

THE AGRO-TOURISM IN BUZAU COUNTY

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Abstract: *The present paper captures the most important aspects regarding the development and sustaining of agro-tourism in Buzau county, but also its tendering in the next period. There will be various methods and techniques used by agro-tourism to enter this county, as the tenants look at, but also the most attractive tourist points. By the comparative analysis of agro-tourism and rural tourism concepts, the concept of tourism product, the different forms of tourism that are traced according to the typology of a certain activity, as well as characteristics that define the activities of rural tourism, the agro-tourism of the economic activity and the implications in the structure of the activities of the economic sphere, this being due to the last time, when more and more Romanian and foreign tourists are heading for relaxation to these specific areas.*

Key words: *agrotourism, environment, nature, natural resources, rural space, touristic offer*

JEL CLASSIFICATION: Q13, Z32

1. INTRODUCTION

The agro-tourism as a whole comprises a wide range of activities, events, accommodation, and they are in an optimal environment in the rural concept. It is a concept that sustains all the tourist activities that are generally organized and managed by local people in the area and which is based on a great deal of human and natural getaways. It comes as a supplement that capitalizes on the surplus of existing accommodation, a house where everything is specially arranged for guests who want to relax.

Generally speaking, the farm remains the main symbol for those living in the urban environment, as the farmer's farm looks, more specifically the one who knows the secrets of nature, who knows the best fishing, hiking or other attractions for tourists. The village or area where the human being comes from is a special place in his vision, referring to the human dimension, the specific zonal animation, the different places that marked the life of centuries people in turn.

We also meet in this area different artisans or small entrepreneurs who make life in the country much easier. It is also the base of most traditional holidays or specific wedding or baptismal customs [Dinu L., 2012].

Rural space, village and farm separate or together is the charm of rural tourism through everything it attracts. Agritourism and tourism in general should be seen as a form of activity that will provide the urban population with the most appropriate conditions of therapy against the stress

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determined increasingly by today's environmental factors at work. The whole form of tourism has a very strong influence on psychological factors and addresses all those who love nature and those who know how to use it for the benefit of their health without destroying it as we see in today's climate change or the effects of global warming.

At the core of agro-tourism activity we find three interdependent elements as well:

- ❖ Attraction to the natural beauty, novelty, ethnography, but also to the country-specific events;
- ❖ Meals and accommodation, which, even if they are not high on hotel standards, must be offered with hospitality and of superior quality;
- ❖ The way and ways to access the countryside are absolutely necessary to ensure a continuous flow of tourists.

2. Rural tourism - environmental relationship

Rural tourism to any other field of activity is dependent on the surrounding environment because it represents its main subject matter, the object and the field of activity that is the support of its resources. The forests, rivers or reliefs in general, the natural monuments or the architectural monuments are all components of the environment and constitute agro-tourism resources, which favor the development of agritourism for recreation and recreation, as well as spa treatment, as we meet in the resort of Sarata Monteoru, where the year is visited by thousands of tourists, famous for its salty baths and treatment. In all these conditions, the rural tourism-environment relation has a special significance, and the protection and development of the environment is the basic condition of agrotourism, and any changes brought to it can lead to diminishing or even canceling its resources [Manole & Stoian, 2001].

Agro-tourism is the predominant tourist form of the Buzau region. The tourist destinations rotate in the streets of localities or communes far from civilization on its own Buzau is not a well-known tourist destination, as the attractions are generally rare compared to other areas of the country with the same resources. The biggest cities near Buzau are Ploiesti, Bucharest, Ramnicu Sarat [Bran, Rădulescu, Ioan, & Popa, 2011].

Dealul Mare region has enormous touristic potential, even if tourism development is still at its beginning due to poorly developed infrastructure, the region is still a secret for many tourists who offer natural and wild beauty blended with traditions and rural attractions specific to the sub-Carpathian region. The main tourist attractions in Buzau County are:

- ❖ Oenological tourism;
- ❖ Rural and environmental tourism;
- ❖ Recreational and Spa Tourism;
- ❖ Adventure and Sports Travel.

If we refer to the area of accommodation and gastronomy, the infrastructure here is not complex, because some regions in the area have a wide range of hotels and hostels, while in others the accommodation structure is totally absent. Rural tourism mostly offers accommodation in agritourism hostels where it can usually eat because there are not many restaurants in the city [Alexandru & Alexandru, 2001].

3. The agro-tourism - the main tourist points

From the point of view of biodiversity, the area is well-known for the "Muddy Volcanoes", the Colti's Amber, the salt caves, the spectacular landslides and, last but not least, the quiet landscapes and salty lakes. All of these phenomena are part of the nature biodiversity and you do not have to have some knowledge in the field to be able to admire the spectacle offered by nature, and some examples will be listed below:

- ❖ The fabulous landscapes in the Carpathian and Subcarpathian areas;
- ❖ Numerous marked trails for Siriu, Penteleu Masives;
- ❖ Unprecedented fires from Lopatari in the village of Terca, where natural gas comes to the surface with the cracks of the earth's crust that burn constantly offering a unique natural spectacle;
- ❖ The famous geological reserve of Badila, where salt and limestone rocks are declared "Monuments of Nature";
- ❖ Milea-Viforata forest reserve with secular molluscs.

All this but not only represents the main point in the activities of promotion, research, education and development of tourism, but also in the construction of a necessary infrastructure, such as: tourist information points, hostels, rental centers. The richness of natural heritage along with biodiversity allows the expansion of agro-tourism related to forest, fishing and hunting, as well as other activities that can be encouraged and which can acquire conditions for the development of the initiative towards this field. Due to the various relief features and shapes that bring the space uniqueness together with the specific topoclimate adapted to a state of sanogenesis, Buzau subcarpathians are a special tourist attraction for all tourists and a priority in the process of rebirth of the Romanian tourism both nationally and internationally. The main actors together with the county institutions have as main objective the development of sustainable strategy throughout Buzau county [Zahiu L., 1999]. Subcarpathians of Buzau are distinguished by a wide range of tourist attractions that characterize the hilly relief of this area. According to these conditions the tourist valences are given by:

- ❖ Muddy volcanoes that offer tourists a spectacular picture;
- ❖ "The Living Fire" from Lopatari;
- ❖ Erosion witness at Grunj;
- ❖ The karst phenomenon on the Meledic Plateau.

Rural areas of interest are grouped on the basis of the specifics of the following types:

- ❖ Climate and landscape villages characterized by the presence of an attractive natural setting, with many elements that encourage leisure. The features of this type are designed for leisure travel and offer tourists the opportunity to walk outdoors, steam baths to heliotherapy.
- ❖ Balnear villages specific to this type of tourism that are based on valuable resources such as mineral waters; in addition to those in the Sarata Monteoru area, these are also found in Lopatari, but with a lower value, only of local importance. We also meet villages that have a collection of art, historical and architectural monuments (Antonie).

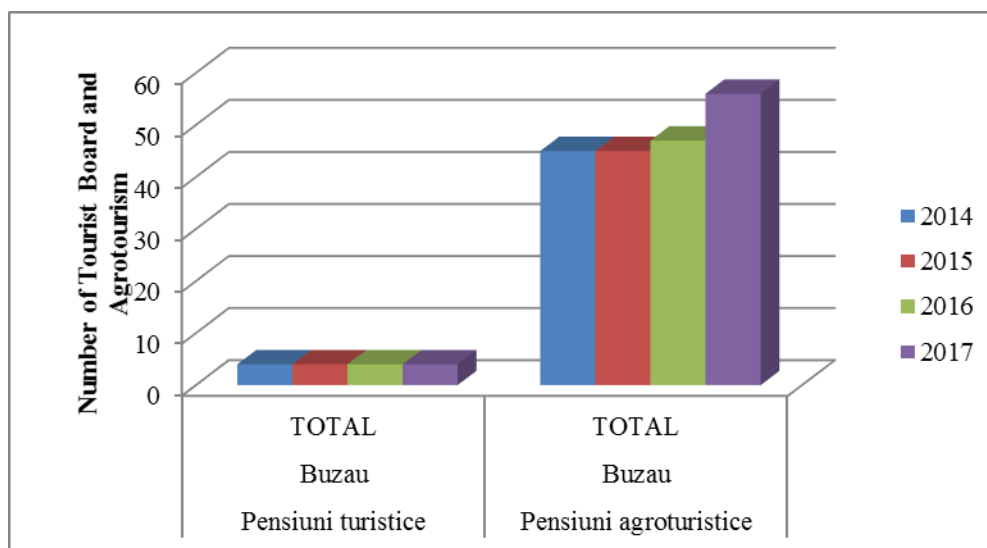
The entire cultural diversity of the space that lies at the interface between the three provinces (Muntenia, Moldova and Transylvania), Subcarpathians in Buzau have some but also unique because of the predominant rural space, the settlement of the villages along the valleys, but also the existence of cultures old and powerful religious wolves, where traditions have been held for thousands of years, passing from one generation to the next. You can see in the traditional harbor, the Biosca area, known for its traditional architecture, fairs, fairs, legends and stories about treasures and supernatural powers of places. Hydronics and toponyms are the strongest evidence of the link the area has with plant, animal and earth resources.

Cultural diversity is complemented by biodiversity and biodiversity that underlie the socio-economic development of the study area. In the villages of Buzau County, popular art items are often found and are tourist attractions for everyone, as well as for a whole unit. The bizonal ethnographic area occupies ancient dwellings that are archaeologically certified from the Paleolithic, confirmed by the ethnographic and folkloric community. If we are talking about the Buzau villages in general, they are very impressive through the greatness of the households, integrated with a special attention in the natural environment [Stoian M., 2014].

Below we will report the situation of the tourist and agro-tourist pensions in Buzau County, as well as the changes that took place throughout the analyzed period 2014-2017 regarding the structures of tourist reception with functions of tourist accommodation by types of structures, the capacity of the tourist accommodation existing on types of tourist accommodation structures,. All of these data have been processed from the INS website and interpreted as a result of the results obtained.

Analyzing the situation of the accommodation units in Buzau county for the tourist pensions, as well as the agro-touristic ones in the last four years I obtained the following results:

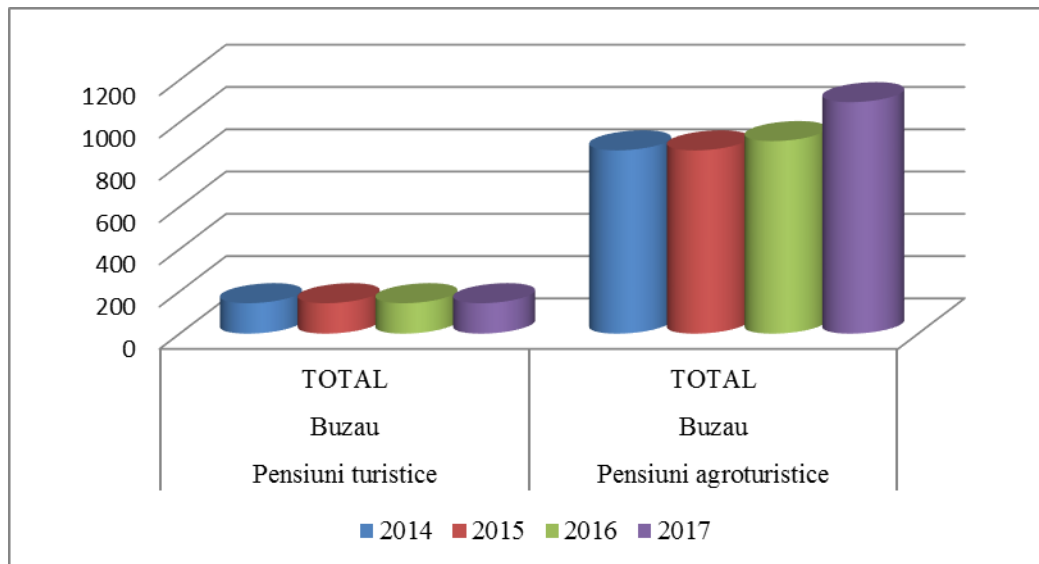
Figure. no. 1: Tourist accommodation structures with functions of tourist accommodation by types of structures, counties and localities



INS Source: Own processing

According to the above graph it can be noticed that the total number of tourist pensions remained constant for the entire analyzed period, but the change occurs in the agro-tourist boarding houses from 45 in 2014 to 56 in 2017, this year-on-year increase a total of 25.2% is due to the fact that most people prefer more and more a vacation in a quiet area where it can recreate, away from the noise of cities and daily stress, where of course you can enjoy all the good things from organic and natural food, as this is also the addition of agro-tourist accommodation.

Figure no. 2. The capacity of existing tourist accommodation by type of accommodation



INS Source: Own processing

As in the chart above, it can be seen that the total number of tourist pensions remained the same throughout the analyzed period and since the year 2016, the total of the agro-touristic pensions has grown by 9.4%. This change is due to the ever increasing development of the new buildings, hence the larger number of accommodation places. Very many locals have preferred to open their own business to earn a much more consistent income, so with the development of technology, a lot of facilities were found that we only found in urban areas, and now they can also access them in an area mountain where the silence is very dense, and relaxing at home.

Analyzing the situation of agro-tourism in Buzau County, we observe that its weaknesses are:

- ❖ Insufficient promotion of tourist potential due to the lack of an information center in the area;
- ❖ The lower motivation, as well as the mistrust of the population in particular to capitalize on the tourism potential and the amounts for investments in tourism that could benefit from European funds;
- ❖ Investments in tourism quite low due to lack of financial means and a long-term sustainable mechanism;
- ❖ A rather poor infrastructure, lack of many access ways to the areas to be visited, insufficient parking for coaches that transport tourists. This lack of infrastructure close to the European level is the main drawback of general investment in other sectors of activity.

Opportunities and threats are mainly driven by the country's external environment. there is a need for a permanent analysis of the social, economic and political evolutions in the target markets in order to identify the changes that may occur and which may influence positively or negatively the tourism activity of the county.

- ❖ Participation in various national and international tourism fairs;
- ❖ Increasing interest in tourism from local NGOs.
- ❖ Encourage new forms of tourism;
- ❖ The diversified tourist offer

Threats:

- ❖ Competition of neighboring counties with well-developed and well developed tourism potential;

- ❖ Loss of customs and traditions in rural areas;
- ❖ The low living standard of the rural population;
- ❖ The deterioration of the economic situation even at national level may include, because if we report to International Monetary Fund, we see the weakness of the economy in our country in relation to the rest of Europe. At this moment, the increase in consumption is still expected even if the unemployment rate gives signs of declining, so that the consumption is kept at a lower level even when the economic growth occurs, and here the investment must be maintained to create favorable results.

4. CONCLUSION

Several aspects can be concluded as a result of this research, and the first one refers to the fact that Buzau County currently has a huge agro-tourist potential but does not invest much. Tourism development can go hand in hand with inheritance preservation, but monitoring is required to ensure certain high conservation standards. In addition, tourism is also a tool for rural development, but the local community must also be involved.

A second conclusion refers to the poor promotion of tourism potential that has been chaotic in the last two decades without focusing on a spectacular result, but only momentary results. If there was a much more sustained promotion at tourism fairs and through the media, the economy would get another aspect, and these wealthy fields would become much more sought after and cherished at the same time.

For a good development of tourism in this area, there is a need for a plan that encompasses some strategies to grow the area from an economic point of view. In particular, they are beneficial to tourists who want to spend as much free time in such areas.

The immediate aim is to refer to the overall policy framework for sustainable management of natural and cultural resources that promotes tourism potential in county, but also generating additional revenue through the development of this sector.

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