

## Tourism in Romania and the Possibilities of Attracting Tourist Flows

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### Abstract

*At present, tourism represents an important activity for the economy of a country, being able to make a major contribution to the economic development of that country. Moreover, tourism can be considered not only an economic activity but a way and lifestyle that is aimed at the parties involved in this activity. Tourism generates benefits for all parties involved: tourists, direct service providers (the transport service providers, hoteliers, restaurant owners, entertainment, treatment, etc.), intermediaries (travel agencies) and for residents. In this paper are addressed the concepts aimed at tourism as an economic phenomenon, as well as its importance in an economy.*

*For this, in this paper, we analyze the tourist activity in Romania, identifying the causes and factors that influenced this activity, as well as the possibilities and directions of attracting tourist flows.*

**Key words:** tourism, tourist, tourist flows

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

### 1. Introduction

Tourism is a complex activity, with many positive or negative implications on tourists, service providers, tourism intermediaries, but also on the natural, economic, social and cultural environment of a certain tourist destination. Tourism is part of the tertiary sector, of services, which is why it is strongly influenced by the human resource in this sector, which provides tourism services. Although these intangible elements are essential, they cannot function without the existence of tangible elements represented by the specific technical-material basis of tourism, but also by the infrastructure with general character, as well as by the natural and anthropic resources that can be exploited from a tourist point of view.

This is why, I think, tourism functions as a true complex, dynamic system, with a multitude of elements, with inputs and outputs. In an economy, this system cannot function independently, so it is in close correlation, directly or indirectly, with the other activities within an economy. That is why tourism functions as a genuine industry, called the tourism industry.

The tourism industry represents one of the most dynamic economic sectors. Tourism plays a vital role in creating jobs, an important consideration during any economic crisis. Tourism is a heterogeneous industry involving a complex system of activities and services (Stanciulescu & Lee, 2011, p.13)

### 2. Literature review

In the specialized literature, tourism has been defined in different ways, being developed simpler definitions but also more complex definitions, these definitions evolving with the development of society. If at first tourism was regarded as a simple phenomenon, today it is approached as a complex phenomenon, being a genuine tourism industry.

In Dictionary of Hotels, Tourism and Catering Management (1994, p.253) tourism is a business of providing travel, accommodation, food, entertainment, etc., for tourists.

Hudman & Hawkins (1989, p.4) considers that a definition would be that tourism is the sum of all the relationships arising from the interaction of tourists, businesses, tourist governments, and the host government and communities. In the conception of other authors tourism may be defined as the processes, activities, and outcomes arising from the relationships and the interactions among tourists, tourism suppliers, host governments, host communities, and surrounding environments that are involved in the attracting and hosting of visitors (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2009, p.6).

An important role in generating a tourist flow has the motivation to travel, motivation that is the basis for choosing a tourist destination. These travel motivations are presented in table no.1.

Table no. 1 Tourist motivation

Travel Motivations	Forms	
Health	Physical	Mental
Curiosity	Cultures Society or public figures Disasters	Politics Physical features
Sports	Participating Team competition Spectator Baseball Horseracing	Hunting and fishing Golf and tennis Football Track and field
Pleasure	Travel Art Music	Entertaining Gambling Honeymoon
Spiritual or Religious	Pilgrimages Religious headquarters Drama and musical productions	Meetings Historical sites
Professional and Bussines	Scientific expeditions Business travel	Conventions Education
Friends and Relatives		

Source: (Hudman & Hawkins, 1989, 39)

Other authors (Landry & Fesmire, 1994, p.10) considers that for tourists, the "profit" in choosing certain destinations is not monetary, but emotional. Tourists choose destinations that fill their personal needs:

- Culture
- Education
- Entertainment
- Health
- Relaxation
- Being with others
- Religion, spiritual enrichment

In other words, not every trip generates a tourist flow to a tourist destination. There must be at least three conditions for a person to be a tourist:

- disposable income
- free time
- a tourist motivation

The United Nations Conference on International Travel and Tourism, held in 1963, considered recommendations put forward by the International Union of Official Travel Organization (now the World Tourism Organization), and agreed to use the term "visitor"(, Holloway, 1998, p.2). The term visitor (The United Nations Conference on International Travel and Tourism, 1963, p.5; <https://digitallibrary.un.org> ) describes any person visiting a country other than that in which he has his usual place of residence, for any reason other than following an occupation remunerated from within the country visited. This definition covers:

- Tourists: temporary visitors staying at least 24 hours, in the country visited and the purpose of whose journey can be classified under one of the following headings:

- a) leisure (recreation, holiday, health, study, religion and sport);
- b) business, family, mission, meeting.
- Excursionists: temporary visitors staying less than 24 hours in the country visited (including travellers on cruise but excluding travellers in transit)

A tourism destination is a physical space with or without administrative and/or analytical boundaries in which a visitor can spend an overnight. It is the cluster (co-location) of products and services, and of activities and experiences along the tourism value chain and a basic unit of analysis of tourism. A destination incorporates various stakeholders and can network to form larger destinations. It is also intangible with its image and identity which may influence its market competitiveness (UNWTO Tourism Definitions, 2019, p.14).

Tourism plays a very important role in an economy. Thus, Page (2009, p.4-5) considers that the reasons why tourism assumes an important role, are:

- Tourism is of growing economic significance at a global scale
- Many governments see tourism as offering new employment opportunities
- Tourism is increasingly becoming associated with quality of life issues
- Global travel is becoming more accessible in the developed world for all classes of people
- Tourism is becoming seen as a basic right in the developed, Westernized industrialized countries
- In some less developed countries, tourism is being advocated as a possible solution to poverty

Attempts to encourage the development and growth of tourism activities are often desirable because tourism creates jobs and brings money into a community or country. Tourism can create greater cultural understanding and enhance economic opportunities, it may also change social structures; may place increasing demands on transportation systems, public services, and utilities; and may lead to environmental degradation (Cook *et al*, 1999, p.22).

### **3. Research methodology**

In this paper, the existing statistical data, provided by the National Institute of Statistics, are used to analyze the tourism activity in Romania and the tourist flows. Based on these data, the flows of tourists are analyzed, on the two components: domestic tourism and international tourism, in order to highlight the trends recorded during the analyzed period.

### **4. Tourism in Romania**

Romania is a country that has a huge natural and anthropic potential. There are all forms of relief, thermal resources, there are buildings with historical value, castles, traditional buildings, monasteries, customs and valuable traditions. Therefore, in Romania all forms of tourism can be practiced: mountain tourism, coastal tourism, spa tourism, nature tourism, rural tourism and agro-tourism, ecotourism, speleological tourism, business tourism, cultural tourism, religious tourism,, sports tourism, hunting and fishing, etc. However, in Romania, tourism is an activity that is not carried out at its true value, its natural and anthropic potential is not properly exploited.

Thus, after 1990, with the transition to the market economy, tourism in Romania entered a new stage. The economic, social and political instability in Romania has strongly affected tourism in the first ten years after the 1990 revolution.

The incoming tourist flows were negatively affected (the number of tourists who visited our country was drastically reduced) and the number of Romanian tourists who visited other countries increased. This led to a deficit in the trade balance.

Table no. 2 Tourists accommodated in the establishments of tourists' reception with functions of tourists' accommodation in the period 2005-2017, in Romania

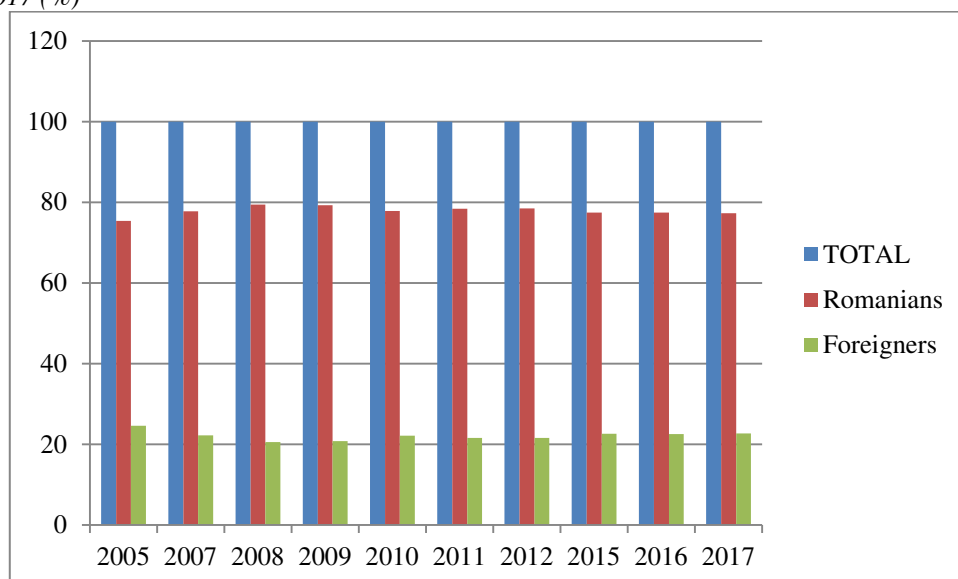
Years	TOTAL		From which:			
	Number of Tourists	%	Romanians (Number of Tourists)	%	Foreigners (Number of Tourists)	%
2005	5805096	100	4375185	75,37	1429911	24,63
2007	6971925	100	5420968	77,75	1550917	22,25
2008	7125307	100	5659416	79,43	1465891	20,57
2009	6141135	100	4865545	79,23	1275590	20,77
2010	6072757	100	4726414	77,83	1346343	22,17
2011	7031606	100	5514907	78,43	1516699	21,57
2012	7686489	100	6030053	78,45	1656436	21,55
2015	9921874	100	7681896	77,42	2239978	22,58
2016	11002522	100	8521699	77,45	2480824	22,55
2017	12143546	100	9383266	77,27	2760080	22,73

Sources: realized by author, based on data provided by National Institute of Statistics (<http://www.insse.ro/cms/ro/content/alte-publicatii>, Romanian Tourism Statistical Abstract, 2007, p.35-36; 2010, p.42-43; 2013, p.38; 2018, p.36).

From the analysis of the data from table no.2 the following aspects are revealed:

- In 2017, compared to 2005, the total number of tourists increased by 2.09 times, indicating an upward trend and an improvement in the tourist activity, both on the national and foreign tourists segment;
- Starting with 2009 and until 2011, there is a decrease in the total number of tourists to 7125307 in 2008, to 6072757 in 2010, ie a decrease of about 15%, meaning a significant decrease for this interval. This decrease is due to the reduction of population incomes and consequently, the reduction of the tourist demand as a result of the economic crisis of this period;
- After 2011, there is a continuous increase of the tourist flows so that in 2017 the maximum value was recorded for the analyzed period, both for the internal tourist flows and for the tourist flows received.

Figure no. 1. The share of Romanian tourists and foreign tourists accommodated in Romania between 2005-2017 (%)



Source: realized by author after Table no.2

The analysis of the data in Figure no.1 indicates a concrete situation for the tourism in Romania, during the analyzed period. Thus, it is found that every year the number of Romanian tourists is significantly higher than the foreign tourists. Each year analyzed, Romanian tourists hold about 77% as compared to about 23% as foreign tourists.

The small number of foreign tourists in Romania compared to the number of national tourists is based on the following causes:

- Insufficient promotion of Romania as a tourist destination from the point of view of the tourist attractions and the offered tourist services;
- Causes related to the tourist infrastructure: accommodation units inadequate from the point of view of the provided tourist services;
- Tourist services that do not correspond in terms of quality;
- Deficit of specialized labor force in the provision of tourist services;
- High prices of tourist services, non-competitive in terms of price-quality ratio;
- Lack of highways and communication routes to facilitate tourists' access to tourist attractions
- Insufficient protection of foreign tourists

## 5. Conclusions

The analysis of the tourism activity in Romania and of the tourist flows highlights the fact that Romania's tourism market is dominated by domestic tourism (over 75%). This fact is beneficial for Romania being a short-term solution for Romanian tourism, but that does nothing but move the financial flows from one area to another, within Romania. That is why Romania has to take the appropriate measures, to reduce the departures of Romanian tourists abroad and at the same time to increase the flows of foreign tourists visiting our country.

To do this, it is necessary to act in the following directions:

- Improving the quality of tourist services;
- Practicing tariffs that are competitive abroad;
- Better tourism promotion of tourism resources and attractions in Romania;
- Increasing investments in the hotel business so as to increase the number of 4 and 5 star hotels;
- Realization of investments corresponding to the construction of roads that facilitate the access of tourists to the tourist attractions in Romania;
- Changing the mentality of the tourism service providers in Romania regarding obtaining maximum profit in the shortest time and creating a long-term tourism vision;
- The stimulation of the employees in the tourism sector by increasing the wage incomes, because in Romania the level of the earnings in tourism is the lowest and therefore it reflects negatively on the quality of the tourist services.

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