

AN ANALYSIS OF SOME RECENT STATISTICS OF THE ROMANIAN TOURISM

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Abstract

One studies the evolution in time of some indicators that are representative for the touristic activity in Romania during 2000 – 2009, as well as correlations between them, these being: the number of arrivals and of overnights in the tourism structures with accomodation functions, as well as the number of tourism structures and their accomodation capacity, separately for foreign and Romanian visitors, as well as for different tourism destinations. All these indicators were extracted from the database of the National Institute of Statistics. Generally, an increase in time of the number of tourists is found, but also a certain decrease during the last two-three years, except for some groups of destinations which show a rather peculiar and interesting dynamics. Thus, the tourism in the resorts of the seaside area have registered an accentuated decrease during the last four years, especially for the foreign tourists, that reflects a change in their options. On the other hand, the tourism for the category of destination "other localities and touristic routes (which excludes the resorts of the spa, seaside, and mountain areas, as well as the city of Bucharest and all the county capital cities) has shown a remarkable growth during the whole considered time interval, indicating an increase of the interest of the tourists (both Romanians and foreigners) for the cultural and rural tourism.

Key words: Romania, Statistical data, Destinations, Tourism evolution.

JEL classification: D22, L83, Q26, Q56.

1. INTRODUCTION

According to the World Tourism Organisation (WTO), the tourism represents the largest industry in the world, generating revenues of billions of dollars and millions of jobs every year (www.unwto.org). Nevertheless, the mass tourism has been much criticized for its negative, unacceptable impacts, especially on the social, cultural, and environmental levels. As an alternative, "new" forms of tourism have often been recommended, that should be more efficient solutions to the already done harm, and representing more friendly and sustainable forms of approaching the tourism. Among these new forms of tourism, initiated in Romania as well, one can enumerate the ecotourism (Boghean and Boghean, 2006), the rural tourism (Condratov, 2006), and also the cultural tourism (Petroman, 2010). In this respect, as an example of important impact, an UNESCO report emphasizes that the cultural tourism has a positive economic and social impact, it establishes and reinforces identity, it helps building image, it helps preserve the cultural and historical heritage, with culture as an instrument it facilitates harmony and understanding among people, it supports culture and helps renew tourism (www.unesco.org).

The cultural tourism includes, first, the tourism in the urban areas, especially the big cities or historical centres, which inherited a rich historical heritage and are also fitted with cultural facilities, such as museums and theaters. The cultural tourism includes also the tourism in the rural areas, where it is based especially on highlighting of the traditions,

values, and life style of the indigenous cultural communities (for example, specific festivals, folk customs and rites, legends and stories, etc.) (Petroman, 2010). Under this hypostasis, the cultural tourism is tightly woven with the ecotourism, which is characterized by the return towards the natural environment, and an original anthropic environment. These new forms of tourism, recognized as such during the last decades of the XXth century, as well as important niches of the tourism market, have impressive growth rates. For example, the World Tourism Organisation estimated that the cultural tourism represented, in 2003, about one third of the global tourism, probably having a growth rate of 15% per year (www.unwto.org). Thus, the cultural visits evolved from a peripheral attraction added to a travel itinerary, to an important catalyst of the whole experience of a holiday, and even to tours entirely dedicated to cultural purposes.

In Romania, the development of the tourism is considered as a priority economic option, having in mind the outstanding potential existing for different types of tourism. The main problems in connection with this development are the planning of the destinations and the resources available for the destinations' planning (Petroman, 2010). In the same time, in elaborating the strategies of development, the knowledge of the trends manifested by the evolution of the tourism in our country, over a certain time interval, represents an important factor.

To this end, in the present study, by an analysis of statistical data published by the National Institute of Statistics, we try to highlight the main aspects of

the evolution of the tourism in Romania during the years 2000-2009, especially from the point of view of the type of tourism (as much as allowed by the quoted data).

We mention some other recent articles, having subjects and results partly intersecting with the present study: the effects of the global crisis on the Romanian tourism (Costea, 2009; Stănculescu and Micu, 2009); considerations on the development of sustainable forms of tourism (Boghean, 2007; Nistoreanu, 2007; Bran, Hîncu et al, 2010); correlation between the accommodation capacity and the number of tourist arrivals (Zaharia, Hapenciuc et al, 2008); the touristic activity in different areas (Stanciu, 2007; Harja, 2009). After performing this investigation we have learnt of a work also dealing with statistics of different forms of tourism in Romania during 2000-2008, with some results and conclusions similar to those of the present work (Chiriac, 2009).

2. CONSIDERED STATISTICAL DATA

The statistical data were extracted from the web page of the National Institute of Statistics (<http://statistici.insse.ro>) for the latest ten years (the interval 2000 – 2009), for the following sub-chapters of Ch. B.15, TOURISM: (1) – Arrivals of the tourists in structures (establishments) of tourist receiving, and having touristic accommodation functions, sorted by tourist destination and types of tourists; (2) – Overnights in structures of tourist accommodation, by tourist destinations and types of tourist; (3) – The existing accommodation capacity, by types of tourism structures, comfort category, and touristic destination; (4) – The index of utilization of the capacity of tourist accommodation, by types of receiving structures and forms of ownership; (5) – Arrivals of foreign visitors in Romania, by origin countries and continents.

These data allow a sorting of the visitors both by their type (foreigner/Romanian), and by several tourist destinations. This latter feature is important because it allows a coarse classification by the types of tourism that are practiced in Romania. Thus, in the INS database there are highlighted six categories of tourist destinations: (a) Spa resorts; (b) Seaside area resorts, excluding the city of Constanța; (c) Mountain area resorts; (d) The Danube Delta area, including the city of Tulcea; (e) Bucharest and the county capital cities, excluding Tulcea; (f) other localities and tourist routes. In this way, one can assign the predominant type of tourism for each of these destinations: (a) spa tourism (treatment and recreation); (b) sun and beach tourism (seaside tourism); (c) mountain tourism; (d) ecotourism; (e) as we deal with big cities, a mixing of

more types of tourism, including, for example, cultural tourism, business tourism, entertainment tourism, etc.; for the big cities, it is, however, difficult to obtain data separately for the diverse types of tourism; (f) this is a very interesting category; as the big cities, and the spa, mountain, and seaside resorts are excluded, here one may have also different types of tourism, depending on the area/locality, but one may assume that the rural tourism and the cultural tourism will predominate.

For the six databases enumerated above, we made graphs with the evolution in time of some indicators that characterize the touristic activity. The analysis of each of these graphs, as well as a comparison between the graphs, will be discussed in the next section. In some cases the relationship between different indicators was studied by calculating their correlation coefficient r (Worthing and Geffner, 1959).

3. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

We start the discussion from a general graph where are presented the number of arrivals of foreigners in Romania, as well as the number of arrivals in tourism structures (Figure 1).

In the upper-side graph one observes that the number of foreign persons entered in Romania increased especially after the year 2006, a moment that corresponds with the Romania's adhesion to the EU, as well as to the Sibiu – European cultural capital event. Also, one can see that the majority of the persons arrived in Romania are from the EU countries, as well as from other European countries, while the visits of persons from other continents are, comparatively, much less in number.

In the lower-side graph one observes, nevertheless, that the number of foreigners received at tourism structures is much lower than that of those registered at border entries. Also, the numbers of arrivals of both Romanians and foreigners at tourism structures shows a certain decrease during the years 2008-2009, a time that coincides with that of the economic crisis. These numbers of registered tourists were commented on in numerous materials devoted to this subject, the general assessment being that the number of foreigners attracted in touristic actions, and at tourism attractions from Romania is still small, if one takes into consideration the very important touristic potential of the country. In the following, we will highlight the main characteristics of the evolutions observed in the graphs of the investigated time interval.

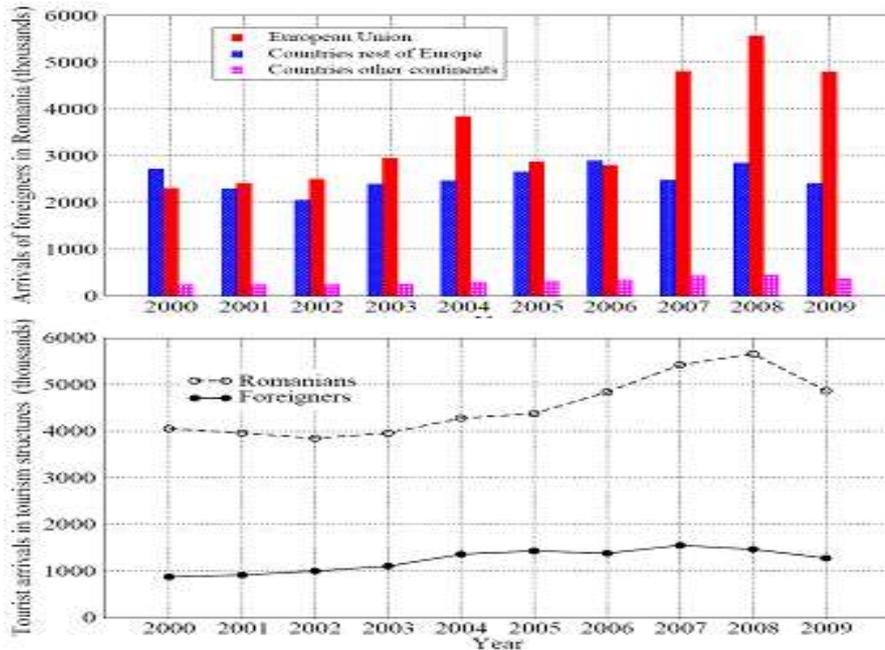


Figure 1 - Upper: number of arivals of foreigners in Romania, at the border entries; Lower: number of arrivals of Romanians and of foreigners at the tourism structures with tourist accomodation functions

Source: National Institute of Statistics, <http://statistici.insse.ro>

The next graph presents the situations of the arrivals at the structures with tourist accomodation functions, sorted by the type of tourist (Romanian or foreigners), as well as by the six tourism destinations

(Figure 2). Figure (2a) shows the number of tourists' arrivals (registrations at tourism structures). We first comment on these numbers.

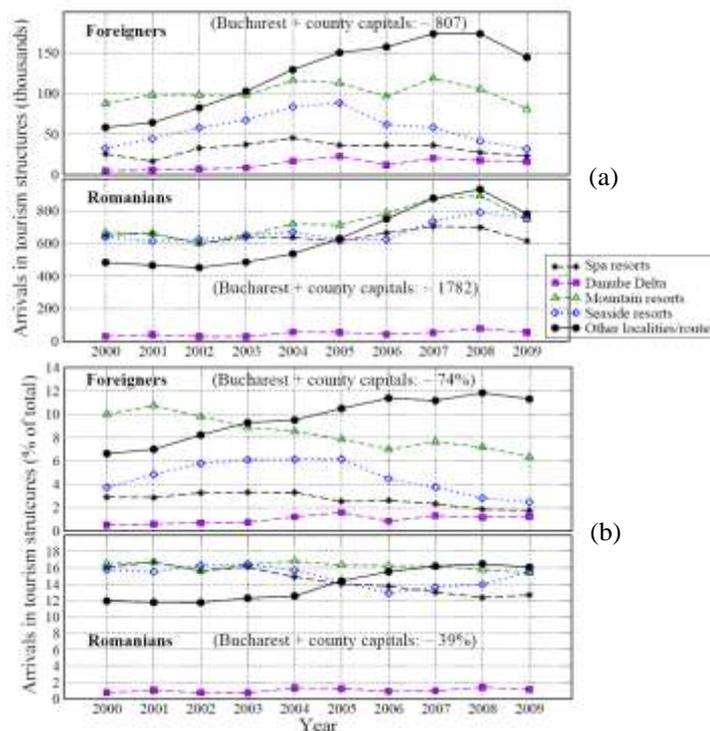


Figure 2 - (a) Number of arrivals in the tourism structures with touristic accomodation functions sorted by the type of tourist and destinations; (b) the same data as in (a), but represented as percentage weights. For the destination "Bucharest and county capital cities" only the average value for the considered time interval is indicated

Source: National Institute of Statistics, <http://statistici.insse.ro>

Foreign tourists. The seaside tourism: after increasing until 2005, there is an accentuated decrease, by a factor larger than two. The tourism in the mountain area remained approximately constant after 2004, with a slight diminution during the last two years. The spa tourism: approximately constant, with a slight decrease after 2004. The tourism in the Danube Delta area had a relatively constant growth over the whole time interval, practically doubling its volume. The tourism in Bucharest and the county capital (big) cities had a continuous growth, except for the last year (only the average of the considered time interval is indicated in the graph). An extremely dynamical evolution can be seen for the last destination category, "other localities and tourist routes", where the number of tourists increased about three times, registering only a slight decrease in 2009.

Romanian tourists. The data represented in the graphs present evolutions that are relatively similar to those for foreigners. Again, the destination "other localities and tourist routes" has a very accentuated increase, the corresponding arrivals dominating, in the end, all the other destinations, although before the year 2004, except for the Delta area, they were the smallest numbers.

The data from the upper graph (Figure 2(a)) are presented under percentage weight form in the lower graph (Figure 2(b)). One clearly observes, in the case of the foreigners, the diminution of the

weight for the destination categories "seaside" and "mountain", and the simultaneous increase of the weight of the destination (f) (other localities and routes). Practically, within the type "foreign tourists" a redistribution of the number of arrivals on the six groups of destinations has taken place in such a way that, leaving aside the predominating group "Bucharest and big cities", destinations (b) (seaside) and (c) (mountain) considerably diminished, while destination (f) practically doubled, by taking over a large part of the tourists and thus reaching almost 12% of the total. It is remarkable that for this later destination the percentage decrease for 2009 is almost absent. In a similar way, in the case of the Romanian tourists the weight of the destination (f) continuously increased (though not as much as in the case of the foreign tourists), becoming in the end larger than that of the other destinations. To resume, the analyzed data (Figure 2) indicate an increase of the tourists' interest for destinations from the (f) category (other localities and routes), especially in the case of the foreign tourists. One may therefore speculate that during the recent years there is a growing interest for the 'new' types of tourism, and especially for the cultural tourism and the rural tourism.

A similar presentation is made for another important indicator of the touristic activity, the number of overnights in structures of touristic accomodation (Figure 3).

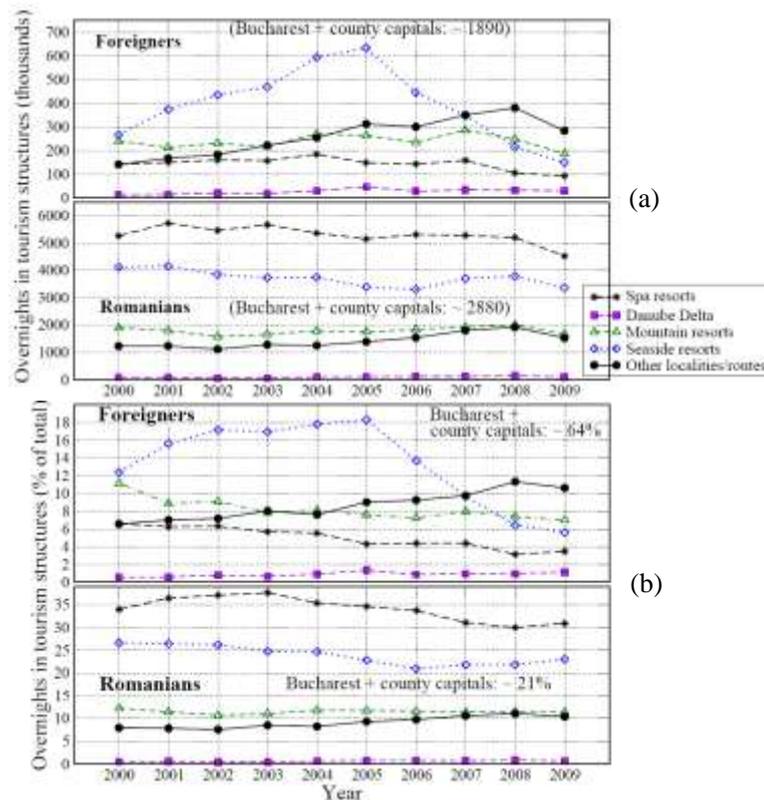


Figure 3 - (a) Number of overnights in the tourism structures with tourist accomodation functions, sorted by the type of tourist and destinations; (b) the same data as in (a) but represented as percentage weights. For Bucharest and the county capital cities only the average value for the considered time is indicated

Source: National Institute of Statistics, <http://statistici.insse.ro>

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

The differences between the two cases, of the Romanian and foreign tourists, respectively, can be commented on by examining also another indicator, the average number of overnights (Figure 4).

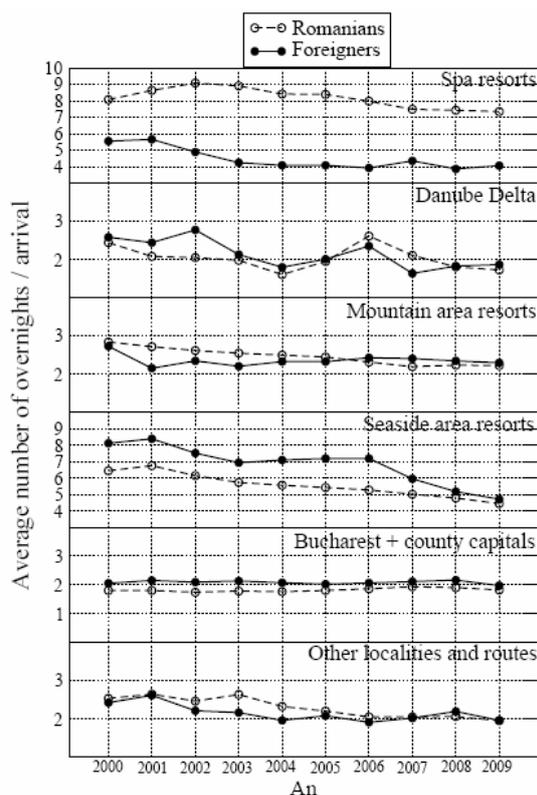


Figure 4 – Average number of overnights in the structures with tourist accommodation functions

Source: National Institute of Statistics, <http://statistici.insse.ro>

For four out of the six destinations, the average number of overnights of the foreigners is very similar with that of the Romanians, and remained approximately constant in time, or slightly decreased. There is, however, a big difference in the case of the tourism at the spa resorts: the average number of overnights of the Romanians is larger (around 8

nights), probably reflecting the custom of fixed duration cures presented by the promotional packages. This number is smaller for the foreigners, and decreases toward a value of 4 nights, reflecting a different approach of these tourists, mainly directed to the tourism of entertainment and to points of special touristic interest in Romania. In the case of the seaside area tourism, the average number of overnights has decreased both for the foreigners and the Romanians, but much more rapidly for the foreigners starting with the year 2006, a fact that generated the accentuated decrease already remarked in the previous figures (Figures 2 and 3). In both cases, this decrease indicates a change in the tourists' preferences, towards visits of shorter duration.

For a better understanding of the evolutions of the touristic activity indicators discussed above, other indicators were examined as well, namely, the number of tourism structures and their accommodation capacity. Their evolution during the considered time interval is shown in figure 5.

The destinations "Danube Delta", "Bucharest", and "other localities and routes" had the strongest dynamics: their number of tourism structures doubled over the time interval considered, a fact that led to an important growth in the corresponding accommodation capacity. A slower rate of increase is found for the destinations "seaside" and "mountain", while for the destination "spa" even a slight regression took place.

Because of the similarity of the evolutions from Figure 5 with those observed in some cases in Figures 2 and 3, it is normal to ask whether those variations are correlated. In some cases, the corresponding evolutions are obviously uncorrelated, as for example in the case of the number of overnights of the foreigners in the seaside resorts (with its accentuated decrease during the later years) and its increasing number of tourism structures that led to a practically constant accommodation capacity: here we have a clear change in the tourists' options.

On the other hand, it looks interesting to study the correlation of the same quantities in the case of the destination (f) ("other localities and routes"), where their variations in time are very similar. In this case we have calculated the correlation coefficient r (Worthing and Geffner, 1959) between the numbers of arrivals, and overnights, respectively, with both the number of tourism structures and the accommodation capacity. The result is shown below (Table 1). This coefficient is used in order to estimate to what extent the variation of one quantity determines that of another quantity, therefore to what extent there is a correlation between the two quantities. If the value of r is 1, then the two quantities are perfectly correlated (there is a linear relationship between them), while a value of 0 indicates a complete lack of correlation.

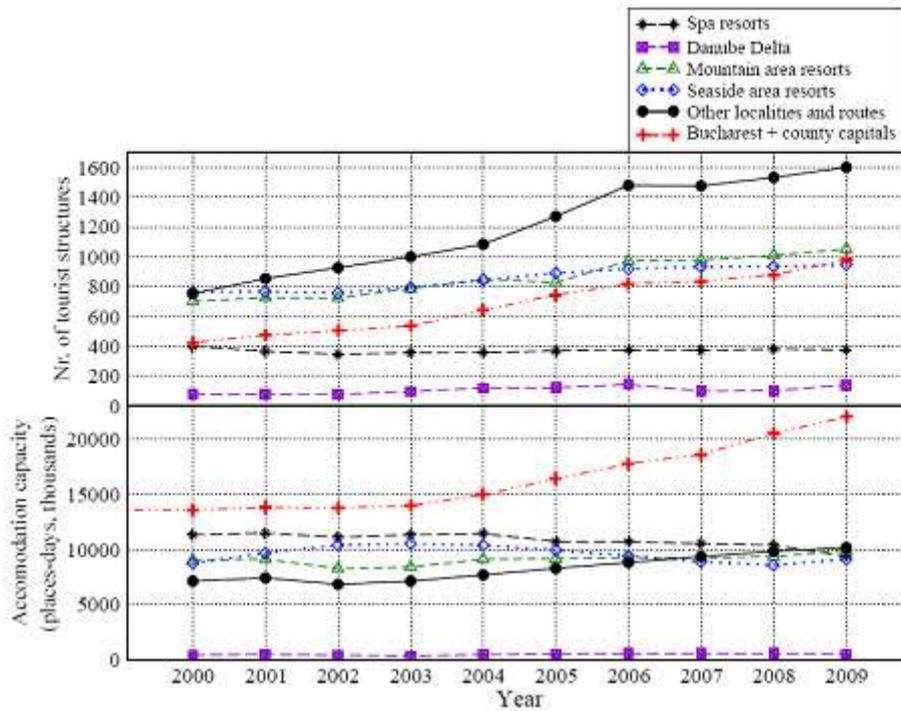


Figure 5 – Evolution of the number of tourism structures and of their accommodation capacity

Source: National Institute of Statistics, <http://statistici.insse.ro>

Table 1 – The correlation coefficient *r* between indicators of touristic activity for destination (f) "other localities and routes"

Corelation	Foreigners	Romanians
X1 with Y1	0.93	0.93
X2 with Y1	0.91	0.84
X1 with Y2	0.83	0.94
X2 with Y2	0.83	0.87

Meaning of the notations: X1 = number of tourist arrivals in tourism structures; X2 = number of overnights; Y1 = number of existing tourism structures; Y2 = accommodation capacity of the existing structures.

In table 1 one observes a good correlation, for example, between the number of arrivals in tourism structures and the number of such structures (correlation coefficient above 0.92). In other cases, the correlation is not equally good, the *r* coefficient being smaller than 0.90. However, it does not seem indicated to extrapolate too much in the future such a correlation, as long as the existing accommodation capacity was used only at a reduced level.

Indeed, the last figure (figure 6) shows that the average index of utilisation of the (total) accommodation capacity was rather small, around 35%, with an accentuated decrease in the year 2009. The values of this index have never exceeded 50% (<http://statistici.insse.ro>) for none of the types of tourism structures (with different types of ownership). Under these conditions, it is clear that other causes should be sought for the evolutions that were found.

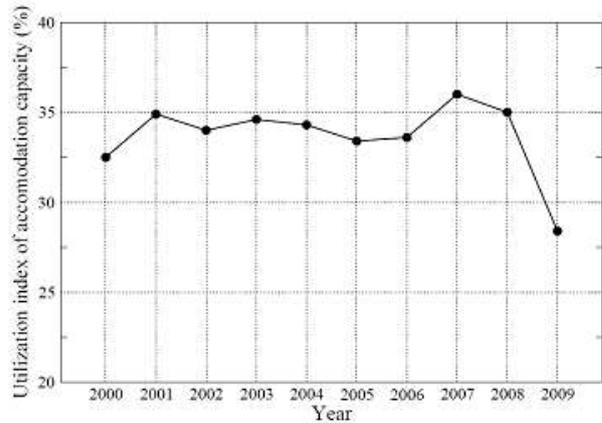


Figure 6 – Index of utilisation of the total accommodation capacity during the investigated interval

Source: National Institute of Statistics, <http://statistici.insse.ro>

4. CONCLUSIONS

In this study, it was analyzed the evolution of some indicators of the touristic activity in Romania, during the years between 2000 and 2009, by using the database of the National Institute of Statistics. The focus of the study was on the evolution of this activity on the six tourist destinations highlighted in this database that allows a coarse classification on types of tourism practiced in Romania. Some trends of these evolutions have been observed, the most interesting being the following:

- An important decrease of the tourism from the seaside resorts area, during the last years, especially manifested in the case of the foreign tourists;
- A significant growth of the tourism for the destinations "Danube Delta" and "other localities and tourist routes".

The later destination, which excludes both the big cities and the spa, seaside, and mountain resorts areas, had the strongest positive evolution, becoming

important even quantitatively, especially in what concerns the options of the foreign tourists.

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

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