Research Regarding the Evolution of Agrotourism in Several European Representative Destinations

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Abstract
The popularity of rural areas, as a possibility to spend the vacation has increased in recent years, in most countries. Changes in attitudes were parallel with changes in European styles to taking the holidays, but also in preferences to return to nature, and various local products.
At the European level there is a large interest for the development of agrotourism and its ability to contribute to the development of rural areas, therefore there are countries that have made from agrotourism a lifestyle and additional incomes with which that pride. Based on this statement this paper follows agrotourism activity in several European countries, considered most representative: Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Italy.

Keywords: agrotourism; evolution; European destinations.

1. Introduction*

On the whole European countries are characterized by a high degree of industrialization, an intensive agriculture and a developed transport infrastructure, that ensures a high traffic of goods, people, including tourists. Taking into account tourism potential, Europe, through its natural environment (Fig. 1), have some tourist attractions of a spectacular variety, which can sustain several form of tourism, some of the most developed being:
• The most important type of tourism is the spa tourism (about ¾ from the annual flow of tourists). The main areas are: Mediterranean coast of Spain with developments on the famous "cost", the Balearic Islands, the coast of France, Italy; Adriatic Sea; Baltic and the North Sea where this type of tourism is practiced in a short season; Atlantic Ocean, Black Sea.
• Another type of tourism is the mountain one, practiced from XIX century in the Alps Mountains, where there are many resorts in the high area and glacial lakes in from the valley. Other facilities for practicing this type of tourism are in the Tatra Mountains, Carpathian Mountains, Rhodope Mountains, Pyrenees Mountains or Scandinavian Alps Mountains.
At European level there is broad interest in the development of agrotourism and its ability to contribute to rural development. Over time, European rural tourism operators had to recognize that:
• Provide housing (housing) is not sufficient to satisfy the demands of the tourists; [1,2]
• The facilities are just as important as the destination and the greatest success in rural tourism have been obtained where those two were taken together; [3,4,8]
• There is a greater accent on knowledge and promoting rural values.

The diversification of tourism forms makes that according to statistics, one of four European to spend their holidays in rural area.

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2. Materials and methods
The authors of the paper were used as methods of work: data collection, processing, analysis, observation and their interpretation.

3. Results and discussion
Speaking about tourism in rural areas, at European level they are:

- countries with specific agrotourism offer (Italy, Austria, Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Netherlands, Belgium);
- or a joint offer - rural tourism and agrotourism - (France, Ireland, Portugal).
This paper follows agrotourism activity in several European countries, considered most representative: Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Italy.
The evolution of agrotourism in Austria

The beginning of agrotourism in this country dates back more than 150 years and is related to the geographical position of Tyrol. Having special tourist resources the development of the region was not only strong but also fast. [5]

Austrian agrotourism reached a very strong development, with a number of 19,000 farms, providing a rich living for about 10% of Austrian farmers.

German agrotourism product is found under the name "Holiday in peasant farms". Great success of the German agrotourist product derived from:
- Anti-trust legislation;
- Permanent support of "small and medium" business with own capital;
- Exploiting small industry and agriculture through peasant farms, authorities concluded that "a guest brings more profit than any other activity conducted during a whole year."

The competent authorities of Germany pay a special attention to capitalization in terms of tourism of some rural areas where there are villages and peasant farms well maintained. Therefore in Germany agrotourism came to be practiced in more than 2/3 of the countryside, German farms being extremely interested to invest and devote to this activity.

The evolution of agrotourism in Switzerland

Lately has been studied and encouraged the transformation of some villages in tourist villages. In this approach the transformation of villages, in holiday villages are pursued objectives such as:
- the geographical position of the village, which should be close to walking trails, in pleasant areas without polluting industries;
- to have facilities for tourist services.

After this phase comes the phase of creating the holiday village, aiming at solving the infrastructure first, taking into account solving the infrastructure problem, water supply, followed by the construction of a neighborhood, at a short distance from the village (200-300 m), having villas and single-family houses. These houses, built in the local architectural style, are sold to private individuals. Local government has the obligation to administer them when owners do not use them.
All these measures have sustained such a strong development of agrotourism that two Swiss peasants from three obtain their incomes from agrotourism, this contributes annual with 5.6% in GDP and provides 300,000 jobs.

The evolution of agrotourism in Italy

Most people, that have spent a vacation in an agrotourist farm in Italy, want to return and. What is the reason for liking the Italian rural areas? Italian agrotourism attract through [7]:

- famous wines and culinary traditions;
- folk dances and songs;
- architecture of various historical monuments;
- poetry and legend of each village.

The clients come from Northern Italy (75%) and from the EU countries, manifesting a growing trend of European tourists. In general, the types of accommodations are distributed as follows: 70% in independent houses and 30% in peasant homes. Camping reaches 1/5 from the total supply.

Accommodation in peasant homes is present in the pioneer regions from the Alpine region, where hospitality is directly related to catering services. The law system requires that products produced on the farm to exceed 40% from those used in the preparation of meals. Another 40% must come from that region. This guarantees the complementarity of this filed of activity.

4. Conclusions

Analyzing agrotourism activity from the territory of the European Union we drew some general features that facilitated the development of this activity:
- most states have succeed to pay the largest share of agricultural tourism in rural areas;
- was encouraged and promoted the development action of peasant farms from rural areas;
- promotion of activity from rural area of agrotourist farms and peasant lifestyle;
- accent on highlighting the national peculiarities, traditions and customs of rural areas;
- EU countries were directly involved in agrotourism.

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