
THE EVOLUTION OF TOURISM SERVICES IN ROMANIA

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Abstract

In this paper, the authors evaluate the tourism services in the Romanian economy during the recent period. The potential and resource of major tourism area in the country are analyzed. The main indicators considered in the scope of the research are the arrivals of tourists, the net use of accommodation index, the arrivals of foreign tourists, emphasizing the value corresponding to the European Union citizens, the preference for tourism manifested by some categories: pensioners, students.

Key words: *tourism, services, area, ethnographic, resource*

JEL Classification: *L83, Z30*

Introduction

The variety of country's relief, the large number of historical monuments and especially their historical significance, while the existence of mountain resorts, some with spa or profile sport practice, form a tourism attraction on the Romanian and international side.

Particularly mountain areas (the Alpine mountains Rodna, Bucegi, Fagaras, Parang, Retezat), a significant number of natural or karst like passes from Bicz, Scărișoara, Ialomicioara, Topolnița and nature reserves that exist in Danube Delta and the Black Sea coast are reference points.

The cultural aspect, consisting of ethnography and folklore traditions and archaeological excavations (Constanța, Sarmisegetuza, etc.), the existence of monuments of the Middle Ages (monasteries Neamț, Suceava, Sucevița etc.) is another element that prompted the development of tourism.

The Black Sea, an important one in terms of tourism, offers special conditions for spending holidays or spa treatment. On a length of about 70 km on the Black Sea resorts spanning a number of resorts (Mamaia, Eforie Nord, Eforie Sud, Costinești, Techirghiol, Cap Aurora, Mangalia, Neptun, Jupiter, Venus, Olimp etc.) with modern hotels, holiday facilities to practice minigolf, tennis courts, bowling and casinos, restaurants, bars or sport-utility practice.

Literature review

Algieri (2006) develops on the specialization of tourism in small countries, a close topic is approached by Arezki, Cherif and Piotrowski (2009). Allen and Arkolakis (2014) describe the relation between trade and topography in the case of spatial economy. Anghelache and Anghel (2015) is a reference research for statistic – economic analyses. The evolutions of Romanian tourism were analyzed by Anghelache, Anghel, Bardașu and Popovici (2014), Anghelache and Anghel (2014), Anghelache, Fetcu (Stoica) and Anghel (2012). Ashley, De Brine, Lehr and Wilde (2007) discuss

the role of tourism in capitalizing economic opportunities, Sequeira and Macas Nunes (2008) analyze the tourism as factor of influence for economic growth. Dimanche (2005) designs a framework, at the conceptual level, for the competitiveness of tourism in cities. Dwyer and Kim (2003) use a model-based approach on competitiveness, Navickas and Malakauskaite (2009) develop on competitiveness factors in tourism. Hawkins and Mann (2007) study the role of the banks in the development of the tourism field, Mair and Jago (2010) present a conceptual model to increase the green component in a sub-sector of tourism.

Methodology and data

General aspects

In the tourist area of the Black Sea gather annually since 2000, over one million Romanian and foreign tourists.

Delta, tourist area and nature reserve, represents another attraction for those who want to spend part of their holidays in Romania.

In Northern Bucovina, Suceava County (with the city of Suceava, capital of Moldavia from XIV-XVI century), remains a monument to the five monasteries attraction (located in the county) that are on the UNESCO list and which are part of world heritage. Here we meet Voroneț (built in 1488), Shaft (built in 1503) Humor (built in 1530), Moldova (built in 1532) and Suceava (built between 1582-1600).

In the central area of Moldavia, the municipality of Piatra Neamt, Bicz and impressive beauty of the valley Bistrita, represented by historical sites such as monasteries Agapia or Neamt, Văratec etc.

Prahova Valley and the Timis that are attractive to those wishing rest being surrounded by Bucegi, Baicului, Piatra Mare, located relatively close to Bucharest (120-150 km).

Prahova Valley there is a whole chain of resorts, such as Sinaia, Bușteni, Azuga or Predeal.

Poiana Brașov and to another area of interest is the fact that you can practice sports, mountain climbing, hunting and tourism there are many other possibilities.

The northern part of Oltenia is known in terms of tourism, specific to the spas: Baile Căciulata, Calimănești, Olănești, Govora and others.

This area is private and architecture, folklore and especially the historical monuments such as the monasteries: Cozia, Tismana, Horezu. Further north, the Apuseni Mountains offer a superb view of the caves: Pojarul Politei, Urșilor, Scărișoara and also the existence of thermal lakes, glacier, unique in their kind in Southeast Europe.

Further north, the tourist area of Maramureș is rich in ethnographic, folk. Here we encounter the famous wooden churches and monasteries and we admire the costumes specific local port.

The few issues presented above reveals that tourism is a natural resource, is an industry which should be given attention.

Privatization in this area began more difficult, but in recent years, the process has accelerated, exercising the influence and being adopted measures aimed at developing tourism in general to specifics Romanian, but especially as a point attraction for international tourism.

They have developed new tourist centers, pilot centers that have received financial support from the local government and attract foreign investors.

Currently, we are witnessing a slowdown in the development of agro-tourism centers, which hampers the development of these services.

Arrivals in the establishments of tourists' reception July 2016 was 1401.6 thousand people, more than the number in July, 2015.

Romanian tourist arrivals in the establishments of tourists' reception with functions of tourists in 2016 represented 78.9% of total arrivals, while foreign tourists represented 21.3% of total arrivals.

Arrivals in hotels in July 2016 were 997.5 thousand people. Compared to 2015, the arrivals in hotels in 2016 grew by over 17%.

Romanian tourists' overnight stays in the establishments of tourists' reception with functions of tourists increased in 2016, being in July of 3877.6 thousand persons. Net use index of accommodation places in 2016 was 42.5% in July, higher than in 2015. Arrivals of foreign visitors in Romania registered at border points have been growing in 2016, reaching 1279.2 thousand persons in July. Most foreign visitors came from European countries (91.7%). European Union countries most arrivals were registered in Hungary, Bulgaria, Germany and Italy.

Departures of Romanian visitors abroad registered at border points July 2016 were 1659.4 thousand, higher than in July of 2015. Road transport means were mostly used by Romanian visitors abroad.

In 2010-2016, tourism was characterized mainly by:

- slow the privatization of tourism;
- tourist services was tempered traffic of tourists from EU countries. Thus, in 2014, tourism in Eastern European countries was lower in Romania. 2015, entered Romania in monthly average, over 758 415 foreign visitors and Romanian living abroad;
- developing tourism programs that offered a wide range of services and products, in particular through the practice of attractive programs for Romanian and foreign tourists;
- the rehabilitation of the Black Sea beach and improvement of Superski in the Carpathians was modest. Using these programs was tried modernization of Mamaia;
- regarding the Black Sea tourism, it has declined steadily. Some 10,000 foreign tourists participated in the program "Cruising the Danube". Between 2011-2016, the number of foreigners has increased;
- In the winter tourist season was recorded fewer tourists;
- reducing the number of tourists was due to the difficult financial situation of the population, although conditions remained attractive.

We have initiated programs such as "The Romanian coast to anyone" "A week recovery resort" and others, however, they have not attracted large number of tourists, as previously anticipated.

Many pensioners and students have benefited from these special programs. Education tourism, although it was better adjusted because there were no necessary funds, had no effect. International relations in the field of tourism have developed in relations with some international tourism organizations, such as World Tourism Organization, The Associations for Travel Protection, etc. The Danube River With these organizations have approached and have been discussed issues concerning the development of tourism, such as eco-tourism and rural tourism development. There have been exchanges of views and discussions were held with tourism authorities

in Moldova, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Ukraine, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Serbia, Jordan, Egypt, Israel, Turkey, Hungary, Poland, the Baltic republics, etc. trying is a better basis for cooperation in tourism development and the realization of exchanges between travel agencies of these countries.

In 2002-2016, they have enacted some issues related to certification of tourist resorts, providing medical assistance, accident prevention in tourist areas, etc. It has created a clear framework in relation to tourism companies and protection against noise and pollution.

Tourism Law and the Law on approving the “Superski in Carpathians” were important moments and led to the protection and development of tourism in Romania. In the first semester of 2016 compared to the corresponding period of the previous year, both the arrivals and overnight stays in the establishments of tourists’ reception with functions of tourists’ registered increases.

Regarding foreign tourists in the establishments of tourists’ reception, the biggest share was held by those in Europe, more pronounced in countries belonging to the European Union.

The average duration of stay July 2016 was 2.5 days in Romanian tourists and 2.1 foreign tourists. Net use index of accommodation places in July 2016 was 42.5% on total tourist accommodation.

Higher utilization of accommodation July 2016 were registered in hotels (52.8%), villas and cottages for tourists (36.5%), hostels (32.0%).

Of the total arrivals, arrivals of Romanian tourists in the establishments of tourist reception with functions of tourists accounted for 75.3% in the period 01.01-31.07.2016, while foreign tourists represented 24.7%.

Special programs for tourism development

Tourism services in 2009-2016, continued use of a series of programs that were aimed to increase the number of visitors and, in this way, the proceeds of the tourist activity.

Among the programs started in 2009-2015 and will continue in the coming period include:

- national tourism development program “Super Ski in the Carpathians”. Under this program is envisaged for the development and modernization skiing resorts, as enhancing and bringing European standards of existing resorts, and increasing the security of tourists.

The effects of this program were: diversification into tourism, enhancing the quality of tourist resorts in the mountain and increasing the number of foreign tourists who visited us.

- the “Cruise the Danube”. Under this program was aimed at improving the structure and development of docks for boats and small ships that were an attraction for foreign tourists. In 2003-2014 continued modernization works to eliminate pollution, eliminating the effects of abandoned vessels and cranes, so that they can talk about tourism development in this area. There have been created recreation areas on the Danube, particularly in Oltenita and Giurgiu, where a significant number of Bucharest, but also people from other parts of the country have spent their free time. As a result of measures undertaken annually more than 33,000 tourists visited these resorts along the Danube, revenues from this business increased revenues, with additional prospects in the coming period;

“Romania - the land of wine” is a program that was pursued capitalization attraction they have growing zones, and especially wines well known Romanian tourists, especially the foreigners, who visited a number of specific resorts. Travel agencies have paid special attention to presentation, in a professional manner, and the launching of tenders which were attractive and well received by foreign tourists. These services will be enforced and, certainly, will have the effect of increasing the number of visitors, especially foreigners interested in knowing this reserve and potential of Romanian wines. There were promotional activities carried out by the Ministry of Tourism in fairs and exhibitions, which were launched in brochures and documentaries. Also at these fairs they attended agencies and travel agencies in our country that promoted actively, Romanian wines abroad, organizing activities popular with foreign tourists;

- the “Holidays in the countryside” envisages development of rural tourism while its presentation to attract visitors from the country in particular, but also from abroad. They diversified programs that have provided services in rural area, paying special attention to youth programs. As a result of this program, it increased the percentage of rural tourism or agro-which in three years has seen an increased dynamic. Tourism services in these areas and this program benefited from favorable prices and guides who have experienced a number of specific issues Romanian countryside. Meanwhile, Romanian and foreign tourists had the opportunity to know the architectural traditions and how it was developed Romanian village;

- the “Blue Flag” was introduced in Romania as a symbol of international recognition of the quality resorts on the Romanian Black Sea. In 2005, programs were conducted in five states that comprised the chain of Mamaia and Neptun Olimp resort to. The program was also involved non-governmental organization “Foundation for environmental education”;

- the “Q” was introduced as a symbol of quality, as is common practice in Spain, France, Switzerland, when asked by tourists. This program will ensure the development of quality tourism. Regarding this program, it will release national standards for hotel services, which will be approved by government decision and will be a campaign that will be involved in trade and tourism agencies. As a result of this program was developed consciousness tourists and increased image quality and long-term they have Romanian companies;

- rehabilitation program to reintegrate existing casinos in a number of tourist resorts with a picturesque architectural interest. Among them were located Sinaia, Constanta, Slănic Moldova, Vatra Dornei, Herculane, which have been integrated into the international chain of casinos. As a result of this program, increased clients, which caused a large number of visitors, appreciated the existing conditions and contributed by receipts, to obtain significant revenues;

- program for low-income tourists is intended, in particular, pensioners and tourists who have low incomes;

- the “Dracula Park”, interpreted as a typical Romanian, was included in the programs organized for tourists. Since 2000, it has raised the issue of establishing a park “Dracula”, which, despite some delicate items represent a step forward. As a result of the “Dracula Park” foreign tourists visited historical places that are supposed to have been inhabited (visited) by Dracula;

- the tolling system was introduced in hotels and restaurants for those with low incomes. Given the low value of the state contribution to the development

of tourist resorts and concern to combat tax evasion, a new charging system was developed by the Ministry of Tourism in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and it refers to nonprofit tourism units;

- the “easy-surprising Romania” is one coupon and addresses tourism market, leading to increased opportunities for diversification and knowledge, becoming a specific offer and very attractive for tourists from Germany, the Netherlands, Austria and the Scandinavian countries.

Given the fact that the countries with which we compete for tourism have allocated significant sums to the budget coupon (Bulgaria - 10 million, Poland - EUR 11 million, Hungary EUR 28 million, Turkey 76 million euros), was taken into consider deploying an aggressive advertising campaign both domestically and internationally. Television as the main media vehicle, attended the presentation of tourism issues.

Unfortunately, in the past three years to promote foreign tourism was inefficient because it focused on significant issues and reduced interest for potential tourists. The amounts high enough spent on tourism promotion have not reached their intended purpose, namely bringing foreign tourists to be on a second or third visit to Romania.

Tourist services, has acted to include Romania in the Euro Guide Travel Guide, benefiting the pages showing the structure of the tourist resort, its history, rural tourism, gastronomy, wine and hotel information.

This guide is distributed in over 40 countries and is read by approx. five million people. It is published in three languages (English, French and German) and has an attractive graphical presentation.

- Info-tourism program. In each county capital, international tourist resort or area tourist information were aired that could be out of reach of visitors to our country. Thus the increased awareness of the beauties of our country.

Conclusions

There is a low number of tour companies on the market, reducing possibilities for those who want tourism practice. Although paid attention to the social side of tourism growth, developments remained noticeably influenced by the crisis.

Since 2001, Romania has practiced through the provision of tourism services, an aggressive presentation of tourist products, which resulted in attracting visitors.

Between 2002-2016 Romania recorded an average of 68 annual international fairs and exhibitions in Europe, the Middle East, North America and Japan. On these occasions, over 225 Romanian tourism companies were presented, exposed and negotiated contracts in international tourism, thus contributing to more active presentation of the beauties of Romania, attracting a large number of tourists. Over 3.9 million visitors were presented at the stands of Romania at such fairs and exhibitions. Romanian presence in these activities has been recognized internationally give some medals such as “Werve Grand Prix” for Delta and “Golden Web Award” from some international associations.

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