

Buzias as a Cultural and Therapeutic Tourism Destination

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Abstract

Tourism makes an important contribution to culture and the historic heritage by providing means for keeping the traditions alive and financing its protection as well as increasing visitor appreciation. Cultural tourism helps preserve the cultural and historic heritage. Therapeutic tourism doesn't just depend on mineral water baths and natural therapeutic sites, it also depends on hospital and healthcare development in the country providing a modern medical care service. At Buziaș the emphasis falls on the unique procedures with natural therapeutic factors. The healing qualities of carbonated water, mofettes and sedative bioclimate are well-known and highlighted by the studies and researches carried out until now, as well as by the high number of patients with significant improvement in symptomatology. Moreover, Buziaș has also a rich cultural heritage, including historical monuments which, once restored, will be able to compete other famous international destinations. That's why an urgent managerial strategy is necessary to be elaborated in order that Buziaș be able to regain its prestige and attract a large number of visitors, eager to contemplate the natural and cultural beauties of this resort.

Keywords: cultural heritage, therapeutic tourism, historical monuments, resort

1. Introduction

Cultural tourism can be defined as travel concerned with experiencing cultural environments, including landscapes, the visual and performing arts, and special (local) lifestyles, values, traditions, events as well as other ways of creative and inter-cultural exchange processes. Cultural tourism is important for various reasons: it has a positive economic and social impact, it establishes and reinforces identity, it helps build image, it helps preserve the cultural and historic heritage, with culture as an instrument, facilitates harmony and understanding among people, supports culture and helps renew tourism [1,2].

The economic and social impact is caused by the incomes created by the cultural tourism business and supporting businesses. There is an increase in local production since the cultural tourism activities are strongly connected with

other branches of economy. As cultural tourism is employment demanding, there is an increase in employment in the area, as guests participate and appreciate local culture. This helps keep people in the region, which is a positive catalyst for regional development. It, thus, improves the demographic situation in regional areas by giving a perspective to the youth. Cultural tourism is a key instrument in regional development strategies in EU countries. Cultural tourism leads to better overall infrastructure and living environment - not only for tourists, but for the host community, as well as the activities encompass the whole territory of the destination. As cultural tourism gives the destination an identity, it gets known, this attracts interests and people, which again help to marked local production in general. Positive for the economic and social development is that cultural tourism generates new ideas and a wish to cooperate among the local population [3-5]. Cultural tourism helps to establish and reinforce an identity. This is an essential element in preserving and enhancing national and local pride

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and spirit. Culture and heritage features are essential in building a country's image, thus cultural tourism can be one of the key instruments in developing a positive image of a country or destination internationally [6,7].

Cultural tourism helps preserve the cultural and historical heritage. Tourism makes an important contribution to culture and historic heritage by providing means for keeping the traditions alive and finances the protection of heritage as well as increase visitor appreciation, in short-more public interest and more funds for protection. Tourism interest in the heritage site can be the key in providing political support for the management and protection of the heritage in question. Well-managed cultural tourism can encourage the revival of traditions and the restoration of sites and monuments [8]. Cultural tourism makes it possible to find the balance between protection and the use of heritage. If overused, the site is ruined, and there will be no future income. In such a way there is a natural need for sustainable thinking [9, 10].

In a world that is troubled by conflicts and xenophobia often based on misunderstandings, cultural tourism can facilitate cultural harmony and understanding among people. More in-depth knowledge of other people's culture will stimulate understanding and a wish to cooperate. It also promotes communication and integration [11].

On the other side, therapeutic tourism despite being relatively new has experienced a particularly wide expansion recently. The good thing in therapeutic tourism is that it provides both physical and emotional healing together. Therapeutic tourism doesn't just depend on mineral water baths and natural therapeutic sites, it also depends on hospital and healthcare development in the country providing a modern medical care service [12, 13].

Buzias – a famous international destination

The balneary resort Buziaş (German Busiasch), is situated south-west of Romania, in Timiș County, at a distance of 25 km (on DJ 592), 28 km (by railway) from Lugoj, 34 km (on DJ 592) and 37 km (by railway) respectively, from Timișoara. It spreads out on a surface of 104 km² and is situated at an average altitude of 128 m [6]. It has a population of 7.023 inhabitants (2011).

The history of Buziaş town starts in the Paleolithic Era, as archaeological evidence shows. During the Dacian and Roman period, the settlement is known by the name of Ahibis, and it appears, for the first time, in historical documents by the name of Buziaş, during the period 1071-1072. As a balneary resort, it receives its first visitors in 1838, at the same time when Doctor Gheorghe Ciocârlan starts his career as a balneologist, being the first person who has pointed out the therapeutic effect of the mineral waters in Buziaş [14-16].

At Buziaş the emphasis falls on the procedures with natural therapeutic factors, which are not available to patients in physiotherapy offices or recovery departments in the cities or treatment departments of other resorts. The healing qualities of carbonated water, mofettes and sedative bioclimate of Buziaş are well-known and highlighted by the studies and researches carried out until now, as well as by the high number of patients with significant improvement in symptomatology, after following repeated bath treatments. The mineral water is carbonated (CO₂=2000-2600 mg/l), chalybeate, hypotonic and rich in bicarbonates, sodium, calcium, magnesium. It is used in treatments applied externally as mineral water baths, which are performed by immersion of the body, to a certain level, in the carbonated water, heated to approximately 34°C, for 15-20 min. It is also used in treatments applied internally using the waters from the well-rooms within the park of the resort. In the warm season there can be baths taken in the open-air mineral carbonated water swimming pool situated in the park of the resort, unique in Europe. Therapeutic effects of carbonated water baths: - at heart level, they determine the decrease of cardiac rhythm (bradycardia) and myocardium irrigation improvement (marked out on the ECG); - at peripheral level they produce vasodilatation accompanied by cutaneous hyperaemia; the capillaries react biphasic: initially there is vasoconstriction, then after 1-5 min. vasodilatation takes place (in a bath of water obtained at the same normal temperature, at the same temperature this phenomenon does not happen); - they also reduce systolic as well as diastolic BP, and lowers venous pressure [1].

Mofettes are free CO₂ emissions, extracted from carbonated waters; they are carried out collectively, in specially set up facilities, "Roman

circus” shaped. Patients are seated on a certain level depending on the illnesses they suffer from. The course of the procedure grows progressively from 5-10 min., up to 15-20 min. Carbon dioxide reaches the bloodstream both by inhalation and directly through the skin, and determines arterial vasodilatation with significant growth of cerebral (by 75%), as well as muscular and cutaneous blood flow (by 50%). Buziaş enjoys a bioclimate fit for relaxation, and the strong air ionization being predominantly negative similar to an altitude of 800-1200 m (although Buziaş is situated at an altitude of only 128 m) is in itself a form of treatment in cardiovascular diseases, reason for which tours are recommended in the dendrological park, which spreads out on a surface of 25 ha. In the park runs the Colonnade – a Turkish-Byzantine wooden construction, dating since 1875, extended in 1939, by a length of 510 m.

Diseases benefiting from usage of natural therapeutic factors at Buziaş are: ♦ Cardiovascular diseases – represent the therapeutic profile of the resort. Among these, we mention: arterial diseases (all stages of peripheral obliterans atherosclerosis, excluding those which demand surgery); chronic ischaemic cardiopathy (stage II myocardial infarction after prior testing in a specialized clinic, 3 months after the acute episode without rhythm disorder, without instable angor) + CIC with effort triggered angor, stable or without angor (ischemia or bundle branch block on ECG); HBP, rheumatic or operated valvulopathies, hemodynamically stable at 3 months after surgery; Chronic vein diseases; ♦ Neurologic diseases: post CVA residual hemiplegia, 6 months to 2 years after its onset, aiming at motor recovery; ♦ Neurological and psychical disorders – especially neuroses, and among these, particularly neuroasthenia; ♦ Digestive tract disorders; chronic hypo-acidic gastroduodenitis, predominantly hypotonic biliary dyskinesia, functional disorders of the colon (irritable colon, constipation); with the internal treatment, carbonated water stimulates saliva, gastric, pancreatic and biliary secretion, and gastro-intestinal motility is enhanced; ♦ Kidney impairment: hyperuricaemia, gravel, repeated urinary infections; CO₂ waters enhance diuresis, increase motility at the urinary tract level, and enhance pre-formed uric acid discharge; ♦ Nutrition and metabolism diseases: DZ, Gout, Obesity, dyslipidemic syndromes, dyselectrolytic

syndromes (lack of Ca, Mg); iron deficiency anaemia; ♦ Gynaecologic disorders: menopause with HBP, female sterility, libido disorders; chronic inflammatory diseases of the pelvic organs.

By its potential Buzias is one of the gifted resorts in the country, through the therapeutic mineral waters and natural carbon dioxide, and also sedative bioclimate. The concentration of existing negative ions especially in the park area of the resort is one of the largest in the country. The symbolic architectural element of the resort is the covered Colonnade from the Park, built in Turkish-Byzantine style, with wooden pergolas and sculpted wood, unique in our country [4]. In Europe there are only two similar covered promenades: at Karlovy Vary and Baden-Baden. Existing villas were built, mostly in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, in an unified architecture feature (especially the wooden structure which follows the parks collonade structure) [2].

Unfortunately, today Buziaş is an unknown destination for most of the visitors, due mostly to the neglecting by the authorities of its cultural heritage, whereas in the last decade nobody invested in restoring this beautiful corner of nature and history. A walk on the once famous promenade is like a return in time, but not a glorious one, just another occasion to observe the poor condition of the historical and natural landmarks.

Conclusions

For recreational tourism in Buziaş specific tourism activities could be developed (in Buziaş, as well as in the neighbouring villages of Bacova and Silagiu), offering to tourists hiking trails in the forest, in the Silagiu Hill (the vineyard), picking medicinal herbs from the spontaneous flora, direct contact with the local folk traditions (there are two traditional events- ruga and the kerwei and an intensive recovery concern of the folk tradition initiated by the House of Culture). The Park Resort, in an area of over 20 hectares is declared dendrological reserve, with numerous rare species of trees, of which the most important is *Platanus orientalis*. There are also archaeological points of interest, leading to the existence of the resort since the 3rd century BC.

Therefore, an urgent managerial strategy is necessary to be elaborated in order that Buziaș be able to regain its prestige and attract a large number of visitors, eager to contemplate the natural and cultural beauties of this resort.

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