sustainable development of tourism in coastal areas can be sustained by the arrangement and rearrangement of the territory and, in the specific sense, by the alternative, sustainable and properly dimensioned tourism.

The defining characteristic of the technological-institutional dimension of tourism is *the collaboration and communication* between the decision-makers and the executives, which have the highest average score (4.38) and are perceived to be of “critical importance”.

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The free and fast access to information, respectively the implementation of modern technology in tourism, fill the technological framework of the dimension, being characterized by the high average values (4.33 and 4.20 respectively) and the recording the options “high importance” and “critical”, as a module.

The close link between the business environment and its social partners (4.11), and the *research-development and innovation* in tourism (4.01) recorded values below the average size (4.22 - the highest of the four), but reported to the whole measurement scale, they can be appreciated as being high. We find that the institutional-technological development of tourism is defined by the ability of decision makers and executives to cooperate and the degree of access to information and tourism technologies.

Stakeholders Responsible for the Sustainable Development of Tourism in Coastal Areas

From the tourism operators’ perspective, the results (as a percentage) of the extent to which the seven categories of interest are responsible for the sustainable development of tourism in the Black Sea coastal zones are presented in the following table, on “to a very large extent” to “not at all” scale.

Local authorities are perceived as having responsibilities in the sustainable development of tourism in coastal areas in a very large extent (36.5%) and a large extent (50.6%) and only 1% in a small extent.

Almost 85% of respondents consider that the *central government* and *professional tourism organizations* have responsibilities in a large extent (44.7% and 47.1% respectively) and very large extent (40% and 37.6%); nobody did not choose the not at all option.

The business environment, and the *tourists and the local population*, are perceived as having responsibilities in a large extent (44.7% and 40% respectively) and in a very large extent (27.1% and 34.1%) on

Table 18. Stakeholder responsibility, study on business

Stakeholder	Weight	A Very Large Extent	A Large Extent	Some Extent	A Small Extent	Not at All
International organizations	%	24.7	29.4	35.3	9.4	1.2
	Cumulative	24.7	54.1	89.4	98.8	100
Central government	%	40.0	44.7	12.9	2.4	0
	Cumulative	40.0	84.7	97.6	100	100
Local governance	%	50.6	36.5	11.8	1.2	0
	Cumulative	50.6	87.1	98.8	100	100
Tourism professional organizations	%	37.6	47.1	11.8	3.5	0
	Cumulative	37.6	84.7	96.5	100	100
Scientific and educational environment	%	18.8	41.2	32.9	7.1	0
	Cumulative	18.8	60.0	92.9	100	100
Business environment	%	27.1	44.7	24.7	2.4	1.2
	Cumulative	27.1	71.8	96.5	98.8	100
Tourists and local population	%	34.1	40.0	23.5	1.2	1.2
	Cumulative	34.1	74.1	97.6	98.8	100

Source: table computed by the authors based on the research’s results

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a balanced and principled development of tourism. 41.2% of respondents appreciate that the *academic and research environment* plays an important role in the development of tourism (a large extent), while another 32.9% consider it not so important (some extent). Regional and international organizations also are responsible in a large extent (29.4%), but also to some extent (35.3%) for how tourism develops.

In order to compare the average results for each category, it was used the same method as in the previous study (there were assigned options as follows: 5-a very large extent, 4—a large extent, 3-some extent, 2-a small extent, 1-not at all, then it was calculated an average score). The average and module are listed in table 19.

In the tourists' perception, the responsibility for the sustainable development of tourism in coastal areas rests on the following delimited categories (in the decreasing order of weighted averages):

1. **Local Governance:** Recorded the highest average (4.36), the most frequent option being “to a very large extent”.
2. **Central Government:** With an average score of 4.22, *the professional tourism organizations* with 4.19, respectively *tourists and the local population*, with 4.05 - are characterized by the same majority frequencies of occurrence - “to a great extent”.
3. **The Scientific and Educational Environment:** Is recognized as having an important role in the sustainable development of tourism, being characterized by the average score of 3.72 and the “to a large extent” module.
4. **International (global and regional) Organizations:** Have an average of 3.67, being “in some extent” responsible for the sustainable development of tourism.

Directions of Action in the Sustainable Development of Tourism in the Black Sea Coastal Areas

From the perspective of tourism operators, the results of the study on the selection of the same 12 actions and measures meant to support the sustainable development of tourism in the Black Sea coastal areas are presented in table 20.

Analysing the cumulative weights for the two most important measures that can contribute to the sustainable development of tourism in the Black Sea coastal areas, we can make the following observations:

Table 19. Evaluation of stakeholders responsible for the sustainable development of tourism, study on the business environment

Indicator	International Organizations	Central Government	Local Governance	Tourism Professional Organizations	Scientific and Educational Environment	Business Environment	Tourists and local Population
Average	3.67	4.22	4.36	4.19	3.72	3.94	4.05
Module	Some extent	Large extent	Very large extent	Large extent	Large extent	Large extent	Large extent

Source: table computed by the authors based on SPSS analyse of data

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Table 20. The extent to which some measures can support the sustainable development of tourism in coastal areas, the study of the business environment

Measure	Weight	A Very Large Extent	A Large Extent	Some Extent	A Small Extent	Not at All
Arrangement/ rearrangement	%	56.5	37.6	4.7	1.2	0
	Cumulative	56.5	94.1	98.8	100	100
Improving the basic infrastructure	%	68.2	24.7	5.9	1.2	0
	Cumulative	68.2	92.9	98.8	100	100
Increasing the quality of services	%	67.1	24.7	8.2	0	0
	Cumulative	67.1	91.8	100	100	100
Diversification of the offer for the tourists	%	55.3	31.8	10.6	1.2	1.2
	Cumulative	55.3	87.1	97.6	98.8	100
Adequate legislative framework	%	49.4	36.5	11.8	0	2.4
	Cumulative	49.4	85.9	97.6	97.6	100
Policies and strategies	%	52.9	40.0	7.1	0	0
	Cumulative	52.9	92.9	100	100	100
Public-private partnerships	%	32.9	40.0	22.4	2.4	2.4
	Cumulative	32.9	72.9	95.3	97.6	100
Supporting young entrepreneurs	%	37.6	35.3	20.0	5.9	1.2
	Cumulative	37.6	72.9	92.9	98.8	100
Increasing the access to information	%	29.4	52.9	11.8	5.9	0
	Cumulative	29.4	82.4	94.1	100	100
Accountability and education	%	41.2	42.4	16.5	0	0
	Cumulative	41.2	83.5	100	100	100
Collaboration / countries joint coastal strategies	%	37.6	41.2	21.2	0	0
	Cumulative	37.6	78.8	100	100	100
Groups for local action	%	24.7	50.6	22.4	2.4	0
	Cumulative	24.7	75.3	97.6	100	100

Source: table computed by the authors based on the research's results

- *Arrangement or rearrangement* of the territory in coastal tourist areas according to the principles of sustainable development would contribute to a large extent (56.5%) and to a very large extent (37.6%) to the development of tourism.
- Almost 70% of respondents believe that the *improvement of the basic infrastructure* would support the sustainable development of tourism to a very large extent, while another 25% consider that the support would be to a large extent.
- More than 90% of tour operators, whether agents or accommodation providers, believe that by increasing *the quality of tourism services*, tourism would develop sustainably in a large extent (24.7%) and in a very large extent (67.1%); the answers “not at all” or “to a small extent” were not present.

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- Nearly 90% of the respondents believe that the *diversification of tourist offer* would support the sustainable development of tourism in a large extent (31.8%) and in a very large extent (55.3%).
- Half of respondents see in the creation of a *legislative framework* the option that would greatly help the development of tourism, while 36.5% consider it to be in a large extent beneficial to tourism.
- Developing and implementing *policies and strategies* in coastal areas would be a prerequisite for the sustainable development of tourism in a large extent (40%) and in a very large extent (52.9%).
- Almost three quarters of respondents believe that supporting and strengthening *public-private partnerships* would contribute in a large extent (40%) and in a very large extent (32.9%) to the sustainable development of tourism.
- The same percentage as in the case of public-private partnerships (72.9%) also has the *encouragement of young entrepreneurs*, which would contribute in a large extent (35.3%) and in a very large extent (37.6%) to the sustainable development of tourism in the Black Sea coastal areas.
- 52.9% of the respondents consider that the *increase of the access to information* for all categories involved in the tourism activity would contribute in a large extent, while 29.4% consider that this would even contribute in a very large extent to sustainable development.
- The extent to which *education and accountability of tourists and local population* would contribute to the sustainable development of tourism has relatively equal proportions, for in a large extent (41.2%) and in a very large extent options (37.6%).
- The elaboration and implementation of *regional cooperation programs* is seen by 41.2% of tourism operators as a strategy that would be in a large extent beneficial to tourism, 37.6% of them appreciating this in a very large extent.
- 50.6% of respondents assess the development of *local action group* networks as an option in the sustainable development of tourism in a large extent, while another 24.7% of operators consider this aspect to be beneficial in a very large extent.

In order to compare the measures and the directions of action selected, it was done similarly to the first study (there were assigned values to each option: 5-very large extent, 4-large extent, 3-some extent, 2-small extent, 1-not at all; then the weighted average score was calculated). The average results and the module obtained are presented in table 21.

Depending on the weighted average score of each variable and module, it can be made a scale of priority levels as follows:

- Priority level I. A set of four directions of action and options designed to contribute to the sustainable development of coastal tourism, characterized by “a large extent” module and an average higher than 4.40: improving the *basic infrastructure* (4.60), improving the *quality of tourism services* (4.59), *arranging/rearranging* tourist destinations according to the principles of sustainable tourism development (4.49), and developing and implementing sustainable tourism development *policies and strategies* (4.46)).
- Priority level II. A group of three options that can contribute in a very large extent to the viable and sustainable development of tourism, which recorded an average score between 4 and 4.40: the *diversification of tourism supply* (4.39), the creation of a favourable *legislative framework* (4.31) and *support for young entrepreneurs* (4.02).

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Table 21. Assessment of measures to support the sustainable development of tourism in coastal areas, study on the business environment

Characteristic	Average	Module
Arrangement/ rearrangement	4.49	Very large extent
Improving the basic infrastructure	4.60	Very large extent
Increasing the quality of services	4.59	Very large extent
Diversification of the offer for the tourists	4.39	Very large extent
Adequate legislative framework	4.31	Very large extent
Policies and strategies	4.46	Very large extent
Public-private partnerships	3.99	Large extent
Supporting young entrepreneurs	4.02	Very large extent
Increasing the access to information	4.06	Large extent
Accountability and education	4.25	Large extent
Collaboration / countries joint coastal strategies	4.16	Large extent
Groups for local action	3.98	Large extent

Source: table computed by the authors based on the research's results

- Priority level III. Three other measures characterized by a common module (“a large extent”) and an average value higher than 4: *empowering and educating tourists and local population* (4.25), collaboration between coastal states, designing and implementing common strategies (4.16) and *increasing access to information* for all categories involved in tourism activities (4.02).
- Priority level IV. Two actions that would complete the picture of a sustainable tourism development strategy in coastal areas characterized by a common (“a large extent”) module and having an average score below 4: supporting and strengthening *public-private partnerships* (3.99) and the development of networks of *local action groups* (3.98).

Comparative Evaluation of the Results of the Two Studies

For the comparative assessment of the results of the studies on the two categories - tourists and the business environment - we analysed the average scores for each of the 20 defining characteristics of the dimensions of the sustainable tourism development, for the seven categories of stakeholders and for the possible measures, actions or solutions that would contribute to a balanced and viable development in coastal areas³.

Regarding the characteristics that define sustainable development, there can be stated the following conclusions, from the perspective of the tourists or tour operators, whether they travel agencies or accommodation units:

- Within the economic dimension, two of the five characteristics have higher weighted average scores in the perception of tourists than that of the business environment (*balanced economic development* and *high competitiveness*), the other three being perceived in the opposite direction (*superior capitalization of resources*, *low unemployment* and *balanced income distribution*).

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- The tourists consider *the qualitative economic development* as defining for the durability of tourism, while the business environment considers that the *superior capitalization of the resources* is the most important characteristic of the economic dimension.
- *Low unemployment* is not so important for the economical side of the sustainable development, in the case of the survey made on tourist; the same thing is applicable to the balanced distribution of income.
- Regarding the socio-human dimension, all five characteristics have received higher average scores in the survey conducted on the tourism operators.
- Respect between generations and between tourists and the local community is perceived as defining, according to the results of both studies.
- Equal opportunities and the avoidance of discrimination define as little as possible sustainable development relative to its socio-human dimension.
- The average scores of the environmental-ecological characteristics are superior in the case of the study of tour operators compared to those given by tourists.
- The arrangement of rearrangement of the territory based on the principles of sustainable tourism development in coastal areas has scored the best score of the ecological dimension for both studies.
- Low seasonality is the least relevant relative to the sustainable ecological development of tourism in coastal areas.
- As in the case of social and environmental dimensions, the average scores obtained by the technological-institutional characteristics resulting from the business environment were higher than those recorded in the tourist's responses.
- The ability of collaboration and good communication between decision-makers and executive persons is the defining feature with the best score in both studies; for tourists the same importance has the accessibility of information.
- *Research - development and innovation* importance in the tourism industry obtained the lowest scores in both studies.

In order to deepen the comparison, there were calculated the coefficients Spearman and Kendall of the characteristics of the sustainable development of tourism.

The probabilities smaller than 0.05 reject the null hypothesis, so there is a concordance between the ranks of the sustainable development characteristics of tourism resulted from the two studies. The values of the coefficients suggest a high intensity concordance.

Comparison of the results of the perception of tourists and tour operators on the role of the stakeholders shows that the average values are higher for the second study, the differences being higher for the central administration (0.22), the professional tourism organizations (0.2), tourists and the local population (0.19), and the business environment (0.18), average for international, global or regional organizations (0.14) and the academic and scientific environment (0.14), respectively small in the appreciation of local governance (0.07).

As rank ordering is the same in both studies, there is a perfect concordance in this respect.

It is also possible to make an appreciation of the extent to which the tourists and tour operators perceive their role in relation to the results of the two studies.

It is noted that both tourists and tour operators consider that tourists, alongside the local population, have a more important role than the business environment in the sustainable development of coastal

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Table 22. Comparative assessment of the characteristics of sustainable tourism development

Dimension	Characteristic	Tourists	Business Environment
Economic dimension	Balanced economic development, through quality, not through quantity	4.28	4.19
	Higher capitalization of resources/tourist areas	4.22	4.39
	Low unemployment	3.57	3.59
	High competitiveness	3.91	3.88
	Balanced income distribution	3.57	3.69
Socio-human dimension	Respect for the next generations, tourists and the local community	4.21	4.35
	Cultural Identity	3.91	4.15
	Equal Opportunities/ Avoidance of Discrimination	3.55	3.76
	Unique Experiences for Visitors	3.86	4.25
	High Quality of Life for the Local Community	3.94	4.01
Ecological dimension	Tourism activities with low influence	3.63	3.74
	Optimal arrangement of the territory	4.03	4.15
	High weight of niche tourism	3.55	3.65
	Reduced seasonality	3.40	3.58
	Forms of alternative tourism	3.69	3.71
Institutional-technological dimension	Research, development, and innovation in tourism	4.04	4.07
	Collaboration and Communication between Policy Makers and Implementation Factors	4.22	4.38
	Close Link between Business and Social Partners	4.10	4.11
	Free and Fast Access to Information	4.22	4.33
	Modern Technology Applied in Tourism	4.06	4.20*

Source: table computed by the authors based on tables 6 și 17

Note: * It was considered the weighted average of the variable at group level.

Table 23. Correlation of the ranks of the characteristics of sustainable tourism development

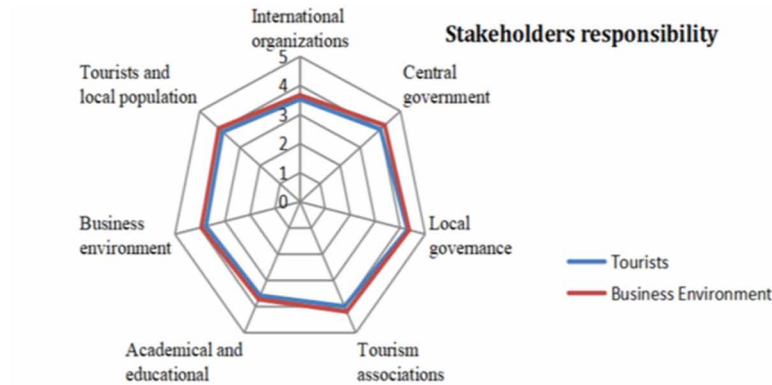
Rank Correlation Coefficients	Value	Sig. Value
Spearman	0.862	0.000
Kendall	0.702	0.000

Source: table computed by the authors based on table 22.

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Figure 1. Responsibility of stakeholders in the sustainable development of tourism

Source: by authors, based on research results



tourism. Moreover, tourists assess their role as in a very large extent important in the area concerned, while tour operators consider themselves responsible in a large extent. However, in the context where average scores from tour operator ratings are superior to those from tourists survey, the average score for tour operators (3.94) is higher for tourists (3.86).

By comparing the average scores for each of the directions of action or the measures selected in the study, there can be drawn some conclusions:

- For all variables, the average score resulted from study number 2 was superior to the average score resulted from the first study:
 - With values above 0.35 for the perception of the contribution of *policies and strategies* on sustainable development of tourism (0.39), the role of *tourism diversification* (0.38), the importance of *collaboration and regional cooperation strategies* in the Black Sea (0, 36) and the need for a favourable *legislative framework* (0.35).
 - With values between 0.20 and 0.30 in the assessment of the arrangement - rearrangement of the coastal territory (0.25) and the improvement of the *basic infrastructure* (0.23).
 - With differences below 0.20 for the other options, the lowest being recorded in terms of encouraging and *supporting young entrepreneurs* (0.04).

Table 24. Opinions on the role of tourists and tour operators in the sustainable development of tourism

Study	Indicator	Business Environment	Tourists and Local Population
1. Tourists	Average	3.76	3.86
	Module	Large extent	Very large extent
2. Tour operators	Average	3.94	4.05
	Module	Large extent	Very large extent

Source: computed by the authors based on research results

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- *Improving the quality of tourism services* (4.51, and 4.59) and *improving the basic infrastructure* (4.37 and 4.60 respectively) would contribute to the sustainable development of tourism in coastal areas, according to both studies.
- The development of *local action groups* would have the lowest relative impact (3.83 and 3.98), according to both studies. Additionally, in the case of study on tourists the lowest score was obtained by *the collaboration and cooperation between the coastal countries* of the Black Sea (3.80) and in the second study by the supporting *public-private partnerships* (3.99).

The concordance between the results of the two studies was tested by calculating the Spearman and Kendall correlation coefficients.

The value of the coefficients confirms that there is a correlation between the classifications based on the average scores recorded by the variables investigated in the two studies.

Table 25. Comparative assessment of measures for the sustainable development of tourism

Measure	Tourists	Business Environment
Arrangement/ rearrangement	4.24	4.49
Improving the basic infrastructure	4.37	4.60
Increasing the quality of services	4.51	4.59
Diversification of the offer for the tourists	4.01	4.39
Adequate legislative framework	3.96	4.31
Policies and strategies	4.07	4.46
Public-private partnerships	3.86	3.99
Supporting young entrepreneurs	3.98	4.02
Increasing the access to information	3.90	4.06
Accountability and education	4.13	4.25
Collaboration / countries joint coastal strategies	3.80	4.16
Groups for local action	3.83	3.98

Source: computed by the authors based on the tables 10 and 21

Table 26. Correlation of the ranks of measures for the sustainable development of tourism in coastal areas

Coefficients of Ranking Correlation	Value	Sig. Value
Spearman	0.846	0.001
Kendall	0.697	0.002

Source: table computed by the authors

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CONCLUSIONS ON THE DIMENSIONS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND LINES OF ACTION FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE COASTAL AREAS

The sustainable development of tourism in coastal areas implies a balance between its dimensions - economic, ecological, socio-human, institutional-technological - a hypothesis confirmed by the average values, the frequency and the distribution of the answers in the studied studies.

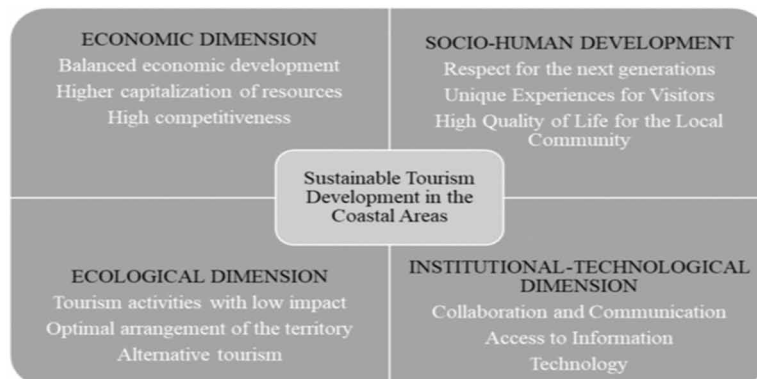
Sustainable economic development of tourism in coastal areas implies a balance between quality and quantity and the superior capitalization of natural, anthropic, financial and human resources. The socio-human approach to the sustainable development of tourism is identified primarily with respect for future generations, but also within the generation and, in a specific sense, between the host population and visitors. The ecological side of tourism development is based on elements of territory arrangement and adaptation by rearranging tourist areas in order to establish a balance with the natural environment. The technological and institutional dimension of the sustainability of tourism is characterized by information, communication and collaboration of all categories interested and involved in the tourism industry. Specifically, the sustainable development of tourism in coastal areas is the result of the interaction of four dimensions:

The sustainable development of tourism in coastal areas implies the careful qualitative valorisation of resources, respecting the principles of tourism development and based on relations of respect, communication and information, collaboration and cooperation among all interest groups.

One of the principles of sustainable development, “Think global, act local”, is confirmed by the results of studies: local governance has the primary responsibility for sustainable tourism development in coastal areas. The integrated approach to sustainable development is supported by the close average scores achieved by different stakeholders: central government, professional organizations, business environment and the population - tourists and locals. Also, the contribution of international organizations or the academic environment is not negligible.

The twelve lines of action -priorities for sustainable development of tourism in the coastal areas- assessed in the studies confirm the general assumption that a concerted effort and complex and related measures are needed to generate sustainable development. Analyzing both the average scores and the rankings of the two studies, it can be drawn up a short list of the main categories of actions:

Figure 2. Dimensions of sustainable tourism development in coastal areas
 Source: by the authors on the basis of research



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- *Increasing the quality of tourism services and improving the basic infrastructure.*
- *Elaboration and implementation of coherent strategies and policies, arrangement and rearrangement of tourist destinations and diversification of the offers for tourists.*
- *Creating a legislative framework conducive to sustainable development and educating and empowering tourists and local population.*
- *Increasing access to information, supporting young entrepreneurs and regional cooperation.*
- *Establishing, developing and supporting public-private partnerships and local action groups.*

These lines of action can be considered as it follows: *general* - designing a legislative framework and strategies and policies to support sustainable development, cooperation between coastal countries, and forms of public-private partnership; *specific* - improving the infrastructure, arranging and refurbishing the territory, diversifying and increasing the quality of tourism services; and *complementary* - encouraging young entrepreneurs, increasing access to information, setting up local action groups, and educating and empowering tourists. These measures and directions can be taken locally, especially those specific and complementary, or at national level - general actions.

The tourists' and tour operators' differences of perception in relation to the dimensions, responsibilities and directions of sustainable tourism development in coastal areas may be valuable for policy-makers.

Regarding the assumptions of the research verified by statistical methods, there are no significant differences between the categories of tour operators regarding the studied subject. Also, there is a concordance between the perceptions of the consumers and the tenderers regarding the characteristics of sustainable development, responsibilities and actions for generating it.

As a limitation of the research, we assume that the study are undertaken in the coastal areas of the Black Sea and the surveys were conducted only in one country. The research has generated possible future directions for study: the comparative analysis of the perception of the tourists and the local community in relation to tourism and its sustainable development, descriptive and causal researches setting out the responsibilities of each stakeholder on different directions of action, researches to determine how we can measure and assess the level and progress of sustainable development of tourism in relation to its size.

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ Non-parametric test to test the existence of statistically significant differences, used for ordinal data.
- ² For the InTh5 variable, the null hypothesis is rejected, so there are significant differences in the appreciation of the importance of the “Modern Technology Applied in Tourism” feature among the categories of respondents (travel agencies, hotels).
- ³ We limit this comparative approach as indicative due to the differences in representativeness between the two studies. Thus, the number of study participants was 311, of which 226 (72%) as tourists and 85 (28%) as representatives of the business environment.

Chapter 5

Mountain Tourism at the Beginning of the 21st Century

Mihail Ovidiu Tanase

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7101-2485>

The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania

Liliana Nicodim

University Ovidius Constanta, Romania

ABSTRACT

The 1990s represent the starting point for a lot of changes not only in tourism but in the whole economy of any EEC. Before that, Eastern European countries had similar tourism developments with some differences between the types of mountain development due to some specificities according to the national policies of the sector. A short overview of the mountain tourism current situation is presented in the beginning. The tourism market is a very challenging one with rapid changes due to shifts in customers' preferences, new technologies, seasonality. The authors also presented the latest trends in mountain tourism in terms of supply and demand. The possibilities for future mountain tourism development in Romania are presented at the end of the chapter starting from the results of the previous analyses. Some of them are specific for Romania, but others can be applied to all mountain destinations (with or without minor adjustments).

INTRODUCTION

The end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s produce a lot of geopolitical changes in the central and eastern part of Europe. First, it was Germany reunification which can be considered a starting point in all the changes that followed. Czechoslovakia divided into Czech Republic and Slovakia. Yugoslavia, after an internal war divided into several countries. Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia as well as Ukraine, Moldavia and Belarus emerge on the ashes of former USSR. Together with Romania, Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary, and Albania we have a complete geopolitical frame of East European Countries (EEC). Greece

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was part of the Western Bloc so she had a different level of development throughout the years and will not be taken into consideration in this analysis.

Carpathian Mountains, Dinaric Alps and Balkan Mountains layout the foundation for mountain tourism in Eastern Europe. Due to their position on the map, most of the EEC have possibilities to develop mountain tourism. But what is the best direction for the development of mountain tourism in these countries? Which are the advantages they have and how can they increase their appeal both within their own borders and abroad? These are the questions for which we will try to provide a response starting from a careful analysis of the current situation.

BACKGROUND

Mountain tourism importance resides in many aspects. Mountains cover 24% of the world's land surface and households around 12% of world's population. In terms of number of tourists, mountains are second only to islands and coasts, generating around 15-20% of the annual global tourism. Mountains are also an important source of fresh water, food, hydroelectricity, timber and mineral resources. (UNEP, 2007)

But mountains are also fragile ecosystems. The impact of the direct factors manifests itself on several components of the environment: water, fauna, soils and vegetation, rocks, landscapes and it consists of: discharging waste water directly into rivers without prior decontamination, the increase of constructions of any kind (ski slopes, residential area, roads, tourist accommodation units) leading to deforestation and soil erosion, disruption of natural habitats for various species of animals and birds, changes in migration patterns, husking and fragmentation of forest areas, noise, etc. The indirect factors, associated with the general infrastructures and additional services, also have a negative impact on components of the environment. Due to the shape of the landform, in mountain areas the traffic is concentrated in the valleys of the slopes generating traffic jams, noise and pollution. By congestion, height level inadequacy, failure to observe the local architecture standards, the use of certain building materials and painting colours, the buildings contribute to the degradation of the overall image of an area. Exogenous factors increase the climate changes and their impact on the mountain areas and not only on them. By the year 2100, the experts' forecasts estimate a global temperature increase of 2-3 degrees Celsius all over the world. Unlike other ecosystems, mountain species are more sensitive to climate change due to the fact that there are several sub-types of climate in an altitude-dependent bunk. Due to these circumstances, ecosystems at high altitudes will suffer most from the disappearance of alpine landscape areas and from the migration to higher altitude of plant and animal species from lower areas.

Under these conditions, the overall picture of mountain tourism is outlined in most EEC destinations that have had a rapid development in the period after the 1990s. These resulted in concentration of the offer in certain areas and buildings with a questionable framing from the legal point of view. Without taking into account the accommodation capacity of the destination or the access roads, we are now in the situation in which there is overcrowding, especially during weekends and during the tourist seasons.

MOUNTAIN TOURISM IN EEC

In terms of types of activity, mountain areas can accommodate facilities for summer and winter sports. But facilities for winter sports are a good indicator of tourism attractiveness and tourism development.

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We present a brief comparison in table 1 by showing the number of ski resorts, the overall length and total number of ski lifts. There are 3 major players: Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia, followed by another 5 countries with around 250 km of slopes (Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Slovenia and Ukraine). The last 10 countries in this analysis present modest facilities for winter sports and scarce natural resources for mountain tourism.

Compared to western countries supply, EEC has a modest supply for winter sports. For example, France has 10100 km of slopes and 3166 ski lifts, Austria 7197 km of slopes and 2539 lifts, Italy 5841 km of slopes and 1805 lifts, Switzerland 7073 km of slopes and 1820 ski lifts. The total offer of Central and Eastern European countries is below the offer of any other country with winter tourism tradition. The situation is similar from the comparison perspective of the largest resort offer. If in EEC there is only one offer from a single company, in the western area, there are vast skiing areas with hundreds of kilometres of ski slopes. Due to their geographic position, some of these are located in cross-border areas. For example, Les 3 Vallees area offers a total of 600 km of ski slopes and 139 ski lifts. Similar situations can be found in Austria (Ski Arlberg with 306 km of slopes and 200 km of ski routes, and 88 ski lifts), Switzerland - France (Les Portes du Soleil with over 580 km of slopes and 172 lifts), Italy - France (Via Lattea with 400 km of slopes and 63 lifts available).

In terms of number of slopes and lifts provided it's a similar situation, with several countries in Europe that concentrate more than 75% of the total supply for winter sports.

In this situation, how can an EEC compete on winter sports market? Mountains in EEC countries have lower altitudes, which limits the development possibilities for winter sports. This is the first and the most important aspect to be taken into account in a comparative analysis. It is difficult to provide a correct answer but it should be taken into account that the number of skiers is increasing throughout Europe and especially in the central and eastern countries. Vanat (2019) estimates that the EEC area, alongside the Asian area, has potential for growth as it represents a 35% from the total number of skiers but contributes only with 25% of the number of winter sports practicing tourists. Most of their supply in winter sports in mountain tourism addresses national demand and neighbouring countries. Cross-border journeys on medium and long distances are uncommon for practicing winter sports (see Table 2). Under these circumstances, any development of new facilities for practicing winter sports in the EEC countries should target the domestic development potential and less the international winter sports practicing tourists.

It is well known that tourism is highly dependent on weather for almost any type of tourism. Mountain tourism due to some peculiarities adds climate and natural landscapes is a nature-based type of tourism. Mountains as fragile ecosystems are the most vulnerable to climate change. The impact of climate change over the mountain areas will reduce the attractiveness for winter sports in relation to natural snow reliability and technical snow reliability (Amelung & Moreno, 2009). Increase of temperatures and changes in precipitation pattern influence negatively the number of days suitable for outdoor winter sports. Several studies show a decrease in number of days with snow. SEATM (2004), measuring annual number of days with snow in Col de Porte (France) for 1960 to 2003, observe a 25 days with snow decrease. Also, an increase in temperature by 1.8°C will shorten the snow season, for locations at 1500 meters, by 40 days. For Austria (Hantel et al., 2000), a 1°C rise in temperature may reduce snow season by about 4 weeks due to low-lying locations of ski resorts.

After this analysis, it can be said that winter sports should not be a priority in the development of mountain resorts in the EEC. Specific seasonality and the short ski season are additional factors that support this allegation. Climate change will put additional pressure on mountain areas. Under these circumstances, the diversification of the leisure offer all through the year should be a priority. And

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Table 1. Distribution of ski resorts in EEC

Country	Number of Ski Resorts	Total Length (km)	Ski Lifts	Largest Ski Resort		
				Slopes Length	Ski Lifts	Name
Belarus	4	7.2	10	3.6	2	Logoisk
Bosnia and Herzegovina	17	94	55	25	11	Jahorina
Bulgaria	20	200	82	58	13	Borovets
Croatia	10	19	18	6	4	Platak
Czech Republic	299	691	907	29.4	14	Klinovec
Estonia	6	4.7	19	2	8	Kuutse Hill
Greece	24	197	122	36	17	Mount Parnassos
Hungary	14	35	53	8	8	Sáréna Eplény
Latvia	16	17	73	5	16	Riekstu Kalns
Lithuania	11	7.8	28	2	10	Liepkalnis
North Macedonia	8	48	31	25	14	Mavrovo
Montenegro	7	25	18	14	6	Kolašin 1450
Poland	258	493	689	37	11	Szczyrk
Romania	94	204	150	18	9	Sinaia
Serbia	26	95	71	55	23	Kopaonik
Slovakia	127	474	529	44.5	22	JasnaNizke Tatry
Slovenia	49	273	193	41.5	22	Mariborsko - Pohorje
Ukraine	48	184	105	68	16	Bukovel

Source: own computation based on data available at skiresort.info (www.skiresort.info)

this development should be complementary to the natural resources of the destination. A list of leisure activities is presented in table no. 3.

Apart from the diversity of the offer throughout the year, within the new tourist offer, it is necessary to introduce the concept of sustainability as a guarantee of the activity continuity. Sustainable development of tourism is a widely cover topic by several organizations and a lot of scientists. Jurigová and Lencséssová, (2015), after an extended literature review concluded that sustainable tourism development

Table 2. Main flows at European level for skiing

Inbound Country	Outbound Country				
	Germany	United Kingdom	Netherlands	Belgium	Switzerland
Austria	1	6	5		9
France		3	7	8	
Italy	2	10			
Switzerland	4				

Source: Vanat, 2019

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Table 3. List of mountain sports and recreational activities

Snow/Ice Centred	Snowboarding; Skiing; Snow shoeing; Tobogganing; Downhill racing; Ice skating; Cross country skiing; Ski jumping; Ice hockey; Curling;
In the air	Paragliding; Cliff jumping; Gliding; Hang-gliding; Micro-lighting; parachuting; Skydiving; Bungee jumping;
Water based	Kayaking; Scuba diving; Water skiing; White water rafting; Canyoning; Sailing;
Nature focus	Wild flower viewing; Birding; Camping; Wildlife viewing; Hiking;
Motorized	Motorcycling; Quad bike scrambling; Off road driving; Snowmobile driving;
Climbing	Abseiling; Mountain climbing;
Other	Hunting; Caving; Dog sledding; Orienteering; Via Ferrata wilderness experiences

Source: Prideaux, B. (2009). Resort destinations.

stands on three pillars: economic benefits for tourism destination defined as economic efficiency, well-being of local residents defined as corporate social responsibility and minimal environmental impacts defined as environmental sustainability.

Mountain Tourism Supply and Demand in Romania

The analysis of the statistical data for Romania, in particular, but also for the other countries, presents difficulties due to the pursued indicators in the national statistics and the type of aggregating the data. The statistical data for Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia, some of the main competitors in mountain tourism in EEC, are not available for mountain tourism as type of destination. A similar situation is also found in Bulgaria, the country that is Romania’s main competitor for mountain and seaside tourism. Theirs Institutes of Statistics aggregate data in a way that makes impossible to compare data with those available for Romania. The data are for counties and cities. Only Slovenia has similar statistical indicators. A brief evolution of Romania mountain tourism is presented in table 4 through some statistical data.

For the presented period, Romania and Slovenia recorded decreases in the average duration of the stay both for the total tourism and for mountain tourism. Regarding the general tourism situation in both countries, mountain tourism is less attractive than other forms of tourism. Two nights, namely 2.5 nights for the average duration of the stay shows a poor capitalization of resources or an insufficient tourist attractions development. Tourists who choose the mountain have little leisure choices.

Also, a constant increase in the number of tourist accommodation units, arrivals and overnight stays, is registered for both countries. But the similarities stop here. For the year 2018, in the mountain tourism Slovenia has 32% in the number of tourist accommodation units, 30% in total arrivals and 29% in overnight stays. For the same indicators, Romania recorded lower values. With a certain limit due to different data recording methodologies, it can be argued that mountain tourism in both analysed countries has an evolution below the national average. Differences may be due to methodological differences in the recording of statistical data. Many of Romania’s spa resources are located in mountain areas. And national statistics record similar indicators (number of units, arrivals, overnight stays, available capacity) for spa tourism. A map of the spa and ski resorts in Romania can be seen in Figure 1. As it can be seen more than 75% of the spa resorts overlap the mountain area, making it hard to differentiate, at least from the statistical point of view, between the mountain and the spa tourism. From the evolution perspective, some of them have developed facilities for winter sports and some mountain resorts, especially

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Table 4. Mountain tourism evolution in Romania and Slovenia

		2010		%	2015		%	2018		%
		Total	Mountain		Total	Mountain		Total	Mountain	
Romania	Tourists accommodation units	5222	1038	19.88	6821	1822	26.71	8453	2374	28.08
	Arrivals of tourists	6072757	814973	13.42	9921874	1528583	15.41	12905131	2217110	17.18
	Tourists overnights	16051135	1772859	11.05	23519340	3258394	13.85	28644742	4544949	15.87
	Average length of stay	2.6	2.2		2.4	2.1		2.2	2.0	
	Occupancy (number of beds) (%)	25.2	17.5		28.7	20.4		32.2	24.6	
Slovenia	Tourists accommodation units	1298	427	32.90	1400	446	31.86	1469	481	32.74
	Arrivals of tourists	3299537	856768	25.97	4373878	1196576	27.36	5933266	1773461	29.89
	Tourists overnights	9883920	2401798	24.30	11653764	2982084	25.59	15694705	4489094	28.60
	Average length of stay	3.0	2.8		2.7	2.5		2.6	2.5	

Source: own computation based on data available at <https://www.stat.si/statweb/en/home> and <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/>

superior category hotels, have integrated wellness products into their offer, thus promoting them less as independent tourist attractions.

International Mountain Tourism Trends

8th World Congress on Snow and Mountain Tourism held in Andorra-La Vella in 2014 had some interesting conclusions about the new trends in mountain summer tourism (UNWTO, 2014):

- An ongoing shift from mass tourism to multi-niche tourism.
- Growing demand for nature near mountain sports and wellness areas.
- Internalization of mountain tourism.

Main conclusions of the 9th World Congress on Snow and Mountain Tourism (UNWTO, 2016) states the following:

Figure 1. Distribution of spa and ski resorts in Romania

Source: <http://www.contur-travel.ro/harta-balneo.html> and <https://www.i-tour.ro/harta-interactiva-partii-schi-romania/>



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- An increase interest for sport and adventure tourism.
- Restates the importance of health tourism (medical and wellness).
- Tourism is about special moments and emotional experiences.
- Fast IT development offers new possibilities for information, personalization and mobile experiences.

The 10th World Congress on Snow and Mountain Tourism (UNWTO, 2018), in the technical conclusion paper identifies new directions for mountain tourism:

- **Authenticity:** For accommodation units, for tourism products, by using local materials, architecture, food and local habits.
- **Experiences:** Unique and authentic.
- **Innovation:** Smart tourism destinations.
- **Quality:** Considered the main goal of the future for mountain tourism.

Stravs Podlogar (2019) at 4th UNWTO Euro-Asian Mountain Tourism Conference - The Future of Mountain Tourism presented the development directions for Slovenia mountain tourism: green scheme of Slovenian tourism, sustainable development, product development and 5* experiences, unique experiences. The key products are: holidays in the mountains, sports tourism, outdoor, business meetings and events. All this products are concentrated over the concept of year-round business with a balance between leisure and business segment.

Health tourism defined as medical and wellness tourism is another growing segment of which mountain areas can benefit over a long term. Global Wellness Institute (GWI, 2018) estimated for wellness tourism a growth rate of 6.5% for 2015-2017 which is more than double the growth rate (3.2%) for tourism overall. Wellness tourism market is estimated at 639\$ billion and 830 million trips. Health tourism has the advantage of an increased independence from weather conditions and can be an alternative to windy rainy days or abundant snowfall that limit the possibilities of movement and outdoor activities.

Nowadays it can be seen an increase in cultural tourism. Mountain areas, due to relatively difficult accessibility, are the keepers of traditions. And especially of intangible ones: customs, traditions, folk crafts and folkloric festivals. In an estimated market of about \$ 1 trillion, on an upward trend, cultural tourism can help to diversify the mountain tourism offers, especially for periods when, due to weather conditions, activities cannot take place outdoors.

Culinary tourism has a greater independence from the natural conditions. Visiting traditional products farms, even if it is more enjoyable on a sunny day, can offer a similar experience on foggy or extreme temperature days.

Starting from the concept of year-round tourism, integration of many forms of tourism, according to the local resources, will lead to unique offers for mountain destinations. Integrating the activities and attractions of spa tourism, rural tourism, agritourism, gourmet tourism, adventure tourism with (winter or summer) sports practicing can be the key to future mountain development. This integration of multiple activities offers a number of advantages to the said destinations (Nistoreanu & Tanase, 2008):

- Better capitalization of all categories of resources.
- Better results through local cooperation and participation actions.

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- Individualization of destinations and increasing attractiveness by combining different factors of production with the existing resources.
- Sustainable development of tourist destinations.
- Creating a unique image through architectural, “local colour”, authentic values.

At least in EEC countries, the mountain tourism offers the ideal setting for the application of integrated tourism as a complex form of tourism destination development. The small dimensions of the destinations, the relatively easy access due to the heights and the intra-mountain corridors, the cultural values slightly altered by the consumer economy and the natural resources create the ideal framework for the development of unique tourist products, different from the major tourist developments in Western Europe. Except for destinations with a higher level of development in the winter sports area, many of the other destinations may target a different pattern to provide a counterweight to the offer of the first mentioned ones.

PROPOSALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF MOUNTAIN TOURISM IN ROMANIA

Starting from the international experience and the current trends, we believe that the opinion on the development of mountain tourism must change from the current situation focused on the development of new ski facilities. Besides the increased seasonality and the dependence on weather conditions (rain and snow falls and temperatures), they also have a negative impact due to inevitable deforestations. Mountain tourism has to attract tourists throughout the year and not just for the weekend (remember the average stay of 2 nights). In order for this to grow, it is necessary to develop the leisure offer and to introduce permanent leisure elements that would lead to revisiting. In a brief presentation the main proposals are:

- Reconsidering the offer of spa tourism in destinations where there are natural resources.
- Integration of the area specific gastronomy in the accommodation and food units offer.
- Authenticity of the destination.
- Developing outdoor leisure facilities.

Wellness Tourism

As mentioned above, much of Romania’s spa resources overlap in the mountain areas. Under these circumstances, a number of destinations have treatment centres especially in the spa tourism area. Designing accessible procedures and educating the customers represent possible directions and also means building less new facilities. It is necessary to transfer the spa procedures from the medical area to the wellness area in order to increase the accessibility degree. Upgrading and expanding the existing ones may represent alternatives of spending the leisure time. Taking into account the increase in temperatures, mountain areas can become viable alternatives to summers spent on the coastline. Expansion of outdoor swimming pools with sunbathing options, along with various indoor facilities, can represent points of interest for mountain resorts. Under these circumstances, by combining the advantages of mountain tourism with those of the spa tourism there can be developed unique and attractive tourist products.

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Traditional Gastronomy

Mountain areas in Romania do not have high altitudes similar to the Alps and are relatively accessible due to the multitude of crossing roads. And sub-mountain areas in the immediate vicinity have contributed to the diversification of gastronomy in the high altitudes areas even though in such areas agriculture had a limited development.

Animal breeding is a traditional activity across the country, and mountain lanes represented crossing points but also animal husbandry. By processing milk, a wide variety of dairy products are obtained and of these can be regarded as traditional products: telemea cheese produced from cow's milk, sheep's milk or buffalo's milk which can be eaten fresh or matured, preserved in acidified whey brine. Specific for the mountain area is the smoked cheese from cow's milk and kneaded cheese preserved in the tree bark.

All meat products made in the household system can be considered traditional: sausages, black pudding sausages, smoked ham, smoked ribs, hams, meat roulade, greaves, mutton or goat dry salt meat. Moreover, the Romania mountain areas are famous for trout farms. Trout can be eaten fresh or preserved, salted or smoked.

Fruit or vegetable can also be processed to obtain jams or pickles. And every part of the country produced and still produces canned food from vegetables and fruits specific to these areas. Mountain areas stand out due to the berries (blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, cranberries), mushrooms and medicinal or aromatic plants.

Specific for the mountain area is the bread baked in large loaves (2 kg / loaf and even with a higher weight in certain areas). In some geographical areas to the bread dough, along with wheat flour there are added mashed potatoes. The traditional beverages of the mountain area are țuica and palinca - fruit-based alcoholic drinks: plums, apples, pears, quinces, etc. There can also be mentioned various berries syrups.

The mountain area gastronomy is also supported by the European certification scheme - "mountain product" launched in 2014. This European recognition has advantages for farmers and consumers because it ensures a better position on the market by certifying certain features of the products. Nowadays, Romania has 83 products registered in the National Register of Mountain Products (RNPM) being divided into the following categories: 57 - milk and dairy products; 17 - vegetables-fruits; 1 - bread and bakery products; 5 - apiculture products; 1 - fish products; 2 - meat and meat products.

The including these products in the offer of tourist accommodation units in various areas contributes to the development of the tourist experience and increases the attractiveness of the said mountain destination compared to the other mountain or national destinations.

Authenticity of the Destination

Some of the previous proposals contribute to the increase of the authenticity of the destination. But authenticity should also be found in the design of the accommodation facilities, food and leisure facilities. Harmonious integration of buildings into the landscape and harmonization with specific architecture; from this point of view the most important aspect in designing and building the new accommodation facilities and in the rehabilitation projects of the existing ones is the strict observance of the urbanism norms (Nistoreanu et al., 2009) through the following:

- Preserving the right proportions between the building and the surrounding "vital" space, namely forest, grove, mix of trees, shrubs and green space.

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- The correct orientation of the living area and of the related utilities.
- Preservation and extension of the green area, including massive planting of trees, shrubs and green areas around the buildings, and even on roofs, balconies and loggias.
- The use of specific natural resources and, if possible, of traditional building technologies to capitalize this complementary category of resources (the workforce in related areas, the natural resources of the area).

It can easily be said that the impact of a new building on the environment is minimal if it respects the directions listed above. But what matters is the aggregate impact of all new buildings, which can lead to “visual pollution” due to overcrowding, environmental pollution due to natural discharges and local population discontent due to the increase over the limits of the supportability of the tourist traffic in such areas. Under these conditions, the “vital” area must be exploited by planting even on rooftops or balconies to enhance the pleasant appearance and to gain “nature” to the “detriment” of the buildings. This cannot be done without the help of professional horticulturists for all future projections, whether they refer to the rehabilitation of existing units or to new buildings with economic destination.

Outdoor Facilities Development

The overlapping of sports activities on Romania’s natural resources has led to the identification of areas suitable for various winter and summer activities. Both seasons were taken into consideration (summer-winter). Off season periods (spring and autumn) are covered by summer activities because they do not depend on the presence of snow or on low temperatures.

Mountain biking is a tourist, sports and leisure activity that uses a bicycle built specifically for mountain conditions. Lately, this activity has grown in the preferences of Romanian tourists and is organized in various mountain areas such as: Iezer Massif, Fagaras, Postavaru, Baiului Mountains, Bucegi, Piatra Craiului and Cindrel Mountains. There is also added the possibility of practicing this on all forest roads in the mountain area.

In the beginning, climbing did not distinguish itself from mountaineering, being considered as training for the latter. By the mid-1970s, climbers invented the free climb, without the hardships of traditional climbing, whose territory is located in the high altitude mountains. Romania provides favourable conditions for both manners of rock steep exploration. For mountaineering there are designed trails in Costila-Bucegi, Postavarul, Cheile Turzii areas, climbing being practiced in areas, of which the most important are: Bicaz, Rarau, Bucegi, Rasnoavei Gorge, Zarnestilor Chasm, Oltetului Gorge, Sohodol, Ampoiului Valley, Cernei Valley.

Equestrian tourism is the set of leisure equestrian activities (for which are used trained horses) practiced by tourists, activities that are diversified according to the manner the horse is used (as driving horse or riding horse). Equestrian tourism is an asset to rural areas, with the opportunity to participate in the economic reconstruction of such territory and to revive an ancient practice. The mountain areas offer clubs for equestrian tourism in the Calimani Mountains, the Macin Mountains, the Rodna Mountains and the Apuseni Mountains.

Canyoning is a sport and leisure practice that some specialists classify as an aquatic sport, while others treat it separately. At first it was technically divided between rafting and caving, consisting in the crossing, descending canyons, that is to say, the mountain water courses bordered by steep walls. The

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main national destinations for practicing this adventure sport are: Valea Seaca (Hasmas Mountains), Cerna Valley, Sipotului Valley (Valcan Mountains), Trascau Mountains, Rodnei Mountains.

Rafting is a sport derived from water sports on steady or flowing water (kayak, canoe, inflatable boats, etc.), but it is practiced in fast mountain waters. The mountains of Romania, thanks to their water courses, offer many opportunities for practicing this sport. The most important areas are the rivers: Jiu (Livezeni-Bumbești Jiu area), Crisul Repede (Bratca-Vadu Crisului), Crisul Pietros (Beius-Pietroasa), Cerna, Buzau (Nehoiu-Patarlagele), Mures and Bistrita.

The most practiced of the air sports is paragliding (three quarters of people who like these sports) to the detriment glider, an older sport whose learning conditions and costs are less favourable. The “aerological” conditions are the only conditions to be met (Dienot & Theiller, 1999). However, this activity develops slowly because it has to overcome the barriers imposed by risk, cost, time and especially by the practice space. In Romania this sport that has recorded a “boom” in different areas, such as: Bunloc (Brasov County) Poiana Brasov, Vatra Dornei, Borsa, Balea or massifs (Ceahlau, Parang, Piatra Craiului, Cindrel, Rasnoavei Gorge).

To these sports is added hiking. This activity has just begun to regain its past appeal. It is mostly practiced by townspeople and those who most feel the need to enjoy natural landscapes and to rediscover a simpler way of life. The mountain areas of Romania offer wide possibilities, in all mountain ranges, for practicing hiking on marked paths, forest roads or in unfamiliar areas.

Alpine skiing (on slopes) is the main form of mountain sports tourism in the winter season in most countries (including Romania). Romania offers numerous resorts for alpine skiing, of which the most important, from the specific infrastructure point of view are the following: Poiana Brasov, Sinaia, Predeal, Straja, Muntele Mic, Borsa.

Roller skiing involves climbing snow covered slopes on skis, advancing on flats areas and skiing down slopes with various degrees of difficulty at the tourists’ choice. The national mountain areas that are suitable for this sport are Bucegi, Postavarul and Fagaras Mountains.

Cross-country skis are rarely found in all mountain areas. It is appropriate to distinguish between light-weight cross-country skiing for active relaxation and rest, through areas with small difference of altitude levels, and cross-country skiing as a performance sports. Specially designed cross-country ski slopes exist in Predeal, Gradistei-Fundata Gorge, Azuga, Straja, Piatra Arsa, Sovata, Vatra Dornei.

Extreme skiing is a spectacular activity, especially in the steep areas of high mountain tops. The suitable destinations for practicing this sport are: Sinaia, Balea, Busteni.

Snowboarding is a relatively new sport that has conquered little by little the young people, who find it more attractive than skiing, which for some represent an “old-fashion” sport. So-called “snowparks” are built in most European winter resorts, meaning spaces reserved for those eager for thrills, including specially designed slopes. In foreign literature (Bouchet & LeBrun, 2009) it is stated that snowboarders reinvented the original skiing by rediscovering skiing practices. This sport can be practiced on all ski slopes, but specially designed areas with trampolines exist at Cavnic and Harghita Bai.

“Rockets” hiking has devolved in recent years, even if the activity is new, due to the equipment used. “Rockets” hiking are winter mountain hiking on mountains peaks covered by a thick layer of snow. In Romania there are possibilities for practicing this sport in the Bucegi Mountains, Bicz Gorge, Cavnic.

Ice climbing includes both climbs on classic ice flanks and extremely difficult technical climbs. Suitable areas for this activity are sufficient in areas where water falls have an adequate flow and can freeze in winter due to low temperatures, thus in mountain areas above a certain altitude or in other cold areas.

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Suitable areas in Romania are found in Busteni (artificial structures) or natural, at Rachitele, Balea, Olt Valley or Bicz Gorges.

Caving is a form of mixed tourism that can be practiced both in summer and winter time. Practicing caving is a sport discipline whose main purpose is the discovery and exploration of small caves, wild caves or wholes. The special equipment is essential for the success of such an action. There are over 12,500 caves in Romania, of which over 95% are in the Carpathian Mountains (Glavan, 1995). 14 of them were designed for tourists' access and most were electrified. The most famous and visited caves (Ursilor and Dambovicioara) each year receive between 50000 and 70000 visitors and estimates indicate approximately 300 thousand tourists visit the 14 main caves.

Mountain areas offer, through natural resources, multiple possibilities for leisure. The difference between a successful destination and a less attractive one is represented by the materialization of the tourist offer in accommodation units, food and leisure activities appealing for an optimal customer segment. Establishing action directions for tourism in general and for mountain tourism in particular must start from the existing natural and anthropogenic resources. Identifying them, their appeal and physical state is the first step in the development of tourism.

Due to its size, the domestic market offers a large number of potential customers, and knowing their needs and their expectations from the tourist offer is the second stage. Without an offer-oriented development, mainly for Romanian tourists there can be expect an increase in competitiveness on foreign markets. Based on the expressed needs and the opinion of the Romanian tourists, a long term strategy can be developed. The mountain area in our country has a wide range of natural and anthropic resources that offer the possibility to practice several forms of tourism. Under these circumstances, it is necessary in each area to identify the main shape to which two, three complementary forms can be added; this will ensure a differentiation of both on offer and destination, reducing the danger of competitiveness between our national tourist destinations.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation starts with an analysis of the current mountain tourism situation. Some influence (climate) factors are global and others have a national or regional application. The presentation of trends in mountain tourism offers a possible future situation of the targeted factor. But the trends are not predictions as they cannot be 100% correct. The multitude of influence factors, the interconnections between the various elements of tourism are elements that can change the future trends other than those already identified. The general issues identified within the trends must be materialized in concrete actions. But faulty or poor quality materialization will have the opposite effect to the desired one.

Under these conditions, the presented proposals are possible concrete directions for the development of the mountain tourism offer. But the ways of future application and management remain at the choice of the decision makers in the tourist areas. Their choice will also be based on the available natural, financial and human resources and the interest for future ways of development.

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Chapter 6

The Chinese Incoming Segment: Opportunity for the Central and Eastern European Market

Ana Maria Nica

The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania

ABSTRACT

The tourism domain has represented, for a long time, one of the main sources of revenue for the different destinations that have awarded a special focus to its development and enrichment. Its types of impacts, whether economic, social, or environmental, bring both great benefits and pose a certain level of risk. Regardless of the latter, people will be always willing to travel to get to know new cultures, and there will always be competition between destinations at the time of attracting and maintaining tourism flows. The last decades have been marked by the emergence of a new tourist flow (i.e., the Chinese outbound segment), which brings great economic potential to the Central and Eastern Europe region. To this end, this chapter focuses on presenting the current situation of the presence of the Chinese segment within CEE and some of the specificities of their tourist consumer behavior.

INTRODUCTION

The evolution of tourism in the last decade transformed this activity step by step and to an increasing extent, from an alternative of spending free time to a complex industry, with economic and social effects, outlined on the human community.

In the current context of world economic development, there is an increase in the number of participants to the touristic movement, but also in the number of countries, amplifying its contribution to social economic development and claiming, at the same time, adaptations to the new requirements of the tourist clientele. Therefore, it is all about the promotion and development of tourism forms that meet specific needs of well-defined market segments, like youth tourism, business tourism, ecotourism etc.

The chapter starts by presenting a general overview on tourism, its forms and importance within the general economic framework. The following step of the chapter is aimed at providing an in-depth

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analysis of the Chinese outbound segment, in terms of tourism flow, tourism expenditure, and tourism expectations. The third major part of the article contains a description of the presence of the incoming Chinese tourism segment on the Central and Eastern European market.

This chapters aims at thoroughly describing the outbound segment of an emerging market of great potential – the Chinese tourists. The second main objective is to provide an overview on the presence of outbound Chinese tourists on the Central Eastern European market, with a view towards finding directions of action for the Romanian tourism stakeholders. Given the ever greater importance of the Chinese tourists, in terms of both international flows and expenditure, i.e. potential revenue for the host destinations, the incoming segment from the above mentioned country is of great benefit and should receive special focus from the Romanian authorities, agents and providers of services.

Background

Tourism is a complex socio-economic phenomenon, characteristic to the modern civilization and strongly influenced by its emerging evolution. (Minciu, 2004)

The term “tourism” corresponds to the movement of persons away from their domicile. Obviously, any definition should be precise and over the years, numerous definitions and characteristics of the tourism concept occurred. One of the first efforts from the tourism defining process belonged to Professors Hunziker and Krapf from Berne University. In 1942 they established that tourism ought to be defined as “the sum of the phenomena and relationships arising from the travel and stay of non-residents, so far as they do not lead to permanent residence and are not associated to any money making activities”. In 1973, in the United States, the National Resources Review Commission agreed that a person who travels at least 80 kilometers (only one way) could be considered a domestic tourist. 11 years later, the US Census Bureau described tourism as a tour of 100 miles at least. The Canadian government also came up with a definition that exemplified tourism as a circuit of at least 40 kilometers from the borderline of the tourist’s residence. (Neacsu et al., 2016)

Basically, the tourism concept went through a series of transformations until everyone officially agreed to a final form, one created by the World Tourism Organization and endorsed by the UN’s Statistical Commission in 1993:

Tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business or other purposes.

The dynamism and depth of transformations in all economic sectors and in the social life as defining features of contemporary evolution are reflected, among others, in changes of the economic structures, in the re-ranking of the divisions in accordance with the requests of the scientific-technical progress, with balanced exploiting of resources at full potential and increasing efficiency, with the contingency of enhancing life quality. In this context, tourism presents itself as a distinct aspect of the economy, with a higher active presence in both economic and social life, with an important engagement in general progress and not least of all, as an element of sustainable development and also as a promoter of the globalization process. (Minciu, 2005)

Tourism represents an economic and social phenomenon of the present day civilization, strongly anchored within the lifestyles of the society and in a relation of interconnection with it. Thereby, the trends registered in the world economy evolvement, both the positive ones manifested through increased

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production by means of general welfare, international exchanges development, amplified cooperation between states and industrialization, along with negative ones for instance crises or times of economic recession, inflation, poverty and unemployment growth, or all sorts of environmental damages have, undoubtedly, influenced tourism activity either quantitatively or structurally, stimulating travel and modifying their spatial orientation.

Also (Wang et al., 2010), the fact that tourism addresses large sections of the population, fully responding to its physical and non-material needs, has been represented by the tourist traffic intensification, implying one of the top evolutions regarding growth. In contrast, through its vastness and complexity, tourism has a large natural, material and human impact, with profound implications on the dynamics of the economy and society, on international relations.

Tourism thus presents itself as a complex activity with a multitude of facets, with significant economic load, all of this being contemplated in the assortment of points of view with regard to the content of the tourism notion and the adjacent perceptions.

Among the reasons that make the persons today to move from their place of residence in order to visit a locality, area or country, or to spend time in the middle of nature, are: the need for relaxation, physical rest or especially mental rest, reconditioning; the need to escape from the polluted urban environment and from the rhythm of more and more intense daily activities, the need for entertainment, fun or leisure, experience the “new”; the desire to know the beauties of an area, countries or culture, their traditions, their arts; health care oriented trips, etc. All these reasons summed up design the tourist motivation.

Whilst ample researches have now been conducted in regards to the tourists effects on the locals, rather less are offered to give information about how locals influence the tourists in return.

Tourists experience (Yu & Weiler, 2013) three stages when they try to adapt to the local community of their vacation environment. First, the tourists get excited by the surroundings and the freshness of the place. Later on, a second stage is occurs when the tourists become somehow disappointed and also more critical when it comes to the environment, as they get used to the situation and accommodate.

Lastly, the tourists learn to adapt. By doing so, experiencing a re-entry crisis may be common, meaning it becomes quite difficult get familiarized again to their home atmosphere when they go back.

Studies that examine the extent to which the attitudes tourists develop before traveling affect their adaptability and also if travel improve the understanding process between the hosts and visitors or if it only reinforces certain stereotypes.

Many say that if one travels with the hope and confidence of positive experiences, one will experience them. The relationship between the host and the tourist but from the tourist’s perspective is much harder to explore, however.

Due to an increase in traveling, a phenomenon called “second home abroad” occurred. This phenomenon led to all sorts of desires, especially the desire to possess homes in attractive resorts all around the globe, the Mediterranean region being a favorite.

A survey conducted in England by the officials, showed that over 200,000 residents owned second homes outside the UK territory in 2016. Other studies oppose and suggest that the British own over 500,000 homes in France only.

Usually the tourists are willing to blend in and even to learn the language of the locals and in these cases, almost no conflicts exist. But there is the situation where larger groups of persons acquire properties in smaller regions of a foreign country and they try to bring in their home values, customs, or anything familiar for them. For the host countries this could sabotage the traditional lifestyles. (Wang et al., 2010)

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There are also situations when these homes are simply purchased with the purpose of renting them to national or other.

A tourist destination can be represented by any territorial-administrative unit (country, region within a country, city, village, resort or other area) whose economy is dependent on the significant increase of the income from tourists, may own one or more natural and / or anthropic tourist attractions. (Neacsu et al., 2016)

Another approach shows the tourist destination as a place or geographic space where a visitor stops either for one or more nights of accommodation or for a short period of time or is the end point of the tourists' holiday, no matter if they travel for the purpose touristic or business.

The destination, its image and the way it is promoted, stimulates people to visit it, being the one that can energize the entire tourist industry.

As it is, the destinations represent the center of the tourist activities, the point of connection of many tourists.

The World Tourism Organization (2017) defines the local tourist destination as “a physical space in which a visitor spends at least one night”. It consists of tourist products for instance assistance services and different tourist attractions that potential tourists are allowed to consume and visit in a day.

Through investments and an ever-growing number of worldwide destinations, tourism turned into a core agent in the socio-economic progress by new jobs and enterprises creation, by developing the infrastructure etc.

In the last six years, tourism went through a continuous expansion and diversification and because of that it became one of the biggest and fast-enlarging economic areas in the world. Besides the all times favorite destinations of Europe and North America, a lot of fresh destinations developed.

Tourism has demonstrated uninterrupted growth through the years, in spite of some episodic shakes, unquestionably proving the sector's firmness and resilience. International tourist arrivals experienced an impressive transformation at a global scale over the past decades. Starting with 25 million \$ in 1950, in 1980 the number increased to \$278 million and it went up to \$674 million in 2000, and in 2016 it almost doubled reaching \$1,235 million. (WTO, 2017)

“International tourism receipts earned by destinations worldwide raised from US\$ 2 billion in 1950 to US\$ 104 billion in 1980 going up with US\$ 495 billion in 2000 and US\$ 1,220 billion in 2016” according to WTO, 2017.

One of the primary categories of universal trade in services is represented by tourism. Apart from the receipts obtained in destinations, in 2016 international tourism also produced the amount of US\$ 216 billion meaning exports made by international transportation services for passengers offered to non-residents, getting the value of total tourism exports up to 1.4 trillion \$. If we calculate a daily average, it would be 4 billion \$ per day.

If it is to divide in percentages the global exports regarding goods and services, the international tourism represented 7% of them in 2016. Comparing tourism and world trade, we can see that in the past five years, tourism has grown a lot faster. (WTO, 2017)

According to WTO, when it comes to top export categories worldwide, tourism gets the 3rd place, right after the chemicals and fuels industries. Also, tourism is considered the top export category for many still developing countries.

A brief analysis of travel motivations shows that satisfying the demand for tourist services takes place across different geographic areas. In these cases, local, regional (zonal) and national demand may be

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discussed. (Snak et al., 2003). From the interests of the national economy point of view, these forms of demand have a well-defined meaning.

Attracting visitors to a particular destination brings economic and social profit, both nationally and internationally.

People have different preferences in regards to purchasing decisions or while consuming a product or service and when it comes to tourism, there are no exceptions. According to their needs, necessities, preferred things, wishes, budget, motivation, people choose a certain destination.

It looks like Europe currently is still the leader, having 2 countries ranking in the first 3 places from the list, gaining the reputation as the “world’s largest source region for outbound tourism”. 48% - almost half of the international arrivals worldwide are generated by Europe. With 26% and 17%, Asia and the Pacific and the Americas are following.

WTO also analyzed the international tourist arrivals and the international tourist receipts for all the destinations. Please see below the situation of Romania concerning this data from 2010 up to 2016:

Inevitably, when people travel they spend money and sometimes they amounts of money spent hen travelling are huge. The WTO conducted a research and created a table in which they ranked the countries which spend the most in international tourism.

Taking a look at the above table, we find China sitting on the first place, being the leader of the global outbound travel. Starting with 2012 China began to climb up to the top of the list and according to WTO researches in 2016 the Chinese travelers spent US\$ 261 billion when travelling and their number of outbound travelers reached 135 million in the same year.

On the second place we find the United States with an expenditure of US\$ 124 billion, with an increase of 8% in 2016.

FORMS OF TOURISM

There are many different forms of tourism. The tourist typology can be defined by the specific aspect of the combination of the services that make up the tourist product and the way it is marketed. The most used tourism typology criteria are by displacement motivation, type of landscapes, the area of origin of tourists, the form of travel organization, degree of mobility of tourists, frequency of demand manifestation and the age group of tourists. (Minciu, 2004)

By the purpose of visit, according to UNWTO, there are three main categories: by leisure, recreation and holidays; by health and religion; and by business and professional.

By the type of landscapes, there are five categories:

- Seaside tourism especially practiced in the seaside area, as well as on the shores of lakes and rivers, with a climate and tourism comfort suitable for visitor’s recreation and spas. Thermal values of the air and water are very important, also the purity, the salinity and the therapeutic value of the marine water and the aesthetic aspect of the shore landscapes.
- Mountain tourism is very appreciated for the grandeur and splendor of landscapes, the variety and the abundance of the animal and vegetable world, the presence of tourist attractions, like cascades, keys and gorges, caves and mountain peaks, cities, castles and monasteries in the area. A great popularity has the ski slopes, spa resorts, sport fishing and extreme sports like alpinism, bungee jumping and paragliding.

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- Urban tourism takes place in the perimeter of urban centers that are accompanied by sightseeing and recreation focused in the specific environment, especially museums and art galleries, stadiums, parks, locations of business tourism, casinos, accommodation and leisure centers.
- Suburban tourism is intended for the reception of tourist flow generated in weekends by urban areas. The suburban space has the primary role of urban population's recreation and rest;
- Rural tourism is very well appreciated for the silent ambience, fresh air, the splendor and charm of surrounding landscapes. In rural areas can be practiced agritourism, ecotourism, sport tourism and ethno-cultural tourism.

By area of origin of tourists, there are two main categories:

- Domestic tourism, practiced by the population of a country within national boundaries.
- International tourism, the result of the movement of persons outside the borders of their country of residence.

By the form of travel organization:

- Organized tourism, realized through the implication of tourism agencies that delivers all-inclusive or partial packages.
- Unorganized tourism, without the implication of tourism agencies. The visitor decides the destination by himself, the duration, the period, transportation and accommodation methods.
- Semi-organized tourism it is characterized by the combination of the two.
- Overview of the Chinese outbound segment

A study conducted in 2016 (Bin et al., 2016) has shown the expectations of Chinese tourists when traveling abroad. Through the implementation of the focus group method, conducted in more than 10 different Chinese cities, the study resulted in a series of issues and approaches on the preferences of Chinese tourists in terms of the main tourism services, i.e. accommodation, food and beverage, transport, possibilities of entertainment, different possibilities of visiting a certain destination – guides, guided tours, etc. The main outcome of this study has shown that the Chinese incoming segment, although it bears no special features in comparison with other segment of tourists, originated in a different country or a different continent, it does have a special set of requirements regarding the services and their standards. To understand those expectations and the tourism behavior of the Chinese segment is to get closer to succeeding in attracting and maintaining them as recurring tourism flows. Also, the host destinations may be able to provide better services, at the standards and in accordance with the requirements and expectations of the Chinese incoming segment (Pan et al., 2007)

The answer to the posed question of what do the Chinese tourists expect, what sort of services do we have to provide to this segment? relies in a deeper understanding of tourist behavior in terms of what they expect and prefer (Kaczynski, 2008). At the same time, the issue of quality of service is extensively researched in the scientific literature, and the bottom line of it is that the perceived quality is generated from the balance of what tourists expect and what is delivered to them (Shoemaker et al., 2007).

The success in attracting the emerging, highly-valued segment of Chinese outbound tourists is to be found at the intersection of expectations, the quality of service, perceptions, but also understanding the cultural differences. In terms of the characteristics, values and requirements of tourism behavior, one

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may notice substantial differences (Reisinger, 2009). Thus, the existing cultural differences affect all the stages of tourism experience, starting with the way of gathering pre-travel information and ending with the level of satisfaction once the travel is finalized. All in all, some elements that are characteristic to the European segments of clients may and in many cases will not apply in the case of the Chinese tourism flow (Li, 2008).

Expectations of the Chinese Outbound Tourism Segment

One of the main features of the Chinese tourism segment, as suggested by Yu & Weiler, in 2003, is their preference for arranged travel packages, given the benefits of the unique price, which is also more convenient in many cases, and the perceived greater level of safety. In terms of valued and thus required components of the trip, the beautiful landscapes, the popular and renowned tourist attractions, feelings of safety, local catering services ranked first. According to the same study, there seem to be differences in the levels of satisfaction of the Chinese tourism segment in relation to issues such as educational level, gender and age.

Therefore (Guo et al., 2007), when traveling abroad, adult Chinese tourists are prone to choosing tourism products that offer them more destinations, as they perceive those as being more beneficial in terms of costs and time than the single-destination tourism products. Following the same thread, the Chinese tourists expect professional guiding, stricter schedules and at to have at least one person accompanying the group at all times. Also, the guides should know at least two languages (Chinese and the language of the visited destination or English if there are more destinations included in the travel package). Another characteristic that is very important for the Chinese tourists is for the guide to be friendly and have fair knowledge about the culture, history and other important issues about the visited place. A lack in providing such services may result in a steep decrease in their travel satisfaction level.

According to the same study, the Chinese tourists have a tendency towards buying expensive, branded items as gifts for family and friends, seldom extending to simple acquaintances, but also as souvenirs for themselves. These branded purchases can widely range from small electronics to clothes and footwear.

Another study (Kueh & Von, 2007) has reported that Chinese tourists seem to be, on general terms, very satisfied with services such as transport and lodging, the perceived attitude of the members of the host destination towards them and the general entire experience of traveling outside of their country's borders. Aspects that require additional focus related, according to the same study, to the food and beverage units and the food that they had consumed. The Chinese tourists are quite sensitive to the relation between the price they pay and the quality of the services they receive.

In terms of expectations towards the accommodation services (Wang et al., 2010), the Chinese incoming segment seems to prefer facilities that are similar to the ones found in their country, especially regarding the hotels. The most valued components of the accommodation service are the levels of cleanliness and the degree of safety that it offers, but also the respect that is shown to them by the staff of the unit. Another important feature that the lodging providers should pay special attention to refers to the toiletries and the possibility of preparing hot tea in the hotel room.

The experience of dining in local restaurants is also greatly influenced by the previous similar experiences in their home-land catering units. As a general rule, the Chinese tourists prefer balance, therefore they will expect to find, at destination, food that is familiar to them, apart from the local food. This translated into a menu rich in vegetables, poor in milk and dairy products, with a greater number of salty dishes, in the detriment of sweet ones.

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MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

With the increase in income levels (Nielsen, 2017), travel has become a key indicator of the quality of life for the average blanket of the Chinese population, so more and more Chinese travel abroad for holidays. The European Commission has closely monitored the current trends in China's outbound tourism market (China-Outbound, 2018), pointing out that in the year 2017 the Chinese made over 131 million visits across the country, which translates with an increase of 7% over the previous year. Also, at the level of 2016, China's outbound tourism segment made travel expenses worth more than \$ 261 billion, a 4.5 percent increase over the previous year. Thus, China ranks first in international rankings, surpassing the United States and Russia.

The study by Nielsen (2017) highlights the fact that for Chinese tourists (generally characterized by a higher level of education) tourist attractions and travel experience are more important than the costs that could be borne. Therefore, 56% of the respondents mentioned that the beauty and uniqueness of a particular destination are the main factors they consider, while 47% said that destination safety would affect their choice of travel destination. A 45% said they would also take into account the difficulty in obtaining a travel visa for the chosen destination, while 35% considered the hospitality of the host population to be of utmost importance. The fifth factor behind is the fact that China's outbound tourists are traveling costs.

In recent years, for Chinese tourists, travel outside the country has gradually become a norm. According to the survey, the average number of countries or regions visited by Chinese tourists between 2016-2017 was 2.1 and that the number of countries or regions they were planning to visit in 2018 was 2.7. They expressed the desire to have unique experiences during trips, such as visiting historical sites, tasting local cuisine, buying local produce, and various other unique options that are characteristic of the intended destination. As a result, Chinese tourists travel abroad mainly for leisure, 78% said *loisir* as the first priority. The generation of young tourists, born after 1990, is the most adventurous group, 16% have chosen the adventure as the main motivation for their journey. Respondents born in the 1980s focus on gastronomic experience (58%) and shopping (49%), while Chinese outbound tourists born in the 1970s prefer a relaxing travel experience, with the main goal of *loisirs* during abroad (82%). On average, Chinese tourists have spent an average of \$ 3,500 on a European destination per total stay.

Of all Chinese tourists who traveled abroad in 2017, 67% traveled to other Asian countries or regions (51% in Hong Kong, Macao or Taiwan), while 38% were in Europe, 25% in America North and 20% Australia / New Zealand. As European travel routes are better developed for Chinese tourists, nearly 40% of respondents traveled there last year, especially in France, the United Kingdom and Germany.

But the Central and Eastern European region is becoming more and more interesting for this segment of tourists, especially the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, which has recorded substantial and rapid increases in the number of Chinese tourists in the last three years.

According to The Nation (2018), more and more Chinese tourists are heading for Central and Eastern Europe as a result of the European Union's initiative to attract this segment of tourists. Thus, there were 10.3% increases in Chinese arrivals between May and August this year. By comparison, the growth rate from the same period of 2017 was 9.4%. In August, funds were approved for Croatian and Slovenian tourism authorities for their joint promotion in China, which will take the form of a promotion campaign with the theme "Experience Croatia, Feel Slovenia", which was created to enhance the visibility and reputation of the two countries on the Chinese tourism market. The CEE region also has a higher degree of bookings, 32.5% more than other regions of Europe.

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From the total number of outbound Chinese tourists, the highest number arrived in the Czech Republic, followed by Hungary, Croatia, Poland and Slovenia.

Czech Republic

The influx of Chinese visitors to Prague has been a welcome development in the last 3 years for the Czech capital, where, as in many other countries, their presence is received as a means of compensating for the reduction of income caused by the fairly pronounced loss of the Russian tourists segment, a trend of recent years.

The average stay of Chinese tourists was 2.7 days, most of the time being spent in the city center. The capital of the Czech Republic, Prague, renowned for the historical center where many UNESCO monuments are found, has become a major destination for Chinese visitors; Consequently, a large majority of the nearly 300,000 arrivals of Chinese citizens in the Czech Republic are concentrated in the city. This figure represents an increase of 35% compared to 2014 in the number of arrivals and significantly exceeds the number of Chinese tourists arriving in the United Kingdom over the same period by more than 60,000, the capital cities of Prague and London being located at the same level.

Another feature of the Chinese tourist in the Czech destination is the way of arriving, mostly of them coming in organized groups as part of touristic packages prepared and sold by Czech tour operators. Individual travelers, inspired by the Prague nightlife, music and art scenes - considered comparable to Barcelona - could also travel to other Czech tourist regions but do not have the necessary information to feel encouraged to do so and, they also do not have products and services tailored to their specific needs. A strong motivation engine for Chinese young tourists was filming a successful Chinese cinema film in 2015 in Prague, so the beauty of the old city center served as a glamorous backdrop for the action of the film.

There are already steps being taken by the Czech Tourism Organization to extend the tourist map for the incoming Chinese segment. The historical towns of Telč and Český Krumlov, which, like Prague, are listed by UNESCO, could serve as attractive alternatives for cultural tourism, while Mariánské Lázně and Karlovy Vary offer the opportunity to place the Czech Republic on the map of the high quality spa tourism. The Czech Republic also has a strong gourmet culture that can be used by the tourism industry, especially if it is organized in a way that allows Chinese tourists to visit not only the beer centers in Plzeň and České Budějovice or the Moravian wineries, but also to learn the actual production of beverages or of Bohemia dumplings.

Consequently, the challenge for the Czech National Tourism Organization is to develop strategies to highlight the characteristics and needs of this new market segment and to support local service providers in developing products tailored for Chinese tourists, including for visitation of also other regions of the country outside Prague.

Hungary

The president of the Hungarian Association of Chinese Tourism Guides (Xinhuan, 2018) points out that Budapest has three major attractions for the Chinese tourists, namely thermal baths, nightlife and unique Danube views. Gourmet cultures, strongly represented by Tokaj wine, are added to this.

Customized tourist packages are increasingly required on the Chinese market. Although only 10% of the population holds a passport, this low level is still equivalent to 140 million people in the country.

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For the Chinese, traveling is a matter of prestige. The mere possession of luxury goods is no longer considered a personal achievement, but to know, in the light of its own experience, the culture and gastronomy of Hungary and other ECE countries takes its place. After making the decision about the main city visited, most of the time in Budapest, Chinese tourists tend to add excursions to nearby destinations such as Tihany or Lake Balaton. With an average travel time of 12 days in Europe, tourists who come through organized tours do not stay very much in one place, the situation being different for travelers coming on their own.

Approximately 128,000 Chinese tourists visited Hungary in 2016 (BBJ, 2018). Their number increased by 30% by the year 2018, thus showing a very pronounced growth trend. Given that Hungary is most often part of the “Golden Triangle” Vienna-Budapest-Prague trips, organized touristic packages, the average duration of the stay is not very high, being at a level comparable to the one from the Czech Republic, i.e. between 2 and 3 days. A vast majority consider that the beauty and uniqueness of tourist attractions make Hungary a destination in which they want to return. The emergence of niche tourist packages centered on elements such as culture, treatment, gastronomy, wine, and so on represents an opportunity for Hungary to attract more Chinese tourists. It should not be forgotten that a characteristic of Chinese visitors is that they want to meet familiar elements such as food, TV programs or various imported products from China.

Another opportunity that tourism organizations in Hungary have is represented by business tourism, a special sector in the tourism industry, which includes conference tourism, incentive trips, exhibitions. Hungary, from the perspective of wellness hotels or spa resorts, can be an extremely attractive alternative to China’s outbound market.

Poland

In 2016, over 75,000 Chinese tourists visited Poland, their number rising to an upward trend. The most visited places are the large cities of the country, but also the nature reserves. Chinese tourists most often buy souvenirs, amber stones, vodka and various Chopin related items, according to the president of the Association of Guides for Chinese Tourists in Poland (Turystyka, 2018).

A characteristic feature of the Chinese incoming segment in Poland is that of megalomania impulse, so they prefer to visit areas with a rich history or very old, large, being quite sensitive to details. Thus, the most visited cities are Warsaw, the capital, but also Gdansk, Malbork or Krakow.

They also appear to be extremely interested in the way of life, the cultural, but also the gastronomic customs of the local population.

A discordant note of the Hungarian and Czech experience of Chinese tourists is their predilection to visit the rural areas of Poland, the provincial area that it often characterizes as “idyllic”. This is explained by the fact that China’s natural environment is currently much degraded. Thus, the natural habitat of Poland, very slightly modified by anthropic action, represents an extremely important attraction for Chinese tourists.

According to archive data from the Polish Tourism Organization (RP, 2017), in 2014, the total number of Chinese tourists reached 50,000. Their number increased dynamically following measures taken by the Polish authorities. Thus, at present, Chinese tourists choose Poland for having direct flights, with flights 2 times a week (LOT in collaboration with AirChina). Additionally, Poland regularly presents itself at the tourist fairs organized in China, for example in Shanghai; during the years 2014-2016, Poland

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has carried out a promotional campaign under the slogan “I Like Poland”, specially designed to attract tourists from the area of China

Evolution of Demand for Incoming Tourists From China

In the area formed by the three countries previously analyzed, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland, one can see, according to Table 1, a dynamic increase in the number of arrivals in the incoming segment of Chinese tourists. The highest figures are recorded by the Czech Republic, with 300,000 arrivals registered in 2017, followed closely by the Hungarian values of 280,000. At a considerable distance there is Poland, with about 100,000 Chinese tourists coming in 2017.

Extensive exponential increases across countries can be explained in part by the efforts of the national tourism institutions and state institutions, including the promotion campaigns specifically designed for the Chinese market, the opening of tourist offices in China, the introduction of direct flights links with major cities in China, as well as the simplification of visa procedures. In the case of Hungary, the submission of documents for receiving the visa can be made in 14 cities in China, and its release takes place within 48 hours.

By the end of August 2018, according to the Xinhuanet Report (2018), a 11% increase in the number of arrivals of Chinese tourists in Hungary was recorded as compared to the same period of 2017, reaching 140,000 arrivals. Much of the estimated 7 million overnight stays in Budapest came from Chinese tourists. An increase is expected for 2019 also thanks to the signing of the partnership agreement between Unicredit Bank Hungary and Alipay, an online payment platform in China, making Hungary the only country in the region to offer Chinese tourists the possibility of secured payments with major benefits.

The Czech Republic registered a total of 226,000 foreign tourists from China by mid-2018, according to Forbes (2018). The capital city of Prague has taken an extra step to attract Chinese tourists by opening new air routes with China, but also by publishing and disseminating informative materials (charts, brochures, guides) in the Chinese, Korean and Japanese languages, both in print and online.

According to Turystyka.wp, by the end of 2018 Poland will record about 130,000 incoming tourists coming from China. The actions taken by the Polish Tourism Organization in Asia thus have an exponential increase in Chinese visitors to the Polish territory. Presentation and promotion campaigns rank first among these actions, targeting not only the final audience, i.e. tourists, but especially tour operators, media, and bloggers. Since 2016, a tourist information and promotion office has been operating in China, and its work has been intensified lately. The aforementioned activities have a positive influence on the level of spending by Chinese tourists in Poland, the value of which reaches the equivalent of EUR 1,700.

Table 1. The evolution of the number of Chinese tourists

Years/Countries	Number of tourists		
	Czech Republic	Hungary	Poland
2015	195,000	126,000	55,000
2016	260,000	227,000	75,000
2017	299,000	260,000	101,000

Source: Reports of the National Institutes of Statistics

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Possible Evolutions of the Chinese Incoming Segment in Romania

Data provided by the Romanian Institute of Statistics on the number of incoming Asian tourists, presented in Table 2, do not include separate data for tourists coming from China. The size of the Asian incoming market is, however, promising, evolving over the three years presented. The evolution of the number of tourists from the Asian continent is however pronounced, with a doubling of the number of tourists coming from this continent in the years 2016-2017.

Currently, Romania has opened a tourist information and promotion office on China's territory in Beijing. Its actions could be stepped up in order to increase the number of Chinese tourists in the country. Additional activities can also be undertaken by the competent tourism authorities by attending international fairs organized in China through promotions and collaborations with Chinese tour operators through offers tailored to the needs and expectations of Chinese tourists.

Romania, in terms of its tourist potential, but also geographical location, is a potential new destination for the Chinese incoming segment. Based on the features highlighted by China's outbound market study presented at the beginning of the material, as well as the experience of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, Romania is a very good destination for the Chinese market. The presence of large urban cultural centers such as Bucharest, Iași, Cluj, Brasov or Constanța are major attractions for Chinese incoming tourists. They are mainly attracted by rich history, gastronomy and uniqueness. From this point of view, Romania has a huge potential for developing this segment of tourists, elements such as traditional customs, local cuisine, wines, etc., being of interest.

Another strong point of Romania is the presence on its territory of the Danube Delta, Biosphere Reserve, Chinese tourists being attracted to places with unique beauty elements. Also, rarely preserved rural areas in the Chinese territory can be an attraction.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

It is a fact that the Chinese incoming segment represents a huge potential for the Central and Eastern Europe. Some of the countries have already taken measure towards accommodating this important tourism flow, some are still in the beginner's phase. A good starting point for the opening of the destination Romania for the Chinese market was made in 2017 during the Workshop held in January 2017, following which several important action lines were drawn up, such as steps to increase the number of arrivals Chinese tourists up to 10,000 / month in the coming years, including the possibility of including Romania in Chinese tour operators' circuits, which send hundreds of thousands of tourists annually to countries in Central and Eastern Europe.

Table 2. Number of tourist arrivals from Asia on Romanian territory

Continent/Years	Thousand people		
	2015	2016	2017
Total	9331	10223	12706
Asia	353	402	799

Source: Report of the National Institute of Statistics

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The present chapter aimed at analyzing and evaluating the potential of the Chinese outbound tourism segment for the Central and Eastern European market, while highlighting the importance and possibilities for Romania. A strong future research direction is to further analyze the evolution of the figures within the CEE area, with a special focus on the way Romania is acting towards attracting and maintaining a steady flow of Chinese tourists.

CONCLUSION

Through a rapid development, tourism is part of the phenomena that contribute to the development of the contemporary era. Tourism represents a growing range of services: food, accommodation, leisure, information, advertising, public relations, and much more. Through tourism, all of the above mentioned categories can develop and generate earnings from their perspective. In an even more competitive economic environment, countries and destinations have to find new ways of reinventing their destination, to bring and keep older and newer segments of tourists.

The Chinese incoming segment represent a strong force that brings valuable potential, both through the number of tourists, as well as through the tourism expenditure they realize. This segment is, at the same time, a growing force, in the process of developing, on their way of turning into a sophisticated flow of tourists. Understanding their culture, learning how to meet their expectations is crucial for the branding of the destination that wants to attract the Chinese tourists.

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Chapter 7

Slow Movement and Forms of Evolution in the 21st Century

Gheorghe Georgica

The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania

ABSTRACT

We live in a world that is constantly evolving, which is taking place with an astonishing speed. Over the past 30 years, there have been concerns that have tried or are trying to promote the slowdown. Such a current is the slow movement, promoted initially by Carlo Petrini and which today has millions of followers worldwide. Under the slow umbrella there were developed many ideas, some with high impact such as slow food, CittaSlow, and others. In the chapter, the author makes an inventory of the evolution of the slow current and puts this evolution in a logical structure. In his research, the author uses the international databases as well as the multimedia resources available. The chapter underlines that the slow movement has its best results in the tourism industry, for which this movement is so important. The author points out three main directions of evolution, which may constitute points of interest for future research, especially in the direction that has connection with slow food, slow tourism, and CittaSlow.

INTRODUCTION

Slow food movement was initiated in Italy in the 1980's as a protest opposing the opening of a McDonald's in Rome (Heitmann et al., 2011). The slow food movement aims to preserve regional cuisine, local farming, communal meals, and traditional food preparation methods (Chrzan, 2004) (www.slowfood.com, 2019). This cultural initiative has since spouted into a whole way of life known as the Slow Movement, which emphasizes relation: relation to food, relation to families and, in the case of travel relation to local peoples and cultures.

“Slow movement and forms of evolution in the 21st Century,, meets the specific objective of characterizing “slow movement” worldwide, highlighting the decisive role “Slow Travel” and “Slow Food” plays in the development of this movement.

The old Latin adage “*Festina lente*” returns to present time (Steinmayer, 2001). We are, recently, advised to travel and look around without haste, leisurely to better meet those we meet and to take more

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care of the environment. “The democratization of the journey and the opening of new horizons for tourism have caused frenzied reactions - observes Maximilien Nardi, co-founder of the Swiss travel agency Synopsis. This has prompted many to visit the world in record time” (Dorobanțu et al., 2012). But Scheou objects - “too many trips kill the trip” (Schéou, 2007). Hence the urge to do less tourism to make it better.

The desire to keep our connection with the world and ourselves is not new. Most traditional cultures still have these connections. These people relate to their culture, the people around them, the places where they live. It is not long since the extended families lived under the same roof. The children grew up knowing their cousins, uncles and aunts, grandparents and other relatives. These children felt bound to the people around them. Not long-ago people were connected to their food. Most of them were cultivating vegetables and fruit in their gardens usually behind the houses where they lived. Many families had dairy cows, cheese and butter as well as a wide variety of meat. Families usually used fresh products to prepare traditional dishes, everyone was involved, and meals were social events. At the end of the events, the whole family was involved in cleaning and washing dishes used at the table (Slowmovement.com, 2019). In today’s times, the rush and speed of events, the stunning developments in technology that are emerging at a dizzying, have made these family ties weaker. This constitute into a reason why slow movement can contribute to the phenomenon of “slowing down”.

Recognizing the rhythm of activity in our lives as an unwanted item is a first step in restoring the connection and slowing down the pace of life. What we all want to know is how to make this reconnection with the traditional lifestyle, but at the same time to be able to fulfill our responsibilities in society.

On this background appeared the “slow movement” which aims to redefine the notion of spending free time, minimize environmental impact, enrich social and non-consumerist experiences (Fullagar et al., 2012).

Starting from these aspects the author presents in this paper the main types of evolutions in connection with the slow movement. Based on findings he groups the slow movement types of evolutions in 3 categories: a category which has strong connection with tourism, a category witch has a strong connection with technology and a category witch has a strong connection with social life. This way of presentation wants to be one of the first made in the scientific literature and wants to illustrate the importance of the slow movement implication in the lives of people.

SLOW MOTION - COMPONENTS

The movement is considered a constellation of diverse ideas and cultural activities that have a close connection with food, cities, money, the media and travel (Tasch, 2008). There is a wide variety of traveling stories, imagery and speech stories that promote slow travel through the press, travel blogs, magazines, travel guides, and advertisements (Funnell, 2010).

It began in 1986 with Carlo Petrini’s protest against the opening of a McDonald’s in „Piazza di Spagna” in Rome (Weiermair & Mathies, 2004). The philosophy of the movement starts from the premise of the negative effects of speed in a society obsessed with economic growth and consumerism. Slow Movement is crocheted, painstakingly, around the notions of “impoverishment” of time and the loss of connection with the world and yourself. Under the hat of the movement, sub-brands such as: Slow Cities, Slow Travel, Slow Living, Slow Money, Slow Tourism, Slow Food and others appeared, consecutively or simultaneously. On January 1, 2010, the first decade of the slow movement was celebrated.

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The slow movement has not been established and is not controlled by a single entity, it is the result of a continuous action on the part of the global community represented by various personalities in different fields. One of these personalities is Carlo Petrini (Box 1).

Slow food, slow tourism, slow money, slow city, slow parenting, slow media, slow travel are just a few of the new words and expressions in the international vocabulary circuit. It seems that wherever we look the prefix “slow” is added to the various phenomena, industries, and economic sectors. In the past, the word was slowly associated with the inability of individuals to keep up with others in their workplace and leisure activities. Nowadays the meaning of this word “slow” has begun to change, it is associated: with breaking the daily pace, with seeking a balance in everyday life, with giving up the idea that everything must be done very quickly. The slowdown has become an antidote: the rapid pace of globalization, the hard work to prove success, and the availability of financial resources for recreation, to be on the trend with other consumers – as an example we have the crowds from “Black Friday” when everyone needs to buy something even if they don’t need that (Humphertz, 2010).

The concept of slow is assign to many activities and processes that are not always related to tourism. There is only a small amount of literature in this field, especially for Slow Food, Slow Travel, CittaSlow. Over the course of the research for this chapter we identified over 20 components for “Slow Movement”. Of these, author kept 15 which were grouped into three categories: tourism-specific components, social components, and technological components.

1. THE SOCIAL COMPONENTS SPECIFIC TO THE SLOW MOTION

For the social component’s author mention the following: Slow Counseling, Slow Ageing, Slow Church, Slow Education, Slow Media, Slow Parenting (Figure 1).

Each component is briefly presented below.

Box 1.

Carlo Petrini: He was born in 1949 in the province of Cuneo in Italy and is the founder of the Slow Food movement. Two events convinced Petrini that Italy is at a turning point:

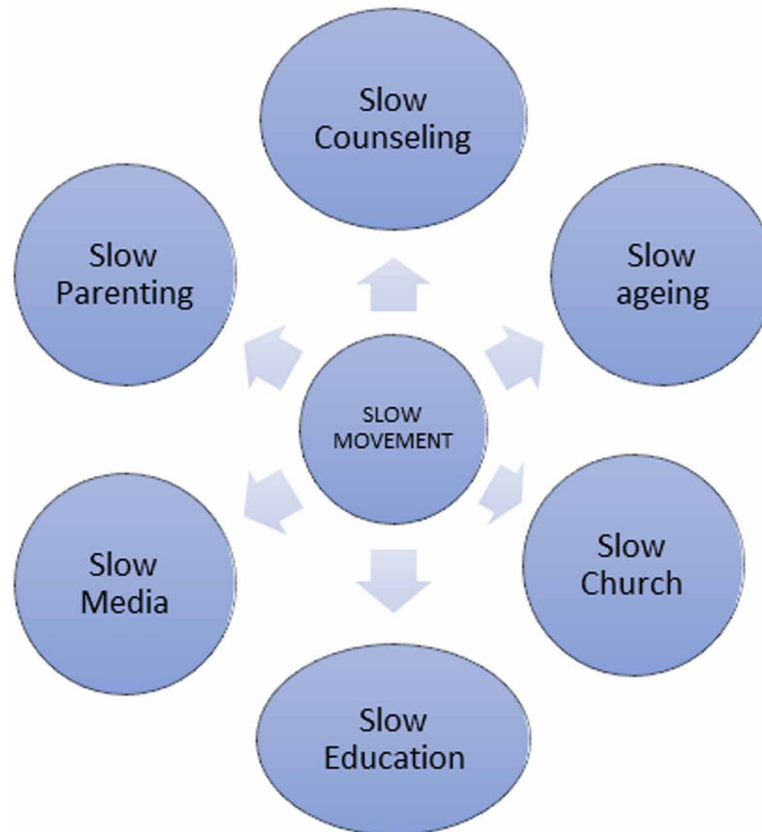
- opening the first McDonald’s restaurant in the Square of Spain in the heart of Rome (1986). After just one year the restaurant went bankrupt and closed.
- the other was the death of 19 people and the poisoning of several hundred more because of the consumption of cheap counterfeit wine. These events were followed by the foundation of the Slow Food Association in 1989. The president of this association is Carlo Petrini. Currently, the association has international status (over 150 Member States).

He was a member of the Italian Communist Party. In the pages of this party’s newspapers, he has promoted Italian traditional products. He is now a journalist and writes for the newspaper “La Repubblica”. He is a member of Italian Democratic Party. He is the author of books (Amazon.com, 2015): *Slow Food Nation: Why Our Food Should Be Good, Clean, and Fair* (2007); *Slow Food: The Case for Taste* (2004); *Terra Madre: Forging a New Global Network of Sustainable Food Communities* (2010); *Slow Food: Collected Thoughts on Taste, Tradition, and the Honest Pleasures of Food* (2001).

Throughout his career he has been rewarded with numerous awards that certify the quality of this man. Among the awards we include: Johannes van Dam Prize - Netherlands 2014 (UR, 2015), United Nation Champion of the Earth 2013 - (Nuttall, 2013), Silver Spoon Award 2007 (Corradin, 2007), Eckart Witzigmann Science and Media Prize - Germany 2004 (Eckart-witzigmann-preis.de, 2004).

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Figure 1. The social components of “slow movement”
(made by author)



1.1. Slow Counseling

Counseling based on relaxation- - Agramovich and Hoskins say in their work entitled “Slow Counseling: Promoting Wellness in a Fast World” that it is necessary to adapt the tools used by psychologists to solve the increasingly serious problems of the clients patients) in terms of stress-related effects and time-consuming activities (Agramovich & Hoskins, 2012).

Counseling based on relaxation- involves:

- Focus on improving people’s well-being.
- Elimination of stressors, both domestic and environmental.
- The close connection between the patient and the therapist.
- As therapists help patients in their attempt to cope with the demands of modern life.
- Recognizing the influences that modern technologies have on increasing stress. The role of therapists is to help patients to use these technologies in an appropriate and minimally negative way.
- Patients are encouraged to focus on activities and to prioritize these activities - even refuse some of them.

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- Emphasis is placed on the use of techniques that favor an evolved lifestyle specific to traditional practices from different cultures.

David Tresemer declared in his paper “Slow Counseling - Emphasize the Healing Power of Relationships” that in the world of counseling, fast therapies, and one-pill fix-its skip past the soul work (Tresemer, 2016). Heart and soul prefer slow. Fast skips the enjoyment – and healing.

1.2 Slow Aging

Is a rigorous approach based on scientific evidence that promotes the aging process as a fact that adds value. This movement encourages the use of alternative methods of slowing down aging and prolonging lifetimes - without resorting to drugs or other unhealthy therapies to the body. This concept of “Slow and Healthy Aging” was first brought to the attention of the general public in 2004 with the release of the book “Fast Living, Slow Aging” written by Kate Marie and Merlin Christopher Thomas. The two coauthors are Australians and were inspired by their personal life in writing this book and launching this concept (Debra, 2013).

Kate Marie and Dr. Merlin Thomas say that at the base of a long and healthy life there are 3 essential elements, namely (Marie, 2014):

- Nutrition (involves planning and balanced nutrition).
- Movement (involves flexibility, determination, and exercises).
- Leisure.

In addition to the 3 elements, the concept promoters have defined 7 principles that should be in the attention of anyone who wants to get old beautifully (AGELESS principles) (Thomas, 2014):

- Conscientiousness and involvement in the choices made.
- Clear and realistic goals.
- Focus on positive elements and on dropping negative ones.
- Elections to be sustainable.
- Avoid focusing on one element - there are always more options.
- Search for help - because it exists.
- Choosing what is best for us - what is good for someone may not be good for us as well.

According to most researches nowadays, beautiful aging involves 3 basic elements (Martin, et al., 2012):

- High cognitive level and physical functions.
- Active engagement in various activities.
- Low probability of illness or disability.

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1.3 The Slow Church

A traditional church - is a movement within the Christian confession (the Anglican church) in the USA inspired by the principles of slow movement. The term was introduced for the first time in 2008 by Kyle Childress. He mentions that the traditional church is a small church in which all believers (Childress, 2008):

- Everybody can see each other.
- They are attentive to the needs of others.

The founder of this movement criticizes the construction of huge churches where people who enter feel the pressure from the grandeur of the church and go to a corner and no longer interacts with other believers. He also criticizes the fact that people are no longer walking on foot, they use the car even for very short journeys, which leads, among other things, to increased fuel consumption, isolation, break-up, but most importantly people do not know even their neighbors. Childress is promoting the construction of smaller, warmer churches by encouraging people to walk, encouraging people to interact with each other (Patheos, 2019).

Smith and Pattison in their book “Slow Church” mention the three principles of “traditional church” (the three EEE), namely (Smith & Pattison, 2014):

- Ethics through loyalty.
- Ecological thru understanding the mission of God on earth.
- Economic through reconciliation.

1.4. Slow Education

Promoting deep learning in the context of a curriculum that recognizes the talents of all students. The movement emphasizes the relationship of educational commitment that must be established between the student and the teacher, a relationship that should not involve student assessment according to standardized tests, but requires an assessment of student success (Harrison, 2019).

The promoters of this movement support investments in education and training of teachers as essential moral fundamentals of society. According to a study published in Australia, the Australian higher education institutions face a so-called McDonnalization of education (all for little money but fast ahead). The main conclusion of the study was that even if the level of funds allocated by the government decreased, the quality of the educational act did not decrease, but on the contrary increased (Richards, 2007).

The concept of “Slow Education” derives from the difference between slow food and fast food and is an effort to associate the quality, culture, and personality of each student with quality schooling. The principles of this movement have been successfully applied in schools, especially in the UK. Examples include: Silas Primary School and Matthew Moss High School (My World - a case study in slow education, 2013).

1.5. Slow Media

Friendly Media - The concept first appeared in the US in 2002. The one who used it for the first time was independent filmmaker Helen de Michiel (Michiel, 2002). In recent years, the amount of information

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that is circulating on the Internet each day has risen to unimaginable levels compared to ten years ago. Consequently, the concept of slow media has begun to be increasingly used. The movement embraces more currents as evidenced by Jennifer Rauch's professor at Long Island University in Brooklyn - New York, so we have: Slow Reading, Slow News, Slow Communication, Slow Journalism, Slow Books, Slow Blogging, Slow Word (Rauch, 2013).

Articles about this move have appeared in many popular newspapers such as Philadelphia Inquirer, Boston Globe, Huffington Post, Times of the UK and Forbes (Rauch, 2011), there are also many blogs about this movement, as well as a group on Facebook.

Among the principles that guides this movement we mention (Köhler et al., 2010):

- Promotes monotasking.
- Concentration on quality.
- Promotes sustainability, respects the views of viewers and readers.
- Promotes progressivity.

Unfortunately, in Romania the press has fallen taking in consideration the level of quality. It promotes bad taste, non-value, "manelism". Here, the "National Broadcasting Council" should intervene with clear regulations.

1.6. Slow Parenting

Free Care - Founder of this movement is Jean Alice Rowcliffe. This movement encourages parents not to plan in detail each step in the development of their children. According to her, children should be allowed to enjoy childhood and discover the world at their own pace. Parents should love them, give them all the support, but without conditions to receive them (Belkin, 2009).

The move came amid the rise of age at which mothers have children, amid the rise in childcare income, amid rising competition for jobs. All of this is a matter of concern for parents, which force them to plan the future of their children in advance. Parents of today have lost confidence in children's ability to develop themselves.

There have also been some recommendations for parents. Among these, the author find the following (Rowcliffe, 2012):

- To try to be parents and not friends of their own children.
- Homes are the first schools, parents the first teachers.
- The "job" of a child is to play.
- To respect the community both within and outside the family.
- To learn to cultivate tranquility, and to make time for relax.
- It's okay to let them say no.
- Less is better.
- And not use electronic devices for at least one hour a day.

Respecting these principles generates several benefits as Susan Lipman says. Among these benefits we can find: it helps to create memories, allows parents to be present in all children's activities, creates

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connection and unrelated experiences between children and parents, improves the psychological and psychological health of children and parents, creates children that will be successful (Lipman, 2012).

2. TECHNICAL COMPONENTS SPECIFIC TO THE SLOW MOTION

For this category author mention the following components: Slow Fashion, Slow Technology, Slow Money, Slow Science and Slow Gardening (Figure 2).

Each component is briefly presented below.

2.1. Slow Fashion

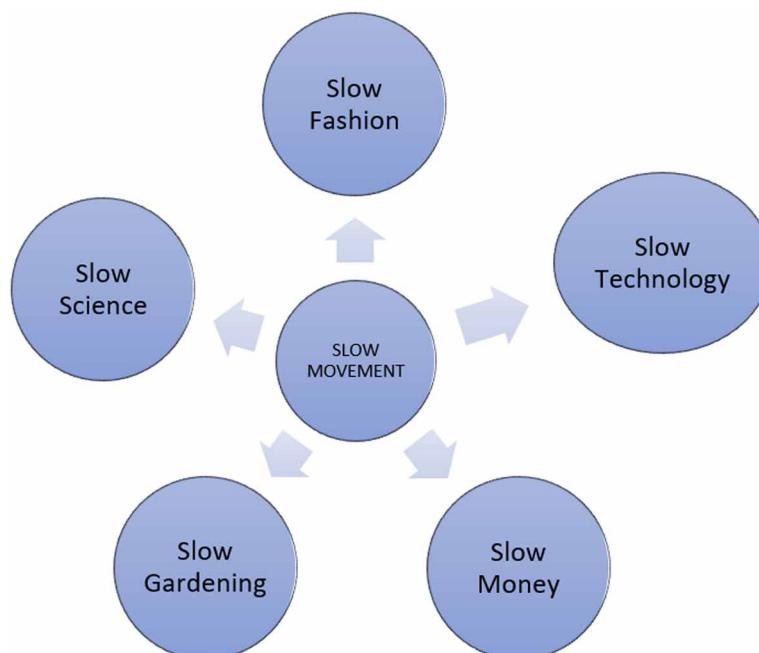
Friendly Fashion - the concept was firstly introduced in 2007 by English woman Kate Fletcher. If at the beginning it strictly targeted the clothing industry, today the concept refers to everything that is related to the fashion industry. Fletcher argues that “Slow Fashion is not the seasonal trend that comes and goes, but it’s a sustainable move that has grown in recent years” (Fletcher, 2013). It is intended to be an alternative to mass production of the textile industry (Fletcher, 2014). Initially, this movement opposed to mas textile production, promoting only handmade textiles. Today the concept is expanding by including products that have a low environmental impact.

Among the practices promoted by this movement authors mention (Donaldson, 2019):

- Boycott of textile products produced in mass.

Figure 2. Technological components specific to slow motion

Source: made by the author



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- Promotes the purchase of craft products made by small producers, by local textile manufacturers.
- Purchase of second-hand goods or old-fashioned clothes.
- Donating of unwanted clothing.
- Buying textiles made from ethically or recyclable materials.
- To promote the “do it yourself” principle – to create our own clothes.
- Shopping textile more rarely.

The movement is trying to promote a reduction in the pace of change in textiles industry. Today trends in the fashion industry are changing from 4 to 6 weeks, according to Rebecca Cork, who is the promoter of the Slow Fashion movement. She mentions that companies are creating false demand for products by introducing new trends (Cork, 2019).

Slow Fashion also has a logo. It is recommended to use this logo on labels for products that meet several conditions, like: be environmentally friendly, be recyclable, be the result of ethical work, and be sustainable.

Slow Fashion is a current that (Bourland, 2011):

- Celebrate personal style.
- Encourages education.
- Promotes Consumption Consciously.
- Puts quality in the center.
- Asks us to slow down.

2.2. Slow Science

The concept for this movement was first put forward in 1990 by Eugene Garfield. He mentions that many times the researchers are in a hurry to announce exceptional results, for which the results will be felt after many years (Example: Human Genome Project), and with very large investments. Garfield says that these efforts could be channeled into projects that have much clearer and closer perspectives taking in consideration the time for implementation (Garfield, 1990).

After Professor Garfield’s view, other researchers have also brought back to the attention of public the concept of Slow Science. One of these is the french researcher Joël Candau who, in 2010, outlined the principles for this movement for education namely (Candau, 2010):

- It is recommended that 50% of the time for those teaching at college to be allocated to research, because research is an important source of data and this experience it is difficult to obtain under other conditions.
- Perform a good quality research to publish quality articles (during the research time people should not perform other functions).
- Promote quality rather than quantity.
- Driven by research, education is a tool for the transmission of acquired knowledge.
- Allocation of sufficient time for family.

Martin Willis asserts that the Slow Science movement can be summarized as follows (Willis, 2013):

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- Research takes place over a period of time and are not being affected by the delivery deadline.
- Research is done with honesty, integrity, and objectivity.
- Research is not only a useful purpose, it also has the purpose of satisfying a curiosity.

Authors mention that the returning to what was before in research will be hard to do. They say that a little caution from the researchers would not hurt.

2.3. Slow Money

Money for healthy food - Large financial companies are urged to steer some of their money to finance: small food businesses, organic farms as well as other small local food businesses. The movement it is trying to create a link between investors and the places where they live (Tasch, 2014). This move is supposed to be in opposition to what's happening on Wall Street where investors do not even know what they're investing in or which country they do it.

The move was launched in 2009 by creating local investment funds in various states in the United States (California, New York, New Mexico, and more). The money which investing funds invest comes from donations of companies and residents of those states, from contributions of financial institutions. In recent years, such investment funds have also been founded in France and Switzerland. The movement promotes the following elements as basic principles (Hewitt, 2013):

- Wants the "return" of money to the real economy.
- Investors must be connected with their places of residence by creating healthy relationships between them and local food industry entrepreneurs.
- Investing money in local activities (food activities).

37 funds and clubs were founded to support the movement, and by 2019 more than 30,000 people joined them. 3600 of over 30,000 adherents have contributed with financial resources in order to achieve the movement ideas. Up to now, over 40 million dollars have been invested, with 397 businesses financed (slowmoney.org, 2019). Money were invested only in environmentally friendly projects that promote sustainability principles.

3. COMPONENTS OF THE SLOW MOVEMENT CHARACTERISTIC TO TOURISM

For this category, author mention the following components: CittaSlow, Slow Travel / Slow Tourism, Slow Food, Slow Gardening, Slow Photography (Figure 3).

Each of these components has a history, which authors highlighted in the following lines.

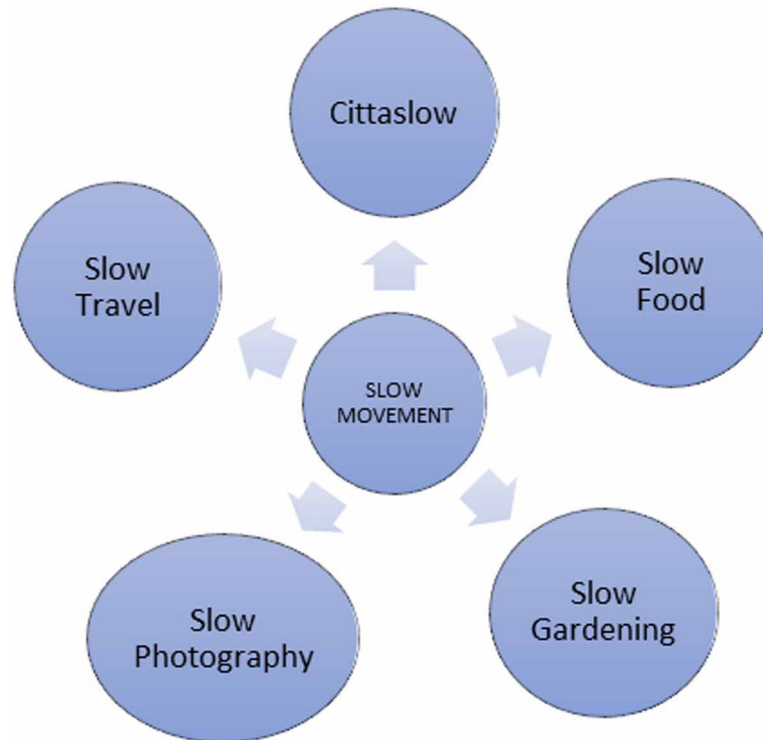
Author find that some authors distinguish between Slow Travel and Slow Tourism (Fullagar et al., 2012). Those who do this say that slow travel only refers to the mode of transport chosen for travel to the destination, and Slow Tourism represents all the activities carried out by tourists within the destination.

Other authors consider Slow Travel to include Slow Tourism as they considers that both components are linked together (Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011), (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2013). Slow Travel encompasses all the experiences tourists have experienced since leaving home until they are back home. This

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Figure 3. Components of the slow movement characteristic to tourism

Source: made by the author



includes travel experiences, experiences gain at the destination, and the contribution to environmental and heritage conservation.

Author gave credit to the last statement that Slow Travel includes Slow Tourism.

3.1. Slow Travel

Lately, many products and services are available under the “slow travel” sign. Many sites praise this type of tourism, while offering slow travel experiences from long-term stays to complete accommodation. Besides, authors have found the existence of tourist guides for different cities around the world for “slow travel” lovers. These guides promote everything that is local, natural, traditional, and all that makes it great to visit these corners of the world (Bradt Travel Guides, 2014). Surely for those who had enough of “fast”, the “slow” goals offer the possibility of being different, moving differently, doing things differently.

The literature talks about the concept of “slow travel” focused on conceptualizing it in relation to the principles of sustainable tourism. Lumsdon and McGrath identified through their research a number of parameters related to slow travel, such as: slowing down and the value of time, location and activities at destination, modalities of transport and experiences lived through the use of different modes of transport, and not least in environmental consequences (Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011). Dickinson and Lumsdon assert that “slow travel” in terms of environmental impact involves metaphoric characterizations such as hard / soft and heavy / light (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010).

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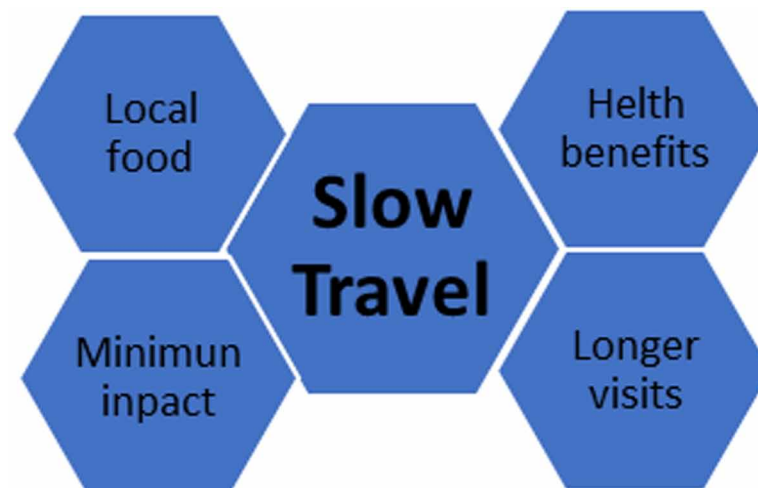
Australian professor Philip Pearce at James Cook University in Queensland proposes four elements for “Slow Travel” (Figure 4)

The concept of Slow Travel, which focuses on the close exploration of communities and the local environment, can be related to a major conceptual theme in tourism research, namely authenticity. Jamal and Robinson state that tourists have the opportunity to create and experience unique experiences such as visiting inspirational places, listening to extraordinary stories, or meeting people with extraordinary stories (Jamal & Robinson, 2009). Authenticity determines the existence of this type of tourism and gives tourists the opportunity: to see the locals way of life, to see local industries and to become friends with the local population. All this leads to increase tourist’s satisfaction and loyalty.

According to Alison Caffyn, the elements that define Slow Travel are (Singh, 2012, pp. 373-379):

- Minimize travel distance.
- Increasing travel time.
- Assume relaxation and restoration for body and mind.
- Assume detailed exploration of the local area.
- Assume contact with the inhabitants, their culture, the local community and the patrimony owned by the locals.
- Assume the consumption of local products (food, beer, wine, other local beverages).
- Familiarization with new skills.
- Assumes the use of a very small amount of technology.
- Assume: experience of quality and authenticity.
- It is relatively sustainable and assumes a modest impact on carbon dioxide emissions.

Figure 4. The defining elements of “slow travel”
Source: Adaptation after (Pearce, 2013)



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3.2. Slow Gardening

The work of the land in a traditional way - the movement was born in 2009 at the initiative of an American Felder Rushing. Rushing is a horticulturist by profession; in the past he worked for Carlo Petrini, who had a strong influence on him, causing him to apply the “slow” principles of gardening (Rushing, 2019). Slow Gardening promotes the cultivation of land by traditional methods without the use of technologies and fertilizers that are not of animal origin. People are encouraged to enjoy every activity they perform in the garden, interact with their neighbors, enjoy the results of their work (Alexander-Sinclair, 2012).

This movement has many things in common with organic farming that also promotes the cultivation of products without the use of synthesis substances. The difference between the two is that organic farming is seen as a source of income while “slow gardening” is seen as an activity that is used to deconcentrate, relax and interact with people. This movement has a logo used to promote the movement.

The movement enjoys success, that led to publish a book to promotes the principles of the movement. Farmers from all corners of the world, from New Caledonia, Hawaii and up to Arctic reindeer breeders, have joined this movement. The motto of the movement is “Life is not a problem to be solved, it is an experience to be lived” (Rushing, 2011).

3.3. Slow Photography

Beautiful photos take time - and photography has been touched by “crazy rush” for speed. Today we can take pictures even with the watch. The promoters of this movement say that today for a good photo people should make a total of more than 1,000 pictures, which, in their opinion, involves waste of resources both material and technological. Slow Photography promotes a return to the past in terms of the time spent taking a photo. The movement is not promoting to give up technology but only to spend more time on making pictures, because photography means “capturing a moment, a glimpse of time” that will tell a story over a longer or shorter time (Svendsen, 2013).

Due to the speed, the true “losers” are the photographers, they lose the pleasure of taking pictures, losing possible “experiences”. Wu states that “the Slow Photography movement is seen as a struggle against this loss of the pleasure of taking a photo” (Wu, 2011). The photography is still seen as an experience, as a action and not as a means of accomplishing something and just that.

Through this “effort” to slow down:

- Fewer but better-quality photographs are been obtained.
- Professional satisfactions is obtained.
- Spiritual and unique moments are lived.

Wu proposes 3 steps to take a quality picture (Wu, 2011):

Step 1: Study closely the object, reliefs, people we want to photograph. Through this effort, we have the chance to see things that can initially escape us.

Step 2: We set what to show and what is not in the picture, we choose the angle, the effects used.

Step 3: Take the picture. This last step is the least important, in fact the first 2 are the ones that create our experience, pleasure and incitement.

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Alex Gavan, who is one of the best climbers and photographers in Romania, says “There are no magic recipes but a lot of work” (Găvan, 2015) to succeed in everything we do, including photographic art.

3.4. CittaSlow: The Association of Slow Cities

The CittaSlow Association was founded in 1999 in Italy and promotes local identity in the context of globalization and aims to improve the quality of life at the local level.

The association was founded by the mayors of four cities (Grevein Chianti, Bra, Orvieto and Positano) and by Slow Food President Carlo Petrini (Lowry & Lee, 2011). These four cities have become the first to be certified as “CittaSlow”. The main purpose of this association is to promote the philosophy of the Slow Food movement at community level as well as at local government level. It consists in applying the concepts of organic gastronomy in everyday activities in those communities. Also, the founding members have developed a regulation that must be respected by all CittaSlow members. Today it is called the “Citta Slow International Charter” (Cittaslow International, 2014).

The regulation adopted then have 54 rules in total, out of which 24 are mandatory. The arrangement was divided into 6 chapters as follows:

- Environmental Policies.
- Infrastructure Policies.
- Technologies and utilities for the benefit of the citizen.
- Protection for indigenous production.
- Awareness.
- Hospitality.

The regulation was adopted in the idea that other cities in the world could join this association. A city, in order to become a member of this association, must first obtain the status of “slow food”. In order to obtain this status, a contender city must have less than 50,000 inhabitants and accept and apply Slow Food’s guidelines to improve the well-being of residents as well as to preserve local specificity (Green Lifestyle, 2012).

Under Articles 25 and 26 of the Regulation, countries, or territories with three-member cities in the association may set up a “National Coordination Committee” that reports directly to the parent organization. This committee can take the tasks of the mother organization, including checking the files of the candidate cities in those countries or territories. By doing so, the decision seeks to shorten the time in which a city can become a member of the movement (Cittaslow International, 2014).

The association promotes a set of principles, to which all member states have to join, (cittaslow-goolwa.com.au, 2014):

- Encourage diversity rather than standardization.
- Support and encourage local traditions and culture.
- Supports sustainable development.
- Supports local producers and at the same time encourages them to produce products specific to the city’s area.
- Encourage a healthy lifestyle especially among children and young people.
- Working with local communities to achieve these principles.

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Today, there are 252 CittaSlow member cities in 30 countries around the world. Most of them are from Italy, followed by Germany and Poland (CittaSlow, 2019).

Member states receive the snail as proof of their membership to CittaSlow Association.

By joining the movement, cities gain several social and economic advantages. In these places there has been a decline in the rate of depopulation in these cities. There has also been notice a reduction in congestion due to traffic reduction and a better use of available local budget resources.

Park says CittaSlow promotes tourism primarily directed to middle class, ignoring the others. He also states that the Cittaslow movement is an attempt to preserve authenticity, as today's the trend is to uniformize any activity (Park, 2014, p. 129). Stefano Cimicchi (one of the founders of the Slow Food movement) says that the association wants to become a major player at European level by taking decisions that have a major impact on small communities, communities that have played a major role in forming the identity of the great states (Newman & Jennings, 2012, p. 196).

Baycan and Girard state that there are differences in "slow cities" regarding the adoption of movement principles for activities in those communities. Thus, they say that smaller cities do not fully apply the movement principles, while large cities fully apply these movement principles. They also found that in cities member to Cittaslow there is a strong emphasis on conservation, on protection and on a better use of local products and less on the introduction of new technologies (Young & Stevenson, 2013).

Following a research carried out by Franco Angeli in 2012 among cities member of the movements, it was found that the average population of cities was ~ 14,000 inhabitants. There has also been observed an increase in number of inhabitants over the past 10 years for the respective cities (before joining the association, they faced a severe problem of depopulation). Member cities have in vast majority of cases (91% of them) historical centers and 44% of them are located in parks or reserves. Distances from motorways are approximately 27 km and 20 km to railway stations. According to respondents, the CittaSlow movement promotes: local culture and traditions, improving the living conditions for the inhabitants, preserving and protecting the natural and artificial monuments, increasing attractiveness through a recognized global brand (Angeli, 2012, pp. 93 -104).

3.5. Slow Food

The movement was initiated in 1986 by Carlo Petrini as a response to the opening of a McDonald's restaurant in an area of significant cultural importance (Piazza di Spagna - Rome).

Petrini is considered to be one of the 50 people who could save the planet according to the "The Guardian". He managed to draw attention to the quality of the sleeves we eat to great world leaders such as David Cameron, Prince Charles, Al Gore and Barack Obama.

The slow movement has expanded worldwide in more than 100 countries in an attempt to halt the advance of "fast food" as well as in the "fighting" with multinational food producers that have contributed to the degradation of the environment thru their activity that they carry out.

Currently there are more than 100,000 members for "Slow Food" only. They promote slow philosophy through the events and activities that they organize / promote such as:

- Tasting activities.
- Visits to farms and local producers.
- Organization of conferences and symposiums.
- Organization of film festivals.

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- Tasting classes for children and adults.
- Conducting promotional activities at local and international level.

Slow Food philosophy is based on three principles (Smith & Pattison, 2014): Tasteful, Clean and Fair:

- Tasteful because the consumption of fresh seasonal products should be encouraged, and they should be part of every local culture.
- Clean because production and consumption of food should not harm our environment or our health.
- Fair because the consumer price should be affordable and cover the costs of small-scale production.

Such a philosophy encourages both the involvement of small producers in the production and sale of high-quality products, as well as the responsibility of the tourist who, once they feel the difference in quality, they will also contribute to the development of the small rural communities.

Every year, “Salone del Gusto - Terra Madre” is organized. The event takes place at the end of October and is organized by Slow Food, the Piedmont Region and the municipality of Turin in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry in Italy. The Salone del Gusto International Event is held in Turin, Italy. It is dedicated to healthy eating and is an event that has reached its 12th edition.

In 2018, the Salone del Gusto-Terra Madre 2018 was organized from 20 to 24 September at the Lingotto Fiere Center, Turin’s shopping center where over 900 exhibitors from 100 countries were present. Among them were chefs, farmers, academics, food craftsmen, wine and gastronomy representatives, and Terra Madre communities all over the world.

At the center of each edition of Salone del Gusto and Terra Madre, there have been a number of hot topics related to food, which are increasingly important, especially in the light of environmental, social and agricultural health and climate change related issues, the planet’s population, global famine, and more. Among the guests or counselors, as well as representatives of the Slow Food movement, who talked about key topics such as people’s welfare, food wastage, agricultural speculation, meat consumption, native peoples, bees, family farming, etc.

CONCLUSION

Worldwide there are more than 1300 convivia (local branches) dedicated to the slow movement. The local branches are organizing products presentations made by local producers who are members of these organizations. And also exchange activities are organized between subsidiaries and the most important is that thru these activities the promotion of the slow current is taking place.

Slow movement penetrated deferent areas of contemporary society, and by doing so several activities have taken slow prefix in their name. This phenomenon of introducing the notion of slow in different areas of contemporary society continues to expand, suggesting that people are trying to return to their origins. From all new components the most representative to slow movement are Slow Food, Slow Travel, Citta Slow.

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Chapter 8

Economic and Social Features of MICE Industry Development and Business Tourism

Manuela Liliana Muresan

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2366-4526>

Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania

ABSTRACT

The chapter aims to study a new form of tourism, business tourism and the MICE industry, which in Romania and Eastern Europe is in the process of development, having a major economic contribution to the growth of the economy of the communities where it is taking place. The business and industry tourism sector MICE (M-meeting, I-travel incentive/reward, C-convention or congress, E-exhibition, fair, event) is an industry that governs the economic market confirms the markets of Europe and the United States of America as a success story through the regeneration of urban cities and the superior quality of services. The aim of the research is to analyze the social and economic implications generated by the business tourism sector and the MICE industry in order to increase the level of development of the communities where they are taking place.

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary world is subject to a rapid process of change, and tourism is strongly present in the life of society, as an economic and social phenomenon influenced by it. Studies in the field present the analysis of the tourism sector as a human experience, as a factor in the national economic progress, and not - ultimately, as a business – a source of revenue and development of the destination. Tourism highlights natural resources, enriches the cultural horizon and represents a way of economic, social and spiritual development of society.

The benefits of this chapter are in close correlation with those of the book, bringing to the attention of students, teachers and researchers from outside Eastern Europe the concerns of tourism research in the universities and research centers of the former communist countries for three decades after the return

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to the economy market. Research aimed at a wide public interested in European tourism and especially in the former socialist countries' tourism, with emphasis on the Romanian one.

The motivation for choosing the theme is justified by the insufficient knowledge of the potential of business tourism and the MICE industry in Romania, the present chapter following the following research directions:

- The extent to which the business tourism sector has taken place today.
- The social and economic implications generated by the business tourism sector and the MICE industry, with the aim of increasing the level of development of the communities where they are taking place.
- The potential for capitalizing and the dynamic of the business tourism sector.
- The economic impact on investment in tourism infrastructure.

The research of the proposed theme was accomplished through the following research methods: documentation for identifying the development of business tourism and MICE industry was made by analyzing the current available information, the synthesis of the existing research on the subject, the direct and indirect observation on some popular MICE destinations in Europe, description, interpretation of statistical data provided by ICCA, OECD, UNWTO, regarding the capacity of hosting MICE events.

The objectives of the chapter are as follows:

- Defining concepts and practical approaches to the business tourism industry and MICE industry.
- Analyzing the potential of MICE business / industry tourism at international, regional and national level.
- Clarifying the importance of the MICE business / industry tourism sector in the development of the tourist destination.
- Identification of contemporary economic trends in the context of globalization on the development of MICE business / industry tourism.
- Presenting the size of the MICE industry (meetings, incentives, conferences, fairs) at international, regional and national level.

The author's concerns in the proposed research for this chapter are:

- Explaining the concepts of business tourism, MICE industry, Convention Bureau associations.
- Identifying links between the criteria for choosing a MICE destination and the influence of the number of participants in events.
- Evaluation of the MICE event hosting infrastructure in Romania.
- Identifying the available resources that can turn Romania into an attractive MICE destination at international level.
- Determination of Romania's most important competitors in MICE industry worldwide, European and regional.
- Highlighting the economic importance of business tourism for the national economy.

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Background

The current tourist development has caused the differentiation of some types of tourism, which have gained more and more importance: rural, adventure and business tourism, with priority being given to organizing events specific to the MICE industry. On a large scale, rural tourism and local communities have been encouraged to develop as independent, stand-alone destinations, capable of creating distinct, strong and unique experiences for visitors through local customs and traditions. Tourism in kind proved to be successful under the auspices of maintaining local traditions and customs (Nistoreanu, 2006), as well as through the sustainable development of rural areas in Romania and other emerging countries from the perspective of tourism flows, as a result of strong support through regional policies (Postelnicu & Dabija, 2018).

General and tourist events in particular are attractions that are highly appreciated by visitors to a destination, so they can enjoy more leisure time, find out more about the destinations they visit, relax, etc. (Postelnicu & Dabija, 2016). As key factors in tourism demand, events act as catalysts for business and leisure travel. For many cities, regions and countries, business tourism based on different events is an essential priority in the national development strategy, being accompanied and supported by specific public policies in countries such as Australia, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Ireland, Japan, Korea, Latvia, New Zealand, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom. They allocate considerable financial, spatial and human resources to develop, attract and support major events that enhance the attractiveness and competitiveness of the destination, contribute to local prosperity and the economic development of the regions as well as to various organizations and institutions (OECD, 2017).

At national level, empirical studies in this regard are very few, being treated from the point of view of some segments of business tourism and the MICE industry, such as event management or marketing of fairs and exhibitions, but have not been deepened in all its aspects. Thus, the specialized literature identified refers to: Nistoreanu, (2005), Stănciulescu & Țigu, (2006), Pop & Dabija, (2009), Stănciulescu, (2010), giving us the possibility to draw a scientific framework to the topic approached.

Business tourism, conferences and fairs are complemented by the MICE industry, under the umbrella of which all events from business meetings, congresses, fairs and exhibitions are found. This is a niche of tourism that has evolved rapidly in recent years, bringing remarkable profits to the community and being non-aggressive to the environment. There is no doubt that this sector can be divided into primary and secondary activities (Stănciulescu, 2010). The main activity is business (work) and includes activities such as: consultations, inspections and attendance at meetings. The secondary ones are related to tourism (leisure) and include activities such as dining, recreation, shopping, sightseeing, meetings with other people for leisure activities, etc. Primary ones are considered to be more important, the secondary ones are often described as “substantial” (Stănciulescu, 2010).

Business tourism provides an impetus to the transport sector of the country of transit, transit and destination: airlines, rail, road and / or shipping companies make full use of business travelers. This generates jobs for professionals such as automotive engineers, pilots and cabin crew, ground-floor auxiliaries, etc. (Whitford, 2009). Sometimes business meetings take place in locations different from those of employees, which forces them to extend their stay, benefiting from an improved tourist experience. At the same time, it is possible that once he has visited the foreign city, he will remain with a favorable impression and wish to revise it for recreational and / or relaxing purposes with his / her family. This will generate revenue for organizations in the field of tourism, food and hospitality (Severt et al., 2007).

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There is a direct correlation between business tourism and the tourism industry in general (Swarbrooke & Honer, 2001). Business tourism is able to generate many social, economic benefits for local communities, being considered a key factor in maintaining and developing temporary and permanent jobs. Many governments are making positive use of the effects of business tourism at regional or national level as it contributes to capital inflows, the development of sparsely populated or poor regions, etc. Business tourism generates jobs in the supply, organization, and event chain.

DEFINITION AND ANALYSIS OF BUSINESS TOURISM CONCEPT

Davidson (1994) is the first to define the concept of business travel through journeys that relate to people's work. Since ancient times man has traveled for trade, which is practically one of the oldest forms of tourism. Davidson's broad definition of business tourism includes a variety of distinct forms of business tourism, including business trips, daily travel to and from work outside the worker's area of residence, conferences and local, regional and national meetings organized by organizations and institutions, global and / or international congresses and conventions, in-service training courses, exhibitions, fairs, product launches, incentive trips, short-term labor migration (one year), exchanges of experience and / or study trips conducted by students and / or teachers, moving traded, traditional, agri-food products, etc.

The definition of business tourism has proved to be a very comprehensive concept. Over the years, many researchers have tried to define this new form of tourism. Although in the literature Neacsu (2000), Swarbrooke and Honer (2001), Minciu (2004), Nistoreanu (2005), Garrod (2012), Perova (2017) etc. there has been no definition of business tourism fully agreed by specialists.

Definitions of Business Tourism

- **Business Tourism:** Journeys recorded as having purposes related to people's work; from ancient times man has traveled for trade, so one can say that it is one of the oldest forms of tourism (Davidson, 1994).
- **Business Tourism:** Business trips are defined as "work-related travel, an uneven work place" (Middleton & Clarke, 2001).
- **Business Tourism:** "Practice of people traveling for purposes related to their work." (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2001).
- **Business Tourism:** Defined a lucrative segment with rapid economic growth and enjoying leisure activities combined with business travel (New York International Trade Center, 2001).
- **Business Tourism:** Or business trips are a more limited and concentrated subset of regular tourism. During business travel (trips), individuals are still working and paid, but they are doing so far away from their workplace and at home (Lennon, 2003).
- **Business Tourism:** How "business travel expenses are paid by the business / company they work for." (Pender & Sharpley, 2005).
- **Business Tourism:** The main activities of business tourism include meetings and participation in conferences and exhibitions; Despite the business term in the name, business tourism is also made by individuals in government or non-profit organizations that engage in similar activities, it is still classified as business travel (travel) (Garrod, 2012).

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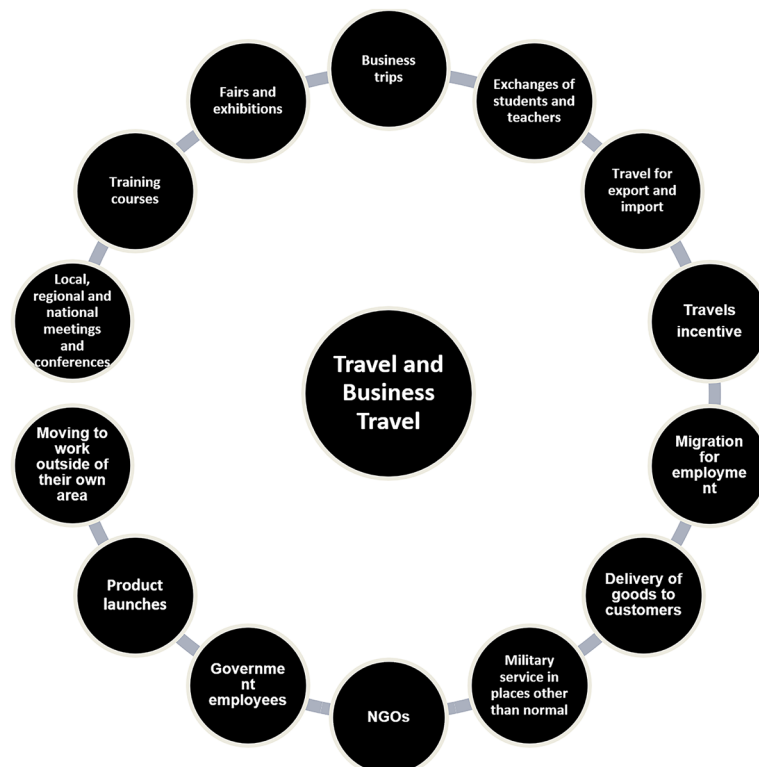
- **Business Tourism:** Providing facilities and services to millions of delegates who attend annual meetings, congresses, exhibitions, business events, incentive trips, and corporate hospitality (International Association of Congresses and Conventions (ICCA), 2018).

The authors Gregorić, Nađ and Gregorić (2016) claim that the business and travel industry occupies a large part of the tourism industry. It employs millions of people and is the main niche in the tourist destinations market. Business tourism as a relatively new form of tourism is difficult to put in a certain limit and can not be compared to some similar forms of selective tourism.

In figure 1 there are 15 categories of trips divided into subdivisions. For example, an individual business move may be a sales agent who sells to a new customer his company’s product, an IT consultant who visits a customer to resolve his problem, or an executive director of a multinational corporation that visits a regional branch, etc. At the same time, we can identify a number of criteria that support the differentiation of forms of tourism, among which the motivation of travel is the one that separates business tourism from all other types. The significance of this criterion is demonstrated by the fact that the definition of tourism itself is based on the typology of the reasons for travel (Minciu, 2004).

Business tourism is an industry that seems to take responsibility globally because it is capable of finding new ways to take care of itself but also of the communities and people it serves. World economic prospects have reported an increase in industry despite a political climate that continues to indicate a “protectionist” agenda.

Figure 1. Typology of business trips in business tourism
 Source: (Swarbrooke si Honer, 2001)



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As a result, MICE is the generator of economic and social development through global travel, supporting services such as transport, accommodation and tourism infrastructure. It should be noted that the industry of meetings and events is strongly affected by decisions taken by the authorities on transport, culture, trade etc. Its development implies the contribution of the whole society and requires a good public-private dialogue.

The concept of the event was defined according to DEX (Romanian Academy, 2009) as an event or fact of particular importance in a social or private life for a human community (or for an individual), which happens at some point and causes the change of a in fact, a local or regional phenomenon. Matthews (2008) brings to discussion the so-called special events that they define as gatherings of people to participate in for several hours or days to discuss, sell, celebrate, learn, observe or influence people in a particular sector; or direction. From the point of view of the event, MICE, M (meeting), I (stimulus trip), C (convention or congress), and E (exhibition, fair, event), represents one of the fastest growing segments in the tourism industry (Getz, 2008; Whitford, 2009) as a result of the longer stay of the participants in a destination compared to other types of tourists (Zhang, Leung & Qu, 2007), respectively for the benefits on which creates them to the MICE-related industrial network (Oppermann & Chon, 1997).

The MICE industry has created an increased demand in the tourism sector due to the assumption that business travelers spend more money each day in the destination than leisure visitors. There is also the potential for visitors to use the facilities that their destination offers over a longer period of time than seasonal peaks for traditional holidaymakers. Thirdly, the facilities a city or a country can offer can be expanded by developing new exhibition and conference facilities for the MICE sector, which can be strongly supported with co-benefits for residents and destination, making it more attractive. The emphasis on MICE is not, however, unceasing. To attract conventional traffic, cities invest or support the organization of conferences and exhibitions that are expensive and therefore represent an opportunity cost for public interventions (Boyle, 1997; Baade, Baumann & Matheson, 2008).

This is particularly important because such facilities are marginalized in many places economically, requiring even public subsidies. The motivation for which public support is needed in MICE is based on the economic benefits that appear in the profit area, depending on the visitor, or an improved competitive position over other urban areas. Visitors' convenience policy often requires public support, such as iconic cultural facilities, exhibition and conference centers, stadiums hosting major events (Coates & Humphreys, 2000; Jones, 2002). It is regrettable that it was difficult, if not impossible, to be transparent and consistently measure the economic benefits of MICE activity for a destination. Without such a measure, the information needed to use a good public policy will not exist (Sanders, 2002). There is a significant gap in highlighting decision makers to assess the economic situation of the new infrastructure faced by visitors. This support is important for the realization of the conference facilities and the associated infrastructure, which cost a lot, the political factors rarely being involved in this field (Flyvbjerg, 2008).

DIMENSIONS OF MICE INDUSTRY

Davidson and Cope (2003) highlight the value of the MICE industry by linking the corporate world to the influential organizations with the travel world. Thus, currently 40% of the activity of many tourism agencies is represented by this sector, due to which the budget allocated on the night of accommodation increases by approximately 20% per tourist. The actors involved take into account the cultural diversity and the service-family balance, because some of the conference participants want to come with the part-

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ner, which implies the development of additional package tours for the meetings. Thus, profit growth is guaranteed by finding the best accommodation and related services such as small tours and excursions, a good opportunity to promote the location of the event, etc. (Stănciulescu, 2010).

Davidson and Cope (2003) present the meetings in other forms:

- Training session, attended by 10-30 people, for a period of three to five days.
- Reception, ceremony that has a festive character, generally attends from 50 people upwards.
- Meeting, a promotional event, attended by around 30-150 participants for a maximum of three days.
- Summit, an official governmental event, taking place at the highest state level, attending presidents of state and government, between one and three days at the most.
- Workshop is an event with 30-35 participants, divided into groups of 4-5, where people are sharing experience and information on a theme.

The MICE industry has a very important economic and social component, it is incentives / incentives / rewarding trips. Incentive tourism is a management tool for rewarding and motivating sales representatives, merchants, distributors, production workers, support staff and sometimes the most loyal customers. The company rewards sales representatives who reach the proposed target, sending them on holiday with or without family. Most of the time, the incentive trip comes with stays at five-star hotels, tourist packages and planned activities such as festive dinners, parties and games. Practically, incentive trips have nothing to do with business or work in the sense of activity. The incentive travel market is recognized especially in the U.S. and Asia, but has been developing for some years in Europe, even in Romania (Deery et al., 2004).

Chloe (2013) identified several factors on which decisions to support travel rewards are based:

- The stimulus budget economy or how strong the economy is in the country where the sponsor group has its headquarters.
- The political climate, as travel alerts for destinations with political turbulence may affect their choice.
- Security and security, a growing problem around the world, such as the terrorist alert levels after the US-September 11, 2001 incident, such as the attacks in Europe, the Paris-13th Army armed forces, and Manchester-May 22nd, 2017 (Mediafax, 2018).

Specialists in the field say in the international press that security threats and fluctuating exchange rates influence the choice of destination for incentive travel more than ever. While Morocco and Turkey, which were among the most desirable destinations for groups in 2014/2015, became really uninteresting in 2017/2018, despite the fact that prices are extremely attractive to tourists (Citmagazine, 2018).

At the same time, Tenerife, southern France and Croatia have become viable travel alternatives, especially for relaxation and recreation, and there are no security issues to date. Iceland has recently become another destination highly appreciated for rewarding journeys due to the beauty of nature and the fact that it is only a few hours away from most European metropolises. Long-haul flights are steadily expanding, with 34% of event planners considering highly viable rewards destinations like the United Arab Emirates, the US, South Africa, Thailand, Singapore and Japan etc. They are currently on top of the wish list for rewarding trips (Citmagazine, 2018).

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Another component of the MICE industry that brings major profits to the development of the communities in which it is organized is represented by conventions / conferences / congresses. They are similar to meetings, being gatherings of individuals who have common goals, developed for the exchange of ideas, opinions and information of common interest. An organization (for example an association) will annually hold a convention on a theme related to its profile. Those interested in registering for the convention may pay a membership fee to the association for all sessions, discussions, benefiting from food, drink and festive meals and visiting different local objectives. Conventions consist of a variety of events: congresses (large-scale meetings, trade meetings), conferences (small-scale gatherings for information exchange) and networking and networking events. All conventions can be organized internationally, nationally and regionally (Swarbrooke & Honer, 2001).

The specific characteristics of the conventions, according to Chloe (2013) are:

- A big event that lasts a few days and involves a social program.
- Organized by associations: professional and commercial, voluntary societies, charities and political parties.
- The time when it takes place once a year.
- Generates revenue for the organizing association.
- Convention place selection is done long before the convention.

According to the International Association of Congresses and Conventions (ICCA) the most popular destinations for international conventions in the world, the top 10 countries in 2017 were as follows (ICCA, 2017):

1. United States of America (424,010 participants).
2. Spain (327,996 participants).
3. Germany (246,045 participants).
4. France (211,129 participants).
5. United Kingdom (192,544 participants).
6. Italy (172,274 participants).
7. Canada (168,223 participants).
8. Austria (139,187 participants).
9. The Netherlands (134,510 participants).
10. Japan (133,025 participants).

The last component of the MICE concept is represented by E, the exhibition and the fair. These events are organized to promote new products, services and information to those interested in them, such as prospective customers or buyers. The companies presenting the exhibit usually rents an area / stand from the organizer and creates a meeting space with potential buyers. Often buyers or the general public need an invitation or a ticket to be admitted to the fair or fair. (Pop et al., 2009).

At fairs there is an opportunity to collect the latest information about competitors, but also to build the image of the company according to market demand. Participants may be associations or companies in the industry of the manifestation (Moise, 2015).

According to Chloe (2013), exhibitions are ranked according to size:

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- For the public or for the final consumer (B2C): to present the services - car parks or fair /exhibition - book, tourism or exhibition of equipment.
- For business buyers, namely interorganizational meetings (B2B): commercial show or trade fair for the export of the presented products.
- A mixed event - an exhibition combining trade and the public, open to companies and all interested. Most of these mixed events have a specific attendance program for participants.

This sector is an area of excellence and professionalism that is dynamic at a global level, which in recent years has stimulated the growth of world travel for individual or group travel in the interest of attending international conferences, official events, business forums, training courses and activities team building. Therefore, these business and business travel arrangements involve a multitude of other services besides those typical of classical tourism (Garrod, 2012).

MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

Capitalization of the Business Tourism Potential

This type of travel is a travel associated with attending meetings at company or association level, congresses, conventions or fairs. It has proven to be an important sub-sector of the tourism industry on both travel volumes and revenue generated by stakeholders. There is also a high degree of interdependence between the various actors involved in business travel and tourism. Swarbrooke and Honer (2001) synthesize this interdependence shown in **table no. 1**, the reality being more heterogeneous than the figure shows. For example, transport operators include: air, rail, ferry, cruise, taxi, bus transport, transport operators offering transport to the destination and transport operators traveling within the destination (public transport).

Benefits of Business Tourism for Destination

Part of business travel contributes to increasing the domestic investment of a destination after the end of an event they attended, although there is little empirical evidence to support this idea. It is noticed that the business visitor visits the business destination, likes what he sees and decides to set up a new business or transfer his existing business to that destination. It is not surprising that business tourism has been used as a development strategy for certain destinations such as:

- Industrial cities in an attempt to diversify and modernize their economies.
- Traditional coastal resorts that want to expand their season and attract business tourists, financial potential (Swarbrooke & Honer, 2001).

The demand for business travel by business travelers in a particular area, country or region may be subdivided by: the frequency of travel, the level of demand for certain destinations, the level of demand for different types of accommodation, for the products and services of certain providers and / or intermediaries, segmentation of the market based on the type of employer on the basis of age, gender and nationality, depending on the seasonality of the demand, the purpose of the journey and the type of

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Table 1. The actors involved in capitalizing on business tourism

CONSUMERS / CUSTOMERS SPECIALISTS / INTERMEDIARIES PROVIDERS	Individuals Companies Associations
	Business travel agents Placement companies and handling agents Fair and exhibition organizing companies Event organizers Travel agents for incentive packages Marketing and Destination Management Agents
	Transport operators Vocational training operators Travel stimulation operators: Residential and non-residential Accommodation operators Subsidiary services: catering services Specialized services: audio-visual and entertainment equipment, information technology Tourist Attractions

Source: (Swarbrooke & Honer, 2001)

business tourism, the duration of the journey and the costs incurred during the trip. Events under the umbrella of business tourism have the force for destinations to stimulate the development of infrastructure investments such as airports and convention centers without guaranteeing that they will depreciate their investment (Swarbrooke & Honer, 2001).

The existence of a certain auxiliary service destination may influence the organizer’s decision to organize business tourism events. For example, a company organizing a launch of state-of-the-art technology products can choose a destination with dedicated IT and audiovisual companies. Many of the destinations, according to Swarbrooke and Honer (2001), are marked to enhance their attractiveness, such as “Big Apple” for New York, so these brands can be powerful marketing tools such as the French Riviera, have a great power to attract business travelers. Destinations, however, are discrete areas that offer all or most of the attractions and services necessary for the business traveler, regardless of the purpose of the trip.

Table 2 shows the factors that influence business travel and destination choice. Business trips and tourism demand are influenced by a wide range of factors found both in the generating region and destination. Specific factors will influence the demand for certain forms of business travel, such as reward trips.

Benefits of Business Travelers for Seasonality

One of the advantages of business travel is that they are less seasonal than leisure tourism. The business trip takes place outside the leave of individuals, with predominance during working days Monday-Friday. Therefore, not being the ones who pay the bills for the services they enjoy, tourists traveling so tend to spend three times more than other categories of tourists. Thus, business tourism is less seasonal than similar forms of tourism, but it greatly depends on the economic development of the destination (Stănciulescu & Țigu, 2006).

Due to the high tertiary degree of the services sector, business tourism directly and indirectly influences their development, especially in the areas of commerce, catering, hotel and transport. Whitfield (2009) emphasizes that the promotion of tourism in certain tourist destinations is achieved as a combination of the elements generated by the improvement, innovation and implementation of changes resulting from the needs of tourists, on the one hand, and the capacity to increase tourist incomes, reducing the seasonality on the other part.

Economic and Social Features of MICE Industry Development and Business Tourism

Table 2. Factors that influence business travel in the region and destination

Region	Factors	Destination
Degree of political stability	Political stability is needed both in the generating region and in the destination for business travelers	Degree of political stability
The living standard	A lower cost of living in the destination area may increase the attractiveness of the conference destination for people in the generating region	The living standard
The level of economic development and the state of the economy	A high level of economic development and a strong economy increase demand and vice versa	The level of economic development and the state of the economy
Exchange rate	Relatively high exchange rates for the destination-generating region make travel cheaper and stimulate imports while reducing exports to destinations and vice versa	Exchange rate
Historical and / or cultural links	The stronger they are, the higher the level of business tourism can expect	Historical and / or cultural links
Industrial structure	Business trips are likely to be larger between generating regions and destinations that have common interests in certain industries, products and services	Industrial structure
Governmental policies on trade relations	The more governments support the free trade policy, the greater the likely level of business travel and tourism between the two	Governmental policies on trade relations

Source: (Swarbrooke & Honer, 2001)

Benefits of Business Tourism for Human Resources

There is little empirical research on the types of people who work specifically in business tourism. Business tourism is “an industry” in which success is essential, achieved by training staff and leadership. Thus, **table 3** presents notable intercultural skills models for business tourism and these two types of skills are very important in staff training:

- **The Ability to Speak Foreign Languages:** Given the era of globalization, the number of events related to business tourism and professional travel increases at an accelerated pace beyond the physical and cultural boundaries. Tang (2014) believes that it is imperative for international business professionals to develop intercultural and professional competences in the formation of a comprehensive framework of English language learning for Specific Purposes (ESP). For future experts, this is a vital knowledge of content in terms of communication competence. Several researchers, including Dörnyei and Csizér (2005), Zoranyan (2008) and Wang (2010), have stated the importance of developing intercultural competences in English for business tourism and tourism in general.
- **Technological Skills:** The 21st century is marked by the development of technology in all industries in the global economy. Thus, tourism is dependent on the different types of technology, so it is necessary to employ trained, skilled and specialized staff in their use (Wiseman, 2003):
 - Audiovisual equipment used in organizing events.
 - Digital marketing and access to social networking.
 - Booking software and global distribution systems.
 - Organizing and conducting videoconferencing through various applications, etc.

Economic and Social Features of MICE Industry Development and Business Tourism

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL GUIDELINES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL INDUSTRY AND BUSINESS TOURISM

If the expansion of the international tourism activity in each country depends to a decisive extent on the distribution and quality of the natural factors and the anthropic elements that attract foreign tourists, the development of the business tourism, seen especially in terms of economic effects, is in a correlation direct with the volume, diversity and quality of additional benefits. Given that basic tourism services are made at parameters comparable to those of competing countries, business tourism services can play a key role in ensuring the attractiveness of a destination (Stanciulescu & Tigu, 2005). Among the particularities of business tourism that have contributed to this description, we observe: high profits of organizers and service providers, independence from natural conditions and contribution to seasonality mitigation, use of better material facilities and reduction of environmental impact.

Each business tourism organization has a so-called “**business environment**” or “**macro-environment**,” a term used for the factors that affect its organization and its market. Some of these factors are close to the economic, physical and / or organizational entity, such as suppliers and intermediaries, they can be influenced or even controlled by them. If we refer to the business environment, it also includes the macro-environment (it includes wider and deeper factors), which have a great influence but on which the organization has no control and practically little or no influence (Dabija, 2011).

The key factors in these macro-active environments will greatly influence the future of the organization, as can be seen from the **figure 2**.

As with leisure tourism, business tourism and the MICE industry have an economic, environmental and social impact on their destination. Conventional practice can briefly identify economic and social effects, although they are in fact very interdependent. More and more countries, regions, cities and resorts are trying to attract events from the business tourism sector, which is considered from the economic

Table 3. Notable intercultural skills models for business tourism

Autor	Cognitive level	Behavioral level	Affective level
Deardorff (2006)	Knowledge (awareness and understanding of own culture and cultural differences)	Skills (critical thinking, problem solving and interacting with people from different cultures)	Attitude (openness, availability and the desire to respect people other cultures)
Wiseman (2003)	Knowledge (awareness or understanding information and actions required)	Skills (performance through effective and context-sensitive behavior)	Motivation (feelings, intentions, needs associated with engaging in intercultural communication)
Luka (2007)	Declarative knowledge of cultural aspects	Ability to operate in different cultural contexts	Attitude (curiosity and openness, tolerance)
Brookers & Becket (2011)	Knowledge and understanding 1. Different cultural contexts; 2. Contemporary global issues; 3. Different cultural places and norms; 4. Foreign languages.	Ability to work in different cultural contexts 1. Taking informed ethical and responsible decisions; 2. Observing the connectivity between global and local dimensions; 3. Intercultural work; 4. Intercultural communication; 5. Coexistence in unfamiliar cultural contexts.	Attitude (curiosity and opening, tolerance) Values and attitudes 1. Waiver of prejudice; 2. Respect and value diversity; 3. Accepts political and ethical responsibility; 4. Empowered to make changes; 5. Promoting justice and equality.

Source: (Tang, 2014)

Economic and Social Features of MICE Industry Development and Business Tourism

Figure 2. The impact of macro-environment on business tourism and the MICE industry

Source: Swarbrooke & Honer, 2001



perspective as the most beneficial form of tourism. Research carried out in different areas of the globe indicates that businessmen and conferences delegates spend two to four times more money than other types of tourists. The positive economic effects of this form of tourism are:

- Revenue for destinations and organizations within it.
- Job creation.
- Generating tax revenues for local and central government.
- The multiplier effect of tourism business expenses within the local economy.
- Potential stimulation of domestic investment.
- Foreign currency intake if business tourists are foreigners (Swarbrooke & Honer, 2001).

The social impact of the MICE industry and business tourism may be less visible or tangible than the economic impact, which also implies considering the following (Swarbrooke & Honer, 2001):

- The offer of interesting jobs, relatively well paid, increases, the women and young graduates can quickly enter the labor market.
- Supporting infrastructure such as: commercial complexes, theaters and public transport facilities;
- Stimulating creativity in the local business community.
- Can be a motivator for many employees / business travelers.

Destinations play a unique role in conducting MICE-related events and related organizations live in a complex macro-environment that positively or negatively affects the economic, social and technological outcomes of the industry (Morrison, 2013).

Economic and Social Features of MICE Industry Development and Business Tourism

THE POTENTIAL OF THE ROMANIAN DESTINATION

Romania can offer tourists a unique experience through its resources and services, because compared to other Eastern European countries, Romania has rich natural tourism resources that have given it the opportunity to open up to the tourism sector. This significant tourist potential is reflected by spectacular reliefs and scenic landscapes, harmoniously combined with authentic traditions and customs (Postelnicu & Dabija, 2016; Postelnicu & Dabija, 2018). However, business tourism and the MICE industry remain untapped at their true value, although it offers any country a real leverage for its economic development.

If we analyze the MICE industry in depth, we notice that the choice of destination is never random and is influenced by a number of defining elements for each part of the market. For example, for exhibitions, the organizers will seek proximity to the target or major markets of the industry, a large number of participants, air travel accessibility, conference center accommodation capacity, sponsor support, technology deployment and accommodation cost (Antonioli Corigliano, 2013).

Considering the MICE industry as one entity, ignoring the specificity of events, the criteria for selecting the destination may be ranked according to the importance of promoting it. **In the table number 4**, there is a classification based on the analysis of the specialty literature and on the discussions held with different professionals in the MICE industry, but also with the staff of the public institutions in the country about the first five criteria relevant to the choice of the destination by the MICE event organizers.

Considering the main destination - the nightlife, attractions and climate are not key variables in the decision-making process of organizing an event, but rather personal reasons or strongly depend on the type of event chosen. For Romania, these elements are rather attractive in the choice of our country as a MICE destination, due to the assembly of several variables from the ones previously exposed, but especially due to the existence of the following favorable premises:

- Security and security, in the current geopolitical context, is an important asset that this destination has, a publicly available issue internationally.
- Service quality is largely due to the fact that the organizers choose to host the event because there are qualified staff with advanced studies in the field who also know to speak several foreign languages, mainly English.
- Romania's membership of the European Union makes the travel policy an advantage, even if the formalities needed to obtain a visa are more extensive and / or more laborious depending on the delegate's country of origin (Stănciulescu & Țigu, 2006).

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TOURIST DESTINATION ROMANIA

Romanian tourism has so far developed through the direct contribution of the cultural, natural and leisure areas. Romania owns unique tourist attractions in the world: The Danube Delta - the only delta in the world declared as a UNESCO biosphere reserve; Bran Castle - associated with the legend of Count Dracula; Transylvania - one of the favorite regions of Prince Charles of the United Kingdom and declared by the Lonely Planet newspaper as the world's first tourist region in 2016 (Mureșan & Nistoreanu, 2017); one of the most beautiful waterfalls in the world - Bigar; Transfăgărășanul – which, according to the authors of the Top Gear show, is the most spectacular mountain road in the world (Mureșan & Nistoreanu, 2017). Part of Romania's tourist attractions are included in UNESCO World Heritage: monasteries with painted

Economic and Social Features of MICE Industry Development and Business Tourism

Table 4. The first five relevant criteria for choosing the MICE destination

No.	Variables	Arguments
1.	Accessibility	Today, speed and proximity are very important both for saving time and money.
2.	Infrastructure development	Globalization and entry into the free market have allowed companies to multiply. Participating in events has transformed into corporate culture to compete, find new customers or share the latest experiences. The exhibition / conference space must meet a number of criteria depending on the type of event, but for most organizers, the space available and the ability to accommodate a large number of participants is a prime destination for the destination.
3.	Accommodation capacity	Most MICE events are national or international, which implies the need to host delegates. Depending on the size and type of the event, it is very important to have a large accommodation capacity, namely hotels of minimum three stars. The presence of international chains is a major asset for a destination.
4.	MICE industry history	The already hosted event, whether national or international, is an advantage for a destination because it offers more confidence to the organizers. In addition, organizers perceive a better destination if they have had an earlier experience with it.
5.	Tourist attractiveness	The destination has to convey a message, an experience, but also give the business visitor the opportunity to discover new landscapes and cultures. Image promotion will be based on the customer and the subject of the event.

Source: (Oppermann, 1996)

exterior frescoes in Bucovina, Dacian fortresses in the mountains of Orăştie (where the tourist can find Sarmizegetusa Regia, considered by Know how of Romania as a Romanian Stonehenge (2018), medieval fortress from Sighisoara, which is still inhabited, or the wooden churches in Maramures (Postelnicu & Dabija, 2016; Postelnicu & Dabija, 2018). The promotion of Romanian tourism is focused around six forms of tourism: rural, cultural, spa, seaside, ecotourism / adventure and city break.

ANALYSIS OF VARIABLES / CRITERIA FOR THE ELECTION OF ROMANIA AS A MICE DESTINATION

Romania’s potential as a MICE destination will be identified on the five variables in the table no 4.

Accessibility

According to the figure no 3 a number of sixteen cities of Romania have an air transport infrastructure, internationally connected by different airlines: Bucharest (with two airports: Otopeni and Baneasa), Baia Mare, Bacau, Brasov, Cluj- Napoca, Constanta, Craiova, Oradea, Iasi, Satu Mare, Sibiu, Suceava, Targu-Mures, Timisoara, Tulcea. Of these, most international connections are at Henri Coanda International Airport Bucharest / Otopeni.

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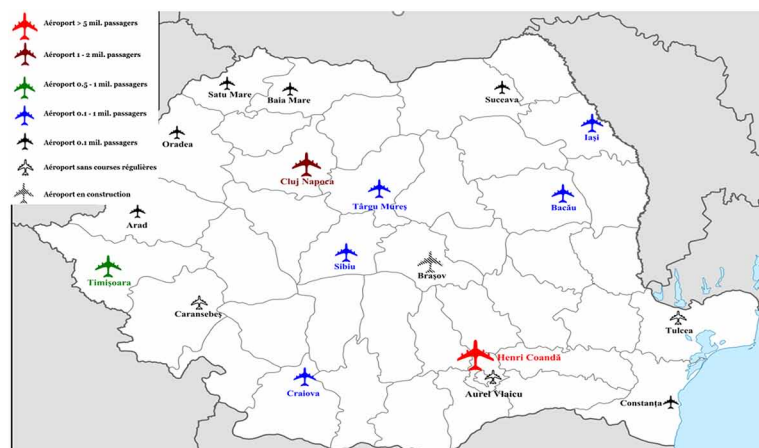
The airlines that are currently operating flights to and from Romania are: Aegean Airlines, Aeroflot - Russian Airlines, Tarom, Air Berlin, Air Moldova, Austria, Alitalia, Air France, Air Serbia, Austrian Airlines, Swiss Air Lines, Lufthansa, British Airways Air Malta, Portugal Tap, Carpatair, CSA Czech Airlines, Blue Air, WizzAir, Ryanair, EL AL, Ernest Airlines, Eurowings, Farnair Switzerland, FlyDubai, KLM-Royal Dutch Airlines, Pegasus Airlines, Qatar Airways, SAS Scandinavian Airlines, Sky Airlines, Turkish Airlines, Vueling and Germanwings (Otopeni Airport, 2018).

Accessibility by air is increasing from one year to the other, low-cost deals and low-cost airlines offer better accessibility and connections by market development for this variable, which is one of the most important in choosing a MICE destination. Bucharest has the largest public transport network in the country, one of the largest in Europe, even if it is not as well developed from the perspective of the current state of the car fleet. It consists of a metro system and three other forms of surface transport: buses, trams and trolleybuses (Ratb, 2018). All other cities have their own public transit network as well as transit, except for the metro. At this time, feasibility studies for the construction of a metro in Cluj-Napoca are underway, due to the development of the city there is a great need to streamline the traffic through new methods (Monitorul de Cluj, 2018).

THE MICE EVENT LOOKING INFRASTRUCTURE

Romania has the capacity to host MICE events of different sizes due to the numerous spaces built for this purpose, especially in airports with cities. Each air bound city of abroad destinations has an infrastructure of typical MICE industry spaces, such as exhibition and conference centers, theaters, stadiums, or multipurpose halls, where capacity allows events of different sizes. In 2017, together with a team from the Ministry of Tourism, we organized a centralization of all event organizing venues in the sixteen airports with airport infrastructure in Romania. To have an overview, this analysis has centralized the three historical regions of the country: Transylvania, Wallachia and Moldova. In the Transylvania region, we grouped the cities of Cluj-Napoca, Oradea, Baia-Mare, Satu-Mare, Braşov, Sibiu, Târgu-Mureş, Arad and Timişoara.

Figure 3. Airports in Romania



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Wallachia was described by the cities of Constanța, Tulcea, Craiova and the capital of the country of Bucharest. Tulcea and Constanța from a historical point of view is Dobrogea, it was easier for us to integrate in the south of Wallachia, **the table no 6.**

The only cities in the region of Moldova with airports: Suceava, Iasi and Bacau have also been analyzed in terms of MICE infrastructure, in the table no 7.

This regional analysis was carried out with the number of the following event hosting locations and the capacity of their halls: four and five star hotels that we will analyze at variable accommodation capacity, conference / exhibition halls, polyvalent halls, chamber of industry and commerce, cinemas, theaters, opera houses and stadiums. All of this was analyzed from the perspective of a future MICE event: business meetings, congresses / conventions and exhibitions / fairs that cities could host.

Accommodation Capacity

The classification of tourist accommodation units in Romania is set by the Ministry of Tourism, and the required standards are aimed at improving the quality of the Romanian tourist offer and adapting to the expectations of foreign clients. Bucharest and other major cities in the country host brands / brands belonging to international hotel chains such as JW Marriott, InterContinental, Radisson Blu, Park Inn

Table 5. Event hosting capacity MICE - Transylvania – 2017

TRANSYLVANIA	CLUJ-NAPOCA	ORADEA	BAIA MARE	SATU MARE	BRASOV	SIBIU	TARGU-MURES	ARAD	TIMISOARA	TOTAL
5* Hotels	4	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	8
Number of rooms	412	0	0	0	200	114	77	0	10	813
No of conference rooms	10	0	0	0	3	5	4	0	0	22
Capacity seats conference rooms	2378	0	0	0	600	800	445	0	0	4223
4* Hotels	10	2	1	3	7	8	5	5	22	63
Number of rooms	665	324	94	107	1251	665	282	510	1714	5612
No of conference rooms	26	3	1	5	50	29	11	11	28	164
Capacity seats conference rooms	4415	590	70	530	9752	3236	920	1255	1900	22668
Conference /Exhibition Center	2	1	3	2	1	1	0	1	4	15
Number of conference rooms	6	3	4	2	3	1	0	2	10	31
Capacity seats conference rooms	1500	400	300	116	152	1000	0	950	1615	6033
Polyvalent Hall	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	8
Capacity seats	10000	2500	2060	0	1570	1812	2000	1500	1400	22842
Capacity seats conference rooms	200	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	200
Chamber of industry and commerce	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
No of conference rooms	1	3	3	3	1	1	2	4	8	26
Capacity seats conference rooms	200	135	305	110	100	30	100	151	2300	3431
Cinema	3	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	15
Number of rooms	19	12	11	1	8	1	9	11	20	92
Capacity seats rooms	4182	1588	1151	70	1470	250	1715	828	3480	14734
Theater	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	3	13
Number of rooms	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	3	7	18
Capacity seats rooms	1000	670	300	800	1000	330	600	530	1100	6330
Opera house	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	0	1	7
Number of rooms	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	0	1	7
Capacity seats rooms	1000	0	0	400	660	460	900	0	6900	10320
Stadium	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	11
No of conference rooms	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Capacity seats rooms	220	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	220
Capacity stadium	53701	18000	16000	24000	8800	14200	8200	12500	33000	188401

Surce: (Muresan & Nistoreanu, 2017)

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Table 6. Event hosting capacity MICE - Wallachia – 2017

WALLACHIA	CONSTANTA	TULCEA	CRAIOVA	BUCHAREST	TOTAL
5* Hotels	4	1	0	9	14
<i>Number of rooms</i>	744	60	0	1697	2501
<i>No of conference rooms</i>	7	1	0	66	74
<i>Capacity seats conference rooms</i>	860	60	0	4915	5835
4* Hotels	35	3	3	21	62
<i>Number of rooms</i>	7556	324	151	2703	10734
<i>No of conference rooms</i>	64	13	4	126	207
<i>Capacity seats conference rooms</i>	6611	1399	580	9651	18241
Conference /Exhibition Center	1	0	1	1	3
<i>Number of conference rooms</i>	1	0	6	10	17
<i>Capacity seats conference rooms</i>	300	0	2169	1020	3489
Polyvalent Hall	1	1	1	1	4
<i>Capacity seats</i>	1500	1200	4215	5300	12215
<i>Capacity seats conference rooms</i>	0	0	0	0	0
Chamber of industry and commerce	1	1	1	1	4
<i>No of conference rooms</i>	4	3	3	14	24
<i>Capacity seats conference rooms</i>	195	100	210	151	656
Cinema	3	1	4	21	29
<i>Number of rooms</i>	22	2	16	113	153
<i>Capacity seats rooms</i>	1040	212	1645	26000	28897
Theater	3	1	1	13	18
<i>Number of rooms</i>	3	1	1	23	28
<i>Capacity seats rooms</i>	852	324	650	6200	8026
Opera house	0	0	1	1	2
<i>Number of rooms</i>	0	0	1	1	2
<i>Capacity seats rooms</i>	0	0	350	952	1302
Stadium	1	1	1	5	8
<i>No of conference rooms</i>	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Capacity seats rooms</i>	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Capacity stadium</i>	15500	12000	30000	132808	190308

Source: (Muresan & Nistoreanu, 2017))

by Radisson, Sheraton, Hilton, Hilton, Accor Pullman, Novotel, Mercure, Ibis, Ramada, Golden Tulip Best Western, but also hotels of local businessmen.

Experts have realized an analysis of accommodation spaces in 4-5 star hotels in sixteen cities with international airports, which can host events of the MICE industry. Thus we have identified 23 five-star hotels, out of which nine in Bucharest and 148 of 4 stars. These units highlight the potential of accommodation of tens of thousands of people. The hotel infrastructure has enjoyed steady growth in the last ten years, especially in cities such as Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca, Sibiu, Timisoara, Constanta. Major hotels in the capital operate in the business and MICE industry. Nine hotels of five stars in Bucharest have 1,697 rooms and 66 conference rooms with a total capacity of 4,915 places. Thus, they qualify for organizing a MICE event of major importance (Muresan & Nistoreanu, 2017).

History of MICE Industry

Concerts, shows, festivals, exhibitions, fairs, conventions, conferences and incentive trips are organized all year round in Romania, thanks to specialized MICE service providers, tour operators or DMC - including important global business representatives on work related trips. Bucharest is connected to the international events market, both as a member of international organizations and through the local pres-

Economic and Social Features of MICE Industry Development and Business Tourism

Table 7. Event hosting capacity MICE - Moldova – 2017

MOLDOVA	SUCEAVA	IASI	BACAU	TOTAL
5* Hotels	0	1	0	1
<i>Number of rooms</i>	0	120	0	120
<i>No of conference rooms</i>	0	4	0	4
<i>Capacity seats conference rooms</i>	0	550	0	550
4* Hotels	6	15	2	23
<i>Number of rooms</i>	537	1262	344	2143
<i>No of conference rooms</i>	6	38	6	50
<i>Capacity seats conference rooms</i>	1480	2680	320	4480
Conference /Exhibition Center	0	1	1	2
<i>Number of conference rooms</i>	0	3	4	7
<i>Capacity seats conference rooms</i>	0	1420	550	1970
Polyvalent Hall	0	0	1	1
<i>Capacity seats</i>	0	0	1500	1500
<i>Capacity seats conference rooms</i>	0	0	0	0
Chamber of industry and commerce	1	1	1	3
<i>No of conference rooms</i>	5	3	9	17
<i>Capacity seats conference rooms</i>	430	160	1320	1910
Cinema	1	3	1	5
<i>Number of rooms</i>	8	7	8	23
<i>Capacity seats rooms</i>	1346	2600	1324	5270
Theater	1	2	1	4
<i>Number of rooms</i>	1	6	1	8
<i>Capacity seats rooms</i>	300	1650	1500	3450
Opera house	0	1	0	1
<i>Number of rooms</i>	0	1	0	1
<i>Capacity seats rooms</i>	0	750	0	750
Stadium	1	1	1	3
<i>No of conference rooms</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Capacity seats rooms</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Capacity stadium</i>	12500	11500	17500	41500

Source: (Muresan & Nistoreanu, 2017)

ence of many international structures and companies. International events organized in Bucharest with thousands of participants are: The Postal Union Congress (2004), The Francophone Summit (2006) and NATO in 2008 (Conference Center-Parliament Palace, 2018). A more recent example is the international conference on “Integrated Quality Management in Tourism Destinations: A Key to Competitiveness” which took place on June 26, 2016. It is the result of a collaboration between UNWTO and the Ministry of Economy, Commerce and Tourism through the National Tourism Authority. The conference benefited from the participation of some 300 delegates from 30 different countries and provided a global vision on the issue of quality in the tourism sector. This event highlighted the importance of tourism for competitiveness and explored the ways in which a destination, for example organizations in tourism-related areas, can plan, launch and implement destination quality systems (Infotravel Romania, 2018).

More international events organized annually in Romanian cities present our country as a destination with the potential to host MICE events. An international event for which Romania appears on the European map of culture is the “George Enescu” Festival, which takes place every two years starting September 4, 1958, being dedicated to the Romanian composer of world renown and prestige. For three

Economic and Social Features of MICE Industry Development and Business Tourism

weeks, Bucharest and other standard cities host symphonic concerts by large orchestras around the world. (George Enescu Festival, 2018).

The Transilvania International Film Festival (TIFF) debuted in 2002 in Cluj-Napoca, growing in visibility, prestige and notoriety each year, being now among the top 40 international festivals. Every June, Cluj-Napoca becomes the capital of the international cinemas, selling about 90,000 tickets in 2017, meaning 130,000 participants and over 1,200 Romanian and foreign guests: actors, directors and many personalities (Tiff, 2018).

Other international events are organized throughout the year in different locations: the Sibiu International Theater Festival, the Summer Well Alternative Music Festival (near Bucharest), the Electronic Music Festival “Untold” - which has been nominated since the first “Best Major European Festival” edition. Currently, it is the largest music festival in Romania, bringing together more than 300,000 people annually in August, of which about 10% are foreign tourists. Transylvania is present on the map of techno-electronic music festivals and the “Electric Castle” Festival, which combines live and electronic music from clubs on the open air scenes of a historic monument, Bánffy Castle from Bontida (Cluj County), (Muresan & Nistoreanu, 2018). In 2018 over 210,000 young people and 300 artists participated during the festival (Cluj Life, 2018).

Tourism Attractiveness

Some unique competitive advantages, when properly provided, together with the existence of natural resources (beaches, mountains, lakes, forests, flora and fauna, etc.) contribute fully to the emergence of new forms of tourism such as business, gastronomic, adventure tourism, ecotourism, visiting and preservation of historical monuments, preservation of traditional crafts, participation in cultural and recreational events, sports competitions, concerts, etc. (Todt & Dabija, 2008; Isaac, 2010; Anglin, 2015; Postelnicu & Dabija, 2018).

The country’s tourist attractiveness is immense, with Romania benefiting from strong competitive advantages both in terms of attractiveness and proposed activities. We can deduce that Romania’s attraction forces are concentrated around anthropic and cultural tourism; the country has considerable resources and natural reservations, a flora and fauna with a rich historical and cultural heritage. Of course, it is desirable for Romania to be able to fully develop this major competitive advantage in order to develop into a strong and well-known MICE destination at European and international level. Once with the evolution of this industry, impact and interactions with the rest of the population will also increase. Romanian society is recognized for its hospitality, this is reflected in the support and development of a strategy for hosting MICE events in Romania. Many hosted events allow a locality, region or country to rank first at an international level, sometimes being the main factor contributing to its increased attractiveness, leading in time to the expansion of visitors and strengthening the brand image/tourist brand (Liu, 2014).

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Since the research activities for the business tourism sector and the MICE industry are limited, the few existing studies do not provide actual data on the potential of the sectors on the destination Romania, in this sense such treatment of the subject has not been carried out so far.

Economic and Social Features of MICE Industry Development and Business Tourism

Although the contribution of the Romanian industry is very large and involved, without the support of the state for building the necessary infrastructure in this sector, it is impossible to evolve on the international market. Throughout the world, business centers and exhibit pavilions, which Romania needs, have been built through public-private partnerships, there has never been a 100% private investment in this aspect.

Taking into account the limits of research, we consider it important to present the following recommendations on the field of research (business tourism and MICE industry), to the attention of the academic, private, associative and institutional decision-makers:

- Identifying good practices in the business tourism sector and the MICE industry that can be auspicious for the development of Romania.
- Developing a program of measures to reduce the seasonality of tourist services by developing new offers.
- Planning a calendar of events at the capital, region, country level by the private, associative and related public authorities.
- Building a public-private partnership in Bucharest with a conference center at international standards from all points of view can turn the capital into a MICE HUB in SE Europe.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The present research is a sustained effort over several years of study, the theme chosen being a topical and internationally pioneering theme. Thus, I consider it extremely important for the development of the business tourism sector and the MICE industry, from the social and economic point of view, to follow the below directions:

- Attracting academia and statistical research institutes to measure the effects of business events in terms of tourism and also to take into account other outcomes of business events such as educational, intellectual, commercial and investment events.
- Creating digital maps containing useful information for MICE industry specialists on event hosting capacity for each city holding the airport, as well as detailed information on tourist attractiveness in terms of tourist routes, objectives, accommodation, entertainment, etc. .
- Creating a complete national database with all MICE industry actors: hoteliers, event companies, transport companies, translators, etc.
- Producing magazines, brochures in order to promote the potential of business tourism and the MICE industry of Romania in several international languages
- Accessing European funds needed to develop the MICE infrastructure.

CONCLUSION

Starting from the present economic and social reality, we carried out a complex research of the theories developed in the field of business tourism and the mice industry in order to integrate them in the development of Romania as a new European destination.

Economic and Social Features of MICE Industry Development and Business Tourism

A MICE destination is not randomly chosen by the business visitor or organizer of the event because it has to convey a message and be consistent with the objectives of the event. Romania has a major tourist potential in this aspect, and the infrastructure related to the sector is on an upward trend steep due to private investment. The arguments of the industry specialists in favor of Romania as a new European destination are the following:

- Internationally accessible, positioning in the middle of Europe.
- A keen, professional business environment with a good image in the community from abroad.
- The diversity of attractions and cultural heritage of Romania, which is fantastic, in a radius of 300-400 km changes gastronomy, traditions, due to our history.
- It has a load of authenticity especially on the enthusiasm which is used while organizing the events and which the participants receive.
- Operation of international airline companies at several airports in the country.
- Developing the hotel infrastructure of the capital and big cities.
- Romania and Bucharest are growing destinations; it is very important because they have not reached saturation limit.

From the perspective of the criteria for choosing a MICE destination: accessibility, infrastructure development, accommodation capacity, MICE history and tourist attractiveness, Romania and several cities in the country, besides the capital, present themselves in a favorable way. Following the analysis of the MICE event hosting capacity, the infrastructure development criteria is one that we can mark as a target achieved, not at the standards that major meetings and congresses ask for, but we currently have tens of thousands of places in the country's historical regions with a large number of accommodation potential and conference rooms or stadiums where major events can be organized. Our country, from the perspective of the MICE history, is very dynamic: conferences, exhibitions, fairs, concerts, festivals, incentive / rewarding trips, all of which are part of the daily life of Romanians. The last criterion of tourist attractiveness is an advantage due to its uniqueness through the folklore traditions spread throughout the country and especially due to the practicing of all forms of tourism.

We are prepared to organize international events of 500-1000 people in the capital as well as in the major cities of the country. Romania currently has MICE professionals trained both in the Romanian education system and abroad, in schools and internationally renowned companies. Those who are going abroad would return to Romania to work in this industry.

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Chapter 9

Romania: A Destination for Slow Seekers

Liliana Nicodim

University Ovidius Constanta, Romania

Puiu Nistoreanu

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8369-7899>

The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania

ABSTRACT

An important component of the anthropic resource category, slow, is represented by the gastronomic component, namely through ethno-cultural events organized throughout the country. As a result of the research, the authors learned that a wide range of festivals and events are organized on the territory of Romania that are promoting the traditional products specific to the different regions. These constitute the main ways to promote tourism for the areas in which they occur. The authors found that Romanian tourists are eager to know their country and that is why these manifestations have real success. Wine-related resources form a real promotional tool for slow current and especially for and slow food. The presence of these resources fits perfectly between two important components of slow movement, namely slow tourism and slow food. The authors, therefore, have a moving part and a feeding component that when combined give to the tourist products of a much greater value than if there was a tourist product for each component.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SLOW FOOD MOVEMENT

The movement was been officially established in Paris in 1989. Among the reasons for establishing this movement we can mention: counteract the rise of fast life, to stop the disappearance of local food and traditions, combat the decreasing interest of people in the quality of food that they eat (SlowFood, 2015). Going slow it is seen as the only way to go forward as the capitalist system of thinking does not recognized that there are limits to growth (Botta, 2016). Slow Food Movement is aimed at sustainability of gastronomy and at sharing cultural values (Erdogan, 2016, p. 242). Matchar considers that Slow

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movement offer connection to local tradition, offer a more fulfilling and reflective life (Matchar, 2013). And this aspects determine tourist to choose activities that are different to those at home when choosing destinations that promote/offers products specific to Slow Food or to Slow tourism (Lee, et al., 2015). People who travel for Slow Food destinations see this as a social interaction, as a self – development activity (Lee, et al., 2014). Czarniawska affirms that to produce slow food dishes needs time and it is hard for people to consume this kind of dishes during the week. They tend to eat them especially on weekends or during holidays (Czarniawska, 2013, p. 11).

In the center of Slow Food Movement stay three principles, according to the “*Slow Food Manifesto for Quality*” stay: good, clean and fair. Good comes from quality, flavorsome and healthy food. Clean means a production process that doesn’t do harm to the environment. Fair comes from good prices both for consumers and for producers (Slow Food Movement, 2015). The Slow Food Organization it is funded and supported by the European Commission, with which it is working on the developing of a common Agricultural Policy. Slow Food it is seen as a way to boost agriculture and tourism sectors. The tourism stakeholders should promote good, clean and fair diets through acquaintances and public relation materials according to (Kim, et al., 2019, p. 15). The logo of the movement is Snail and according to Dasa the collective philosophy of the movement is to preserve and support traditional ways of life (Dasa, 2014, pp. 71-72). This movement encourage people to cooperate and to provide better services for people and for tourist in special (Virtue, 2017).

The first congress of the movement had been held in Venice in 1990. Over the time, there have been a series of important events, which marked the short but rich existence, of this international movement. Among these events, the authors mention:

- The creation of Slow Food Germany in 1992 was followed by the creation of Slow Food Switzerland in 1993;
- In 1996 the first International Salon “Salone del Gusto” takes place in Turin;
- Slow Food USA is created in 2000;
- In 2004, the first edition of “Terra Madre” takes place;
- In 2007, the 5th International Slow Food Congress is held in Puebla, Mexico, with over 600 delegates;
- In 2008 Carlo Petrini is named “one of the 50 people who can save the planet” by the newspaper “The Guardian”;
- The Slow Europe campaign was launched in 2011, which called for European policies to promote sustainability, biodiversity and support for small farmers;
- In 2012, the founder of the Carlo Petrini movement holds a speech at the United Nations Committee for Internal Affairs from New York;
- The ESSEDRA (Sustainable Socio-Economic Development of Rural Areas) project was launched in 2013. The project aimed at creating a map of Balkan specific foods;
- Also, in 2013, Carlo Petrini receives the United Nations’ greatest environmental award, namely “Champions of the Earth”;
- In 2019 there are more than 160 member-countries of this movement.

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BACKGROUND

Slow Food: An International Organization Dedicated to Promoting Good, Clean, and Fair Products

Three major projects of this movement have been launched over time, namely “**Terra Madre**”, “**Salone del Gusto**” and **ESSEDRA**.

Terra Madre

The events organized by the Terra Madre International Foundation include organizations and individuals promoting sustainable agriculture in order to preserve biodiversity and taste.

The importance of protecting and supporting small producers has become more and more clear lately. The Terra Madre Foundation was created in order to: give visibility and voice to these producers, to highlight the true value of their work, to provide knowledge that leads to better working conditions.

The event was launched in 2004 with the occasion of the first meeting held in Turin - Italy. Very soon after the launch, the “Slow Food” current has reached countries that previous didn’t embraced the principles of this trend. Among the new lovers of “Slow Food” are counted many African countries, many Latin American and Asian countries.

The role of the Slow Food Association is fundamental to the success of Terra Madre events. Thanks to the association, the events gain visibility, generates opportunities, relationships and contacts. Since 2012, a close collaboration has begun between Terra Madre and Salone del Gusto and the results are increasingly spectacular.

The founding members of the Terra Madre Foundation were:

- The Italian Ministry of Agriculture (Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policy);
- The Department for Cooperation and Development of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy;
- The local authority in Piedmont;
- The town of Turin;
- Slow Food – the international organization;
- Slow Food – Italy.

At international level, the country with the most members of Terra Madre Foundation is the United States with 346. It is followed by Italy with 246, Spain with 80, France with 62 and Germany with 53 (Terramadre.info, 2019). In US the foundation enjoys a remarkable success. There are in total producers from 154 countries that are members of the foundation.

The Foundation organizes “Terra Madre Day” every year on December 10th, when the foundation members are organizing events dedicated to this day. “Terra Madre Day” is being organized since 2009 at the initiative of “Slow Food International”.

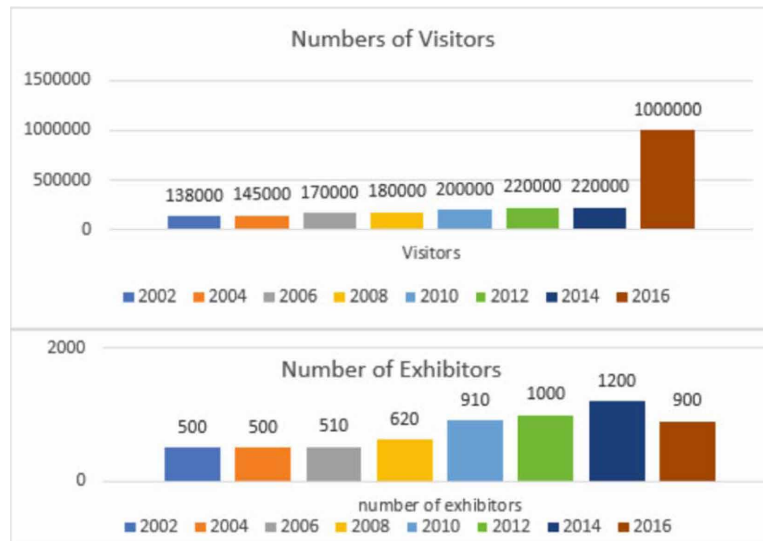
Salone del Gusto

The event is organized once every two years, starting from 1996, in the Italian town of Turin, Piemont region. Since 2004, the event has been in tandem with Terra Madre, with which it has developed very

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Figure 1. Evolution of the number of visitors and number of exhibitors

Source: made by authors based on data from (<http://www.slowfoododsherred.dk>, 2014)



close links. Last year saw the twelfth edition of the event, which enjoyed massive participation from both the public and the exhibitors. From year to year, the number of exhibitors and the number of visitors increased (Figure 1). If in 1996 the exhibition took place on an area of 7,950 m² in 2014, the event was held on an area of ~ 80,000 m² (www.slowfoodmn.org, 2019) (<http://www.slowfoododsherred.dk>, 2014). “Salone del Gusto” is not only one of the world’s leading food fairs, but also a meeting place for small producers. They have the opportunity to share their experience, establish relationships and promote their products among visitors.

According to Figure 2, the Salone del Gusto product fair is of interest to a number of Stakeholders, whether from governmental origin, either from the sphere of production or from the sphere of donors. Among the Stakeholders representatives for various institutions is characterized by the presence of educational institutions from all levels of education. It was also noted that the entire food chain is represented at the fair. Media institutions were also presented, and they were making extensive reports about the event. Here we include the Romanian media, which made extensive reports from this fair.

The exhibition features sales, workshops, producer meetings, public education, conferences and numerous tastings. The exhibition with sale is at the heart of the activities carried out at the fair. The fair hosts: farmers, craft producers, fishermen, breeders, chefs, and representatives of Slow Food’s various subsidiaries around the world.

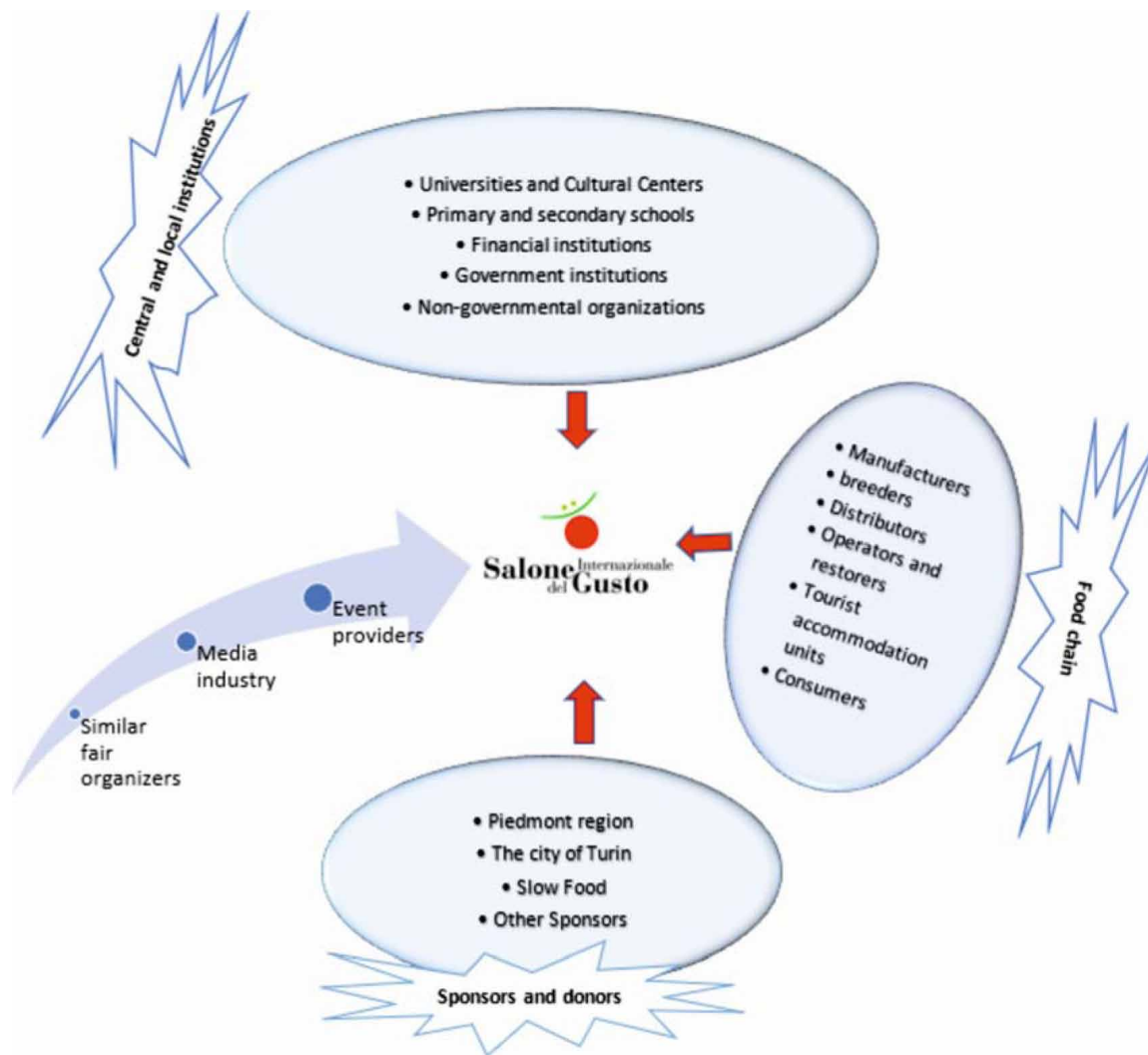
“Salone del Gusto” is important for producers, for authorities, for consumers and beyond, as shown in Figure 2.

During the more recent years, the fair has implemented different main themes. For example, in 2014 the fair had two important themes, namely: “The Ark of Taste” and Family Farms. In 2018 the main theme was “sustainable nutrition” and the main goal was to determine people to “think about their daily lives, their way of eating, shopping, and approaching food in general” (Terra Madre, 2019).

The Ark of the Taste project was the result of an initiative of the “Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity” and aims at drawing up a list of: products (it could be also plants) with a special taste that are

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Figure 2. Stakeholders for manifestations organized during the “Salone del Gusto”
Source: Adapted from (ICM Research, 2011)



in danger of disappearing from the consumption of the population (Littaye, 2015, p. 144); animals used for food whose growth has been greatly reduced. The list is available online at (Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity, 2019). In order to be admitted to this list, products animals must meet certain criteria (www.slowfoodfoundation.com, 2014):

- Products must be distinguished by quality and can be domestic species (plant varieties, native animals), wild species (only if they involve traditional harvesting and processing techniques) and processed products;
- The products/animals must be specific to a particular area, to be referred in the customs and traditions existing in a restricted area;
- To be produced in a limited quantity/to be grown in a small number;

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- Be in danger of disappearing from diet/or not being raised by locals.

The purpose of this project was to highlight the existence of these products, to draw attention to the risk of their disappearance, to invite the public to help protect these products by buying and consuming them, by supporting producers, by sharing their own culinary experiences. The European Union supports the project.

Twenty-three national committees evaluate the products that are proposed to be listed. In Romania, there is such a committee, which consists of seven people with experience in the field. Anyone can propose products to be included in this list.

Worldwide, there were 5039 products (last update 18/06/2019) meeting the admission criteria. Romania has 41 products included in this list. Anyone can view the list by using an interactive map that is available at <https://www.fondazione Slow Food.com/en/nazioni-arca/romania-en/>. In order to view the product registered, we can view Google's available images at <https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/u/0/collection/slow-food?hl=en>. Most products were registered by Italy (871 products) followed by the United States with 351 and France with 293.

The Family Farming Project: 2014 was declared by the United Nations as the year of family farms (Penunia, 2014). Often underestimated, family farms are the basis for sustainable food production that responds to the main challenge of the future, namely feeding the planet's inhabitants without destroying the environment.

Family farms are important because:

- are closely linked to the factors that ensure global food safety;
- helps preserve traditional products;
- contribute to the protection of biodiversity;
- supports the sustainable use of natural resources;
- they contribute to the economic development of rural areas.

According to the latest statistical data, family farms provide 70% of the food consumed by the planet's population. In the future, family farms are expected to hit two major issues, namely (World Consultative Committee for the IYFF-2014 of Civil Society, 2015):

- feeding a growing population concentrated in urban areas;
- they will have to deal with less and less resources.

The ESSEDRA project: It is a project launched in 2012 by all Slow Food subsidiaries in the Balkans. ESEDERA is the acronym for "Sustainable Economic and Social Development of Rural Areas". The project is co-funded by the European Union and aims to integrate the countries of the region, including Turkey, into Europe. This integration wants to preserve national identity, proven by the amazing diversity of food in the area.

This goal was pursued through Non-Governmental Organizations that work locally in agriculture, in improving food quality and in developing rural communities. The objectives relate to solving issues such as: protecting the environment and biodiversity, fighting climate change, and the well-being of local communities (ESSEDRA, 2014).

Achieving these goals implies that activities to be divided into three levels, namely:

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- highlighting the role of small farmers in biodiversity conservation, supporting civil societies and their participation in public debates related to rural development;
- supporting small producers and initiate field research on foodstuffs threatened with disappearance from consumption;
- public communication activities that could include, among others: promoting the consumption of local products, organizing informative workshops, responsible consumer campaigns.

The whole project was been coordinated by Slow Food with nine civil society organizations from Balkans. It also includes an organization from the UK.

There is a close interconnection between this project and Terra Madre and Salone del Gusto.

Concerns for Slow Movement in Romania began between 2007 and 2008 when numerous initiative groups, especially from Transylvania have studied the phenomenon and began the steps for that Romania to enter among the world countries where this movement it has a real success. This positive aspect is highlighted by the increasing number of adherents, by the growing number of people who want to experience “slow”. The most important component of the slow movement in our country is “Slow Food”.

THE SLOW FOOD MOVEMENT IN ROMANIA

Issues, Controversies, Problems

The Slow Food movement currently exists in more than 150 countries where over 1,300 subsidiaries are been established. Branches are also known as “convivia”. There are 13 local convivia in Romania. They are based in different locations from Romania. These locations are (Table 1):

Some of these subsidiaries also have their own internet sites as follows:

- **Slow Food Alba Transilvania:** has the following Internet address: <http://www.slowfoodalba-transilvania.ro/>. This subsidiary brings together people interested in promoting the tasty, healthy and honest food produced in small and medium-sized households in Alba County. The subsidiary supports local producers in their development by practicing sustainable agriculture and sustainable tourism;

Table 1. Local convivia from Romania

Local convivia	City	Local convivia	City
Alba Transilvania	Alba Iulia	Țara Făgărașului	Făgăraș
Maramureș	Baia Mare	Iași	Fălticeni, Suceava
Brașov	Brașov	Brusturoasa - Palanca	Galați
Bran-Moeciu	Brașov (Transilvania)	Târnava Mare	Saschiz, Mureș
București-Valahia Gusturilor	București, Sector 2	Timișoara	Timișoara, Timiș
Cluj Transilvania	Cluj, Napoca	Turda	Turda, Cluj county
Țara Bârsei	Cristian, Brașov		

Source: made by the authors

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- **Slow Food Bucharest “Valahia Gusturilor”:** has the following internet address: <http://www.targultaranului.ro/targ.php>. The main project of the subsidiary is the Peasant Fair, a small producers’ market, which is a short food chain for direct contact with consumers;
- **Slow food Cluj Transilvania:** has the following internet address <http://www.slowfoodcluj.com/index.php/ro/>. Slow Food Cluj Transilvania Convivium, which was established on April 2009, organizes numerous activities throughout the year, culminating with the itinerant festival of culture and food Transilvania Fest. Convivium is meant to bring people together to preserve traditional products in Cluj County. Local producers are an integral part of the cultural identity of the region and the country.
- **Slow Food Turda:** has the following internet address: <http://slowfoodturda.ro/site/>. Slow Food Turda was established on February 2008 and is working in collaboration with several organizations. Since August 2009, it has become an independent association.

The purpose of the association is to organize educational activities for the promotion of local, regional and national heritage from the cultural and gastronomic point of view, as well as support for agrarian development.

Slow Food Turda members are conducting a permanent campaign to encourage small-scale production, product certification and participation in fairs of this kind, as well as other events that could produce profit for participants. All this in order to prevent the risk of disappearance for local traditional products.

Slow Food Turda focuses on the education of the young generation, organizing periodic visits to local producers, whereby young people can see “live” how traditional products are made and thus have the opportunity to discover the secrets of old occupations.

Of all 13 local subsidiaries, only the Turda branch has a sustained and continuous activity. It has an up-to-date website, full of current information from both Romania and the world. Other subsidiaries have outdated sites or do not have it at all. At the same time, it is very difficult to find information about them as well as about the events they organize.

At the level of the “slow movement”, there are three major projects for this movement, namely “Terra Madre”, “Salone Del Gusto” and “Essedra”. Romania participates actively in all three projects.

“Terra Madre” Foundation in Romania

Currently there are 2258 members of the Terra Madre Foundation in the world (Terramadre.info, 2015). In Romania, we have 16 associations of producers that are member of the foundation, as follows:

- **The Association of Producers on the Aries Valley.** The association includes producers around Turda, in northeastern Transylvania, having very close links with Slow Food Turda. In recent years, Turda has become a model for many initiatives that support small producers. The association is composed of producers for: vegetables from Mihai Viteazul village, sweet red onion from Moldovenești, potatoes and cabbage from Viișoara.
- **The Association of Red Onion Producers on the Arieș Valley.** Red onions are one of the symbols of Turda and its surroundings. The members of the association decided to reintroduce sweet red onion – a symbol of the region. The resulting onion are been processed locally in the form of jams and pickled onion. The Association carries out promotional actions to preserve local authenticity among young people and local producers.

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Figure 3. a-c. Promotional posters for the Earth Fruit Fair

Sources: (Iubescbrasovul.ro, 2012), (Kissfm.ro, 2013)



Figure 4. a. Smoked trout in “hârzob” from fir and b. Trout sausages

Source: (Reteta-mea.ro, 2012), (E-produsetraditionale.ro, 2014)



- **The “Roadele Pământului” Association, Braşov.** It was founded at the initiative of a group of Slow Food members who established the “Roadele Pământului” fair in 2009. About 40 producers from the Braşov area and other representative from other areas of the country are involved in this project. The products are displayed in the central square of Braşov, in front of the town hall. There are traded products such as traditional Bârsa and Harghita sausages, rye bread with potatoes, smoked trout. The fair is organized in the last weekend of each month and is supported by the local association, the local council of Braşov and the County Department of Agriculture.
- **The Brusturoasa, Palanca Education Center.** It was been founded at the initiative of a small group of local producers from Brusturoasa, Palanca commune in Bacău County, and aims at promoting local products and educating young people in preserving local wealth. The project also offered courses at local children’s schools to familiarize them with products specific to the area, as well as the ways to achieve these products. Teaching children involved visits to local traditional producers and excursions to familiarizing with local flora.
- **The Association of the collectors of medicinal plants from Brusturoasa – Palanca** operates in one of the most beautiful regions of Romania. Brusturoasa – Palanca commune that has villages that are located in delightful, unspoiled locations. In this lovely place, women and children pick up herbs especially in the spring. Conscious of their value, the members of the association began to preserve and promote the traditional knowledge involving the elders and children of the commune in this activity. Based on the collected information, they have edited a collection book of medicinal plants in the area together with the list of uses for each plant.

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Figure 5. Promotional posters for the Earth Fruit Fair

Source: (Farmacianaturii.ro, 2015)



Figure 6. a. Blackcurrant jam - from Bucovina and b. fermented cheese in fir shell

Source: (Traditionalromanesco.ro, 2012), (Crainicul.ro, 2015)



- **The Educational Center Kindergarten Dr. Ion Rațiu from Turda.** Children attending this kindergarten (just over 40 children) are being taught about what quality food is and are fed with organic fruit and vegetables. These vegetables and fruits are growing in the kindergarten garden, which serves as an educational tool.
Also, in the area, in a project funded by the European Union – “Healthy Food for Schools of Europe” – in other eight schools with over 200 students, with 20 teachers and 30 volunteers, lunches are being served with fresh produce.
- **The Association of Producers of “Sweetie Pie” from Bucovina.** The association has producers in the Câmpulung Moldovenesc area from Bucovina. They produce a range of products specific to the area, including sweetness. It is made of black currant and is very rich in vitamin E. In addition to sweetness, other preparations such as “zacuscă” and different types of fermented cheese are being produced.
- **The Educational Center of high-school Dr. I. Mesota from Bran-Moeciu.** An EU funded project, “Healthy Food for Schools of Europe”, was implemented here. Through the project, high-school students are educated to consume fresh and healthy products in the detriment of unhealthy meals. For the occasion of the Terra Madre day in the high school, a workshop on healthy eating is organized. The center works very closely with Bran-Moeciu Slow Food Branch.
- **The Association of Producers from Vâlcea.** Approximately 40 small farmers from Vâlcea region founded this association. They practice traditional farming in bee growing, apple production, bread production and beer production.

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Figure 7. a. Honey from Vâlcea and b. Apples of Vâlcea

Source: (Recolta.eu, 2013), (Protv.ro, 2015)



Figure 8. a. Homemade potato-bread from Sibiu and b. Traditional bread – “Rustiq” Bakery from Sântimbru – Alba

Source: (Sibiu-turism.ro, 2015), (E-produsetraditionale.ro, 2014)



- **The Association of Cheese Manufacturers from Rotbav (near Feldioara) – Braşov.** Cheese producers in Rotbav have established this association to promote their interests and to become more visible in the community. They produce locally sourced cheese, especially “Telemea”, “Pressed Cheese” and “Urda”.
- **The Association of bread producers from Sălaj area.** The association is the result of the initiative of several families in Tresnea. They use the flour obtained from the grinding of the wheat produced by them to prepare bread and various bakery products. The association is supported, in its work, by the Raţiu Foundation, which for several years has been supporting the development of rural communities and culture in this area.
- **The Association of small producers from Saxon villages.** Saxons, Hungarians, Romanians and Rroma have contributed to the creation of a unique gastronomy in the world, which is now preserved and exploited by the small producers from this area. They produce mainly bakery products, which, due to the preparation techniques and due to the used ingredients, are unique in Romania. They formed this association of producers to promote their products.
- **The Association of producers of pickles from the Saxon villages.** The mowing of vegetables and fruits has a long tradition in the area of Târnava Mare, but nowadays fewer people preserve vegetables and fruits in their own household, the members of this association joined their efforts together in order to preserve this old tradition.
- **The Association of Small Producers from Brusturoasa – Palanca.** Great varieties of natural products are prepared here. These include milk products, meat, fish, jams and medicinal syrups. The main problem in their selling is the lack of compliant packaging as well as the fact that producers do not associate. The association created under the umbrella of Slow Food tries to associ-

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Figure 9. Promotional posters of Turda culinary festival

Source: (Slowfoodturda.blogspot.ro, 2012) (Slowfoodturda.blogspot.ro, 2013)



ate small producers to get European Union support and to be visible on the traditional products market.

- **The Farmers' Association from Turda.** The Association organizes annually a festival promoting local tourism, agriculture and local products. The festival organizes seminars, animal exhibitions, youth programs, craft workshops and, last but not least, a mini market for local producers. The association advises cultivators concerning the seeds to be used in order to preserve these seeds, in terms of promotional activities and, last but not least, it provides information on EU support for small producers.
- **The association of medicinal plants pickers from Brasov County.** Herbs and medicinal pickers in the villages around Brasov established the association. The association's actions are been aimed at raising awareness among local people about the fragility of floral richness in the area, trying to pass on knowledge to the younger generation and promoting the sustainable gathering of medicinal plants.

Along with natural resources, gourmet resources complement in a harmonious way the elements that make Slow an attractive form of tourism for the public. Without this, Slow would not have been available to the public. The most important human resource for practicing Slow are the gastronomic resources and wine-making resources.

Gastronomy

The best promotion of traditional Romanian gastronomy has been done through fairs for traditional product that take place in different locations from Romania for the occasion of various national and local celebrations.

Popular festivals have always attracted the attention of curious people to learn more about the traditions and occupations of people in a country or region. At the same time, they have become a good way of promoting the image of the locality or the region where they come from, attracting hundreds or sometimes even thousands of tourists, eager to get acquainted with some customs or traditions of the people.

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Fairs can be used as promotional tools at national level, especially when there is a lack of image for settlements or geographical areas.

Folklore festivals and fairs foster cultural and rural tourism. Thousands of visitors choose each year to participate in festivals organized in different rural settlements in the country, thus coming in contact with other habits while learning new things about the traditions existing in those places as well as about the history of those places.

Panagou et al. assert that traditional foods are those that have been consumed locally or regionally for an extended period of time and which could be considered as an extension of culture, history, geography, climate, agriculture, and lifestyle. The necessary ingredients or recipes for the preparation of such dishes have been transmitted from one generation to the next and have eventually become part of the country's folklore (Panagou, et al., 2013).

Ethnocultural events, designed to be communicative moments open to many people, reinforce the idea of participation, and promote a sense of belonging because they are created by a local community but address topics of national interest and often even international. Because of culinary tourism, these dishes have been born, which attract many tourists from all corners of the globe. Among the most famous events of this kind in Romania we mention the following gastronomic festivals:

- **“Sarmalele” Festival**, Praid, September. It is the first gastronomic festival in Romania. This program includes folkloric performances with ensembles of dancers, musicians, fanfare from settlements where the competitors come from, all presenting the customs and cultural values of their lands (Asociația turistică a ținutului sării, 2014). In addition to the good will, the festival aims at strengthening cultural relations between participating regions, as well as preserving culinary traditions by promoting some very popular gourmet “wonders” – SARMALE, a kind of food that allows a lot of inventiveness, originality and variety of assortments.
- **The Pleșcoi Sausage Festival**, Berca, Buzău, October. The event hosts the presentation of culinary products of the producers from Berca, Pleșcoi and surroundings, who are invited to present their traditional dishes (cheese, wine, bakery, sweets) (România Turistică, 2014). Tasteful, dry, smoked, and spicy, Pleșcoi sausages have become a representative dish for Buzău. Pleșcoi sausages are famous all over Europe, and the festival attracts both Romanian and foreign tourists. Pleșcoi sausages carry with them a true legend of the manufacturing recipe.
- **The Sheep Wailing – The Festival of Cheese and Pastrami**, Bran, Brașov, September. The Wailing of Sheep is a feast marking the end of a pastoral cycle. For shepherds, the descent of the sheep in the mountains is a feast of celebration. There is a sales exhibition featuring gastronomic dishes specific to the area: sheep pastry, cheese (including renowned fir-tree cheese), “bulz” and seasonal drink, which in this case is grape juice (Vinsieu.ro, 2014). Tourists can taste these products and at the same time they can see the most beautiful sheep, cattle, and horses with which the locals boast. Also, on each holiday, the most beautiful shepherd dogs are awarded.
- **Pies’ Festival**, Oituz, Bacău, August. The event is organized every year on the occasion of the Winter Moons, when annual gathers are organized for the best housewives in the settlements, who compete against each other in the preparation of pies and “sarmale” (Stiriagricole.ro, 2014).
- **The National Trout Festival**, Ciocănești, Suceava, August. The festival includes fishing competitions or the preparation of trout and polenta (Turism.gov.ro, 2014). Tourists can attend the preparation of fir pots in which smoked trout is kept. Mayonnaise trout, fish sausages, fish fillet steaks,

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thyme smoked trout, trout with fish, grilled trout in aluminum foil with garlic sauce, fish croquettes, fish fillet and many other gourmet products are prepared for tourists and festival attendees.

- **The “Tămâioasa” Feast**, Pietroasele, Buzău, September. The Romanian “Tămâioasa” feast is a traditional manifestation that gives the starting of grapes’ harvesting. On this occasion the representatives of the wine cellars and pensions in the area come to present their offers with the desire to attract as many tourists as possible (Bogdan, 2013). There is also a wine contest where all the producers in the area participate. The jury of the competition usually has at least one tasting specialist in its composition.
- **Expopastoralis, The Story of Cheese**, Rucar, Argeş, September. The holiday dates back to 1980. It involves local people, villagers from around the country or tourists from all over the country. Housewives prepare traditional dishes to be displayed for tasting. Among the snacks one can find: bumblebee, dickey, pudding in blankets, egg cakes and many more. There are also sales exhibitions for selected cheeses in the area (România Turistică, 2014).
- **Szekler Festival**, Sfântu Gheorghe, Covasna. The first edition was held in 2015. This event attempts to promote the traditional “Szekler collage”, which according to some sources dates back around 1450 (Negrea, 2015).
- **Rural Tourism Fair**, Albac, Alba, September. The Apuseni Mountains, with a great scenic beauty, host every year the national rural tourism fair. This is attended by the representatives of tourism at national, regional and local levels. In addition to hosting craftsmen, there is also a gastronomy contest where the best chefs from different tourist boarding houses in the area compete against each other on various Romanian cake recipes. The official partner of the event is ANTREC Alba (Sfârlea, 2014).
- **Harvest Festival**, Ampoița, Alba, July: Tourists are invited to taste the dishes presented at the gourmet competition, but also the traditional products specific to the area – pies, plum brandy, jam, pickles all prepared by the locals. Another attraction of the festival is the possibility for tourists to actively participate in the harvesting, the weaving and wearing of the spice, the wheat threshing, as well as the popular port parade (Antrec Alba, 2014). As a novelty, people who love cycling trips are also invited here.
- **Forest Feast**, Poienița Voinei, Hunedoara, July. The event takes place on the Cornet Hill, and over time it has generated interest for tourists eager to discover the traditions of the area. The event was created as a sign of thanks from the locals for the popular musician Drăgan Muntean – who managed to make Hunedoara town known throughout the country (Mesagerulhunedorean.ro, 2014).
- **Harvest Day**, Poiana Mărului, Brasov, September. It is organized to celebrate the coming of autumn and also to promote local products among tourists who can taste and purchase the specific products of the area either gastronomic or handicraft (Româniaturistica.ro, 2014).
- **Household Parade**, Sapoca, Buzău, September: The event is occasioned by the coming of the autumn and includes activities such as exhibitions with the sale of leguminous products - which are cultivated by the farmers in the area – folk parades as well as the unforgettable parties occasioned by such events. At the end of the day a special surprise dish is prepared, from the products exhibited during the event and which the participants are invited to taste (Romaniaturistica.ro, 2015).

Thus, a series of gastronomic events are organized on the territory of our country, which present interest both to the population in the area and to the other inhabitants of Romania. As a result of the research we found that only a small part of the gastronomic festivals in Romania benefit from a national

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promotion campaign. We have noticed the presentation of news stories that promote gastronomy in numerous programs on the national radio station (Radio Romania Actualități) as well as in the program grid of TVR HD.

Programs for promoting Romanian gastronomy: The richness of gourmet resources has increased the interest of researchers, local authorities, and non-governmental organizations. This interest resulted in launching of research programs that materialized in book collections and studies that exploited the wealth of Romanian gastronomy. Among these programs there are:

- **Research of traditional gastronomy from Sibiu County:** Mircea Silvia project coordinator says that at international level during exchanges between cultural, administrative and educational institutions, one of Romania's business cards is gastronomy. This constitute a starting point for an interdisciplinary research of the traditional gastronomy with focused on the five ethnographic areas of Sibiu County: Valea Târnavelor, Mărginimea Sibiului, Țara Oltului, Țara Secașelor and Valea Hârtibaciului. This research led to (Macrea, 2011):
 - The rediscovering of old recipes from these areas;
 - The rediscovering of instrumentation used in making recipes;
 - The highlighting of the best moments for serving.The project aimed at bringing to the attention of current generations of the recipe and traditional dishes. Research revealed that only the people still have the knowledge to implement these prescriptions.
- **At lunch with Delta people – The research of traditional cuisine in the Danube Delta:** the project was initiated by Ivan Patzaichin, Mila 23 in partnership with SNSPA Bucharest. The aim of the project was to draw attention to “Delta People” by making the knowledge of these people available to the public (Deltagastronomia, 2012).

The project aimed at finding the traditional culinary practices specific to Delta communities, the networks and the ingredients used, and the tools used. Other goals were to find connections between dishes consumed and seasonality, in order to learn the role of the community in food. It also considered the link between communities and the natural heritage, given its role as a “food tank”. The project has not been completed research is still under way.

Ivan Patzaichin sums up in a few words the purpose of the project “To Meet Delta People” in an interview with a local newspaper in Tulcea (“Obiectiv – Cotidian de Tulcea”), namely, *we have to emphasize, preserve and promote the specific kitchen from the Danube Delta* (Patzachin, 2012).
- **Cooking Festival “Turda Culinară” – Slow Food Turda,** the first edition took place in 2011. The festival was launched by Slow Food Turda in partnership with Turda City Hall and was created among other things to highlight the gastronomic richness of the Turda area by organizing demonstrations and cooking contests during the 3 days of the event. Another purpose of this festival was to create educational activities for both children and parents (Slow Food Turda, 2012).

The products fair organized for this occasion was a good opportunity for the producers in the area to make known their own products to the local community but especially to the tourists who had the opportunity to taste and purchase these products.

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Winemaking Resources

Romania enjoys a climatic exposure that favors the vine culture, which has made this culture one of the most important in our country since the oldest times. On the backdrop of changes in the tourist's consumer behavior, a new opportunity emerged in this sector of activity, namely wine-tourism.

This is an important development opportunity for the wine industry in Romania and the world. Since antiquity wine has been associated with a relaxing state, it was seen as a means of facilitating communication with friends, it was seen as a way to create a pleasant ambience. The development of this form of tourism has grown particularly in recent years when large and small vineyards have begun to look for new sources of income to compensate to a certain extent to lower wine consumption per capita in the most important consuming countries.

In our country there are 8 large wine regions: Transylvania Plateau, Danube Terraces, Moldova Hills, Banat Hills, Muntenia and Oltenia Hills, Dobrogea Hills (Wineromania, 2014), Crișana and Maramureș Hills, Sandie's and other favorable land in the south of the country (Ministerul Agriculturii și Dezvoltării Rurale, 2014). Romania has 9 famous vineyards, which also offer tasting activities, itineraries for knowledge of the surroundings and presentation of the activity: Miniș, Murfatlar, Drăgășani, Ștefănești (Golești-Argeș), Huși, Odobești and Harlău (Ministerul Dezvoltării Regionale și Turismului, 2007). In addition to this we can mention, more recently, the entrances on the market, the wine cellars: "Crama din Deal" – between Sibiu and Mediaș, "Cramele Halewood" – Azuga, Prahova, "Lacerta Wine Cellar" – Fintșesti Buzău, Winery SCDVV Pietroasele – Buzău (HotelGuru, 2014).

For wine tourism to be considered slow it has to meet certain characteristics including:

- spending a long time in the area where the wine cellar is located (from 2 days to a week);
- consumption of local products, especially local wines;
- participation in festivals, wine events;
- the use of means of transport specific to the slow movement (means of public transport, bicycles, means of transport used by locals);
- creating links with residents in the visited region;
- participation in educational activities for the developing the knowledge base.

In recent years, due to the possibility of obtaining European funding, a series of programs and projects have been launched which have as main purpose the development of the wine tourism in Romania. Some of the most prominent projects that are important for the slow movement are:

- **The Road of Vâlcea Wine** aims at developing tourism in the town of Prundeni and neighboring localities, in Vâlcea County, by capitalizing local wine resources (Drumulvinuluivalcean, 2012).
- **GAL (Local Action Group) The Wine Road in Buzau County** aims to improve the living standards of the inhabitants by making better use of local resources such as human, environment, heritage, architecture or viticulture (GAL Drumul vinului, 2015). As activities, researches mention: improving the tourist offer, promotion of sustainable agriculture, education, and promotion activities. In the region there are several national renowned vineyards including Pietroasele, Năeni and Breaza; The wine cellar of SCDVV Pietroasa is one of the most beautiful wine tasting locations on the itinerary of Buzau wine route.

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- **Wine Road from Prahova region** aims bringing to the attention of tourists areas with important vineyards from the sub-Carpathian hills of Prahova County. It is a continuation of the wine road from the neighboring county of Buzau. On the road there are 7 wine cellars where tourists can taste red and white wines (Primăria comunei Valea Călugărească, 2014). The road crosses several vineyards of national interest such as Tohani, Valea Călugărească, Urlați and Ceptura.
- **Vrancea vineyard road**, Vrancea County. The main objective of the project was to improve the tourism valorization of the wine resources from the 11 towns involved in the project (Consiliul Județean Vrancea, 2015). Within the 11 towns there are 3 vineyards of national importance: Panciu, Odobești and Cotești.
- **The Wine Country Association**, Alba County. By establishing this association between the Alba County Council and the wine producers in the county, it was intended to attract tourists to four existing vineyards in the county. The vineyards are Aiud, Alba, Sebeș-Apold, and Târnave. Târnave vineyard is one of the most important in the country, where Jidvei is one of the most famous wine producers in Romania. Also, in this vineyard we find the Fortress of Baltă which is a medieval fortress that has been renovated and today serves as an excellent place for tasting wines.

Wine tourism is still at the beginning in Romania. Our country should follow the example of countries such as France, Spain, Italy, Austria, countries that record important revenues from practicing this form of tourism. For example, following a study on the Rhône Valley in France, businesses operating on the Rhône Valley recorded \$ 150 million in revenue from this form of tourism (Vinland.ro, 2012).

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The authors found that many traditional product manufacturers have joined the Terra Madre Foundation, which organizes every two-years a meeting of producers around the world in Turin, Italy. There the producers have the opportunity to promote their products. The adherence to this foundation offers notoriety because it has a selective admission process in its ranks.

Slow food lovers have what to taste in Romania. It is important for producers to know how to promote, and if they do not know how, they should get together because this is the only way to succeed on a very competitive market.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Between the slow movement, sustainable development and ecology there is a connection that has its roots in the concern for the locality, community, but also sets directions of ecological travel (ecological innovation/ eco-innovation). The increased interest in the slow movement reflects the fact that its specific characteristics make both the tourist world and the corporate world slow down a little the fast pace of tourist experiences. As a new form of tourism, characterized by greater segmentation, slow tourism offers flexibility, authentic experiences, maintains and improves local conditions, raises awareness of the demand and supply of ethical values and generates a new form of awareness due to consumer involvement.

Future studies will evaluate the slow tourism experience through several dimensions: time, slowdown, contamination, authenticity, durability and the emotion offered. The environment will be perceived with

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all five senses, so that a deeper personal relationship with the locals can be created, to experience the area rather than to tolerate it, to understand the local community, its history and values. At the center of this emerging trend, there is the chance to regenerate and re-energize and the opportunity to take advantage of the best current technologies and behaviors, while protecting the old. The rural environment is conceived as a slow zone capable of restoring the balance between individuals.

CONCLUSION

An important component of the anthropic resource category, for Slow, is represented by the gastronomic component, namely ethno-cultural events organized throughout the country. As a result of the research, authors learned that a wide range of festivals and events take place in Romania in places where organizers promote traditional products specific to the country's different regions. These constitute the main ways to promote tourism for the areas in which they take place. Authors found that Romanian tourists are eager to know their country and that is why these manifestations have a real success.

Wine related resources form a real promotion tool for the Slow trend and particularly for Slow Food. The presence of these resources helps fitting perfectly between two important components of the slow movement, namely slow tourism and slow food. Therefore, we have a moving part and a feeding component that, when combined together give to the tourist products a much greater value than if there were a tourist product for each component. The authors have found that there are various programs that promote tourism in the greatest vineyards of the country, which create pleasure both to tourists and to wine producers.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Cooking: Is the art, technology, science, and profession of preparing food for consumption. It is made both by people in their own homes, as well as by professional chefs and chefs in restaurants and other food establishments.

Gastronomy: Is a term used in the culinary field, to define almost everything, from fine dining experiences to specific studies on the chemical handling of food.

Oenology: The science of wine and winemaking.

Slow-Food (Concept): Implies that the food must taste good, it must be produced in a clean manner that does not harm the environment, animals and human health, and producers must receive fair compensation for their work.

Slow-Food Movement: A movement that advocates for the preservation of local culinary traditions and for respecting the act of “eating”.

Vinification (Vinification): Represents the production of wine, starting with the selection of the fruit, its fermentation in alcohol and the bottling of the finished liquid.

Viticulture: Is the cultivation of grapes; there are several varieties of grapes.

Chapter 10

Changes in Rural Tourism: What's New?

Daniel Avram

The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania

ABSTRACT

This chapter addresses the main trends of rural tourism and focuses on the development of this niche in Romania, one of the countries in Central and Eastern Europe that has a real potential to become a reference destination internationally. The analysis is based on the breakdown of statistical indicators and changes in the demand structure to assess the evolution of rural tourism activity objectively. Thus, elements such as the evolution of accommodation structures in rural areas, the number of overnight stays by agro-tourists, as well as changes in the profile of tourists that can influence the activity of rural tourism have been included. Also, there are examples of rural destinations that have made their mark on Romania as providers of rural tourism services that have echoes at the international level.

INTRODUCTION

Romania is one of the countries that has remarkable rural potential so rural tourism can become a country brand. The natural landscapes, the ozone air, the folk architecture, along with centuries-old customs and the gastronomy are just a few of the elements that make up the Romanian village. The evolution of rural tourism in the last two decades has been remarkable, both in terms of supply and demand, and the non-reimbursable funding from rural destinations has contributed to the development of this niche. This chapter aims to be an objective analysis of the image of Romanian rural tourism, pointing out elements of differentiation of the Romanian village, which can turn it into a coherent and sustainable tourist product. It also emphasises the need to adapt tourist products to changes in the demand structure, both demographically and in terms of tourist motivation. This chapter points out what is new in the structure of demand and what are the main characteristics of the tourists that stakeholders have to take into account in carrying out the activities specific to this niche.

Rural tourism represents one of the main alternatives for farmers to earn income without relying exclusively on agriculture. For sustainable development in this sector, the stakeholders should take into

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account the protection of the environment, resource efficiency and enhance the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises.

Romania is one of the main European destinations for rural tourism in terms of resources and potential and it could easily become an important reference point in the field if its tourism offer would include innovative aspects. Even though rural tourism is known as a domain that depends on old traditions to attract visitors, this is not enough anymore. In this context, innovation in this field would represent the competitive advantage that Romania needs to reduce the gap between its real indicators in tourism and its potential.

Romania has an impressive rural heritage that could be successfully included in an attractive tourism product at international level (Gavrilă-Paven, 2015). Romanian village has always been an attraction for the tourist flows, and there have been attempts to organize tourism activity from 1967 to 1968. The Romanian example also represented a good example that a close relationship between agriculture, food and tourism can become the key to long-term development, profitable both for the stakeholders involved in this field and for the local community. However, the lack of continuity at the legislative level and the low interest from the authorities have delayed the development of a specific infrastructure to support this niche. Thus, we cannot speak about a coherent tourism product in rural areas until 1990 (Nistoreanu, 2006).

Together with the delay in the development of a coherent product in rural tourism, it is also essential to specify that the cultural heritage from rural areas has not been capitalized by modern means (Fanea-Ivanovici, 2018), such as digital restoration or online dissemination through 3D models (Neamtu et al., 2018). This aspect diminished the competitiveness of rural tourism products so far and limited the possibility of generating additional revenues to local communities (Ciurea & Filip, 2016). In addition, the development of the Romanian tourist activity in the rural area in the last 30 years did not aim to exploit the resources taking into account the profile of the tourists and the trends generated by the technological progress. Thus, at this moment, tourism products promoted in Romania are considered incomplete and less competitive in the international market.

The importance of rural tourism for the Romanian economy is also recognised in its national tourism strategies also. Romania is one of the Central and Eastern European countries for which the development of rural tourism is a viable option for sustainable economic development (OECD, 2018a). In regard to support of this niche, associations have been developed over the past three decades to support rural tourism in Romania, such as: The Romanian Villages Association (created in 1988-1989), The Romanian Mountain Development Federation (1990), The National Rural, Ecologic and Cultural Tourism Association from Romania (1994), The Romanian Agritourism Agency (1995) and The Configuration and Innovation Centre for Carpathian Development – CEFIDEC (1994), ANTREC (2007) (Bogan, 2012).

BACKGROUND

Rural tourism services are considered by the specialists in the field, including by the authorities, as a viable solution for diminishing the weaknesses of the Romanian village. It is known that rural residents have a low income and, in many cases, live on the brink of poverty. Also, agriculture practised in rural Romania by resident families is, in most cases, subsistence, which does not give the inhabitants sufficient incomes to have a better living. The diversification of agricultural activity through tourism, stimulated by the authorities, would be an aid to the village families who want to supplement their income by other methods as well. The benefits of this move are multiple, both for the resident population and for the

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rural population who would spend their holiday in the country. The Romanian villages where the rural tourism activity is used and where it can be competitive are characterised by a low level of pollution, which is beneficial for restoring the body of people who are affected by the stress at the workplace. An advantage of the Romanian village is also given by the fact that many of the traditional localities still have houses with peasant architecture without modern influences that are not appreciated at the real financial value. Moreover, in many cases, they have been abandoned by families who have started a new life in the city, attracted by the multitude of possibilities in the urban environment.

In this context, investments in the purchase of typical accommodation structures of the Romanian village with tradition and history can be achieved at a low cost. This may be a reason to boost the development of rural tourism, both from own funds and by attracting European funds, as in the case of the Development Program for the programming period 2014-2020 two sub-measure 6.2 - Support for the establishment of non-agricultural activities in rural areas 6.4. - Investment in the creation and development of non-agricultural activities (Dumitru Eduard & Laurentiu, 2016).

Before Romania's accession to the European Union, funding lines for tourism development in rural areas were also allocated. Funding from the European Commission began in 2000 through the National Rural Development Plan (NRDP). The purpose of this funding was to reduce the disparities between rural and urban areas in Romania and to help the economy as a whole recover from the gap with the member states. It is also worth mentioning the funds from The European Pre-Accession Program 2000-2006, namely SAPARD funds (Special pre-Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development). Since 2007, two National Programs have been implemented to support rural communities that have also had an impact on tourism development. These are the National Rural Development Programs 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 (Elena, 2016)

For optimal use of tourism resources in rural areas, it is necessary to take into account the need for knowledge of the tourists and the evolution of their professional life, which means that the traditional ways of capitalising on tourism resources should be combined with the modern ones. It is also necessary to consider the complementarity of rural tourism with other forms of tourism (Dorobanțu, Gheorghe, & Nistoreanu, 2012; Petroman et al., 2016). For example, gastronomic tourism can provide a solution in support of rural tourism, and it can be an alternative for tourists when spending their time in traditional villages. Gastronomic tourism means experiencing the local food specific to a region or a country, and it is considered an essential element in the tourist experience (Helstosky, 2015). It became a much-appreciated practice due to its local economic impact, since tourists who are attracted by local gastronomy usually spend more money, above average (Bel et al., 2014). It also covers a wide range of reference points, from food served on the street to dishes served in famous restaurants or culinary arts festivals (Yeoman et al., 2015).

Another important aspect is that the evolution of health concerns is in close connection with the new trend of slow food (Voinea et al., 2016) which also helps preserve old traditions (OECD, 2013; Hall & Gossling, 2013). Also, in the last decade, there was an ever-increasing predilection of tourists to search for unique spots instead of a classical location that are chosen by masses and to approach the local customs as much as possible. Local food acquired a central role, and stakeholders in the field have begun to rely on this.

Romanian Village: Particularities

Tourism is one of the most active areas, which is heavily influenced by the level of innovation in related fields. The more the economy is more willing to invest in product and service innovation and the more they develop their specific infrastructure, the higher the chances of becoming an international tourist reference. Romania is for the time being among countries that do not have a transport infrastructure suitable for tourism, and this is one of its weak points that inevitably leads to the diminishing of the mobility of tourists on its territory. The interconnectivity of the means of transport is deficient so that the tourists are not able to reach the desired objectives, due to the lack of alternative transport. Also, the lack of promotion and visibility on a global and even regional scale negatively influences the decision of tourists to visit certain tourist areas.

Although natural and anthropogenic resources place Romania among the countries that could perform in tourism, the reality differs considerably. Including culinary - one of the critical components of rural tourism, Romania is not known, although the quality of the slow food and the wines produced here are validated by specialists (Tomescu & Botezat, 2014). A solution to diminish the negative impact of the Romanian tourism shortages is the orientation towards niche tourism, as is the case with rural tourism, where the uniqueness of the place and the experience offered to the tourists can cause them to overcome the mentioned shortcomings (Tomescu & Botezat, 2014).

The Romanian village has a wide range of unique resources due to the location of rural areas in regions with different cultural influences, which contributed to the creation of a sustainable and competitive rural tourism product (Pop & Georgescu, 2019). Activities such as outdoor hiking, hiking, hunting, fishing, rafting, cycling or carriage rides (Gherasim, 2012). Despite Romania's potential and experience in providing rural services in rural areas, rural tourism has encountered many difficulties over the years, mainly generated by the economic downturn as a whole. Given that tourism and economic development of a country are interconnected, taking into account the need for a transport infrastructure to support tourist flows, automatic rural tourism has suffered from the lack of coherent reforms in areas such as transport (Godja, 2016). This domain faces many problems related to poor cooperation at the local level, poor development of ecotourism infrastructure, lack of qualified workforce, insufficient promotion (Tudorache, Timotin, Cârlogea, & Musteață-Pavel, 2016).

Romanian rural tourism is highlighted by its tourist resources and by the non-abolition of the Romanian villages that have kept their uniqueness, both in terms of architecture and habits. In addition, the Romanian rural area where this niche tourism activity is suitable is in the vicinity or even overlapping with the localities or areas that are listed on the UNESCO list of monuments. At the level of 2019, Romania has 6 cultural sites listed on the UNESCO World Heritage List and two natural sites (Institutul Național al Patrimoniului, 2019). Thus, among the characteristics of the tourist destinations in rural Romania, the following features are highlighted

- Romania has a rural area where many traditions are found and which also benefit from a high biological diversity, expressed both at ecosystems level and at the species level. Rural areas are rich in folklore, and local identity is still present in many rural areas, which creates the premises for the development of local rural brands that can be promoted internationally;
- The main attractions are rural handicrafts, folklore and traditions, culinary heritage, agricultural practices, architecture, music and dances, peasant art (Popescu, Badita, & Mazilu, 2014). Also, the cultural diversity and rich history contributed to the uniqueness of the Romanian vil-

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lages. Transylvania is a suggestive example. This region of the country has Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian influences, due to its reach history in this regard (Plesoianu, Grecu, & Popescu, 2018)

- There is a wide range of natural and cultural resources that are unique, relate to history, cultural geography and topography (Gherasim & Gherasim, 2017)
- Romanian rural tourism is a form of tourism which has increasingly drawn more interest, both from Romanian citizens and from foreigners (Andrei, Gogonea, Zaharia, & Andrei, 2014).

An example of a Romanian rural tourism destination that is well-known both internally and internationally is Viscri village in Transylvania. The locality is famous for its Saxon influences, with a preserved architecture that inspires a unique atmosphere (Corsale & Iorio, 2014) and has as its main attraction the Evangelical Fortified Church Viscri, which is part of the UNESCO heritage (Jordan, Havadi-Nagy, & Maroși, 2018). A fortified church is a building which has a religious meaning, but also played a defensive role in times of war (Duguleana & Postelnicu, 2018). The main advantage of Viscri village is its location in an area with picturesque scenery, tranquillity and with architecture with village influences, the houses being restored respecting the current rules. Also, homes, including those hosting tourists, are furnished in a traditional style, respecting the specificity of the place, which contributes to the interest of tourists in this destination. Besides the tangible elements that attract tourists from the country and abroad, Viscri also has a variety of services well designed and promoted to emphasise the ancestral aspect of the place (Florea & Pascu, 2015).

Although Viscri village is a real example of a rural destination with an impact on Romanian tourism, its brand is not a mature one, indicating possible demand volatility in the coming years. The notoriety of the village of Viscri began to grow with the decision of Prince Charles of Wales to acquire more properties here in 2006. Until then, the locality was known nationally and among the Saxon community. Since the Prince of Wales has turned his attention to Viscri, the village has begun to show interest at the international level, being the subject of more news. The analysis of the print media reports in the Proquest international database is edifying in this respect.

In order to illustrate the media interest for rural tourism in Viscri, a brief analysis of the news in the international newspapers included in the Proquest database was made. The search criteria were the “Viscrist” keyword, to be present in the title or the abstract, all the years in the archive were selected as the period, and the types of publications were chosen from the print media published in English (Proquest, 2019). The results showed that a total of 44 news items were published that would meet the selection criteria. The first news in an international publication was written in 1999 and most news appeared in 2006 - a total of 9 news items and in 2007, 2008 and 2010 - 5 news items each year. Also, seven news items were published in 2015. Most publications are from UK (27), followed by Canada (11). It is also worth mentioning that in almost all the news reference is made to Prince Charles’s decision to acquire properties in the area.

The brief analysis shows that Viscri’s international reputation is directly related to the interest of the written press on the activities of the Royal Family in the UK, which presents both opportunities and threats to Romanian rural tourism. On the one hand, the subject is of interest in countries where the population has a high budget for holidays and where the interest in nature protection is increased. On the other hand, linking the destination to one subject, the one related to Prince Wales’ decisions, is a risk factor for Viscri because it is dependent on the actions and interest of one person. In the long term, this cannot be a strategy, and stakeholders directly interested in the development of tourism in the area must ensure that they can develop a diversified strategy that will keep the interest of international tourists for Viscri.

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Also, the Romanian villages in the North-East area, including the Churches of Moldova, included in UNESCO World Heritage, are other examples of rural destinations that form the image of rural tourism reference destinations. These are highlighted by the surrounding monuments that preserve both the natural landscape and the anthropic attractions, which together form the uniqueness of the place and lead to the attraction of tourists in this area (Nicu & Stoleriu, 2019).

The Analysis of the Main Tourism Indicators that Express the Activity of Romanian Rural Tourism

To describe the rural tourism activity in Romania, we analysed the main statistical indicators that can describe the evolution of rural tourism. There have been included indicators, such as the evolution of the number of representative accommodation units (agro-tourism hostels) per total and by development regions, the number of overnight stays recorded in agricultural boarding house accommodation and the number of tourism projects approved for financing in rural areas.

As an analysis period, the 2000-2018 series was considered. This period has been chosen, as it was desired to include two essential intervals for the Romanian economy, i.e. the period before Romania joined the European Union, i.e. before 2007, and the post-accession period after 2007. Also, the time series includes the period after the financial crisis that affected the national economy and, implicitly, the tourism field. By choosing a time of almost two decades, it can be pointed out the evolution of rural tourism in Romania, and the role played by the grant of the European Commission's grant. Also, the statistical indicators included in the analysis were chosen to follow the evolution of the accommodation spaces represented by the agro-tourist boarding houses. This form of accommodation was chosen, as agro-touristic hostels are the flagship units for tourism in the Romanian rural area and are located exclusively in rural areas. Besides, the statistical institute records annually data from this accommodation and provides reliable data for analysis. Generally speaking; however, it is worth mentioning that the Romanian statistical department does not collect data on rural tourism as a niche of tourism, but it follows the evolution of agro-touristic pensions in terms, not of number and accommodation.

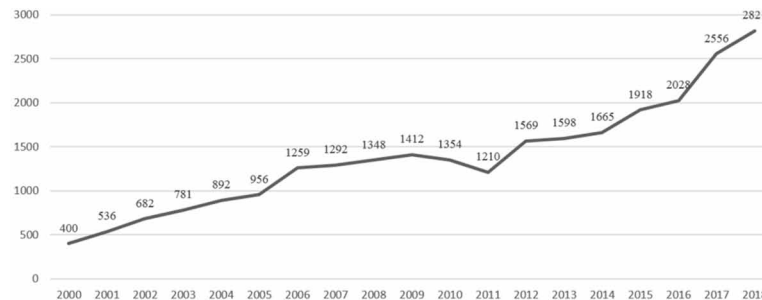
According to the analysis of the number of agritourist hostels in the period 2000-2018 (figure 1), It is noticed that the number of units increased almost continuously, from 400 units, in the first year analysed, to 2821 in 2018. Exceptions are 2010 and 2011 when the financial crisis affected the economy of Romania, something that was also translated into the tourism field. The analysis of the annual growth rate of the number of agritourism units shows that the highest growth rates were in the pre-accession period: 2001, with 21,41% increase compared to the previous year, 2002 (21,41%) and 2006 (21,07%), when PHARE was a significant contributor to this increase. After Romania became an EU member state, the growth rates were more modest, excluding 2012 (22.88% compared to 2011), when there was a revival of the number of units, after two consecutive years of regression and 2017 (20.66% increase compared to 2016).

The evolution of tourist capacity in terms of agritourism units has also directly influenced the evolution of the number of available accommodations in agro-tourist boarding houses. During the study period, the two indicators had an almost overlapping evolution. Capacity in places increased year on year in the pre-accession period when it recorded high annual growth rates: 36.65% in 2001 compared to 2000 and 30.49% increase in 2006 compared to 2005. It is worth noting that in 2010 and 2011, the number of agritourism units contracted as a result of the effect of the financial, economic crisis when negative growth rates were registered. The number of accommodation places, but did not decrease, it

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Figure 1. Evolution of the number of agritourist pensions in the period 2000-2018

Source: Made by the author based on TEMPO statistics (National Institute of Statistics, 2019)



almost stagnated, registering a modest increase of only 2% in both 2010 and 2011. Which means that the rural entrepreneurs who had during this period (2010-2011) an agritourism business has optimized their costs and has been more temperate with investment. Thus, instead of building a new accommodation space, they preferred to expand their existing structures.

During the period 2000-2018, the number of overnight stays in agro-touristic pensions also increased almost yearly from 64,588 in 2010 to 2,255,286 in 2018, which represents an increase of about 35 times. For this indicator, in the two years of the series, decreases in overnight stays were recorded: in 2009 (-10.44% decrease compared to 2008) and 2010 (-11.34% decrease in growth rate compared to 2009). As with the pre-accession period, the annual growth rate was higher than after 2007. Thus, in 2002 and 2003, the number of overnight stays increased at 38.7% and 36.05% respectively compared to previous years. After 2007, one year of which the travel of Romanian citizens abroad was more accessible and the financial, economic crisis affected the budget of the families of the Romanians dedicated to holidays, the annual growth rate of the overnight stays did not reach the pre-accession level but remained at high levels. Thus, in 2015, the number of overnight stays increased by 21% compared to 2014, marking the highest increase after Romania's accession to the EU.

Given the particularities of rural tourism and its dependence on the natural resources that are located in the countryside, it is necessary to highlight the differences in terms of specific accommodation structures (agritourism hostels in this case) from one development area to another. For the sake of clarity, the evolution of the number of agro-tourism units in Romania during the period 2000-2018 was followed by analysing the data every two years (figure 2). Thus, besides the apparent increase in the accommodation spaces from one year to the next, noticeable differences are observed from one development region to another.

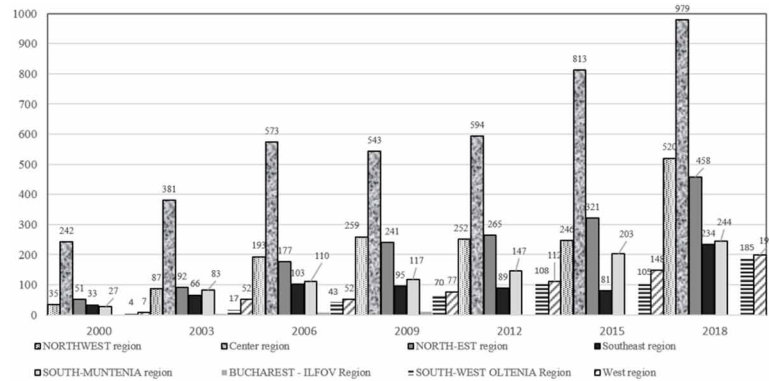
It is noted that during almost two decades, the most representative region development in Romania (of the eight existing) in terms of the number of pensions is a central region. This was noted each year with the highest number of agritourist hostels. Their number increased over the 18 years from 242 units to 979 units. Also, the increases are spectacular, especially in the Northwest regions, where the number of units has gradually evolved from 35 in 2000 to 87 in 2003 and in 520 to 520. Robust growth has been recorded and in the West region, where from 7 agro-tourism units in 2000, they reached 199 units in 2018.

Thus, regarding the evolution of the number of agritourist hostels in Romania according to the development region, it is observed that the highest concentration is maintained during the two analysed periods Centre Region. Here, the number of agritourist pensions has increased over 18 years, from 242 in 2000 to 978 in 2018. Substantial increases were recorded in almost all regions, except for Bucharest -

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Figure 2. The evolution of the number of agritourist hostels in Romania in the period 2000-2018 by development regions

Source: Made by the author based on TEMPO statistics (National Institute of Statistics, 2019)



Iffov, wherein 2000 there was a single accommodation unit of the agritourist pension type, and in 2018 two were registered. The situation is explained by the lack of specific attractions in this area. In terms of values, significant increases are evident in NORTHWEST regions - rising from 35 units in 2010 to 520 units in 2018 and the NORTH-EST region, from 51 agro-tourism board houses to 458 in 2018.

Also critical is the mapping of the evolution of the number of agritourist boarding houses in 2008 and 2012 - considered by the author to be the reference years for the National Rural Development Program 2007-2013, since in 2008 (September-October) the first session of submission of projects for financing, and 2012 (April-May) the last session was organized. Thus, for an optimal illustration, the figure below shows comparatively the evolution of the number of agritourist hostels, in 2008 and 2012, on the 8 development regions in Romania (figure 3). It also includes the total number of projects financed by measure 313 - Encouragement of tourist activities “Falling under Axis III -” Improving the quality of life in rural areas and diversifying the rural economy “reported at the end of the 2007-2013 program. It is important to note that this measure covered three types of funded project categories: Recreational Infrastructure, Small Infrastructure and Development / Promotion of Rural Tourism Services. The results of this measure in terms of projects accepted for funding are relevant to the ongoing analysis as the financing of the three categories creates the necessary framework for the development of rural tourism and, implicitly, the development of accommodation units. In this way, an optimal highlighting of the evolution of accommodation capacity in the rural area is achieved in terms of agritourism accommodation units.

Note *: The maps are developed, taking into account the eight development regions of Romania, coded according to NUTS.

North-West region (RO11) – includes the following counties: Bihor, Bistrița-Năsăud, Cluj, Maramureș, Satu Mare, Sălaj

Centre region (RO12) – includes the following counties: Alba, Brașov, Covasna, Harghita, Mureș, Sibiu;

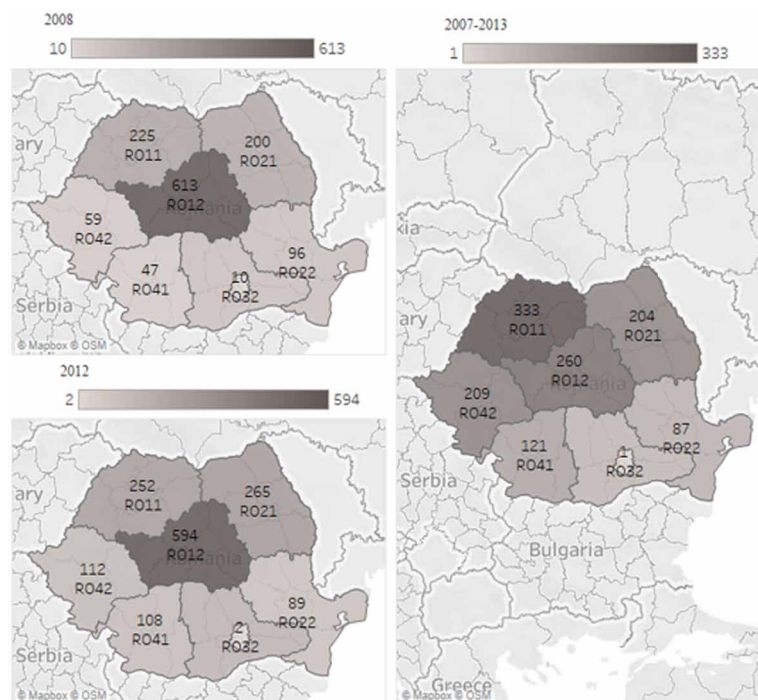
North-East region (RO21) – includes the following counties: Bacău, Botoșani, Iași, Neamț, Suceava, Vaslui;

South-East region (RO22) – includes the following counties: Brăila, Buzău, Constanța, Galați, Tulcea, Vrancea;

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Figure 3. The evolution of agritourist pensions in Romania: 2008 compared to 2012 and the total of projects funded through 313 measure during 2007-2013 (development regions)

Source: Made by the author using Tableau Public, based on TEMPO statistical data, (National Institute of Statistics, 2019) and (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2015)



South-Muntenia region (RO31) – includes the following counties: Argeş, Călăraşi, Dâmboviţa, Giurgiu, Ialomiţa, Prahova, Teleorman;

Bucharest - Ilfov Region (RO32) – includes the following counties: Bucharest, Ilfov;

South-West Oltenia Region (RO41) – includes the following counties: Dolj, Gorj, Mehedinţi, Olt, Vâlcea;

West region (RO42) includes the following counties: Arad, Caraş-Severin, Hunedoara, Timiş.

Note **: Measure 313 includes three categories of funded activities: Recreational Infrastructure, Small Infrastructure and Development / Promotion of Rural Tourism Services.

From the mapping of the evolution of agritourism boarding houses at the beginning of the National Rural Development Program 2007-2013, it is noticed that within five years, from the moment when the first project submission session was launched in September-October 2008 and until the last session, from April to May 2012, the number of agritourist hostels has increased in six development regions in Romania out of the eight. If in 2008, the Northwest Development Region was the second-place in terms of the number of agro-tourism hostels, with 225 units, in 2012, the North-East region was 265 units in the second place. Development regions where there have been decreases in unit numbers over the five years have been the Centre region - down from 613 units in 2008 to 594 units in 2012 and the South East region with a decrease from 96 units in 2008 to 89 units in 2012. Decreases may be due to the effects of the financial crisis that has negatively affected the economy of the country as a whole. Also, it has affected the profitability of tourism businesses and has lowered the travel budget for tourists. A

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contribution was made to the non-reimbursable funds allocated to rural tourism development, which have led to significant financial flows to areas previously less priced by investors.

Regarding the number of rural tourism projects financed under Measure 313 of the Rural Development Program 2007-2013, it is noted that the development area with the most significant number of submitted and selected projects was the North-West area, with 333 projects, followed by the Centre area, with 260 projects and the Western area with 209 projects. It can be noticed that there is no perfect overlap with the evolution of the number of agritourist hostels with the number of projects selected for financing under measure 313. This indicates that a significant part of the rural-specific accommodation units was started from own sources of rural entrepreneurs and some of the funds available through the funded program was also directed to less attractive investors.

The analysis of statistical indicators reflecting the evolution of Romanian rural tourism shows a significant increase over the last two decades both in terms of supply and demand. The association demonstrates the high interest of leisure travellers in authentic areas, characterised by the uniqueness of tourism resources and a natural environment with quiet and unaffected by pollution. It is also apparent the interest of entrepreneurs for business development in the rural area and the concentration of activity in three development areas in the country. These issues also pose threats to the sustainable development of rural tourism, and the most current concern should be changed in demand.

Changes in the Structure of Tourism Demand: Influences on Rural Tourism

According to the OECD, tourism will follow four major development trends by 2040: evolving visitor demand, ii) sustainable tourism growth, iii) enabling technologies, and iv) travel mobility (OECD, 2018b). In terms of changes in the profile of tourists, there are also drastic changes that will affect the evolution of this field in the medium and long term. On the one hand, it is about demographic change, which, especially in European countries, is becoming apparent. Their impact on the economy can bring about significant changes in business models. On the other hand, it is even about changing tourists in terms of how they choose to spend their lives and how they want to get old. Today's tourists are increasingly concerned about their health, the place they choose to spend their holidays, the shift from mass tourism to the niche. The impact of each trend shift can be significant on the niches of tourism. The main trends of change in the attitude of tourists towards holidays that will have a major impact on rural tourism in the medium and long term will be detailed below.

Changes in the behaviour of tourists due to demographic change and new motivations make travel businesses a defining moment. Entrepreneurs have to keep in mind that their offer must meet the requirements of tourists who want to experience new experiences that will enrich their knowledge. Thus, tourists want to associate their holiday to an unique experience, which is delimited by the characteristics of mass tourism. At the same time, the ageing of the population creates a segment of tourists that is distinguished by a large number of representatives, the specific needs and the stable budget they have. Taking into account these aspects and the fact that one of the main motivations of today's tourist is also the adoption of a healthy lifestyle, rural tourism, which has natural resources that can respond to this motivation, can have a significant advantage. So, taking advantage of changes in the behaviour of tourists, rural tourism can turn into one of the first leisure options.

Regarding the demographic changes mentioned, it is worth noting that the behaviour of senior tourists is different from that of young tourists. They follow when choosing their holiday destination, the safety level, the distance to the home, preferring the closest destinations and their preference for national

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destinations. It is worth mentioning that senior tourists have a willingness to travel in a higher offseason than tourists who are part of other age groups, and the money they have available are constant and predictable, which reflects a higher budget allocated for holidays compared to younger tourists (Nielsen, 2014). Also, elderly tourists prefer niche tourism, being attracted mainly by culture and heritage, food and wine and tourism for medical treatments. Other motives are socialisation, daily routine, experiencing new experiences, and motivation to stay independent and active for as long as possible (Santos, Veiga, & Águas, 2016).

Unlike older people who are not familiar with technology and have other information behaviours, tourists who are part of the young age group are noticed by an increased interest in digitised destinations. They prefer to be thoroughly informed before choosing their destination and prefer to make their analysis of the destination. For them, it is essential to find tourist information on specialist sites, blogs or social networks and to make informed choices. Young tourists are characterized by knowledge of technology and have technological skills, frequently use social networks and are looking for unique and authentic experiences and are attracted by the activities that can be done at the destination. Thus, they prefer to spend their holidays in places where they have a wide range of tourist services, from where to choose (Mihajlović, & Koncul, 2016). Also, they, like senior tourists, prefer niche tourism to the detriment of mass tourism and have a great deal of attention to the impact tourism has on the environment (Santos, Veiga, & Águas, 2016).

Another feature of seasonal tourists is that they prefer to use specialised tourist platforms to reserve both the primary tourist services (accommodation, transport) and leisure (Juul, 2015). They use platforms for information as well as for the purchase of tourist services (Folgeri & Bait, 2014)

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

This chapter points relevant issues for rural tourism that are useful for all the representatives in the field. The analysis represents a useful tool in the strategy's development of the Romanian village for tourism purposes, both at the micro and the macro level. Given the complexity of the domain and the potential of Romania to attract foreign tourists to its iconic villages, this analysis needs to be deepened in future studies that emphasise the main outcomes.

A future direction of research is to identify changes in the behaviour of Romanian tourists. In the international literature, there is currently no extensive research to highlight the characteristics of the Romanian demand. To this regard, an in-depth analysis of the motivation of Romanian tourists, as well as their expectations regarding tourist services, is necessary. In this way, business representatives can anticipate demand changes and can develop actual tourism products that meet tourist criteria. Another research direction is the analysis of the non-reimbursable funds for Romanian villages with an emphasis on the areas that can increase the efficiency of the funding. Starting from the results presented in this chapter, according to which not all development areas in the country are suitable for rural tourism activity, it is necessary to identify the areas that are most suitable for the development of rural tourism. The activity of this niche is dependent on the tourism resources located in the Romanian village, so it is necessary to investigate the opportunity of rural financing.

CONCLUSION

Romania's rural potential in terms of natural resources and the uniqueness of cultural heritage can successfully transform the Romanian village into a reference destination for European rural tourism. The preservation of the traditions, the existence of the accommodation spaces in buildings belonging to the patrimony, as well as the historical monuments with different cultural influences create the uniqueness of the Romanian village and make it attractive for the international tourists.

The growth opportunities of this niche have contributed in the last decades to the development of rural tourism, especially in the Central, North-East and West Development Regions. Also, European funds directed to rural areas to diversify agricultural activities through tourism services have contributed to the development of accommodation infrastructure and the modernisation of destinations. Whether it is the pre-accession period of Romania to the European Union, i.e. before 2007, whether it is the post-accession period, Romania has allocated funds for the creation of accommodation units, such as agrotourism, tourist information centres or specific infrastructure. This is obvious in terms of increasing the number of agritourists boarding houses in the period 2000-2018 and the number of overnight stays.

Although the Romanian rural village, which has the resources to become a destination of consecrated rural tourism, it presents itself as an insufficiently developed and promoted an international product. The best-known example is the village of Viscri, whose notoriety is influenced by the interest of the international press for the actions of Prince Charles de Wales in the field of travel or choosing to acquire properties in picturesque areas.

Given that rural tourism is a niche dependent on cultural heritage, both in terms of tangible and intangible resources, it is evident that the development areas in Romania are differentiated both from the specific accommodation offer (agritourism) and demand (number overnight). Segmentation is also evident in projects funded by European funds from the National Rural Development Program 2007-2013.

As a result of the analysis carried out in this chapter, it also follows that changes in the structure of demand can have a positive influence on the tourist flows to the rural destinations in Romania. Thus, stakeholders must take into account the new profile of today's tourists, which is marked by both demographic and motivational changes. Thus, it is obvious the segment of elderly tourists who are growing in European countries and the motivations related to the preoccupation of a healthy lifestyle and leisure in an authentic place that offers new experiences.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Agritourism Pension: Type of accommodation specific to rural tourism.

NUTS: Codes of territorial units used for statistical reasons.

Rural Funding: Funds that are allocated to develop rural communities.

Rural Resources: Natural and anthropic resources that include both tangible and intangible heritage located in rural areas.

Rural Tourism: The form of tourism that takes place in rural areas.

Senior Tourists: Older people over the age of 65 who are no longer working and who travel for different reasons.

Viscri: One of the most iconic rural tourism destinations from Romania, located in Transylvania region.

Chapter 11

Innovative Solutions for Sustainable Development of Rural Tourism in Central and Eastern European Areas: Types of Innovation in Tourism and Hospitality

Adina Letitia Negrusa

Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

Valentin Toader

Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

ABSTRACT

Starting from concepts like sustainable development, sustainable tourism development, and sustainability, the chapter introduces important strategies for assessing sustainable rural development. Also, based on OECD and Eurostat taxonomy regarding innovation, it explains the two types of innovation: product and process (production, distribution, marketing, communication, management, and product/process development). In order to answer the question “How do firms innovate?” the authors draw attention to best practices of innovation in rural tourism. The aspects that are discussed mainly, but not exclusively, focus on the creation of tailor-made products, property renovation, marketing business skills development, information technology solutions, involvement in socially responsible activities, and the use of networking and collaborative behavior. Starting from different approaches of successful innovation in rural tourism identified in the scientific literature, the chapter emphasizes relevant case studies/best practices from the Central and Eastern European areas.

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Innovative Solutions for Sustainable Development of Rural Tourism in Central and Eastern European Areas

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, in the context of sustainable tourism development, it becomes crucial for rural communities to approach this process in a sustainable manner using appropriate strategies for optimizing positive and minimizing negative impacts. The purpose of this chapter is to describe how the innovation process can contribute to the sustainable development of rural tourism. The rural environment's sensitivity to different factors represents an additional incentive for local stakeholders to identify better ways of valorization of the areas' endogenous resources. Thus, innovation may represent a good approach for the sustainable development of tourism.

Starting from concepts like sustainable development, sustainable tourism development, and sustainability, the chapter introduces important strategies for assessing sustainable rural development. Also, based on OECD and Eurostat taxonomy regarding innovation, it will be explained the two types of innovation: product (goods or services) and process (production, distribution, marketing, communication, management, and product/process development).

In order to answer the question "How do firms innovate?", the authors will draw attention to best practices of innovation in rural tourism. The aspects that will be discussed mainly, but not exclusively, focus on the creation of tailor-made products, property renovation, marketing business skills development, information technology solutions, involvement in socially responsible activities or the use of networking and collaborative behavior. Starting from different approaches of successful innovation in rural tourism identified in the scientific literature, the chapter will emphasize relevant case studies/best practices from the Central and Eastern European areas.

The main purpose of rural tourism firms to invest in innovation is to improve their competitiveness. Better services lead primarily to increased customer satisfaction, achieving new target markets and raising the number of loyal clients. Furthermore, through innovation, new products and services can be created, enriching the rural tourism supply. From a different perspective, property renovation may represent an effective marketing tool to attract new markets and build a unique business identity. The innovation in rural tourism is important not only for competitive purposes but also to ensure the sustainable development of the business activity.

Background: Sustainable Development in Rural Tourism

Many rural areas in Central and Eastern Europe face significant challenges in terms of employment, career opportunities or migration towards urban areas. In such a situation, tourism represents a solution to capitalize in a more efficient and sustainable way the local resources, to attract external investments and to generate local development. Since the tourists are searching more and more genuine experiences, the rural tourism units must work together with the rest of the local community to identify new or improved ways of using the cultural and spiritual identity of the area, which means, they must be innovative. Moreover, since the natural environment and the socio-cultural characteristics, which give the uniqueness of a destination, are very sensitive to external actions, it is important for the local communities to orientate their development policies towards sustainable tourism.

UNEP and UNWTO emphasize the fact that sustainable tourism should not be perceived as a special form of tourism, but as a status to be achieved in the case of all forms of tourism (United Nations Environment Programme and World Tourism Organization, 2005). Tourism may become an important economic sector, especially in the case of rural areas, but this aspect should not determine negative ef-

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fects at the level of natural and socio-cultural environments. Thus, according to UNEP and UNWTO, sustainability should be the responsibility of all the stakeholders involved in the tourism sector, starting with the tourists, continuing with the local communities and the firms providing directly or indirectly goods or services to tourists and ending with the public sector which should take the leading role in the development of sustainable tourism (United Nations Environment Programme and World Tourism Organization, 2005).

Furthermore, UNWTO defines sustainable tourism as the tourism activities that (World Tourism Organization, 2011):

- Make optimal use of environmental resources, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural resources and biodiversity
- Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance
- Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits (employment, income-earning opportunities, etc.) to all stakeholders that fairly distributed and contributing to poverty alleviation

In the case of rural areas, a very sensitive issue related to the sustainable tourism development is the use of local resources, which should allow, in the same time, to tourists to fulfill their needs, to local units to achieve long-run viability and to local communities to preserve their lifestyle and enhance their future opportunities. Out of all the resources available, Rinaldi emphasizes the role of local food as a key dimension for rural development (Rinaldi, 2017). Synthetizing the different approaches available in the literature, Rinaldi highlight the two approaches related to the “local food” concept:

- Firstly, it refers to all the dishes and products manufactured and sold in a specific region, and their production employs local people
- Secondly, it refers to specialty foods, which contain local ingredients.

The role of local food in the tourism experience is well described by UNWTO which states that when tourists are tasting the local food, they *are searching for an experience that is not solely limited to the taste but engages all their senses. Every dish has a story and every ingredient maps the history of a destination* (World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), 2017). Moreover, the local gastronomy can be the source of many sustainable tourism products due to its educational role: tourists may learn not only about the traditional preparation techniques but also the local food *give tourists an appreciation and understanding of local history, culture and customs* (World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), 2017). The cooperation between the stakeholders may determine the creation of local networks and clusters, a form of process innovation, which may stimulate the product innovation even furthermore.

Types of Innovation in Rural Tourism and Hospitality

In order to fulfill the previous characteristics, the tourism providers must be innovative – they have to improve or develop new products which will respond better to customers’ needs and which will increase the attractiveness of the destination. According to the Oslo Manual, 2018 edition, *innovation is a new or improved product or process (or a combination of thereof) that differs significantly from the units’*

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previous products or processes and that has been made available to potential users (product) or brought into use by the unit (process) (OECD, 2018). A mandatory requirement which characterizes an innovation is the fact that it should be implemented in order to generate added value.

There are two types of business innovation: product innovation and business process innovation. *Product innovation is a new or improved good or service that differs significantly from the firm's previous goods or services and that has been introduced on the market* (OECD, 2018). In rural tourism, examples of product innovation may focus on the combination of the traditional architectural features with the modern and functional facilities, on the introduction of local gastronomy and local products into the restaurant's menus (like in the case of Viscri 32 restaurant from Viscri, Brasov County in Romania) or on the creation of new products for that regions (like onion marmalade for example on Valea Ariesului, Cluj County in Romania).

A business process innovation is a new or improved business process for one or more business functions that differ significantly from the firm's previous business processes and that has been brought into use by the firm (OECD, 2018). The use of social media or other online tools for promotion of their business (like Cabana Motilor, Cluj County, Romania), the improvement of reservation process (using Airbnb or other sharing economy platforms) or cooperating with other local stakeholders to provide the services to their customers represent a few ways to innovate in rural tourism.

Accommodation area has attracted many entrepreneurs and because of that, it registers the highest part of enterprises in comparison with any other part of rural tourism. Also, due to the social-cultural factors, it has been noticed a change in the entrepreneurs' behavior. In the last 10 years, rural tourism attracted a new type of entrepreneur – the lifestyle entrepreneur. In 1982 Flinn conceptualized this type of entrepreneurs for the first time, as those who moved from the city to the countryside because they preferred rural life (Lane, et al., 2013). Some features associated to them, according to many studies, are the following: motivated by quality of life rather than growth (Shaw & Williams, 1998), main priority is lifestyle rather than customer service (Marcketti, Niehm, & Fuloria, 2006), very limited growth orientation, limited marketing and product development expertise and activities (Peters, Frehse, & Buhalis, 2009) and motivated by survival and sufficient income to maintain their and their families' way of life (Komppula, 2004).

Gradually, out of this group, it has been shaped a distinct category of entrepreneurs, who, besides the interest on their life quality, are also interested in the long-run viability of their business. It resulted that they are the real innovators in rural tourism since most of them succeed to combine successfully their skills with the endogenous resources of the area. In general, they are implementing incremental innovation and are driven in their businesses by a strong passion for what they are doing, this passion is one of the main sources for innovations. Very often they are lead-users, who explore new leisure activities, after they become first-users, for example, they are practicing extreme sports, and later first-movers in offering these specific leisure activities, running extreme-sports centers. Their profile includes: a higher level of education (Lane, et al., 2013), motivated to "save the traditional way of rural life" from the extinction, focused on clients, trying to customize their products/services as much as possible to guests requirements, having well-developed learning skills. Furthermore, they possess significant multicultural skills which allow them to understand and address better the needs of foreign tourists (Negrusa, Toader, Rus, & Sofia, 2015). Consequently, the lifestyle entrepreneurs' contribution to the development of rural tourism is considerable due to some important strengths: understand better urban customers' expectancies and behavior, bring new skills and methods (like digital technology), came with strong informal networks, bring additional capital in the local communities and confidence in emerging new projects (Lane, et al.,

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2013). Thus, seeing the rural areas from a different perspective, through the eyes of a foreigner, or even the eyes of a tourist, they may be able to identify new resources with tourism potential in order to initiate new concepts in rural tourism and to innovate both in product and business processes.

BEST PRACTICES OF INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS IN RURAL TOURISM FROM CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN AREAS

The Use of Architectural Features of the Region to Innovate in Accommodation Services

Accommodation plays a central place in rural tourism and could have a positive or a negative impact on their local area and host communities. Many researchers have shown that small and individual accommodation services together with personal contact represent key reasons for the guests' choice in the rural holiday. The importance of accommodation provision and the specific target market to whom address explain why have been observed a range of innovative ideas implemented by rural entrepreneurs in order to maintain their business activity and fight with tough competition from other forms of tourism (Lane, et al., 2013).

Thus, the architectural aspects of the building offer many opportunities to respond in a sustainable way to tourism development. An important innovative tool is the use of authentic architectural features. This implies conserving historic buildings, as well as developing green new buildings. There are many examples of accommodation units from the rural area which use architecture features for product innovation.

An interesting example in this regard is the resort Raven's Nest, located in Romanian Carpathian Mountains, Apuseni, Alba County. For this holiday village, formed from 3 accommodation units (Fig. no.1), a restaurant, terrace, and a traditional spa area, the entrepreneur's idea was to create an authentic image of the rural architecture specific for Transylvania of XVIII-XIX centuries. Thus, have been restored 3 old houses, the oldest from 1896, and a barn from the neighborhood, using the traditional methods and materials, like hemp, twigs, and straw. Also, the furniture for all 24 accommodation places is restored or created by rural craftsmen from nearby regions. These elements together with the natural environment create a distinctive accommodation product (Designist - concentrat de idei fine).

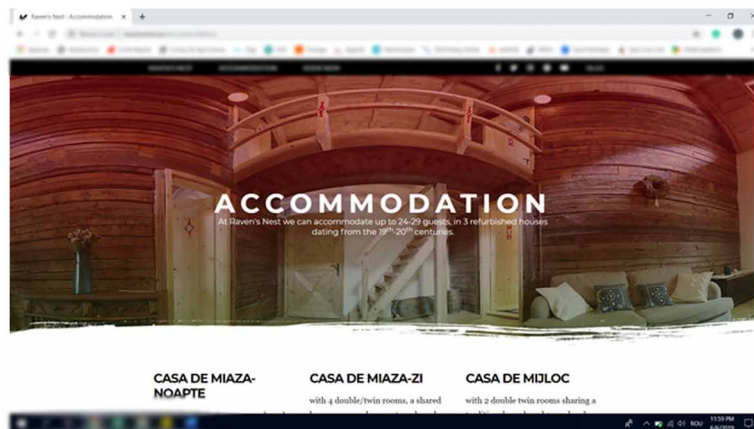
A clearer example of using architectural features for the tourism development purposes is the case of Maramures area from North part of Transylvania, Romania. The most representative architectural element for this region is the wooden gates. If initially, these symbolized the social and economic status of the citizens in the community, in time the number of gates increased significantly, together with the number of craftsmen and the role image has changed. Also, an important change in the type and the style of the gates have occurred (Simion, M., & Moisuc, 2018). But, remained the awareness of the rural population, that the authentic traditional elements increase the attractiveness of the region and therefore they wish to preserve them (Simion, M., & Moisuc, 2018). Thus, many guesthouses from this region built new gates and considered them essential to attract tourists and to fulfill their guests' expectancies.

Also, the most precious cultural heritage for the Maramures is represented by the traditional wooden church. The churches are made of wood, especially of oak, a hard essence which remains in good condition for a long time. These churches preserved social-cultural features and historical symbols for this region, with an extraordinary value, thus more than 8 churches are now included in the UNESCO world heritage.

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Figure 1. Raven’s nest webpage

Source: <http://ravensnest.eu/accommodation>, accessed in 6 June 2019



In order to preserve these settlements as tourist attractions and historical vestiges, the local communities began to build one or more in addition to their villages (Simion, M., & Moisuc, 2018).

Integration of New Types of Accommodation in Rural Tourism

Rural tourism development displays also the emerging of new types of accommodation, generally unserviced accommodation units (provide just sleeping services) as an enhancement to the serviced accommodation (provide sleeping, food, and other services). Thus, besides guesthouses, pensions, farmhouse bed&breakfast were added (Lane, et al., 2013):

Self-catering accommodation units in converted buildings – this concept implies the conversion of a former house or a farm building into an accommodation unit. Due to a growing market trend for self-catering accommodation services, these units became popular for large groups or families, offering

Table 1. Wooden churches from UNESCO patrimony

Location	Wooden Church	Dating from
Barsana	Mary the Mother of God Entering the Church “Intrarea Maicii Domnului in Biserica”	1720
Ieud	Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary “Nasterea Maicii Domnului”	1391
Budesti	St. Nicolas “Sf. Arhanghel Mihail”	1643
Poinile Izei	St. Paraskewa “Cuvioasa Paraschiva”	1604
Surdesti	St. Archangels “Sf. Arhangheli”	1721
Desesti	St. Paraskewa “Cuvioasa Paraschiva”	1770
Plopis	St. Archangels “Sf. Arhangheli”	1798
Rogoz	St. Archangels Michael and Gabriel “Sf. Arhangheli Mihail si Gavril”	1633

Source: (Simion, M., & Moisuc, 2018)

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maximum privacy and closeness to nature. On the other hand, offer financial advantages for property owners without problems that serviced accommodation units bring.

An interesting example is the case of Megyer village from Hungary. Facing a massive depopulation (around 18 citizens) the mayor offered the entire village for rent. Thus, the guests receive the temporary title of deputy mayor, giving them the right to oversee law and order and rename the four village streets for the length of their stay (Gorondi). This campaign makes village popular, attracting guests and small entrepreneurs and turned itself in a village resort. A similar case is the Gosztola village resort (Csatári B., 2019).

Camping barns/ hay/straw barns – a relatively new concept to convert an agricultural asset, like a barn, usually too light to be transformed into a permanent dwelling, into a basic shelter for tourism purpose. This idea attracted young people and family groups who bring their own sleeping bags and cooking equipment.

Specialty self-catering units typically using high-quality heritage buildings like former railway stations, wind or water mills, jails or castles. For example, in Croatia, the accommodation offer in the rural area from seaside was enriched with the unique features of old lighthouses.

Campsites – are characterized by low usage of financial and human resources needed for their development and bring them the opportunity to be integrated with agriculture activity. In the same category can be included glamping, glamorous camping – with fixed tents, yurts, and other tent forms which lately raised a lot from both points of view customers and entrepreneurs interest (Lane, et al., 2013). In Hungary, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Romania, Serbia these types of accommodation fit very well to the traditional rural accommodation units due to the fact that rural tourism cannot be considered it linked solely with farming activities. An important demand for rural tourism accommodations is connected with nature tourism, visiting national parks, protected areas, and mountain tourism. Thus, have been developed new complementary accommodation units in rural areas. The majority of them are constructed in such a way in order to reduce the impact on the surrounding environment. It is also the case of well-known concepts like Tree Houses, Lake Houses or Floating Houses. Following a global trend, in this regard, many entrepreneurs from Central and Eastern European countries implemented it. Resorts from Croatia (Plitvice Holiday Resort), Poland (Wdrzewach, Nałęczów, Houseboats, Mielno), Czech (Brno Municipal Forests, Moravia, Green Valley Treehouse Resort Chotýšany in Central Bohemia), Slovenia (Garden Village Bled Slovenia), Romania (Predeal, Harmonie Complex) provide a perfect opportunity to reconnect with nature and cultural heritage, through distinctive design accommodation units located up in the trees, on the lake or riverbank.

Use of Regional Skills and Crafts to Build Tourist Destination Identity

A good example in this regard can be considered the development of *thematic villages* in a different region of Poland: Kujawsko-Pomorskie Region, West-Pomeranian Region, Lublin Region. According to Anna Kłoczko-Gajewska, in 2013 were over 75 such places in Poland, like Flower Village (Zalno), Mushroom Village (Krzywogoniec), Hobbits' Village (Sierakowo Sławieńskie) or Pottery Village (Garncarska).

What is the thematic village? An appropriate definition for this concept is a limited rural area, up to 20 km, with all facilities, buildings, and landscape, whose image is created based on a specific theme, worked out by the local community. The purpose of creating a thematic village is to enliven rural economy through the integration of the local community around issues related to a given regional product, service or culture. (Spychala & Graja-Zwolinska, 2017)

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These villages are structured to be a tourist destination area where visitors can participate in an active way in different type of activities organized as workshops like cooking traditional food (making butter and cottage cheese manually, baking bread and various cakes), learning crafts (pottery, making souvenirs of various natural materials such as straw, stones, bones, etc.) or practicing old-fashioned sports (bows, cannon shooting). Many of these villages are trying to strongly connect the theme of the village with the topic of the workshops. Almost half of the villages (Kloczko-Gajewska, 2013) offer cross-country rounds, outdoor fairs, picnics, feasts and events where citizens dress up accordingly with a specific theme. There are some villages that traditionally organize such events annually based, mainly for their citizens and neighborhoods, where tourists can get a different perspective about rural life. Product innovation can be observed also in the variety of forms used by for presenting the rural areas, creating the traditional atmosphere and tourists experience. Thus, almost 40% of these villages offer for example a show of a real blacksmith, visits in two cowsheds: a traditional and a very modern one, walking educational trails, multimedia presentations, and training about nature. The common objective for all these types of activities is to educate tourists regarding the richness and beauty of rural areas.

Important results have been achieved based on the implementation of this concept like the creation of new jobs for local citizens, more external contacts with other thematic villages, associations, in some cases with scientific institutions or universities for special consultancy services.

For example, the Pottery Village represents a project whose main objectives were to create a tourist destination, social integration of unemployed from rural areas and small towns and reactivation of an old handicraft profession (European Network for Rural Development, 2014). Therefore, has been created a local partnership under NIDA Foundation among businesses, social organizations, authorities and other local actors for the benefit of the social economy. All together took the initiative to harvest forgotten technological traditions, habits, and customs related to this handicraft and transform it into a regional potential in order to deal with the long-term unemployment problem. As a result of their initiative has been created a social enterprise and using different funding sources were employed a range of activities between 2005 and 2014. Among them, the core activity has been the vocational and theoretical training for 108 unemployed people within the domain of the craft. Also, from the beginning, the themed village was considered as a tourist destination, able to organize handicraft fairs, workshops, exhibitions and other kinds of events. In time, the social enterprise developed, with ten people full-time employed, a range of activities like the production and commercial of ceramic and sartorial products, regional souvenirs, hand-made paper and services activities. The products portfolio covers corporate gifts, souvenirs, tissue paper, flowers, glass painting, and stained glass. Every year have been registered around 12000 visitors, including tourists and study groups from Poland and abroad (European Network for Rural Development, 2014).

Another best practice identified was in Bulgaria, where a tour operator developed different types of special interest tours in order to allow tourists to know better the inhabitants and their specific skills and crafts. For example, browsing their webpage (Magic Tours, n.d.), the tourists may find information about the Mummers Carnival (Kukeri Fest) tours (where people are wearing traditional multi-colored mask and costumes, covered with beads, ribbons, and woolen tassels), the Valley of Roses and Rose Festivals tours, wine tours, Jewish heritage tours and folk music and dance tourism. One of the most innovative aspects of their products is the focus on tourists 'education on Bulgarian culture. For example, in the case of folk music and dance tours, the visitors attend informal lectures on Bulgarian music and traditional crafts provided by professionals and university professors, meet with high school students in authentic folklore and learn how to dance traditional Bulgarian dances like *khoro* and *ratchenitsa*.

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In Czech Republic, some cottages and mansions revived rural life. For example, the rural areas around the small town Usti nad Labem offer not only traditional horse breeding farms that offer accommodation in the rural hinterland, but also such exotic options as goat farms, where tourists learn the basics of caring for goats and the process of making goat cheese (cottages-for-holidays.com, n.d.).

Starting from the traditional way of transporting goods to the Baltic Sea, in different areas from Slovakia wooden raft rides were developed to link together wonderful natural scenery, culture, traditions, and rural life. A good example is rafting on the Dunajec, a river on the Slovak-Polish border in the heart of the Pieniny National Park (Sightseeing Cruises, n.d.). The Dunajec region is well-known for its traditional wooden boats, and because the river creates a natural borderline between Slovakia and Poland. Today, the boats consist of a few wooden canoes, guided by men in traditional folk costumes, who sail through a picturesque canyon surrounded by steep rocky crags (ONDERČANIN, 2016). Similar tourism products are offered on the river Orava or the Váh – near the mountain Strečno and near the town of Piešťany (Sightseeing Cruises, n.d.).

Innovative Products Based on Local Food

More and more entrepreneurs use gastronomy and local food in order to promote local culture. According to World Tourism Organization culinary tourism is a part of cultural tourism (European Travel Commission, 2005). Thus, gastronomy became the main motivation of tourists for some destinations and especially for rural areas.

Successful innovative approaches can be identified also in food and beverage services from rural areas. In Romania, the story of two restaurants – Cabana Motilor (Marisel, Cluj County) and Viscri 32 (Viscra, Brasov County) – emphasize how the local products and local gastronomy may represent a source for innovative rural tourism services. Their story is somehow similar: the owners are two families (of lifestyle entrepreneurs) who lived previously in urban areas and who decided at one moment to change their lifestyle. One of the families bought and restored in a traditional way an uninhabited house (Viscra 32), while the other applied for EU funds to build a new and well-integrated in the natural environment chalet in Marisel (Cabana Motilor). Both units operate also a restaurant because, besides developing a business, they want to help the local community by creating jobs and providing revenues to local producers. Their dishes are a good example of product innovation: most of the meals they serve to their guests are made from the products provided by the local producers, using traditional recipes. Moreover, the owners of Cabana Motilor produce tea, juices, and jams from forest berries gathered from the region and developed new varieties of bread and cheese (bread with potatoes and onion, cheese with onion).

Local foods and gastronomy represent key elements to diversify rural tourism and promote local economic development, involving many different professional sectors. Thus, with an experience of 11 years, My Transylvania Association (Sibiu, Romania) works toward discovering, preserve and promote the local foods, gastronomy, and culinary traditions and diversities. At the beginning of the activity, the firm started with organizations of short excursions in rural areas around Sibiu, in which the tourists had the possibility to discover the rural life, traditions, and food. These lead to establishing as a permanent gastronomy tourism product an itinerant food event – brunch with locals. From April till September, on the last Saturday of each month, tourists and visitors are invited in a different village from Transylvania, to enjoy local specialties and, especially, food cooked on the spot with products and recipes mostly from that area.

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Because in the gastronomic experience the raw materials and different components represent pre-eminent features, the association My Transylvania included strategic stakeholders in the concept: local producers, agricultural farms, fisheries, NGOs and more entrepreneurial families. Through food, as a teaser, the objective of the association was to stimulate some other cultural experiences in the rural area – visits to the fortified church, craft workshops, traditional crops, know better about the history of the region, traditional dances. But more important was the fact that socialization between tourists and locals was encouraged and this element added value to this experience – *organizers did not provide seats for everyone. You eat, but you feel awkward that someone else is standing, so you inevitably get into the talk, give up your seat* – Cristian Crismaru (DOR, 2017).

Gradually, the success of this concept came also with the opportunity to launch new projects, like village restoration programs, organizing the festival Transylvania Gastronomica whose objective is to connect urban restaurant with local producers for raw materials and recipes, product branding project for local producers.

In order to maintain a coherent development of this concept, the association added new services like tasting sessions of local products, private brunch in villages, cooking workshops, gastronomic routes and city tours in which the key elements are culinary experiences. To enlarge the connection between hosts and customers it was created an online platform Eat local, dedicated in the same time to promote events and products to customers as well as to attract new members next to the existing ones from 200 villages from Transylvania and other regions of Romania, Olt, Muntenia, Banat, and Dobrogea.

Republic of Moldova is another destination where local food and drinks represent the main attraction of tourism products. A tour agency, Winetours Moldova, organizes wine and culinary journeys in different regions of Moldova, combining the historical and socio-cultural attractions with traditional lunches and winery visits and wine tastings. To enrich the visitors' experience, the agency includes in their tours "special" activities, like the creation of personalized skin care products, based on natural ingredients like wine and grape extracts, the possibility to attend a specialty coffee master-class or learn wine painting techniques (Winetours Moldova, n.d.). Also, on their webpage, they recommend traditional

Figure 2. My Transylvania
Source: My Transylvania



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accommodation guesthouses, whose owners capitalized their different skills into the guesthouses design or services provided. For example, the guesthouse *La gura cuptorului* (At the oven's mouth, in English) has an exhibition hall, called *Museum of bread*, all the guests being served with tea, local honey, baked cakes, while the owner of *Casa Mierii* (Honey House, in English) guesthouse is initiating the tourists in the process of honey and honey products creation.

With a wide range of culinary specialties, Hungary has driven its tourism strategy toward cuisine (Benkhard & Halmai, 2017). Starting with 2006 the Hungarian government launched different tourism campaigns and programs focused on culinary values: 2006- The year of wine and cuisine, Great degustation trip, 2010 – Year of Festivals, 2016 – Year of culinary experience. The most valuable culinary products are pálinka, Tokajiaszú, Unicum, csabai and gyulai sausages, two types of paprika, classic winter salami, acacia-honey, red onions from Makó, pastry horn and food products from fattened geese (Benkhard & Halmai, 2017). Around them have been developed a wide range of culinary tourism offers like festivals, competitions, cookery courses, and thematic itineraries. The gastronomy-tourism have been perceived by rural municipalities as the only chance to prosper, thus they quickly adapted to it. A good example in this regard is The Villány-Siklós Wine Route Association, the first successful wine route in Hungary established in 1994 (Csatári B., 2019). Today, a network of more than 100 members from 17 municipalities, private vine-growers and wine-makers, entrepreneurs, rural accommodations, restaurants, and NGOs, offers a wide range of products and services based on wine, like wine-tastings, traditional cellars, wine contests, festivals, folklore events (Villány-Siklós Wineroute Association, n.d.). Along the way, the historical memorial sites, the rural architecture in the villages and in the vineyards offer interesting sights. Important results did not delay to be noticed. The number of wine makers almost doubled, tourists season lasts all year, along with wine tourism the Hungarian consumption of wine growth, and local authorities implemented complex development programs (Villány-Siklós Wineroute Association, n.d.). Because this type of thematic itinerary involves a diverse type of elements from rural areas, like agriculture, processing facilities, crafts, living traditions the concepts spread all over the country and have been developed based on other food products. As a representative part of the Hungarian cuisine, the drink palinka inspired the development of thematic routes. For example, Bekesi Plum Palinka Path and Szatmar-Beregi Plum Path, during which tourists' awareness is driven not only to know palinka production as well as the preparation of plum jam, thus tourists can try to prepare their own plum jam and they can have an insight into the process of plum drying (Harcsa, 2017). Also, local festivals and events, contests have been developed in order to promote palinka gastronomy as well as new products of the small local distilleries.

The Added Values of Networks in Process Innovation

Sustainable tourism products are developed and promoted also by travel agents and tour operators. Johan's Green Mountain is a tour-operator agency (located in Cluj-Napoca, Romania) providing sustainable active holidays mainly to foreign tourists. The tourism activities they are selling are taking place in different rural areas of Romania (most of them in Transylvania). The product innovation represents the most frequent type of innovation in their case. To develop customized products for their customers, they combined in a unique and original way natural and socio-cultural aspects of the Romanian rural areas. They allow to tourist to choose if they would like guided or individual trips, in different parts of Romania and different moments of the year, like this providing them the opportunity to learn about the traditional lifestyle of Romanians. On the other side, as they state on their webpage (Eco&Sustainable

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Tourism, 2019), *they are stimulating young people to stay home in the villages and to prove that there is a decent future in rural tourism for them.* Like this, young people will have an incentive to preserve and transfer to the next generations most of the villages' traditions and customs. Moreover, from the point of environmental impact, the agency chooses the fewer pollutant ways of transportation for tourists along the trails (on foot, by bikes, and by horses), they marked the hiking trails and installed info panels. From the social point of view, they cooperate with many families from rural areas in order to be able to provide different services to tourists: accommodation, food and beverages and different crafts specific to each rural area.

An innovative approach for developing rural tourism in a more sustainable way is represented by forming large networks or clusters of family farms, small companies, and local public units, in many countries from East and Central European countries. In Romania, there are some important best practices in this regard, a very good example, in this case, being a rural tourism network developed in Sâncraiu (Cluj County). The tour-operator Davincze Tours succeeded to developed a strong cooperation with the local authorities, local guesthouses and other producers (of meat and dairy products, forest fruits and mushrooms, lavender, strawberry, honey, wine, oil, traditional fabrics (cloths - hats, fur coats; carpets; wood carvings) or equestrian services) in order to create and promote tourism products. Tourists are allowed to visit households of local producers, having the opportunity to see traditional production methods and to find out the story which lies behind the technique. Their interest in developing tourism activities have facilitated the development of "co-opetition" process (Decelle, 2004), in Sâncraiu over 40 accommodation units cooperating and competing each other at the same time. They understood that, individually, they will never be able to attend international tourism fairs, to spend money on promotion or to provide complex tourism packages to their customers. The results describe very well the success of such a way of organization - every year, besides the more and more diverse supply of tourism packages, they are organizing events that attract a significant number of domestic and foreign tourists in the regions (like an International Music and Folk Dances Camp, a Rosehip Festival and a Grapes Ball) (Toader, et al., 2012). Also, the capacity to attract groups of tourists (of over 40 persons) and to share them in the case of accommodation and food and beverage services (because all the units have a small accommodation capacity) emphasize the efficiency of this organization method.

Another example of cooperation was identified in Ukraine, where the leaders of the most active Cossacks organizations established the International Union of Cossacks Forces. Besides other activities, they are organizing tourism activities for individuals or groups with the purpose to help tourists to learn more about the Cossack history and different socio-cultural aspects of their way of life. Depending on the customers' desires and wishes, the length of the tour may vary between two days to three weeks and can include activities like hikes, learning activities on how to read maps, to use compass to navigate by the stars and in the woods, to set up the tents, to kindle the smoke (signaling) and smokeless fires, to learn the basics of fishing and the skills to prepare a simple Cossack food (soup, fish soup), learning to swim, etc. (The International Union of Cossacks Forces, n.d.). Also, optional activities are provided to guests: lectures read by scientists of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, lessons of the ride horse in the Cossack manner, including the lessons of using the Cossack weapon (sword, whip), and getting acquainted with the historical reconstruction of the Cossack clothes, models of weapons, household items, customs, and lessons of Cossack songs, including participate in the Cossack parades (The International Union of Cossacks Forces, n.d.).

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ICT as a Tool for Rural Tourism Innovation

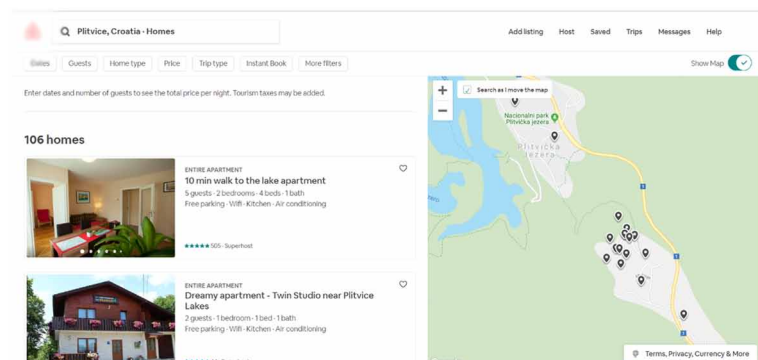
Usually, rural tourism units, most of them being characterized by a small service capacity, face significant impediments when it comes to innovate, seasonality and the lack of financial resources being often cited as the main problems (Toader, Gica, & Rus, Innovation in the activity of SMEs acting in Cluj county rural tourism, 2013). Fortunately, the development of information and communication technologies (ICT) and their increasing use in tourism (due to high flexibility of costs) gave a chance to small entrepreneurs focused on rural tourism to compete with the global players. Often is emphasized that ICT has been and continues to be a major factor in changing the configuration of modern tourism (Ceter for Strategy & Evaluation Services, 2013), influencing both the tourists’ behavior and the way the services are delivered and promoted.

The ICT developments had a significant impact on the performances of the tourism units, allowing them to increase their revenues and to optimize their costs. The use of social media and other online tools allowed to rural tourism units to promote their products and services to tourists from all over the world at more than affordable costs. For example, since 2010, Cabana Motilor (Marisel, Cluj, Romania) is using a Facebook, Tweeter, different specialized tourism websites and Google AdWords to build and consolidate connections with their tourists and to target the potential domestic and foreign customers. This represents an example of process innovation where the traditional distribution and promotion channels of tourism services were replaced entirely in order to increase the firm’s competitiveness.

New business models are emerging in tourism as a result of ICT progress. Nowadays, the sharing economy platforms represent the new trend in tourism and more and more units from rural areas are adopting them. OECD defines the sharing economy as *the new marketplaces that allow services to be provided on a peer-to-peer or shared usage basis*, including peer-to-peer services alternative to traditional tourism activities (OECD, 2016). This new trend is present in rural areas especially in the accommodation sector, for example, many units from rural areas being listened on Airbnb. More precisely, at the beginning of 2019, there were 12 accommodation units listed on Airbnb in Viscri (Brasov, Romania), 47 units in the rural area near Sibiu (Sibiu, Romania) and over 100 units close to Plitvice Lake in Croatia.

Taking into consideration the different types of innovation implemented, it can be observed that most of the rural tourism units are focusing first of all on product innovation. Usually, the source of product innovations is represented by the entrepreneurs’ knowledge and personal interest to increase the value

Figure 3. Rural accommodation units listed on Airbnb – Plitvice, Croatia
 Source: Airbnb website, accessed 06 June 2019



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of tourism experience and by tourists' observations and demands. The latest allows to tourism units to understand better the tourists' behavior and to customize the tourism packages according to their needs without significant efforts to identify the idea of improvement – this comes naturally from the interaction with the tourist. Unfortunately, this approach is usually easy to replicate by local competitors, most of the competitive advantages that could be obtained from such an innovation being mitigated.

On the other side, the process innovations, even if they are not so frequent as product innovations, once implemented, they may generate significant competitive advantages. The ICT skills of rural tourism entrepreneurs represent a significant factor driving innovations in the reservation, promotion, communication with customers, payment methods, etc., many of these improvements making easier and more comfortable for tourists to interact with the tourism units. But, one of the most efficient and with a long-run impact type of innovation is the development of networks and clusters. The cooperation between different local stakeholders, both private and public, will create the opportunity to capitalize on a more efficient way the local resources and to develop and promote high quality, diverse and unique tourism products. Working together reduces the individual risk of failure, optimize the costs and increases the revenues because the more diverse and enriched tourism supply has the capacity to reduce seasonality and increase the length of stay.

CONCLUSION

The chapter identifies and discusses the most interesting and successful innovative solutions adopted by entrepreneurs from rural areas in order to respond better than competitors to the actual customer's needs. Product diversification, especially using traditional elements and unique regional values like local food, architecture, and crafts, represents the main approach in the case of product innovation. But also is remarkable the development of networks in many countries from Central and Eastern Europe as business process innovations. Networking in rural tourism plays an important role. The entrepreneurs are aware of this trend and try to develop new products/services or to improve them, using different forms of cooperation. Multicultural skills, a strong commitment to the community and social responsibility, passion for hospitality represent drivers for innovation in rural tourism.

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Chapter 12

Romanian Newly–Nominated WHS and Current Tourism Development in the Associated Rural Localities

Cornelia Pop

Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

Cristina Balint

Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

ABSTRACT

The aim of the chapter is to investigate the current status of tourism development within the rural localities adjacent to the newly nominated natural world heritage sites (WHS) in Romania. The general methodology will be that of a case study, combining deductive and inductive approaches and the critical interpretation based on the available data. The results show a modest to non-existent tourist infrastructure and shallow tourist activity in the rural area adjacent to the 12 locations of the new natural WHS. The findings also show a low level of awareness regarding the WHS designation among the local authorities and the absence of real cooperation between the custodians of the related protected areas and the local communities. The new WHS locations have a long way ahead to become attractive and sustainable tourist destination by applying adequate destination management which should include the special status of these rural destinations.

INTRODUCTION

Natural protected areas (NPAs) have important environmental values (Mayer et al., 2010). Being traditionally located in peripheral areas, NPAs can represent unique tourist attractions (Mayer et al., 2010; Leon et al., 2015) and therefore have the potential to promote sustainable rural development for the adjacent localities (Mayer et al., 2010; Armaitiene et al., 2014). Tourism development related to NPAs

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can generate economic benefits for the local communities if the management plans for the respective destinations balance in an adequate manner the conflicting goals of promoting economic development and the preservation of the natural and cultural heritage (Kusova et al., 2008; Leon et al., 2015; Canteiro et al., 2018).

The designation of a NPA as a World Heritage Site (WHS) can be considered an enhancing factor to the attractiveness of the respective destination by increasing its (international) visibility (Jimura, 2011;

Chi et al., 2017; De Simone et al., 2018). Furthermore, natural WHSs seem to be preferred by international tourists (Su & Lin, 2014) and play an important role in boosting tourism demand mainly in developing countries (Yang et al. 2019).

Being a developing country, Romania should take advantage of this situation since it added a new natural WHS in 2017 to the existing seven WHSs.

The conservation efforts and the establishment of Romanian protected areas dates, in the modern era, since 1918 (Stringer & Paavola, 2013). In the post-communist period, the majority of Romanian national parks were nominated as such during the year 2000. The introduction and nomination of Natura 2000 special protected areas (SPA) and sites of community importance (SCI) started in 2007 through the Order 1964/2007 issued by the minister of environment and sustainable development. Romania is part of Europarc Network with the following protected areas administrative entities as members: Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, Retezat and Apuseni national parks.

According to INCDT (2009) and MoT (2018), the protected areas grew from 17.84% of the Romanian territory in 2008/2009 to about 23% in 2018. During the same interval, the number of national parks remains the same (13), the natural parks grew from 14 to 16, while the Natura 2000 areas grew from 108 SPAs to 171 SPAs and from 273 SCI to 435 SCI areas (INCDT, 2009; MoT, 2018).

The designation of the new natural WHS (Primeval Beech Forest) in 2017, with its 12 locations, adds new challenges and opportunities for Romanian central and local authorities and communities to enhance the nature-based tourism development on sustainable principles, mainly in the related rural areas. Though during the past decade, rural tourism grew (Pop et al., 2017), tourism in the rural areas related to NPAs raises specific problems (Erdely & Dinca, 2011). The 3 versions of the national strategy for tourism (INCDT, 2009; INCDT, 2015; MoT, 2018) recognizes the problems. However little advance was registered between 2009 and 2018. Nonetheless, one step comes from an analysis of tourism development in the protected areas and adjacent localities.

The present paper focuses on the related rural localities of the newly designate WHS and the current level of tourism development at the level of these localities. The assessment of the current tourism development level at these rural destinations can provide a platform for researchers and practitioners to draw the appropriate strategies for the future progress of tourism (mainly ecotourism) in the respective localities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The academic literature on NPAs tends to focus mainly on the most visible of these areas, the national parks (e.g. Kusova et al., 2008; Mayer et al., 2010; Leon et al., 2015). There is also a strong series of papers discussing the governance of these national parks and the surrounding areas (Schliep & Stoll-Kleemann, 2010; Benedetto et al., 2016; Lordkipanidze et al., 2019). Most recently, some studies tend to

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include the cultural dimension of the tourist visits in the national parks (e.g. Agnoletti, 2014; Schaeegner et al., 2016).

The literature on (natural) WHSs is concerned mainly with the influence of the tourism development on the integrity of the respective WHS environment (Yang & Lin 2014; Jimura, 2011; Caust & Vecco, 2017), the importance of residents' participation to the respective destination management (Latkova & Vogt, 2012; Su & Lin, 2014), while a growing body of research is discussing the panacea role of WHS designation (e.g. Poria et al., 2011; Cuccia et al., 2016; Yang et al. 2019).

Romanian academic literature investigating the topic of tourism in the country's protected areas is sparse. The existing papers either discuss the situation of the protected areas in the context of Romania's accession to European Union (Buza et al. 2005), or are focused on the regulations concerning the protected areas (Antonescu et al. 2015), and on the management of these protected areas (Stringer & Paavola, 2013; Manolache et al. 2018). A small series of papers focus on comparisons between a Romanian national/natural park and a similar park in other countries (e.g. Cottrell & Cutumisu, 2006; Baltescu et al. 2017) discussing the potential of sustainable tourism development. The paper of Erdely & Dinca (2011) discusses the general problems of tourism development related to the Romanian NPAs. The paper of Hornoiu et al. (2014) investigates consumer behavior in Romanian NPAs, enhancing the interest of young people for nature-based tourism. The only paper that could be found on accommodation infrastructure related to the protected areas in Romanian Carpathian Mountains is that of Balteanu et al. (2008); though there are no details regarding the localities associated with these protected areas and it is not clear how many of the announced lodgings are rural areas.

The academic literature on the Romanian WHSs is equally scarce, as highlighted by Pop & Georgescu (2019).

To the best of our knowledge, currently, there is no paper focusing on the new WHS rural locations, related to the NPAs, trying to assess the respective level of tourism development. Therefore, the present paper is filling this gap in the Romanian academic literature and, also, adds new results to the findings of the existing literature on Romanian rural WHS locations.

DATA AND METHOD

The present study is based on the following secondary sources of information: a) the Ministry of Tourism (MoT) databases for registered accommodation facilities; these databases are not available earlier than 2005; b) the data provided by the National Institute for Statistics (NIS) via Tempo-online database; c) the websites of the national parks and the websites of the local authorities for the communes (the smallest administrative units in Romania, found only in rural areas) identified to be administratively related to the new WHS locations. It was chosen not to use the Facebook pages since it is not clear if the respective pages are managed by the local authorities' representatives or by private persons.

The data were extracted for the years 2005, 2016 and 2018 in order to allow comparisons with the existing data for the other Romanian rural WHS locations and also to capture the evolution of accommodation facilities before and after the new WHS designation. The data for the tourist activity in 2018 were not available at the end of April 2019.

The information was grouped by commune and by new WHS locations. The data at every commune level is available upon request, while the information for the new WHS locations is included in the pres-

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ent paper. The short data series and the absence of variation in some data between for the announced years prevented the use of regression and even of nonparametric methods.

The general method used was the case study approach, combining inductive and deductive reasoning and the critical interpretation of the available data.

The hypothesis formulated for the present case study: *the communes related to the new WHS locations present a modest level of tourism development given the similar level found for the already investigated Romanian rural WHS locations.*

THE NEWLY DESIGNATED WHS

Selected General Information

In 2017 Romania added a new natural WHS, the Primeval Beech Forest, to the existing 7 WHSs (the natural WHS Danube Delta and the six cultural WHSs).

The natural WHS Primeval Beech Forest is spread all over Europe and was introduced since 2007. The twelve European countries hosting the natural WHS Primeval Beech Forest are (according to <https://www.worldheritagesite.org/list/countries>): Albania (2 locations), Austria (2 locations), Belgium (1 location), Bulgaria (9 locations), Croatia (2 locations), Germany (5 locations), Italy (6 locations), Romania (12 locations), Slovakia (4 locations), Slovenia (2 locations), Spain (6 locations), and Ukraine (11 locations).

Only Romania, Bulgaria and Ukraine have more than the maximum of 6 locations of primeval forests recorded in Western European countries, with Romania leading with the 12 locations of this new natural WHS. Figure 1 in the Appendix presents the geographical position of the new natural WHS twelve locations and the positions of the other WHSs' locations.

Table 7 in the Appendix presents the details regarding these 12 new locations of WHS Primeval Beech Forest. A synthesis of the information in Table 7 shows the following:

- 1 location is superimposed over the national park Cheile Nerei-Beusnita; 6 locations are included in 3 national parks (2 in Cozia park; 3 in Domogled-Valea Cernei park; 1 in Semenic-Cheile Carasului park); 3 locations are registered as Natura 2000 protected areas and as nature reserves (Codrul secular Slatioara, Grosii Tiblesului-Preluci; Grosii Tiblesului-Izvorul Surii); and 2 locations are registered only as Natura 2000 protected areas (Codrul secular Sinca and Codrul secular Strambu-Baiut)
- 8 locations (of which 7 related to the national parks) have as sole custodian Romsilva (see Note* in Table 7 for details); 2 locations have joint custody (Codrul secular Strambu-Baiut and Codrul secular Sinca; in this second case it is worth noting that from administrative viewpoint, the localities in charge with the areas of Codrul Secular Sinca are in Brasov county, while the two custodians are in Sibiu county); 2 locations do not have a custodian (Grosii Tiblesului-Preluci; Grosii Tiblesului-Izvorul Surii).
- a total number of 34 localities, administratively related to the new WHS locations, were identified: 6 towns (3 in Caras-Severin county and 3 in Valcea county) and 28 communes (14 in Caras-Severin county; 6 in Valcea county; 4 in Maramures county; 2 in Brasov county; 1 in Gorj county; and 1 in Suceava county).

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- for the 7 areas related to national parks the following resulted based on the national park websites: there are no dedicated pages for the WHS locations within the national parks' websites, though some of the adjacent localities are mentioned on the pages dedicated to tourist trails; 1 area (Codrul secular Sinca) has a dedicated, but not working, website and several dedicated webpages; 4 areas (Codrul secular Slatioara, Grosii Tiblesului-Preluci, Grosii Tiblesului-Izvorul Surii, and Codrul secular Strambu-Baiut) have only several dedicated webpages.

Table 1 below presents more information regarding these locations, taking into consideration the administratively related communes.

Similar to the national park websites, only one commune has a dedicated page to the adjacent locations of the new WHS and the other 4 communes have brief mentions of the respective locations of the new WHS.

While all the 28 communes might have related strategies for development, these strategies are publicly available - via websites - only in 4 cases. Tourism development has a small section within three of these strategies, while only one commune (Muereasca) has a longer and realist section addressing the strategy for tourism development. A fifth commune (Sinca Noua) considers, through a short statement, the importance of ecotourism for further development.

Of the 26 communes with functioning websites, seven do not have pages dedicated to tourism. In the majority of cases, the pages dedicated to tourism contain scarce information, mainly about the natural beauty of the surrounding areas. In the case of 13 communes another page dedicated to other tourist attractions can be found, usually related to potential cultural attractions. Nonetheless, the existing historic monuments (as enhancers of tourist attraction) are rarely mentioned.

Accommodation and Tourist Activity in the New WHS Locations

The potential for tourism development of any rural locality related to NPAs is considered to be high (Su & Lin, 2014; Yang et al., 2019). Furthermore, the presence of historic monuments, museums/collections and the preservation of rural local traditions can enhance the attractiveness of any destination by adding the cultural component of tourism.

In the case of the communes related to the new WHS location, their potential is enhanced by the fact that only one of the three national parks announces one accommodation possibility for groups within the park. For the other locations related to Natura 2000 areas, there is no information regarding the accommodation facilities, therefore they were presumed to be absent.

Based on the data in Table 2 and using the same scale as Pop & Georgescu (2019), the majority of the WHS locations included in the present study have a high tourist potential, while only one, related to one commune, is considered to have moderate tourist potential.

All WHS locations have officially registered accommodation units. However, as Table 2 shows, the presence of lodging facilities seems to have no direct connection with the tourist potential scores, mainly in the cases of Codrul secular Slatioara and Izvoarele Nerei. Both these locations have a very modest infrastructure of accommodation facilities, despite their high tourist potential. It is worth noting that for other 4 locations (Cheile Nerei-Beusnita, Codrul secular Sinca, Domoged-Valea Cernei, and Strambu-Baiut) the majority of the accommodation facilities are concentrated in one commune (Sasca Montana for Cheile Nerei-Beusnita, Sinca Veche for Codrul secular Sinca, Mehadia for Domoged-Valea Cernei,

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Table 1. Selected characteristics of the locations of the newly nominated WHS

Location	County and map position in Figure 1	Number of communes administratively related to the location	Communes' websites and language	WHS mentioning on websites	Tourism strategy on websites	Tourism dedicated page
Cheile Nerei-Beusnita 1133ter-050	Caras-Severin 44	11	1 commune with no website 1 commune with a compromised website ¹ 9 communes with Romanian only websites	3 communes mention the WHS on their websites	2 communes included their tourism strategy on the general development strategy No information for the others	9 communes with dedicated pages for tourism (of which 4 communes also have a dedicated page for other tourist attractions)
Codrul secular Sinca 1133ter-051	Brasov 37	2	2 communes with Romanian only websites	1 commune mentions the WHS on the website	1 commune implies the existence of a tourism strategy indicating ecotourism as the core of the commune future development	2 communes with dedicated pages for tourism and both communes also have a dedicated page for other tourist attractions
Codrul secular Slatioara 1133ter-052	Suceava 33	1	1 commune with a Romanian only website	No	No	No Some information is scattered in the main page
Cozia 1133ter-053 1133ter-054	Valcea 38, 39	6	6 communes with Romanian only websites	No	2 communes included their tourism strategy on the general development strategy No information for the others	No (though the same 2 communes with a strategy have dedicated pages to other tourist attractions)
Domogled-Valea Cernei 1133ter-055 1133ter-056 1133ter-057	Caras-Severin Gorj 40, 41, 42	3	3 communes with Romanian only websites	No	No	2 communes with dedicated pages for tourism and both communes also have a dedicated page for other tourist attractions
Grosii Tiblesului 1133ter-058 1133ter-059	Maramures 34, 35	1	1 commune with a Romanian only website	Yes a dedicated page	No	Dedicated page to tourism and also one for other tourist attractions
Izvoarele Nerei 1133ter-060	Caras-Severin 43	1	1 commune with a Romanian only website	No	No	The dedicated page contains no information
Strambu-Baiut 1133ter-061	Maramures 36	3	3 communes with Romanian only websites	No	No	2 communes with dedicated pages for tourism and both communes also have a dedicated page for other tourist attractions

Source: authors' compilations based on the WHS location codes and the communes' websites accessed between April 19 and April 30, 2019

and Botiza for Strambu-Baiut). These 4 rural localities gather between 60% and 80% of the total lodgings and bed places for all the new WHS locations.

Overall, the number of accommodation units and their lodging capacity recorded an upward trend between 2005 and 2016/2018. The location Strambu-Baiut is the only one with a downward. However, this overall upward trend comes mainly from the fact that a number of 8 localities entered the accommodation market between 2005 and 2016/2018. At commune level, most of the localities registered a stagnation in the number of lodging facilities.

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About one-third of the communes related to the new WHS locations do not offer lodging facilities for tourists.

The majority of the communes host between 1 and 4 accommodation units with a lodging capacity of 10 to 99 bed places, the most frequent accommodation that can be found represented by rural pensions (most frequent), lodges and rooms for rent.

The modest accommodation infrastructure is also confirmed by the bed places at 100 population (Table 3), most of the WHS locations having a similar carrying capacity as that registered at the national level for the rural localities.

A comparison between total accommodation facilities registered for the new WHS locations and for Danube Delta (the only other one natural WHS) shows important differences in favor of the Delta. The situation is normal, Danube Delta being designated as WHS in 1991 and becoming since a more visible tourist destination.

The tourist activity within the locations of the new WHS can be considered modest and related to the availability of the lodging facilities (Table 3).

Overall, tourist arrivals increased 2.5 times between 2005 and 2016, though Strambu-Baiut recorded a slight decrease, while for Grosii Tiblesului and Codrul secular Slationara no tourist activity is recorded². The most impressive increase is registered for Cheile Nerei-Beusnita, with an increase of 13.6 times in tourist arrivals. It is interesting to mention that in 2016 the locations of the new WHS, not nominated at that time, drew closer to the tourist arrivals of the other natural WHS, the Danube Delta. The carrying capacity based on tourist arrivals also shows that the new WHS locations seem not to be overcrowded. Though, at commune level the situation is different as of 2016: one locality, Sasca Montana, received 281 tourists at 100 population, while Mehadia received 80 tourists at 100 population. For these two localities, the danger of overcrowding is emerging and has to be taken into consideration.

Despite the overall increase in tourist arrivals and the small number of lodging facilities, the occupancy rate is low, for 3 of the locations not even reaching 10%. For all the new WHS locations the occupancy rate is far lower than the one registered for rural areas at the national level and considerably lower than in the case of Danube Delta.

The length of stay shows mixed results. Overall and for 3 locations the number of days spent by tourists within those areas decreased, with the highest decline of 4.5 days in the case of Cheile Nerei-Beusnita. For two cases, the length of stay increased, in the case of Codrul secular Sinca with 1.2 days, similar to the case of the Danube Delta. The overall trend for the length of stay in new WHS locations is similar to that registered at the national level for rural areas, though the new WHS locations experienced a shorter length of stay.

The number of tourist arrivals cannot be related to the number of visitors for the new WHS locations mainly due to the absence of information regarding this number. Though, the 3 versions of the strategy for ecotourism (INCDT 2009a, INCDT 2015, MoT 2018) mention the number of visitors for the 4 national parks related to the new WHS locations (Table 4). The strategy versions also mention that most of the Cozia park's and Domoged-Valea Cernei park's visitors are occasional visitors coming rather from the two administratively related towns-spa resorts, Calimanesti-Caciulata and respectively Baile Herculane. Therefore, the available data for visitors is of little use in a trial to estimate the influence on tourist arrivals in the related communes, except for the overall upward trend of the visitors.

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Table 2. Selected information regarding the locations of the newly nominated natural WHS

WHS locations	NPRD average scores for tourist potential (2012)	Accommodation according to NIS (first row) and MoT (second row)						No. of historic monuments as of 2015	No. of museums and collection opens to the public (first row) & No. of visitors (second row)		
		No			Bed places				2005	2016	2018
		2005	2016	2018	2005	2016	2018				
Cheile Nerei-Beusnita 1133ter-050	21.86 (high) 4 communes have no scores	3	11	12	169	238	268	32	0	0	n/a
		2	16	19	14	262	301		0	0	n/a
		dwellings in rest area, lodges, rooms for rent, rural pensions							Two local museums/collections in Bozovici and Racasdia not recorded by NIS		
Codrul secular Sinca 1133ter-051	26.02 (high)	1	10	10	48	185	208	8	0	0	n/a
		2	17	17	23	292	292		0	0	n/a
		motel, villa, lodge, houselet-type unit, rooms for rent, rural pensions							Two local museums/collections in Sinca Veche not recorded by NIS		
Codrul secular Slatioara 1133ter-052	16.5 (high)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	n/a
		0	1	1	0	8	8		0	0	n/a
		rural pension							A local museum/collection in Stulpicani not recorded by NIS		
Cozia 1133ter-053 1133ter-054	24.12 (high)	3	4	6	86	78	104	36	1	1	n/a
		4	5	6	71	83	91		0	150	n/a
		lodge, motel, rural pensions									
Domogled-Valea Cernei 1133ter-055 1133ter-056 1133ter-057	28.53 (high)	6	8	10	219	306	334	11	0	0	n/a
		7	9	10	255	285	361		0	0	n/a
		hotel, motel, camping, dwellings in rest areas, rural pensions									
Grosii Tiblesului 1133ter-058 1133ter-059	9.01 (moderate)	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	n/a
		4	0	2	21	0	26		0	0	n/a
		rural pensions									
Izvoarele Nerei 1133ter-060	29.5 (high)	0	2	2	0	20	20	6	0	0	n/a
		0	2	2	0	20	20		0	0	n/a
		houselet-type unit, rural pension									
Strambu-Baiut 1133ter-061	27.09 (high)	25	9	10	196	121	129	6	0	1	n/a
		36	22	24	201	215	220		0	380	n/a
		rooms for rent, rural pensions							A local museum/collection in Botiza not recorded by NIS		
Average/ Total new WHS	22.83 (average)	38	44	50	718	948	1,063	101	1	2	n/a
		55	72	81	585	1,165	1,319		0	530	n/a
		9 of the 17 accommodation types are available in the selected areas the dominant type: rural pensions							Six local museums/collections not recorded by NIS		
Danube Delta	26.66 (high)	75	50	194	1,808	1,379	4,438	57	0	0	n/a
		74	226	272	1,949	4,863	5,657		0	0	n/a
		12 of the 17 accommodation types are available in the selected area the dominant type: rural pensions									

Note: Informal/not registered accommodation facilities were found (as of April 2019) for the following WHS locations: 1. Cheile Nerei-Beusnita -seven; 2. Codrul secular Sinca – ten; 3. Codrul secular Slatioara - three; Cozia - two; 4. Grosii Tiblesului – two; 5. Codrul secular Strambu-Baiut - nine.

Sources: authors' calculations based on NIS data, MoT data, <http://www.cultura.ro/lista-monumentelor-istorice>, and NPDR data https://portal.afir.info/informatii_generale_pndr_pndr_2007_2013_masura_313_incurajarea_activitatilor_turistice (Annex 10)

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Table 3. Tourist activity for the rural locations of the new WHS and of the existing WHSs

New WHS areas and existing WHSs	Tourist arrivals (persons)		Occupancy rate (%)		Length of stay (days)		Carrying capacity*					
							Bed places at 100 population (no)			Tourist arrivals at 100 population (no)		
	2005	2016	2005	2016	2005	2016	2005	2016	2018	2005	2016	2018
Cheile Nerei-Beusnita 1133ter-050	381	5,176	17.60	19.99	6.5	2.0	1	1	2	2	29	n/a
Codrul secular Sinca 1133ter-051	909	1,393	8.60	6.71	1.5	2.7	1	3	4	18	26	n/a
Codrul secular Slatioara 1133ter-052	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	n/a
Cozia 1133ter-053 1133ter-054	426	1,579	4.07	6.81	1.3	1.2	0.5	0.5	1	3	11	n/a
Domogled-Valea Cernei 1133ter-055 1133ter-056 1133ter-057	2,325	3,283	13.09	17.18	2.5	2.9	2	3	3	18	29	n/a
Grosii Tiblesului 1133ter-058 1133ter-059	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	n/a
Izvoarele Nerei 1133ter-060	0	266	0	16.54	0	2.8	0	1	1	0	11	n/a
Strambu-Baiut 1133ter-061	936	819	3.26	3.39	2.0	1.8	7	2	3	33	16	n/a
Total new rural WHS locations	4,977	12,516	8.28	11.60	2.4	2.2	1	1	2	4	11	n/a
The Danube Delta	16,155	17,922	29.61	39.00	1.7	2.7	9	25	26	77	93	n/a
National rural level	714,220	1,686,679	23.48	21.17	3.6	2.5	0.6	1	1	7	17	n/a

Note*: calculate as suggested by Defining, measuring and evaluating carrying capacity in European tourism destinations, B4-3040/2000/294577/MAR/D2,

Sources: authors' calculations based on NIS data for the new rural WHS location and Table 7 in Pop & Georgescu (2019) for the existing rural WHSs

DISCUSSIONS

At almost two years after the designation of the new WHS, the information regarding the communes related to its locations shows a low level of awareness concerning the importance of WHS nomination, for most of these communes. For the other 5 communes (those which present their development strategy and seem to understand the importance of tourism development) this level can be considered, at best, moderate. This finding is similar to the findings of Pop & Georgescu (2019) for the other 7 Romanian

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Table 4. National parks’ visitors and personnel allocated to visitors according to the 3 versions of the strategy for ecotourism

The national park		INCDT 2009a (pages 36-37)	INCDT 2015 (pages 47-48)	MoT 2018 (pages 44-46)
Cheile Nerei-Beusnita	Visitors	About 10,000 per year in 2007-2008	About 8,000 per year for 2011-2013 About 25,000 in 2014 About 50,000 in 2015 (first 9 months)	About 70,000 in 2017
	Rangers/guides	n/a	7 rangers	8 rangers
Cozia	Visitors	About 50,000 per year in 2007-2008	About 50,000 visitors in 2014	About 80-90,000 visitors for 2009-2016 About 100,000 visitors for 2017
	Rangers/guides	n/a	2 rangers/guides & 1 guide	7 rangers & 2 guides
Domoged-Valea Cernei	Visitors	About 10,000 in 2007-2008	About 10,000 per year (period not specified)	About 15,000 per year in 2017
	Rangers/guides	n/a	9 rangers & 3 guides	10 rangers
Semenic-Cheile Carasului (including Izvoarele Nerei)	Visitors	About 60,000 in 2008	n/a	About 7,095 in 2017
	Rangers/guides	n/a	7 rangers & 2 guides	8 rangers & 2 guides

Sources: INCDT 2009a, INCDT 2015; MoT 2018

rural WHSs. The result also concurs with the conclusions of Poria et al. (2011) on low to moderate awareness levels of local authorities concerning the meaning of WHS designation.

Furthermore, when not absent, the information for tourists on communes websites is, for the most cases, sketchy and often not mentioning their respective links and/or proximity to the NPAs. The information concerning the other tourist attractions is even more superficial.

Moreover, the national parks’ websites are also ignoring the importance of new WHS locations’ designation, while for the locations registered under Natura 2000 the websites are absent, with few exceptions.

Therefore any potential tourist is left to gather information about the respective destinations rather from the electronic word of mouth spread mostly by social media websites than from the website of the respective destination.

The virtual absence of accommodation facilities within the new WHS locations represents an opportunity for the communes administratively related to these locations to develop an appropriate lodging infrastructure. As Table 1 shows, the number of available accommodation facilities and the lodging capacity is increasing in connection with the increased number of tourist arrivals. The available accommodation types and the dominant type (rural pensions) are similar to the finding of Pop & Coros (2016) and Pop & Georgescu (2019) for the other rural WHSs.

Though, the accommodation network is modest and concentrated within 4 communes out of the 28 under the scrutiny. The same communes, naturally, receive the highest number of tourists and at least in one case (Sasca Montana) the danger of overcrowding is looming. A more even distribution of the lodging facilities among the neighboring communes is to be desired. More studies are needed in order to understand the factors that generate the identified concentrations; currently, they cannot be explained only by the proximity or the distance from a town or by the geographic position on a national road. The

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local business initiatives, sometimes supported by the local authorities, seems also to play a role, as suggested by Pop & Georgescu (2019). Botiza commune can be considered a special case since it became known as a tourist destination mainly in relation to the preservation of the local traditions (Muica & Turnock, 1999; Cipolarri, 2010) rather than as a nature-based related tourism destination.

The relative modest tourist activity for the new WHS locations (low occupancy rate, decreasing length of stay) is in line with the findings of Pop & Coros (2016) and Pop & Georgescu (2019) for the other rural WHSs regarding the scarcity or the absence of alternative entertainment facilities and/or other activities (including the presentation of intangible cultural heritage as suggested by Yi et al., 2018) motivating tourists to extend their stay. Another motive, needing further investigations, might be related to the quality of accommodation and food services.

Based on the information provided by the 3 versions of the strategy for ecotourism (INCDT 2009a, INCDT 2015; MoT 2018), the length of tourist stay can be easily increased by the (eco)tourism visitation programs offered by the 4 related national parks. There are mentioned guided park visitation programs for 2 to 7 days. Though information regarding these programs is not easy to find on national parks' websites and when found, there is almost no connection with the related communes. Furthermore, as Table 4 shows, the parks have far too few employees supposed to provide guiding services for an increased number of visitors.

Unfortunately, for the other WHS locations registered only as Natura 2000 areas, no information is available regarding the (eco)tourism programs and/or visitation alternatives.

The situation of the Romanian protected areas and the development of nature-based tourism and ecotourism for these areas might change in the years to come due to the creation of a new agency (ANANP – Agentia Nationala pentru Aree Naturale Protejate/National Agency for Natural Protected Areas) in 2016. The main mission of this new agency is to manage the NPAs and to protect the biodiversity and the country's natural patrimony. However, during the 2.5 years since its creation, ANANP continued to select and allocate custodians to the protected areas and until now did not announce important changes in the ways the national parks should approach the (eco)tourism development.

The information presented above shows an important problem for the new WHS locations and the related communes: there is a lack of cooperation between the area custodian(s) and the adjacent localities regarding the NPAs and the potential of developing the most appropriate form of tourism, respectively the ecotourism. The situation might have the following main causes: a) since 9 of the 12 WHS locations are under the administration of RNP Romsilva and one area is under the administration of two entities similar to Romsilva (Table 7), and since their main source of income is represented by the (sustainable) commercial exploitation of forests³, tourism development does not come first in these entities' priorities. Furthermore, the current organization of the protected areas, mainly the parks, without proper boundaries, make it almost impossible to control the entries into the parks; b) the superficial communication between the central authorities and local governments, mainly communes, regarding the existing strategies and plans for (tourism and ecotourism) development, which generates the next cause; c) the lack of or a low level of awareness of the related communes' authorities and communities regarding the real tourist potential of the respective areas as mentioned by Jaliu (2012). As revealed by the 3 versions of the strategy for ecotourism, the level of entrepreneurial education is not adequate mainly in the related rural areas. Also, the support for developing and sustaining small businesses in rural areas, mainly related to tourism, is not satisfactory, as highlighted by Radan-Gorska (2013). Therefore, the rural population has the tendency to turn toward the traditional economic activities and seek employment where it can

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be found (e.g. the logging industry) rather than to enter the tourism sector which requires creativity and rapid adaptability.

Hence, the need for the creation of destination management organizations for these complex tourist destinations is obvious.

CONCLUSION

By being situated in the proximity of the declared national parks since 2000 and to the Natura 2000 areas since 2007, the communes related to the new WHS locations could have had an advantage to developed nature-based tourism and ecotourism before the WHS designation in 2017. Furthermore, the absence of lodging facilities within the NPAs should have enhanced the aforementioned advantage.

Nonetheless, the reality is different: with the exception of 4 communes, the majority of the selected rural localities host 1 to 4 accommodation units of small lodging capacity, and 10 of these localities have no registered accommodation for the observation period (the number decrease at 8 if the informal accommodations are considered). While the accommodation facilities grew between 2005 and 2016 following the overall rural tourism development in Romania, as highlighted by Pop et al. (2017), the growth came mainly from the entry of new communes on the accommodation market. While the accommodation infrastructure growth continued between 2016 and 2018 and educated guess links this evolution to the WHS designation, the progress is modest and the connection cannot be confirmed due to short data series.

With a modest accommodation infrastructure, the tourist activity is, not surprisingly, low. Though the tourist arrivals increased, the occupancy rates are very low and the length of stay is rather decreasing suggesting an inadequate tourist offer, mainly lacking in alternative entertainment facilities featuring the local tourist attractions, including the intangible heritage, as already highlighted by Pop & Coros (2016) and Pop & Georgescu (2019).

The working hypothesis: *the communes related to the new WHS locations present a modest level of tourism development given the similar level found for the already investigated Romanian rural WHS locations* **is confirmed.**

The reasons for this situation are multiple and need further investigations. Among the reasons mentioned by the 3 versions of the national strategy for ecotourism in Romania are (INCDT 2009b, INCDT 2015; MoT 2018): a) the lack of adequate education of local population for developing sustainable businesses related to proximity to NPAs, situation also highlighted by Ciocanea et al. (2016); b) the scarcity of adequate financial resources to support the development of the aforementioned business, fact confirmed by Pop & Buys (2015) and Spulbar et al. (2019); c) an unsupportive and bureaucratic administrative environment mainly for rural small and medium business due to the absence of a coherent policy for tourism-related businesses in rural areas (e.g. the lack of stimulus for the businesses that implemented good practices in (eco)tourism; the lack of assistance for small rural tourism operators to acquire European ecotourism labels).

However, the present paper pointed as one the main causes of the current low tourism development within the new WHS locations as being the absence of an integrated destination management where the commune administrations and the NPAs custodians should work together for a sustainable development of the areas, with (eco)tourism as one of the main growth factors. Further, better communication between

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the central and local authorities is to be desired to ensure the aforementioned development within the frameworks of the existing strategies.

As shown, the awareness level of local authorities (reflected by the content of their websites) regarding the meaning and importance of the respective WHS locations' designation is, at best, low to moderate, though most of the time nonexistent for the selected communes. The superficial communication with the central authorities in terms of (eco)tourism strategies is reflected by the fact that none of the new WHS locations and the associated communes enter as partner in a project supporting the development of ecotourism destinations (INCDT 2015; MoT 2018), though one commune (Sinca Veche) mentions ecotourism as the core for its future development. Only one of the new WHS location (Cheile Nerei-Beusnita) applied in 2017 for the certification as an ecotourism destination (MoT 2018).

The new WHS locations have an important tourist potential and their modest development allows them to manage local tourism development in order to avoid the plagues of established WHSs around the world like overcrowding and the deterioration of WHS characteristics. Furthermore, the interest for nature-based tourism related to the NPAs is growing, as shown by Hornoiu et al. (2014), INCDT (2015) and MoT (2018). Nonetheless, the new WHS locations have a long way ahead to become an attractive and sustainable tourist destination, if there will be applied an adequate destination management.

The present paper results are in line with the findings of Jaliu (2012), Iatu et al. (2018) and Pop & Georgescu (2019) regarding the modest level of tourism development in the rural localities related to WHSs and considered to have high tourist potential. The results also confirm the need for integrated destination management which should implicate the local communities, including the creation of local tourism associations involved in WHS location management as suggest by Jimura (2011), the NPA custodians and central authorities.

As Pop & Georgescu (2019) already highlighted, the special status of WHS locations should be recognized for sustainable and authentic tourism development, preserving the natural heritage along with the cultural heritage.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Authentic Tourism Development: The process of developing a local tourist destination based on the respective place distinctive, original, natural, and traditional characteristics, including the tangible and intangible heritage.

Ecotourism: A form of small-scale tourism associated with the visiting of natural protected areas by featuring responsible traveling, enhanced care for environment conservation and supporting the increase of local population well-being.

Natural Protected Area: A defined location/geographical space where human occupation/exploitation of resources is limited through regulations and is managed in order to ensure the long term preservation of the respective natural resources and values.

Natural World Heritage Site: a natural area designated by UNESCO due to the recognition of its outstanding international importance and therefore being entitled to receive special protection.

Nature-Based Tourism: A wide range of tourism experiences directly or indirectly related to and depending on the natural environment.

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Nature-Based Tourism Destination: An area that provides the needed infrastructure and services for tourists oriented toward the natural environment and where the conservation of this environment is (or should be) related to the offered accommodation and services.

Primeval Forest: an old-growth forest that reached an advanced age without significant disturbances and exhibiting a high level of biodiversity.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Sasca Montana is the commune with the compromised website. A page dedicated to this commune can be found on a website dedicated to the Romanian territorial administrative units (www.ghidulprimariilor.ro). On this page, Sasca Montana has a good description of tourist attractions of the area, featuring as most important the national park Cheile Nerei-Beusnita.
- ² Though, the related communes might experience tourist activity, this is not officially recorded by NIS since no accommodation facilities are registered for the respective communes by the same institution.
- ³ For more details see <https://www.saveparadiseforests.eu/en/unprotected-primeval-forest-discovered-domogled-and-valcan-area/> and the photos from <https://www.agentgreen.ro/campania-pentru-parcuri-nationale-autentice/>

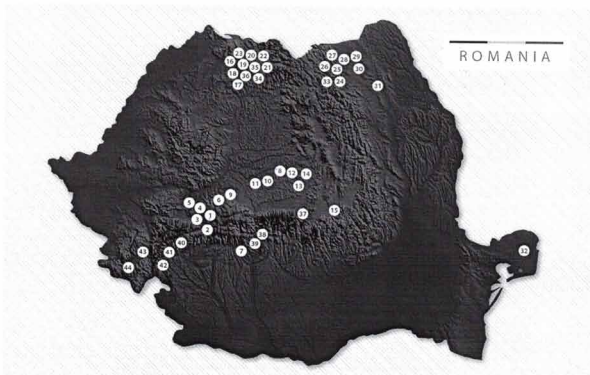
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APPENDIX

Figure 1. Map of Romanian WHSs

(source: www.uncover-romania.com/attractions/unesco-heritage-romania/ and authors' compilation)

Annex 1: Map of Romanian WHSs (source: www.uncover-romania.com/attractions/unesco-heritage-romania/ and authors' compilation)



Map legend

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Sarmisegetusa Regia Dacian site (rural) | 23. Desesti wooden church (rural) |
| 2. Banita Dacian site (rural) | 24. Voronet monastery (urban) |
| 3. Piatra Rosie Dacian site (rural) | 25. Humor monastery (rural) |
| 4. Costesti Dacian site (rural) | 26. Moldovita monastery (rural) |
| 5. Bliidaru Dacian site (rural) | 27. Sucevita monastery (rural) |
| 6. Capalna Dacian site (rural) | 28. Arbore monastery (rural) |
| 7. Horezu Monastery (urban) | 29. Patrauti church (rural) |
| 8. Sighisoara citadel and city center (urban) | 30. Probota monastery (urban) |
| 9. Calnic village - fortified church (rural) | 31. Suceava St. George church (urban) |
| 10. Biertan village - fortified church (rural) | 32. Danube Delta (rural) |
| 11. Valea Viilor village - fortified church (rural) | 33. Primeval Beech Forest Slatioara (rural) |
| 12. Saschiz village - fortified church (rural) | 34. Primeval Beech Forest Grosii Tiblesului - Preluci (rural) |
| 13. Viscri village - fortified church (rural) | 35. Primeval Beech Forest Grosii Tiblesului - Izvorul Surii (rural) |
| 14. Darjiu village - fortified church (rural) | 36. Primeval Beech Forest Grosii Strimbu-Baiut (Strambu-Baiut) (rural) |
| 15. Prejmer village - fortified church (rural) | 37. Primeval Beech Forest Sinca (rural) |
| 16. Surdesti wooden church (rural) | 38. Primeval Beech Forest Cozia - Masivul Cozia (rural & urban) |
| 17. Rogoz wooden church (urban) | 39. Primeval Beech Forest Cozia - Lotrisor (rural & urban) |
| 18. Plopiș wooden church (rural) | 40. Primeval Beech Forest Domogled - Valea Cernei - Ciucevele Cernei (rural) |
| 19. Budesti wooden church (rural) | 41. Primeval Beech Forest Domogled - Valea Cernei - Iaua Craiovei (rural) |
| 20. Poienile Izei wooden church (rural) | 42. Primeval Beech Forest Domogled - Valea Cernei - Domogled-Coronini- Bedina (rural & urban) |
| 21. Deal Ieud wooden church (rural) | 43. Primeval Beech Forest Izvoarele Nerei (rural) |
| 22. Barsana wooden church (rural) | 44. Primeval Beech Forest Cheile Nerei-Beusnita (rural & urban) |

Romanian Newly-Nominated WHS and Current Tourism Development in the Associated Rural Localities

Table 6. Map legend

1. Sarmisegetusa Regia Dacian site (rural)	23. Desesti wooden church (rural)
2. Banita Dacian site (rural)	24. Voronet monastery (urban)
3. Piatra Rosie Dacian site (rural)	25. Humor monastery (rural)
4. Costesti Dacian site (rural)	26. Moldovita monastery (rural)
5. Blidaru Dacian site (rural)	27. Sucevita monastery (rural)
6. Capalna Dacian site (rural)	28. Arbore monastery (rural)
7. Horezu Monastery (urban)	29. Patrauti church (rural)
8. Sighisoara citadel and city center (urban)	30. Probota monastery (urban)
9. Calnic village - fortified church (rural)	31. Suceava St. George church (urban)
10. Biertan village - fortified church (rural)	32. Danube Delta (rural)
11. Valea Viilor village - fortified church (rural)	33. Primeval Beech Forest Slatioara (rural)
12. Saschiz village - fortified church (rural)	34. Primeval Beech Forest Grosii Tiblesului – Preluci (rural)
13. Viscri village - fortified church (rural)	35. Primeval Beech Forest Grosii Tiblesului – Izvorul Surii (rural)
14. Darjiu village - fortified church (rural)	36. Primeval Beech Forest Grosii Strimbu-Baiut (Strambu-Baiut) (rural)
15. Prejmer village - fortified church (rural)	37. Primeval Beech Forest Sinca (rural)
16. Surdesti wooden church (rural)	38. Primeval Beech Forest Cozia – Masivul Cozia (rural & urban)
17. Rogoz wooden church (urban)	39. Primeval Beech Forest Cozia – Lotrisor (rural & urban)
18. Plopis wooden church (rural)	40. Primeval Beech Forest Domogled - Valea Cernei - Ciucevele Cernei (rural)
19. Budesti wooden church (rural)	41. Primeval Beech Forest Domogled - Valea Cernei - Iauna Craiovei (rural)
20. Poienile Izei wooden church (rural)	42. Primeval Beech Forest Domogled - Valea Cernei - Domogled-Coronini- Bedina (rural & urban)
21. Deal Ieud wooden church (rural)	43. Primeval Beech Forest Izvoarele Nerei (rural)
22. Barsana wooden church (rural)	44. Primeval Beech Forest Cheile Nerei-Beusnita (rural & urban)

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Table 7. Details regarding the twelve location of the newly nominated WHS, the associated/related localities and information regarding the custodians of the areas and the content of the identified websites

No.	Name and UNESCO number	Comments and codes of national parks and other protected areas	Localities administratively related to the nominated WHS	Other information
1	Cheile Nerei-Beusnita 1133ter-050	Superimposed on the national park RONPA0003 Cheile Nerei-Beusnita Also registered under Natura 2000 as: ROSPA0020 Cheile Nerei-Beusnita & ROSCI0031 Cheile Nerei-Beusnita	All localities are in Caras-Severin county <i>Towns (2):</i> Anina Oravita <i>Communes (11):</i> Bozovici Carbunari Ciclova Romana Ciuchici Dalboset Lapusnicu Mare Naidas Racasia Sasca Montana Socol Sopotu Nou Localities mentioned to be on park's tourist trails (https://www.cheileneireibeusnita.ro/turism/trasee-turistice/): - Ciclova Romana (village Socolari); - Sasca Montana (villages Sasca Romana & Potoc); - Sopotu Nou	Area custodian/administrator of RNP Romsilva* http://anap.gov.ro/anap/wp-content/uploads/ANP-PEREGIUNI/VEST/administrare_vest.pdf Park's website: https://www.cheileneireibeusnita.ro/ website information: - Romanian only (no translation options); - description of park's tourist trails & visitation rules; - no accommodation options within the park; - no information regarding the number of visitors
2	Codrul secular Sinca 1133ter-051	Part of Natura 2000 area registered as: ROSPA0098 Piemontul Fagaras & ROSCI0122 Mtii Fagaras	All localities are in Brasov county <i>Communes (2):</i> Sinca (Sinca Veche) Sinca Noua	Area under the custodians/administrators Silvic Rasinari RA** and Ocolul Silvic Izvorul Florii-Avrig** (both in Sibiu county): http://anap.gov.ro/anap/wp-content/uploads/ANP-PEREGIUNI/CENTRU/administrare_centru.pdf The website below is not working (April 13, 2019) http://www.fagaras-natura2000.ro/en/natura-2000-piemontul-fagaras . No dedicated page on Directia Silvica Sibiu of Sibiu county An empty Facebook page: https://web.facebook.com/pages/Administratia-SCI-Muntii-Fagaras-si-SPA-Piemontul-Fagaras/101256823272423?_rdc=1&_rdr A page within a website dedicated to Romanian birds http://pasaridinromania.sor.ro/Piemontul-Fagaras
3	Codrul secular Slatioara 1133ter-052	Part of Natura 2000 area registered as: ROSPA0083 Mtii Rarau-Giumalau & ROSCI0212 Rarau-Giumalau Also registered as nature reserve RONPA0740 Codrul secular Slatioara	<i>Communes (1):</i> Stulpicani, Suceava county Locality mentioned to be on park's tourist trails http://www.carpati.org/trasee_muntii/rarau_giumalau-40/Stulpicani (village Slatioara)	Area custodian/administrator: RNP Romsilva http://anap.gov.ro/anap/wp-content/uploads/ANP-PEREGIUNI/NORD-EST/Arii_NE_03_2018.pdf No dedicated website Though, this brief description page can be found http://www.carpati.org/ghid_montan/muntii/rarau_giumalau-40/prezentare/ A page within a website dedicated to Romanian birds http://pasaridinromania.sor.ro/Muntii-Rarau-Giumalau The link that exists (for Codrul secular Slatioara) on Suceava county website is perceived as a threat by anti-viruses programs Two links exists on Directia Silvica Suceava (http://www.silvasv.ro/Rezervatii_naturale.htm) but contain only internal decisions regarding conservation measures and the organization of the area Rarau-Giumalau http://www.silvasv.ro/images/ANUNT/FOND/AP%20DS%20SV/Set%20masuri%20conservare%20situl%20Rarau%20Giumalau.pdf http://www.silvasv.ro/images/ANUNT/FOND/AP%20DS%20SV/Regulamentul%20sitului%20Rarau%20Giumalau%20final.pdf

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Romanian Newly-Nominated WHS and Current Tourism Development in the Associated Rural Localities

Table 7. Continued

No.	Name and UNESCO number	Comments and codes of national parks and other protected areas	Localities administratively related to the nominated WHS	Other information
4	Cozia-Masivul Cozia 1133ter-053	Included in the national park RONPA0010 Cozia Also registered under Natura 2000 as: ROSPA0025 Cozia-Buila-Vanturarita & ROSCI0046 Cozia	All localities are in Valcea county <i>Towns (3):</i> Baile Olanesti Brezoi Calimanesti <i>Communes (6):</i> Barbatesti Berislavesti Muereasca Perisani Racovita Salatrucel Localities mentioned to be on park's tourist trails (https://cozia.ro/trasee.html) or to host tourist information points (https://cozia.ro/harta.html): - Brezoi - Calimanesti (component locality Caciulata) - Perisani - Salatrucel	Area custodian/administrator: RNP Romsilva http://ananp.gov.ro/ananp/wp-content/uploads/ANP-PEREGIUNI/SUD-VEST/administrare_sud-vest.pdf Park's website: https://cozia.ro/ website information: - Romanian only (the pages for English and French are not working as of April 13, 2019); - description of park's tourist trails; - the park's map available at: https://cozia.ro/harta.pdf offers information in Romanian & English - accommodation within the park is possible at Cozia Lodge for organized groups of 6-10 persons; - no information regarding the number of visitors
5	Cozia-Lotrisor 1133ter-054	Similar with 1133ter-053 (postion 4, above)	Same localities as for 1133ter-053 (postion 4, above)	Same information as for position 4, above
6	Domogled-Valea Cernei-Domogled-Coronini-Bedina 1133ter-055	Included in the national park RONPA0001 Domogled-Valea Cernei Also registered under Natura 2000 as: ROSPA0035 Domogled-Valea Cernei & ROSCI0069 Domogled-Valea Cernei	All localities are in Caras-Severin county <i>Towns (1):</i> Baile Herculane <i>Communes (1):</i> Mehadia Localities mentioned to be on park's tourist trails http://domogled-cerna.ro/trasee_turistice.htm Baile Herculane (as starting point for the majority of tourist trails; it is also hosting the visiting centre for the national park)	Area custodian/administrator: RNP Romsilva http://ananp.gov.ro/ananp/wp-content/uploads/ANP-PEREGIUNI/VEST/administrare_vest.pdf The national park's http://domogled-cerna.ro/ website information: - Romanian only - description of park tourist trail & visitation rules - a visitors' center exists in Baile Herculane - no accommodation options within the park; - no information regarding the number of visitors
7	Domogled-Valea Cernei-Iauna Craiovei 1133ter-056	Similar with 1133ter-055 (postion 6, above)	All localities are in Caras-Severin county <i>Communes (2):</i> Mehadia Cornereva Localities mentioned to be on park's tourist trails http://domogled-cerna.ro/trasee_turistice.html Cornereva (component localities: Bogaltin, Dobraia, Inelet, Poiana Lunga, Prisacina, Prislop)	Same information as for position 6, above
8	Domogled-Valea Cernei-Ciucevele Cernei 1133ter-057	Similar with 1133ter-055 (postion 6, above)	<i>Communes (1):</i> Pades, Gorj county	Same information as for position 6, above

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Romanian Newly-Nominated WHS and Current Tourism Development in the Associated Rural Localities

Table 7. Continued

No.	Name and UNESCO number	Comments and codes of national parks and other protected areas	Localities administratively related to the nominated WHS	Other information
9	Grosii Tiblesului-Izvorul Surii 1133ter-058	Part of Natura 2000 area registered as: ROSCI0264 Valea Izei si Dealul Solovan Also part of the area registered as nature reserve RONPA0602 Arcer-Tibles-Bran	<i>Communes (1):</i> Grosii Tiblesului, Maramures county	Area without custodian: http://anap.gov.ro/anap/wp-content/uploads/ANP-PEREGUNI/NORD-VEST/fara-custodie_nord-vest.pdf No dedicated website A dedicated page in Romanian and English on: https://www.marasilva.ro/AP02.php A dedicated page on Grosii Tiblesului commune website http://www.grosiitiblesului.ro/turism/patrimoniu-natural/rezervatia-naturala-arcer-tibles-bran
10	Grosii Tiblesului-Preluci 1133ter-059	Similar with 1133ter-058 (postion 9, above)	Similar with 1133ter-058 (postion 9, above)	Same information as for position 9, above
11	Izvoarele Nerei 1133ter-060	Included in/part of the national park RONPA0012 Semenice-Cheile Carasului Part of Natura 2000 area registered as: ROSPA0086 Mtii Semenice-Cheile Carasului & ROSCI0226 Semenice-Cheile Carasului	<i>Communes (1):</i> Prigor, Caras-Severin county Park website does not mention Prigor neither on the trails or as an info point http://pnsc.ro/trasee-turistice/	Area custodian/administrator: RNP Romsilva http://anap.gov.ro/anap/wp-content/uploads/ANP-PEREGUNI/VEST/administrare_vest.pdf Park's website http://pnsc.ro/ website information: - Romanian only (no translation options); - description of park's tourist trails & visitation rules; - no accommodation options within the park; - a link offers information with the accommodation options in the vicinity of the park, including Prigor (http://pnsc.ro/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Unit%C4%83%C8%9Bi-de-cazare-%C3%AEn-raza-Parcului-Na%C8%9Bional-Semenice-Cheile-Cara%C8%99ului.pdf) - no information regarding the number of visitors
12	Strimbu-Băiuț (or Strambu-Baiut) 1133ter-061	Also registered under Natura 2000 as: ROSCI0285 Codrii Seculari de la Strambu-Baiut	All localities are in Maramures county <i>Communes (3):</i> Baiut Botiza Lapus	Area custodians/administrators: RNP Romsilva & Asociația WWF Programul Dunare Carpati Bucuresti: http://anap.gov.ro/anap/wp-content/uploads/ANP-PEREGUNI/NORD-VEST/nord-vest.pdf No dedicated website A dedicated page (Romanian only) http://anap.gov.ro/anap/2017/11/01/codrii-seculari-de-la-strambu-baiut/ A dedicated page (Romanian only) https://www.marasilva.ro/AP34.php

Note *: RNP Romsilva is Regia Nationala a Padurilor Romsilva (<http://www.romsilva.ro/>) which is the national organization in charge with the sustainable forestry management. It also has the position of administrator for 22 national and natural parks having the task of protecting and secure the biodiversity of these protected areas. Romsilva has 41 branches, one in each of the 41 Romanian counties called Directii and these administrative units manage sub-administrative units called *Ocoale* (no official translation is available and a direct translation is difficult without creating confusion). Furthermore, the administration of the 22 national and natural parks is done through distinct administrative units, special dedicated to these parks and registered as legal persons.

Note **: Ocolul Silvic Rasinari RA and Ocolul Silvic Izvorul Florii-Avrig are both distinct organizations of local interest, not integrated by RNP Romsilva, but with similar tasks in the geographical region they cover.

Sources: for WHS locations' codes https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1133/multiple=1&unique_number=2152; for the administrator/custodian of the protected area <http://anap.gov.ro/anap/category/liste-arii/>; for the Natura 2000 areas and the adjacent localities www.mmediu.ro/app/webroot/uploads/files/Anexa_nr_1.pdf and www.madr.ro/informari.../1994_9f17599376e2c9881422552a7af355e5.html, and the websites mentioned within the annex. All websites were accessed between April 10 and April 30, 2019.

Chapter 13

Rural Tourism and Its Dimension: A Case of Transylvania, Romania

Monica Maria Coroş

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1966-8954>

Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

ABSTRACT

This chapter aims at identifying the role and perspectives of rural tourism in one of Romania's most attractive destinations, Transylvania. Rural tourism and rurality are conceptualized, followed by a literature review on the major pillars of rural tourism. Identified elements are linked to Transylvania's resources aiming at assessing its rural tourist potential, focusing on the area's rural tourism supply and demand. Potential recommendations include to work on the further development of rural and agritourism in Transylvania's multicultural villages, building promotion strategies around success cases such as Mărginimea Sibiului, Sâncraiu, Şirnea and the entire Bran-Fundata-Moieciu area, Viscri and the Saxon heritage, the UNESCO Heritage sites. Nature and wilderness are important differentiation elements. The success of any destination can only be achieved based on the joint efforts of all stakeholders. Thus, DMO strategies are formulated. To be internationally competitive, Transylvania must capitalize on its unique assets and it must provide diversified and integrated services.

INTRODUCTION

Previous studies regarding Romanian tourism have revealed that the performance of Romania as a tourist destination is below the potential of its available resources (Coroş & Negruşa, 2014; Pop, Coroş, & Balint, 2017). One of the main causes for this situation is related to the inappropriate development of the tourist lodging facilities, foodservice units, and leisure amenities, combined with the inadequate and inconsequent international promotion of uncompetitive destinations and tourist products. For years, Romanian authorities have insisted on advertising seaside resorts, while foreign visitors were mainly oriented towards cultural and rural destinations and products. This chapter aims at presenting some suc-

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successful cases of rural tourism in Transylvania with the purpose of contributing to the development of this type of tourism in the same destination and in other Romanian destinations.

Rural tourism provides countries the possibility of diversifying their rural economies, by creating new workplaces, enabling the protection and development of local cultures and traditions. Many Central and Eastern-European countries enjoy a valuable heritage of natural resources (mountains, lakes, rivers, forests, hills, plateaus, plains, etc.) with a generous rural life (abundant in: crafts, traditional music and folklore, local gastronomy, etc.) enriched by a highly varied rural heritage (castles and fortresses, churches, even entire villages, etc.). This heritage is combined with and supported by activities that take place in rural destinations (hiking, climbing, horse-back-riding, fishing and hunting, trekking, cycling, and also rural experiences that involve gastronomy, wine and/or cheese tasting, arts and crafts, etc.), and which constitute the ingredients of successful rural tourism. Rural tourism and ecotourism constitute, perhaps, the most appropriate ways of discovering Romania (Postelnicu & Dabija, 2016). At the end of 2014, the prestigious British travel guide, Lonely Planet, included Romania in the top 10 countries to be discovered in 2015. Furthermore, towards the end of October 2015, the same guide nominated Transylvania as the number one destination of 2016 (Smădeanu, 2015). Rural culture should represent the main element of the promotion of Romania's tourism.

Between 2009 and 2010, the Romanian National Authority for Tourism conducted several studies among foreign visitors to establish how they perceive the destination. These have led to the adoption and implementation of a highly debated national tourism brand: "Explore the Carpathian Garden!". The most important findings of Romania's tourism studies are summarized as follows. First, perception differences occur between those who have visited Romania and those who have not; whereas, experienced visitors tend to have a somewhat better impression compared to those who have only heard about the destination. Experts consider that a more intense communication process will make more sources of information available to visitors. Consequently, tourists will have access to better information, expected to further improve perceptions regarding Romania (Romanian Government - Ministerul Dezvoltării Regionale și Turismului, 2011). Second, Romanians must become conscious and proud of the country's tourism potential, starting with the possibility of providing visitors with unique experiences in symbolic destinations. Some of these may include the intact nature of the Carpathian Mountains and of the Danube Delta; the cultural heritage: both rural and urban; the painted monasteries of Bukovina; the areas with well-preserved traditions, such as: Maramureș, Mărginimea Sibiului, Rucăr-Bran corridor; and the Romanian, Saxon and Hungarian villages, etc. (Romanian Government - Ministerul Dezvoltării Regionale și Turismului, 2011). Third, a low level of information concerning Romania as a vacation destination can be observed in the case of the foreign tourists and, moreover, among potential tourists. Thus, 77% of those who have visited Romania were able to name something unique from the point of view of tourism, while in the case of those who have not visited the country, the percentage fell to 23% (Romanian Government - Ministerul Dezvoltării Regionale și Turismului, 2011). Fourth, for the people interviewed who had not visited Romania, the main unique aspects associated to the destination were its history and/or culture and its landscapes, while, those who had visited Romania consider nature to be its main tourist attraction, mentioning especially the Carpathians, the Danube Delta and the rural scenery. Fifth, a significant percentage (68%) of the respondents who have visited the country would recommend it as a holiday destination (Romanian Government - Ministerul Dezvoltării Regionale și Turismului, 2011). The first four attributes associated to Romania by its visitors or by those who have acquaintances who have visited it are: authentic, rural, hospitality and green (Romanian Government - Ministerul Dezvoltării Regionale și Turismului, 2011). Moreover, Romania's most recent tourist brand ("Explore the Carpathian

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Garden!’’) has been built based on the following attributes: intact nature, authenticity, unique culture and safety. The brand’s personality includes kindness, purity, green and innocence. Its main values consist of exploration, spirituality, plus good and simple life (Romanian Government - Ministerul Dezvoltării Regionale și Turismului, 2011).

More recent studies, covering Romania’s tourism, evaluate Romania’s attractiveness as a tourist destination among its own citizens and on the six identified external target markets (US, UK, Germany, France, Italy, and Austria). Thus, overall, Romanians are more interested in local attractions than foreigners, the attractiveness of these attractions being higher in the case of Romania compared to other external destinations. Furthermore, the overall attractiveness of Romania’s tourist products is higher among the international target group members compared to the results obtained from the overall respondents from the same markets. Top preferences include mountain-based holidays, rural tourism, vacations in a natural and unspoiled environment, circuits, spa resorts/health and wellness tourism, active and adventure vacations, winter/ski breaks, wine-tastings, city-breaks and meetings, respectively adventure and active vacations; river cruises and seaside destinations are also appreciated by the respondents (Romanian Government - National Authority for Tourism (NAT), 2014-2015; Coroș & Popa, Study Regarding the Potential of Wine Businesses and Tourism to Contribute to Sustainable Development in Alba County, 2018).

According to the branding strategists, Romania’s differentiation results from its: pure nature, unique cultural heritage and authentic style of the rural areas. These are the constitutive elements of the six Romanian tourist products recommended for development (Romanian Government - Ministerul Dezvoltării Regionale și Turismului, 2011) in the coming years which include: tourist circuits, rural tourism, pure nature and natural parks, health, cure, wellness and fitness tourism, active and adventure tourism, and city-breaks.

Given that some of the most valuable natural and cultural resources are in rural areas; rural tourism is one of the most important types of tourism in Romania. Still, rural areas also confront some of the most severe problems concerning tourist and support infrastructures, thus, this heritage is not supported by an appropriate infrastructure (Coroș & Negrușă, 2014). Moreover, a significant part of Romania’s most valuable natural and cultural heritage (nearly 54%) is in Transylvania, and especially in or nearby its villages. (Romanian Government - Ministerul Dezvoltării Regionale și Turismului, 2011; Coroș & Negrușă, 2014). In Transylvania, urban and rural multiculturalism, nature and ecotourism, and rural life are the major attractions. These elements blend together to create a very special, authentic, and, therefore, highly appreciated cultural tourist product that enables the valorization of both urban and rural cultural and natural heritage. In Transylvania’s rural tourism cultural experiences are combined with recreational activities, or with summer or winter mountainous tourism, or with spa and cure holidays.

This chapter aims at discussing rural tourism in Transylvania, relying on the theoretical background and on the identified and presented success cases of rural tourism in Transylvania with the purpose of contributing to the development of this type of tourism in this destination, as well as in other Romanian destinations.

BACKGROUND: RURAL SPACE AND RURAL TOURISM IN ROMANIA

For purposes related to economic development and the improvement of peoples’ quality of life, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (1994, pp. 8-9) has addressed the issue of tourism strategies and rural development, providing a broader discussion framework for rural

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tourism. Thus, urban or resort-based tourism does not take place exclusively in urban areas but extends to rural destinations, too. Particularities and national criteria used by various countries differ enormously, thus, rural areas themselves are difficult to define. Not all tourism activities taking place in rural areas are purely rural; some may be urban in form but located in or nearby rural destinations. Historically, tourism has been an urban concept, most tourists being generated by urban areas. Tourism generates an urbanization influence on rural areas, encouraging cultural and economic changes, and the development of new constructions. Even more, various forms of rural tourism have developed throughout time, from farm-based holidays in countries such as Germany, Austria or France, to seaside tourism in Greece or to ski vacations in Austria, etc.; farm-based holidays are much rarer in rural areas of the USA or Canada. According to OECD (1994, pp. 8-9) rural areas undergo a complex process of change, determined by factors such as: the global market, the influences of communications and telecommunication upon marketing and upon the perception of products and services; the impact of environmentalism. While most rural destinations face depopulation, some experience inflows of people who retire in nice and quiet places or who aim at developing non-traditional businesses. Today it has become very difficult, if not impossible, to make a clear distinction between urban and rural areas in advanced economies, mainly due to suburbanization, to long(er) commuting distances and to second home development. The definition provided by Glăvan (2003, p. 9) is relevant for the purposes of this chapter: *Rural tourism comprises all tourist activities that are carried out in the rural environment, outside the areas dedicated to 'tourism of lights' (in cities), to 'blue tourism' (littoral destinations), to 'health tourism' (in spa destinations), and to 'white tourism' (in mountain resorts).*

Medlik (2003, p. 145) provides one of the most adequate definitions of rural tourism for the case of Transylvania. Thus, rural tourism is *mainly holiday (vacation) tourism with a focus on countryside destinations. Although not a new phenomenon, rural tourism development has been receiving much attention in recent years as a means of income and employment generation and of diversification of local economies. It is often identified with farm tourism, but rural tourism is a wider concept and includes also such specific features as the development of nature trails, picnic sites, interpretation centres and agricultural and folk museums.* Further, the same author also explains the concept of farm tourism. Again, the definition illustrates the case of Transylvanian farm tourism (vacation) as a type of: *tourism centred on a working farm, which takes various forms but invariably includes accommodation in or adjacent to the farm premises and with self-catering accommodation based on the farm land, e.g., cottages, caravans and camping sites. Farm tourism may be seen as a form of rural tourism and is also called agritourism, agricultural tourism, agrotourism, farm stay tourism and vacation farm tourism* (Medlik, 2003, p. 69).

The OECD (1994, pg. 20-22) discusses some of the most important factors that have contributed to the more recent development of rural tourism. A first factor is the increasing level of both formal and non-formal education. This is supported by the same people's growing interest in heritage preservation, capitalization and interpretation. The increase of spare and leisure time, doubled by more available financial resources and also supported by the trend of fragmented holidays have also contributed to the development of tourism in general and to that of rural tourism, in particular. Another source of development resides in the improvement of rural accessibility, of the transportation systems, as well as of the destinations' communications. People's accentuated health-consciousness influences them to shift from the traditional resort-based holidays (sun-sea-sand formula) to rural destinations that provide active and healthy recreational activities. Furthermore, the modernization of outdoor clothing has led to the possibility of spending more time outdoors, even in poor weather conditions. The growing interest in specialty food is one of the most recent worldwide trends on which rural tourism has both the opportunity and the

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ability to capitalize on (Privitera, Nedelcu, & Nicula, 2018). Authenticity is usually sought by tourists, being an increasingly prized quality of visited destinations (in fact, it follows immediately after beautiful sceneries as triggering factor for rural tourism destination choice). Peace and tranquility also represent “a must” among tourists. Senior tourists and aging but active populations often pick rural destinations in order to enjoy and discover new non-urban but healthy destinations and experiences. Tourist demand has shifted towards “real travels”, which continue to register significant increases. Moreover, as opposed to mass-tourism, individualism also constitutes a growing market. Aiming to support the development of rural tourism, various agencies, located in the countryside, provide in many countries reliable and attractive pieces of information regarding their specific destinations, trying to increase the local populations’ well-being, to preserve the natural environment and to attract tourists on a sustainable basis.

Obviously, rural tourism is a complex, multi-faceted activity, including farm-based holidays, special interest nature holidays and ecotourism, walking, climbing and riding holidays, adventure, sport and health tourism, hunting and fishing breaks, educational travel, arts and heritage tourism, ethnic tourism, etc. In fact, rurality provides the unique selling point of rural tourism packages. Rurality is briefly characterized by low population density and rather small size of settlements, agriculture and forestry as main purposes of land use, respectively traditional social structures and issues that enable the identification of community identity and heritage. Rural tourism is perceived as a key concept for development and conservation, representing the complex pattern of rural environment, economy and history (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 1994, pg. 13-14; Petrea, 2004, pg. 13-14). Rural tourism should fulfill certain requirements (Table 1).

A fundamental condition is that traditions are preserved, and that development only takes place according to the pace and possibilities of the local families. Allowing local communities to be in charge of the management and to directly control the development of rural tourism in their village is essential for its long-lasting development. Further, the authentic lifestyle represents, in fact, the main source of attracting tourists, who tend to be oversaturated with modernity or reluctant to today’s overwhelming pseudo-modernity (Petrea, 2004, pp. 13-14).

According to the data provided by the Romanian National Institute of Statistics (NIS), as of January 1st, 2019, Romania counted some 22.171 thousand persons with Romanian residence, of which 56.4% have urban addresses (Romanian National Institute of Statistics (NIS), 2019), but at the level of January 1st, 2018, only 19.524 thousand persons were full-time residents of Romania, of which 53.8% resided in urban areas (Romanian National Institute of Statistics (NIS), 2018). Thus, nearly half of the total population of Romania is established in rural areas, living in 2,861 communes, that gathered together 12,957 villages. In 2018, Transylvania gathers 38.4% of all localities (namely, 45.63% of the municipalities, 43.78% of the towns, 36.39% of the communes and 37.93% of the villages) (Romanian National Institute of Statistics (NIS), 2019). These villages and communes are located *on all landforms (19.48% in the mountains, 58.47% in hilly areas and plateaus, and 22.13% on plains), with a particular concentration on valleys (terraces), contacts between geographical units, depressions, along communication routes and seaside* (Ielenicz & Simoni, 2013, pp. 79-86). One ought to note that Romania faces a severe demographic decline, generated several factors: the decreasing birthrates, combined with an ageing population trend, respectively with a very high emigration process (Romanian National Institute of Statistics (NIS), 2018). Internal migration towards urban centers is also a reality of today’s Romania. This entire situation cannot but have a negative impact upon the further increase of disparities between urban and rural destinations. Consequently, Romanian rural communities confront various problems, resulting in very poor standards of living and viability. Some of the main causes are synthesized by Nistoreanu, Dorobanțu

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Table 1. Conditions of rural tourism

Criteria	Description
Location	countryside, in areas with less than 10,000 inhabitants and where land use is dominated by farming, forestry and natural areas;
Functionality	small-sized enterprises: especially small-scale lodgings and farm-based accommodation, combined with traditional food-service outlets, open space and nature-related activities, heritage, traditional societies and practices (contact with nature and with the rural community's material and spiritual heritage);
Scale	rural in scale (usually small-scaled): settlements' and buildings' architecture; although not entirely environmentally friendly, rural tourism is usually associated to small-scale tourism and therefore, considered less disruptive;
Infrastructure	expected to be light/weak but reasonably developed;
Facilities	traditional in character, growing slowly and naturally/organically, and family connected/relying on local families;
Control	local;
Development	sustainable, for the local community's long-term well-being; sustainability is expected both in terms of preserving and protecting the rural community's specific character and cultural heritage, and in the sense of the appropriate use of resources for further development; long-term, viable economic activities, granting all actors widely distributed socio-economic benefits, along with the new opportunities for stable employment;
Resources	optimum use of environmental resources, with the preservation of essential ecological processes, natural resources and biological diversity;
Authenticity	respectful with the socio-cultural authenticity of the host communities, ensuring the preservation and conservation of their cultural, architectural, life assets and traditional values, in order to achieve better understanding and intercultural tolerance;
Seasonality	low; rural tourism can take place anytime yearlong;
Investments	rural tourism implies relatively low investments with a lower level of risk, also providing viable occupational alternatives for the unemployed labor-force in the countryside. Furthermore, it contributes to the stability of the population in rural areas, providing effective tools for counter fighting depopulation; still, its development requires in both Romania and Transylvania significant infrastructure investments made by local and, especially, central public authorities
Types of Tourist Activities	walking, climbing, adventure/wilderness holidays, canoeing, rafting, cross-country skiing, snow-shoe tours, low intensity downhill skiing/off-track down-hill skiing, nature study in outdoor settings (bird-watching, photo-safari etc.), fishing and hunting, cycling and cycle touring, horse-back-riding, sightseeing, rural heritage studies, village/small-town touring, relaxation holidays, small-scale conventions/conferences, rural festivals, sports requiring natural settings (e.g. orienteering), gastronomic experiences, wine-tastings, educational activities, handicrafts, etc.

Source: Own synthetization based on various sources (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 1994, pg. 14, 16-17; Petrea, 2004, pg. 13-14; Nistoreanu, Dorobanțu, & Țuclea, 2011, p. 118)

and Țuclea (2011). First, Romanian rural communities face a weak and poor socio-economic environment. Second, local authorities are not active enough, often failing to contribute to the development of their communities, unable to improve infrastructure, and consequently to attract investors limiting the opportunities to capitalize on rural tourism. Third, people's reluctance to cooperate (as a consequence of the communist authoritarian and centralized regime, people tend not to trust each other and, therefore, they are not interested to cooperate, while the state does next to nothing in the sense of educating and encouraging the peasants to cooperate and to associate), combined with the ageing population and the migration of youth to larger towns or cities, constitutes a significant demographic problem of rural areas. Romanian villages face problems such as: a high share of subsistence agriculture, very low diversification of non-agricultural activities, poor development of the technical and social infrastructure, and very low civic involvement of rural communities. All of these issues represent difficult challenges that cannot be properly addressed without strategic planning for sustainability. Developing and implementing

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appropriate and coherent strategies could eventually lead to the creation of a healthy, participatory and cooperative social environment and rural society. Of course, the support and encouragement of local initiatives are compulsory. In this context, tourism becomes a key element (Stănciulescu & Micu, 2009, p. 3; Nistoreanu, Dorobanțu, & Țuclea, Strategic Directions in Sustainable Tourism Development through Rural Tourism Activities, 2011) of any attempt to revitalize the country's rural environment. Supporting the same idea, Moisescu (2008) establishes the place of rural tourism in Romania's economy: *Next to agriculture, rural tourism constitutes a great chance for the future of the national economy and for the support of the population's existence in its specific area.*

Tourism has developed rather chaotically, especially in the case of lodgings' development. Many urban destinations, resorts and villages are affected by the lack of architectural coherence.

Given the cultural richness and diversity of Romanian villages, their inclusion in tourist circuits could contribute to the creation of various tourist products (Nistoreanu, Dorobanțu, & Țuclea, Strategic Directions in Sustainable Tourism Development through Rural Tourism Activities, 2011) such as:

- holiday destinations in the countryside; corporate or professional seminars;
- second-home rentals in Moldova, Bukovina, Oltenia, and Transylvania;
- developing (handi)craft-skills and workshops and the discovery of rural traditions and practices (ceramics, pottery, wood carving, glass and wood painting, weaving, embroiling, and sewing; painting and decorating eggs, etc);
- practicing and skilling in rural activities (like cooking, gardening, preparing juice, syrups, gems, and marmalades);
- initiation in traditional folk activities (such as: dancing or drama).

Supporting the need for the preservation of traditions and of authenticity, Petrea (2004, pg. 13-14) further explains that the infrastructure specific for rural tourism must reflect (through buildings, annexes, amenities, spaces for relaxation, etc.) the traditional rural scale both through architecture and spatial coordinates (size, distances, densities). This requirement has the purpose of encouraging the preservation and the perpetuation of an authentic lifestyle.

Obviously, rural and agritourism play an essential role in Romania's development as a sustainable international tourist destination. These two types of tourism provide visitors/tourists excellent opportunities for discovering the people's traditions, hospitality and cuisine in each region, contributing to a better valorization of the Romanian heritage within the European Union and worldwide. They also grant the rural population, especially in mountainous areas, a valuable source of revenue. Moreover, they imply relatively low investments with a lower level of risk, also providing viable occupational alternatives for the unemployed labor-force in the countryside. Furthermore, it contributes to the stability of the population in rural areas, providing effective tools for counter fighting depopulation.

The Place of the Transylvanian Rural Tourism Product in Romania's Tourist Industry

Romania's tourism offer is briefly characterized based on some official documents elaborated by the national authorities with the purpose of developing the national tourist industry: The National Strategy for Tourism for 2004-2006, The Regional Operational Program 2007-2013, The Master Plan of Romania's National Tourism for 2007-2026, etc. Romanian tourism is supported by identified segments including:

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agri tourism, spa tourism, mountainous tourism, circuit tourism and events' tourism. Romania's tourism potential is varied and relatively evenly distributed among the country's regions. Still, despite the fact that all regions have valuable natural, cultural and historic resources, major disparities occur regarding the development of the tourist and support infrastructures and, consequently, of their exploitation and valorization possibilities (Coroş & Negruşa, 2014).

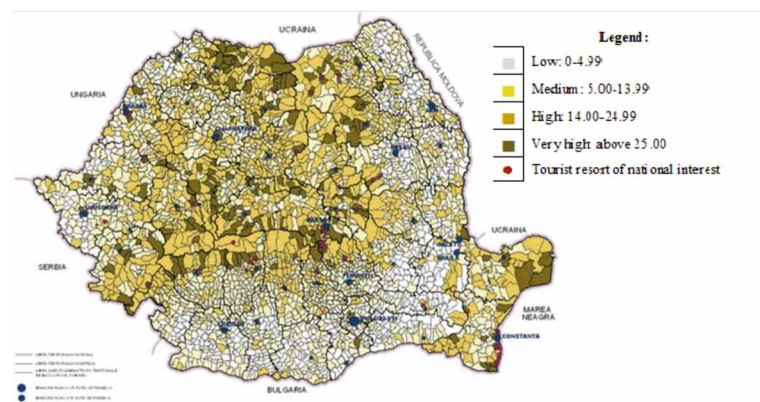
Romania's tourist resources are located in various areas of the country. Depending on the concentration of resources (Figure 1), Romania's territories are split into two categories: areas with *complex and highly valuable resources* (24% of the surface), respectively destinations with *high tourist potential* (34% of the land); these are mainly located in the Carpathian Mountains, in Transylvania, in Bukovina, and in the Danube Delta. There are many areas with lower densities of tourist attractions (such as the North-Eastern, the Sothern, and some of the Western parts of Romania) (Romanian Government, 2008).

Transylvania presents a multicultural environment which has contributed to the development of a generous rural cultural and tourist supply. Traditions are still quite well preserved and capitalized on in many villages. Transylvania has been selected for the current case study because it is a rich tourist destination, enjoying a positive reputation among Romanian tourists and high notoriety and attractiveness for foreigners, too. Transylvania emerges as one of the most attractive and valuable Romanian destinations from the point of view of its tourism related heritage, associated with a somewhat better perception both among Romanians and foreigners (Coroş, 2015, p. 420). Some of the region's high positive notoriety is generated by the presence of the Saxons and by their cultural influences and heritage. Further, the activity of Mihai Eminescu Trust, doubled by the presence, interest, activity, and involvement of His Royal Highness Prince Charles of Wales in the preservation of the Saxon villages and heritage, account for nearly two decades of international positive visibility (Todt & Dabija, 2008). The UNESCO World Heritage Sites are also a very important category of tourist resources. Also, the much-debated Dracula myth has a significant contribution to the destination's international visibility.

Just like in Romania's case, the reality is that in Transylvania's destinations the most valuable resources are located in areas facing major tourism and/or support infrastructure issues. The percentage of tourist destinations with valuable and highly valuable resources but with problems associated to the tourist and/or support infrastructure is very high, of around 80% (Coroş & Negruşa, 2014).

Figure 1. The distribution of tourist resources in Romania

Source: Appendix No 2 of Governmental Emergency Decision No 142 of 2008 (Romanian Government, 2008)



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Briefly, the administrative territorial units (ATUs) of the counties belonging to Transylvania concentrate about 54% of all of Romania’s tourist resources; more exactly, this area hosts 47% of the localities where natural resources are dominant, about 56% of the ATUs with human-made dominant resources, and some 61.5% of the ATUs equally endowed with natural and human-made resources. Further, in the case of Transylvania’s ATUs with very high concentration of tourist resources 52% have dominant natural resources, 60.3% have human-made resources dominant, and 68.4% of the ATUs with natural and human-made resources, in evenly distributed quotas (Fig. 1). Moreover, both in the case of Romania and in that of Transylvania, the ATUs with high and very high concentrations of tourist resources face significant infrastructure-related problems (79.2% ATUs in Romania, respectively 80.2% of those in Transylvania). Two of Transylvania’s major regions (Center and North-West regions of development) are the top two regions of Romania in terms of numbers of ATUs with high and very high densities of valuable and very valuable tourist resources. Transylvania concentrates the large majority of Romania’s natural heritage sites (Coroş & Negruşa, 2014). A similar finding is valid for the destination’s endowment with human-made tourist resources. Thus, Transylvania possesses around 49% of Romania’s entire natural and human-made heritage resources (Table 1): more exactly, 54% of all natural protected areas of national importance and of all of Romania’s natural monuments (biosphere and natural/national parks reservations, respectively national reservations and natural monuments). Likewise, Transylvania concentrates a significant part of all national cultural heritage values and resources: monuments and architectural masterpieces (44.3%), archaeological monuments and sites (33.1%). Transylvania hosts 47.9% of the ATUs with very high density of built heritage with highly valuable cultural value, distributed as it follows: municipalities (43.4%), towns (53.3%), respectively communes and villages (47.7%).

Until now UNESCO has included in its World Heritage List 34 natural, cultural and historic objectives belonging to Romania, completed by 7 pieces of immaterial heritage, respectively by at least 45 *Living Human Treasures* titles granted as of 2015 to valuable folk artists and handcrafters. UNESCO has also included three natural objectives in its Biosphere Reservations. Regrettably, the updated list is not yet available on the official website (Romanian Government - Ministerul Culturii și Identității Naționale. Institutul Național al Patrimoniului, 2015-2019). Of these, more than three fourths (namely, 26 sites) are located in Transylvania. Moreover, with one exception (Sighișoara) they are all situated in rural areas.

Table 2. The distribution of Romania’s and Transylvania’s natural and human-made tourist resources, and the endowment with technical and tourist infrastructures

Region	ATUs with Tourist Resources	ATUs with Infrastructure Problems	% of ATUs with Tourist Resources and Infrastructure Problems	ATUs with High and Very High Concentration of Tourist Resources					
				Dominant Tourist Resources			Infrastructure Problems		
				Natural	Human-Made	Natural and Human-Made	Natural	Human-Made	Natural and Human-Made
Romania	1,164	922	79.2	529	372	263	369	110	443
Transylvania	627	503	80.2	251	213	163	226	46	231
Transylvania as % of Romania	53.9	54.6		47.4	57.3	62.0	61.2	41.8	52.1

Source: Own calculations based on Coroş & Negruşa (2014)

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Figure 2. Map of UNESCO world heritage sites in Romania

Source: Dănilă (2008)



Furthermore, Transylvania also gathers most of the nominees for the *Living Human Treasures*, with 27 granted titles (Romania’s National Commission for UNESCO, 2017; Pop & Coroş, 2016; Lupu, Tănase, & Tudorache, 2016). The listed heritage sites can be located based on Fig. 2, above and are synthesized in Table 3, below; they consist of cultural and natural heritage sites, respectively of immaterial heritage. The fact that Transylvania concentrates some of the most valuable UNESCO sites of Romania, and especially the ones protecting the rural heritage such as the Saxon villages and the villages in Maramureş, compensates up to a point these severe infrastructure problems (Romanian Government, 2008; Pop & Coroş, 2016; Lupu, Tănase, & Tudorache, 2016).

Rather ignored during communist times, Romania’s supply of tourist accommodation facilities truly began to develop in Transylvania in the second half of the 1990s. In fact, this region concentrates some of the country’s emblematic rural destinations such as the Romanian heritage in the rural surroundings of Sibiu (Mărginimea Sibiului), the Saxon villages and the mountain villages (in Braşov and Sibiu counties), respectively the villages of Northern Romania (Maramureş and Satu Mare counties), as well as the rural Hungarian heritage (Covasna, Harghita and Mureş counties), the Romanian folk heritage in Albac and the Hungarian heritage of Colţeşti and Rîmetea (Alba County). Agri-tourist pensions/guesthouses and rural tourist boarding houses represent the most adequate accommodation facilities for authentic rural tourism experiences (Pop, Coroş, & Balint, 2017). Villas (respecting the typical architecture of spa and mountain resorts) and chalets and huts (with architecture specific to mountain areas) can also be considered appropriate lodgings (Glăvan, 2003, p. 57). Tourist inns, although not officially ranked anymore, provide excellent opportunities for the development of authentic tourist services and products.

Despite a highly appreciated local cuisine, with Romanian, German and Hungarian influences, the food-service sector is still weak. Furthermore, the numerous and highly valuable natural resources provided by the destination are not supported by an appropriate leisure infrastructure; in fact, this segment is almost entirely absent in Transylvania, like at national level. Moreover, the cultural heritage is valorized by the means of various sites and institutions, most of which also need major renovations, modernizations and improvements. The rural cultural supply is enriched by diverse and valuable local events, fairs and festivals, which provide unique cultural experiences and an authentic flavor.

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Table 3. UNESCO world heritage sites in Romania and in Transylvania (resources by area)

Resources	Locality(ies), County(ies) and Region(s)
1. Cultural Heritage (30 UNESCO World Heritage Sites – WHS)	
a. Dacian fortresses in Orăştie Mountains (6 sites)	Sarmizegetusa Regia at Grădiştea de Munte/Grădiştea Muncelului; Costeşti Cetăţuie, Costeşti Bliदार and Luncani-Piatra Roşie, Băniţa (all in Hunedoara county – Transylvania) and Căpâlna (Alba county – Transylvania) (1 st century BC – 1 st century AD);
b. Historic center/citadel (1 site)	Sighişoara (Mureş county – Transylvania) (12 th century);
c. Villages with Saxon fortified churches/citadel churches/Saxon citadels/church and village nucleus (6 sites)	Biertan/Birihalm (Sibiu county – Transylvania) (13 th century);
	Câlnic/Kellig (Alba county – Transylvania) (13 th century);
	Prejmer/Tartlau (Braşov county – Transylvania) (13 th century);
	Viscri/Deutsch-Weiskirch (Braşov county – Transylvania) (14 th century);
	Saschiz/Keisd (Mureş county – Transylvania) (15 th century church and 19 th century tower);
d. Villages with Hungarian fortified churches (1 site)	Valea Viilor/Wurmloch (Sibiu county – Transylvania) (14 th century);
e. Churches and monasteries (7 sites)	Dârjiu (Harghita county – Transylvania) (13 th century church with several modifications throughout the 14 th , the 15 th and the 16 th centuries);
f. Monastery (1 site)	Arbore, Humor Monastery, Moldoviţa, Pătrăuţi, Proboata, Suceviţa, and Voroneţ (Suceava and Neamţ counties – Bukovina and Moldavia (15 th and 16 th centuries);
g. Wooden churches from Maramureş county (8 sites)	Hurezi (Vâlcea county – Oltenia) (1693);
	Bârsana, Budeşti-Josani, Deseşti, Ieud Deal, Plopiş, Poienile Izei, Rogoz, and Surdeşti (Maramureş county – Transylvania) (17 th and 18 th centuries);
2. Natural Heritage (4 sites)	
a. Natural objective (WHS)	Danube Delta (Dobruđja);
b. Reservations of the biosphere (3 sites)	Danube Delta (Dobruđja); Pietrosul Mare in Rodnei Mountains and Retezat Massif (Transylvania);
c. UNESCO Global Geoparks Network (1 site)	Haţeg Country Global Geopark (Transylvania);
Resources	Locality(ies), County(ies) and Region(s)
3. Immaterial Heritage (7 sites)	
a. <i>Căluşul</i> ritual (folklore)	Northern Oltenia – Wallachia;
b. <i>Doina</i> (folklore)	all over Romania – including Transylvania ;
c. Horezu ceramics/pottery	Vâlcea county – Oltenia;
d. <i>Şcoarţă</i> /Traditional wall-carpet craftsmanship	Romania jointly with the Republic of Moldova;
e. <i>Dansuri fecioreşti</i> /Lads' dances	Transylvania included;
f. Men's group <i>Colindat</i> / Christmas time (caroling) ritual	Romania jointly with the Republic of Moldova (Transylvania included);
g. <i>Mărţişor</i> /The 1 st of March token and practices	Transylvania included;
4. Living Human Treasures (45 titles)	
a. For Handicrafts (Pottery makers, Artisans of musical instruments, Creators of costumes and folk masks, Icon painters and egg decorators, Furriers, Weavers and knitters, and Wood sculptors)	45 titles granted by 2015, in a total of 16 counties, with a regional distribution dominated by Transylvania with 27 titles (including the counties of Harghita, Satu Mare, Hunedoara, Sibiu and Mureş), followed by Wallachia and Oltenia, with 7 titles, and by Moldova with 6 titles);
b. For Folklore (Bards, Traditional dancers and instructors, and Folk singers)	

continued on following page

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Table 3. Continued

Resources	Locality(ies), County(ies) and Region(s)
<p style="text-align: center;">14 other sites are on the Tentative List</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Roșia Montană Mining Cultural Landscape (Transylvania); 2. Extension to the Joint World Heritage Property “Primeval Beech forests of the Carpathians (Slovak Republic and Ukraine) and the Ancient Beech forests of Germany (in the Transylvanian space, too); 3. The old villages of Hollókő and Rimetea and their surroundings (Transylvania); 4. The Historic Centre of Sibiu and its Ensemble of Squares (Transylvania); 5. Le Monastère de Neamt (Bukovina); 6. Byzantine and post-Byzantine churches from Curtea de Argeș (Wallachia); 7. Monumental Ensemble from Țirgu Jiu (Oltenia); 8. The Rupestrian Ensemble from Basarabi (Wallachia); 9. The Church of the Three Hierarchs from Iași (Moldavia); 10. The “Coules” of the Small Wallachia (Oltenia); 11. The church from Densuș (Transylvania); 12. The Vauban Fortress from Alba Julia (Transylvania); 13. Sînpetru (paleontology site) (Hațeg county – Transylvania); 14. Secular Woods from Slătiora (Bukovina). 	

Source: Own centralization based on: Romania’s National Commission for UNESCO (2017; Coroș, 2015, pp. 203-206; Pop & Coroș, 2016; Lupu, Tănase, & Tudorache, 2016) (Romanian Government - Ministerul Culturii și Identității Naționale. Institutul Național al Patrimoniului, 2015-2019)

Over the past three decades, tourist arrivals and overnights have increased significantly for both Romanians and foreigners, recently having begun to pick-up the pace and timidly grow, still average lengths of stay have slightly increased since 1988 but they have dropped considerably starting with 2001 (from 4.0 nights in 1988 to 2.2 nights in 2018) (Lupu, Țară, țară, vrem... turiști! #șțeu! Călătorie prin (statistica) ținutul(ui) Neamț - și nu numai, 2019). Seasonality is a clear feature of national tourism, where the warm season (from May to September) accounts for most arrivals, with a peak-season in July and August. Transylvania also faces the same decreasing demand, reflected by the same poor performance in terms of occupancy rates as that of other regions, respectively like that at national level. Seasonality occurs in Transylvania’s case, too. The destination enjoys a somewhat more extended summer season, beginning in April and ending in October/November. Moreover, the peak season is less steep and more extended compared to the one at national level, starting in June and ending in September. For Transylvania’s case, four types of localities may be considered: county residencies (also the largest cities in each county), municipalities, towns and communes and villages (Coroș, 2015, p. 105). In terms of daily routines and tradition preservation, many of Transylvania’s small towns resemble villages; this is valid even for some municipalities, which resulted after the transformation of some small towns for administrative purposes. Moreover, again, for administrative reasons several communes were transformed into towns. Many of these newly established towns also face serious challenges regarding the development of infrastructure and the possibility of accessing financial resources. Some of Transylvania’s most attractive resorts function as large towns and municipalities, while some emerging resorts can be found in small towns and villages (Pop, Coroș, & Balint, 2017). Overall, Transylvania’s tourist activity is divided between urban and rural destinations. County residencies and municipalities account for most tourist arrivals but small towns and villages register somewhat higher overnights. However, like in Romania’s average lengths of stay have decreased significantly since 2001/2002. This has happened especially because of the visible decrease in the case of both small towns and villages from 5-6 nights in 2001/2002 to around 3 nights by the end of 2018. At the same time, large towns and municipalities register slight variations between 2 and 3 nights, usually associated to business trips, cultural tourism, weekend or short breaks, including event-related tourism (e.g. TIFF – Transylvania International Film Festival, Electric Castle, Untold, Sibiu Jazz Festival, Smida Jazz Festival, Elementum, Blaj aLive Festival, etc.). Furthermore, county

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residencies seem to have constant values of nearly 2 nights for the entire timespan (Romanian National Institute of Statistics (NIS), 2019). Many of these small destinations possess balneal and/or other natural resources exploited at local level, this cannot but lead to the conclusion that they are at most embryonic destinations, if not only individual attractions, as described by Swarbrooke (2001, p. 19).

Previous research (Coroş & Negruşa, 2014; Pop, 2014) revealed that the accommodation supply available in Romania and in Transylvania is not adequately developed and, consequently, fails to support the development and performance of the destinations with high and very high tourist potential. An even worse situation occurs in the case of the supply of food and beverage services and the very poor supply of leisure services. Cumulated, all of these aspects can only explain the modest performance of Romania's and Transylvania's tourism in terms of local and international tourists, respectively of occupancy rates. Furthermore, Romania's rural tourism is still underdeveloped and not yet capable of satisfying the national or international demand at an acceptable qualitative level. According to official statistics, over the past 30 years hotels, motels and apart-hotels have developed at a slower pace compared to boarding houses and agri-tourist pensions, which, together with other small structures have become dominant after 2012-2014, accounting nowadays for the largest supply of accommodation capacity, more than 40% of the total bed-places, available in Romania (National Foundation of Young Managers, 2012; Coroş & Negruşa, 2014; Coroş, 2015, p. 209). The continuous decrease of the occupancy rates is one of the consequences of the significant increase of accommodation places (Lupu, 2019, p. 9) combined with the low diversification of the offer and with a rather poor match of the tourists' expectations.

As of September 2019 (Romanian Government - Ministerul Turismului, 2019) 14,589 lodging facilities provide 471,527 beds in 223,791 rooms; of these, nearly 50% (6,584 units) are located in rural areas, accounting for approximately 30% of the national accommodation capacity. Transylvania concentrates a significant chunk of Romania's rural suppliers of lodging services (51%): agri-tourist boarding houses (60%), rural boarding houses (57%), tourist chalets (66%), apartments to rent (57%), camping sites and houses (42%), rooms to let (40%), rural hotels (46%), motels (43%), villas (38%), tourist halting places (35%), hostels (31%), respectively bungalows (28%). These provide 66,541 beds in 30,851 rooms. Most of the units are ranked 3 stars/flowers (56%), 2* (30%), followed by 1* (6.8%), 4* 6.2% and 5* (0.8%); this situation is consistent with that at national level. In fact, the supply is budget/economy-midscale oriented, with a merely present upscale and luxury segment. Obviously, the services are not really diversified.

Infrastructure Challenges, Limited Services and Low Diversification: Transylvanian Rural Tourism Whereto?

Issues, Controversies, Problems

The early stages of the development of agritourism and rural tourism in Romania date back to the inter-war period. During the '20s-'30s Romania's rural destinations were primarily linked to mountain tourism and balneal resources; however, nature and education represented important tourism-related activities.

Mass tourism began to develop worldwide after the Second World War. This trend also reached Romania in the '60s-'70s, a timespan when most of the country's tourist infrastructure was developed. The intensive development of the accommodation facilities realized by the communists mainly focused on the development of large facilities, located in seaside, mountain or spa resorts, appropriate for mass tourism. This seemed to ignore rural areas and their potential for tourism development. Despite this situation, the first but also short communist attempts to capitalize on Romania's rural tourism potential date back

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around 1967-1968 and targeted tourists present on the seaside. A few years later, in 1972, the Ministry of Tourism identified and selected 118 rural localities, representative of the Romanian villages. These localities were to be introduced in the national and international tourist circuits. Thus, the early stages of rural tourism and agritourism were set. Further, in 1973 a pilot group of 13 villages were selected and promoted as rural destinations. This group included the following villages: Lerești (Argeș), Poiana Sărată (Bacău), Fundata and Șirnea (Brașov – Transylvania), Tismana (Gorj), Bogdan Vodă (Maramureș – Transylvania), Sibiel (Sibiu – Transylvania), Vatra Moldoviței (Suceava), Crișan, Murighiol and Sfântu Gheorghe (Tulcea), Racoș (Timiș – Transylvania), and Văideeni (Vâlcea). The start seemed to be a good one but in 1974 the communists forbade the accommodation of foreign tourists in private homes; given their inclusion in the international offer of ONT Carpați, five villages (Lerești, Rucăr, Sibiel, Murighiol and Crișan) were for a short timespan excepted from this interdiction (Nistoreanu, 2018, p. 517). Thus, tourist villages became practically impossible to use for international tourism purposes. Moreover, the communist rulers adopted many decisions and measures that negatively affected and threatened rural communities (e.g. the nationalization process, the establishment of agricultural cooperatives and the relocation of peasants in urban areas as workers in various factories and industrial plants. Regarding the organizations that are related to the development of Romania's rural communities, respectively which support agritourism and rural tourism, one may retain at least Opération Villages Roumains, established in Belgium in 1988-1989 with the purpose of protecting and preserving Romania's villages cultural heritage. This organization was especially important because of its international efforts of saving the traditional Romanian villages and their entire heritage from the communist threat: that of demolition and restructuring. Things began to slightly change only after 1989 when Romania reinstated democracy (Bran, Marin, & Tamara, 1997, pg. 119, 130; Glăvan, 2003, pg. 45-46; Vlad, 2007). Post-communist organizations include: The Romanian Federation for Mountainous Development established in 1990, The National Association for Rural, Ecologic and Cultural Tourism from Romania (ANTREC) established in 1994 and affiliated to EUROGÎTES, and The National Agency for Agritourism, established in 1995. By 1995 ANTREC counted 1,240 farms, receiving 18,500 tourists, of which 3,500 foreign, with an average length of stay of 4 nights, adding up to 2000 members in 15 counties. ANTREC grew by 1997, reaching nearly 3,000 members from 28 counties, respectively by 1998 it already had 1,000 agritourist boarding houses, that attracted overall 150,000 tourists with an average length of stay of 4 nights. By 2010, agritourist guesthouses functioned in 780 villages (Simoni, 2010), they continued to grow, covering by 2015 to 800 localities and further registering by 2018 around 3,500 members in 32 counties (owners and managers of agritourist boarding houses, restaurant owners and managers, travel agencies that promote and sell packages based on rural, eco, active, cultural, gastronomic tourism, personalities and other persons interested to develop rural tourism) (Nistoreanu, 2018, pg. 518-519). Despite its potential, the Romanian rural space still underperforms (Nistoreanu, 2018, p. 518). ANTREC members also include craftspersons, folk artists, heritage managers, museum keepers, etc. (Iștoc & Tătaru, 2016).

In Romania, tourist villages (Figure 3, Table 4 & Figure 5 in the Appendix) can be split into several categories based on various criteria discussed by various specialists who have identified four different classification criteria: geographic, ethnographic, prevailing form of tourism and potential for tourism (Bran, Marin, & Tamara, 1997, pg. 123-126; Simoni, 2010; Nistoreanu, 2018, pg. 528-529). The first criterion is the geographic one, based on which, four different types of tourist villages can be identified all over Romania. The first type refers to tourist villages located in mountain areas (with: outstanding sceneries, and landscapes, therapeutic climate, traditional pastoral and forestry occupations, spectacular landforms: gorges, waterfalls, caves, glaciers, etc., protected areas, forests, balneal resources, ski

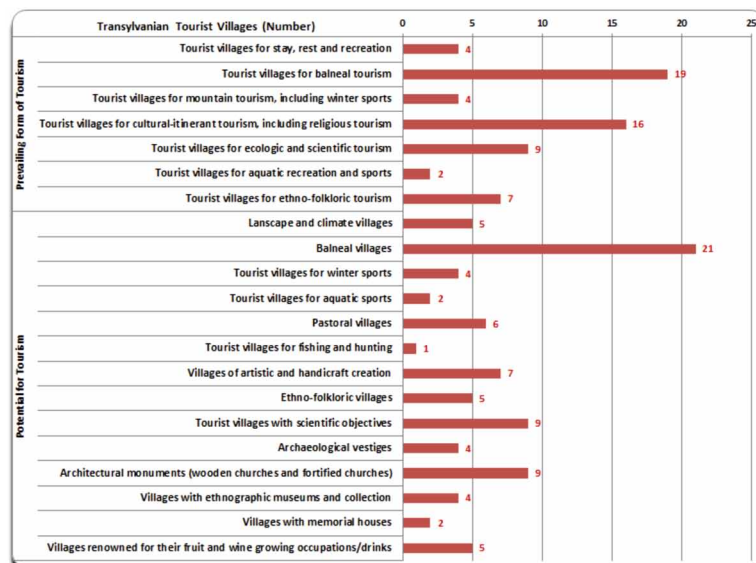
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domains, religious sites such as: monasteries and churches, traditional architecture). The second type is that of tourist villages located on hills and plateaus (providing: balneal resources, sedative-indifferent bio-climate, traditional fruit and wine growing occupations, monasteries and churches, ethno-folkloric values, fishing and hunting funds). The third type includes tourist villages located on plains (not necessarily abundant in valuable natural resources but which have authentic ethno-folkloric values; some might possess balneal and therapeutic resources). The fourth type describes tourist villages located in the Danube Delta and on the Black Sea shore (which can offer: remarkable landscapes, beaches, lakes, therapeutic mud, exciting and soliciting seaside bio-climate, flora and fauna reservations, notable ethnography and ancient vestiges).

As mentioned above, for economic purposes, some tourist villages were transformed into towns (e.g. Geoagiu-Băi, in Hunedoara county, Cavnic, in Maramureş, or Borsec, in Harghita county). Other villages are located in the outskirts of cities (e.g. Ghimbav is in the metropolitan area of Braşov city, Braşov county) or nearby towns (Băile Băiţa, near Gherla and Torok baths, and Ocna Dej, near Dej, both in Cluj county). Theoretically, urbanization brings along more financial resources and more opportunities for the destination’s development but it also represents a major threat for the authenticity of the same destination. Moreover, given the urban statute of many such rather small destinations, their administrations can neither capitalize on the funding resources they could have accessed had they remained rural, nor on the funds available for urban areas, as they cannot afford to pay the expected contributions, given their poor budgets. In spite of all these mainly financial drawbacks, tourist villages have a great tourism potential. A list, containing some of the most valuable Transylvanian tourist villages, is presented in the box below (Figure 4).

Figure 3. Transylvania’s tourist villages

Source: Own processing based on: Bran, Marin & Şimon (1997, pg. 123-126), Simoni (2010), and Nistoreanu (2018, pg. 528-529)



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SOME BEST PRACTICES, INSTEAD OF SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Transylvania's rural tourism consists of a special mixture of: agri-tourism, rural rest and relaxation vacation and/or short-break/weekend escapes, rural tourism in secondary homes, cultural rural tourism, natural heritage tourism, health and cure tourism in rural destinations, rural gastronomy, religious tourism, and of sportive and adventure tourism. Properly supported by an adequate infrastructure, and coherently promoted abroad and in the country, Transylvania's rural tourism can be expected to further gain a statute of a success story. Not all rural communities are doomed to poor performance. Some of Transylvania's tourist villages have managed to build strong reputations abroad.

A special category is that of the European Destinations of Excellence (EDEN). Apuseni Nature Park, a Romanian EDEN destination, listed in 2009, is a karst area with more than 1,500 caves and 35 different types of minerals. It is covered by three counties: Alba, Bihor and Cluj. This destination attracts tourists all year long for various activities (spring: water rushing down melting mountain tops; summer: trekkers winding their way down deep caverns; fall: leaves changing colors as the days grow shorter, and winter: extreme skiers in search of untouched powder); some highlights include: canoe trips, mountain festivals, limestone climbing or discovering rural life and authenticity. Communes like Brațca, Șuncuiuș and Vadu Crișului în Bihor county or Albac in Alba county have managed to capitalize on this recognition. Although an urban EDEN destination, Alba Iulia contributes to the notoriety of rural destinations in Alba county. Known as the land of shepherds, sheep cheeses and delicacies, Mărginimea Sibiului (Sibiu county) is a picturesque rural area nearby Sibiu (European Capital of Culture of 2007) located at the feet of Făgăraș Mountains (The Transylvanian Alps). It is one of Romania's major rural destinations, especially due to its extremely rich and varied heritage. Although it is located in one of the emblematic Saxon areas, it consists of 18 mainly Romanian villages (Boița, Sadu, Râu Sadului, Tălmăciu, Tălmăcel, Rășinari, Poplaca, Gura Râului, Orlat, Fântanele, Sibiul Vale, Săliște, Galeș, Tilișca, Rod, Poiana Sibiului, and Jina). The entire area constitutes an excellent mixture of ancient, medieval and modern history (dating all the way back to the Neolithic), traditions (closely linked to the Christian feasts but also related to the agricultural calendar), handicrafts (with a unique museum of naïve religious glass paintings, and also with a great variety of craft-persons: coat makers, belt makers, cooper workers, carpenters, blacksmiths, icon painters, wood carvers, pottery makers, shoemakers, rangers, hat makers, wheelers, etc.), ethnography

Figure 4. Info note: Transylvania's most important tourist villages by county

Sources: (Bran, Marin, & Tamara, 1997, pp. 123-126; Simoni, 2010; Nistoreanu, 2018, pp. 528-529)

Alba (Albac, Arieșeni, Avram Iancu, Căpâlna, Călnic, Colțești, Gârda de Sus, Ighiel, Întregalde, Jidvei, Lancrăm, Luncile Prigoanei-Poarta Râului (Șugag), Pianu, Poșaga, Râmeț, Rimetea, Sălcuia, Scărișoara, Tecsești, Valea Izletului, etc.); **Arad** (Miriș Moneasa, Șiria, Vinga, etc.); **Bihor** (Balș, Budureasa (Stâna de Vale), Călugări, Chișcău, Remetea, Sănmărtin (Băile Felix; Băile 1 Mai), Tinca, Vadu Crișului, etc.); **Bistrița-Năsăud** (Colibița (Bistrița Bărgăului), George Coșbuc, Lechința, Valea Vinului (Rodna), etc.); **Brașov** (Bran, Cristian, Feldioara, Fundata, Ghimbav (urban today!), Hărman, Moieciu, Prejmer, Șirnea, Viscri, Zizin, etc.); **Caraș-Severin** (Brebu Nou (Trei Ape), Gârâna, Poiana Mărului (Zăvoi), Sasca Montană, Văliug (Crivaia; Semeric), etc.); **Cluj** (Băișoara, Băița (urban today!), Beliș-Călățele (Fântânele), Bologa, Ciucea, Cojocna/Băile Cojocna, Izvorul Crișului, Nicula, Ocna Dejului (urban today!), Săncraiu, Sic, etc.); **Covasna** (Băile Șugaș, Biborțeni, Bodoc, Malnaș Băi, Ozunca-Băi, Tunia (Balványos), Vâlcele etc.); **Harghita** (Bilbor, Borsec (urban today!), Corund, Dârjiu, Izvorul Mureșului, Praid, etc.); **Hunedoara** (Bănița, Blidaru, Costești, Geoagiu-Băi (urban today!), Grădiștea de Munte/Grădiștea Muncelului (Samizetusa Regia), Nucșoara, Pietra Roșie, Vața de Jos, etc.); **Maramureș** (Bărsana, Botiza, Budești, Călinești, Chiuzbaia, Coștiui, Desești, Leud, Ocna Șugatag, Plopiș, Poienile Iziei, Rogoz, Săpânța, Surdești, Vișeu de Jos, etc.); **Mureș** (Eremitu, Gurghiu, Iernut, Jăbenița (Solovăstru), Saschiz, Sângeorgiu de Mureș, etc.); **Satu Mare** (Băile Acăț, Bixad (Vama), Vama (Băile Puturoasa; Valea Mariei), etc.); **Sălaj** (Băile Boghiș, Buzuța-Băi (Ileanda), etc.); **Sibiu** (Bazna, Biertan, Bălea (Cățișoara), Cismădoara, Jina, Poiana Sibiului, Prislop, Rășinari, Sibiul Vale, Tălmăciu, Valea Viilor, etc.); **Timiș** (Giarmata, Orțișoara (Călăcea), Recaș, etc).

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and folklore (traditional costumes for women and men, respectively for covering their heads), gastronomy (varied and nicely flavored local products) (Mărginimea Sibiului website). (EDEN Network Association, 2019). The region was also awarded by the European Commission, being granted the Golden Apple in 2009 as recognition for the locals' interest towards preserving their traditions, customs, crafts and costumes. With an attractive and diversified gastronomic offer, the area is one of the key destinations of Sibiu county, the eight European Gastronomic Region of 2019. Five tourist routes are recommended by the association that promotes tourism in Sibiu area: The Road of Cheese, in Mărginimea Sibiului; The Road of Nature, in Hârtibaciului Valley, capitalizing on the area's Natura 2000 sites; The Customs of Făgăraș Mountains, in Olt Country; The Road of Fortifications, on Târnavale Valley; and The Road of Salt, on Secaș Valley (Asociația Județeană de Turism Sibiu, 2019).

Maramureș is also known as the land of wood culture. The region claims to be the geographical heartland of Europe. It is the land of wooden churches, a destination of mythological richness, with impressive landscapes and ancient customs. The destination has carefully preserved the culture, traditions, and lifestyle of a medieval rural past. Located in the Northern part of Transylvania, this region is a mixture of: valuable cultural and religious sites (starting with the wooden churches included in the UNESCO heritage); rural lifestyle, including unique sites (such as the Merry Cemetery from Săpânța), a great variety of traditional crafts (carved wooden gates and churches, wood sculptures, embroideries and beads, textiles, ceramics, masks, traditional costumes, and traditional jewelry); history and memories from the past (the Memorial Museum dedicated to the Victims of Communism opened in the prison from Sighetu Marmăției, the Elie Wiesel memorial house, the Art Museum, respectively the History and Archaeology museums from Baia Mare, etc); traditional cuisine and gastronomy (which include both traditional food and beverages); green routes (nature related tourism in Rodnei Mountains National Park); winter sports (in older and newer mountain resorts, some opened in former mining and quarrying areas, as alternative occupation solutions, e.g. Izvoare, Cavnic and Șuitor ski areas); balneal tourism (in some local interest resorts such as Ocna Șugatag). In fact, some recommended trails are: Greenway; The Way of Crafts; The Way of Wooden Churches; Bike Ride through the Land of Lăpuș, and Maramureș, Joy on Two Wheels (Maramureș County Council, 2019). Given its rich rural heritage, it has gained a privileged position among the Romanian destinations frequented by both local and international visitors, seeking authentic experiences and tourist products.

The village of Sâncraiu (Cluj county) has developed a highly innovative agritourist network with a capacity of 313 beds, provided in 134 rooms belonging to various local entrepreneurs, who operate 42 agritourist boarding houses, one rural pension and one rooms-to-let structure, almost all ranked officially 2 daisies (41 houses) and the ranking 3 flowers. If necessary, for children camps and/or for larger events, the school boarding house offers 50 more beds. The village is promoted abroad by DaVincze Tours travel agency. The destination's main attractions are: its beauty and neatness; the fact that it is the Northern gateway to the Apuseni Mountains, and their varied landscapes with many gorges, caves, cascades and forests; seven artificial ponds, adequate both for fishing and leisure activities; the possibility to make many day-trips; the XIII century Reformed church; many artisans and handicrafts; rich Hungarian traditions (90% of today's population being Hungarian) etc. Until recent years, the destination was almost unknown among Romanians but due to its very effective online promotion tools, it has become a top rural destination among German tourists and other Westerners (Coroș, Gică, Yallop, & Moisescu, 2017).

Șirnea (Brașov county) and the entire Bran-Fundata-Moieciu area constitute another very important rural destination of Romania. In fact, Șirnea (Butnaru & Bălan, 2010) was the first tourist village of Romania, established in 1968; its main attractions are generated by the fact that it is a mountain village,

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endowed with a ski track. Moreover, it has hosted the European Youth Olympic Winter Festival in 2013 and it offers various mountain routes for hiking and trekking. It also has a generous offer of local events, such as: milk measuring, sacred dances, the fire of the sheep flocks. Unfortunately, although a success story until now, it seems that the village's tourism faces decline, reason why innovation is compulsory. The entire Bran-Fundata-Moieciu area relies on a rich combination of mountain tourism and traditional rural life of shepherds.

Viscri (Braşov county) is also known as “the village of His Royal Highness Prince Charles of Wales”, being among the first Romanian heritage sites of UNESCO. Like many other Saxon villages (e.g. Bier-tan, Saschiz, Călnic, etc.) Viscri provides the possibility of admiring many very old architecture masterpieces, excellent relaxation opportunities, the discovery of rural life, etc. Mihai Eminescu Trust, the foundation supported by Prince Charles has done a tremendous job rehabilitating a very large number of Saxon houses. At the same time, the foundation educates and supports the Gypsies (a very large but poor community) in mastering old crafts. Some of the village's must sees are: the old Saxon church, the main street, the felt-makers and the blacksmith workshop. The landscape is also remarkable.

The above-mentioned villages and areas are only a few examples, perhaps the most notorious ones. Other success stories may include Romanian and/or Hungarian villages like: Frumoasa, Corund and Praid from Harghita county; Albac, Arieşeni, Colţeşti and Râmetea from Alba County; Gărâna from Caraş-Severin county, etc. Good practice examples can also be associated to innovation practices (Toader, Sofică, Petrescu, Negruşa, & Balint, 2013; Toader & Gică, 2014), such as the ones identified in Cluj county. Among these, a first category is that of the enterprises associated to product innovation, located in Beliş, Mărişel, Sâncraiu, Sic, Săcălaia and Scind-Mărgău villages which focus on providing excellent tourism experiences based on education, entertainment, or active holidays. A second type includes those who develop based on process innovation. This specific category is rather poorly represented, as businesses focus on providing only basic services: accommodation and/or meals. Still, some positive examples occur under the form of events like: the Rosehip Festival and the Grapes Harvest Festival in Sâncraiu, the Onion Festival in Mihai Viteazu or the Banffy Castle Cultural Days in Bonţida, or riding trails in the Apuseni Mountains and active holidays in the Gilău and Vlădeasa Mountains. The third category includes enterprises that rely on organizational innovation. Some examples occur among accommodation units from Mărişel and Sâncraiu villages which cooperate at local levels in order to provide more complex services, their cooperation may include private or public institutions. Last but not least, the fourth category is that of enterprises that develop based on marketing innovation. The network established in Sâncraiu which is promoted internationally and which attracts many foreign visitors to spend their holidays in one of the most natural traditional regions in Europe is a great example in this respect.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Given the fact that Transylvania's rural tourism is appreciated and sought by both native and international tourists, as it has begun to be recognized for its' qualities: tasty foods and wines, diverse and picturesque landscapes, fair quality-price ratio, friendly and welcoming people, preserved natural sites, etc. Future research directions shall focus on developing in depth case studies dedicated to micro destinations but also to entrepreneurial behaviors. Other directions can include destination management strategies, the development of tourist and visitor attractions, diversification and promotion strategies of hospitality businesses and destinations, the better capitalization on the UNESCO World Heritage sites, etc.

CONCLUSION

As recommended by the country's branding specialists (Romanian Government - Ministerul Dezvoltării Regionale și Turismului, 2011; Romanian Government - National Authority for Tourism (NAT), 2014-2015), Romania should target the segment of spontaneous tourists, eager to discover new and unexploited attractions, interested to experiment new destinations and things. These tourists can be split into two distinct categories. The first type is that of the smart/discerning travelers who include young people adventurers (25 to 35 years old). They are interested in independent travels, rather than in planned, programmed and predictable vacations. Moreover, they prefer to refer to themselves as travelers and not tourists because they do not visit mass tourism destinations. The second category includes empty nesters (namely, families with grown-up children who have left their parents' homes, becoming independent). These tourists are usually people who live in metropolis, seeking escapade relaxation but who also practice a healthy lifestyle. Based on the studies concerning Romania's profile as a tourist destination among its foreign visitors, Transylvania's main target market includes the following countries: Austria, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Spain, Russia, UK, and USA, to which China is added as priority market (Coroș, 2015, p. 276; Coroș & Popa, 2018).

Romania is promoted abroad (Romanian Government - Ministerul Dezvoltării Regionale și Turismului, 2011; Romanian Government - National Authority for Tourism (NAT), 2014-2015) as the destination that provides tourists the chance to "Rediscover the taste of country life". The countryside, situated far away from civilization and close to unspoiled nature, is described as the best starting place in any exploration of Romania. Journeys through Romania provide the discovery of the warm and pleasant way of the villager and their openness and readiness to welcome people (Romanians and foreigners). The peasant's lifestyle is promoted as authentic and unaffected by time. Tourists are invited to immerse themselves in a fascinating world, full of traditions, where time has stopped and where ritual of hundreds of years are still practiced in an eternal world with simple but worshiped values. Rural communities still live in a very close relationship with their lands, where religion occupies a central part, as the community's lifestyle is similar to that of the ancestors. Given this highly attractive presentation, one should wonder how the destinations (Romania and Transylvania) perform in terms of attracting and retaining both national and international visitors.

Local, regional and national authorities, respectively investors must become aware of the fact that Transylvanian agri-tourist guesthouses enjoy a high popularity among Romanian and, especially, foreign tourists, registering significant percentages of the arrivals and overnights in such facilities at national level. Moreover, the development of a unique and specific tourist offer is highly needed. In this respect, tourist inns provide excellent exploitation opportunities, due to the fact that they have unique architectural features and that they can provide excellent differentiation options. Furthermore, entrepreneurs, sensing these opportunities tend to consider this type of hospitality facility as lodging and/or food-serving units. Time has come for the state to reconsider their official classification.

In Romania and in Transylvania, the lack of leisure services, combined with an inadequate infrastructure and with rather modest accommodation services, respectively with unspecialized foodservices, constitute the main cause of a low demand for rural tourism, as well as for tourism in general. In fact, these are some of the most important factors associated to poor performance in Romanian tourism. Of course, an inadequately developed infrastructure cannot support the appropriate evolution of tourism and the valorization of tourist resources. As the analyses revealed, some of most valuable tourist resources are located in remote villages, lacking exactly the much-needed infrastructure.

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Transylvania's rural destinations and small towns are most commonly frequented for recreational activities, cultural trips, outdoor activities, mountaineering, etc. The destination's tourists match the profile of the targeted international visitors. In this context, a pertinent explanation of the decrease in the average lengths of stay can be found exactly in the lack of diversification at destination level. Without attractions and activities, respectively with limited services and with poor access solutions to tourist attractions, tourists cannot be expected to extend their stays in Transylvania. Moreover, due to the possibility to travel abroad, Romanians have shifted from the local offer towards international destinations, thus, contributing to the diminishing of the region's average lengths of stay. Despite the fact that the warm season registers higher arrivals and overnights in Transylvania, the overall overnight stays are low and only slightly higher between May and October compared to those in other months (Coroş, 2015, pp. 99, 105; Romanian National Institute of Statistics (NIS), 2019). Once again, the lack of a diversified offer, results, in the case of foreigners, in lower overnights during the late spring, summer and early autumn compared to the colder seasons.

Overall, Romania's traditional accommodation sector is quite consistent but still needs to be upgraded in terms of qualitative level. Moreover, most of the destinations are only in their early stages of development, lacking the much needed leisure and recreational, respectively cultural facilities. In fact, developing and providing diversified and integrated services is compulsory for the future of Romania's and Transylvania's tourism.

Romania has great opportunities for developing rural tourism, and the proper hosting of the villagers by providing rental accommodation and fresh and natural products can seriously contribute to raising living standards, socio-existing cultural heritage conservation. The geographical position of our country, including all forms of relief, provides ideal opportunities for developing tourism in general, and especially the rural tourism (Nistoreanu, Dorobanţu, & Ţuclea, 2011).

To conclude, multiculturalism can be considered the concept that best describes Transylvania and its rural space. Any further success can only rely on the capitalization of this very generous and resourceful feature of the region, both in its rural and in urban areas. Still, the development of rural tourism in particular and of tourism in general faces important issues related to specific and support infrastructure. The efficient management of rural destinations, together with the implementation of clear policies regarding rural tourism are two key conditions for the successful conservation of the cultural heritage and of the folklore of each destination, respectively for the development of rural tourism in Romania.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Administrative Territorial Unit: Official term used for referring to any type of locality (commune, town or municipality) which has its own managing authority (city/town hall and local council); villages as territories integrated in communes are not here included.

Agri-Tourist Boarding House/Guesthouse/Pension: Lodging facility organized on the premises of the peasant's farm, usually in their home but also in independent buildings, providing accommodation services in not more than 8 rooms with maximum 16 beds. They also provide foodservices, using products from their own crops and farms, respectively, guests are provided access to furnished cooking spaces, where they can prepare their own meals. Guests have the possibility to experience authentic rural life, if desired, getting involved in specific agricultural and farm-related activities, crafts, traditional folk activities, etc.

Embryonic Destination: Tourist destinations which rely on a single attraction around which certain services begin to develop later.

Individual Attraction: Tourist destinations which possess only one tourist attraction, without any services developed around it.

Rural Tourism: Type of tourism that takes part in the countryside, capitalizing on the natural, human-built, and cultural heritage on the area, involving the local population in the provision of various types of services (accommodation, food, leisure and entertainment, nature exploration, guiding, traditional craft and arts, folklore, etc.) and contributing to the well-being of the residents.

Tourist Boarding House/Guesthouse/Pension: Accommodation facility with a capacity of at most 20 rooms and 60 beds, which is established in urban and/or rural areas, functioning either in independent buildings or within the residence of the owner-manager. It is either equipped with kitchen and dining room, or it provides access to cooking spaces and food-serving areas, for own use.

Transylvania: From the international tourists' perspective, this Romanian region includes today not only the historic homonymous province but also the following provinces: Banat, Crişana, and Maramureş.

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APPENDIX

Table 4. Tourist villages in Romania and Transylvania

Type and Description	Counties and Regions Hosting Villages from Transylvania	Counties and Regions Hosting Villages from other Regions of Romania
1. Ethnographic Criterion		
a. Tourist villages from Moldavia		Câmpulung Moldovenesc, Suceava, Ținutul Botoșanilor, Neamț, Bacău, Țara Vrancei, Valea Bistriței, and Țara Dornelor;
b. Tourist villages from Transylvania	Bistrița-Năsăud, Cluj, Mureș, Țara Moților, Alba, Târnave (Alba, Mureș and Sibiu), Mărginimea Sibiului, Covasna, and Brașov-Țara Bârsei;	
c. Tourist villages from Crișana	Zarand, Beiuș, and Bihor;	
d. Tourist villages from Maramureș	Țara Maramureșului and Țara Oașului;	
e. Tourist villages from Banat	Ținutul Pădurenilor, Țara Hațegului, Țara Almăjului, Carașova, and Clisura Dunării;	
f. Tourist villages from Northern Oltenia		Gorj and Vâlcea;
g. Tourist villages from Southern Oltenia		Olt, Dolj and Mehedinți;
h. Tourist villages from Northern Muntenia/Wallachia		Argeș-Muscel, Dâmbovița, Prahova, Buzău and Brăila;
i. Tourist villages from Southern Muntenia/Wallachia		Teleorman, Ialomița-Bărăgan, and Ilfov;
j. Tourist villages from Dobruđa		Danube Delta, Babadag, and Constanța;
2. Criterion Based on the Prevailing Form of Tourism		
a. Tourist villages for stay, rest and recreation	Brașov;	Argeș and Prahova
b. Tourist villages for balneal tourism	Arad, Bihor, Brașov, Cluj, Covasna, Harghita, Hunedoara, Maramureș, Satu Mare, Sibiu, and Timiș;	Argeș, Brăila, Buzău, Dâmbovița, Gorj, Mehedinți, Neamț, Prahova, and Vrancea;
c. Tourist villages for mountain tourism, including winter sports	Alba, Bihor, Brașov, and Caraș-Severin;	
d. Tourist villages for sea, sun and sand tourism		Constanța and Tulcea;
e. Tourist villages for cultural-itinerant tourism, including religious tourism	Alba, Brașov, Hunedoara, Maramureș, and Sibiu;	Gorj, Neamț, Suceava, and Vâlcea;
f. Tourist villages for ecologic and scientific tourism (in natural protected areas)	Alba, Bihor, Caraș-Severin, and Hunedoara;	Argeș and Tulcea;
g. Tourist villages for aquatic recreation and sports	Caraș-Severin;	Argeș and Ilfov;
h. Tourist villages for ethno-folkloric tourism	Alba, Bihor, Harghita, Maramureș, and Sibiu;	Argeș, Olt, Suceava, and Vâlcea;
3. Criterion Based on the Potential for Tourism		
a. Landscape and climate villages	Brașov, Cluj, and Harghita;	Argeș, Gorj, Neamț, and Prahova;
b. Balneal villages (sometimes supporting balneal tourism in resorts of local or even national interest)	Arad, Bihor, Brașov, Harghita, Hunedoara, Maramureș, Sibiu, and Timiș;	Argeș, Brăila, Buzău, Dâmbovița, Gorj, Ialomița, Ilfov, and Mehedinți;
c. Tourist villages for sports		
c ₁ . Tourist villages for winter sports	Alba, Bihor, Brașov, and Caraș-Severin;	
c ₂ . Tourist villages for aquatic sports	Caraș-Severin;	Argeș, Ilfov, and Tulcea;
d. Pastoral villages (mountain villages, with preserved century-long pastoral occupations, respectively with famous dishes based on milk and mutton)	Sibiu;	Argeș and Vâlcea;
e. Tourist villages for fishing and hunting (recreational activities for tourists: fishing, hunting, and safari, providing accommodation and traditional dishes based on fish or venison)	Mureș;	Suceava, and Tulcea;
f. Villages of artistic and handicraft creation (well-known for: the creation of pottery, wood and glass painting, wood and stone sculpture, folkloric weaving and embroidery, folkloric music and dance, remarkable rural architecture)	Bihor, Cluj, Harghita, Maramureș, Mureș, Satu Mare, and Sibiu;	Argeș, Gorj, Olt, Suceava, and Vrancea;

continued on following page.

Rural Tourism and Its Dimension

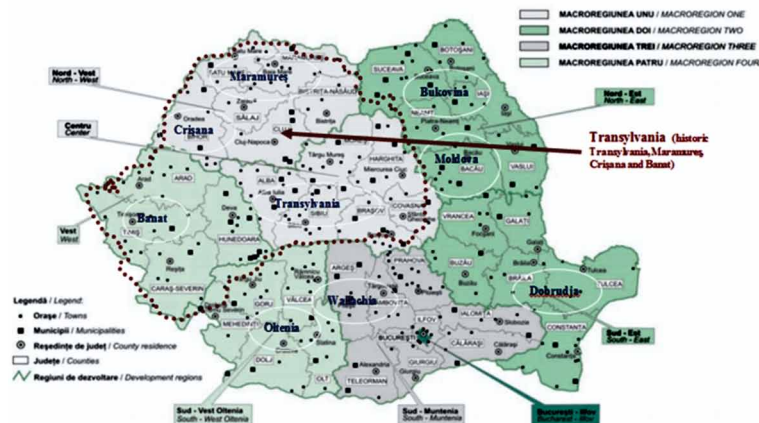
Table 4. Continued

Type and Description	Counties and Regions Hosting Villages from Transylvania	Counties and Regions Hosting Villages from other Regions of Romania
g. Ethno-folkloric villages (which have a great ethnographic value, due to their museums, rural architecture, traditional costumes, and folklore; this heritage is completed by ethno-folkloric events, markets, fairs, festivities, festivals of music and/or dances; the best-known villages are located in counties	Alba, Arad, Braşov, and Sibiu;	Argeş, Dâmboviţa, Gorj, Neamţ, Prahova, Suceava, and Vrancea;
h. Villages with scientific objectives (which are located in areas with natural heritage sites, that attract tourists due to their uniqueness and beauty)	Alba, Bihor, Caraş-Severin, Hunedoara, and Maramureş;	Argeş, Mehedinţi, Suceva, Tulcea, and Vrancea;
i. Villages with historic sites, art and architecture monuments		
i ₁ . Archaeological vestiges	Alba and Hunedoara;	
i ₂ . Villages with religious architectural monuments		Argeş, Gorj, Neamţ, and Suceava;
i ₃ . Wooden churches	Maramureş, Mureş, and Sălaj;	
j. Villages with Saxon fortified churches/citadels	Braşov and Sibiu (Southern Transylvania);	
k. Villages with ethnographic museums and collections	Braşov and Sibiu;	Argeş, Dolj, Olt, Suceava, Vaslui, and Vâlcea;
l. Villages with memorial houses	Arad and Bistriţa-Năsăud;	Gorj, Neamţ, Suceava, and Vâlcea
m. Villages renowned for their fruit and wine growing occupations/drinks	Alba, Arad, and Timiş;	Constanţa, Iaşi, Neamţ, Tulcea, and Vrancea.

Source: Own processing based on: Bran, Marin & Şimon (1997, pg. 123-126), Simoni (2010), and Nistoreanu (2018, pg. 528-529)

Figure 5. Romania's map: Administrative and historic regions

Source: Based on the Romanian National Institute for Statistics (2015)



Chapter 14

Typical Aspects of the Traditional Food Behavior Within the Romanian Rural Environment

Puiu Nistoreanu

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8369-7899>

The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania

Bogdan Gabriel Nistoreanu

The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania

Liliana Nicodim

University Ovidius Constanta, Romania

ABSTRACT

The Romanians' food behavior has certain peculiarities specific to the various geographical areas in which the Romanian society has developed. An analysis of the traditional diet is—up to this date—modest. But taking into account the very varied geographic conditions, the existing resources, sometimes abundant, sometimes modest, of the troubled history of the Romanian people, it is easy to understand how the way of life and the culinary habits in Romania were shaped throughout history. This chapter explores typical aspects of traditional food behavior in rural Romania.

INTRODUCTION

As is known, an important part of human life is in a current connection with gastronomy. We stopped in the gastronomy field because, although it seems a simple area, it is very complex, with multi-branch processes – which include from discovering, tasting, experimenting to documenting food and foodstuff.

It is known that there is almost always dance, theater and painting around the food.

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Looking at the table pleasures from all points of view, we realized that there was need for more than one study here, for there is much to be said from a scientific, linguistic, semantic point of view.

It is generally known that gastronomy studies various cultural components that have nutrition and food in general as a basic element. Thus, it is related to the arts of beauty and social science in terms of culture, and to the natural sciences relating to the digestive system of the human body. Some time ago we heard an expression that we liked: *The culture of a people can be known through the open window of their kitchen*. The cuisine of a people does not appear spontaneously; it gathers and synthesizes the entire civilization of those that are part of it. In the gastronomy of a nation we find reflected: history, geography, influences of other civilizations, population psychology, technology, beliefs, art, its fears and its spoils. Gastronomy breathes in its own rhythm that has been created by climate, resources, traditions, religions... (Montanari, 2010).

BACKGROUND

1. The Culinary Arts: The Art of Preparing Food

From the many definitions of gastronomy, the authors prefer, in report to the subject under discussion, the one of the online dictionary: *The art of cooking good food or appreciating them at their real value*, although another definition reminded us that: *gastronomíe f. (gastronomía, d. gaster, belly, and nómos, law) = Excessive enjoyment of food [!] good and selected*, because in terms of traditional Romanian cuisine these elements are unanimously accepted (***) DEX, 2019).

The word “culinary” is defined as something linked or related, with cooking and cuisine. The English have a very useful word that in Romanian does not exist “culinarian”, that is, a person who works in the field of culinary art. According to the encyclopedias we had access to, it seems that the first study dedicated to gastronomy is “The Physiology of Taste” by Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, which appeared at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Unlike traditional cooking books, he studied the relationship between the senses and the food, treating the state of well-being happening after a quality meal as a scientific phenomenon (Brillat-Savarin, 1982).

The Romanian gastronomic domain includes a multitude of neologisms French, English, German, Turkish etc. Gastronomy terms can appear as specialized phrases or in simple phrases. The history of gastronomy concerns the evolution of food preparation in terms of refinement, development and differentiation of tastes. So, while gastro-technics represent techniques, gastronomy is an art. From an etymological point of view, the word gastronomy comes from ancient Greek, from “gastér” (meaning stomach) and “nomos” (meaning knowledge or law). Also worthy of consideration there is the history of food pathology and the history of food hygiene. In the Physiology of Taste, by Brillat-Savarin, gastronomy is defined as *Rational knowledge of everything that relates to man as a feeding being* (Brillat-Savarin, 2015). Gastronomy researches people and things, in order to take from one country to another everything that is worth knowing, and a well-arranged feast is a summary of the world, each country sending its representatives.

Gastronomy has its origins in all major and classical civilizations, yet in the context of hospitality and tourism gastronomy is a new area of study. Perceptual sensors play a major psychological and psychosociological role in the appreciation of culinary preparations, just like other tourist experiences at other destinations (Aries, 2016).

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Consumption of food and beverages, especially when dining in the city, is a pleasant sensory experience, and the pleasure factor or “feel-good” factor as a result of eating at a particular destination is a marketing tool that should not be underestimated (Poulain, 2018). That is why it can be argued that carefully selecting the special treatment and/or dishes that can fulfill a desire or a personal lust, tourists will value more what they feel at a tourist destination and what that destination offers. Although the relationship between gastronomy and tourism is real, there are very few studies in specialty literature that address the link between gastronomy and tourism, respectively communication aspects of related to the purchase of food and tourism services (Dabija, Bejan, & Tipi, 2018).

2. The Origins of Traditional Diet in Romania

Undoubtedly, our ancestors fed with resources specific to the natural ecosystems in which they lived which they harvested or hunted, and then started producing them alone, and the food they were preparing had to meet their daily needs determined by climate, work and life.

At first, they ate forest fruits, mushrooms, roots, honey, seeds, venison, grapes, fish, wild mountain, plains and water birds. Later, when agriculture began to develop, they included in their food resources cereals, milk, dairy products, eggs, the meat of animals and poultry which they raised, vegetables.

Of particular importance was the expansion of corn crops, which have gradually become an important source, then even traditional of food for man and fodder for animals that man grew for his food.

All these have left their mark, sometimes profound, sometimes less visible today, on the folklore and local traditions, on the food behavior, the cuisine and the Romanian culinary habits.

Over the course of history, the specifics of everyday life, sometimes of hardships, of taking refuge in forests, of plagues, of restrictions and obligations of all kinds, failed to destroy the Romanian culinary traditions. It is known how to prepare traditional Romanian food, but culinary traditions have evolved continuously. Thus, the culinary traditions of the time of Stephen the Great (1433-1504) (** ER, 2019) come in contrast with the culinary traditions of the middle of the 19th Century, with those in the 20th and with what we understand today as culinary traditions.

3. Food Resources in Romania

The most unexpected and unknown dishes of Romanian cuisine were created centuries ago by the isolated fishermen in the Danube Delta and the solitary shepherds of the Carpathian ridges. Many culinary dishes were invented during the days of hardships, when people were forced to leave their villages, homes, households and take refuge in the mountains, in the forests, in swampy areas where the enemies who attacked our country could not reach. Food resources have always been a trusty ally of the Romanian, as “his brother was the forest”.

Among the food resources that can be found in Romania we remember:

- **Fish:** among the species fished in inland waters and on the seaside: sturgeons, Danube spruce, carp, catfish, perch, pike, linseed, caraway, blue spruce, gobies, gray mullet; or acclimated and raised in fisheries: mountain trout.
- **Venison:** birds (coot, wild ducks, wild geese, partridges, pheasants); animals (rabbit, deer, stag, mountain goat, boar, bear).
- **Meat:** pork, beef, mutton, chevon; ostrich, turkey, geese, duck, hen; quail meat.

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- **Milk:** from various species (cow, buffalo, goat, sheep).
- **Eggs:** hen, quail, duck.
- **Fruits and vegetables:** a very varied range.
- **Cereals:** wheat, corn, rye.
- **Wine.**
- **Mineral water** (still or sparkling).
- **Other sources of food:** fish roe, honey, snails.

These food resources can be used in the preparation of a very wide range of traditional Romanian dishes and can contribute to the personalization and individualization of the culinary dishes of the agro-tourist guest houses of Romania.

ISSUES, CONTROVERSIES, PROBLEMS

The Evolution of Food Behavior

Food behavior, like other types of behavior, is a complex phenotype. The environment plays an essential role in shaping and educating the way food is prepared, taking into account:

- the place where the individual lives;
- the life its society lives;
- the religion;
- the cultural inheritance;
- the work conditions;
- the time dedicated to feeding; and
- the genetic characteristics of the individual.

Numerous molecules of peptides or proteins interfere with human food behavior. Genes have to interfere with food behavior because they govern the synthesis of the proteins essential to life.

The evolution of traditional food behavior was due to the mutations that have taken place for centuries in which the society has evolved from hunter - gatherers, to grain growers and solitary livestock farmers, to village communities producing agri-food resources, to specialized producers of agri-food resources. In the last 50 years these mutations have also been linked to the urbanization of the population and the industrialization of agri-food production.

One should also not neglect that in the course of the historical evolution of foodstuff behavior, during different periods there have been times in which the cultivation in the individual households of cereals and vegetables and the raising of animals near the house of man have intensified.

Specialty studies conducted in recent years in our country have highlighted that:

- socio-economic transformations have started to determine a deviation from traditional food, characterized by naturalness, simplicity and good taste;

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- the diet towards which modern man, especially young people, is obliged to follow is not entirely consistent with traditional food behavior.

Thus, by increasing the urban population, which is dependent on industrial products, the following phenomena are presently manifesting in the foodstuff behavior:

- the consumption of highly technologically processed food, highly refined, treated with dyes and preservatives, held on the store shelves for a long time, poor in vitamins, minerals and other important nutrients has increased;
- the „fast food” system is becoming more prominent while delivering dishes which are not specific to the Romanian people food behavior;
- the consumption of highly energetic foods has increased (fats, sugar, doughy products, alcoholic beverages, etc.), and people are increasingly dominated by nervousness, being constantly stressed, forced to live in a polluted environment.

Traditional Romanian Activities that Influence Food Behavior

Food production activities can be considered traditional for shaping and transforming the Romanian food behavior. These activities are:

- Baking, bread production, the basic food for the typical Romanian and of wheat and rye-based products;
- Winemaking, processing of grapes and obtaining wine, a product which has always been part of the Romanian’s food;
- Meat processing from animal species hunted or grown in individual households or specialized farms;
- Milk processing from grown animal species;
- Fish processing;
- The preservation of fruits and vegetables.

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: THE SERVICES OFFERED BY AGRO-TOURISTIC GUEST HOUSES IN ROMANIA

The particular aspects of Romania’s natural riches characterized by:

- great diversity and rational distribution of landforms;
- the diversity and variety of food resources;
- the possibility of acclimation and insertion in production of new food resources;
- the traditions and the beauty of the Romanian village;
- the mineral water and salt resources;
- areas rich in sapropelic curative mud;

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give our country a real and high potential in agro-tourism or rural tourism.

In order to capitalize on this country's natural opportunity, but also to capitalize on its initiative, talent and household skills, aware of the financial source that it can represent, many inhabitants, especially from rural areas, have established rural guesthouses, true oasis of beauty, traditionalism, but also of cultivation of the traditional Romanian food behavior.

Developing in recent years, at the beginning on the Prahova Valley, in the area bordering Brasov, Bran and in the North of Moldavia, agro-tourism has expanded rapidly in other regions of the country, such as the Danube Delta, the Black Sea Coast, different rural settlements in the Vrancea Mountains, from the counties of Neamt, Harghita and Covasna, from the Apuseni Mountains, Maramures, as well as from the Center of Transylvania, where we could mention the village of Viscri.

CONCLUSION

It should be borne in mind that rural tourism, also called agro-tourism, is defined as the tourism that takes place in rural areas. Rural tourism is typically small size tourism, where the following activities take place: visiting natural and cultural landscapes and participating in traditional rural activities. Rural tourism attracts tourists because it offers: beautiful natural views, ordinary accommodation but with some comfort in traditional architecture buildings, traditional, authentic food, visits to historical and cultural places.

The traditional Romanian food behavior along with the beauty of the landscape represent the essential elements of advertising for the agro-tourist guest houses in Romania.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Civilization: The entirety of human knowledge and experience, all the acquisitions of the human spirit, the high level of development of a society.

Culinary Art: Including “cooking-related” means of cooking, is the art of preparing, cooking, and presenting food, usually in the form of meals. The one who works in this field—especially in restaurants—is called a “cook” and lately he/she is called a “culinary artist”.

Ecosystem: The complex of living organisms, their physical environment, and all their interrelationships in a particular unit of space.

Food: Is any substance consumed to provide nutritional support for an organism. It has mainly plant or animal origin and contains essential nutrients, such as carbohydrates, fats, proteins, vitamins or minerals.

Gastronomy: A term used in the culinary field, to define almost everything, from fine dining experiences to specific studies on the chemical handling of food.

Human Life (Human Condition): What it means to be human; the experiences, characteristics, and limitations of life shared by all humans, as opposed to other lifeforms.

Romanian Cuisine: Includes a diverse mix of dishes, from several traditions with which it came into contact, but it also retains its own character.

Chapter 15

The Impact of Rural Tourism on Wellbeing: Romania's Case

Alina Cerasela Avram

The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania

ABSTRACT

This chapter aims to enhance general knowledge about the impact of rural tourism on the wellbeing in a country that is known to have an impressive potential both on spa and rural tourism. The approach will take into consideration the new profile of tourists in recent years and the dynamism of the tourism field in Europe. Based on the research that the author has made in recent years on health tourism and wellbeing, expanding the scientific approach to the rural area represents the next step in her approach, given the potential of this field in Romania. The chapter will address the ways of capitalising on the rural tourism resources in Romania through the specific activities of the concept of "rural wellbeing tourism." This model has been successfully developed and implemented in the Nordic countries, Austria, Switzerland, Iceland, and Canada, and it is considered a way to generate highly competitive tourism products.

INTRODUCTION

The analysis addresses a topic of interest for Romania, which is one of the countries facing the ageing population and highlights the possibility of taking advantage of rural wellbeing tourism. The approach derives from Romania's remarkable wellness potential (Aluculesei, 2015) and from its experience of using natural factors of cure for more than two millennia (Asociația Română de Balneologie, 2016). Also, the geographical position of rural tourism areas in the proximity of spa resorts creates the opportunity for these two forms of tourism to combine in a customised concept according to the profile of the Romanian rural space. The rural heritage of the regions where wellness resorts are located, and the possibility of interconnecting the two forms of tourism are also underlined in the Masterplan of Balneal Tourism, especially in areas as Transylvania and Bucovina (National Authority for Tourism, 2017), that reinforces the opportunity of this approach. In this context, the main issues considered in the chapter

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are the study of literature review in this field through defining the concept of rural wellbeing tourism and the analysis of the Romanian potential of rural wellbeing tourism. It includes the swot analysis, with the emphasis on identifying the areas that can adopt this concept and develop a competitive tourism product, mapping the principal localities that can become rural wellbeing tourism spots. Another part of the chapter points the opportunities for research and innovation in this field that can boost rural wellbeing tourism in Romania.

Rural wellbeing tourism is a combination of wellness and rural tourism, with an emphasis on the impact on the well-being of tourists. The name indicates the importance of combining several forms of tourism in a single package, which response to the current needs of tourists. The term is a new one and is specific especially to the Nordic countries, who have developed this concept because they benefit from both categories. Due to its particularities, it can be adapted to many European countries that benefit from a rich rural environment and wellness resources. The population that can benefit from this tourist product belongs to both the elderly and the young, consisting of people who have an active lifestyle and who face a high level of stress.

BACKGROUND

Rural wellbeing tourism is a new concept, and it was less approached in the literature and Government policies of European countries. So, it is essential to note that its development at international level depends both on external factors, such as the success of governmental and domestic policies and internal factors, as the demand trend and the awareness of the importance of healthy and active life on the part of the population.

In Europe, one of the most complex research projects that deepen the concept of rural wellbeing tourism is the Prowell project, co-funded by the EU, awarded under the 2013 call for proposals “Supporting the enhancement and promotion of transnational thematic tourism products”. Following the analysis of the literature by the authors of the project report, a complex definition has been developed that incorporates the main components of other wellness tourism activities in the rural area:

Rural wellbeing tourism is a form of tourism that takes place in rural settings and that interconnects actively with local nature and community resources. Based on the rural tangible and intangible, openly accessible and commercial ingredients, wellbeing tourism is holistic mode of travel that integrates physical and mental wellness and health and contributes to wider positive social and individual life experiences. - Source of the definition: (Hjalager, Tervo-Kankare, Tuohino, & Konu, 2015)

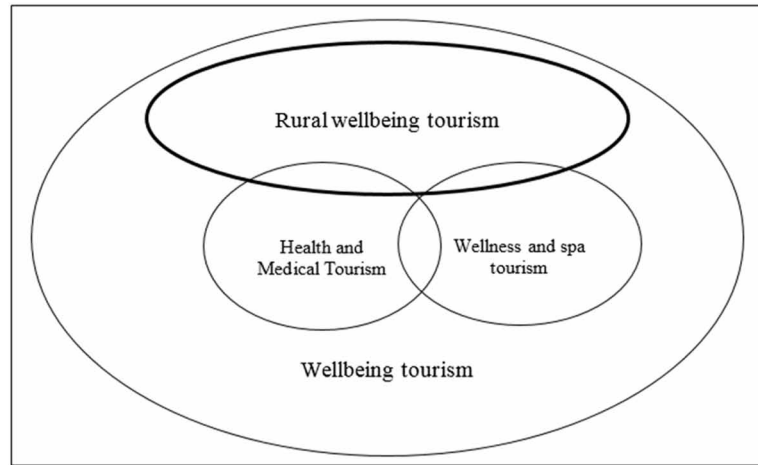
The term rural wellbeing tourism is a comprehensive one and shows a high level of connectivity with health tourism and medical tourism. Hjalager et al. (2015) illustrated the connection of terms for a better understanding of rural wellbeing tourism (figure 1).

Thus, rural wellbeing tourism is at the intersection of several niches such as wellbeing tourism, health and medical tourism as well as wellness and spa tourism. Terms are sometimes used in literature in confusing contexts. For a more precise delimitation of concepts, the following table describes the main features of the types of tourism that have increased connectivity with the niche of the rural wellbeing tourism (table 1).

The Impact of Rural Tourism on Wellbeing

Figure 1. Rural wellbeing tourism connectivity with other tourism forms

Source: (Hjalager, Tervo-Kankare, Tuohino, & Konu, 2015)



It is noticed that the common element of the forms of tourism that connects is wellness. This is to improve the health of tourists through specific activities taking place in rural areas. The meaning of the term wellness varies according to the context, the one who promoted it as American researcher Halbert Dunn in 1959 (Mueller & Kaufmann, 2001). In the US it is related to the intellectual and religious movement of the nineteenth century, representing the need for a change of lifestyle, and in Europe, it is related to the spa industry and alternative treatments, which have no direct connection with medicine (Miller, 2005). However, due to the peculiarities of European practice, the term wellness is also accepted, including medical care, being especially synonymous with units equipped with treatment and recreation facilities in individual resorts. Despite the different directions in which this term can be translated, all definitions contain common elements, especially concerning the multidimensional, holistic approach that has changed over time and continues to change the line with the evolution of society.

Given the complexity of this niche, this chapter analyses the opportunity to develop rural tourism under current demographic wellbeing. Nowadays, many of the countries in the European Union face the ageing of the population and are becoming aware of the impact of this phenomenon both economi-

Table 1. Terminology

Tourism form	Details
Wellness tourism	In some countries, it is synonymous with Health Tourism (Hungary, France). In other countries, there is no standard practice, and the term well-being (Finland) or well-feeling (Slovenia) is used. In Central and Eastern Europe, the term is associated with mineral treatments (Smith & Puzcko, 2014).
SPA tourism	It is the most popular form of health tourism and focuses on relaxation. The approach is related to body beauty, and the practice uses preventive and curative techniques.
Medical tourism	It involves travel for medical purposes, having as its primary motivation the low cost of treatment. The question is whether these tourists have the necessary condition to enjoy the related tourist services included in such packages (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2010; World Health Organization, 2013).

Source: Aluculesci (2016)

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cally and socially. The analysis approached in this chapter starts from general to specific. Thus, after analysing the general demographic framework at European level, the study is narrowing at the level of Romania - a country which is facing a marked downward demographic trend and enjoys a real potential for developing rural wellbeing tourism (Aluculesei, 2016).

CURRENT DEMOGRAPHIC CONTEXT - MOTIVATION FOR RURAL WELLBEING TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Population ageing is one of the current issues, with significant influences on a social and economic level (European Commission, 2015). Thus, the older population must be viewed differently, underlining concepts such as healthy life expectancy and active ageing (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2014; Euro Health Net, 2012). European Union has the most rapidly elderly growing in the world (Tragaki, 2014). According to Eurostat, the retired population is growing both in EU countries and in countries wishing to join, with the great importance of the age group over 80. The predominance of older people in the Union leads to the release of several scenarios like “scenario of the grey century ” or “open borders scenario” that propose different directions (Davoudi et al., 2010) to reduce adverse effects.

The demographic situation faced by the European Union is unprecedented and can be viewed from several angles. On the one hand, it is the absolute triumph of humankind on morbidity and mortality. People live longer than ever, enjoying higher living conditions than those of a century ago. They have social and care services, they can study and engage in whatever gender, enjoying an active life up to a very old age. On the other hand, there are changes in the structure of the population and their effects on the standard of living. There is a concern that accentuating social spending will be a burden on public finances, with adverse effects on the welfare of the population (Alda, 2017). It also includes the problem that the existing disparities will deepen even more due to the ageing of the population and the restriction of the active population segment.

Changes in population age structure also have alarming economic and social implications, such as increasing retirement costs, dependence rates, health and care costs (Feng, 2017) and education and associated costs with social allowances (European Commission, 2017). In this context, the authorities are looking for solutions that mitigate the effects on the economy and create forward-looking scenarios for situations that would deepen economic gaps and lead to a decline in economic growth (RAND Corporation, 2015).

In the European Union, the segment of the population over 65 has grown alarmingly over the past decades, rising from 25% in 2010 to 29.6% in 2016, and by 2070 it is forecast to reach 51.2%. Progress in medicine made life expectancy double in 2017 as compared to 1900. According to the European Commission, at the beginning of the 20th century, the average life expectancy among men was 43 years old, and in 2050 it is estimated to reach the 82-year threshold. For women, life expectancy was 46 years in 1900, and in 2050, according to experts, it would reach 87 years. Also, the fertility rate is on a downward slope. In the member countries, the population over 65 is already over the segment of 14 and in 2050, around one in three Europeans will be at least 65, compared to one in five in 2017. At the country level, none of the Member States will represent more than 1% of the global population. However, due to disparities within the Union and uneven access to quality health care, 10% of the EU population (about 50 million people) suffers from chronic diseases (European Commission, 2017b).

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A direct consequence of changes in the population structure is increasing the dependency ratio, which is one of the most used indicators for expressing the pressure exerted by the retired population on the labour market population. The dependency ratio is projected to increase from 43.2%, as it was in 2016, to 68.5% in 2070. Within the Union, the report will fluctuate by country, ranging from a minimum of 2070 54.5% in Sweden and a maximum of 92.5% in Poland and are expected to be about 80% in seven Member States: Bulgaria, Greece, Croatia, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Romania (European Commission, 2017).

In addition to increasing life expectancy, along with the decrease in fertility rates, the current demographic situation has also contributed to the fact that the baby boom generation (those born between World War II and 1960) has reached the age reaching a life expectancy of 10 years over those who withdrew from work in 1980. The baby boom group is replaced by a substantially lower workforce, born in the early 1990s. The baby boom generation enjoyed a period of sustained economic growth and benefited from significant improvements in healthcare and increased employment rates. Subsequent generations did not have the same conditions, narrowing their financial prospects. Thus, generation X (born between 1960 and 1970) cannot claim to have higher earnings growth over their parents. Also, those in the millenary generation, who became adults after 2000, was affected by the consequences of the economic and financial crisis, with consequences on the prospect of a stable career. Digitisation and automation, which underpin the improvement of quality of life, have brought new challenges to the labour market. In this context, for most people, “a living place for life” or “a career for life” is no longer up to date (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2017).

Concerning the demographic impact on the economy, specialists believe that ageing populations can affect economic growth and revenue convergence by its effects on factors of production. Knowing that labour productivity depends on the age of employees, the current demographic trend is expected to have a substantial impact on income convergence in Europe (Cuaresma et al., 2016).

In the European Union, economic growth is shrinking in advanced economies, and according to specialists, one of the factors that provoked this situation is the demographic one. The baby boom generation has reached retirement age, and younger generations have been unable to cover the entire cohort, which has led to a fall in labour (IMF, 2017).

The adverse effects of the age structure of the population on the economy are also determined by changes in consumer behaviour and social specifics of people over 65 (Marešová, Mohelska and Kuc, 2014). It is known that young people tend to spend more on consumer goods, while the elderly allocate significant amounts of income for medical care and treatment. The theory of age cycles shows that the most significant savings are made in the middle of life when the individual begins to anticipate retirement (Orlicka, 2015). Hence, a predominantly elderly population may have a negative impact on consumption, which in turn causes a decline in economic growth (Van der Gaag and Beer, 2015). Also, demographic changes alter long-term savings behaviour.

In the European Union, each Member State can be classified as having an ageing demographic population, given that the proportion of the elderly is above 12% of the total population. This was mainly due to the low fertility rate, increased life expectancy and the balance of birth rates with mortality rates. In addition, the phenomenon of longevity is growing in the EU. The age group over 80 years of age is advancing at an alert rate higher than that of the young population, and within this group, the number of those who live longer than 100 years has increased exponentially. Globally, according to the United Nations projections on population demographic trends, the number of people aged 100 will increase by about 20.1 million by 2100.

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The phenomenon of longevity was first documented after World War II in Sweden and the UK. In Ireland and Iceland, the phenomenon began later in the 1960s and 1970s and in the former Communist bloc countries in the 1980s and even in 2000. The differences are explicable for political stability in developed countries, better work and access to a high-performance health system. In the former Communist countries, the highest proportion of the centennial female population is also found: 83.3% (Aliaj et al., 2016).

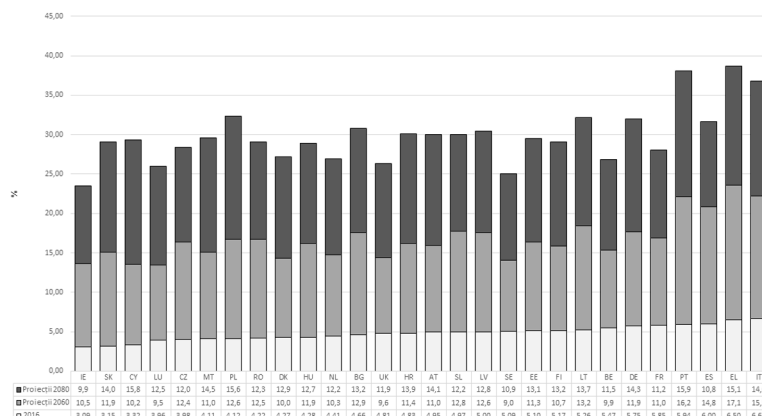
In the Member States, the long-lived population segment is also noteworthy. In 2016, the share of people over the age of 80 varied within the Member States from a minimum of 3% in Ireland, followed closely by Slovakia and Cyprus by 3.1% and 3.9% to a maximum of 6% in Spain, 6.5% in Greece and 6.6% of the total population in Italy. Eurostat’s projections for the 2060s and 2080s show that the share of those older than 80 years will increase exponentially in some cases (figure 2). In Ireland, this segment will reach 10% in 2060, from 3% in 2016. The estimated maximum will be in Greece where the proportion of elderly over 80 will be 20% of 17%, almost three times higher than in 2016 (6.5%).

An immediate consequence of changes in the structure of the Union’s population is the increase in the median age, total dependence rate and dependency rate of the elderly with consequences for the increase in public expenditures.

All these demographic realities underline that the development of models that rely on the use of natural resources to improve the well-being of the population (both the elderly and the young) is more than ever needed. Government programs at the country level do not focus on solutions and the positive impact of tourism products such as rural wellbeing tourism, so developing this concept, starting from the Nordic model in countries like Romania, must come in reverse. Also, it is not clearly specified as a measure to use the rural framework as a destination for improving the well-being of the population. Thus, the development of rural tourism wellbeing tourism can come from interested stakeholders, such as rural entrepreneurs with therapeutic natural resources, NGOs, local communities.

As the decrease of the active population’s share has significant economic consequences, solutions are continuously being sought, and the start of the Horizon 2020 program is one of the European Union’s priorities soon. One of the subtopics directly set refers to the *Health, Demographic Change and Well-being* issue and has the purpose of maintaining the elderly population active and independent as long

Figure 2. Population over 80 in the member states (data for 2016 and projections for 2060 and 2080) Source: Eurostat (2018)



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as possible. Another implemented program is part of the Innovation Union - an initiative which has the purpose of financing projects that primarily concern the active and healthy ageing process (European Commission, 2015). Other accomplished projects are: "More years, better lives", "The ambient assisted living", "Active ageing index", "Health for growth" (Euro Health Net, 2015), the project accomplished by the National Public Health Institute of Sweden in 2007 which emphasizes the need to develop preventive health services in the context of population ageing. Thus, the European concerns for active ageing and for finding solutions to current demographic problems transform spa tourism in a possible answer to these challenges.

Romania is one of the countries facing the ageing of the population, and it has an increasing percentage of low-income older people. In the period 2012-2015, the poverty rate among the population aged over 65 increased by 4.9% (National Institute of Statistics, 2017). According to the European Commission's report of 2017, the country's population is declining, which will have significant economic and social implications in the long run. Since 2007, the total population has fallen by 6% and by 2020 it is estimated that the active population will be reduced by another 4%, while the age segment over 65 will increase by 20% by 2060. Also, the systematic emigration that is especially expected among young people, as well as the low number of emigrants returning to the country, make Romania lose significant labour resources. This has significant consequences on slowing productivity and hindering revenue convergence and the potential for economic growth in the coming decades (European Commission, 2017c) and will accentuate inequality in the income of the Romanian population.

Since 2015, the population aged over 65 outnumbered the young population, which made the old-age dependency rate to jump from 29.7% in 1990 to 42.7 in 2015. According to the United Nations estimates, by 2050, the population in Romania will narrow by over 20%, and the median age of the population will reach about 48 years. Against this background, the demographic ageing of the population will affect the labour market with an impact on labour demand. Decreasing the share of the active population would have adverse effects on potential GDP growth. A modest level of economic growth mainly affects inactive people in the labour market, such as children and retirees, eventually leading to increased inequalities (BNR, 2017).

A successful example implemented in the Nordic countries, that can also be adopted by Romania is the mix between health and rural tourism, that is also known in the literature as "rural wellbeing tourism" (Pesonen & Tuohino, 2017), concept based on the use of rural, especially natural resources, as a source for improving the health of tourists.

RURAL WELLBEING TOURISM: ITS MAIN CHARACTERISTICS

At European level, there is an evident demand for rural tourism's wellbeing tourism packages. Also, the impact of living in rural areas on the inhabitants here is proven and recognised internationally. An example is the study of the Local Government Association in the UK from 2017 on health and wellbeing in rural areas. Thus, it is noteworthy that in the rural area of the UK, a country whose population lives in the country at 85%, the average population is healthier than the one living in the city (Local Government Association, 2017). Although the concept of rural wellbeing tourism is one of the few approaches so far in the literature, the interest of tourists for the two components makes the development of specific tourist products to be opportune (Pesonen & Tuohino, 2017). The general features of this type of tourism are:

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- It is a growing market in the Nordic countries, especially around the Baltic Sea (countries like Denmark, Finland, Lithuania and Norway);
- The concept is a new one; the first specialised books date from 2009 (Pesonen & Tuohino, 2017);
- Natural resources that are abundant in rural areas are used (Tervo-Kankare & Tuohino, 2016);
- In Finland, well-being tourism is considered a form of self-contained tourism and a brand itself, representing a mixture of “traditional spa-related treatments and physical activities, as one of four tourism categories that have been given top priority ” (Björk, 2011).

Given the demographic context described, along with the direct implications of population ageing, the development of rural wellbeing tourism products would be appropriate to alleviate the negative impact of a growing elderly population. Taking into account countries such as Romania that have a high potential for developing and implementing programs that include rural wellbeing tourism, the main advantages of this niche are the following:

- It requires a less expensive specific infrastructure than other forms of tourism. Taking the example of rural localities with a strong ozonized air, it can be said that the existing infrastructure can be developed at minimum rates;
- It is a niche with increased interest from the population;
- Accepting the elderly population of rural wellbeing tourism packages would be more comfortable than other alternatives;
- The interest in socialising the elderly is increased, and in rural areas, people interact daily;
- It is a form of tourism that can also be practised at acceptable rates for the retired population;
- Promotion can be done easily, with channels already used to promote these destinations as rural destinations;
- Some activities do not require a higher level of staff training (e.g. outdoor walks and monitoring -);
- Activities that are specific to rural tourism can be integrated successfully, helping the economic development of the area in question;
- It is a form of sustainable tourism.

Considering that the current discussion refers to a new concept for countries that have potential in the development of rural wellbeing tourism as an integrated concept, it must be taken into account that the development of an area with tourism potential in a destination attract a regular flow of tourists represent real risks for the sustainability of tourism activity. It is true that there are real benefits for a community that are converging from tourism development - such as creating new jobs, which leads to the decrease of unemployment in the area and also influences the image of the local community on an aggregate basis. Another benefit is that the local population that live in an area that attracts a flow of tourists will benefit from the development of social services and higher medical care. Including access to goods and services will be easier, as where tourist flows are attracted, there is inevitably a growing segment of the trade. Economic diversification, which is a real chance for the inhabitants of a rural community to work in a non-agricultural field, is also essential, and tourism field offers this opportunity. Thus, the benefits of developing in-depth tourism activity in a rural area are multiple. Also, the current development of services specific to this activity and the ever-growing IT component (booking software, patrimony digitisation, map application development) provide local people with the latest developments in devel-

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opment and contributes to reducing the knowledge gap between rural and urban residents. This has the effect of educating a somewhat forced population that would not otherwise benefit from technological training. On the opposite side, if investors do not know to run a tourist activity and show no respect for the uniqueness of the area, which ultimately attracts and maintains the flow of tourists, one can only speak of the irreparable destruction of the destination (Reeder & Brown, 2005).

In Romania, there is an increased potential for the development of this niche, and we can talk about the factors mentioned at the beginning of the chapter: increased potential and experience in rural and wellness tourism, as well as a population experiencing ageing. Thus, the development of rural well-being tourism is opportune in Romania, especially as there are initiatives in this respect by the authorities, but by components: the development of spa tourism - by developing the master plan for the development of spa tourism and the development of ecotourism of rural tourism) - by elaborating the National Strategy for Ecotourism Development in Romania.

Regarding the economic and social negative impact of the ageing population, it is worth mentioning that no concrete action plan has been developed in Romania. This is where the need for the development of specific tourism products, such as rural wellbeing tourism, contributes to the beginning, even to a small extent, to diminishing the negative impact of the demographic trend. Regarding tourism wellness practice in Romania, no detailed statistics are available. The only data that the National Institute of Statistics publishes refers to accommodation units and the use of the spa's capacity. Thus, there is an essential barrier to assessing the wellness phenomenon in the country.

Concerning competitiveness, it is recognized that few units are internationally certified - in 2016 a single unit in Romania has international certification according to EuropeSPA (2016), and the quality of services is below the standard of foreign tourists. This situation has several causes, and the most important one is the fact that in Romania there is a long history of the use of health resources in order to improve the health status (this practice is older than 2 millenniums in the country), which has determined that the state subsidize annual cures for part of the population. This has damaged the quality of services, as competitiveness has never been pursued. Also, staff working in tourist units with treatment facilities are not trained considering the highest standards. It is known that professionals in the field have migrated to Western European countries, where salaries are higher than those in the country, and new job seekers have not been able to offset the experience of those who left. Also, equipment used in procedures is worn physically and morally, and investment in resorts is low. Also, the degradation of some resort - emblem (e.g. Herculane) has affected Romania's image as a wellness provider (Popescu, Badita & Sosea, 2014).

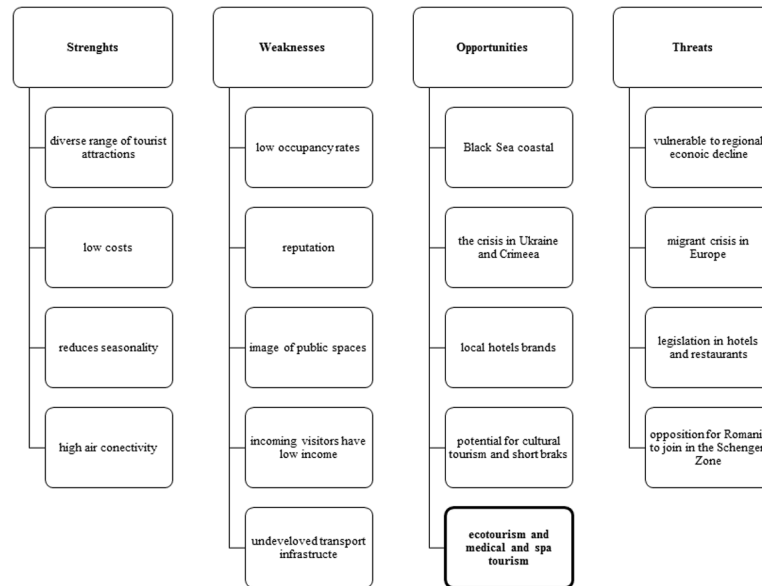
Overall, Romania is a tourist destination that has great potential but has not yet managed to take advantage of its full benefits. According to consultancy firm Fitch Solutions, the tourist market in Romania attracts a flow of tourists under its real potential and remains attractive in terms of neighbouring countries. Although there is an upward trend in arrivals in recent years, with an estimate of 8.2% increase in arrivals for 2019, the weaknesses that Romania has compared to the supply of neighbouring countries are visible. Thus, it cannot be competitive on the international market and cannot fully benefit from the increased connectivity and expansion of the middle class in China that has led to increasing demand for Chinese tourists travelling abroad. Below is a SWOT analysis (figure 3) of Romania as a tourist destination, based on the Fitch Solutions report of 2019, on which are presented the points that recommend Romania as a potential destination for rural wellness tourism and elements that require improvement.

Among the opportunities identified by the consulting company Fitch Solutions, one of the most prestigious worldwide consultancy company, there are included eco-tourism and medical tourism and spa - taken as a whole. In this regard, the two concepts can successfully merge into a single product

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Figure 3. Romanian tourism SWOT analyses

Source: (Fitch Solutions, 2019)



that meets the main characteristics of the model developed in the Nordic countries. Starting from the SWOT analysis presented above, below is detailed a brief analysis of Romania as a destination for rural wellbeing tourism.

Aspects that Recommend Romania as a Potential Destination for Rural Wellbeing Tourism:

- Increased rural and wellness potential;
- Experience in the development of rural and wellness tourism services;
- Romania is a safe destination;
- Reduced travel costs;
- Increased interest from entrepreneurs (especially in the accommodation sector);
- European funds dedicated to the rural areas for the diversification of agricultural activity;
- The population of Romania has increased connections with the rural area so that the development of a new tourism product to be developed in the country would benefit from community support;
- A rural area is considered a healthy, low-pollution and low-stress environment;

Aspects that Need to be Improved:

- Poor road infrastructure and low connection between different means of transport;
- The lack of specific endowments for the needs of the elderly that need an adaptation of the furniture and the presence of specific facilities;
- Lack of a plan by the authorities to develop this stand-alone concept (rural wellness tourism as a global product);
- low population information on issues of social wellness programs that can be deployed in rural areas.

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THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF RURAL TOURISM ON WELLBEING IN ROMANIA

Given the demographic problems faced by Romania (the ageing of the population), which will become more acute in the coming decades, the development of a tourism product to take place in rural areas and to track the impact on wellbeing is a good thing. On the one hand, the elderly population would benefit from a high degree of socialisation that is lacking in the lives of retired people. In the absence of programs developed by the authorities, rural wellbeing tourism products would help fill this gap and launch other similar initiatives in other tourism niches. Neglecting social life by authorities in policymaking contributes to the deepening of health imbalances of retired people, with a negative impact on wellbeing. On the other hand, the elderly would spend their time (those who chose a holiday package specific to rural wellbeing tourism) in a health-related therapeutic area. It is known that the elderly suffers from several pathologies, and living in a crowded and polluted area makes it difficult to relieve symptoms. Spending time in an area that has natural resources with therapeutic properties helps alleviate symptoms that, along with medication, lead to an improvement in overall health.

Also, the young population would benefit from a tourism product that would make it easier for them to recover from periods of work-related stress. The active young age population faces organisational stress and burnout. The decrease in productivity at work and the emergence of psychiatric overcrowding are just two direct consequences. Natural therapeutic remedies (e.g. exposure to sedation) have the benefit of significantly improving the level of stress at work. Notable is the fact that tourists, regardless the age, should become more responsible for natural resources, and they realise their therapeutic value. Spending time in a rural area rich in therapeutic natural resources contributes to the awareness of the tourists about the importance of preserving the environment and the importance of sustainable development.

Besides, the local population would experience an increase in the standard of living. By developing an activity that has not previously been developed, the local population benefits from new jobs and, due to the mix of the two forms of tourism (rural and wellness), jobs will have a higher salary by requiring high specialisation. Also, there will be opportunities for specialisation, and the local community will have a larger budget (by tax collection) for development. Regarding the areas of Romania most suitable for the development of the tourism product to take place in rural areas and impact on wellbeing, the author started from the study by Andrei, Gogonea, Zaharia, & Andrei (2014). Authors studied aspects regarding the regions which have the highest development potential in the practice of rural tourism and from the analysis by Aluculesei (2015) regarding Romanian wellness resorts. Thus, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- According to Andrei, Gogonea, Zaharia, & Andrei (2014), from the eight development regions of Romania there are only two main regions that can develop successful rural tourism products: Central development region, which includes counties from the heart of Transylvania (Alba, Brasov, Covasna, Harghita, Mures and Sibiu) and The North-East Region, comprising the counties of Northern Moldavia, of which Neamt, Suceava and Iasi;
- Following the mapping of local interest sites in the country (Aluculesei, 2015), it is observed that they are located in the western part of the country and along the Carpathian Arc, mostly overlapping and completing them those of national interest. This aspect highlights where the largest resource are located and where the practice of bathing for medicinal purposes has been perpetuated for centuries. The county with the most local resorts of interest is Harghita, the six localities

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being: Homorod, Borsec, Harghita, Praid, Izvoru Muresului, Lacu Rosu. Then there are four counties of local interest: Braşov, Caras-Severin and Cluj (figure 4 and figure 5).

Starting from the two studies mentioned above, an overlapping of the results of the two studies leads to the conclusion that the most suitable destinations for rural wellbeing tourism in Romania are in the Central and North areas, near the spa resorts of national interest and local.

Figure 4. Distribution of local interest resorts in Romania

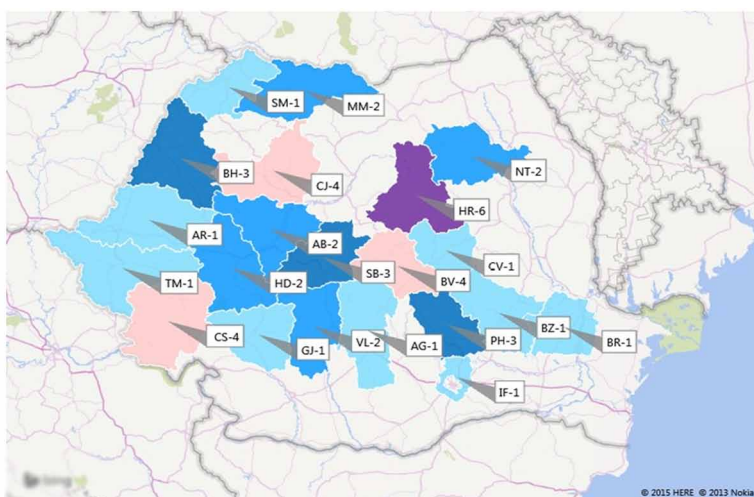
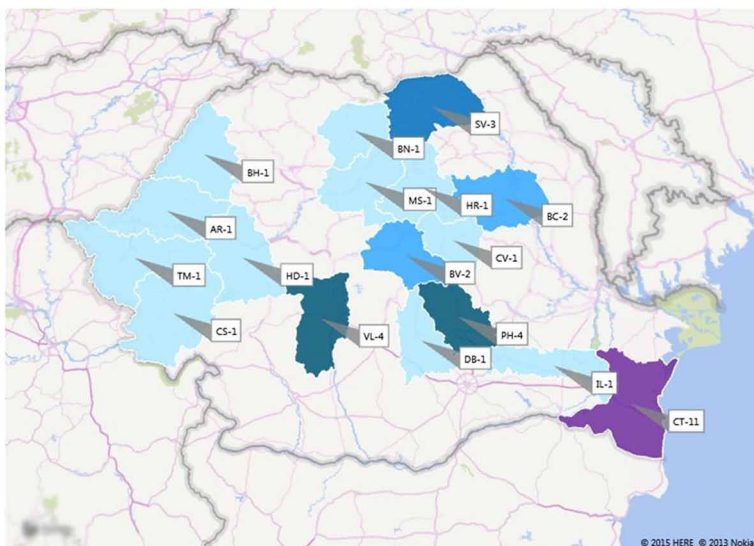


Figure 5. Distribution of national interest resorts in Romania

Source: Aluculesei (2015) – images created in Power Map, based on din HG 852/13 August 2008



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OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP RURAL WELLBEING TOURISM IN ROMANIA - ESTABLISH AN INNOVATIVE RESEARCH CENTRE

Rural wellbeing tourism is not yet developed in Romania and is not embedded within a self-sustaining tourism product, but it appears only on components. In this context, the development of rural wellbeing tourism can be achieved in a framework of good practice. This tourism niche is a complex one, which contains both potential tourism elements, including the impact on wellbeing and the implications for the environment and natural resources. Thus, the development of a segment like this contains a high degree of innovation and involves actions specific to the field of research. Thus, given that Romania is currently in the conceptual framework, it is appropriate to develop the concept adapted to Romania at the highest level.

For this, the present chapter concerns the establishment of a centre of excellence dedicated to rural wellbeing tourism, following the Brocher Foundation (2019) model. This institution attracts researchers from all over the world on a competitive basis to develop a short-term research project during a limited stay corresponding to the purpose of the activity of the institution concerned. In order to have an even more significant impact, the proposed centre of excellence can aim to fund research specific to rural wellbeing tourism in Romania through competitive annual or biannual calls.

Thus, the winners of the grant will have the following benefits: short-term mobility scholarship, current costs, and a monthly scholarship, and the primary obligation is to provide research results: article/chapter book/study/ conference paper after completing the centre of excellence and proving their publication/presentation according to the call specifications.

Advantages are multiple. Firstly, it would enrich the literature that addresses rural wellness in general and the one that focuses on Romania in particular. In this way, Romania will be validated through research focused on its real potential for the development of this niche. Also, as funded researchers come from countries with a different background from Romania, their approach will be innovative and will bring added novelty to Romania. Another advantage derives from low start-up costs and diminished fixed costs if the existing accommodation infrastructure is used. The centre can work in a well-established wellness resort, located in the vicinity of a rural area with great tourist potential. Thus, the specific living costs of the selected researchers will be significantly diminished and, moreover, ensuring a connection between the researcher and the investigated environment would be ensured. Through this approach, researchers who are received at the Research Centre can benefit from training sessions explaining the specificity of rural tourism and wellness products in Romania and briefing on the progress of research. In this way, the failure of research would have diminished considerably.

Also, the development directions of the centre are numerous. Among the most important and far-reaching is the attraction of researchers with increased potential in the research of this niche and that show an interest in deepening specific activities. Thus, the Research Centre can carry out collaborative projects with researchers (early stage researchers or experienced researchers) and attract funds from the European Commission, such as Marie Curie or ERC Grants.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

This chapter sets out important issues both for tourism development in general and for diminishing the negative effects of ageing populations. The clarifications are useful for all stakeholders involved in

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tourism, including for authorities. Given the importance of the topic and the real chances of Romania to become a destination for rural wellbeing tourism, the subject needs to be deepened in future research. A research direction identified by the author is mapping rural destinations where this type of tourism can be practised and identifying all the available resources and the costs needed to make them worthwhile. Another direction that could be developed in the coming years is to identify and study a locality that is a model of development for rural wellbeing tourism and to conduct a pilot study.

CONCLUSION

Rural wellbeing tourism is a tourism niche that can have a real positive impact on wellbeing in countries where this activity is suitable. The current concerns about the consequences of an aging population in the European Union in economic and social terms, as well as the increased interest of tourists in an active and healthy life, together with the resources needed to develop this concept in some member countries, are the starting points for the development of competitive and innovative tourism products.

Romania, which is one of the member countries facing a descendant demographic trend and has as its particularity the ageing of the low-income population, is an example in this regard. Developing a tourism product to take place in rural areas and impacting on wellbeing has multiple benefits here. The wide range of natural resources that have proven therapeutic properties along with the growing awareness of rural areas as a holiday destination have a positive impact on the implementation of the concept of rural wellbeing tourism.

Also, addressing the social aspect - rural communities being open to dialogue and proving an increased interest in knowing the tourists, this tourism niche has a significant impact on the wellbeing of the elderly population. Retired people often suffer from loneliness and feel higher social isolation than active ones. Thus, spending time in an area in the dialogue is encouraged to help improve the mental state of those who come to the countryside for wellness purposes.

The impact on the young population is also essential. Rural wellbeing tourism can make a significant contribution to reducing organisational stress and restoring the body after demanding periods at work.

In conclusion, rural wellbeing tourism is a solution for diminishing the negative effects of the ageing population and improving the wellbeing of the population. Given the low cost of implementing such a concept in countries like Romania, derived mainly from the lack of a need for expensive, expensive infrastructure and the positive impact on wellbeing, the development of a wellbeing rural tourism product is auspicious. In order for the impact to be significant and in order to ensure sustainable development of this product, the establishment of a Research Excellence Centre is a necessary step, especially since international competitiveness currently requires scientific validation.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Ageing Population Segment: Population over 65 years that in European Union became a priority in terms of economic and social impact.

Herculane: An iconic Romanian destination for spa that was developed by the Roma Empire.

Local Interests’ Resorts: Resorts that have tourism attractions and resources that are of interest for national tourists.

National Interests’ Resorts: Resorts that have tourism attractions and resources that are of interest for foreign tourists.

The Impact of Rural Tourism on Wellbeing

Rural Wellbeing Destination: A rural destination where are natural resources that can be use to increase the health of the tourists

Rural Wellbeing Tourism: A new type of tourism that combines wellness resources with rural areas in regard to increase the health of the tourists.

Spa Resorts: Resorts that have natural resources that are scientifically proved to have a positive impact over the health of tourist.

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About the Contributors

Puiu Nistoreanu is a Romanian economist, essayist, and journalist. Professor of Tourism, Ph.D., Tutor Ph.D. in Business Administration, Pro-Dean of Faculty of Business and Tourism (formerly Commerce), member of Tourism and Geography Department, in The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania. He is the author of 40 books (7 authors, coordinator 4, 29 co-authors), over 200 specialized studies and articles, over 100 essays (published in Romania and abroad), 20 research contracts.

* * *

Alina Cerasela Avram is a Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies graduate (class of 2008-2013), with a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree from The Faculty of Commerce (now named The Faculty of Business and Commerce). She also has a Master's degree from the Carol Davila University of Medicine and Pharmacy in "Research and Operational Interventions in Social, Medical and Public Health Services Management" and also has a PhD in the field of business management, with the thesis "Innovative Methods in Romanian Spa Natural Resource Exploitation through Tourist Services". Between July 2014 and November 2015 she had a POSDRU research scholarship in the MINERVA cooperation project for elite PhD and post-PhD research careers. While enrolled in the MINERVA project, she benefitted from a student mobility research program, between January and April 2015, at the Lleida University in Lleida, Spain. Alina is editor-in-chief and founder of the Junior Scientific Researcher online research journal. The publication was founded in 2015 after she won the Start-Up Smart funding project for young entrepreneurs. Another such initiative of Alina is the Catalog Med Tour website for medical tourism, founded in 2012.

Daniel Avram is a PhD student at Bucharest University of Economic Studies, having the research topic in rural tourism field. Between 2015 and 2017, Daniel took part of the study "Trends in tourism demand in Romania", conducted by the Department of Business and Tourism of the Bucharest University of Economic Studies. He is also a member of the Editorial Board of Junior Scientific Researcher Journal, dedicated to PhD students and young researchers.

Cristina Balint is a lecturer at Babes-Bolyai University, Romania. She received her PhD in finance in 2012 from the Babes-Bolyai University. She has a main research interest in financial markets and a collateral one in the hospitality industry and is the author and co-author of several papers. In recent years, the research interest in the field of hospitality is focused on rural tourism.

About the Contributors

Daniel Bulin is lecturer at the Department of Tourism and Geography – Faculty of Business and Tourism, Bucharest University of Economic Studies and Senior Researcher at Institute for World Economy – Romanian Academy. Bachelor degree in economics obtained in 2008 at Faculty of Commerce– Bucharest University of Economic Studies (BUES), he graduated two years later master’s program “Business Administration in Tourism” of the same faculty. He obtained PhD diploma in Economic Sciences in 2013, field of Business Administration (thesis entitled „Sustainable development of tourism in coastal areas of Black Sea – a XII century perspective”) and between June 2014 – September 2015 he was a postdoctoral researcher and he finalized the program with scientific paper “Tourism – Romania’s sustainable growth priority axis”. During the postdoctoral program, he conducted an international mobility at the Faculty of Economics and Business Studies – University Rovira i Virgili in Spain. In April 2019, he graduated the postgraduate program Strategic Hospitality Management (École Hôtelière de Lausanne in partnership with the Bucharest University of Economic Studies). He published numerous articles, both as single author or coauthor, in journals indexed in international databases, including ISI Clarivate, and / or presented at national and international scientific conferences, including ISI Proceedings. Since 2014 he is coauthor of “World Economic Studies” and several studies from the research plan of the Romanian Academy. Among the areas of interest are: world economy and country economic reports, sustainable development, international institutions and organizations, economy of tourism, business administration, business ethics, etc.

Monica Maria Coroş is a Lecturer in Travel Agency Management, International Tourism Operations, Cultural Tourism, Entrepreneurship and Purchasing Management in the Department of Hospitality Services, Faculty of Business, Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania. She completed her Doctoral Degree in Management at the Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca (Romania) with a thesis on Tourism Demand and Supply Management. Her research covers topics related to destination management organizations, sustainable tourism, rural tourism, entrepreneurship and SMEs.

Robert-Ionuţ Dobre is Researcher at Institute for World Economy - Romanian Academy (since 2017) and Distribution Sales Channels & Branch Network Management Directorate Director, OTP Bank Romania, since 2019. Bachelor degree obtained in 1996 at Faculty of Cybernetics, Statistics and Economic Informatics, Bucharest University of Economic Studies, he obtained PhD diploma in Economic Sciences in 2013 (thesis entitled “Organizational behavior of Romanian banking system from the perspective of strategy-structure-performance paradigm”, Valahia University of Targoviste). His main areas of expertise and interests are: management, world economy and the banking system.

Georgica Gheorghe is an Assistant professor at the Department of Tourism and Geography – Faculty of Business and Tourism, Bucharest University of Economic Studies. He obtained his bachelor’s degree in economics (2008) at Faculty of Commerce – The Bucharest University of Economic Studies (BUES), he graduated two years later master’s program “Business Administration in Tourism” of the same faculty. He obtained his PhD diploma in the field of Business Administration (2015) with the paper entitled “SLOW TRAVEL MOVEMENT – A MEAN FOR A BETTER USE OF RURAL RESOURCES “. In 2017, he graduated the master program “Research and teacher education for business & Economics (EDU - RES)” focused in Economic research and teaching from Technical University of Kosice – Faculty of Economics/ The Bucharest University of Economic Studies – Faculty of International Business and Economics. During the master studies (2015-2017) he conducted an international mobility within

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ERASMUS+ program at Technical University of Kosice (Slovakia). He published numerous articles in journals indexed in international databases, including ISI Clarivate. Among the areas of interest are international tourism, slow movement, slow food, informatics, programming, communication, etc

Małgorzata Kieźel is assistant professor at the Department of Marketing Management and Tourism at the Management Faculty, University of Economics in Katowice. Her research is focused on the problems of marketing management and planning, strategic analyses and marketing research, services marketing, modern marketing communication, innovations, consumer behaviour, relationship marketing as well as creating and co-creating value with the involvement of customers. For over a dozen years, she has carried out studies into the market of system products offered by banks to retail customers and tourism sector. She has authored or co-authored over 90 research publications, including four books. She is an experienced teacher at first-cycle, second-cycle and post-graduate studies. She is a certified academic tutor and Design Thinking moderator as well as member of the Polish Economic Society, Polish Academic Marketing Association and Polish Association for Knowledge Management (PSZW).

Manuela Muresan currently is a Ph.D. in Business Administration, Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies. Her research interests are business tourism, MICE industry, hospitality and tourism management, international business development and strategic management. Now she is working at the Ministry of Tourism and she is involved in many education projects. She published several articles in the field of business tourism and in the development of the tourism area.

Adina Negrusa obtained her Ph.D. in Management in 2004 and its research interests relate to hospitality and tourism management and managing innovation process. She was coordinator as well as a member in many research projects focused on branding, networks, and innovation in tourism and hospitality. Also, she published scientific articles in a variety of international volumes and chapters in national and international books.

Ana Maria Nica is a graduate of the Faculty of Commerce (renamed as Faculty of Business and Tourism), within the Bucharest University of Economic Studies. Currently she holds a PhD degree, since 2012, in the research of emerging economies and tourism clusters. The research interest of the post-PhD studies, finalized in 2015, is tourism cultural heritage. Currently she holds the position of Lecturer within the Department of Tourism and Geography and teaches subjects such as: Hotel and Restaurant Technology, Tourism Economy, Ecotourism and Tourism Event Management.

Liliana Nicodim is an experienced specialist with a demonstrated history of working in the higher education. She is a member of the department for General Economy from the Ovidius University - Constanta and since 2009 hold the title of university professor. The subjects that she is teaching include Business ethics, Ethics and academic integrity, Business communication and negotiation, International trade negotiations. She is the author of numerous articles that include 7 articles indexed Web of Science (Clarivate Analytics) and 48 articles indexed in international databases.

Bogdan Gabriel Nistoreanu PhD Graduate of the Academy of Economic Studies in Bucharest, Faculty of Economic Studies in Foreign Languages (Faculty of Business Administration, with teaching in foreign languages), Specialization Degree: Business Administration - 2005; Faculty of Marketing, Master

About the Contributors

Marketing and Business Communication - 2007; Doctor in Management Field -2012. He: contributed to 7 books (2 author, 5 coauthor), 16 scientific articles, 3 scientific research contracts; received the awards: “Alecsandru Puiu Tacu” (2007) - awarded by the Institute of Economic and Social Research “Gheorghe Zane” Iași - of the Romanian Academy; “Professional debut” (2015) - granted by the Association of Economic Faculties of Romania. Areas of competence: business administration, management (change and strategic), entrepreneurship, education, energy.

Ana Mihaela Pădurean employed in higher education and research. Currently she is Associate professor PhD at the Tourism and Geography Department, ASE, her areas of expertise being: Tourism Economics, Events Management, Business simulation game, Landscape Planning. Ana Mihaela Pădurean is author of numerous publications in the field of Tourism Consumption Behavior, Natural Protected Areas, Urban Tourism and Sustainable Development in Tourism.

Paweł Piotrowski is currently Assistant Professor in Department of Marketing Management and Tourism at the University of Economics in Katowice. He earned his Bachelor of Business Administration in 2009, and his PhD in Management in 2017 at this University. His thesis work was focused on the issue of events management in post-industrial cities for marketing purposes. His research interests cover a range of issues related to public management, place marketing, events marketing and tourism. He has over 20 scientific publications related to those issues.

Cornelia Pop is a full professor at Babes-Bolyai University, Romania. She received her PhD in finance in 1997 from the same university. She has a collateral research interest in the hospitality industry and is a coauthor of an international book, Romania as a Tourist Destination and the Romanian Hotel Industry, published in 2007 by Cambridge Scholars Publishing, United Kingdom. In recent years the research interest in the field of hospitality is focused on Romanian World Heritage Sites and tourism development related to these sites.

Andreea Fortuna Șchiopu is a Full Professor within the Department of Tourism and Geography, the Business and Tourism Faculty, the Bucharest University of Economic Studies, and teaches classes such as Business Communication, Business Administration, and Operational Management. She earned an M.B.A. degree from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) in 2007 and a Ph.D. degree from the Bucharest University of Economic Studies in 2009 with a thesis on Communication and Management. She has published many papers and articles in indexed journals with multiple citations. The main research objectives are oriented around communication, emotional labor, business administration, and tourism management.

Mihail Tanase has more than 10 years of teaching at Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies and more than 15 years experience in tourism. Tanase published more than 20 articles and chapters in books in the tourism field.

Valentin Toader obtained his Ph.D. in International Economic Relations in 2008 and its research focus on the economics of tourism and macroeconomics. Between 2011 and 2013, he was the regional coordinator an interregional project promoting innovation in rural tourism – Innovative and Responsible Tourism Territories (www.iartterritories.com).

About the Contributors

Claudia-Elena Țuclea is an alumnus of the Faculty of Commerce (currently Business and Tourism Faculty), Marketing specialization (1995). In 2004 she received her Ph.D. in Economics, with a thesis in the field of Human Resources Management. Between 2008 and 2010 she attended and graduated the ‘English Language Education and Research Communication for Business and Economics’. She started teaching in October 1995 at the Department of Tourism and Services (currently the Department of Tourism and Geography), where she was teaching assistant, lecturer assistant, lecturer and associate professor. Since 2015 she is full professor. Prof. Ph.D. Claudia Elena Țuclea has written 13 books and university courses, among which are to mention: ‘Strategic Management’, ‘The Management of Small and Medium Enterprises’-single author; ‘Human Resources Management’ and ‘The Leading of Human Resources’, a work which obtained the 2001 ‘Virgil Madgearu Award’ of the Romanian Academy. She is the founding member and censor of CACTUS (The Academic Research in Tourism and Service Association) and Managing Editor of CACTUS Tourism Journal. With an academic career of more than 23 years, Prof. Ph.D. Claudia - Elena Țuclea holds in her teaching portfolio the following courses: Human Resources Management, Strategic Management in Tourism, Small and Medium Enterprises Management, Business Administration, Organizational Behavior.

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