

## THE ANALYSIS OF THE ASYMMETRICAL RISK IN TOURISM FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION OF A LASTING REGIONAL TOURISM IDENTITY

Associate Professor Ph.D. **Irina Olimpia SUSANU**

Associate Professor Ph.D. **Nicoleta CRISTACHE**

“Dunărea de Jos” University of Galați, Faculty of Economic, Romania

Associate Professor Ph.D. **Alexandru NEDELEA**

“Ștefan cel Mare University” Suceava, Faculty of Economic Sciences and Public Administration, Romania

Lecturer Ph.D. **Angela - Eliza MICU**

Associate Professor Ph.D. **Adrian MICU**

“Dunărea de Jos” University of Galați, Faculty of Economic, Romania

### Abstract

*In order to establish an adequate balance between tourists' welfare, the needs of the natural and cultural environment, as well as to develop tourist destinations and organizations' competitiveness, it is necessary to carry out a global and integrated approach, where all interested parties share the same goals regarding the durability of tourism and the approached challenges. The purpose of this work is to identify the factors of reduced risk having a major impact over the sustainability of the tourist region under analysis and to highlight the risk factors' connections and impact in order to minimize and eliminate them, with direct effects over the awareness of tourist industry's values. The identification of lasting development's indicators will take into account all these three aspects of the durable development of tourism, namely ecological, economical and social factors, that play a part in highlighting the real performance of a tourist destination. All these aspects are absolutely necessary for the promotion of the Danube's tourist potential, achievable through the emphasis of the relevant values from the tourist patrimony of the county of Galați. The promotion of the Danube' tourist potential presupposes a series of objectives that are subordinated to the general direction that is marked at the national level, respectively Romania's transformation into a qualitative tourist destination based on its natural and cultural patrimony, in order to correspond to the European Union standards. The new policy regarding tourism proposed by the European Commission aims at offering constant support for this industry to be able to face different challenges, by promoting also competitiveness in general.*

**Key words:** *lasting tourism, proactive, reactive, tourist identity, Danube.*

**JEL classification:** *L83*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The goal of this project is to emphasize the value of the Danubian tourism potential of Galați and the integration of tourism and image capital in the country brand concept. It is imperious necessary to fundament an evaluation and promotion model for all tourist resources that can be valorized in order to be integrated in the European system concerning the durable development (Susanu, 2007). In this way, the project objectives are focalized on: the evaluation of the Danubian sector real potential, comparative studies concerning the regional promotion methods and techniques, the attenuation of regional development dissimilitude, the public awareness concerning the contribution of each person to the preservation and the promotion of tourist patrimony.

From the methodological point of view, we realized an interdisciplinary approach, motivated by the complexity of the problems and the necessity to offer viable solutions according the new trends and orientations in the economical, technological, legislative, social, political domains. The project has

in view the augmentation of the Danube visibility from Galați region in the conditions in which at the national level we remark an acute need concerning the country brand formation and promotion. In these conditions, our study will become useful for diverse public categories: local and national authorities, tourism agencies, economical agents, large public.

By the formulation of theoretical concepts, impact models and development strategies, the project will contribute to the research profound study, the business environment stimulation and the growth of each organization and each person responsibility in order to develop the concept of durable tourism (Glăvan, 2003).

The thematic area in which the proposed subject is included, represents a new series of preoccupations at the international level, not necessarily regarding the objective – the evaluation of the tourist potential – but especially the promotion methods and techniques of this potential and the annihilation of some prejudices concerning the real possibilities of the regional tourism.

A series of functioning mechanisms concerning the social and economical phenomena when it is necessary to promote a durable tourism both at the national and local level is decrypted in this context, by means of successive and detailed analysis and then by recombination.

The scientific importance derives from the application way of some patterns, theories, techniques and procedures which are part of the West theory and practice. The scientific value also emerges from the emphasis of each element's specificity from the tourism domain – the economic environment – the social environment as well as their combinations in comparison with those similar to the other Danube countries.

## **2. REGIONAL PROMOTION'S GENERAL PLAN**

The objective is the reference to the patterns of Austria, Germany and Hungary in what concerns the promotion of the tourist landmarks that are along the Danube. Analyzing the present European context and the new tendencies referring to the necessity of a durable development, it can be observed an increase of the interest for everything that means and becomes a competitive economy based on knowledge in good time.

Thus, taking into account the prior axes marked by the Strategy from Lisbon (European Council Presidency, Lisbon European Council, march 2000), Nisa Council (European Council Presidency, Nisa European Council, march 2002) and Goteborg Council (European Council Presidency, Goteborg European Council, June 2001), Romania has in view the creation of a dynamic and competitive economy, a social integration based on the reduction of the differences regarding the economic development and the poverty, the reinforcement of the environment protection and the carrying out of a pattern of lasting development, on the basis of proactive and reactive policies.

Tourism is a dynamic industry that is fully developing, representing 4% of the community GDP, counting about two million organizations where approximately 4% of the total labour force work (around eight million jobs). If taking into consideration the connection to other sectors, tourism's contribution to GDP is estimated at about 11%, the sector assuring jobs for over 12% of the work force (24 million jobs) (Vallen, Vallen, 2005).

The new partnership concerning the cohesion in the enlarged Union has in view the following priorities in accordance with the Third Report regarding the economic and social Cohesion, adopted by the European Union:

a. Convergence: the stimulation of the economic increase and the creation of new jobs in the member states and the less developed countries;

b. Regional competitiveness and the occupation of the labour power: the anticipation and encouragement of changes;

c. The European territorial Cooperation: the insurance of a unitary and balanced development in the whole Union.

According to the post – adhesion strategy project of the Romanian Government, the tourism is mostly outlined among the domains which favor our country in the competition on the European Union market, the country brand being based on it. Next to other well known destinations, the Danube could be part of the tourist and cultural component of Romania's country brand, in good conditions of promotion.

A problem of local and national importance Romania is confronted with, is represented by the different degree of revaluation of the tourist potential, taking into account the importance of the support capacity and the regional economic disparities elimination. This situation is the result of a complex of conditions regarding the inadequate exploitation, respectively the difficult accessibility, tourist services and general utilities of low quality, insufficient diversion programs and labour work in a tourist occupational structure that is inadequate to the market demand and quantitatively insufficient. The activity of tourist promotion is added to all these, which is now under dimensioned, the quantity of published promotional materials is insufficient both from a qualitative and quantitative point of view.

The situation is determined by the lack of a national network including district centers and local offices of promotion and tourist information, of some brands on tourist areas, by the deficiencies in the budget funds for the internal and international promotion activity and the lack of the insurance concerning the continuity of the institutional involvement in the promotion domain.

## **3. THE ANALYSIS OF THE ASYMMETRICAL RISK IN TOURISM AND THE PROMOTION OF THE DANUBE'S TOURIST POTENTIAL**

The communication and especially the tourist resources promotion domain are extremely vast due to the complexity of the new society and the business environment as well. The thematic area is disproportionately covered both at the national and international level which depends on the development stage of the socio – economic, historical, political and even geographical ensemble. More exactly, each country or region has reached a certain level of its tourist resources research, promotion and innovation in accordance with the needs, interests and possibilities offered by the society in discussion. Nevertheless, the disposal of the European countries is

placed in the list of theoretical and practical references which are regularly quoted in the domain studies.

Even if each region has its uniqueness, a first major document with an orientation role of the national regulation documentations was introduced at least at the European level – The Perspectives of the European Spatial Development/PESD. This intergovernmental document on the territorial politics of the 15 was adopted at Postdam in 1999 and after its legalization as a reference document of the European spatial planning, it determined inevitable theoretical analysis of the specialists from the academic field. In Romania, major concerns for the country or the regional brand promotion have mostly remained at the project level or the results can't be included in the professional standards and they are dominated by the projects of the European countries with tradition in the tourism on the Danube and Bulgaria.

The promotion of the Danube's tourist potential is achievable by highlighting the relevant values of the Galați County's tourist patrimony. The project has in view the emphasis of the relevant values in the tourist patrimony of Galați, on the basis of proactive and reactive policies, the increase of the economic competitiveness and the development of the economy based on knowledge by means of a strong synergy with the other priorities at the national level, respectively the lasting regional development, the environment protection, the equality of chances and the informational society.

Proactive policies emphasize a series of control procedures, reporting systems, norms and standards by whose observance one may avoid the coming out of risk factors. Reactive policies take into account the carrying out of crisis plan materialized on a series of specific measures that need to be taken in certain conditions. In the case of crisis manifestation, the response speed is an essential element and each must know exactly what and when to do. In these moments, more than ever, one must act as a team, starting from the highest ranks within tourist organizations to the operative personnel.

The special importance of these policies highlights the fact that tourism organizations must grant a greater attention to the way in which internal and external risk factors are managed, as well as to the building of proactive policies that play a part in the efficient management of an organization's activities, in the prevention of risk coming out and in starting crises. It has been identified as being extremely necessary the establishment of an objective which has in view The Information and Education of the Different Categories of Public, considering the fact that Romania must be in line with the international tendency of each organization and citizen's role increase in the intensive activity of the tourism promotion. The internal tourist promotion activity is now under dimensioned; the quantity of information and promotion materials is insufficient. The situation is determined by the lack of a national network of

district centers and tourist information and promotion local offices, some brands on tourist areas, the deficiencies regarding the funds from the budget of the internal and international promotion activity, the lack of the institutional continuity insurance in the promotion domain.

The research approach is articulated around the following specific objectives in order to reach the general objectives:

- the Increase of Galați visibility on a national and international plan;
- the Increase of the tourism contribution to the area's development;
- the Increase of Galați contribution to the construction of the image capital of the Romanian tourism;
- the Increase of Galați economic and social role;
- the Improvement of the general degree of Galați attractiveness.

All these objectives are treated and analyzed through the prism of proactive and reactive policies, through the highlighting of disturbing factors or factors of success that play the part of preventing or accelerating the process of tourism development in Galați. The project presents a high level of novelty because it proposes to approach in good time the efficient combination of the complex problems in the economic, social, cultural and political domains.

The promotion of Galați area as a reference tourist destination for the fluvial maritime Danube sector would bring many advantages to the different public categories (citizens, private organizations, the state organizations), involved in this problem, this is why we take into consideration this objective for the Romanian tourism.

The opportunity of the approach and the originality of the proposed research subject are given by the following aspects:

- the opportunity studies made by the National Institute of Research – Development in Tourism do not really emphasize Galați tourist potential;
- the absence of the essential elements for Galați promotion in the on-line tourist itineraries;
- the reduced visibility of Galați in Romania's tourist itinerary, the restaurants' itinerary, the one of the protected natural areas published by The National Authority for Tourism within the Ministry of Transports and Tourism;
- the tourist operators need the information to be available on the Internet in order to create the tourist products;
- the lack of a national system centered on indicators for the fluency of the tourist traffic;
- a reduced level of promotion and development of the tourist information centers;
- the lack of a regional tourist brand to represent an element of attractiveness for the target public;

- the inexistence of a balance in the tourist areas promotion;

- Galați doesn't dispose of a proper network of specialized multifunctional centers in tourism to allow to the tourists' access to information and specific events;

- the lack of information referring to the possibilities of spending the free time, the tourist attractions, the cultural and business events, the welcome structures, the restaurants and the facilities that may accompany a tourist product;

- the lack of a web portal designed to promote on-line the Danube tourism in Galați;

- the lack of some information campaigns for the increase of the public responsibility in order to preserve and promote the values system in tourism.

The novelty degree of the subject is given by the fact that it has as a purpose the combined approach of the economic, social and environment problematic and the carrying out of a real activity to inform and promote the eco tourist system of Galați in the context of a durable tourism necessity.

The relevance of the research subject is also insured by the necessity of the regions' alignment with a tourist potential to the new existent tendencies in what concerns the institutional communication, the social and society communication, the communication integrated by marketing associated to some major social tendencies: changes in the middle class' life style, the jeopardy of the environment quality and the tourist resources, cultural interactions (Cox, Koelzer, 2004). We mention that this project will have a special impact on the economic and social environment.

Thus, the technical impact of the subject is effected in the projection of a web portal designed for the on-line promotion of tourism.

The social impact of the subject will consist in the awareness of the different public categories in order to implement the values system in tourism (the environment conservation, the cultural values' preservation), the increase of the work force occupation degree, the increase of our involvement degree in everything that means lasting development.

The economic impact, as a result of the tourist number augmentation in the area, consists in the stimulation of the private initiative in the services domain (the appearance of the new economical agents and the development of those already existent), the augmentation of the economical agents' incomes at the level of the local administration as well. The tourism development in the area of Galați will take into account the principles of the lasting development in what concerns the conservation and protection of the natural patrimony and also the reduction of the anthropic pressure on the environment which is inevitable in the conditions of the tourism practice on a large scale.

Having a significant contribution to the activity development of an organization and implicitly of the space in which it acts, communication plays an

important role in the economic development of the society. It must also be kept in mind the aspect that, no matter how well the communication at the level of a company would be conceived and organized, it cannot eliminate the competition on the level of the products' quality and innovation. The Romanian companies which act in tourism must have in view when they define the communicational behavior, that the economic performances aren't enough anymore and they must conceive integration programs in the life of the society by assuming responsibilities in different domain in order to progress: education, culture, health, sport etc. Practically, the regional tourism must surpass the identity crisis it is confronted with in the present.

The information campaigns will have in view the promotion and the dissemination of a life style that is friendly to the environment, the preservation of the natural and cultural tourist patrimony. The projection of the web portal destined to the promotion of tourist objectives from Galați region represents a complementary activity to the promotion strategy in view to confer a high visibility among the tourists interested to visit this region.

The main objectives followed by the creation of the website are: the augmentation of the attractively degree of Galați region, using specific instruments for online promotion that are focalized to the target (English, German and French), the emphasis of the Danube role as the main tourist attraction point of the region by creating a blog and the implication of local authorities in order to sustain the promotion of Galați region.

The specific activities concerning the design of the website will take into account the rules that determine high web traffic:

- the permanent update of the website content;

- the search engine optimization;

- the insert of advertising banners in collaboration with tourism agencies;

- that propose different tourist itineraries;

- the realization of banner-exchange programs with tourism agencies;

- the opportunity to online registration of visitors in order to receive newsletters,

- the creation of a forum which facilitate an interactive communication;

- the implementation of a search engine and FAQ support;

- the creation of a qualified database and the implementation of viral marketing technique.

Online promotion will be focalized on the acquisition of a great number of visitors on the website that will become potential customers interested in the acquisition of tourist services in the Danube region of Galați from tourism agencies. The success key of the implementation of the web portal will depend on the high interactivity degree between the website and its visitors, which will become the

promoters of tourist image of Galați region among a great number of potential tourists that will be charmed by their choice. The complexity of the problem related to the elimination of the disjunctions between the potential and the tourist image of an area fully justifies an interdisciplinary approach.

The multidisciplinary and multi sector approach is a necessity of the actual research and tends to a larger diversification. No science can solve by itself the problem of an area's resources revaluation in the conditions in which the society and the business environment are more and more dynamic, the public is more pretentious regarding the promotion information and techniques, the progress of the on-line environment is stronger and stronger.

The major objectives of the Government and the resort ministry express the actuality of the multidisciplinary approach idea: the promotion of the tourist potential, the involvement of the public authorities, the stimulation of the interdisciplinary and inter sector partnership, the education of the population in what concerns the lasting tourism.

Practically, the scientific research, the political decision, the involvement of the civil society, the co interest of the private economic domain, the services insured by the mass-media, the economic mobilization must collaborate efficiently and quickly to outline as clear as possible, to reinforce and promote the country image of Romania.

Identifying potential risks has the part of reducing impact, the risk management being a continuous process that starts with the project initiation and manifests until the project is done. The risk management pursues the fulfillment of the following:

- Identification of potential problems and fighting them when it is easier and cheaper than after they turn into real problems and crises appear.
- Focusing on project objectives and the careful search of problems that may affect the project along its entire life cycle.
- Identification of potential problems even from the planning stage (in proactive approaches) and the acquiring in this way of decisions in the management regarding resources allocation.

Increase of project's total chances of success.

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## 1. CONCLUSIONS

The Danube's tourist potential presupposes a series of objectives that are subordinated to the general direction marked at the national level, respectively Romania's transformation into a qualitative tourist destination based on its natural and cultural patrimony, in order to correspond to the standards of the European Union.

Referring to the products and services delivery, a lasting development of the tourist sector from the environment point of view must be sustained and accomplished in a rhythm of development that is superior to other tourist destinations in Europe by the year 2013.

The major objectives of this project have in view the Identification and evaluation of the Danube tourist potential in the area of Galați in accordance with the prior axes number 4 regarding the Development of the regional and local tourism of the Regional Development National Strategy which identified the tourism as a development priority taking into consideration the existent tourist potential in all the regions (The Development National Plan DNP, 2007- 2013).

We also considered convenient have as an objective the Image promotion of Galați tourist area and the introduction in the national and European tourist circulation in the conditions in which the elimination of the disparities in the regional promotion for the country brand is imposed (objective which is established in accordance with the prior axes number 5 regarding the Lasting Urban Development).

These objectives correspond to the directives of the Development National Plan 2007- 2013 respectively the priority number 6, which refers to the Balanced Participation Support of all Romania's regions in the socio – economical development process. Practically, the project will aim by means of its objectives at the insurance of a program regarding Galați tourist potential development, similar to the one carried out in the other Danube regions in the European states, on the basis of proactive and reactive policies.