

THE TOURISM POTENTIAL OF THE ROMANIAN SEASIDE

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Abstract

This article focuses on the main aspects of the tourist potential of the Romanian seaside. Tourism refers to all means that favor the development of societies and their formation, developing economic, social and cultural factors. These factors are interconnected which allows a thorough assessment of the Romanian seaside that we analyse in this paper. The tourist potential of the Romanian seaside can produce a competitive advantage, thus influencing its economic progress. The development of the Romanian seaside tourism product is based on three fundamental ideas, such as the development of a new tourism product based on cultural tourism values, the modernization of the tourist product of the seaside resorts and the development of the domestic tourist offer in accordance with local and regional specificities. As coastal tourism becomes one of the main engines of economic growth, the emphasis is on exploiting the tourist potential of the sea, contributing to the modernization of seaside resorts, environmental protection and conservation in the fisheries, blue biotechnology and ocean energy. The tourist potential is especially related to the Black Sea. The main point of interest of the Romanian seaside is supported by the Black Sea and the resorts that surround it. This paper emphasizes the degree of involvement of the main elements which concern on the most attractive tourism activities in the Romanian coast of the Black Sea that may bring benefits through an important development of services and resources.

Key words: development, economy, environment, Romanian seaside, tourism.

JEL Classification: Z3, Z32.

1. INTRODUCTION

The contribution of tourism to economic and social life is differentiated according to the policies of each country and the activities it carries out. Within the economy, tourism related to the Romanian seaside is mainly aimed at diversifying the structure by creating specific features activities [Vellas & Becherel, 1999].

Black Sea is one of the most attractive touristic areas in Romania, recognized through specific elements of tourism potential. The resources which became the most important regarding on the nature and human environmental are defined through elements such as the beach, sea water and bioclimate. Also, some aspects like mineralized water, therapeutic mud and nature reserves could contribute to the improvement of the romanian seaside. In the Black Sea a lot of natural and human resources have been created which could grow the tourism potential.

If these are permanently upgraded, the tourists will be motivated to try new places and to practice several forms of tourism which can refer to health, culture, relaxation, leisure, ecology and more. The Romanian seaside allows for a complex tourism due to the natural conditions that are extremely favorable. In this context, remarkable accommodation infrastructure has been built over the years. At present they provide the comfort, entertainment, treatments and all the needs of the tourists. The existence of the 12th resorts marked the peak of the tourism of our country, the coast being considered the most favored tourist point because of its characteristics. An example of this may be its seasonality. Also, the seaside resorts which contain Năvodari, Mamaia, Eforie Nord, Eforie Sud, Techirghiol, Costinești, Olimp, Neptun, Jupiter, Aurora, Venus, Saturn and Mangalia

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are well known at international level. All modern accommodation, treatment centres and various entertainment opportunities favors the tourism potential and represents it at a high level.

The whole tourism potential has led to the improvement of tourist activities based on certain sorts of tourism. In few years, the following types of tourism have appeared:

- Tourism for recreation and relaxation;
- Balneary tourism for physical recovery, body and facial cosmetics;
- Social tourism for children and young people;
- Business tourism and congresse.

The oldest type of tourism which is practiced by the tourists is the tourism for recreation in this region. It has evolved with the variation of tourist facilities, one of them it clearly the entertainment. The most popular form of tourism is the balneary tourism where modern techniques and equipment are used. The most attractive place for children and young people is undoubtedly located in Costinești resort. Also, Năvodari resort is known as an environmental place because of the existence of the most important camp for students. The cities of Constanța and Mangalia have become important hosts for numerous economic meetings and conferences on different aspects such as social, medical and scientific issues [Simon et. all, 2011].

2. GENERAL FEATURES OF THE ROMANIAN SEASIDE

The strong point of the Romanian seaside is given by the position of the beaches which are located in the East and South-East. The day includes almost 10 hours of sunlight, and the shore is surrounded by waters that have a low salinity degree. The absence of strong currents gives comfort and safety to tourists. As far as bioclimate is concerned, it is temperate-continental. It is highlighted that rainfall is reduced during the summer season. Also, the uniform level of atmospheric humidity and thermal stability represent other important aspects of the Romanian seaside. If we relate to the Black Sea coast, it stretches over a length about 240 km, from the fascinating nature of the intact Danube Delta in the many modern holiday centers and, also, between Ukraine and Bulgaria, on the Danube Delta north of the coastal town of Vama Veche, located at the border with Bulgaria.

The seaside stretches over a distance of 82 km and tourist resorts are specially arranged for tourists from all over the country who want to exploit them. While the Delta area is strictly protected, the southern area has been transformed into a chain of seaside and balneoclimate resorts to satisfy the most demanding tastes, from children to those of the elderly. Lakes and, at the same time, marine and fluvial lagoons have a remarkable appearance in the coastal area, as the clean water along the seashore is predominant along with the areas where the mud of therapeutic value is [Bran F, 1995].

These are known as Siutghiol, Tatlageac, Techirghiol. Apart from all aspects of the environment, the Romanian seaside is being exploited through the presence of various museums and cultural artistic activities. Among the best known are the National Archeology Museum, the annual anniversary of the Day of the Navy (August 15th) in Constanța, the Callatis Festival from Mangalia, Paul's Orthodox Cathedral, and many more exceptional events and places.

3. THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

The Romanian seaside offers many accommodation options. Approximately 250,000 accommodation places in agritourism, villas and hostels are available for tourists who want to spend their time in one of the 12 seaside resorts: Navodari, Mamaia, Eforie Nord, Eforie Sud, Techirghiol, Costinesti, Olimp, Neptun, Jupiter, Aurora, Saturn. Tourists have the opportunity to enjoy entertainment and leisure opportunities that cover the needs and preferences of everyone. Many restaurants and terraces have been developed along the beach or in the immediate vicinity of the place they live. People can relax in a holiday dessert atmosphere. Also, the Romanian seaside offers possibilities to practice all the nautical sports, each complex having modern leisure facilities, such as tennis courts, football and golf, fun parks and entertainment center. All of them are located in resorts. The most attractive places are located in Mamaia resort because the recent tourism has

developed a lot of entertainment opportunities. The most important are Aqua Magic and Gondola [Bădescu A., 2012].

If we refer specifically to the technical and material tourist base of the Romanian seaside, we can discuss about a complex structure made up of 10 categories, grouped in basic units, such as hotels, hostels, villas, apartments for rent, tourist and agrotourist pensions and units auxiliary accommodation such as bungalows, school camps, camping sites and tourist cabins. The difference between these units is the degree of comfort [Tofan & Niță, 2014].

Besides the places of accommodation, one can also highlight the tourist food services, which constitute a major component, forming the basic tourist services component. The specially arranged places are located both in the statues and in the accommodation units. According to the National Tourism Authority, there are five types of structures that include various folklore-specific restaurants, restaurants specializing in areas such as fishing, family or hostels. Also, the specific restaurants make their presence felt throughout the Romanian seaside, and confectioneries and patisseries are indescribable.

The most visited resort of the Romanian seaside is Mamaia. It is situated on the Romanian Black Sea coast, on the western shore of the Black Sea. This resort is a summer tourist destination which has very few permanent inhabitants, being overcrowded in the warm season. Mamaia represents a good destination for entertainment and, also, has many places

of interest to tourists. The main attractions are the Holiday Village, Lake Siutghiol, the Gondola, Mamaia Cliff and more. The resort is surrounded by numerous beaches which offer the possibility of practicing various water sports such as kitesurfing, jet skiing, windsurfing and water skiing [Bădescu A., 2012].

One of the important thing is that the intense summer activity creates many jobs in hotels, restaurants, transportation services and other related activities. The Romanian economy has a lot to gain during this period due to the large number of tourists who are frequenting the area during the whole summer period. Seaside resorts are considered the main tourist destinations from the country [Roth & Fishbin, 2015].

4. NATURAL CONDITIONS

The natural factors of the Romanian seaside show the most favorable conditions due to the extensive beaches and the global climatic sources through the existence of the therapeutic muds. The main factor of the natural environment is the curative action of water in the Black Sea because it contains a variety of mineral salts and is accompanied by a specific regime also having an important role in balneotherapy sessions.

If we refer to the water temperature, it is much higher compared to other large oceans and in relation to the atmosphere it achieves a thermal constant.

The Romanian seaside has stretched beaches with fine sand and eastward orientation, ensuring a daily rotation of about 13-14 hours in the summer months. These beaches have varied forms such as an open beach type where some bays are located and where the currents can bring a greater amount of sand, and the other type of beach is the closed type, and these are specific to the southern coastline.

In recent years, due to climate change, shores have eroded due to inadequate management, such as illegal sand exploitation, or in some sectors the beaches were occupied with concrete platforms for the sale of certain supermarkets or terraces. The beach of Mamaia has an erosion of 65% of its entire length and the shoreline values are between 4 and 42 meters [Ionescu & Iorga, 2001].

Viewed as a whole, the Romanian seaside is a region with a strong urban character. In this area, the rural environment is underdeveloped and is generally economically and socially dependent on other nearby cities. The main urban centers of the Romanian seaside are Constanta, which is one of the largest cities in our country, Mangalia, which has complex tourist and industrial functions and, last but not least, the city of Năvodari which develops around various complexes industrial sectors under petrochemical and chemical industries.

The tourist and balneal tourism potential of the seashore has led to a strong development of tourism and of the entire hotel industry. The Romanian seas started tourism development at the end of the 19th century when the first spa resorts appeared. The main form of practicing tourism in this area is the summer one, yet it also includes other specific tourism components, especially for children and youth, such as scientific, cultural, or even sports tourism.

At the moment, the tourist offer of all the seaside resorts is varied, and here we find the following: water sports, fishing, amusement parks and gastronomy. Many tourists come to the seaside for heliomarine belts, which are an important factor in increasing the body's existence, preventing various diseases and, in particular, creating a general state of well-being [Rădulescu C.V., et al., 1980]. All this is done by bathing in the sea, sun exposure, beach walks and air that is loaded with aerosols. Through all this, the body synthesizes a significant amount of vitamin D, and it contributes to the body's health by fortifying the bones by providing bone strength, also preventing joint disease, and improving the immune system.

5. THE VISION OF DEVELOPING TOURISM POTENTIAL

Looking at the whole, the vision of tourism development on the Romanian seashore implies imposing the metropolitan area as a main factor and tourism landmark for the entire country through the conduct of its natural and cultural heritage.

The area is appreciated by tourists with high quality that most of the time corresponded and corresponds to the standards in Europe regarding the provision of all the services in the area. Apart from the cultural heritage and the natural environment, on the Romanian seaside we find an impressive human resource in the field of tourism. Every year more than 36,000 people work in this field, and in the future, the potential already existing in this area must be an important desideratum both for business and for public authorities.

Regarding the multiplier effect generated by tourism in line with the local economy level, it is necessary to stimulate it by supporting investments and promoting entrepreneurship in similar fields of tourism such as transport, food industry, mobile industry and construction. Growth Pole Vision Constanta is considering development strategies for encouraging holiday tourism, as well as promoting certain destinations at international level, as the number of foreign tourists who visited this area has been on the rise for the last time. At the same time, a diversified tourist offer and the combination of certain natural, anthropic and cultural factors will be a target for the next period [Lungu M., 2009].

The vision of tourism development in this pursues certain objectives, such as:

- ❖ Promoting a tricky image at national and international level;
- ❖ Presenting tourism through sustainable development in its own way where the richness of the natural heritage is appreciated by tourists and kept in optimal conditions for future generations;
- ❖ The recognition of tourism as a key factor for the local economy and the creation of new jobs is desirable;
- ❖ To annually develop and implement marketing plans for this tourist destination in collaboration with the private and public sectors, targeting all main outlets;
- ❖ Local authorities encourage the development of strategies and integrated plans where a list of all infrastructure elements should be included to avoid uncoordinated development;
- ❖ The development of spa tourism;
- ❖ The development of business tourism;
- ❖ The development of cruise and nautical tourism;
- ❖ The development of ecotourism.

Referring to the goals we have targeted, we have resumed the swot analysis to highlight all the issues we are currently facing.

Table 1. Swot Analysis

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - easy accessibility of tourist areas through modern access ways that are connected to the main European transport points; - having a favorable geographical position for the development of tourism products such as cruise, eco- logical, business or cultural tourism; - due to temperate continental climate it is possible to conduct tourism on the seashore from spring till autumn; - the accommodation capacity in full extent at national level; - organizing various goods and services fairs; 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a rather poor marking of cultural points; - Lack of funds for heritage objectives and their maintenance; - insufficient human resources and a low salary of tourism staff; - overcrowding in the peak season of the summer season, but also in the weekends of the resort of Mamaia
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - business tourism generates economic development; - the interest of authorities and citizens in the development of this tourism sector; - access to various European funds that offers the possibility to finance various tourism development and promotion projects in the area; - European funds receive different funding for training and qualification programs for all staff in tourism; 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the phenomenon leading to the erosion of beaches and beaches may affect the long-term development of tourism in the area; - the lack of interest of Romanian tourists for domestic tourism products; - the competition that exerts for the entire regional tourism market and the low ability of different economic agents to adapt to this competitive market;

Source: Own processing

6. CONCLUSIONS

Globally, tourism is an important economic component on which we are most dependent. Nowadays, tourism has become an essential and decisive factor that has succeeded in mobilizing most countries for economic development. Although there are still states where the situation is not favorable due to economic, cultural, social or geopolitical instability, tourism potential is seen as a motor of the economy and social life.

As far as the Romanian seaside is concerned, it is well exploited due to the general welfare of the society. Therefore, this area is based on a very well developed tourism potential, because both tourists and people living here are able to spend more time on tourist activities, travel, frequent visits to new destinations, participate in cultural and sports events taking place in the resorts mentioned throughout this article.

The tourist potential resulting from the combination of the environment and the technical and material base is a significant aspect, which, if given maximum importance, the Romanian seaside will have to be won, consequently the tourist offer will be an appropriate one.

Due to its location, positioning and sights, this area is populated throughout the summer season. Climate signifies one of the key factors for the development of tourism potential due to the thermal comfort it generates. Therefore, most tourists are oriented to the Romanian seaside and choose this option due to the optimal climate. They allocate time for recreation during the summer. An important feature is the fact that the atmosphere is a curative-recreational one during this period. At the same time, heliomarine practice is known in resorts, which encourages even more trips in the seaside.

According to the information, Mamaia resort significantly contributes to the development of tourist potential, being an important landmark for tourists visiting the Romanian seaside, especially the Black Sea. Due to this destination, the tourist importance is high, and the Mamaia resort has become a remarkable pillar of tourism in the Romanian seaside area over time. Tourist potential

is determined by the sum of all resources allocated to the coastal area. Natural, human, cultural and historical are considered the main elements that make up the whole destination for tourists [Heath & Wall, 1992].

When taking into account all of the aspects considered above, tourism can be seen as one of the most exploited areas at national and international level, involving in its field

activity, the whole society. However, the tourism potential in the area under consideration may influence the whole society as a whole due to the peculiarities discussed during this work [Ionescu I., 2000].

Therefore, this paper aims to analyze the basic links of tourism in the economic field as well as the main indicators that determine the level at which tourism potential contributes to the development of the Romanian seaside.

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