

THE TOURISTIC CAPITALIZATION STRATEGIES OF ROȘIA MONTANĂ'S HERITAGE – PRESENT AND PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

The two millennia of continuous mining, transformed the natural and human habitat of Roșia Montană and gave the Romanian settlement unique elements for the national and even international heritage. Nowadays, the natural habitat and the cultural heritage of Roșia Montană are threatened by several factors, among which the possibility of implementing here a mining project, that might destroy a significant part of the archeological site. Thus, in order to avoid the implementation of this project, there were launched a series of alternative programs for the sustainable development of this settlement. In the past ten years it has been proven that, besides other programs, tourism can be an alternative for the sustainable development of Roșia Montană. In the present study, there will be analyzed the elements of heritage from the Roșia Montană area, that possess a touristic attractiveness and that might add significant touristic incomes to the local economy. Furthermore, based on these elements, there will also be presented the current situation and the prospects of the touristic capitalization strategies, applied in order to promote Roșia Montană as a touristic destination. The broad purpose of this study is to emphasize the settlement's actual potential to develop through tourism.

Key words: Cultural tourism; Mining settlement; Natural and human heritage; Touristic potential; Sustainable development.

JEL Classification: L83; L84

The study area of this paperwork is Roșia Montană commune, situated in the west part of Romania, in the Transylvania region, in Apuseni Mountains (the western group of the Carpathian Mountains). It is part of the ethnographic region of Țara Moșilor (Moșilor County), which is characterized by a high level of development of not only the natural, but especially of the cultural potential. This is a region where the Romanian traditions and the local culture are both preserved and promoted. The natural potential of the Apuseni Mountains (mountain landscapes with gentle slopes, spectacular karstic and volcanic relief, thermal waters) harmoniously blends with the cultural heritage of the picturesque rural settlements: the typical architecture of Romanian mountain villages, ancient traditions preserved until present, multicultural elements attesting the cohabitation of the Romanians with other ethnic groups. Hence, this is the general geographical context (natural and human) of Roșia Montană, with direct effects in determining the coordinates of its evolution.

The subterranean treasures of the Apuseni Mountains caused the emergence of many traditional Romanian mining settlements, even since the Dacian period. Roșia Montană has emerged and developed as a mining settlement with a tradition in gold mining, part of the Golden Quadrilateral of Transylvania (Țebea - Baia de Arieș - Zlatna - Săcărâmb). Its position on the gold route has attracted the interest of many different powers throughout history, the mining activity being almost continuous. Therefore, one can

state that the mining history from Roșia Montană is identified with the history of the settlement itself. Several stages of the mining extracting procedure have been identified from ancient times until present, each stage comprising of different characteristics, which are still visible on the field. The infrastructure, specific to almost two millennia of mining, is an unquestionable proof of human evolution, which makes the importance of Roșia Montană relevant not only for the identity of the Romanian people. This study aims, based on these arguments, to increase awareness on the importance of preserving the natural and cultural heritage of Roșia Montană, as part of the humanity's heritage.

However, this heritage is threatened by the possibility of launching a major mining project that involves extracting in open pits, of four massifs that are surrounding Roșia Montană. Even if the short term results of the project would be to boost the economic development of the settlement and it would provide hundreds of jobs, the long-term negative effects of the project would be irreversible for both the environment and the cultural heritage and the health of the inhabitants. In other words, one consider that the mining project violates the principle of sustainable development and the decision of implementing this project belongs to specialized institutions, able to measure the real impact of the project on the environment and on the local community.

In order to preserve the heritage of the settlement and to ensure the economic and social development of Roșia Montană, experts offer a

number of alternatives to support an economic reconversion, among which, in recent years, tourism proved to be a viable alternative. Finally, this study seeks to highlight strategies of touristic capitalization of the natural and human heritage of Roşia Montană, not only as a measure of preserving the heritage, but also as a tool for the economic development of the settlement. In other words, one will analyze the coordinates of a sustainable and responsible tourism, which can provide a long-term development of Roşia Montană and which are in accordance with the principles of environmental protection and preservation of the cultural heritage. In addition, one will try to prove that Roşia Montană can survive without mining and that it has the necessary resources for a reconversion of the main function of the local economy, from mining industry to rural and cultural tourism.

METHODOLOGY

A field research was conducted in Roşia Montană village, in August 2012, for the purpose of this study, for the inventory of natural and human heritage elements which can become objectives of touristic attractions. During the research it was offered the opportunity to participate in various events designed to inform the public about the importance of Roşia Montană to the national and universal culture (conferences, seminars, book launches, film screenings), coordinated by economic experts and researchers (Marcel Heroiu), historical restoration specialists (Ştefan Bâlici), geography specialists (Pompei Cocean).

Furthermore, a number of tours and themed journeys were taken in order to observe how the local heritage is capitalized from a touristic point of view. These were organized by volunteers under the guidance of several specialists (geographers, architects, historians).

In order to obtain a perspective as objective as possible regarding the situation of Roşia Montană, one interviewed experts in preserving cultural heritage (Ştefan Bâlici, architect), as well as the organizers of the FânFest event (a festival that promotes Roşia Montană's heritage). Moreover, there were also interviewed employees of the mining company that sustains the implementation of the mining project, residents of Roşia Montană, both those who oppose the project and those who support it.

Finally, several documents were analyzed: official documents submitted to state and international institutions for the assessment of the mining impact on the Roşia Montană area, the results of research studies on the importance of Roşia Montană for the universal history and national and international articles related to the Roşia Montană case.

The author's intention was to be as objective as possible in relating the situation of Roşia Montană against the mining project controversy, but there were

also added personal concluding notes, based on personal observations and impressions during the field research.

THE NATURAL AND HUMAN TOURISTIC POTENTIAL

In this chapter, there will be outlined the main elements of the natural and human habitat which exhibit attractiveness and which can be exploited for tourism capitalization.

The touristic potential of the natural habitat stems primarily from Roşia Montană's location in the Apuseni Mountains, the Metaliferi Mountains group, on the Roşia River. The natural landscape shows a high degree of attractiveness both through the simple physiognomy and through the degree of accessibility: relief specific to low mountains (an average altitude between 800 and 1000 m), with gentle slopes, diverse vegetation and fauna, spectacular landforms due to Neogene igneous rocks, mild climate with a high thermal comfort index and a high degree of ionization of the atmosphere.

This relief can be valued for trekking and hiking across the massifs surrounding the village (Orlea, Jig, Văidoaia, Letea, Cârnic). Additionally, there are also geological formations resulted from volcanic rocks, which were altered by the human activity of extracting, such as Pietra Corbului (The Raven's Stone) and Pietra Despicaţă (The Cloven Stone) – both protected natural reservations - and outstanding geological formations to which mythical meanings were attributed (The Sphinx).

The tonic climate favors the possibility to develop tourism specific to climatic, relaxing and invigorating health resorts.

Water resources that have touristic potential are the artificial lakes previously used in the mining process as a mechanical force ("*tăuri*" in Romanian) and that are now integrated in the mountain landscape. Less than 10 *tăuri* still exist (out of about 200) which can be used for recreational and fishing activities. The following can be mentioned: Tăul Mare (the largest), Tăul Cornei (offers a beautiful natural overview of the natural monument Pietra Corbului), Tăul Țarinii (located at the highest altitude in Roşia Montană, 1100 m), Tăul Brazi, Tăul Anghel.

The natural landscape is complemented by the floral diversity, the vegetation specific to mineralized soils and rocks, species particular to the mining activities, dating from the Dacian and Roman periods. The biodiversity of the area is indicated by a study conducted by J.Szabo in 2006; he identified 6 specific habitats, 4 of which represent priority preserving habitats consisting of species from the Red List of plants in Romania - including 8 species of orchids (Gligor, 2012).

The human touristic potential is highly diversified and displays real heritage elements of major importance not only from the Romanian history but also from the world history.

The elements of cultural heritage are directly linked to the history of Roșia Montană, whose existence is documentarily attested nearly two millennia ago (6 February 131 A.D.). Based on this attestation Roșia Montană is officially recognized as one of the oldest mining settlements in Europe, which awards its universal value.

Several archaeological sites can be found in Roșia Montană, some of which are still well preserved and with which one can rewrite the Romanian history. Because of their importance in the evolution of the Romanian people and in the national identity, these sites can be considered “*the birth certificate for the Romanians, (...) the Pantheon of the Romanian history*” (Mârza, 2012, p. 18). This statement is supported by the archeological findings from many historical periods (more than 130 km of underground galleries). Galleries from the Dacian period can be found (a theory which is still disputed), galleries from the Roman period, the medieval period (German colonization period), modern period (pre-industrial period, open pits mining), periods which represent the evolutionary stages of Roșia Montană as a mining settlement, as well as meaningful stages of the Romanian history. The diversity of the types of galleries and of the mining procedures, still well preserved, represents a worldwide unique and authentic element, due to the fact that nowhere in the world can be found so many types of galleries in the same area of extracting.

The most important archaeological sites originate from the Roman period in which Roșia Montană reached the peak of its development as a mining settlement.

The Roman galleries were built through a unique technique, in trapezoidal shape. Most Roman galleries are located in Orlea Massif, some of them being open to visitors. They possess a universal value as they relate to the history and culture of the Roman Empire. Other Roman artifacts are represented by the remains of religious or administrative buildings, or funeral relics (sarcophagi, tombstones), and traces of Roman roads which connected the ancient Roșia Montană (Alburnus Maior) to other mining centers in the area. The ancient Mausoleum represents a remarkable attraction, a double circular tomb, the only one of this kind discovered in Romania from the Dacian-Roman period.

The universal value of the cultural heritage of Roșia Montană and the recognition of the scientific importance of the settlement, had increased significantly with the discovery of the wax tablets in the Roman galleries, between 1786 and 1855 and their research by the scholars of the time, including

Theodor Mommsen, who published the tablets in 1873 in the volume *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*. The tablets represent contracts for sale, purchase, loan and they are standing at the base of the Roman law, which is considered one of the most important legacies that Romans left to humanity.

The cultural landscape of Roșia Montană contains a number of architectural and infrastructural elements that remind of the settlement's main activity, mining, while providing signs of its evolution in time as a mining settlement, from ancient times until present. The Mining Museum built in a Roman gallery (Cătălina-Monulești gallery) still preserves some of the infrastructural elements and tools used for mining from ancient times until the Middle Ages. The old machines used for crushing the mineral rocks (“*șteampuri*” in Romanian), the orientation of the main streets towards the extracting centers, the adaptation of the houses' architecture to the mining activities are just some of the evidences of the mining tradition in Roșia Montană area. The hydraulic wheel, dating from the Roman period, was recently discovered in Orlea Massif, in the Paru-Câmpeni area and possess a great importance as it is the first of its kind discovered in Europe (Cauet quoted by Marinescu, 2005).

In the central square of Roșia Montană the Gold Museum was opened, which is hosting since February 2010, an exhibition on the history of the mining in Roșia Montană, called “The Gold of Apuseni” (“*Aurul Apusenilor*” in Romanian).

The Roșia Montană's architecture shows great diversity and reveals signs regarding the history and the economic development of the settlement, as well as the inhabitants' customs. One can identify here the Romanian model of traditional households specific to the villages from the Apuseni Mountains: timber frame houses, walls made of clay mixed with sand and chalk, reinforced by a layer of cleaved hazel twigs, painted in white, covered with shingles, a porch with wooden balcony, the backyard separated from the front yard of the house with a wooden fence joined with the houses' walls. Several architectural elements were added to the traditional model, which shows the adaptation of the households to the main occupation of the inhabitants (mining). This also shows the inhabitants' connection with nature, since they were using mainly the resources easily accessible in the vicinity of their ordinary environment (wood, stone, sand, clay, limestone).

An element that portrays the adaptation of the households' architecture to the mining activity, can still be met in many of the houses from Roșia Montană. This is represented by the small wooden gate, placed on the street wall of the houses, through which people could enter in basements they used to collect the mineral rocks, carried from the nearby open pits. The existence of these basements represents the

proof of mining exploitation by locals, for their own personal gain, by directly digging in the surface of the massifs. Pieces of shattered rock were gathered in wicker baskets and were transported by the locals, with donkeys, to their basements. They extracted the minerals and the remaining rocks were used in construction, numerous stone walls being the proof of this, as well as paved streets and courtyards, especially abundant towards the end of Roșia Montană village. Remains of the traditional homemade family exploiting, dating from the pre-industrial period, are still visible in Roșia Montană in the massifs which are located in the close vicinity of the village.

The traditional model of the Roșia Montană houses was not adapted only to people's occupations, but also to the building materials supplied by the natural resources of the area, which also contributed to the development of crafts, that became traditional and were transmitted from generation to generation. For example, white-painted walls, still very common in Roșia Montană, are the living proof of the extracting of limestone from the nearby massifs (Vulcan Mountain). Moreover, this also justifies the frequency of the limestone holes specifically created for processing the karst for construction purposes ("*vărărie*" in Romanian) and the mastering of this craft by the locals ("*vărari*" in Romanian). One can therefore recognize how simple elements of architecture, offer a number of valuable information about local culture and customs. For this reason, the traditional adapted model of the Roșia Montană houses should be preserved primarily from respect for the national culture and secondly, for educational, scientific and even touristic use (especially for foreign tourists).

A final aspect of the architecture of traditional houses is the chisel and the hammer ensemble, the symbol of the ancient mining activity, a basrelief found on the street walls of many houses in Roșia Montană, which symbolizes the people's respect and pride for mining, their traditional occupation since ancient times.

As getting closer to the center of the village, one can notice a gradual transformation, both in the structure and the physiognomy of the traditional model of the houses. The simple landscape is replaced by massive, taller buildings, with colorful facades, styled with classical and baroque influences and the chisel and hammer symbol is replaced with various carvings, arches, pilasters, garlands, gables and lug boss structures.

It is, however, notable the fact that the modernization of the building was only apparent. The typical structure and the traditional building materials are coming to light nowadays, from under the stylized facades, due to the advanced decay of the buildings. Most of the houses, with the exception of a few newer buildings from the center, had only the street walls

rebuilt and not the entire house. This suggests that the people of Roșia Montană began to be more interested in their social image and wanted to display their wealth, a trend specific to the urban civilization.

The historical center of Roșia Montană is itself an element of cultural heritage, due to the age and the particular architecture of the houses. One can notice here the existence of buildings that served for recreational activities, typical for the urban life (such as dance halls, buffet, casino). This represents a different element that denotes the inhabitants' prosperity, and the level of economic and social development, which was superior to the one specific to a traditional rural settlement.

These influences, reminiscent of an urban landscape rather than a rural one, outline the unique rural character of this traditional mining village "*frozen in time at the starting point of the urbanization process*" (Apostol and Bălici, 2012, p. 33). The nationalization process which began in 1948 halted the development and urbanization trend of Roșia Montană.

The penetration of these influences does not have as a single cause, the overall development based on the wealth coming from mining. The German and Hungarian communities, with whom the Roșia Montană inhabitants lived in harmony even after the Habsburg domination, had an important role in this respect. An evidence of this fact is the multiculturalism from Roșia Montană, which is visible in terms of architecture (Saxon houses), educational system (the German School), religion. There are five churches in the Roșia Montană village, two Christian Orthodox (Biserica de Sus and Biserica de Jos), the Roman Catholic Church, the Unitarian Church and the Reformed Church. All these churches have a great touristic potential and are part of the local cultural heritage.

After a brief review of the main elements of the natural and human habitat, which can act as touristic attractions, it can be concluded that Roșia Montană has a complex touristic potential that offers the possibility to practice here many types of tourism: cultural tourism, rural tourism, mountain tourism, leisure tourism.

OBSTACLES IN THE TOURISTIC CAPITALIZATION OF THE HERITAGE

Tourism's efficiency as an economic activity is the result of several coordinates that need to act simultaneously. The existence of the natural and human elements with a certain degree of attractiveness is not enough in the absence of a good promotion, tourist and general infrastructure, a legislative framework to support tourism activities, a program of preservation and sustainable usage of the resources that have touristic potential.

In the case of Roșia Montană, it has been pointed from the last chapter, that the settlement itself and the area to which it belongs, have a series of natural and human elements that can act as touristic objectives, capable to attract tourists. The reality of Roșia Montană is quite different, as there were several issues identified that act as a barrier to the development of the heritage and the tourism in this area.

Without any doubt, the biggest obstacle is the threat of a major mining project, that would cover 24 km² (the area impacted would be up to 100 km²) (Duma, 2012), which entails extracting in open pits, the ore processing being done with cyanide. For over ten years, the mining project is presented to the inhabitants, to the public opinion and local authorities as the only option through which Roșia Montană can develop economically; nowadays the area faces a high degree of poverty, unemployment and demographic exodus.

The mining project would take 17 years and a Canadian investing company received the approval for the concession and extracting of gold and silver ore from the Roșia Montană area. The Canadian company would be the prime beneficiary of the exploitation project. This is the proof that the project is not economically equitable for Romania, due to the fact that, based on the last estimations, the Romanian state would receive only 2% of the profit generated by the mining project.

Even if on short term, the project would assure hundreds of jobs and stimulate the development of the area, on long-term, after the completion of the project, the situation would return to being the same as at present; to this, there will be also added the effects of other major risks, with irreversible consequences for the environment, economy, culture and people's health, such as:

- the blasting of four massifs surrounding Roșia Montană (Cetate, Cârnic, Jig-Văidoaia and Orlea) and therefore the destruction of major elements of the natural landscape (including Piatra Corbului, Piatra Despicață and *taurile* – the artificial lakes) and especially the underground cultural heritage (galleries, ancient sites, traces of mining exploitation from various periods) and the surface heritage (41 heritage buildings, 7 churches and several Roman sites) (Duma, 2012);

- the emergence of a cyanide lake in Corna Valley, with a surface of 600 acres and a height of 178 m, which would represent a continuing threat to the environment and population, through the possibility of an environmental accident and through the release in the atmosphere of cyanide acid, as a result of the ore processing with cyanides;

- after implementing the project, there would be only 1/20 of the entire historic site left and this would be surrounded by a monotonous desert landscape, in the near vicinity of an endless cyanide lake (Duma, 2012). Moreover, the historical buildings would be

affected by the blasting in the area. This scenario eliminates any possibility for Roșia Montană to be a welcoming environment for inhabiting. Furthermore, in this context the practice of tourism would be an illusion.

Even though the project was not started, there are already a series of actions of the Canadian company that have negative effects, some irreversible for the heritage and the tourism in the area. For example, numerous attempts to cancel the importance of natural and human resources have been encountered, in order to obtain the necessary approvals to start the project. Two of these attempts had a direct effect on local tourism. They are called attempts as they were revoked afterwards:

- in 2002, based on the approval of the Zonal Urban Plan (*PUZ*, abbreviation from "*Planul Urbanistic Zonal*" in Romanian), Roșia Montană was declared a mono-industrial area. This meant that all others economic activities (including tourism) were declared illegal, except for mining. The decision was revoked 7 years later, but during this time, there was illegal to build, for example, a hotel, or any construction not related to the mining activity (www.rosiamontana.org).

- in 2004, a part of Cârnic Massif was discharged of archaeological value, receiving the approval for mining exploitation. The decision was revoked after 4 years (www.rosiamontana.org).

Secondly, the impact the Canadian company exerts over the patrimony buildings it owns, is extensive. It acquired a large part of the historical buildings from Roșia Montană. The company is either restoring them neglecting the principles of restoring and preserving the historical monuments, or leaving them to collapse, till they become ruins. These actions have irreversible effects on the historical buildings in Roșia Montană.

Another obstacle in the capitalization of the Roșia Montană patrimony is the general landscape of the area: buildings that are in an advanced state of deterioration (most of them are abandoned), population exodus that gives the area a desolated, monotonous and lifeless image. All these elements decrease significantly the touristic attractiveness of the area.

Finally, it should be mentioned the deterioration of the general and tourist infrastructure and even the lack of adjustments for practicing a quality tourism: the bad state of roads, low accessibility through public transportation, lack of proper public and sanitation facilities, qualitative and quantitative insufficiency of accommodation and of public catering services. For example, considering the current accommodation capacity of Roșia Montană, there were identified around 130 beds, in 12 accommodation units, out of which 70% are unclassified (Ciangă and Bolog, 2012).

However, in the last years, volunteers and locals, experts and researchers, public institutions and

nonprofit organizations have fought for the annihilation of obstacles threatening Roşia Montană's heritage and for its inclusion in the national touristic circuit.

TOURISTIC CAPITALIZATION STRATEGIES OF THE HERITAGE

As mentioned above, the situation of the Roşia Montană heritage, particularly the cultural heritage is extremely alarming due to the deterioration of historical buildings. Therefore, a first step that was imposed in this regard was the restoration of the patrimonial buildings, to preserve the architectural patterns specific to the area and to increase the touristic attractiveness of anthropological elements.

Because of the advanced degradation of the original building methods (undocumented) and the importance of these cultural heritage buildings, it was necessary that the task of restoring these historical buildings to be handed to experts. Therefore, an association took this initiative. The association works in the architecture, restoration and preservation of the patrimony, and the work is coordinated by a team of specialists, led by architect Ştefan Bâlici. The lack of financial resources needed for restoration, was balanced by the contribution of the locals who provided building materials and volunteers, especially architecture students, who were involved both in physical labor and in the research and organizing work.

Through the initiative of organizing a summer school at Roşia Montană for architecture students from Bucharest, Ştefan Bâlici (who is also a university professor) managed to gather young, enthusiastic and trained people in order to continue the restoration project of Roşia Montană. This proved to be a primarily educational project, which increased awareness among young people regarding the situation of the Roşia Montană heritage. The team of specialists, young architects, volunteers and locals offered an example of restoration in accordance with the basic principles of preserving the cultural heritage. According to these principles, the restoration of historical monuments should be done using similar or identical methods and materials to those originally used.

Thus, the restoration program was conducted by using natural materials from the area, technologically unprocessed: clay, sand, limestone, stone and wood. No cement or metal was used but the resistance of the buildings was not neglected. The wood structure was restored and for the walls it was used a mixture of clay, sand, whitewash and water, stabilized with hazel twigs. The walls were whitewashed, the courtyards were paved with stone (without cement), the same materials and methods

were used as previously. The architect Ş. Bâlici stated that although the materials and methods used are ancient they will provide strength and durability, as evidenced by the fact that these buildings, although damaged by time, are still standing after more than 100 years, in some cases.

Locals were also involved in the restorations process. The village elders were consulted regarding the ancient crafts used in building the houses, crafts that were transmitted from generation to generation. The locals who practice old local traditional crafts, became also part of the project: stonemasons, carpenters and the ones who make whitewash from limestone ("*pietrari*", "*lemnari*" and "*vărari*" in Romanian). Through this initiative it has been proven that the local community has an important role in preserving the patrimony and that the local ancient traditional occupations will always be needed for preserving the patrimony. Thus, the new generation should be motivated to learn the old crafts from the elders so that they can pass on the learning to the next generations.

The same expert team launched a new program to further support the restoration process. "*Adopt a home in Roşia Montană !*" is a program that connects the owners of traditional houses from Roşia Montană with sponsors and volunteers who wish to participate to the restoration of these buildings. Privately owned homes are *adopted* by the experts during the restoration period and they are properly renovated based on the previously mentioned procedures. The costs are largely covered by donations, sponsors being able to adopt a certain part of the building (for example, a sponsor can donate for the renovation of the roof or the porch), to participate to the restoration process or to request to be informed on the progress of the work they funded.

Several buildings which were part of the heritage, both private homes and public buildings, were restored, including a part of the Unitarian Church, which now is used for cultural activities, seminars and conferences through which the public is informed on the progress of the restoration of heritage buildings. The program currently focuses on the restoration of another 3 houses (a traditional farmhouse from Țarina, the Unitarian parish house and a house in the central square, dating from the interwar period) and the further work on the Unitarian Church. According to the latest data from the official website of the program (April 2013), nearly 10,000 RON were donated for the restoration of the *adopted* houses (www.adoptaocasa.ro).

The Canadian mining company has renovated a number of heritage buildings, including the old Town Hall and the building from the central square in which the Gold Museum was later opened. However, their restoration works are disputed by specialists in architecture, as they consider that the fundamental

principles mentioned above, regarding the restoration and preservation of historical monuments, were not followed. These works have consisted in the demolition and construction of the affected buildings using modern materials and methods which, in technical terms, are not considered a restoration but a reconstruction as only the original physiognomy of the buildings was preserved.

Other initiatives of the Canadian investor were the launch of a local festivity for celebrating the millenary tradition of mining - The Miner's Days ("*Zilele Minerului*" in Romanian), the building of two museums, The Gold Museum (which presents the history of mining in Roșia Montană area, also informing about the modern methods of mining used by the Canadian company), The Mining Museum and the restoration of the Roman galleries (Cătălina-Monulești sector) where the company organizes guided tours. The merits of discovering the Roman hydraulic wheel is attributed to the company. This search was funded by the investor in order to find and separate elements of the cultural subterranean heritage from the area leased for the mining project.

The Canadian investor's intentions and involvement in saving the natural and cultural heritage of Roșia Montană and supporting tourism development of the village are heavily disputed and contested, as many specialists and representatives of the public opinion consider that supporting the mining project is in full antinomy with the promotion of Roșia Montană as a tourist destination.

The site of Roșia Montană (51 classified historical monuments on an area of 650 ha) is already recognized as an element of national heritage and it is protected by Romanian laws, but, because of its importance for the world history, experts believe that Roșia Montană should be on the humanity's heritage list. Through its uniqueness, representativeness, authenticity and universal value, the site of Roșia Montană meets four of the criteria required for inclusion on the UNESCO heritage list (Apostol and Bălici, 2012). Thus, in 2010 the submission file was sent to UNESCO for evaluation, requesting the site's inclusion on the list of the humanity's heritage. The success of this attempt would increase the popularity of Roșia Montană at an international level and, from a touristic point of view, this would mean the opening of Roșia Montană towards the external tourist market.

A tourism development strategy is not complete based on the existence of touristic objectives and the investments in the growth and preservation of their attractiveness. The capitalizing efforts are insufficient without implementing touristic information and promotion measures, without including the elements with touristic potential in organized tourist tours. An association supporting the preservation of the heritage and tourism development in Roșia Montană took the initiative of launching a

festival which through its purpose, duration and complexity, proved to be the most effective strategy for the touristic promotion and capitalization of the local heritage. The festival ("*FânFest*" in Romanian, meaning *the hay's festival*) reached its seventh edition and has attracted increasingly more participants (4000 people at the 2012 edition) (www.fanfest.ro).

During the five days of the festival, the organizers aim to express through the medium of culture, that the future of Roșia Montană is not dependent on mining activity, but it is dependent on the capitalization of the local heritage resulted from two millennia of almost continuous mining.

The organizers also involve the local community in supporting this event, by encouraging them to exploit their own resources during the festival. Thus, for the most part, the accommodation is made in private houses or even in their backyards and gardens, for those who prefer tents, or in the barns, for those who would rather try something traditional and authentic. Tourists can also enjoy traditional Romanian meals, local delicacies prepared by the hosts and they also have the opportunity to personally interact with the locals, to witness their activities, their customs and their lifestyle. The involvement of the community in developing the local culture is achieved also by organizing a traditional fair where locals could sell their handmade products (fabrics, decorations) and homemade traditional food.

There are a lot of activities and cultural events organized during the five days of festival, such as: conferences, seminars and workshops, book launches, film screenings, theater and concerts. All these are intended to inform and educate the public, to increase the awareness of the importance of the Roșia Montană heritage. The main purpose of promoting and exploiting the touristic potential of the settlement is reached by organizing guided tours and theme journeys: cyanide's bike tour (towards the open pits), mountain tours (hiking the four massifs which are part of the mining project), the village tour (the settlement's history and architecture, the tour includes churches, historical buildings and the old center).

During the 2012 edition, there were so many bookings for these tours that all the spots were occupied in the first day, although the number of spots in a group was increased as well as the number of groups. This is the proof that the heritage of Roșia Montană represents a great touristic attraction, with a potential for tourism. Although the local infrastructure is not yet able to support an intensive tourist activity as there are no permanent tourists' information points, the organizers are using an efficient administration system for the event: online and onsite bookings, mediation of the contact with the locals that offer accommodation, updated online information and onsite information points throughout the festival.

Due to the impact and the growing number of participants, the tradition of this event can significantly contribute to the long term development

of the local community and to the efficient capitalization of the Roșia Montană heritage.

CONCLUSIONS

The natural and cultural heritage of Roșia Montană is rich and has scientific and touristic potential, because of the unique and authentic elements, with national and universal value.

The threat of starting a major mining project, the low quality of the general and touristic infrastructure, the advanced degradation of historical monuments are just a part of the factors acting as an obstacle to the touristic capitalization of the Roșia Montană 's heritage.

The restoration and preservation programs for the cultural heritage, the protection of the natural heritage, the events and different cultural manifestation of informing and promoting the tourism in the area, the community involvement in the restoration process and touristic activities, the usage of local and cultural resources for touristic capitalization, are the weapons used to fight against the obstacles previously mentioned.

The variety of natural and human elements of patrimony, enables the development and practice in Roșia Montană of several types of tourism - mountain, cultural, rural, leisure and sports tourism- through which the area could become a touristic destination of national and international interest, if we consider the cultural patrimony with universal value, which could attract foreign tourists.

Based on the existence of a great tourism potential, the conservation efforts and the touristic development, one can conclude that the economic reconversion of Roșia Montană from the mining settlement to a touristic destination and the development of the area through tourism, are possible.

Roșia Montană is not a mono-industrial area and its development is not based on mining. However, it can use its millennial tradition of mining settlement to re-launch itself on the touristic market with an authentic product. It remains to be seen if the threats and disputes of the present will inhibit or stimulate this process, through a popularity boost of this almost mythical settlement, which is on the verge of extinction.

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