The Dynamics of Tourism as Indicator for the Rural Development in Maramures County

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Abstract
The rural tourism represents a major segment of the Romanian travelling sector, which has been under continuous development for the last twenty years. Identifying the development methods of this sector becomes very important and rather necessary considering the many problems this sector is faced with and that impede its progress, at its true potential. Maramures is one of the most complex regions of our country, which manages to successfully combine, using the available resources, several forms of practicable tourism: cultural tourism, religious tourism, agritourism, mountain tourism, balneal tourism etc.
The incommensurable diversity and importance of the touristic resources existing in Maramures County was certified not only by the travellers visiting the region, but also by the fact that Maramures has become a place of the UNESCO world heritage, by including eight wood churches located in this county among the UNESCO world sites.

Keywords: Maramures County, rural development, tourism

1. Introduction
The rural tourism represents a significant segment of the Romanian touristic sector, being under continued development for the past twenty years. Identifying the development methods of this sector becomes very important and particularly necessary considering the many problems encountered by this sector, which prevent its development at its true potential [1].

Thus, in regard of rural tourism, Romania faces many problems, due in particular to the deficiencies in ensuring the efficient promotion and fulfillment of the touristic potential of the rural areas, such as: the lack of integrated touristic products, the insufficient promotion of the rural touristic areas as tourist attractions, the weak advertising of the traditional rural events, the low quality of the facilities for receiving the tourists, the reduced interest in the local cultural events, the instability of the institutional framework having responsibilities in the development of rural tourism strategies and policies, the lack of cooperation within this sector, the deficient information of the travellers, the undeveloped infrastructure particularly in regard of transportation, communications and services, the low occupancy rate of the accommodation facilities, the insufficient development of the small and medium enterprises acting in the supporting services sector etc [2, 3]

Maramures is one of the most complex regions of our country, which manages to successfully combine, using the available resources, several forms of practicable tourism: cultural tourism, religious tourism, agritourism, mountain tourism, balneal tourism etc. The incommensurable diversity and importance of the touristic resources existing in Maramures County was certified not only by the travellers visiting the region, but also by the fact that Maramures has become a place of the UNESCO world heritage, by including eight wood churches located in this county among the UNESCO world sites.

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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

Today, rural tourism represents a significant part of the Romanian touristic sector, whereas in 2011, the accommodation facilities specific for rural tourism (touristic and agritouristic boarding houses) represented around 45% of the total facilities having touristic functions in Romania [1, 2]. Nevertheless, the number of tourists did not exceed 360 thousand, which, in relation to the country total number, shows that only 6.1% of the Romanian tourists and 1.6% of the foreign tourists have chosen to stay in agritouristic boarding houses. The small number of tourists has determined the rural tourism to be exploited at a low level, whereas the occupancy rate of the agritouristic boarding houses was only 13.8% (below the total occupancy rate per country of 26.3%).

We hereby draw particular attention to the fact that the touristic potential of the rural areas in Romania is far from being reached in an efficient manner, pointing out a weak use of the natural, historical and cultural touristic resources, as well as a low use of the existing material base.

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The largest part of the tourist accommodation facilities in Maramures County is included in the category of rural touristic boarding houses (60% of the total number of facilities – 110 units), while the second rank is occupied by urban touristic boarding houses (19% of the total number of facilities – 35 units).

Moreover, the development of the accommodation structures such as boarding houses – either urban or rural – was remarkable between 2006 and 2008: from 24 urban touristic boarding houses registered in 2006 to 35 urban boarding houses in 2008 and from 87 rural touristic boarding houses registered in 2006 to 110 rural boarding houses in 2008 [4].

The number of accommodation facilities in the County has grown from 2008 to 2013, by 19.45%, whereas the highest growth was registered in regard of touristic boarding houses (41.34%), while the agritouristic boarding houses
have recorded a growth of only 15.64% during the 5 years subject to analysis.

Table 2 describes the Romanian or foreign tourist flows, who have occupied various accommodation facilities between 2008 and 2014.

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Not only the number of the tourist accommodation facilities has recorded a positive trend during the last period, but also the existing accommodation capacity (number of places) and the accommodation capacity in operation (number of places – days). Thus, between 2006 and 2007, the existing accommodation capacity has registered an evolution of 18.8 percent and the accommodation capacity in operation has registered an evolution of 21.34 percent [4].

As easily noticeable based upon the presented data, most of the tourists accommodated during the analysed period in various accommodation facilities in Maramures County are Romanian
nationals (80.09%) and 19.91 have different nationalities. The latter come to visit Maramures usually in organized groups, brought to the country by various tour operators and very few of them come by themselves.

Table 3 illustrates the dynamics of lodging in various types of tourist accommodation facilities, according to the nationality of the tourists, during the period comprised between 2008 and 2014.

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<td>1992</td>
<td>1791</td>
<td>2468</td>
<td>2257</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the facts noticed in regard of the dynamics of lodging in Maramures County, we can conclude that: the number of nights spent (namely the occupancy rate of the tourist facilities) has dropped since 2008 to 2012 inclusively, to register afterwards a slight increase: the preponderant nationality of the tourists is Romanian; the facilities with the highest occupancy rate (number of nights spent) are hotels (almost 50% of the tourists have preferred in 2014 these accommodation facilities), followed by touristic boarding houses and agritouristic
boarding houses. Nevertheless, it is noticeable that during the last period (2012-2014), the occupancy rate of these accommodation facilities is increasing. In regard of pupils and preschool camps, it seems that they have lost attractiveness for the target group, whereas the occupancy rate dropped to almost a half in 2014, compared to 2008.

The least tourists were accommodated in the touristic villas and cabins located in Maramures County.

4. Conclusions

Nowadays, rural tourism represents a significant part of the Romanian touristic sector, whereas in 2011, the accommodation facilities specific for rural tourism (touristic and agritouristic boarding houses) represented around 45% of the total facilities having touristic functions in Romania. Nevertheless, the number of tourists did not exceed 360 thousand, which, in relation to the country total number, shows that only 6.1% of the Romanian tourists and 1.6% of the foreign tourists have chosen to stay in agritouristic boarding houses.

References