AN ANALYSIS OF SOME RECENT STATISTICS OF THE ROMANIAN TOURISM

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Abstract: Different indicators of the tourism activity in Romania during 2000-2009 were extracted from the database of the National Institute of Statistics (NIS) and analyzed. The evolutions of such indicators as the number of arrivals in tourism structures, number of overnights, number of tourism structures, and their accommodation capacity, were sorted both by tourist type and by the six destinations highlighted in the NIS database. Sorting by destination allowed a coarse classification by type of tourism. The analysis shows several interesting features, among which the following are notable: an impressive increase of tourism activity in the destinations Danube Delta and “other localities and tourist routes” (that excludes Bucharest and the county capital cities, as well as the spa, mountain and seaside resorts), for both foreign and Romanian tourists; an accentuated decrease, during the last years, in the seaside area. These findings show an increased preference for tourism in new areas, highlighting the outstanding potential for development of the “new” types of tourism, such as the cultural and rural tourism.

1. INTRODUCTION

According to the World Tourism Organisation (WTO), the tourism represents the largest industry in the world. However, the mass tourism has recently been much criticized for its negative impacts at the social, cultural, and environmental levels. Alternative, “new” forms of tourism have been recommended, as more efficient solutions, and for being more friendly and sustainable forms of tourism, such as ecotourism, rural tourism, and cultural tourism (Boghean and Boghean, 2006, Condratov, 2006, Petroman, 2010). The cultural tourism is especially developed in the big cities or historical centers, due to their rich historical heritage and cultural facilities. But it includes also tourism in the rural areas, where it is based on highlighting the traditions, values, and lifestyle of the indigenous communities. In this way, it is tightly woven with the ecotourism, which is characterized by a return towards the natural and original anthropic environments.

These new forms of tourism, recognized during the last decades of the XX-th century, have rather impressive growth rates; as an example, the WTO estimated that the cultural tourism represented, in 2003, about one third of the global tourism, and had a probable annual growth rate of 15%.

Romania has an outstanding potential for different types of tourism, and therefore the tourism is considered as a prioritary axis of development. On the other hand, in elaborating the strategies of development, it is important to know the trends of the evolution of the tourism during the recent years. In this study, by analyzing data from the statistical database of the National Institute of Statistics, for the time interval 2000-2009, we highlight the main aspects of the tourism evolution in

2. THE ANALYZED STATISTICAL DATA

The statistical data extracted from the web page of the National Institute of Statistics (http://statistici.insse.ro) for the latest ten years (2000-2009) concerned the following indicators of the tourism activity: arrivals of the tourists in structures of tourist receiving and having accommodation functions; overnights in structures of tourist accommodation; existing accommodation capacity; index of utilisation of the capacity of tourist accommodation. The organisation of the database allowed different types of data sorting. By using this facility, we sorted the data by the type of tourist (foreigner or Romanian), as well as by the six tourist destinations highlighted by the database. The six destinations are: (a) Spa resorts; (b) Seaside area resorts, excluding the city of Constanța; (c) Mountain area resorts; (d) The Danube Delta area, including the city of Tulcea; (e) Bucharest and the county capital cities, excluding Tulcea; (f) other localities and tourist routes. Sorting the data by these destination categories, allows a rough classification on the types of tourism that predominate for each one, namely: (a) spa tourism (treatment and recreation); (b) sun and beach tourism (seaside tourism); (c) mountain tourism; (d) ecotourism; (e) as we deal with big cities, a mixing of more types of tourism, including, for example, cultural tourism, business tourism, entertainment tourism, etc; for the big cities, it is, however, difficult to obtain data separately for the diverse types of tourism; (f) this is a very interesting category; as the big cities, and the spa, mountain, and seaside resorts are excluded, here one may have also different types of tourism, depending on the area/locality, but one may assume that the rural tourism and the cultural tourism will predominate.

3. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Figure 1 presents the evolution of the indicator “arrivals in tourism structures”, sorted by both type of tourist and destination. The upper part of the graph (a), shows the number of tourist arrivals (registration at tourism structures). For the foreign tourists: the seaside tourism registered an accentuated decrease after 2005; the tourism in the mountain area is approximately constant after 2004; the spa tourism: approximately constant, slight decrease after 2004; the tourism in the Danube Delta had a continuous growth, doubling its volume; the tourism in Bucharest and the county capital (big) cities had a continuous growth, except for the last considered year (only the average over the ten years is indicated in the figure); the tourism at destination (f) (other localities and tourist routes) had an accentuated growth (an increase by a factor of three), with only a very slight decrease in 2009. For the Romanian tourists, we see similar evolutions, again with an impressive dynamics for the Danube Delta and the destination (f). Graph (b) in figure 1 shows the same data, but presented in percentage weight form. One very
clearly observes, for the foreign tourists, the decrease for the categories “seaside” and “mountain”, taken over by an increase especially in the category “other localities and routes”, which became an important part, about 12%, of the total tourism activity. It is remarkable that this later category practically does not show the 2009 decrease that is generally shown by the others (and may be related to the economic crisis).

Figure 2 shows a similar graph for another important indicator of the tourism activity: the number of overnights in structures of tourist accommodation.

In both cases, (2a) and (2b), one observes evolutions similar to those from figure 1 (a and b), however with some notable differences. Thus, in the case of the foreigners, the seaside area tourism has a maximum value of the overnights in the years 2004 – 2005, whereafter it has an accentuated decrease, while the tourism corresponding to the destination (f) shows a permanent growth, becoming dominant over the other categories of destination. In the case of the Romanian tourists, the variations are more monotonous, but destination (f) has again a continuous growth.

One can understand better the differences between Romanian and foreign tourists, by examining figure 3, which shows the average number of overnights.
One can see, in this case, that for four out of the six destinations, the average number of overnights of the foreigners is very similar with that of the Romanians, and remained approximately constant in time, or slightly decreased. There is, however, a big difference in the case of the tourism at the spa resorts: the average number of overnights of the Romanians is larger (around 8 nights), probably reflecting the custom of fixed duration cures presented by the promotional packages. This number is smaller for the foreigners, and decreases toward a value of 4 nights, reflecting a different approach of these tourists, mainly directed towards entertainment and points of special touristic interest in Romania. For the seaside area tourism, the average number of overnights decreased both for the foreigners and the Romanians, but much more rapidly for the foreigners starting with the year 2006, a fact that generated the accentuated decrease already remarked in the previous figures (figures 2 and 3). In both cases, this decrease indicates a change in the tourists’ preferences, towards visits of shorter duration.

Another indicator examined was the number of tourism structures and their accommodation capacity (figure 4).

In this case, the destinations “Danube Delta”, “Bucharest”, and “other localities and routes” had the strongest dynamics: their number of tourism structures doubled over the time interval considered, a fact that led to an important growth in the corresponding accommodation capacity. A slower rate of increase is found for the destinations “seaside” and “mountain”, while for the destination “spa” even a slight regression took place. These trends do not always correlate with those in figures 1 and 2. For example, the increasing number of tourism structures for the “seaside” destination, led to a practically constant accommodation capacity, but this is not reflected in the number of tourist arrivals (figure 1) which drastically decreased during the recent year. A much better correlation seems to exist in the case of
destination (f) (other localities and routes) where both the number of arrivals and of overnights (figures 1 and 3) show a similar, steady increase, with that in figure 4.

Figure 4. Evolution of the number of tourism structures and of their accommodation capacity.

Source: National Institute of Statistics (http://statistici.insse.ro)

4. CONCLUSIONS

This study analyzed the evolution of several tourism activity indicators in Romania during 2000-2009, focusing on the trends observed for the six tourist destinations highlighted by the National Institute of Statistics database. The most interesting aspects of these evolutions are the following:

1) An important decrease of the tourism from the seaside resorts area, during the last years, especially manifested in the case of the foreign tourists.

2) A significant growth of the tourism for the destinations “Danube Delta” and “other localities and tourist routes”. The later destination, which excludes both the big cities and the spa, seaside, and mountain resorts areas, had the strongest positive evolution, becoming important even quantitatively, especially in what concerns the options of the foreign tourists.

Such a conclusion is particularly interesting, because it indicates an outstanding potential for development, and should be in the views of both tourism managers and national heritage managers, given that this type of destination is, arguably, the most suitable for the development of sustainable forms of tourism in Romania, among which the rural tourism and the cultural tourism.

A more detailed presentation of these results can be found in (Bucurescu, 2011).
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