The Analysis of Domestic and International Tourism and Travelling for Romania

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Abstract

Romania can claim the status of destination for exploration, leisure and travel and the recent developments prove the interest for developing and improving itineraries, and infrastructures, while pursuing to identify the most relevant issues for increasing the competitiveness of the Romanian tourism and travel sector. Our paper, by analysing some indicators relevant for the domestic tourism and travel sector attempts on one hand to identify how organisation and activities' improvement might contribute in achieving this goal, by estimating the preferences of domestic tourists as regards inbound and outbound tourism and travel. As the pandemic has played and continues to play an important role in the development of the tourism and travel sector, overall, as regards the HORECA industry, we will attempt also to draw some broad lines as regards 'guesstimating' the future of tourism and travel in the 'new normal' circumstances.

Key words: tourism, analysis, domestic, international
J.E.L. classification: Z32, Z39

1. Introduction

Considering how tourism contributes to the domestic economy, it might be regarded as a market fulfilling multiple purposes as, on one hand, availing itself of income/wealth-generating goods and services is a direct contributor to GDP while, and on the other hand, it is a jobs generator, including in the new context of the digitalised knowledge economy. Moreover, it turns into an increasingly more particular and specialised labour market, if we consider the various and still emerging types of T&T, from leisure, adventure, culture, exploration, to business, and even medical tourism. Thus, it is one of the most fast developing components of the entire services' industry, and it could play a more significant role for Romania's economy, as evidenced by other countries where T&T represent a matter of importance for the national economy, and impact at world level.

However, the current pandemic has brought to light significant and sensitive risks as it was one of the worst hit sectors, if we consider the general agreement of the experts in various fields – from medicine to public administration – who regard T&T as the prominent driver and spreader of the pandemic in the world. Hence, the T&T industry will need to reinvent and readjust itself for the post-pandemic period, while attempting to comply with the possible norms, regulations and operational conditions of the 'new normal'. In this paper, in the conclusions section, we will attempt to outline the possible path for the Romanian T&T sector, along with the one for the HORECA industry overall, as it is one of the sectors still suffering from the delayed transition, as it is pointed out in the contents of the paper.

Finally, we underpin that while for the seaside located resorts the competition in the region is strong, the situation is considerably better and has strong improvement potential for the alpine regions of the country, and the unique features that cater to the new trends in customers' experience, as we intend to highlight in the present paper.

The paper aims to launch a debate for both academia, experts and actors in the field about the three major components we regard as essential for T&T in the future: sustainability, resilience and competitiveness.

2. Literature review

The idea of travelling for exploring new territories and learning about other cultures is not new, as it was strengthened by already established commercial relationships, but also inter-cultural exchanges as result of trade all over Europe, and beyond. This trend is recorded also in the case of the Romanian Boyars (the nobility), merchants and other categories of individuals yearning for adventure and culture. This is the source of many writings about our country from Giovanni da Pian del Carpine (1180-1252) a Franciscan monk heading to the territory of the Great Mongol Khan, to Marco Bandini (1593-1650), who fulfils tasks on behalf of the Holy See in Caransebes and Moldova. Pierre Lescalopier mentions that in Moldova, Wallachia or Transylvania the inhabitants call themselves Romanians. [..] Tout ce pays la Wallachie et Moldavie et la plus part de la Transivanie a esté peuplé des colonie romaines du temps de Traian l'empereur…Ceux du pays se disent vrais successeurs des Romains et nomment leur parler romanechte, c'est-à-dire romain …", Voyage fait par moy, Pierre Lescalopier l'an 1574 de Venise a Constantinople in 1574 (Cernovodeanu, 1960, p.444).

These swift developments triggered another initiative, the setup of the National Tourism Office in the year 1926 – the main national tourism structure that manages to survive also the turbulences after the second half of the 20th century. It is the ancestor of the National Tourism Office "The Carpathians" as it is renamed during the communist period. Established initially as private body for promoting and developing the Romanian tourism it gains the status of a state-body under the subordination of the Ministry of Interior with attributions and tasks of guiding and monitoring domestic and international tourism as of 1936.

The period between the two world wars is the one when attention is paid to the touristic development of several coastal locations: Mamaia, Carmen Sylva, later Vasile Roaita and nowadays Eforie Nord and Eforie Sud, Mangalia, but also to the development of balneary spa locations like Techirghiol, Herculane, Olanesti, Govora, etc.

Unfortunately, tourism development after the Second World War undergoes a hiatus period, with contradictory evolutions, with both positive and negative components encountered also in the other countries of the Soviet bloc.

The data show that tourism was one issue of concern, and this is proven by the unprecedented expansion of tourism accommodations (Table 1).

Table no. 1 Number of tourism accommodations for leisure and balneary tourism over the period 1970-1980

Touristic entities	1970	1975	1980
Hotels	490	633	677
Hostels	34	88	105
Chalets	181	203	200
Halting places	177	187	187
Villas, pavilions, touristic boarding houses and balneary complexes	1316	1503	1561
Total	2198	2614	2730

Source: realized by author, based on data provided by *NIS, Romania's Statistical Yearbook, 1985, p. 324*

Over the first years of tourism in the period 1950-1990 the focus was on improving and exploiting the potential of the Romanian sea shore by building resorts like Neptun, Saturn, Jupiter and modernising Eforie Nord, and Sud, Mamaia. Thus, the outcome was the construction of more than 200 hotels, including other facilities like small wooden bungalows and camping locations, so that the accommodation capacity by the mid-eighties was around 155.000 places (NIS data).

As mentioned, the data need to be taken with caution, an example being the analysis of the accommodation structures in tourism, as reflected in different statistical data arguments. However, developments were not limited to the Romanian coastal potential, but also pursued the improvement in the alpine area, and all over the countries’ territory. The records show that by 1970, Romania availed itself of 2.385 accommodation entities (Murgescu, 2010, pp. 374 -380) or according to the official data of Romania’s statistical yearbook of 2198 accommodation entities. The total number of such tourist accommodation entities amounted to 3490, from among which 828 were hotels, with a total accommodation capacity of 418.944 places, out of which 168.895 in hotels by the end of 1989.

The structural reform after 1989, indeed the entire period of the nineties is marked by complex and contradictory trends of the transition period, which affect the tourism industry as well. The main issues defining the period for the tourism sector are related to the lacking institutional experience in managing the market economy, in general, and the tourism marketThe main privatisation forms were: selling patrimony assets of trading companies with state-owned capital; cessation of shares held by state-owned companies to joint-venture companies; selling shares of the Ministry of Tourism to the companies’ in the Ministry’s portfolio by using the MEBO method, or by using this method together with public tenders, and selling assets by open auction.

Tourism was thus pushed into a deep crisis over the nineties, and the return to a quasi-normal development will cover the entire 2000s, based on the findings of the Substantiation Note for the Governmental Emergency Ordinance no. 32/1998, which later will become Law 155/06.04.2001, for the privatisation of trading companies in the tourism sector. The Note is beginning by acknowledging that the privatisation process was too slow, and continues by enumerating all the errors and shortcomings of the privatisation process up to the respective date. Moreover, it provides a succinct image regarding the various negative factors that affected the process, from the political ones, to the lacking national expertise not only as regards privatisation, but also in organising and providing tourist services of quality.

The explanations vary from the decreasing attractiveness of the touristic packages for the coastal resorts, but also for the alpine and balneary ones, to the increasing higher supply of touristic offers abroad in various countries inside, and even outside Europe at competitive prices.

By the end of the first decade of the 2000s, the image changes completely, as Romania adjusts increasingly swifter to the requirements of a modern, flexible and even environmentally focused tourism. The country becomes more integrated into the new global tourism and travel trends, meaning alignment to environmental protection imperatives, to technological and digitalised progress and digital techniques for improving the quality of services, and of the integrated packages provided.

One issue identified over this period, and which continues to show that the initial difficulties in identifying proper policies, and strategies are not eliminated completely, especially as regards tourism marketing is that Romania, according to Eurostat data continues to be among the countries with the smallest levels of inbound and outbound tourism.

The present state-of-affairs indicates that the current trends are the signs of a new transition, from cultural tourism to creative tourism in the 21st century. Moreover, there are encouraging signs that the T&T sector has assimilated the lessons from the first decade of transition and privatisation and, nowadays, the sector attempts to ‘rebrand’ itself by identifying the most valuable itineraries, destinations, and possibilities of combining the various trendy types of tourism.

The period 2010 to 2019/2020 shows that T&T in Romania follows the overall trend of European tourism, while attempting to identify the best competitive advantages compared with its immediate neighbours and member-states of the EU as well, respectively Bulgaria and Hungary.

First, we mention that 2010 is the year when the financial-economic crises began to make its effects felt also in Romania. Nonetheless, domestic tourist showed interest in travelling to different areas of the country. It is also remarkable, when comparing to the next years, that the first position continues to be held, all over the period by the coastal area, and the touristic resorts located in the area.

Thus, the total number of Romanian inbound tourists was by 113841 thousand as regards tour operating agencies, and over 44% opted for the seaside, while only 3% focused on cultural tourism, 2% focused on sight-seeing in the Danube Delta, at par with religious pilgrimage. Only 22% of total domestic tourists opted for the alpine area, while 12% for spas' areas.

In the case of agencies with sales activities, for the same year, the situation is slightly different as regards the total number of customers, respectively 49584, which is less than half of the number recorded for tour operating agencies. This is the reason why, also the preference of the customers is reflected by their option to 62% for the coastal area, 18% for the alpine area, for spas' areas 10%, a comparable preference for the Danube Delta, 2%, and only 1% showed interest in cultural tourism.

The decade proves to be a profitable one for domestic tourism, on an ascending path, as the figures for 2015 and 2019 show, as the numbers increase, but also here the customers show a considerable preference for tour operating agencies as regards inbound tourism destinations, and the coastal area remains on top of the domestic travel preferences.

Leisure is apparently prevailing, as seaside resorts are known for catering throughout the period to customers who wish to enjoy beautiful leisure time, but also the nightlife of restaurants, clubs and pubs, and other entertainment activities developed by local entrepreneurs in the showbusiness.

However, also cultural tourism gains slightly more relevance over the entire period, and the number of travellers to the alpine area increases considerably, as well.

Noteworthy, is the difference in the numbers of customers for the two types of service providers and we consider that a sound tourism strategy should take this difference into account while developing plans, including the ones after the pandemic.

Concern rising is the fact that the national specific strategy is still under development, while requiring several adjustments. The latest annual country report over tourism in Romania is the one of 2017, and one issue that draws attention is that a new and better-adjusted strategy for tourism was expected by the end of 2018, and it is still not in place, even if supposed to be developed according to the Master Plan for National Tourism Development 2008-2026.

This is in line with, and substantiates again the issues that were not overcome from the preceding periods, respectively higher expertise and professionalization of human resources involved in the horizontal and vertical tourism industry and at all levels of responsibility.

The most critical issues are the human resources, with expertise at the strategical and operational level in the tourism and travel industry, respectively marketing and sales expertise, but also good professionals working directly with the customers from receptionists and maids, to cooks and waiters in the catering industry. In 2017, for instance, the deficit was estimated by 40%.

One explanation for the still slow recovery of the tourism industry could be in the fact that, like other segments of the economic active population many individuals with expertise migrated abroad after the accession, if not even earlier.

The key challenges, to which the current pandemic adds new issues, were identified in the above-mentioned annual report based on the type of priority: high, medium and low. As high priorities were counted as top priorities: the diversification of tourism destinations, the protection of natural and cultural heritage, improving the contribution of ICT and innovation, by taking advantage of the accelerated digitalisation, putting more emphasis on the collaborative economy in the tourism sector, better connectivity and transport facilities, improving education and skills in tourism. These top priorities are conditioned by improving investment in the sector, drafting more sustainable tourism offers along with improving the quality of these offers, and developing responsible tourism practices.

The necessity for better educated, skilled and trained workforce in tourism is still at high level, as many of the better trained opted to migrate and work in the tourism sector abroad.

This state-of-affairs is consistent and continued for the entire period between 2006/2007 (the year of accession to the EU) and 2017/2018, according to the available data.

One aspect that draws attention and needs further research is the discrete relationship between the attractiveness of inbound tourism and employment opportunities in the sector, as despite its huge potential, Romania hasn't managed to develop the sector to its full potential. Thus, it is noticeable that tourism sectors' contribution to total turnover was by 9.3% in 2015, and investments in tourism in 2016 were by 8.1% from total investments at national level, on decrease as compared with the preceding year. For 2017 was intended an increase by 3.5%, and an increase by 2.6% for the subsequent 10 years up to 2027.

The income and profit accumulation levels in the tourism sector are directly related to the job creation capacity of the sector, and relies on the inbound tourism consumption which is a critical issue, identified in the present paper.

If we compare this fact, with the evolution of employment in the tourism sector, some interesting conclusions might be drawn, from the ones related to the need of improving education, skills, and tourism culture of the workforce active in the sector, to the ones about developing improved marketing strategies for inbound tourism.

The explanation for the low participation of the Romanians in tourism range from the low incomes obtained in households, to the poor infrastructure for travelling to the destinations of choice.

Nonetheless, both inbound and outbound tourism activities were forecasted to record continuous growth all over the period 2006-2027, and this is also reflected by the evolution of the employment in this services’ industry. Paradoxically, as the growth of the sector was forecasted, the number of employees decreased, in direct correlation to decreasing investments, and to the slow speed and consistency registered in developing the various projects in the framework of the different programmes addressing the tourism sector.

Table no. 2 Evolution of the number of employees in tourism sector, over the period 2008-2018

Year	No. of employees (k)	Change, %
2008	658.8	5.95%
2009	542.9	-17.59%
.	518.7	-4.46%
2011	496.7	-4.24%
2012	498.8	0.43%
2013	492.1	-1.35%
2014	526.5	7.00%
2015	542.2	2.97%
2016	517.9	-4.48%
2017	539.3	4.13%
2018	532.5	-1.24%

Source: authors’ own processing after Eurostat data

The past year, 2019 could be regarded as reference for what the general perception about tourism in Romania, as the figures regarding the number of persons undertaking tourist activity continued to be low, as compared with expectation, while most were interested in enjoying the coastal resorts. For instance, the platform Hotel Guru indicated according to own analyses that most sought-after destinations were the seaside and alpine tourism resorts, according to the preferences of 88% of the customers making use of the platform, and that 12% of them acknowledged in a survey that they opt for inbound tourism because they cannot afford holidays abroad. One key indicator in shaping the preferences of domestic tourists is the price paid for one night of accommodation.

These were in brief some of the data on which we relied our analysis hereunder.

3. Research methodology

The study intends to be part of the current tourism research. The basic tools used in the analysis of Romania's domestic and international tourism are direct, complete observations on the phenomenon and partial observations, relying heavily on desk-research as regards used data.

The statistical data used has as objective to reflect the condition of the Romanian tourism based on three main inquiry directions, respectively:

- The existing and operational accommodation establishments and the services' provided, including here type and capacity of the respective tourist establishments;
- Tourist traffic statistics, about arrivals, overnight stays, average length of stay, participation to external actions, numbers of Romanian tourist abroad, type of transportation means, number of inbound Romanian tourists and incoming activities, domestic and outbound tourism.

The variables used in our research are both direct, resulting from data gathered from the various tourism and travel related statistics, to which indicators are added that were obtained by processing gathered data based on mathematical relationships.

4. Analysis of accommodation establishments and service provision in Romania

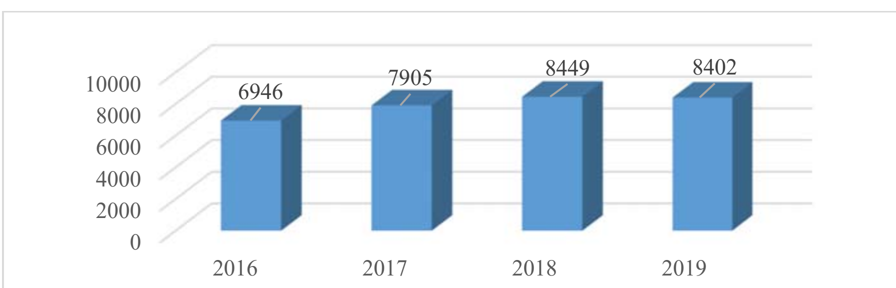
Accommodation has in its structure two prevailing types of accommodation units:

1. First component is held by the profit pursuing sector, and includes all types of accommodation and various types of catering units from restaurants to fast foods;

2. The non-profit/non-commercial sector is represented by particular types of accommodation possibilities provided by either the educational system or the religious groups.

The tourist accommodation units in Romania show for the period selected, 2016-2019 only slight variations as regards their numbers. Nonetheless, it is to be noticed that after a peak in the period 2016-2017, the agri-touristic boarding houses record a decrease in the subsequent years, and only 2800 are registered for the year 2019. The numbers of the best-represented accommodation type, respectively hotels, decreases as well in 2019, after peaking to 1633 in the year 2018. However, constant growth in the number of such accommodation units is registered for hostels, and for the touristic houselet-types.

Figure no. 1. Evolution of the number of tourist reception facilities



Source: Authors' own processing after NIS, Tempo-online

Evolution of the average index: $I = \sqrt[n-1]{\frac{y_n}{y_1}} = \sqrt[3]{\frac{8402}{6946}} = \sqrt[3]{1{,}20} = 1{,}062 = 106{,}2\%$ (1)

Evolution of the average rate: $R = (I - 1) * 100 = 6{,}2\%$ (2)

During the 2016-2019 period, the number of tourist accommodation units increased 1.06 times, meaning an average increase of 6,2%. The number of accommodation units is growing in the analyzed period due to the new investments attracted as a result of Romania's development and promotion programs

Evolution of the average index: I=$\sqrt[n-1]{\frac{yn}{y1}} = \sqrt[3]{\frac{350154}{322186}} = \sqrt[3]{1{,}086} = 1{,}027 = 102{,}7\%$ (3)

Evolution of the average rate: $R = (I - 1) * 100 = 2{,}7\%$ (4)

It is noted that in the period 2016-2019 the number of accommodation units increased by 1.02 times, meaning an average rise of 2,7%. The trend registered is a growing one, which may be due to increased tourist demand.

Analysing the evolution of the number of existing accommodation places in the tourist accommodation structures during the period 2016-2019, we can see that these are steadily increasing, which means that the Romanian tourist reception facilities are constantly growing.

In terms of catering equipment, Romania has all types of restaurants and fast-food unities.

Table no. 3 Tourist traffic

Year	Arrivals		Overnights		Length of stay
2016	T	10917361	T	25274901	2,31
	R	8445949	R	20462848	
	S	2471412	S	4812053	
2017	T	12056276	T	26915676	2,23
	R	9307004	R	21647692	
	S	2749272	S	5267984	
2018	T	12809887	T	28449128	2,22
	R	10024482	R	23144216	
	S	2785405	S	5304912	
2019	T	13268756	T	29870358	2,37
	R	10597048	R	24603394	
	S	2671708	S	5266964	

Source: authors' own processing based on data from the National Institute of Statistics, http://statistici.insse.ro/

Legend: T= total number of arrivals, R= number of Romanian tourists' arrivals,
S= number of foreign tourists arriving, Average length of stay: S=Overnights / Arrivals

The evolution of total arrivals of tourists has increased consecutively in all years of analysis. The total number of tourists' arrivals increased 1.06 times during the period 2016-2019, which means a 6,5% rise. Regarding the number of foreign and Romanian tourists, this is increasing in all the 5 years analysed. The higher number of Romanian tourists than foreign tourists is explained by the fact that Romanian tourists have money to go to their country more than outside the country, and foreign tourists prefer other countries.

The total number of overnight stays has registered year-on-year increases, and we notice a considerable leap from 2016 to the last year of analysis (2019). It shows that the total number of overnight stays increased 1.05 times during this analysed period and that means an increase by 5,7%.

Average indicators of the evolution of total arrivals:

Evolution of the average index:

$$I=\sqrt[n-1]{\frac{yn}{y1}} = \sqrt[3]{1{,}21} = 1{,}06 = 106{,}5\% \quad (5)$$

Evolution of the average rhythm:

$$\boldsymbol{R = (I-1) * 100 = 6,5\%} \quad (6)$$

Average indicators of the number of overnight stays:

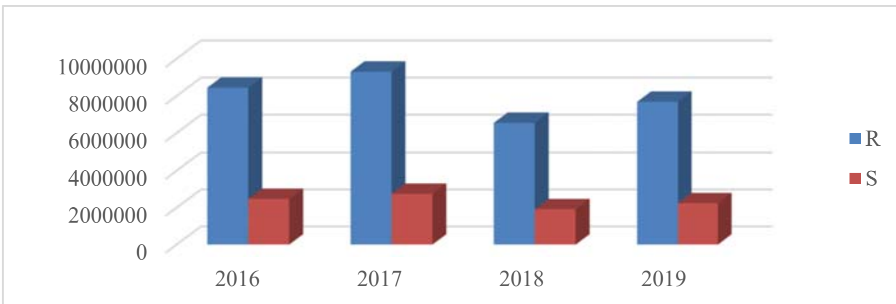
Evolution of the average index:

$$I=\sqrt[n-1]{\frac{yn}{y1}} = \sqrt[3]{1{,}18} = 1{,}05 = 105{,}7\% \quad (7)$$

Evolution of the average rhythm:

$$R = (I-1) * 100 = 5{,}7\% \quad (8)$$

Figure no. 2. The comparative evolution of the number of Romanian and foreign tourists.



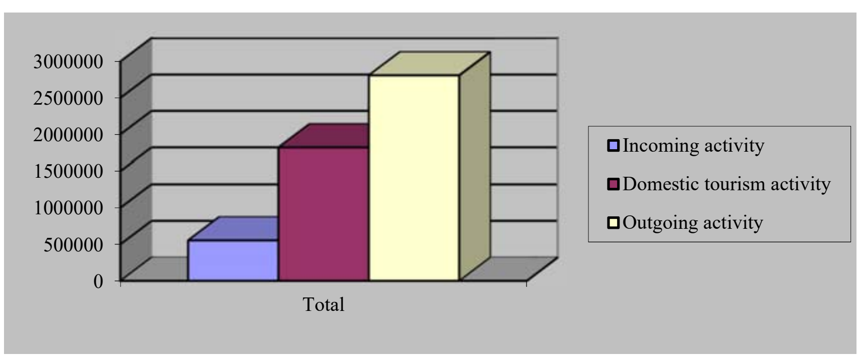
Source: authors' own processing based on data from the National Institute of Statistics, http://statistici.insse.ro/

The total number of Romanian tourists who use travel agencies has increased from year to year.

The first preference of the Romanian tourists is Greece, followed by Bulgaria and Turkey due to the seaports. The opposite is Brazil and Canada. Beginning from 2014 and until 2016, there is a steady increase in the interest of Romanian tourists for Thailand. These figures must be related, however, to the small share of population that practices tourism activities (0.5%), and to the income level, in general (see Figure 3).

Departures represent the unit of measure for Romanian visitors traveling abroad registered at the exit from the country. The same person can make several trips abroad, being registered each time with a new departure.

Figure no. 3. Number of tourists participating in incoming, domestic and outgoing tourism activities



Source: authors' own processing based on data from the National Institute of Statistics

The data processed in our model, prove to be in accordance with estimates performed not only at national level, but also at European level, confirming that the increase in Romanian's appetite for tourism and travel is still conditioned by the income of households' objectively and partly subjectively by their wish to explore, sightsee, and spent quality leisure time in foreign countries. Nonetheless, the participation of Romanians to European tourism remains, all in all low and was by only 0.5% according to Eurostat data in 2018.

The evolutions of the Romanian tourism sector are contradictory, which signals the need for improved programmes embedding projects that should be more consistent with the key priorities mentioned in the national annual reports on tourism as regards Romania. This is currently an imperative, if we take account also of the changed circumstances triggered by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic by the end of 2019 and the beginning of 2020.

5. Conclusions

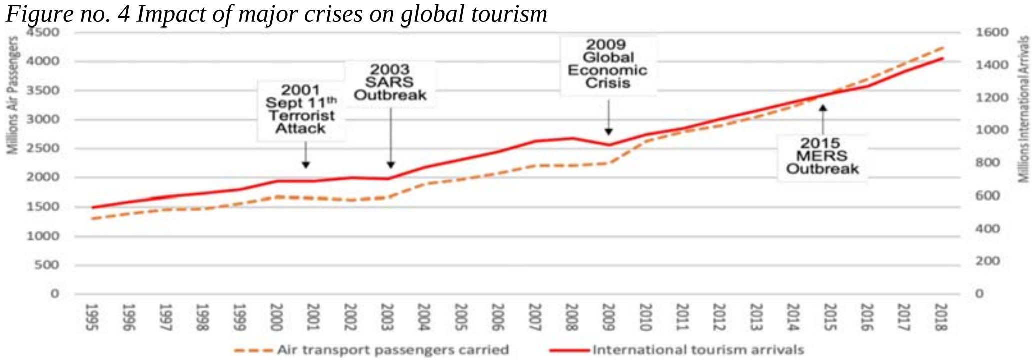
The forecasts of UNWTO, and of the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) up to the year 2019 were optimistic, sometimes entering even into contradiction with the perception of the domestic population as regards some favourite countries of destination. The debates turned increasingly heated and can be identified at the borderline between economic interests, social interests and perceptions. More and more papers focused on issues related to tourism and degrowth as the society at large, began discussing more and more about the overtourism phenomenon which seemed to enter into conflict with sustainable development goals in some sensitive issues (Koens *et al,* 2018). Leaving aside other parts of the world, especially the known 'touristic magnets' of the European continent represented by huge urban agglomerations like Rome, Venice, Paris, Madrid, Athens or Amsterdam, to name but a few, were concerned increasingly more with the high numbers of tourists travelling to these cities either for short weekend trips, or on various special occasions. It was an increasingly heated debate as the interests of the tourism sector aiming to increase incomes and profits entered collusion with the interests and the perspective of the inhabitants of the respective cities in this respect (Milano *et al*, 2019, pp. 353-57)

Nonetheless, the tourism and travel industry were thriving, and around 10% of the world GDP was ensured by the sector by 2019, which can be translated into accounting for millions of jobs in the industry, or in related industries that were suppliers for tourism goods and services.

However, the actual milestone was 2018, the 9th consecutive year of sustained growth of the industry, despite shocks, which apparently showed that this service sector was both sustainable and resilient (UNWTO, 2020).

If we analyse the link between travel and events that could have been used as warnings, we notice that the travel industry was almost imperceptibly affected by the events mentioned above (Figure 4).

Figure no. 4 Impact of major crises on global tourism



Source: authors' own processing based on data from *World Bank (2020a, 2020b)*

It could be, that this was at the root of a certain complacency, all over the world, and in Europe when the first warnings about SARS-COV2 reached the European continent. In but a few months, all decision-factors and the public were identifying the culprits as being the globalised business sector, including here the tourism and travel industry as it was – at least for some countries – an important segment of the SME sector.

Travel industry, an important chain link between residence and destination, irrespective of the travel purpose, from leisure and exploration tourism to business travel, etc., has followed the general trend of the sector, as borders began closing, at latest by mid-March, and lockdowns were decreed in almost all European countries. Instantly, everything directly, or indirectly related to the tourism and the wider HORECA industry was affected severely: air travel, road trave, domestic and international tourism, day visits, cruises, accommodation, caffes and restaurants etc. This pandemic has changed abruptly the perspective from the above-mentioned overtourism (Dodds *et al*, 2019) to non-tourism for all European countries, and all over the world.

For instance, SMEs play a huge role in the sector, and their incomes and profits are estimated to take a drop of about 60% to 80% in 2020, while the industry will not recover completely before 2024.

Another aspect worth considering is how best to assist the domestic sector on the long road to recovery, by improving existing and even designing new mechanisms to ensure the necessary financial means in the sector. This means, innovating in the field of financing mechanisms based on better coordination in the sector to which are added new means of financing like revenue pooling structures for hotels, joint equity funds for SMEs in the sector all these initiatives and variants thereof being backed by the government based on sound policies.

Finally, at this crossroads between overtourism and non-tourism, another sensitive issue is the one of statistics, and the analytics employed in the sector. It is obvious that the pandemic has annulled the value of the prediction models used before it. Now, as the sector will need to put even more emphasis on digitalization, it should be clear that the models need to be changed, and adjusted in order to be able to predict relatively correctly the demand in the post-pandemic period, but also now, as the pandemic still evolves but it became clear to economies all over the world that complete lockdown is not an option, and cannot be supported by any economy.

Romania has the opportunity of taking advantage of these changed circumstances, and should pursue more decisive steps in initiating an improved coordination in the sphere of tourism by building an operational interface for the dialogue between government and stakeholders in the sector, and that would assist also the dialogue between the most representative stakeholders so as to pool financial and other types of resources for ensuring the sustainability and resilience of the sector to the current pandemic shock. Next, the same interface could be used to address some of the key priorities, and make use of this period to improve the education, skills and qualification of the workforce in the tourism sector, including for the managerial levels, as to strengthen an improved hospitality culture at the level of the managers active in T&T. Moreover, Romania should speed up the digitalization in the sector, and develop an own analytical toolset for predicting and modeling future scenarios of domestic and international tourism for the residents of the country.

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