

## Management Strategies for the Recovery of the Romanian Tourism Industry in the Covid-19 Pandemic Context

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### Abstract

*The Covid-19 pandemic is one of the biggest health crises that seems to have not yet been resolved. Although the vaccine against the virus is an important step towards a return to normalcy, it still seems quite difficult to achieve it at the present. In this situation, the tourism sector, which has suffered enormously, must find a way to recover and continue to function in one way or another. Measures and restrictions have been put in place to prevent the spread of the virus and in the end on getting back to life before, but as this is currently not possible, we need to adapt, reorient, develop new strategies or methods to continue to exist and develop. So is tourism. This article presents the international and national pandemic situation and how it has affected tourism and the economy as a whole.*

*As I mentioned, it is important for tourism to find a way to continue to function, adapting to the pandemic times. For this to be possible, methods and strategies, plans and regulations are needed to stabilize tourism businesses and give tourists the confidence to travel again. Thus, by studying the existing situation at national and European level, an analysis was made of strategies that could provide citizens with the possibility and safety to travel and strategies for relaunching tourism, established at the level of the European Union and implicitly applicable to Romania. Each member state of the European Union must make individual efforts for the recovery and relaunch of tourism, especially since Romania also needs development strategies and adaptation to the requirements of the European market.*

**Key words:** tourism, Covid-19 pandemic, restrictions, economy

**J.E.L. classification:** Z3

### 1. Introduction

COVID-19 (coronavirus 2019) is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. The virus was first detected in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, at the end of 2019, spreading at a very high speed around the world. Due to the serious situation created, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a state of health emergency on January 30, 2020. On March 11, a month and a half after the declaration of a state of health emergency, due to the fact that the disease had overcome the epidemic situation, it has been declared a pandemic state. Due to the novelty of the disease, there were no medicines or vaccines to protect people against the virus at that time, so the measures taken then were focused on distance and social isolation. Currently, although there is a vaccine against COVID-19, the virus has been unstoppable, affecting millions of people and causing hundreds of thousands of deaths. On the other hand, measures based on social distancing, isolation, restriction of all transport and other areas of activity have caused an unimaginable economic crisis worldwide. Of course, among the affected economic sectors is that of tourism or especially that of tourism.

For most countries in the world and for many of the member states of the European Union, tourism is a major contribution to the economic and social structure. Tourism has the capacity to provide jobs and vital incomes. In many regions, tourism is the main economic activity, with no other sources of employment. Thus, the tourist ecosystem was severely affected. Although tourism is not the main pillar in the Romanian economy, its contribution is very important. During the pandemic, many

employees in the tourism sector lost their jobs, sales and profits fell, contributing to the economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This research presents the comparative situation of the last three years (2019-2021) regarding the tourism activity in Romania and shows the main measures and strategies taken by the Romanian government, but also at European and international level, as well as the initiatives taken by entrepreneurs in the field and hoteliers to carry out the activity in the most prosperous conditions possible. Research on the impact and recovery of COVID-19 on hospitality in Romania is conducted on the basis of data, contributions, conceptual reflections and empirical research currently available, which shows that the pandemic is not yet under control. Therefore, the situation is unpredictable and research is essential to help restore tourism and its associated industry.

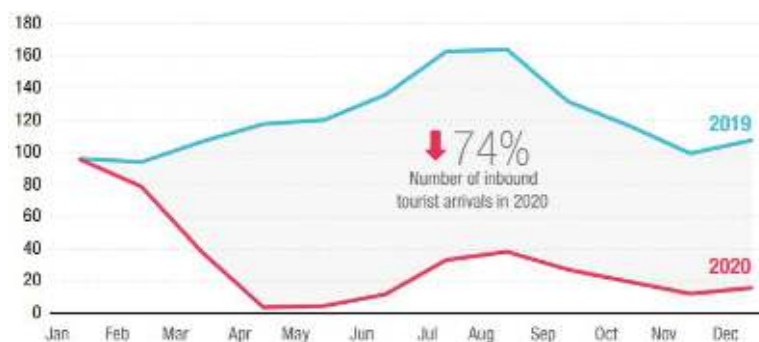
## 2. Theoretical background

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have had and continue to have devastating effects on tourism around the world and implicitly in Romania. Crises are quite common events in tourism, many destinations being affected by natural or man-made crises for which resilience and mitigation tactics and strategies have been developed over the years (Ritchie, Jiang, 2019). The crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic is unique and totally different in many ways. Firstly, the decline in travel, hospitality and tourism has been global (UNWTO, 2020b). Secondly, the economic collapse was dramatic. Thirdly, the current crisis has the potential to bring fundamental changes in many tourism segments, and fourthly, the end of the crisis is not in sight, although the emergence of the vaccine should have been the solution to the general crisis caused by the pandemic.

Vaccines are a critical part of the solution, albeit with considerable uncertainty, even once access and distribution issues are overcome. Although it is effective in limiting severe cases and deaths caused by the virus so far, it is not clear that current vaccination efforts completely stop the spread of the infection. There are people who are reluctant to receive the vaccine. On the other hand, people who have received the vaccine tend to be less responsible for other preventative measures. The possibility of lowering the effectiveness of vaccines against new variants of COVID-19 adds another level of concern. However, a major challenge today is the unequal availability of vaccinations and the low number of vaccinated people in many countries, including Romania.

Tourism was most affected by the application of travel restrictions due to COVID-19. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), almost every country in the world has implemented various travel restrictions, such as travel bans, visa controls and quarantine upon arrival in the country (UNWTO, 2020). In this context, tourism was suspended internationally between April and May 2020. Arrivals of tourists from around the world fell by 74% in 2020.

Graphic no. 1. International tourist arrivals



Source: UNCTAD based on UNWTO.

Being an economic sector of major socio-economic importance, tourism provides jobs and livelihoods for many informal workers in developing countries. The Covid-19 pandemic had a very negative effect in this regard. UNWTO (2021) estimates that there are 100 to 120 million jobs in

tourism. Given the impact on tourism, the decline in international arrivals has caused a huge loss of GDP in 2020 and continued to cause losses in 2021.

The European Union and its member states have provided both financial and other support to the tourism sector. One of the important actions taken is the EU digital certificate for Covid, which harmonizes, at Union level, vaccination evidence, Covid-19 test results and certified recovery from COVID-19 disease. However, despite efforts to harmonize travel rules at Council level, EU member states still apply different rules for travelers.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the European Union has taken steps to provide financial support to tourism businesses. In this respect, flexibility has been provided under state aid rules, so that member states can introduce guarantee schemes for vouchers and liquidity. The European Union continues to provide liquidity to businesses affected by the crisis through a coronavirus investment initiative, which is administered jointly with member states.

Tourism can also receive support from the Recovery and Resilience Facility (part of the Next Generation EU), which also aims to mitigate the economic and social impact caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The member states of the European Union are responsible for drawing up individual national plans for the recovery and resilience of the allocation of funds for the rehabilitation of tourism during this period. Tourism can be recovered both through tourism-specific measures and through horizontal measures relevant to all sectors. Some actions may include: renovation of tourism infrastructure; investing in clean mobility and improving connectivity to tourist destinations; providing training for tourism entrepreneurs, workers and destination managers; or supporting the digitalization of public administrations responsible for tourism policy. (Niestadt M., Re-starting tourism in the EU amid the pandemic, 2021).

### **3. Research methodology**

The research methodology is based on the analysis of the existing situation at European and national level, both from a statistical point of view and from a legislative point of view. In this regard, statistical data was reviewed regarding the arrivals and overnight stays of Romanian and foreign tourists during the period analyzed according to official data at national level, as well as the legal provisions on security measures against COVID-19 and on improvement strategies. of the tourism situation during this period.

We have identified and analyzed the strategies to ensure the citizens the possibility and safety to travel and strategies for relaunching tourism, established at the level of the European Union and implicitly applicable to Romania as well. An analysis was made of both the measures identified both nationally and internationally to help tourism businesses and to recover the economy.

All data analyzed in the research were taken from official documents at national and international level, so that the information provided is as accurate as possible.

### **4. Findings**

Arrivals from the tourist reception structures in September of 2021 amounted to 1,072.5 thousand tourists, increasing by 35.0% compared to those of September, 2020. Out of the total number of arrivals, in September 2021, the arrivals of Romanian tourists in the structures of tourist reception they represented 86.9%, while the foreign tourists only 13.1%.

Regarding the overnight stays in the tourist reception structures in September 2021, they amounted to 2,389.4 thousand, increasing by 25.0% compared to those in September 2020. Out of the total number of overnight stays, in September 2021, the overnight stays of Romanian tourists in the structures of tourist reception they represented 87.7%, while the overnight stays of foreign tourists registered a percentage of 12.3%.

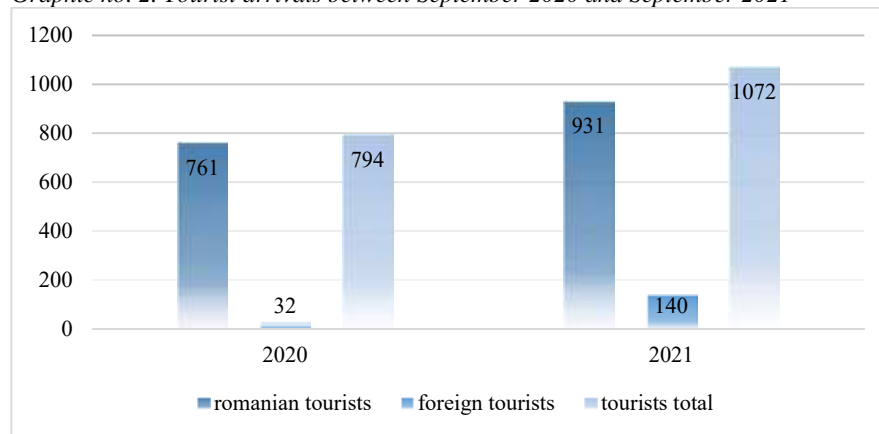
Table no.1. Arrivals and overnight stays in tourist reception structures with accommodation functions - September

	ARRIVALS			OVERNIGHT STAYS		
	September 2020 -thousand-	September 2021 -thousand-	September 2021 compared to September 2020 %	September 2020 -thousand-	September 2021 -thousand-	September 2021 compared to September 2020 %
Total	794.5	1,072.5	135.0	1,912.0	2,389.4	125.0
Romanian tourists	761.7	931.65	122.3	1,839.4	2,095.5	113.9
Foreign tourists	32.8	140.9	429.6	71.6	283.9	404.8

Source: INSSE

The average length of stay in September 2021 was 2.2 days for Romanian tourists and 2.1 days for foreign tourists. The index of net use of tourist accommodation, in September 2021, was 31.7% of total tourist accommodation structures, increasing by 5.4 percentage points compared to September 2020. (Press release, September 2021, National Institute of Statistics)

Graphic no. 2. Tourist arrivals between September 2020 and September 2021



Source: made by the author based on INESSE data

#### 4. Measures and strategies for the recovery of tourism during the COVID-19 pandemic at European level

The crisis caused by COVID-19 has forced hospitality companies to adapt and change their operating strategies. Given that the pandemic has generated high levels of uncertainty, rapid responses have been and are needed to cope as well as possible with negative impacts. However, both previous research and the current situation have shown that there are no optimal preparations and solutions for a crisis situation in the hospitality industry. In the face of the economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of restrictive measures have been taken to prevent the spread of the virus, as well as measures and strategies to maintain and recover tourism and stabilize the economy, both internationally and nationally. These measures have been complemented by specific actions by hotels and tourism entrepreneurs.

The actions and measures taken address two major issues: the restrictions imposed to limit the spread of the virus and the attempt to stop the COVID-19 pandemic, and economic measures that provide tourism with strategies and funds to create safe destinations that will allow the tourist sector to recover.

The European Commission aims to support all EU member states in resuming normal social life and tourism. Romania complies with the general restrictions and measures taken at the level of the European Union. However, each member state has the possibility to establish its own measures on

the basis of the common principles, proposals and recommendations of the European Commission, depending on the epidemiological situation in the country.

Table no. 2. Strategies to provide citizens with the opportunity and safety to travel

Measures	Actions
<b>Restoring free movement in safety conditions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Communication "Towards a step-by-step and coordinated approach to restoring free movement and lifting internal border controls";</li> <li>➤ Replacing measures and restrictions as the circulation of the virus is reduced;</li> <li>➤ Lifting restrictions, first in areas with a low epidemiological situation.</li> </ul>
<b>Restoring transportation in safety conditions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ taking coordinated and risk-based measures;</li> <li>➤ adoption of specific measures for each area;</li> <li>➤ providing safe public transport options.</li> </ul>
<b>Resumption of tourist services with a minimum of health risks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ protection of tourists and the workforce;</li> <li>➤ adopting flexible measures depending on the local epidemiological situation;</li> <li>➤ ensuring a balance between restoring tourism services and protecting public health;</li> <li>➤ adoption of sanitary protocols in tourist accommodation structures.</li> </ul>
<b>Using the technology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ providing access to real-time information on borders, travel restrictions and recommendations and available services;</li> <li>➤ monitoring and limiting the spread of the virus through digitalized applications.</li> </ul>
<b>Protecting people's rights</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ providing support by the European Consumer Centers (ECC) network for cross-border bookings and purchases;</li> <li>➤ providing transparency in booking procedures.</li> </ul>

Source: made by the author on the basis of information obtained from the Communication of the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Brussels, 2020

According to the European Commission, through the *Guide for the progressive resumption of tourism services and for the sanitary protocols in the tourist reception structures*, actions and measures for the gradual resumption of tourism activities must be taken in safety measures. Thus, the Commission established the following criteria to be considered before deciding to relax the restrictive measures: (1) the low incidence of COVID-19; (2) the existence of sufficient sanitary capacity; (3) the existence of surveillance and monitoring systems; (4) the ability to test and track contacts; (5) the existence of communication and coordination mechanisms.

Strategies for relaunching tourism both at European and national level are based on relaxing or lifting restrictive measures. Tourism also needs financial support in order to stay in the market and to be able to relaunch itself once health restrictions are lifted.

Table no. 3. Strategies for relaunching tourism

Measures	Actions
<b>Solving the liquidity crisis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ the adoption of state aid for the granting of direct grants, loans or guarantees;</li> <li>➤ redirecting cohesion funds to provide liquidity to SMEs in the tourism sector;</li> <li>➤ stimulating additional investments to strengthen resilience;</li> <li>➤ channeling funds to investments aimed at regaining the trust of tourists.</li> </ul>
<b>Offering travel vouchers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ providing travel vouchers as a viable alternative to reimbursing canceled holidays</li> </ul>
<b>Saving jobs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ mitigation of the risks of technical unemployment;</li> <li>➤ supporting tourism workers to find a new job in the shortest possible time;</li> <li>➤ increasing the level of competition through European funds.</li> </ul>
<b>Promoting local tourism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ online promotion;</li> <li>➤ offering vouchers.</li> </ul>

<b>Collaboration with partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ collaborations between local, regional and national authorities;</li> <li>➤ collaborations between customs officials, transport service providers, accommodation service providers and all other actors in the ecosystem;</li> <li>➤ creating coordination mechanisms for connecting European Union agencies and bodies.</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainable development strategies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ improving infrastructure and transport;</li> <li>➤ diversification of the tourist offers;</li> <li>➤ promoting tourist areas at European level.</li> </ul>

*Source:* made by the author on the basis of information obtained from the Communication of the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Brussels, 2020

In order to travel safely, The EU Guide to Health Protocols in Tourist Reception Facilities sets out measures to prevent and control SARS-COV-2 infections, as well as protocols for tourism service providers (hotels and other tourist reception facilities), with the aim to ensure the safety of tourist structures and to guarantee the health of guests and employees. The measures to protect the health of guests and employees of tourist accommodation facilities must be constantly re-evaluated and adapted, according to expertise and relevant considerations, so that the measures taken are directly proportionated to the current level of health needs.

## 5. Measures to save Romanian tourism

The Alliance for Tourism offers solutions for supporting and relaunching Romanian tourism, with immediate application (see table 1.5.) and with long- and medium-term application (see table 1.4.). The crisis situation caused by COVID-19, requires urgent measures, but also in the longer term, to help the recovery of Romanian tourism, and even more so to develop in the future this field of activity in our country. It is very important for tourism to overcome, first of all, the crisis situation, and then to change the perception of Romanian tourism and to realize the economic implications it can have. (Graphic 3.).

*Graphic no. 3. The contribution of tourism in Romania's GDP*



*Source:* made by the author based on INESSE data

Increasing the direct contribution of tourism to Romania's GDP can be achieved by increasing tourism revenues, increasing average spending per tourist and the average length of stay of tourists. It is very important to increase the number of foreign tourists but also the number of jobs. These things can be possible, firstly by taking immediate measures on the recovery of tourism during the crisis caused by COVID-19 and then by creating safe long-term strategies for the development of tourism in Romania.

Table no. 4. Measures with immediate application for the recovery of Romanian tourism

Measure	Purpose	Benefits
<b>Supporting the tourism workforce after the end of the state of emergency by prolonging the technical unemployment borne by the state and during the state of alert and also by the method of part-time work</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Encouraging the employer to retain staff;</li> <li>➤ Relieving the state social insurance budget;</li> <li>➤ Reducing the number of unemployed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Retention of employees;</li> <li>➤ Supporting entrepreneurs</li> </ul>
<b>Granting of grants to tourism enterprises affected by COVID-19, as well as granting of subsidized working capital loans and / or investment loans to SMEs and large tourism companies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Maintaining and keeping on the market the small and medium companies in the field of tourism;</li> <li>➤ Reducing the number of technically unemployed people.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Retention of employees;</li> <li>➤ Supporting entrepreneurs in the field</li> </ul>
<b>Reduction of local taxes and / or postponement of payment obligations during the period in which the tourist units were closed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Possibility to retain employees;</li> <li>➤ Maintaining companies in the field</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Retention of employees;</li> <li>➤ Supporting entrepreneurs in the field.</li> </ul>
<b>Partial or complete bearing of the costs generated by the hygienic-sanitary measures by the state</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Maintaining health and safety conditions;</li> <li>➤ Increasing the confidence of tourists and employees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Ensuring the health of tourists and employees at work</li> </ul>
<b>Stimulating tourist traffic by granting vouchers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Stimulating the demand to travel on the Romanian territory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Increasing the demand for tourism and travel in the country;</li> <li>➤ Supporting accommodation units</li> </ul>
<b>Reducing bureaucracy by digitalizing all operational processes in the field of tourism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Process efficiency</li> <li>➤ Achieving better accommodation control;</li> <li>➤ Efficient analysis of tourist data.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Employee and tourist protection;</li> <li>➤ Increasing guest satisfaction;</li> <li>➤ Optimizing and streamlining operational processes</li> </ul>
<b>Adaptation of legislation for remote work</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Efficiency of the employment relationship;</li> <li>➤ Retaining employees in travel companies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Administrative adaptation to the specifics of tourism;</li> <li>➤ Streamlining and optimizing administrative activities.</li> </ul>

Source: made by the author on the basis of official information existing at national level

We must note and acknowledge that Romanian tourism has, in general, even without the coronavirus crisis, very great shortcomings. Although Romania has a huge natural potential, the objectives for the development of tourism are never reached. Due to the deficiencies at the managerial and economic level, there is a very small number of foreign tourists, the services offered within the Romanian tourism not being close to those of the developed European countries. The alarming situation of Romanian tourism requires more than taking immediate measures regarding the Covid-19 pandemic, requiring radical and medium and long-term measures aimed at the intelligent use of natural resources, obtaining funds for the development of tourist areas and for the implementation of management programs that raise the level of quality of tourist services.

In the table below are presented some proposals for measures with long-term application through which the reset and development of Romanian tourism can be achieved. Their purpose is to change the position we have on the tourism market within the European Union, attracting foreign tourists and occupying an important place in the country's economy. (see table 1.5.).



Table no. 5. Proposals for measures with long-term application for the reset of Romanian tourism

Measure	Action	Benefits
<b>Declaring tourism by Government Decision as a strategic and priority economic field</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Signing of a NATIONAL PACT for tourism, through which the Multinational Tourism Development Strategy should be agreed by all political parties</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Changing market position;</li> <li>➤ Greater contribution to the country's economy.</li> </ul>
<b>Establishment of the National Advisory Council for Tourism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Ministerial Order proposing the new criteria for the functioning of the National Tourism Advisory Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Authority and credibility;</li> <li>➤ Stimulating associativity.</li> </ul>
<b>Financing the activity of Destination Management Organizations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Introducing the local promotion tax for all economic actors of a tourist destination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Providing the necessary resources for organization, development and promotion in destinations;</li> <li>➤ Sustainability and competitiveness.</li> </ul>
<b>Promoting Romanian tourism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Romania's registration in the relevant bodies of world tourism in order to play an active role in these institutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ know-how transfer;</li> <li>➤ easy implementation of EU decisions on tourism</li> </ul>
<b>Digitalization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Reducing the budget apparatus, by eliminating positions without performance and without relevance;</li> <li>➤ Creating a platform for interaction between authorities and the private sector - for transparency and efficiency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Reducing the costs of the budget apparatus;</li> <li>➤ Streamlining public policies;</li> <li>➤ Increasing confidence in public authority.</li> </ul>

Source: made by the author based on the information from the “Tourism Alliances” Project, 2020

## 6. Measures for hotels, restaurants, tourism entrepreneurs

The rules established at both European and national level require structures operating in the field of tourism to implement safety and protection measures for tourists and employees, which aim to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Table no. 6. Public health measures adopted in tourist accommodation units

Measure	The purpose of the measure	Actions taken
<b>Risk communication</b>	Tourist safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Elaboration of a training plan with measures applicable at the moment of opening the tourist units;</li> <li>➤ Establishing concrete measures for the periods of stay of the guests.</li> </ul>
<b>Staff training and management</b>	Safety and health of tourists and employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Knowing and observing the sanitary measures imposed to limit the spread of the virus;</li> <li>➤ Staff training on essential measures to prevent and control the virus.</li> </ul>
<b>Informing guests</b>	Protecting tourists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Information on the instructions in force issued by the authorities;</li> <li>➤ Ensuring the availability of guests' contact details if they are suspected of being infected with COVID-19</li> </ul>
<b>Physical distance</b>	Limiting the spread of the virus and protecting tourists and employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Ensuring physical distance in tourist units, according to the provisions in force;</li> <li>➤ Establishing a maximum number of guests, authorized by law;</li> <li>➤ Cancellation or restriction of entertainment events.</li> </ul>

Source: made by the author on the basis of official information existing at national level



Measures applied in tourist accommodation must be so that to minimize the possibility of transmitting the virus. Therefore, they need to establish strategies for the prevention and control of infections, following the recommendations of the health authorities. Tourist reception units must provide training to the staff on the procedures applicable to the prevention and control of the spread of the virus, as well as to the management of COVID-19 cases. It is necessary to limit the number of guests that can be received in an accommodation unit according to the physical distance instructions. There are also many other hygiene rules: the existence of disinfectants, physical distance, online registration, etc.

Hotel management to establish a training plan in consultation with local public health authorities. This plan includes prevention and control measures against COVID-19. Management also provides staff training and forming in COVID\_19 infection prevention and control procedures. A very important thing is to limit the number of guests so that physical distance is guaranteed. Disinfection products must be provided at the hotel reception and physical separation must be ensured. Digitized solutions should also be considered for scrutiny and reception operations.

As for restaurants and dining areas, the number of guests and physical distance must also be limited. Furthermore, optimal ventilation and regular cleaning of system filters must be ensured and air recirculation must be reduced so as to minimize the spread of COVID-19 virus.

## **7. Discussions and conclusions**

In conclusion, it can be said that the epidemic caused by COVID-19 is the largest pandemic that has affected the world in the last hundred years and has caused devastating effects on the world, economy and social life in general affecting individual nations, especially in the field of tourism. These negative effects on tourism have been caused by drastic restrictions on travel in most countries and a reduction in the disposable income of many families, which has affected the ability to buy tourism products even after measures have been taken to isolate and restrict mobility have been eased.

In the face of this situation, the response of national institutions, especially the European Union, was prompt. The European Union has been heavily involved in relaunching economic activity in its sphere of action, providing significant financial resources to the countries most affected by the pandemic. In the same way, all nations have made an important commitment to emerge from the crisis with labor, financial and fiscal measures.

The decrease of the GDP in tourism, of the employment in tourism and of the incomes from tourism was not extremely high as a percentage (1%), representing in 2020, 1.7% of the GDP of Romania. However, given the poor tourism in a developing country such as Romania, this percentage may mean its collapse. That is why the Romanian government had to take urgent measures and mobilize in order to adopt strategies for relaunching, developing and modernizing national tourism, so as to meet the criteria of the European Union and reach a level as close as possible to tourism in developed European countries.

During this period, the hospitality industry should focus on building the confidence of tourists, strengthening their brand and adapting their operations to the so-called "new normal". These strategies could be valuable in this period and in the near future, when the pandemic is to be controlled to a greater extent.

Regarding the measures taken by the Romanian government for rescuing and recovering tourism in Romania, they are based on those established at the level of the European Union regarding the recovery of tourism, the safety of citizens to travel and strategies for relaunching tourism. All this must be adapted to the poorly developed context of Romania in terms of tourism activities. Romania needs very well-developed, complex and extremely thorough strategies to bring tourism in the country on a normal path, far from it being even before the COVID-19 pandemic.

In this sense, Romania needs investment funds, infrastructure, promotion and a lot of involvement from state institutions. Until then, however, it is necessary to establish measures with immediate application for the recovery of Romanian tourism, such as supporting the workforce, offering grants, reducing local taxes, stimulating tourist traffic, etc. It is also necessary for all HORECA units to comply with the public health measures adopted regarding risk communication, staff training and management, physical distance, etc.

The recovery of tourism in the European Union will take time, being a difficult process in this context, but with the necessary resources, we believe that things will return to normal as soon as possible. Regarding Romania, the situation is more complicated given the existence of gaps prior to the COVID-19 pandemic that affected tourism. Plans aimed at relaunching tourism strategies in Romania must take into account long-term development and promotion.

So, beyond the immediate rescue measures, we should look ahead to the future of tourism and transport and look at ways to make them more resilient and sustainable, learning from the crisis and anticipating new trends and consumption patterns related to it.

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