

SAFE-TOURISM IN CRISIS SITUATIONS, APPRECIATIONS IN ROMANIA'S CASE

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Abstract

Economic crisis - is an intensively mediated concept during the past years- it issues with the situation when the business medium confronts with the perspective of a fundamental change, usually sudden and unexpected, that threatens to significantly disturb the present socio-economic perceptions and the daily practice.

The emergent markets are the most vulnerable in crisis, they still adapt the easiest to the actual context, counting on economic flexible domains as the tourism industry or IT and even ecological agriculture in our country's context.

The persistence of global economic crisis, but especially the touristic market fragility makes it impossible to estimate the evolution of hospitality industry for the next years. Crisis effects seem to be inevitable in the context where great tourism actors talk about consequences similar to the ones following the terrorists attacks in USA, in September 2001.

In this case it is very important to understand the stress factors that prevent the optimum development of tourism discouraging the touristic flow towards once well-known destinations. To us, regarding this fact, the importance grows as it must be admitted – with honesty, that Romania is not a touristic destination with a worldwide notoriety, not even European, but some issues like the localization outside those more and more unsafe touristic areas, the peacefulness regarding the terrorism implications and the special natural and anthrop potential, all these, might create the necessary premises for promoting a specific tourism, able to induce tourists the idea of security.

Among the difficulties that Romania confronts itself with, we only mention: unfavourable international image, precarious touristic infrastructure estate only seldom application of quality standards. We appreciate that only if these deficiencies are assumed and controlled in the immediate future, then the interest for Romanian tourism will continuously increase and safe tourism could become a tourism start over factor after the wrong starts for the rural tourism, business tourism or watering tourism.

Key words: *economic crisis, safe-tourism, terrorism, the development of touristic sector, emerging market.*

JEL classification: *D81, L83, H55*

1. INTRODUCTION

Peaceful settlement, starting 1990, of the Cold War has helped to open markets - *Free Trade* and empowerment of the regimes under Communist rule - *Free Society* (Friedman, 2000), phenomena that have accentuated the trend of increasingly stronger integration, labelled as globalization.

For the new markets work is required presence, without restrictions, of a number of participants who are in competitive relationships (Shepherd, 2007) conditioned by the existence of private property and its predominant role assertion, without thereby be denying the existence and utility of public property.

The forms of manifestation of these phenomena have diversified, and effects, especially in the globalized world, interrelate deeper and affects a lot more people (Laurian, Nicolaescu, 2004, pp 63-64).

Whether we understand or not, that we support or on the contrary, we stand in the camp of opponents (Zaharia, 2004), globalization has the unknown effects and its implications for all components of economic and social causes many streams of opinion. But each of us perceives globalization through our own vision.

Globalization is a new era, where the old paradigms and analysis no longer apply, an unprecedented global revolution (Zaharia, 2005). But global market developments suggest that globalization is increasingly characterized by the development of acute global financial markets, growth of transnational corporations and their increasing domination over national economies (Soros, 2002, p.174), became inevitable and unpredictable.

The rapidity with which globalization has covered the entire world will create profound transformation that will rearrange the politics and economy of the third millennium. There will be no national economy, when that process will be

completed (Reich, 1996). Mankind will suffer a big process of "unification", very dangerous for poor areas intent in adopting modern lifestyles.

Globalization provides in a certain measure the open and diversification markets for humanity, promote democratic values, development of tourism worldwide, shortening distances, trade liberalization, increased online dealings and stock, a greater involvement of women in society, better preservation of the individual identity and particular attention to environmental protection. On the other hand, all these advantages will occur to the extent they are managed with the utmost care and efficiency of following phenomena: migration, pollution, investment, energy and security (Barnett, 2003).

Unfortunately, globalization has created premises for risky exposure to the volatility of capital (Yusuf, 2000) - highly visible phenomenon especially when this financial crisis, and location, that decentralization - it gives it the possibility to generate macroeconomic instability.

Lack of strong institutional system to all sections of social and economic development: local, national and over national has induced financial crisis that has confused the U.S. business world in 2008 and 2009 and the globalization of today may become only a systemic cycle of accumulation of capital which could conclude only into a black crisis (Smith, 1999).

To predict economic trends of a country like Romania, is not sufficient only to analyze the data of economical cycle; it is necessary to have access to economic policy analysis (Munteanu, Ionita, 2005, p.17), to sustainable sectors, overseeing players involved and possible risks.

Become the largest global industry, tourism is often seen as a saving solution, designed to support economic development of a country and thus raising living standards (Gerea, p.71).

Touristic component developed often in extension of other activities in which companies were already involved: (Bădulescu, 2005, p. 177) major transport companies have invested in the hospitality and travel production; large building and food investors have contributed to the development of accommodation places, while some insurance or distribution companies have supported the sale through their network of touristic products.

The relative fragility of companies who active in tourism, mainly due to important foreign investment in hosting chain, the seasonality and frequency fluctuations of the exchange rate for travel agencies, determine a strong movement of concentration and integration (Bădulescu, 2005, p. 177) assimilated to the process of globalization.

Tourism is, in fact, a significant factor from the present changes and is considered the most visible expression of globalization. Among the defining characteristics of globalization in tourism (Rotariu, 2004, p. 96) can be included:

- organizing international touristic actions interest requires to overcome the boundaries of their countries and the emergence of regional structures of the global type;

- concentration of capital in the tourism infrastructure is very rapid;

- logistics need of road, rail or air is organised more frequent by regional, national or even global structures;

- the amount of necessary capital of infrastructure elements required concerted efforts of regional structures, even of the states;

- intangible nature of touristic product, determined decisively by the quality of staff employed in tourism, led first to the early development of general rules of conduct but also to strengthen the structures and supranational or international regulations;

- just as it became mass tourism emerged transnational or international institutions and settlements;

- one of the most subtle actions of globalism in tourism is huge lobby which it is made by itself. It reaches to the point that some area will not exist - just like that - as a touristic destination if the overall global travel professional technocrats have penetrated into that region;

- tourism is a global media means having all the characteristic of mass informing instruments, but with much persuasion, much higher power of convincing.

Should not neglect the fact that leisure and tourism should be seen as an essential component of post-industrial society, true elements that contributes to satisfying social needs (Rotariu, 2004, pp.190-191) with recreational connotations, sometimes reassuring ones, or related to relaxation, anti stress, leisure and good fellowship with the environment. It also includes an efficient business that can contribute to the welfare of a given region. The economic value of tourism is immeasurable because it promotes the dispersion of knowledge about a region, a community, raising the quality of touristic experience.

2. TOURISM ECONOMIC SET RIGHT IN TIMES OF CRISIS

2.1 Crisis - disturbing factor in tourism

It is very easy to accuse the lack of professionalism of staff in the tourism sector, corruption, government incompetence, poor management of European funds and the current global crisis without doing anything. Tourism updating wants to be and should be continuous. Inevitable there are tourism development periods occurring together with the material base degradation, however, Kondratieff cycles evolution in economic development suggests that such events have a repetitive character (Burciu et al, 2008) but regressive varying in temporal effect.

From today's perspective of development, long Kondratieff cycles tend to reduce the time to 35-40 years (Șchileov, 2005), a contraction attributed to the accelerated development of civilization.

Evolutionary economic waves are conditioned by several factors (Burciu, 2008) of which an important role in tourism unification have: political stability, implementation of innovation, satisfaction, actual demand and, more frequently in the beginning of this millennium, directions imposed by the major tour operators (fashion).

Tourism recovery in times of crisis requires action to improve activities by aborting socio-economic impact actions. Innovation, in this way, has a stabilization role. Diversification of lifestyles and cultural patterns, creation, imposition and acceptance of new rules means the birth of social innovation as a system of collective activity transformers (Stanciu, Hapenciu et al, 2008).

A very important element of innovation in tourism is known to be related to remodelling success factors, a process of group analysis of experiences learned from the projects or business activities, from the management activities studied (Munteanu, Ioniță, 2005, p. 64).

It now requires more opportunities for new entrants tourism agents, greater mobility of employees within the firm and between firms, more retraining (Dinu, Marinas, 2006), a counter effect of dependence

on financial markets and more investment both in education and infrastructure and research and development.

Today often refer to the financial crisis, but this is just one disruptive situations affecting tourism worldwide. Global economic context disadvantage indeed the optimum deployment of tourism activities but as the practice of quality tourism can be an extremely effective anti-crisis measure, especially in emerging economies.

In general, the crisis is defined as a time dynamic system, characterized by increased accumulation of difficulties, the outbreak of conflict tensions (Zamfir, Vlăsceanu, 1993, p.129), which makes it difficult to function normal, and starting strong pressures towards change. It is individualized as a phenomenon that can cause damage to an organization, both in terms of material loss and that of social prestige, by damaging the public image.

From a touristic point of view, a crisis is represented by any event affecting the confidence of tourists in some touristic destination, which prevents normal activity (ANT Strategy, p.105). A touristic crisis is an event or set of circumstances that may degrade / endangering trade or tourism services and products and can severely compromise the reputation of a touristic destination or region.

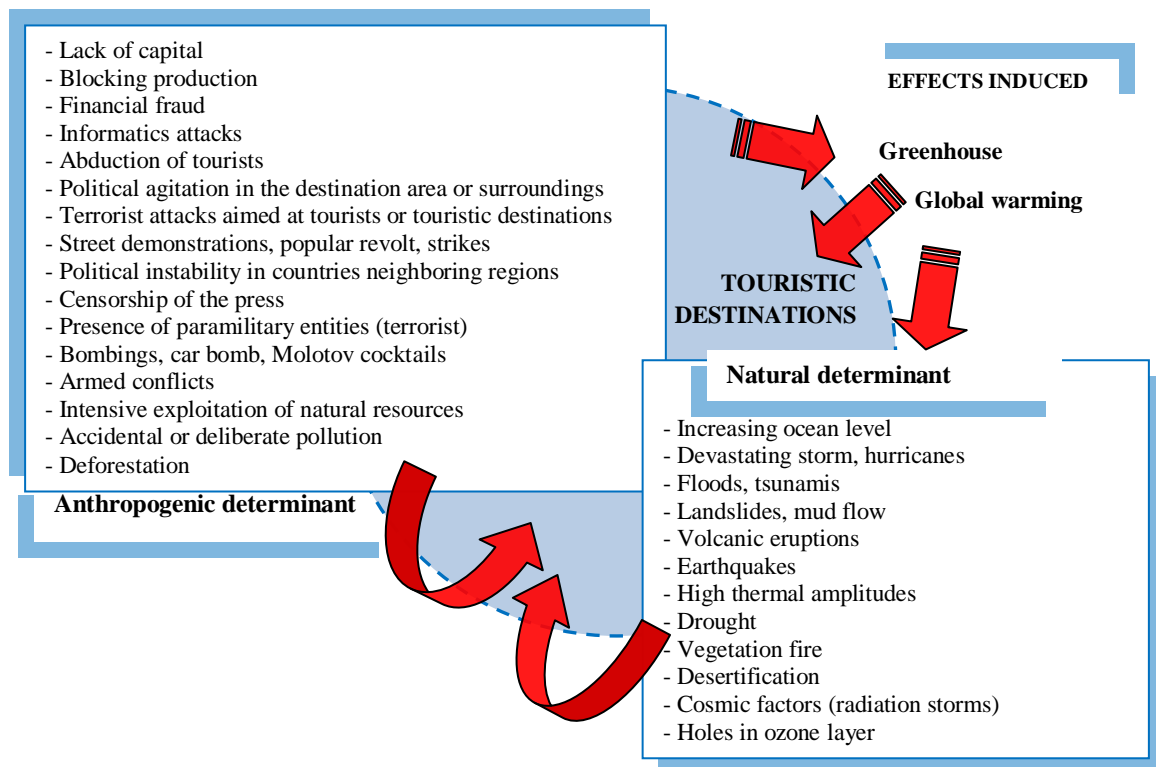


Figure 1 - Typology of disruptive factors responsible for the crises in touristic sector

Crises can be caused by disturbance from the natural environment or the diversity of human actions, in this regard is difficult to draw a clear line of demarcation between the two big specified categories (*Figure 1*), knowing that modern man profoundly influence the behaviour of nature. The term "tourism crisis" is used increasingly more for destinations whose economy suffered through immediate decrease in the number of tourists. Physically speaking, the crisis in the hospitality industry may be violent or non-violent; both crisis families can be divided into three subgroups (Newsom et al, 1993):

- created by nature;
- resulted from a deliberate action;
- resulting from unintentional acts.

Under the management aspects, two main categories of tourism related to crises can be distinguished (Rossart, 1992):

- crisis caused by events beyond the control of a management segment view. Included in this category: natural disasters, wars, terrorist activities, changes in political regimes, waves of crime, epidemics, etc.

- crisis management that results in failure or lack of measures to prevent foreseeable risks. In this category are included: inadequate strategic management, financial fraud, loss / theft of data, uninspired investment, blocking production etc.

The causes of crisis in touristic sector are diverse. Most times they are intimately related to the macroeconomic health of the country or region, changes in sectors adjacent to the hospitality industry and socio-political context. Developing economies of deep tertiary and industrialized scale of emerging economies in tandem with intensive urbanization, do nothing but increase inter-and cross-sector dependence, which causes some susceptibility to certain macroeconomic disturbances.

The effects of these processes are enhanced with the exacerbation of the phenomenon of globalization, a trend which has an impact duplicitous - positive and negative in equal measure - and that determines a strong inside conditioning, where the smallest changes can generate multiplier effects with implications for seasonal fluctuations in tourist flows.

Even if an area with great tourism potential is properly promoted or received consistently obsessive advertising, combined with the general perception of consumers of travel services specific and strong consistency of partnerships within tourism, however this can not prevent most economic crisis slippages associated local, regional or, more recently, global. In addition, not all crises occur spontaneously, mostly based on a series of failures that are influenced by elements of the most diverse in the socio-cultural or managerial and culminating in the wrong macroeconomic, strategic interests or political approach.

Pollution is also frequently responsible for the *environmental crisis*, problem facing increasingly

more modern touristic destinations (Sharpley, Telfer, 2002). The most common and also extremely simple method to sabotage tourism involves degradation of the natural environment through pollution, uncontrolled amplification of touristic and urban human intervention.

Acute effects of global warming mainly caused by enhance road and exacerbated terrorism creates a state of uncertainty that gets to the tourists and leading, ultimately, to substantive changes in behaviour and preferences of tourists.

Current range of new types of tourism, mainly by: ecotourism, rural tourism, agro tourism, cycling, trekking or geotourism, do not only increase the indispensable role of nature, highlighting the importance of local communities in an attempt to reconcile on environmental sustainability direction (Nistoreanu, 2006). Respect for nature compels us to relearn to live in harmony with the environment, to respect nature with all the resources that it has (Bran et al, 2000), strengthening the human-nature symbiotic relationship only through sustainable tourism metamorphosis. But often aggressive attitude of tourism is contrary to the principles of sustainable development and of modern tourism goals.

Worldwide manifest many risk factors and mutations that occurred in the political, environmental, economic, social and cultural domains influence global and regional security environment and also reconfigured non-military and military conflicts physiognomy.

After the fall of communist regimes in 1989 when there was a thaw in international relations tourism was given an opportunity to overall development. It is the time to complete its mass character. Involving a large number of tourists is achieved while simultaneously increasing the risks to which they may be subject (Floyed et al, 2004), the major tourist destinations thus showing a greater predisposition to certain negative actions like terrorist attacks, hostage taking, modern slavery, prostitution, drug use (Pforr, 2006), pollution, land degradation, loss of local traditions, etc.

The events that marked the past decade in the negative global development raising shy interest movement towards some areas with tourism potential include:

- increased activity of terrorist groups: Al-Qaida, the Islamic Resistance Movement - Hamas in the Middle East, ETA in Spain, the suicide terrorist attacks of fanatical Muslim, etc.;

- terrorist attacks in locations of strategic interest: New York (11.09.2001), Bali (2002), Jakarta (2003), Madrid (2004), London (2005), Egypt (2006), Bombay (2008);

- local conflict situations: in Kosovo, Tibet, Jammu and Kashmir;

- armed conflicts: the Gulf War, the offensive in Afghanistan;

- reminiscences of old civil war: Cambodia, Central America, the former Yugoslavia;
- persistence of totalitarian regimes: Cuba, North Korea, Libya, Fiji, Venezuela;
- countries affected by drug trafficking: Mexico, Colombia;
- earthquake in August 1999, with intensity of 7.8 on the Richter scale that rocked north-western Turkey causing 20,000 casualties;
- earthquake and tsunami that affected much of Southeast Asia coast in 2004, resulted in 200,000 dead;
- hurricane Katrina in August 2005 destroyed an area of 235,000 square kilometres, flooding New Orleans and causing the death of about 1,400 people;
- earthquake in L'Aquila, northern Italy, in April 2009 killing 291 people;
- vegetation fires in California, Australia, Spain, etc.;
- outbreaks of avian influenza in Southeast Asia (in 2003 and 2004) and swine flu pandemic (in 2009, which affected mainly Mexico and USA).

Rising incidence of such events led to the consolidation of a pattern of behaviour in relation to the main touristic destinations. The counterpart in recent years even a strategic reorientation is projected focused on control, surveillance and security obsession. The latest trends have in centre: destination management, destination proximity and low prices or psychological strategy in times of crisis, transport security, counter-terrorism policies, overseeing technological world in crowded spaces, to prevent panic and monitoring tourist areas with higher degree of risk and chance (Stanciu, Hapenciuc, 2009, p. 485). Once such events became permanent tourists resume their travel habits when they feel the immediate threat has passed. (McKercher, Hui, 2004, p.102) often directing toward the quieter areas. However the tourist consciousness has a certain amount of uncertainty.

To help maintain the confidence of tourists in the hospitality industry and to minimize the impact of the crisis on touristic destinations should be established in advance strategies for crisis management. Whatever the crisis, techniques to counter it are about the same.

In the long term, forecasting crises can minimize the negative impact of such failures, while allowing the authorities to promptly handle the situation and encourage the smooth conduct of the activities. Survival of tourism operators take, in this case, the seriousness with which they prepared their tactics (Burciu et al, 2008) even before the actual onset of the crisis.

2.2 Measures to counter the crisis

Clearly the way to tackle pre-crisis phase varies greatly, there was no standard course, but to counter the crisis can guarantee professional success and confidence of partners. The disadvantage is that there is always a significant dose of risk and hazard that prevents the consolidation of a certified crisis method that can ensure sustainability of entrepreneurship on the crisis.

Therefore, there should be a strategy drawn personalized greeting crisis - *crisis management*, there is cohesion and predisposition for the joint effort of a group of highly trained specialists - *crisis cell* and operate a policy of appropriate communication - *crisis communication* (Nicolas et al, 2006, p.200). Some approaches suggest six steps meant to anticipate and allow management of an inherent crisis in the tourism and travel industry [49]:

a. *Be prepared, make an action plan.*

Whatever type of crisis management strategies departments and tour operators must have prepared in advance a plan of survival / recovery that can be activated as soon as the situation tense.

b. *Build a crisis management team.*

Involving a team of experts in crisis management is more than appropriate. They must be aware that can be approached at any time for assistance. Such persons shall have the authority to make decisions and need to know how to solve a specific problem. Team shall be responsible for developing a crisis plan, viable.

c. Respond quickly but not hastily. Squeeze relations with partners, find new collaborators opportunities

In some tense situations it is desirable that the response is premeditated and not spontaneous. Initiatives taken in haste may affect long-term stability of the travel agent or, in some cases, even the reputation of that destination.

Partnership stability and firm contracts persistence facilitate the maintenance and support those involved in the touristic networks (clusters) of interest, a situation which is reflected in the quality of benefits, the tariffs and the number of tourists involved in the hospitality sector. Communication between partners is based on mutual exchange of information for the purposes of establishing a common strategy to end the crisis.

d. *Cooperate with media*

Working with the media is essential in crisis situations. Representatives of the media can tell the story / your situation, but for this you have to be willing to cooperate with them and give them the information they require in a timely manner. If it takes a refractory attitude and their information is not publicly available, effects of the crisis will not delay to occur, the situation finally putting its imprint on public image and its indirect impact on tourism activities. Touristic motivation depends to a large

extent by the positive attitude or, on the contrary, the acidity of the media.

e. Do not panic.

Panic leads to a confused state that generates a defective political crisis management. Be calm. Evaluate periodically and take your situation in a professional manner of problems that are arising. To minimize and overcome failures is imperative that all efforts be focused towards support team named to manage the crisis. Solidarity and teamwork must prevail in management problems.

f. Put the emphasis on reputation

Make yourself a strong public image, in time. In this way, when and if something adverse happens, the reputation is to cut things for your favour. During the crisis capital of confidence is based heavily on previous perception of tourists.

Good communication based on the principles of openness and transparency guarantees, in most cases the success of an effective approach to crisis management. It should also be considered:

- inter- and intra-communication;
- fair promoting;
- protection and safety of tourists and destinations;
- constant supervision of existing trends and fluctuations in major touristic markets;
- constant research of market development aimed primarily mood, safety and highlight the reasons of interest, demand and consumption of travel, time and financial budget for potential tourists, etc.

3. SOURCES OF INSTABILITY AT GLOBAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL - IMPLICATIONS FOR ROMANIA

More commonly, management of touristic destinations is an important element of control and efficient management of the impact of disturbances on tourism and travel, but very well may minimize the impact of sector tourism on the environment. A special role is given to strategic initiatives resulting in the security, touristic spatial planning, supervision and periodic inspection, environmental protection, promoting the specific settlements for the touristic area, proactive business initiatives, continuous specializing in travel for staff, etc.

3.1 Safe-tourism in crisis situations

Terrorist acts, war, natural disasters, climate hazards (weather) and incidence of disease have destabilized touristic industry in many parts of the world, highlighting the urgent need of an effective tourism management in crisis situations.

Regional security or general appreciation of the destination must be proven. Thus, for the tourist to feel safe it is needed for him to be convinced that

covered touristic destination is reliable and that there is a set of items to ensure its protection: security, surveillance, transparency of services, seriousness, hospitality etc.

Safety may be in terms of food, from a transport point of view, hospitability, based on lack of control or the most efficient management to counter full of local armed, regional or terrorist conflicts outbreaks detrimental to health tourists, epidemics or pandemics, ethnic conflict or paramilitary activity.

The impact of these factors on touristic flows requires careful consideration and slightly refined the concept of dual (Mistilis, Sheldon, 2006) for safe touristic destination. However, the criteria by which a destination is considered a risk or safe is vague and hard to set out (Rotariu, 2004).

Tourism is irrevocably linked to the concept of security. Tourism behaviour and, consequently, destinations, are deeply affected by the perception of security and the manner of safety and risk management. Moreover, the current general context has shown that security of the tourism sector is extremely vulnerable to changes in global environment. In addition, security gaps maintain the risk printing them a wave effect (Hall et al, 2003).

The concept of **safe-tourism** supposes the promotion of a touristic form that support and guarantee unconditionally the safety and sustainability of destinations, ensuring the safety of goods, of all those involved - tourists, employees in the hospitality sector and citizens alike - and the sustainability of the natural environment.

To promote the concept of Safe Tourism (Stanciu, Hapenciuc, 2009) is very important to understand which stressors drag on smooth development of tourism, discouraging touristic traffic to destinations once established (Konecnik, Go, 2008).

Often, reliable tourism products defy terrorism or weather vagaries. It is a paradox difficult to explain. Why do some destinations with high consistently uncertainty attract a large number of tourists? International assessment of purpose is sometimes greater than the risks to which the tourist is exposed (Stanciu, Hapenciuc, 2009).

Some destinations are in a perpetual crisis (Florida frequently ravaged by hurricanes, earthquakes, etc. Japan regularly jog by earthquakes). But this has not prevented them in becoming successful touristic attractions. Despite quasi permanent war, Israel achieved considerable income from tourism and for its works both Jews and Palestinians or Christians are carrying. The effort to persuade the media and public relation is huge (Rotariu, 2004, p. 107).

Though, the destinations are not necessarily the most secure because of the possibility of a terrorist attack that could have disastrous effects increase in proportion to the reputation of the destination. The most attractive destinations appear to be located arbitrarily close to the hotbeds of terrorism or armed

conflict. The example of Dubai's well known - the hottest destination early millennium Western developed the heart of the Arab world. Also, the fact that Israel is flanked by the Arab world and the geopolitical situation in the Middle East is extremely complicated, Maldives is in relative proximity to tigers Tamils in Sri Lanka, Bali is an exotic destination situated close to East Timor, all they do is support the idea that areas near the "hot points" are very attractive (Stanciu, Hapenciuc, 2009) just for adrenaline. Not be overlooked that not all tourists share this idea.

Other destinations are avoided because of lack of stability in the area. Honduras, Fiji and Venezuela although perfectly safe, because of political and military regimes are avoided, and Mexico and the U.S. are experiencing a decrease in the number of tourists due to recrudescence swine flu epidemic. Amid financial turmoil, or Las Vegas, Monte Carlo or Macau - favourite destinations of gambling and tourism business are not operating in optimum conditions, and suffer a setback.

One thing is clear, regardless of the development level all states are affected to a greater or smaller degree by the beginning of the third millennium crisis [45]. Tourism sector, one of the key areas, particularly of some developing countries, had suffered more seriously because of the global economic downturn, even if in terms of financial flows much better behaved than other sectors of economy [48].

Given the complexity of the phenomenon, WTO officials believe that 2009 could record in shrinkage of 2-3% over the previous year due to financial crisis and swine influenza [37]. It is estimated that international touristic arrivals were compressed up to 8% in first two months of 2009, bringing international tourism in the 2007 level [46].

Nationally, the effects of global economic crisis resulted in a pragmatic definition of two broad categories of tourists, those who have opted for domestic destinations and destinations cheap "all inclusive" tourists. In the last two years Romanian tourists were found in large number some touristic products or their components located in the area of "financial availability" of our country such as well-known destinations - Antalya (Turkey), Hurghada (Egypt), Tunisia - or proximity - Albena (Bulgaria), Parhelia Katerini (Greece) - recognized for modest fees charged in conjunction with high quality services on a higher level than the one provided by units on the Romanian coast. Poor quality of the Romanian tourism was charged as appropriate. Unconscious or not, Romanian tourists mainly practiced a particular form of "safe-tourism" repression marked by the desire for destinations outside the country's more attractive in terms of price and quality of service (Stanciu, Hapenciuc, 2009) but tested, in advance, in terms of safety by predecessors.

This cheap form of leisure was preferred by tourists from devoted transmitting areas - Germany, Nordic countries or Russia, one of the determinants is, without doubt, the global economic crisis. On the other hand Americans are more reluctant in the choice of holiday options, by directing it to local destinations.

3.2 Romania a possible safe-tourism destination

In recent years, major changes worldwide have led those who want to go on holiday to think well before choosing where they spend their holidays [43]. Countries that not many years ago, were credited with a greater degree of risk for travellers have become far safer than the states with stable economy and established tourist destinations.

Czech Republic, Hungary, Croatia, Bulgaria and Romania are now destinations in which almost nothing can threaten Western tourists during their holidays (Dogaru, 2005). While from the traditional areas, only Austria and Switzerland kept their "safe tourism" potential intact. By contrast, U.S., Spain, Italy, France, England, Turkey, Greece and Egypt are prone to a greater extent to terrorist acts, weather or climatic hazards [47].

Also, South - East Asia, a region with an expanding tourism in the early third millennium, kept tourists away because devastating natural phenomena (earthquakes and tsunamis), the intensification of destabilizing phenomena such as terrorist attacks (India, Indonesia), inter-religious conflicts or religious background (China, Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan, East Timor) and political regimes (Myanmar, Burma, North Korea) and Africa is almost not seen because of political and social instability in most countries, the frequent State strikes, riots, violent street events (Dogaru, 2005).

Long perceived as unapproachable destinations, the former Communist bloc countries are the new attractions of this period marked by economic and social instability. Westerners have the ability to see with their eyes "where communism lived". From this point of view, Romania and Bulgaria are undoubtedly the most accessible touristic destinations, social and economic conditions and recent accession to the European Union keeping the same, substantially, specific rural lifestyle.

Increased availability and location in relative proximity to main tourist-emitting countries (Germany, Nordic countries, Russia) and the proximity of large circum-Mediterranean destinations can successfully overcome some shortcomings related primarily to infrastructure and equipment of these two favourable safe tourism destination sites. Undoubtedly added safety is given by Romania and Bulgaria's EU membership and Euro-Atlantic structures.

In a globalized tourism and destinations perspective, at least not yet, Romanian tourism does not exist (Rotariu, 2004). This creates some economic

disadvantages. Romanian destinations are not included in the lists of large tour operators, foreign entrepreneurs show no interest in Romanian resorts although their potential is exceptional, indolence of Romanian authorities that deliberately maintaining a negative perception of foreign tourists in Romania and the lack of foreign investors favours privatization "in pieces" and poor management, and not overall investment in the state level.

There are positive aspects which are intended to be recovered. The fact that, sometimes, traditional elements are still preserves, the natural environment is exceptional, relaxing and without an increased incidence of natural hazards and Romanian cuisine has sometimes ecological connotations gives us to hope that these places may require a travel specific that can be included into EU standard patterns.

If speculate that geostrategic position is a favourable one - knowing that our country has always had a special relationship with the countries of the Muslim world - and it is known that the economic difficulties currently faced by Romania can clearly favour it from a touristic point of view as it is kept out the risks of possible terrorist attacks, all these together give our country all chances to became the main "safe tourism" destination.

Tourism Strategy of Romania will have to consider that the destinations are built both for tourists and locals. Its uniqueness makes them different from other sights, but it must necessarily develop a level of comfort and organization similar to other destinations, so that the locals but also the tourists feel at home (Rotariu, 2004, p.111).

Among the priority objectives of tourism policy of the European Union a special status is occupied by issue of regionalism in promoting regional tourism as a stimulating factor of the development of disadvantaged areas that have touristic vocation [35].

If during the last decade, Romania has not enjoyed a very good reputation abroad, this is made partly on account of difficult transition to market economy and the internationally negative publicity by intense media coverage of orphanages - reminiscent of the former regime, highlight some evidence of high level corruption and promote strongly the offenses of Romanian immigrants in EU countries. These issues have created an international vision, which distorted Romania fact that has imposed an in some terms justified resistance toward certain destinations in our country but these can be easily overcome in the absence of a disqualified touristic substrate.

Romania is not a cheap touristic destination nor oriented towards mass tourism but offers opportunities for people with adventurous sense, that other European regions do not receive much notoriety.

Authentic rural life with traditions related to grazing, traditional costumes, everyday rural activities: mowing, close hay, weeding, carpenters, coopers, etc. spirits drink or plum brandy preparation,

use of animal traction pin with no directed sets can still be found on these lands.

Monasteries in Bukovina, Maramureş and Saxon villages in Transylvania, hamlets people of Apuseni Mountains or those of Bukovina Ridge and fishery villages in the Danube Delta are among the native elements with a strong mystical and spiritual charge.

Ecotourism and active rural tourism together with safe-tourism promotion in the middle of nature is the alternative that many tourists want but suspect that they cannot find in Europe. Tourists that show interest towards such an offer should be aware and conscious that Romania gathers series of elements that may come into contact not elsewhere in a geographic area, like: the unchanged nature with very well and about to be conserved ecosystems, a very own rhythm – patriarchy - of rural humans.

Observing wildlife in the middle of the nature (bears, wolves, wild boar, storks, swallows and other birds) in the existing parks and reservations, the unique nature of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, traditions and rural gastronomy, gives to Romania tourism product a fantastic comforting potential, but it needs more concern regarding household, organizing and quality standards.

The simplicity of rural life and providential silence is refreshing for today's tourists who are tired of the complexity and stress of urban life. Only in the presence of rusticity and nature visitors found again security and total tourism happiness as an alternative to unhealthy life style, away from the cap, the commercial, superficiality and specific uncertainty of the new millennium.

Just as the promoted product is not necessarily the best - the dictum: "No more selling, the explanation for exaggerate advertising" is very present – we consider that things are similar for touristic destinations "overstated". In our opinion, we believe that Romania can become a safe touristic destination for the current uncertain times.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Amid increasing tendency of globalization, contraction of world economy in the second half of 2008 has highlighted the inadequacies and the fragility of contemporary tourism. Considered one of the strengths of the new world order, rise of tourism has received constantly support from multinational profile companies and increasing attention both at governmental and inter-regional relations that formed a true barometer of national economies, particularly for those emerging.

The vulnerability of tourism is particularly evident in the present circumstances when the movement of masses of people is at a very large scale. Excessive mobility requires some more very difficult to manage risks such as: terrorism, natural disasters,

environmental degradation, loss of traditions or other special circumstances that carry a certain risk.

Being in the shadow of the great European destinations, those in the Middle East and North Africa, Romania can only play on the practice of a complex tourism - based on the synergy of active tourism, rural, in nature and spa - in the context of economic recession and double uncertainty that established attractions are facing. In other words, Romanian tourism can only be one that ensures safe that other sites can not offer. The concept of tourism in Romania should be synonymous with safe tourism site, another option being excluded.

Activities related to hospitality industry can often generate a multiplier effect that culminates with an economic growth in regional and national levels,

ultimately contributing to the reduction or removal of existing economic imbalance. On the touristic side Romania has to exploit rural life, the chance to see Europe as it once was, in fact, a simple but viable safe-tourism form.

An European approach, full of professionalism is what Romanian tourism is missing, because there is potential but currently shows not sufficient interest and availability in recovering it constructively.

Those who showed greater responsiveness relying on innovation have won and now are big winners. Indeed, once solutions are found their implementation requires a certain degree of risk and uncertainty. But we must remember that the greatest risk of all is not risking anything.

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