

Development of Romanian Balneo Tourism

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Abstract

Romania is among the European countries with a remarkable spa fund what made the Romanian spa tourism have an old tradition and know a great deal development.

Of all the tourism segments in Romania, the spa tourism is the only one form of tourism that is based on a permanent, highly complex, practical potential inexhaustible and independent of atmospheric conditions.

In line with the increasing development of information technology, in parallel with the isolation of man of nature, it is increasingly evident from the point of view of the body-mind-spirit relationship the importance of tourism products, with an emphasis on health, meeting global needs, aggregates, by extending the concept of health to achieving well-being. Well-being, superior to happiness, means having a clear direction to be followed in life, a sense of belonging, a coherent and positive vision of life, and a sense of affiliation, and is more and more common in the literature, other needs on different stages of Maslow's pyramid. Considering the complexity of health tourism with its forms, it can be said that it has become a form of tourism "of the senses"

Key words: development, spa tourism, wellness destination, health, well-being.

J.E.L. classification: M31, G14

1. Introduction

After a period of decline due to inadequacy of supply and products specific to the new requirements and mutations in the motivation plan - balneary tourism has become a major and growing dynamic segment of the international tourism market in recent decades, through its important social and economic effects. To this sector, more emphasis is placed in the developed countries and with a balneo-tourism tradition, important material and human resources, a deeper involvement of science and technology, the provision of tourist and medical services with a complex invoice and a high quality level to meet the vital needs of modern humans, generated by the evolution of living conditions and the health of the population.

The generosity of the natural balneal resources that Romania offers has determined that most stations can offer therapeutic solutions for a wide range of conditions. In this respect, the latest hydrological research has revealed impressive hydro-mineral resources - more than 2,500 springs and drillings. These are studied according to their physical, geochemical, physico-chemical, microbiological and pharmacodynamic properties.

2. Theoretical background

The spa segment is one of the health tourism products / markets, along with medical tourism, thalassotherapy, hydrotherapy, wellbeing / spa and fitness. Of the above, it ranks second in the rising order of medication. The spa segment uses natural mineral water that comes from groundwater or natural sources and whose curative properties are recognized (chemical, thermal and mechanical effects). It is generally practiced in an appropriate natural environment. Spa treatments are increasingly considered as preventive treatments. Spa tourism is one of the forms of constant tourist traffic, with a relatively stable clientele, which contributes to the increase of the

coefficients of utilization of the accommodation capacities and to the achievement of average daily / tourist average receipts. Among the favorite destinations of foreign tourists, health tourism occupies a very important place. In the years to come, this form of tourism will be even greater, being one of the largest sources of income for our country, which is one of the countries with very rich climatic resources in Europe. We have spa resorts with great tourist potential, if they would run to the standards demanded by modern tourism, but many of the accommodation structures require major or even capital repairs. Europe as our country is in an accelerated process of demographic aging, the elderly being the most important target group for health tourism. In addition, the purchasing power of a person over 50 is now superior to 30% of that of other age groups. Seniors hold 50% of household net income in Western Europe.

2. Description of balneo-tourism resources in Romania

• Mineral waters

If we refer to cold mineral waters, their specter is quite large and comparable to the well-known water minerals in Europe. In the group of oligomineral waters (with a total mineralization below 1 gram per liter) are mainly Călimănești-Căciulata, Olănești or Slănic Moldova.

They are used both internally and externally, with various therapeutic effects: diuretics, anti-inflammatory, anti-spastic, muscle relaxants. Alkaline and alkaline-mineral mineral waters (containing at least 1 gram of dissolved salts per liter) are used, for example, in Bodoc, Malnaș, Slănic Moldova, Borsec, Covasna, Zizin, Sângeorzu de Mureș, Vâlcele, Buziaș or Lipova. In their case, the range of treatable conditions is very wide: gastro-duodenal, liver, gallbladder, allergic, dermatosis, calcium metabolism disorders. The chlorine-sodium or saline mineral waters are mainly characterized by the presence of sodium and chlorine ions, and secondary and other chemical elements. The most famous resorts, where these waters are used by washing the salt masses, are concentrated around salty lakes to Sovata, Cacica, Praid, Ocna Sibiului, Ocnele Mari, Ocna Mures, Ocna Sugatag. Among salty waters other than chloromagnesium or chlorocalcic, also include Black Sea water, which has a total mineralization of approximately 15.5 grams / liter of salts.

In these cases, the treatable diseases refer primarily to internal cure by inhalation, but especially to external cure dedicated to the therapy of rheumatic, post-traumatic, neurological, arthritis, circulatory, gynecological disorders. With regard to carbonated mineral waters containing at least 1 gram of CO₂ / liter, they form mofetic alveoli, widely developed in geological formations in the vicinity of former volcanoes. In Romania, over 1,500 locations of this type were recorded in the Maramureș area, Căliman-Gurghiu Mountains, as well as in the Vatra Dornei area. Other locations are related to the Apuseni Mountains (the most famous place is at Geoagiu Bai) and the Western Plain (Tinca, Lipova, Buziaș etc). Beneficial consequences are noted in the treatment of digestive, urological, circulatory diseases, through internal or external cure. With a content of at least one milligram of titrable sulfur / liter of water, sulphurous mineral waters are mainly bound by sulphates of gypsum formations in the Eastern Carpathians and Getic Depression.

In the resorts such as Govora, Călimănești-Căciulata, Olănești, Herculane, Pucioasa, Mangalia or Săcelu, these waters are used together with some of their mixed character, the latter also containing chlor-alkali, carbon-carbon, alkaline-calcium, magnesium compounds. The beneficial curative effects are manifested in the therapy of digestive, hepato-biliary, respiratory or cutaneous diseases. In the diverse palette, as well as composition and therapeutic effects, there are also sulphated mineral waters, generally hypotonic, noted for the presence of the sulfate anion. These, in turn, may be predominantly sodium or magnesium. Their exploitation is done through internal cure, due to the choleric, cholecysto-kinetic and purgative effect, in numerous spa treatment bases: Slănic Moldova, Sărata Monteoru, Vața de Jos, Amara, Ocna Șugatag, Bălățești, Mirrors, Govora, Călimănești. Another special category is feruginous mineral waters, which usually contain carbon dioxide (CO₂)

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A special category is the numerous therapeutic lakes in Romania that have a particularly important therapeutic interest. These lakes are classified in salted, liman or plain. According to the therapeutic properties, the most important in terms of effectiveness and number of treated diseases are: Techirghiol, Amara, Sarat Lake, White Balt, Ursu and Lake Complex in Ocna Sibiului.

• **Therapeutic sludge**

In Romania there is a long tradition of using sludge for curative purposes. Depending on their content, plasticity and consistency, they were classified as: sapropelic (Amara, Salt Lake, White Balta) - located at the bottom of mainland lakes, Techirghiol and salt lakes (Sovata, Ocna Sibiului); minerals - formed by sedimentation of carbonated, calcium, ferrous, sulphurous, salted salts (Govora, Geoagiu Bai, Turda, Sarata Monteoru, Sacelu, Bazna); peat - which are organogeneous deposits formed by the decomposition of vegetal remains on the bottom of some swamps under the action of microorganisms (Poiana Stampei, Mangalia, Imeni-Covasna).

Their use is the external treatment, the wraps, mud baths, local lubrication, the most popular resorts are: Techirghiol, Bazna, Sovata, Amara, Ocna Sibiu, Wah, Ocnele Govora.

• **Therapeutic gases**

Emissions of carbon dioxide are known as "mofet", in which the radon gas is composed. Their use is only in external cure, in the treatment of peripheral circulatory disorders, hypertension, nervous system disorders or rheumatic diseases. In this respect, Romania is one of the few European countries with important therapeutic gas resources, used in the Eastern Carpathian resorts: Tusnad, Covasna Balványos, Borsec, or Banat in Buziaş. Until now, if we are considering the estimate of reserves, the quantity used in the balneal bath by specific arrangements is still modest. The second category of therapeutic gases are "solfatarele", ie natural emissions of sulfur hydroxide (H₂S), in mixture with carbonic gas and sometimes with radon in special grottos. Among the most famous are the ones from Turia - Pucioasa Cave and Harghita (Băile Harghita and other neighboring sources).

• **Therapeutic salines**

In this respect, there are several underground spaces in our country with famous special arrangements, where the saline climate is used to treat respiratory diseases, especially in bronchial asthma. Spa treatment called "speleotherapy" is practiced predominantly in the salines of Praid, Târgu Ocna, Cacica, Slănic Prahova or Turda. Black Sea Coast In the seaside, there are three natural therapeutic factors used for therapeutic purposes in so-called "free balneotherapy": wave massage (thalasotherapy), sand, harnessed by psano therapy (sandbags or walking through hot sand - thermotherapy), marine aerosols. They are formed by waves breaking and evaporation of marine water, and the treatment consists in their inhalation for respiratory disease therapy.

The natural factors enumerated could also contribute, by their variety, to bio-climatic factors, with a special incidence and variety. Virtually all areas of the main bioclimatic factors in Europe are found in different areas: the exciting steppe and seaside bio-climate (for helium-marine cure); sedentary bio-climate indifferently recommended to people with overwhelmed states and patients who can not bear the stress of climatic factors; bio-climatic tonic-stimulant mountain (to improve cardio-circulatory, respiratory activity, balancing the central nervous system, metabolism and to increase immunological capacity); micro-climate of salines and caves, favorable for chronic obstructive airway diseases.

3. Methods of assessment

In our country there are 160 resorts and spa resorts with mineral resources, of which 24 are considered of national importance with recognition also at European level. The 24 stations of national importance were hierarchized on the basis of the classification system in Romania according to the degree of their endowment. This kind of classification can be considered limited and unrealistic, reflecting the endowment of a moment of spa resorts, usually incomplete and especially insufficient for the complex and rational use of the spa resources. Due to this, in order to have a real image, it is necessary to align to the international system for the assessment of the resorts, which makes a scientific and objective hierarchy of the spa resorts in particular.

The evaluation of the spa and the hierarchy of the resorts in the context of the general spa treatment and in detail on the treatment profiles is beneficial both in tourism and socio-economic. This assessment must be made taking into account the objective factors that characterize the spa offer, first of all the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the therapeutic mineral and environmental substances; the endowment with tourist structures that allow the valorisation and development of the spa function, the tradition of their valorisation, the degree of endowment with elements of general and tourist infrastructure and the impact of the weekend cuturism. The qualitative assessment of the spa resort offer is synthesized by the tourist attractiveness index, which can be calculated on the basis of the factors that define it, each having a certain weight in total attractiveness of the resort, considered 100%:

- therapeutic minerals 30%
- ambient and anthropic media 20%
- opportunities to capitalize on development 10%
- trading of 3%
- Accessibility 6%
- Access 5%
- infrastructure 5%
- Tourism 10%
- concerns of general interest 4%
- impact at the end of the week 3%
- other forms of tourism 4%

Based on the calculated attractiveness indices, a hierarchy of spa resorts can be made on the one hand and depending on their pathological profile on the other. In both cases the hierarchy does not overlap with the current classification of spa resorts in resorts of national, regional and local interest, which mainly concerns the volume and the degree of endowment of the resorts, as well as the duration of their exploitation (permanent or seasonal)

4. Directions for the development of the Romanian spa tourism

The strategic directions for the development of spa tourism in Romania can be supported by the strengths of the tourist areas and proposed to improve the weaknesses of the poorly developed regions in order to increase the competitiveness on the national tourism market:

1. Modernization of tourism infrastructure;
2. Development of tourism products ;
3. Promotion of tourism ;
4. Developing human resources in the tourism sector ;

5. Support the development of sustainable tourism.

5. Opportunities and limits of development

Customers are becoming more and more keen to benefit from an intimate, non-interior, self-centered framework, but be open to an outer space of calm and natural balance. In this regard, he prefers the authenticity of nature and the ecological wellness cottage, immersed in forest, instead of the major infrastructures that value the state-of-the-art technological equipment.

In fact, this preference is in line with the more general tendency to seek natural tranquility, an increasingly rare and increasingly active asset in the ever-urbanized, ever-connected, technologically. Thus, destinations that can offer "peace of mind" have a major competitive advantage that they capitalize through communication. So, the Baltic countries show the sanogenic virtues of ecotourism, their traditional cottage tourism in the woods, near the lake. Finland has a campaign of tourist promotion with the motto "Silence Please". There are more and more accommodation structures located in isolated areas, relying on the attractiveness of the quiet and curative virtues of simple living in the middle of nature.

For example:

- ♣ Fogo Island Inn, located on an isolated island in Newfoundland, Canada, focuses on offering and communicating around the concept of self-reliance: "To be given back".
- ♣ In Italy, Miramonte Boutique Hotel (Meran, South Tyrol) offers forest therapy treatments
- ♣ Hotel Forsthofgut in the Alpine region of Austria has a spa treatment area called "wald SPA" and offers besides treatments based on natural elements in the forest (wax, resin, wood, herbs, etc.) and guided bathing in the woods and walks on bare forest paths.

The advantage of Romania offered by virgin forests and the pure natural environment, more and more known internationally, can be used to develop a New wellness offer with national brand potential.

6. Conclusion

After a period of decline due to inadequacy of supply and specific products to the new requirements and mutations in the motivational plan - balneary tourism has become a major and increasingly dynamic segment of the international tourist market in recent decades, with its important social and economic effects. To this sector, more emphasis is being placed on the developed countries and the tradition of balneo tourism, important material and human resources, a deepening involvement of science and technology, the provision of tourist and medical services of a complex and high quality invoice qualitative level in order to meet the vital needs of modern humans, generated by the evolution of living conditions and the health of the population.

7. References

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