

THE PRESENT STAGE OF CAPITALIZATION OF THE TOURISM POTENTIAL IN ROMANIA

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Tourism resources – elements of the natural and cultural - historical environment – have been capitalized in tourism from ancient times, even if we refer only to the spring waters or to the religious sites from Antiquity and the Middle Age, that were generating sightseer flows.

The capitalization of the tourism resources and the development of tourism have to be constitutional correlated with the general stipulation of the complex systematization of the territory, which ensures a harmonious development of all economic sectors and also a blend between the criteria of economical efficiency with the social ones.

Taking all these facts into consideration, this paper work submits to carry out an analysis of the present development degree of capitalization of tourism potential in Romania. The degree of capitalization of the tourism potential for every particular tourism destination will be followed. In the end, the conclusions of the analysis and also the solutions for a superior capitalization of the tourism resources from our country will be presented.

Key words: tourism, resources, development, accommodation, tourists

JEL Classification: P17, Q56

1. Introduction

Practice proved that Romanian tourism has known till present times an extensive development especially a conjuncture one, without a unitary conception that would comprise all the categories of tourism resources. This conception led , on one side to investment wasting, that on territory level achieved incomplete and especially uncompetitive „tourism products”(mountain products, spa products, cultural one, etc.), and on the other side, tourism sites and areas with representative or unique tourism potential were left behind (Vellas and Becherel, 1999).

An efficient method to establish the capitalization degree of the tourism potential implies comparing the existing attractions with tourism endowment and the intensity of demand (Minciu, 2005). Taking in consideration the equipment and tourism circulation indicators, one can determine the capitalization degree.

In accordance with these assessments, studies show for Romania a relatively poor capitalization degree of the tourism potential, of 20 – 30%. In order to sustain this statement, other pieces of information are disclosed. Therefore, in 2007, Romania was disposing of 283.701 accommodation places, which represented 12,2 places for 1000 inhabitants and 1, 16 places for an area of one square km, a very poor situation in comparison with countries with tourism tradition - where these indicators are very high: in Austria 142,5/ 13,6; France 87,9/9,2; Italy 56,3/10,7; Spain 59,8/4,6 (Briggs, 2001).

2. The distribution on areas of the major indicators of tourism activity in 2007

At the level of our country, significant disparities regarding the level of capitalization of the tourism areas and resorts are recorded, therefore, in order to assess it, the study of tourism indicators of the main tourism destinations is necessary: in particular for the seaside, the Danube Delta, spa areas, mountain areas, major cities and their outskirts.

Table 1 The distribution on areas of the major indicators of tourism activity in 2007**- percents -**

Area	Total Romania	Seaside	Spa Resorts	Mountain Resorts	Danube Delta	Bucharest and Residence cities	Other cities
Indicators							
No. of units	100	19.86	7.93	20.84	2.15	17.81	31.42
Existent accommodation capacity (no. places)	100	41.55	13.54	11.08	1.15	19.03	13.66
Check – in tourists, from which	100	11.42	10.64	14.31	1.06	47.48	15.09
Romanians	100	13.61	13.02	16.21	1.00	39.96	16.20
Foreign	100	3.74	2.32	7.67	1.29	73.76	11.22

Source: calculated according to *The existent tourism capacity in 31 July 2008*, The National Institute of Statistics, October 2008.

If we analyze the accommodation units on tourism destinations, in 2007, one can observe that 31% of them are located in other cities and 18% in Bucharest and other county residence cities. These areas receive annually more than 50% from tourism arrivals for vacation and business. In the seaside area there are 20% of the accommodation units, and in the mountain area 21%. For achieving performance tourism, the number of these units is not sufficient, and the main tour-operators take into consideration these elements when they establish tourism contracts with our country.

In what concerns the number of accommodation places, these are divided in the following way: on the seaside can be found more than 41% of them, many of them situated in gigantic hotels built before year 1989, or in villas opened after the 90s by small tourism entrepreneurs.

If the hotels are analyzed on vacation destinations in 2007, the situation is the following: in county residence cities there are 390 hotels, second places being taken by the seaside, with 295 hotels. On the third place is situated the areas of other cities with 158 hotels, the fourth place is being assigned to spa resorts, with 118 hotels and the mountain area disposes of 104 hotels, being situated on the fifth rank. The last place is assigned to the Danube Delta area, where one can find 16 hotels.

The hotels and restaurants sector achieved this year a turnover of three billion euros, increasing with 45 than the last year, according to five star Hospitality estimations, based on the data offered by the National Institute of Statistics and by the National Commission of Forecast. If for year 2007, the turnover increasing rate was of 15 %, in 2008 the increasing degree did not manage to exceed 4%, as a result of the last trimester decline and due to the effects of the financial crisis. Therefore, the turnover of the hotels and restaurants sector achieved in 2008 represented only 2,2% of the GDP.

According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), because of the world wide economic crisis, tourism arrivals stagnated, and in other regions even declined with 2%. Europe will be the most affected region because the main countries that the tourists emanate from got into recession

(Beirman, 2003). In Romania, the number of tourism arrivals has been of 6972 thousands, from which 1551 foreign ones.

3. The capitalization of the Black Sea tourism potential

The Romanian seaside tourism appeared in an organized framework, from the second part of the XIX century and acquired importance after year 1956, when it began the construction of large hotels.

The natural conditions, extremely favourable for practicing a complex tourism, permitted the construction of a strong infrastructure for accommodation, public alimentation, entertainment, treatments, etc. in 12 resorts, the Romanian marine seaside being considered as the main tourism area from our country, even though, because of its particularities is characterized by seasonality. At the level of 2007, at the seaside region existed 932 tourism units (about 20% from the total number of units from that area) and 117.864 places (representing 41, 5% from the accommodation spaces of our country), the 12 resorts having 295 hotels and 300 public alimentation units. In addition, even if it has a small surface, the seaside records the highest capitalization degree (80%).

If from the quantitative point of view, in the facilities domain with tourism equipment, the seaside is in a good statute, from the qualitative point of view this equipment has a high degree of wear- many of them have a length of service over 27 years-which require investments for modernization; also the recreational facilities are not up to international standards and sometimes the quality of the services is poor (Minciu, 1999). These are the causes why the tourism demand records low levels, therefore all of those who benefited in 2007 of accommodation services at the seaside, hosted 13.61 % of Romanian tourists and 8% of foreign tourist. Confronted with all of these considerations we have to consider also the potential elements that are decreasing and reducing gradually (the beach, the therapy mud), leading to the diminution of tourism potential at the seaside.

4. The capitalization of the tourism resources in the Danube Delta

Compared with the exception value of Danube Delta, the technical equipment, and especially the organized tourist movement is very low. These make that the tourist potential to be below possibilities. We take into consideration not the achievement of crowding of accommodation spaces on land, but a proper endowment with hydro buses, boats, and bedroom ships etc., clean and modern boats proper for deltaic ecosystem.

The tourist equipping of Danube Delta is modest, about 3266 accommodation places in 101 units, representing 2% of the total exiting places from our country. In the establishments of tourists reception were recorded in 2007, about 1% of Romanian tourists and 1.29% of foreign tourists, which show a low development degree of attractions and requires major concern in developing new facilities, both for hosting and for recreation, in order to attract more tourists. Certainly the concept of the Delta capitalization must be subordinated to the requirements imposed by the statute of biosphere reservation which it owns.

5. The capitalization spa tourism potential

Currently, Romania has over 160 resorts and cities with natural treatment factors, which amounts to 13.54% from the total of accommodation places from the country.

In most of them were built modern hotel and sanatorium treatment complexes, from which the services of accommodation, meals, diagnosis and treatment are provided in the same, building (Băile Felix, Băile Herculane, Sovata, Băile Tuşnad, Covasna, Călimăneşti-Căciulata, Mangalia, etc).

Overall, the spas area has 372 tourism units(7.93% from total units) and about 38.404 accommodation places (13.54% from total places),in 2007 the demand was only 13.02% of

Romanian tourists and 2.32% of the foreigners ,have expressed their requests for spas area, all these showing an insufficient exploitation of the natural treatment factors and of existing equipment. This situation is largely attributable to a decreased comfort of facilities, the high degree of attrition, poor endowment with modern treatment equipment. The solution would be to diversify the offer of treatment, but also the diversification of holiday spending, simultaneous with the increasing in the quality of services (Tribe, 2005).

6. The capitalization mountain tourism potential

Analyzing the degree of technical equipment of mountain massive (in terms of accommodation units, of ski path, of the cable transport, of the accessibility of marked paths, etc) as well as of the tourism movement results the following:

- technical inadequate endowment: from the total of the 60 massive examined, about 20 have a certain technical equipment, and only 13 have a better equipment (Postăvarul, Bucegi, Gârbova, Cindrel, Semenic, Ceahlău, Muntele Mic, Țarcu, Făgăraș, Rodnei, etc.);
- the mountain tourism has 31448 accommodation places (11.08% from the accommodation capacity of the country) in 978 hotel units, approximately 108 chalets have about 5574 places that do not cover the mountain space, and from the technically point of view ,in general are inadequate; technical equipment includes: 61 cableways(funicular railway)-cables, lifts and ski lifts-which amount to 62 km in length (compared to 3696 cableways in Austria, 3033 in France, 1534 in Switzerland), nearly 80 km of (upgrade) arranged ski parts (compared with 9500 km in Austria and 2500 in France), from here results a reduced share of the number of foreign tourists (9.61%).

The establishment of tourist reception from the mountain area focuses on 8 resorts and 5 tourist complex ;from these only 4 resorts (Poiana Brașov, Sinaia, Predeal și Bușteni) and 3 tourist complex (Durău, Semenic și Borșa) provide adequate international tourism facilities.

Analysis performed above shows that the Romanian Carpathian mountains has a great tourist potential, with real possibilities for use in tourism, but it is insufficiently exploited.

7. The capitalization of the county residence towns and other settlement (urban or rural)

Tourist movement in this area recorded about 39.96% of Romanian tourists and 73.76% of foreign tourists, which allows assessment of a good exploitation.

Regarding Bucharest and county residence cities, these are suitable for a cultural tourism and in special the business tourism, expensive and lacking of seasonality. Destined both to the tourism and to the transit movement or to the un-tourism movement, these areas enjoy good equipment about 19.03% form all the accommodation places, many of them in units of superior comfort hotels - 4 and 5 stars.

However, because in this area tourist flows can not be separated from the un-tourism ones ,the situation described above, regarding tourist movement reflect only partially the reality, with the exception of cities such as Bucharest, Brașov, Cluj, Sibiu, Suceava, Neamț, where it is needed exploitation of quality and quantity.

8. Conclusions

In present and future conditions of Romania development, the superior exploitation of tourism resources is necessary, with poignancy, as in any economic field. This involves a complex and efficient operation in an intensive tourism, a protection and a conservation of the tourism value.

According to the analysis made on the Romanian tourism potential results that it is poor capitalized, that there are many landmarks, which are not included in tourism circuit. There are imposed measures in the design of planning strategies for development and modernization, according to specific areas-the biosphere reservation, national parks, natural reservation etc., for

accommodation equipment, food and entertainment. It also should be take in consideration increasing the quality of offered services, and diversify of the tourism form.

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