

Seaside Tourism in Romania

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Abstract

Seaside tourism is an important form of tourism that involves capitalizing on natural resources (water, sand and sun). The capitalization from the tourist point of view of these natural resources implies the existence of the technical and material base materialized in accommodation units, in dining units and in leisure and entertainment units, but also the existence of the labor force.

In Romania, seaside tourism has a central place in the tourist activity because in this area is found the largest accommodation capacity. After 1990, seaside tourism in Romania has experienced a downward trend due to factors such as: low quality of services, inadequate management of natural resources, the existence of a low-skilled and insufficiently motivated human resource in terms of salary. At the same time, the seaside tourism in Romania is characterized by an accentuated seasonality, which generates great problems for the providers of tourist services in this area.

Key words: seaside tourism, tourists, accommodation units

J.E.L. classification: L80, L83.

1. Introduction

Seaside tourism is an important form of tourist activity that takes place by harnessing natural resources: sun, water and sand. Unlike other forms of tourism, seaside tourism is characterized by a high seasonality because it is dependent on natural factors.

Seaside tourism is closely linked to the coastal area. The coastal zone is where the processes of the sea and the land interact, resulting in a great diversity of landforms and scenery. At least a third of the world's population are estimated to live on or near the coast, so tourism is but one of many economic activities making demands on its resources (Boniface & Cooper, 2009, p.46).

For Romania, the Black Sea seaside is another important tourism point. The season starting officially on the 1st of May, or otherwise known as Labour Day, when many prefer to run away for just one weekend and spend this special day on the sandy beaches from Dobrogea Country (Stanciulescu & Lee, 2011, p.181).

2. Literature review

Tourism usually denotes forms of recreation that take place beyond a specified distance from the home or in an administrative jurisdiction different from one's place of permanent residence (Heath & Wall, 1992, p.4).

In Foster's view, there are five types of tourism: recreational tourism, cultural tourism, historical tourism, ethnic tourism and environmental tourism. Recreational tourism is where mass and popular-package tours, involving substantial sized groups, seek mainly sun-sea-sand and fresh air or sporting activities of various kinds (Foster, 1985, p.20). In other words, seaside tourism is seen as a form of recreational tourism.

Other authors consider seaside tourism to be a form of sunlust. Thus, sunlust is a form of tourist activity in which natural factors (sun, water, snow, green areas) are the main motivations for travel. (Stanciulescu *et al*, 2002, p.180). Sunlust travel normally calls for facilities for a longer stay and for recreation and much of it equated with resort holidays (vacations) (Medlik, S., 1993, p.140).

Seaside tourism is also considered a form of mass tourism. Mass tourism imposes significant demands on an area for the supply of services with which tourists are familiar, such as comfortable accommodation, good water, sewage and electricity supplies and a wide variety of catering and entertainment services to suit their tastes (Laws, E., 1991, p.12).

The capitalization of natural and anthropic tourist resources implies the need for a specialized labour in the provision of tourist services. Thus, the human resource is the one that determines the quality of the services offered in the case of seaside tourism and consequently determines the intensity of tourist flows to the seaside as a tourist destination.

3. Research methodology

The analysis of seaside tourism in Romania is performed using statistical data targeting the tourist reception structures with existing accommodation functions on the seaside and in Constanta County, the number of Romanian and foreign tourists arriving on the seaside and in Constanta County and also the number of tourists arriving in accommodation units by comfort categories.

4. Seaside tourism in Romania

The flat Black sea coast forms part of the Dobruja region and is scenically the least interesting part of Romania, but offering broad, gently shelving beaches and a holiday season lasting from May to September, it has become the main destination for foreign holidaymakers, and accounts for the majority of all bedspaces (Boniface & Cooper, 2009, p.354).

Romania's main sea resorts are concentrated on 45 miles of fine sand beaches and include Mamaia, Eforie, Neptun, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn and Mangalia (<http://romaniatourism.com/black-sea-resorts.html>).

The importance of seaside tourism in Romania is reflected by the existing accommodation capacity as well as the capacity of accommodation in operation. Because Constanta County has the most tourist resorts on the Black Sea coast, it is important to analyze the accommodation capacity in Constanta County. These data are presented in table number 1.

Table no. 1 Touristic accommodation capacity in the period 1990-2018, in Constanta County

Year	Existing (places)	In operation (thousands places - day)	Indices of net using the touristic accommodation capacity in operation (%)
1990	149442	23387	53,2
1995	121196	12124	56,6
2000	122598	9572	50,2
2005	121067	10939	40,3
2010	124643	9966	31,8
2011	83751	11329	29,7
2012	84690	10657	35,7
2013	85756	9979	34,3
2014	87496	10618	34,1
2015	87848	11059	37,8
2016	85285	10149	44,8
2017	84157	10448	45,3
2018	85418	10376	48,3

Sources : INS, DJS Constanta: Anuarul-Statistic-al-Judetului-Constanta-2019.pdf, p.117;
<https://constanta.insse.ro/anuarul-statistic-al-judetului/anuarul-statistic-al-judetului-constant/>

The analysis of the data in Table no.1 highlights the following aspects:

- There is a decrease in existing accommodation capacity from 149,442 places in 1990 to 85,418 places in 2018, which is a decrease of about 43%. This decrease is based on the removal from the tourist circuit of many accommodation units that were owned by the state and at the same

time a significant decrease in investments made in this tourism sector;

- In the case of the accommodation capacity in operation, there was a decrease from 23,387 thousand places per day (in 1990) to 10,376 thousand places per day (in 2018), which represents a decrease of 55.6%. This is a significant decrease that reflects the decline of tourist activity on the coast, including in Constanta County
- In the case of the index of net utilization of the accommodation capacity in operation, there is a decrease from 53.2% in 1990 to 48.3% in 2018.
- The largest decrease was registered in the period 2010 - 2011 as an effect of the economic crisis registered in that period and which also affected the tourism sector on the Romanian Black Sea coast.

Table no. 2 Tourist accommodation activity in the period 1990-2018, in Constanta County

Year	Tourists (thousands)		Overnight stays (thousands)
	TOTAL	Foreigners	
1990	1696	133	53,2
1995	1043	84	56,6
2000	758	44	50,2
2005	821	109	40,3
2010	803	48	31,8
2011	845	46	29,7
2012	953	55	35,7
2013	860	48	34,3
2014	884	51	34,1
2015	1021	59	37,8
2016	1163	61	44,8
2017	1236	62	45,3
2018	1312	63	48,3

Sources: INS, DJS Constanta: Anuarul-Statistic-al-Judetului-Constanta-2019.pdf, p.117;

<https://constanta.insse.ro/anuarul-statistic-al-judetului/anuarul-statistic-al-judetului-constant/>

If we consider the activity of tourist accommodation in Constanta County, from the analysis of the data from Table no. 2 the following aspects can be deduced:

- In 2018, compared to 1990, the number of tourists arrived decreased by 22.6%. A significant decrease in this number took place between 2000 and 2014 and is due to factors that have negatively influenced the demand for tourist services on the Romanian Black Sea coast, both for Romanian tourists and for foreign tourists.
- In the case of arrivals of foreign tourists in Constanta County, including on the Romanian Black Sea coast, there is a decrease of 53%, which indicates an inadequate policy in terms of attracting foreign tourists to this tourist destination.
- In the case of overnight stays, there was also a decreasing trend, respectively a decrease in overnight stays from 53.2 thousand to 48.3 thousand, a decrease due to the significant reduction of the number of tourists arriving on the seaside, including in Constanta County.
- Significant decreases started in 2005 and continued until 2015 when there is an increase in the value of the analyzed indicators, but below the value recorded in 1990

These decreases in the values of the indicators analyzed in the period 1990-2018 indicate a decrease in the existing accommodation capacity in Constanta County, including the Romanian Black Sea coast.

These decreases, reflected negatively in the number of tourists who arrived on the Romanian Black Sea coast, generated many problems for tourist service providers, in terms of revenues, investments and employment.

Table no. 3 Arrivals of tourists in the establishments of touristic reception with functions of touristic accommodation, on the Romanian seaside, in the period 2006-2018 (The Municipality of Constanta excluded)

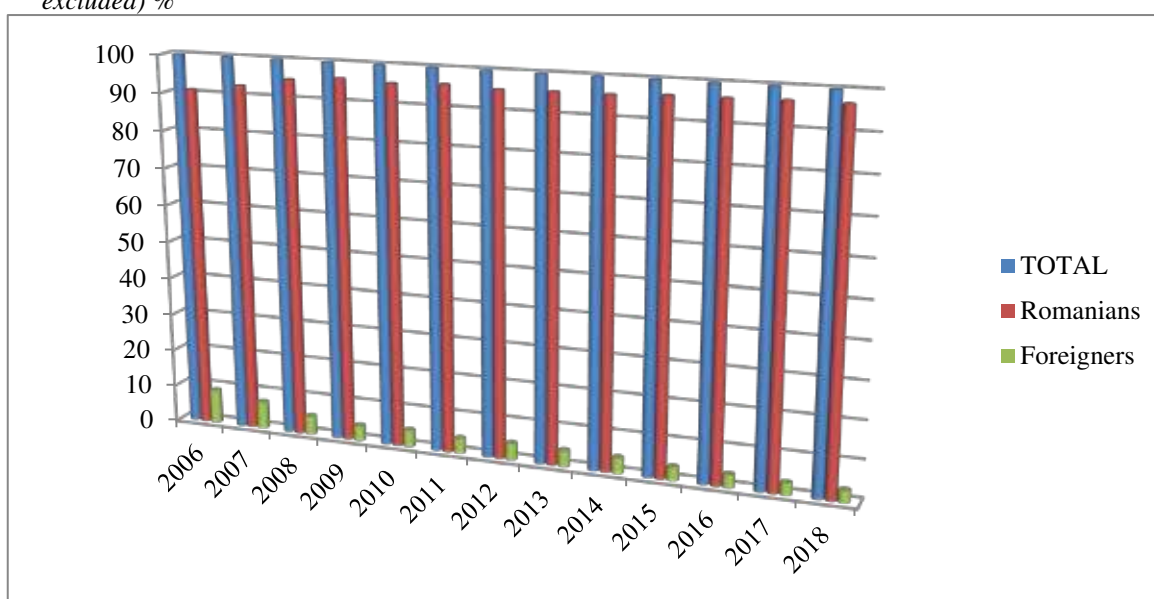
Year	TOTAL			TOTAL %	%	
		Romanians	Foreigners		Romanians	Foreigners
2006	686502	624690	61812	100	91,0	9,0
2007	796162	737971	58191	100	92,7	7,3
2008	832589	791020	41569	100	95,0	5,0
2009	788356	756749	31607	100	96,0	4,0
2010	702566	671182	31384	100	95,5	4,5
2011	735881	706882	28999	100	96,0	4
2012	804198	767830	36368	100	95,5	4,5
2013	728748	697208	31540	100	95,7	4,3
2014	747103	715778	31325	100	95,8	4,2
2015	821659	792039	29620	100	96,4	3,6
2016	977386	942987	34399	100	96,5	3,5
2017	1049970	1016287	33683	100	96,8	3,2
2018	1111431	1076121	35310	100	96,8	3,2

Sources: INS, Romanian Tourism Statistical Abstract, 2007, p.40; 2008, p.40; 2009, p.40; 2010, p.46; 2011, p. 46; 2012, p.42; 2013, p. 40; 2014, p.38; 2015, p.38; 2016, p.38; 2017, p.38; 2018, p.38, <http://www.insse.ro/cms/ro/content/alte-publicatii>;
INS, DJS, Anuarul Statistic al Judetului Constanta 2019, p.119, <https://constanta.insse.ro/anuarul-statistic-al-judetului/anuarul-statistic-al-judetului-constant/>

Regarding the arrivals of tourists on the seaside, according to the data in Table no. 3, there is an increase in the total number of tourists between 2006-2018. Thus, the total number of tourists who arrived in in the establishments of tourists' reception, on the seaside, increased by over 400,000 tourists in 2018 compared to 2006, which represents an increase of 62%. The increase in the total number of tourists is due to the increase in the number of Romanian tourists by 72% in 2018 compared to 1990, respectively by over 450,000 tourists.

If we take into account the number of foreign tourists who arrived in the tourist reception structures with accommodation functions on the seaside, there is a decrease in their number by over 26,000 tourists in 2018 compared to 2006, ie a decrease of 43%.

Figure no. 1. Arrivals of tourists in the establishments of touristic reception with functions of touristic accommodation, on the Romanian seaside, in the period 2006-2018 (The Municipality of Constanta excluded) %



Source: Table no.3

From the analysis of the data from Table no. 3 and Figure no. 1, regarding the share of Romanian and foreign tourists in the total number of tourists arriving on the seaside in the tourist reception structures, the following aspect is found, namely: the share of Romanian tourists increased from 91% in 2006 to over 96 % in 2018 and the share of foreign tourists decreased from 9% to 3% in 2018.

In other words, seaside tourism in Romania is dominated by Romanian tourists while foreign tourists have a very low share in this tourist destination.

Table no. 4 Arrivals of tourists in the establishments of touristic reception with functions of touristic accommodation, by category of comfort, on the Romanian seaside, in the period 2006-2018 (The Municipality of Constanta excluded)

Year	TOTAL	5 stars	4 stars	3 stars	2 stars	1 stars	Not classified
2006	686502	7848	53008	99971	89718	112600	23357
2007	796162	8631	94335	138165	411463	123424	20144
2008	832589	9644	87986	147359	426726	141558	19316
2009	788356	11402	92446	135755	410513	117100	21140
2010	702566	8984	88556	127330	360910	105782	11004
2011	735881	14059	116380	188423	325806	73897	17316
2012	804198	17897	142817	267466	305643	52766	17609
2013	728748	15147	142083	287974	219460	45547	18537
2014	747103	16760	117281	307921	240790	48891	15460
2015	821659	20429	142745	312809	267410	67017	11249
2016	977386	26662	199764	372628	316474	53541	8317
2017	1049970	22867	269677	396040	307044	48780	5562

Sources: INS, Romanian Tourism Statistical Abstract, 2007, p.40; 2008, p.40; 2009, p.40; 2010, p.46; 2011, p. 46; 2012, p.42; 2013, p. 40; 2014, p.38; 2015, p.38; 2016, p.38; 2017, p.38; 2018, p.38, <http://www.insse.ro/cms/ro/content/alte-publicatii>

The analysis of the data in Table no. 4 highlights the following aspects regarding the number of tourists staying in accommodation units by comfort categories for seaside tourism in the period 2006-2017:

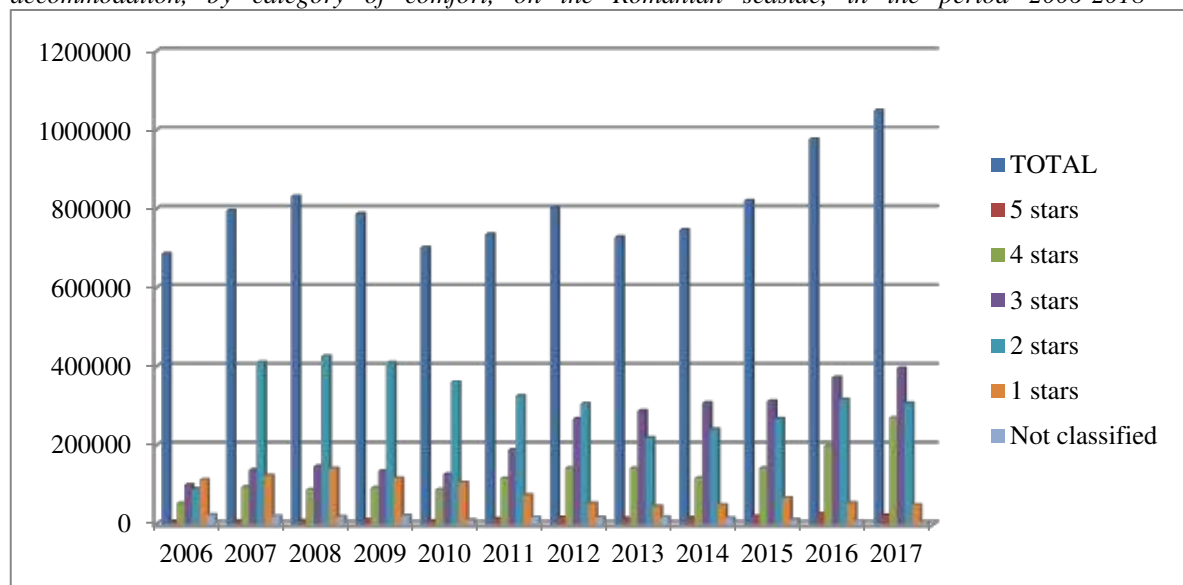
- There is an increase in the number of tourists, in the analyzed interval, for the comfort categories of 5 stars, 4 stars, stars, 3 stars and 2 stars;
- In the case of accommodation units classified at 5 stars, the number of tourists increased by 1.9 times, in the case of 4 stars accommodation units increased by 4.08 times, in the case of 3 stars accommodation units increased by 2.96 times, and in the case of 2 stars accommodation units the number of tourists increased 2.42 times. Thus, it is found that the highest increase of tourists accommodated in accommodation units by comfort categories is registered in the case of accommodation units classified at 4 stars, which means an upward trend for this comfort category in the analyzed interval;
- In the case of accommodation units classified at 1 star, the number of tourists decreased by 56.7% in 2017 compared to 2006, which means a reorientation of tourists towards a higher category of comfort regarding accommodation services;
- The decrease of the number of tourists accommodated in the unclassified units by 76% in 2017 compared to 2006 is a positive aspect aimed at reducing the number of unclassified accommodation units and increasing the safety for tourists, due to the use of tourist services in units classified by comfort categories.

Regarding the share of tourists accommodated in the establishments of touristic reception with functions of touristic accommodation, by category of comfort, on the Romanian seaside, in the total number of tourists in the period 2017-2006, the following aspects can be deduced (Figure no. 2):

- Although there is an increase in the share of tourists staying units classified at 4 stars from 1.14% in 2006 to 2.17% in 2017 these accommodation units have the lowest share, which means that they cannot meet the needs of tourists on this market segment especially in the case of foreign tourists;

- For accommodation units classified at 4 stars, there is an increase in the share from 7.72% to 25.68%;
- For accommodation units classified at 4 stars, there is an increase in the share from 14,56% to 37,71%;
- For accommodation units classified at 4 stars, there is an increase in the share from 13,06% to 29,24%;
- In the case of accommodation units classified at 1 star, the share of tourists accommodated in total of tourists decreased from 16.4% to 4.64%, and in the case of non-classified units decreased from 3.4% to 0.82%, which represents a change in the decision to purchase accommodation services from the point of view of the comfort category;
- These aspects highlight the fact that, in 2017, in the case of the seaside tourism, the accommodation units classified at 3 stars and those classified at 2 stars hold 67% of the total number of accommodated tourists. This increase is due to the stimulation of domestic tourism by granting holiday vouchers.

Figure no. 2. Arrivals of tourists in the establishments of touristic reception with functions of touristic accommodation, by category of comfort, on the Romanian seaside, in the period 2006-2018



Source: Table no. 5

5. Conclusion

Following the analysis of seaside tourism in Romania, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- Although Romania has a high potential in terms of natural resources, they are not sufficiently exploited in terms of tourism. This phenomenon is also registered in the case of seaside tourism, a phenomenon reflected in the number of tourists staying on the seaside.
- Seaside tourism is a mass tourism based on domestic tourism and not on foreign tourists and therefore it is negatively reflected on the foreign exchange earnings obtained from tourism.
- The number of tourists on the seaside is underestimated because, in reality, the number of tourists is much higher due to the functioning in the underground economy of accommodation units not registered in the tourist circuit and consequently not classified by comfort categories.
- The low number of superior accommodation units classified at 5 stars and 4 stars as well as the lack of hotel units that are part of integrated hotel chains generate a small number of foreign tourists to this tourist destination.

- As seaside tourism has a pronounced seasonal character, the providers of tourist services aim to obtain a maximum profit in a very short period of time by practicing high tariffs and an inadequate quality of services, which translates into a small number of tourists, especially in the case of foreign tourists. In these conditions, the increase of the occupancy of the accommodation units and implicitly the increase of the number of tourists from this tourist destination implies an attractive policy from the point of view of the prices practiced, of the services offered but especially regarding the quality of tourist services.
- The chaotic, sometimes abusive construction on the beach had a negative impact on the natural resources that are the motivation for tourists to travel to the Romanian Black Sea coast.
- The inefficient promotion of seaside tourism, including seaside tourist services, often inconsistent with reality, has led to the orientation of both domestic and international tourist flows to other competing tourist destinations.

In order to recover the activity and capitalize on the seaside tourism potential, action must be taken to increase investments for the infrastructure specific to seaside tourism, but also to protect the natural resources specific to this form of tourism, in order to ensure sustainable tourism on the Romanian Black Sea coast.

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