

CONSTRAINTS OF THE ROMANIAN SEASIDE TOURISM

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The competition on the Single European Market requires to those who offer tourist's services on the Romanian seaside, either they are caterers, restaurant keepers, tour operators or specialized agencies, to take decisive measures of rehabilitation and withdrawal for the maintenance on the profile market, through diversification and correlation of the quality with the tourist's product price. The Romanian seaside tourism professionals must understand the new trends in international development of this type of tourism and to realize the fact that the increasing demands of their clients oblige them to resort to new management and marketing tools.

Key words: tourism, competition, enterprising, strategy, destination.

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1. Defining elements of the tourist's demands shown on the Romanian seaside

The Romanian seaside, tourist's summery area once favorite, both for Romanian tourists and foreign ones from Western Europe has lost a great part of the tourist's interest. **The seaside summer resorts are dealing with a tourist's demand decrease as the products and tourist's services offer didn't succeed to rise at the level more and more sophisticated of the demands of the tourists.** This decrease is especially felt in the foreign tourists' case who prefer similar seaside destinations but where the services quality is high and the prices show the real quality of the tourist's services.

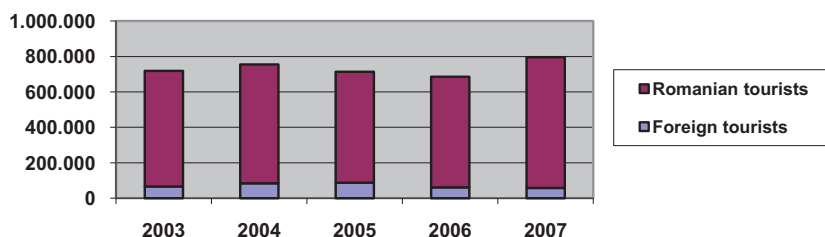


Fig. no. 1 Tourists arrived at the Romanian seaside between 2003 – 2007

In 2003 – 2007 period of time, on the Romanian seaside little fluctuation of the arrived tourists' number was registered. After an involution in 2004 -2006, the number of the Romanian who had oriented towards the inland seaside offer registered a rise of 16,05% in 2007 compared with the previous year. For the foreign tourists case, their number registered a small rise in 2003 – 2005 period of time, followed by a decrease of 30% for the year 2006 and by a decrease of 6,53% for 2007 compared with the previous year.

As for the average stay, it has decreased by 12,24% for year 2007 compared with year 2003. This fact is explained also by the orientation, for the last years, of the resident tourists towards the week-end tourism at the expense of average or weekly stay.

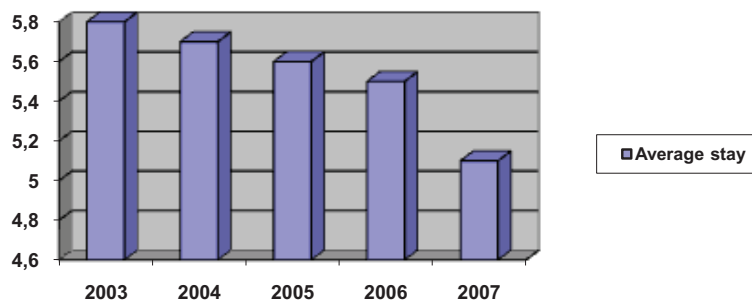


Fig. no. 2 Average stay of the tourists arrived at the Romanian seaside between 2003-2007

2. Difficulties faced by the tourism firms at the seaside

With the fragmented property and without a clear strategic direction, the seaside resorts enterprising did not managed to meet the high demands shown on the tourist's market and now are facing a number of issues.

The difficulties that the Romanian seaside tourist's firms are facing concerns⁴⁵⁰:

- accommodation places mostly of low quality in most tourist's reception structures;
- a very short high season, fact that persuades the enterprising to adopt uncompetitive prices up to the threshold of profitability level;
- the impossibility of attracting and keeping professional personnel for a short high season;
- a great competition between hotels and the lack of enterprising collaboration to attract tourists;
- tourist's services for leisure and entertainment activities are not enough to satisfy the current market demands;
- a limited vision of the caterers who are capitalizing the growing demand of the week-end visitors and they are loosing businesses with groups of tourists who are buying longer stays.
- beach erosion;
- poorly maintained public infrastructure;
- congestion in summer time mostly, and especially at the week-end and insufficient parking spaces;
- conflicting interests of the beach concessionaires and the tourist reception services providers
- loosing the most charter operations on Kogalniceanu Airport.

*In the present time, the most significant threat for the seaside resorts case is the degradation of the most valuable asset, the beach. In the last twenty years was found a real decrease in the beach size, because of the general erosion engendered by the combination of the impact caused by the Danube channels and by the sea wall from Midia higher than the normal level of the sediments deposits along the seaside. Despite the various measures of remediation which were taken, the beach is withdrawing every year approximately 2 meter.*²

In the last years significant investments have been done in the modernization of hotels and for ensuring some facilities within them, for example treatment and wellness, the setting up of some rooms for conferences, etc. which can contribute to the extension of the season. Still these welcome investments can not solve the fundamental issues which face the entrepreneurs of this area.

The marketing studies realized show that the present level of the services of the resorts of the seaside, is not enough to rise to the level of the position Romania should have as one of the main seaside destinations of the Eastern Europe.

At present the entrepreneurs of this area, as well as the authorities from the tourist domain, are trying very hard to re-launch tourism in this area, **by drawing up and applying some strategies which have as objective the transformation of the seaside into a competitive destination.**

The products traded on the Romanian seaside satisfy mainly the expectations of certain market segments, thus: the passive segment, represented by the tourists who choose this destination for the beach and amusement and the segment who practice the balneary tourism.

Although a series of investments have been done, this is the case of Mamaia resort especially, and the seaside attracts, during summer, a significant number of tourists who practice **the weekend tourism, still the offer of products is not diversified** and is not according to the taste tendencies and tourists' preferences. The tourists from Germany and Scandinavian Countries who used to be oriented toward the Romanian seaside, as a tourist's destination, are currently oriented to competent destinations from the Mediterranean Sea and the Aegean Sea, as well as towards Croatia and Bulgaria.

Another problem of the internal market is represented by **the Romanian's tendency to go to foreign destinations**, the Romanian seaside becoming less attractive. For example, the tourist who comes to the seaside expects more than sun and sea. He looks for a variety of attractions and activities beside the beach that is an offer of supplementary products. Choosing a destination by the tourists is determined, in the recent years, by a large offer of products that they can find.

Future projects which regard the establishment of some constructions in the Romanian seaside area should include, beside tourist's reception structures also constructions which should include theatres for theme shows, constructions with sport functions as golf grounds, tennis courts, football courts, recreation parks aquatic parks etc.

One of the projects which stands to be carried out in Mamaia regards *the creation of a covered sea-wall which should be on top of the sea and which should contain a series of points of selling food and nonfood products. This shall offer visitors an alternative for spending time in the resort.*

It should, also, **to be organized or promoted excursions which should put to value the cultural patrimony of the seaside area**, as well as the ruins of the Roman and Greek fortresses, to trade tourist's products which should consider ecotourism activities (for example: the Limanu area near Vama Veche).

450Master Plan for the development of the national tourism 2007 – 2026, chapters E,F,G, pg.273-274, taken from http://www.mturism.ro/fileadmin/mturism/noutati/masterplan_efg.pdf.

In order to put to value the tourist's reception structures outside the season, shall have to be developed **the balneary product of the Black Sea**. The entrepreneurs from the Eforie North and Eforie South, who own tourist's reception structures, should develop modern treatment areas ensuring in this way a functioning outside the summer. *An especially important aspect is constituted by the communicating and proving the existence of new improvements of the tourist's products, to travel organizers from the markets under formation in order to convince them of the increase of the quality of the products and services offered.*

Recovering the reputation that the Romanian seaside once had can be expensive regarding marketing and promotion budget.

The sustainable development of the seaside tourism depends not only from the attractive scenery and tourist's facilities but also from **the competitiveness and quality of the employed personnel**. *Being one of the most competitive economic activities in the world, the tourism needs understanding, professionalism, employment and efficient strategies to develop human resources*⁴⁵¹.

Competitive services can be ensured only by well trained and specialized personnel, with adequate aptitudes and performances. The creation of a qualified work force in tourism needs basic training, professional training courses as well as continue training on the job.

The Romanian seaside tourism has at present a major deficit of qualified personnel. Most of the entrepreneurs, due to the seasonal activity do not hire qualified personnel and do not invest in the professional training. This fact is reflected by the quality of the services rendered by a insufficiently trained personnel and weakly motivated by small wages.

Also, the level of competence in tourism is low, as a result of the lack of performance, work, educational and training standards. The Romanian seaside entrepreneurs should adopt, within the personnel policy, **strategies to attract qualified workers** in the domain, **strategies to make faithful the employed personnel, strategies to increase the quality of the services rendered** by them by ensuring professional training through qualification courses and **strategies to increase competitiveness** by granting certain facilities to competitive workers.

The success of the Romanian seaside entrepreneurs on the Single European Market "shall be determined, generally, by the measure in which they have trained to understand the costs of the integration and exigency standards they have to achieve in order to face the existing competition"⁴⁵².

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