

COMPARATIVE STUDY ON THE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT EVOLUTION IN FRANCE AND ROMANIA

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Abstract

Europe, which occupied a significant part in the international tourism market, suffered a decreasing demand as a tourism destination, during and after the COVID crises. This decrease could be an opportunity to rethink the traditional models of tourism, to make them look better, to innovate and adapt them to the present trends of practicing tourism. Rethinking opportunity of these models is coming by the necessity of the fact that the tourism industry, by its nature, is focused on the economic growth, on the resources exploitation and on making profit as big as it can, in a short period of time. The actual economic and industrial trends, at the international level should give importance to the culture and social environment, to keep the biodiversity and to process resources in a rational and durable way. So, the new models of making tourism should change the tourist behavior, the operators' industry behavior and the industry behavior as well, to become successful models of practicing tourism, in order to revive the world tourism, as the traditional models did in the similar crises.

Key words: *profit, resources, successful models, tourism industry, tourism operators*

JEL Classification: L83 M31 O31 O52 Z32

I. INTRODUCTION

The tourism was and still is, a complex process where many kinds of resources are running. Meantime, the other activity sectors involve only some kind of resources in order to give the final product, the tourism industry use and transform, from the most simple and necessary resources, assuring the tourist's food, to the highly elevate resources, assuring a high level of knowledge, the experience of an emotion, the existence in some different worlds, the existence in others characters.

Practical, the final product in this industry is what we find in the offers of the industry operators – circuits, resorts, hotel rooms, restaurants' menu, a tourist objective propose to visit. Sensitive, instead, the final product of this industry is the satisfied tourist. All the efforts of a conglomerate of resources are focused to create an absolute satisfaction at the end of a tourism experience, to create a glamorous world, full of fantasy, which will give the sensation of the uniqueness for a short period of time. How we get this sensitive product of the touristic activities, the satisfied tourist? Which are the expectations of a tourist in his travel? Which part of the tourism product is more important for him? What should the operators do in order to answer to all this expectations? This are some questions that should be asked at the beginning of the difficult road of making a satisfied tourist.

Seeing from this point of view, tourist – centered road of the industry operators look without any kind of economic-financial positive results, look without the chance of making profit. But this industry is like any other. In order to have continuity, this industry must

get the profit and the inside activities should be financed from themselves. How does an operator get it in the tourism industry? What successful models must follow or what personalized model should create? Which are, also, the expectations of the operators from the tourists which visit them, looking for the perfect holiday?

The purpose of this article is to identify the possible successful models to follow for the industry operators in our country, analyzing critically and pragmatically, the Romanian touristic market and alternatively, the pieces of a successful international model market of tourism and to look for answers to the questions of previous paragraph.

II. EXPECTATIONS OF THE TRAVEL AND TOURISM MARKET

A tourist in his travels, wishes in the short period of time of his holiday, to find at the chosen destination, first of all, the reason of his travel – the relaxation, the restfulness, the lived experience, the excitement, the exploration of space and of unknown, the shopping or the possibility of visiting some tourism attractions. Secondly, a tourist in his travel wishes that all these reasons which help him to choose a touristic destination, to answer to his expectations: accommodation in clean and proper spaces, very comfortable, having his home comfort or more, healthy and enough food in the menus, assured with operativity and without times of waiting, the comfortable and quick transport through and to the travel destination, interesting entertainment activities, if it is possible included in the paid package, detailed, complex and complete information of all this elements

described. Thirdly, a tourist in his travel waits for, of course, that all the components of his holiday to have the available price for his budget.

The studies and the researches in the last years in this field of economy, have been focused more on the marketing and managements theories of tourism destinations, making analyses of the evolution of tourism market by the different points of view and approaches, making analyses of different types of tourism and of the possibility to practice them, in order to get some statistic data and indicators as results of the research or to get some opinions and conclusions for writing bibliographical materials such as books, articles, educational courses or reports less to a critical and pragmatical analyses made by the existent reality from the touristic market and focused through the tourists expectations, presented in the previous paragraph.

In the present moments, the whole world is in a critical point concerning the tourism evolution, being strongly affected by the pandemic crises. A study of the European Courte of Auditors through the evolution of European tourism between 2019 and 2020, shows that „The COVID-19 pandemic has had a dramatic and unprecedented impact on the tourism sector throughout the world, reducing sharply the tourism flows and thus the revenues of the tourism businesses. In the first three quarters of 2020, international arrivals in the EU were 67.5 % lower than in the same period in 2019. The drop ranged from 46 % to 84 %, depending on the Member State concerned.” The European Courte of Auditors said that „most of the tourism stakeholders that we interviewed doubted that the tourism demand would return to pre-crisis levels before 2024” (EU Support to tourism. Special report 27/2021, page 11)

So the situation is the same to everybody, this critical point of the international tourism market being a point of relaunching it, and the countries who will appreciate the situation with realism, with vision, with adaptability to the reality, without the wish of enriching over the night, should had win from this crises.

In this article I will present a comparative analyze between two models of practicing tourism, based on the qualitative research of tourism market, included some industry sectors, especially accommodation establishments, some touristic areas and places, using as instruments of my research, my own observation through this sectors in 2021, in the high season and some interviews with the employees of this activity sectors and with the tourists who benefitted from their services, and also by the quantitative research in online environment to get some relevant statistic data and information about the problem I was interested in.

Looking behind the doors of this industry, his operators concentrate the efforts to obtain some maximum effects with smaller efforts, sometimes with minimum efforts. The reason is the seasonality of this industry almost in all the manifestations. The

minimum efforts for an operators mean, first of all, to allocate minimum material resources – from the consumables to the ingredients used to prepare the food, limited to a given quantity. Secondly, minimum efforts mean to focus minimum human resources, expenses, if they have the professional competences to serve some specialized sectors of industry, or not having enough professional competences. If the human resources is competent and specialize, than is quantitative limited, because being expensive and knowing their value, it won't work hard enough, it will delegate from the tasks, becoming effectively a name, an image associated to other image, an element to build or to strengthen an image of a brand. If the human resources, have not got professional competences and are not specialized, than there are not in excess, only enough to make the tasks, limitation being given by the lowest level of salary. Thirdly, the minimum efforts for the operators, means to allocate a short period of time to prepare and to produce all the tourism services. And fourthly, the minimum efforts mean, to allocate the minimum level of financial resources to sustain all the other resources. Maximum effects are maximum revenues obtains from selling the tourism services, high touristic flux, high level of occupancy, highly positive image on the tourism market, an industry development according to the authority expectations, with the community, with the environment. All these maximum effects obtained with minimum efforts, should focus on the same time, to assure a high level of satisfaction for the tourists and to make them willing to comeback. Thus, the contradiction of tourism industry: how to realize this refined balance of it?

III.FRANCE' TOURISM MARKET EVOLUTION

In the world history of tourism, there are a few recognized models of building a durable tourism, which stabilize the practice of an efficient tourism for the industry companies and which focused it on the same time through satisfying the tourists. One of this acknowledged models is the French model of creating and practicing the tourism.

In the 1910, France established the National Tourism Office, having a role in areas such of tourism promotion from the inside of the French state. The French authorities asked themselves, at that moment, where France was located on the touristic map of Europe. At first, in France were in the same time, private companies – Touring Club, Alpin Club, Automobile Club of French - which developed the tourism in France, creating and promoting the specialized tourism packages. The French authorities try to find a way to contribute the new established ow can develop the tourism in France, the new established National Tourism Office, in the context of a few adverse components: transport and promotion. At the beginning of the XX century, France was almost

unknown in the world as a touristic country, this field being dominated by the British. So, in 1910, France fixed two targets: firstly, to become a touristic country not only a country of tourists and secondly, to gain a place in the top of the international tourism. (Auscher L., 1866-1942)

At that moment, France, was looking for a way to follow in order to impose on the international market of tourism. How did they proceed? They analyzed the tourism resources of the countries in the neighborhood and understood that their own resources are a sum of all the resources found in all these countries, they understood that not having a good developing infrastructure, they had to supply with something else, with innovation and originality. They understood that giving emphasis of the country authenticity, assuring the highest level of comfort at the place destination, promoting intensively this places with professionalism, upgrading all the time the offers promotion, without hidden taxes, in a transparent way and innovating permanent, they will succeed. In order to create deeply specialized professions, named „artisans”, they based on a deep division of labor. Thus, France took a place among the most developed countries in term of tourism in Europe. (Pele-Bonnard, 1998)

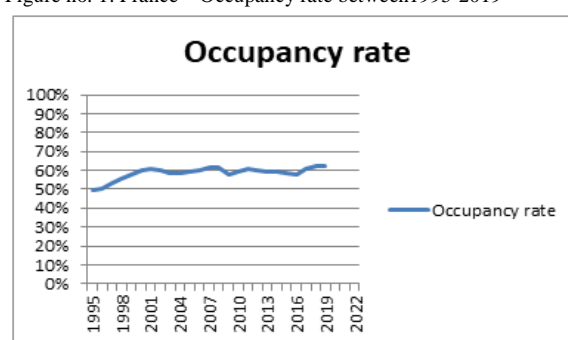
Between 1989 and 1995, the tourism industry decreased in all the Europe and the leader of the market was America. The biggest French tour-operators lost a great part of the market, the leader and the challenger being the British tour-operators and the German tour-operators. In order to get out of this crisis and to regain the market parts, it was necessary to innovate and to adapt to what they had, developing new models of voyages. The first voyages which appeared in this context, were associations of the air transports with the transfers from and through airports(a sort of all-inclusive package) and the trekking circuits. Trekking voyage is a sort of voyage which involves the nature exploration on the different kind of land, during a few days. Trekking is always confused with the hiking, which on the whole mean the same, but it is organized during one day. To this new models of voyages were added new channels of distributions. So, the biggest French tour-operators, especially Nouvelle Frontiers, in order to compete the Germans and the British, established their own distribution channels. Their policy at that moment was to create the branched agencies in the entire France, for an exclusive distribution for their new created models.

Another strategy adopted in that crucial moment for the tourism French market was to reorganized some clubs, agencies, associations and to integrate them in the most powerful operators of the market. For example, the Aquaris Club was integrated in Club Med together with the others companies as air companies, Air Liberty, Minerve, Air Outre Mer. Another example was Wagon Lits et Tourism which was integrate in Accor Group. In this reorganization

were involved also the financial companies in order to assure funding to the potentials clients. Thus, were established some of the first joint ventures from Europe. (Vellas F., 1996)

As a consequence of these pragmatic measures taken by the French authorities in a crisis period and being aware of the importance of tourism industry as a financial source to the state budget, this industry revived and even more, France succeeded to own almost the whole tourism components activities and to sell their tourism resources exclusively by the French tour-operators. The statistical data of UNWTO, beginning with 1995, present an increasing constant occupancy rate, from the 50.3% in 1996 to 62.37% in 2019, when the pandemic crisis started. (Figure no.1)

Figure no. 1: France – Occupancy rate between 1995-2019

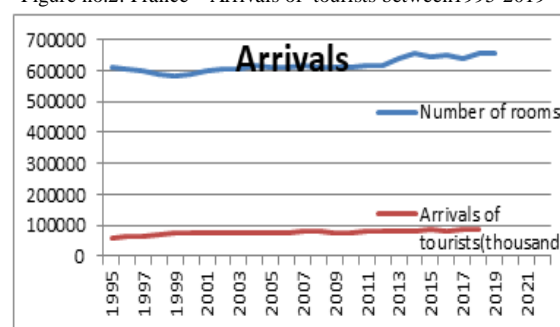


Source of data: <https://www.unwto.org/statistic/basic-tourism-statistics>

Source: own

This evolution, constantly ascendant, it was the same also in the arrivals overnights. In 1996 the arrivals were 62,406,000 foreign tourists and in 2018 were 90,000,000 thousand foreign tourists. (Figure no.2)

Figure no.2: France – Arrivals of tourists between 1995-2019



Source of data: <https://www.unwto.org/statistic/basic-tourism-statistics>

Source: own

Branch tourism offices network, established at the beginning of XX century, is still working. These offices are localized in intensively traffic areas, in railway stations, bus stations or places. French Tourism Office merged in 2020 with others two institutions with the same profile becoming ADN Tourism. It grew up the influence of the touristic French market, not only by promotion and information

actions but also by developing actions, by creating images and touristic brands, by organizing conferences, meetings, congresses, by conservation to the touristic areas. The actual institution offers advertising materials to inform the population, from the simple and commonplace maps of the areas to very well organized maps of public transport network, to newspapers with different kinds of announces and information or catalogues, also presentation flyers to the cultural institutions and to the touristic objectives. And they didn't forget about the simple and old postcards. This institutions organized time to time information sessions and publishes information about their last actions on market. All this information, included those published on the presentation site www.adn-francais.fr are written only in french. There isn't the possibility of accessing the site information in other international languages such as English or German, demonstrating once again the insistence, perhaps ignorant approach considered by some, of cultivating national identity.

IV. ROMANIA' TOURISM MARKET EVOLUTION AFTER COMMUNISM

Taking from the French tourism model, I can confidently appreciate that there are obvious similarities between the tourism resources of France and the tourism resources of Romania. Having as a starting point, the year of 1989, when the political regims were changed in many European countries, and the period is similar with the decreasing period of tourism, it can be appreciated that Romania took the measures and the strategies to build a dynamic, active tourism industry on the world tourism market. From my point of view, these measures, even each of them, individually, stimulated the tourism market, there aren't the levers to merge them in a mechanism which set in motion the whole tourism market and to make it functional. Having a look over the tourism industry in our country at this moment, let us take the following aspects:

-the regional and local tourism offices network, having the role to promote and inform, established in 2008, was reorganized in 2020, after an inactivity period of time. These offices are actually named information tourism centers – CIT. „CIT is a services institution which has the priority to present all the touristic services offers. His role is to inform, to help in looking for accommodation places, to promote and to sell the touristic packages, to organized the events, to sell the touristic products or the souvenirs and more.”(Handbook of Tourism Information Centers, 2016, p.83). In addition to these centers, are working also other local tourist information offices. The authorities left a some liberty to those offices about the juridical states which make them functional. Some of them are even private properties. The most are public properties, being under the local and regional authorities. But there isn't only a single public

authority to organized them, by the conjunctures this offices belong by the city halls, commerce and industry chambers or by some regionals tourism associations.(Chaşovschi C. & Bahre H. & Hildebrandt W. & Maurin M., 2016). The Romanian authorities proposed to restore the tourism offices closed in 2017 abroad. Even the internet is an endless resource of information , about this offices there are not published public information on their activities.

In what concern the offices of tourism information and promotion I made a short online research about the existence and about the way of presentation to all these offices, the CIT ones and also the local ones, in the most attractively areas of the Romania. The conclusions are that, firstly there are only a few information available online about these offices, about their locations, about the way of access to them. Using the browser Google and tourist information centre plus the area of interest as the item of search, were not displayed the useful and direct information. The areas of interest were aleatory chosen from the tourist areas of country: Bucharest, Constanța, Tulcea, Suceava, Bihor, Maramureș, Brașov, Sibiu. It was necessary to access different and many online sites of some travel agencies in order to get some information which remembered through other information about the existence of these offices. The CNIPT has the presentation online sites in those areas where are located the offices. Secondly, the images where these offices appeared, shown some offices which are functional in different kind of buildings, with different architecture stiles, some rustiques, others modern, or are just simple information desks inside of some institutions. The Romania' Logo there is or there is not present and the graphics characters which were used to write the offices name are different as written style and as color of characters. .

-public transport network, well enough organized and developed in urban areas, is less organized in rural areas, areas that usually are the touristic areas. In consequence, this network could not assure in these areas a foundation component of tourism product, the transportation. Implicitly this shortcoming reduce the number of foreign tourists which would want to visit our country, because the actual trends are to organized in a private and personalized way a tourism product, detrimental to a group organized one.

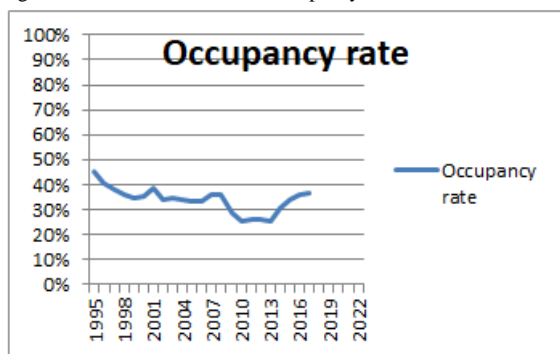
-attractive touristic objectives but unknown, because of the shortcoming systematic promotion, upgraded and intense one.

-clear legislation, well organized, with some exceptions, which can assure the industry function. But in many cases the property right is more important than making tourism as it should be made.

-educational institutions, formals and informals, publics and privates, less as number then those French and not so spectacular, but assuring the human resources for the industry. Because of the remuneration system, this human resources choose to work abroad.

In which concern statistical data, World Tourism Organization published yearly since 1995, the evolution of market of Romania. So, in 1995 Romanian tourism market registered an occupancy rate per accommodation place of 45.00% and in the next years this indicator decreased constantly until 2013, when it was situated at the level of 25.10%. In the next period the evolution was increasing until 2018, before the pandemic. (Figure no.3)

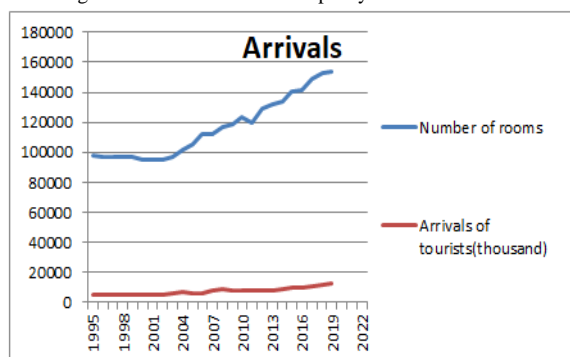
Figure no. 3: Romania – Occupancy rate between 1995-2019



Source of data: <https://www.unwto.org/statistic/basic-tourism-statistics>
Source: own

Also the evolutions of arrivals in our country increased year by year starting with 1995, when 5,445,000 tourists arrived in our country, ending in 1998, when the level of arrivals was minimum after the communism period, 4,831,000 foreign tourists arriving in our country. Later, the trend increased yearly, at the beginning of the pandemic in 2019, being fixed to almost 13,000,000 tourists. But this increase was produced in the context of increasing number of establishments and obvious of the number of accommodation places, and reported to this situation it can be observed an increasing rhythm of accommodation places more accelerate than the increasing rhythm of arrivals, which determined a decrease evolution of occupancy rate. (Figure no. 4)

Figure no. 4: Romania – Occupancy rate between 1995-2019

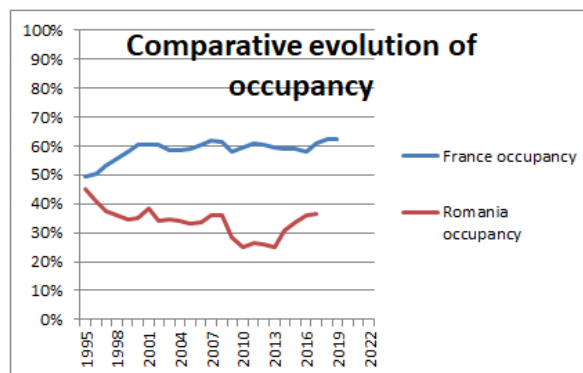


Source of data: <https://www.unwto.org/statistic/basic-tourism-statistics>
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Statistical data of UNWTO, beginning with the same year 1995, show a different evolution of

Romania reported to the evolution of France. If evolution of French tourism market was one systematic ascending year by year, the evolution of Romanian tourism market was one decreasing, according with the occupancy rate. (Figure no. 5)

Figure no. 5: Comparative evolution of occupancy rate between 1995-2019 in France and Romania



Source of data: <https://www.unwto.org/statistic/basic-tourism-statistics>
Source: own

V. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS PROPOSALS

It what concerns Romania, in my opinion, the country has a high enough developed components to create a durable touristic products, in order to be taken and sell them by the tour-operators. It has the privilege to have an incredible touristic resource, The Danube Delta, and a contemporary history with significant importance for the country notoriety. The communism history of Romania shouldn't be ignored, but accepted and valorized and the field of tourism is one of the fields where this history can be valorized. This touristic value of Romania can be transformed in an enormous source of prosperity. But Romanian authorities didn't involve in the market, by taking some management strategies and giving some directions or recommendations to follow for the industry operators as French authorities proceeded. They left the decisional and organizational liberty to the operators in the tourism market activities. Even the common tourism offices were organized chaotically, having multiples decisional authorities and making impossible to take a national strategy. Exactly, these offices with the role to promote the image of the country, don't have an unique image, because there isn't a single authority to manage them. These offices operate in different types of buildings; have the name written with different types of characters, some of them having not even the Romania logo. The unique common symbol of all is the international sign for information.

After a careful observation over a French model of making tourism and the Romanian unsuccessful one, practiced with the same kind of tourism resources, our country should first consolidate some key attractive resources. Secondly should create effectively some

touristic resources, around and inside a touristic area with many points of attractivity but hard to access. This will determine the areas preservation and easiest access to them. Thirdly, should promote intensively and strengthfully the touristic places also by the traditional methods. This traditional methods arrived to the population in her relaxing moments, walking in a park or doing shopping, detrimental to the digitalization methods, irritating the population which is involved in other activities in those moments. Fourthly, Romania should preserve by drastic methods, the authentic areas, isolating them from the urban civilization areas. Then should create a maximum level of comfort in the touristic areas exploited and in the neighborhood and to improve alternatives for the transport in those areas, which should permanent be functional. And the least, but not the last one, to impose a transformations of the offices tourist network under a single and unique authority, by involvement and adopting the most quickest and concrete measures.

CONCLUSIONS

Returning to the French model of tourism, the successful one without doubt, during my observation, I asked myself, how did succeeded a country which has the same kind of resources as Romania and the

same level of infrastructure in a major part of the country, perhaps worse, excepting the urban areas. I will make a resume: France succeeded on the international tourism market with the adaptability to the having resources in each difficult moment, with vision and innovation, with pragmatism and being a keen observer, with continuity of adopting measures, with rigorosity and perseverance, being present permanent on the market and adopting concrete solutions in the changing evolutions of it.

About the European Union, this adopted in 2010 a developing strategy for tourism with some long term developing priorities. These priorities were renewed twice: in 2015 were added priorities about digitalization and improvement workers competences and in 2019 there were added priorities about developing the durable and responsible tourism and about developing the intelligent and innovative tourism. These priorities were not associated with some proper actions and with some concrete recommendations for developing the market. Instead European Union made clear notifications that each members of it should take their own national strategy. As about Romania, it took two national strategies: developing eco-tourism and developing spa-tourism. Romania's first target is „to become a high quality tourism destination until 2030” (EU Support to tourism. Special report 27/202, p.26-27)

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