

## THE DIMENSION OF ROMANIAN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

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Romanian tourism development is a current and controversial topic. The ways through which this sector can be developed are several, but first must be carefully analyzed the present situation by making a good evaluation, in order to have effective and applicable results in our reality. Achieving the objectives of the green economy is a necessary requirement of sustainable development of society. Lately, the trend is to promote more and more the ecotourism and the agrotourism. So, in this article, we present the current situation of the Romanian tourism sector by using the available statistical data at a national and international level. We conducted a SWOT analysis to highlight the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the Romanian tourism, based on the sector situation analyses, in order to make proposals for how the Romanian tourism sector can and will become more competitive, more efficient and more noticeable. The methodological framework consists in quantitative methods and qualitative methods that allow greater flexibility of data analysis. This study concludes that the Romanian tourism must be developed by focusing on promoting more the touristic resources and introducing financial instruments for developing this sector.

**Key words:** green economy, market analyses of the Romanian tourism, SWOT analyses, tourism development, tourism importance.

**JEL Classification:** L38, L83, O14.

**I. INTRODUCTION**

Given the challenges that humanity faces, on a global scale is discussed and is attempted to achieve the targets required by the green economy (UNEP, 2011; EEA, 2013). The main goal of this new economic model is to create new jobs and to diminish CO<sub>2</sub> emissions that contribute to climate change. One of the main sectors that green economy acts is tourism by promoting and encouraging the ecotourism (UNEP, UNCTAD and et al, 2011). This concept has been intensely discussed since 1990 when The International Ecotourism Society presented a definition of the ecotourism, as being a "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people" (www.ecotourism.org). So, ecotourism is a form of tourism that promotes the conservation of the nature, local societies and culture through which are provided economic, social and ecological benefits. Also, UNEP presents ecotourism as a part of sustainable tourism, because refers only to nature, rural and cultural tourism (Wood Epler, UNEP and et al, 2002).

The basic question which starts this analysis is "What is the current situation of the Romanian tourism sector". The SWOT analysis presented by this research gives us the final answer to this question and

shows the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the Romanian tourism, based on which we propose ways for improving the present situation.

Through this research we aim to fulfill two objectives, namely: carrying out an analysis that reveals the situation of the Romanian tourism sector and conducting a SWOT analysis of this field. Results of these analyzes will underpin our proposals for launching the Romanian tourism development using the green economy objectives.

Romanian touristic potential is given by our natural resources, culture, history and traditions (Paicu and Hristache, 2013) and is manifested in various forms of tourism, like: leisure tourism, cultural tourism, religious tourism, adventure tourism, sports tourism, spa tourism, agro-tourism, ecotourism, business tourism, scientific tourism. So, tourism development is reflected through diversification of its manifestation forms and in the continuous enrichment of its content. Therefore, considering its effects on the economy, on the workforce, on the global trade and balances of payments, as well as socio-cultural effects, tourism should be encouraged to grow, especially as Romania has the resources to do so and can be successfully exploited if are applied effective strategies (Neacșu, Băltărețu and et al, 2012).

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

To an international scale, developing tourism is an important subject because it contributes to achieving the green economy targets (UNEP, 2013). This means that tourism helps creating new jobs, reducing poverty and growing the state economy. According to the World Tourism Organization, the year 2012 was significant for the tourism sector because over 1 Billion tourists traveled the globe and international tourism generated US\$ 1.3 trillion in export earnings (UNWTO, 2013). Also, Europe had the highest percentage of international tourists arrivals in the world, namely 52%, but the international tourism receipts are 43%. Instead, Americas had 16% of international tourist arrivals and 20% of international tourism receipts, meaning that has more effective strategies in terms of bringing money in the region from tourism (UNWTO, 2013). Those facts and the global challenges regarding climate change and economic and social crises points out the importance of developing the national tourism. Moreover, worldwide the organizations are promoting the sustainable tourism for biodiversity protection. Given the fact that ecotourism is considered a part of sustainable tourism (Wood Epler, UNEP and et al, 2002), then the goals of sustainable tourism includes also poverty eradication.

Until recently, the Romanian tourism has experienced a conjectural and extensive development without a unitary conception regarding the resources and equally addressing to the domestic and international tourism. Thereby, has started crumbling investments at the local level and occurred the development of new tourism products that were uncompetitive and incomplete (Bran, Marin and et al, 1998). In the Romanian Sustainable Development Strategy, the tourism sector is highlighted as one of the vulnerable sectors to climate change and is presented his significant contribution to the PIB growth. Also, it has been indicated measures to encourage the development of tourism sector (MMDR, 2008). Other documents that provide the guidelines for tourism development are the National Tourism Development Master Plan 2007–2026 and the National Strategy for Ecotourism Development in Romania. As we will further see in the tourism sector analysis, the targets in the Tourism Master Plan (UNWTO and MDRAP, 2006) have not been reached because of several factors, like: the economic crises from 2008, the poor development of the infrastructure, political and legislative factors. Also, with Romania joining the European Union in 2007, the competitiveness of the tourist destinations and tour operators has increased considerably (Mazilu and Marinescu, 2009). Thus, those tour operators and tourist destinations who did not meet the conditions

for service quality have disappeared from Romanian and from the international tourism market. Tourism management must improve always for tourism destinations and tour operators to become more competitive and to be more promoted on the international market (Mazilu, 2008).

So, the tourism sector will continue developing in Romania because of the increase number of foreign investors that come in our country and because of the pressure exerted by the international community, EU, investors, Romanian population. Romania has a vast and varied natural and anthropic tourism potential, as well as a rich culture, which highlights the importance of future tourism development and its inclusion among the branches of the national economy (Bran, Marin and et al, 1998).

## III. METHODOLOGY

In this research we used a secondary data analysis based on national and European statistical data for highlighting the trend of Romanian tourism sector in the 2009-2012 period (www.insse.ro, eurostat.eu). Also, we used the SWOT analysis method for making a qualitative diagnosis of tourism (Stoica, 2011). We chose this method because offers a greater flexibility in terms of data analyses (Wai-chung Yeung, 1995). The SWOT analysis is concluded with proposals of developing the Romanian tourism. This research was conducted by querying various information sources, such as national strategies, specialized books, European and world reports of the various competent authorities in tourism, respectively ecotourism.

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Considering the tourism potential of our country, in Romania it can be exploited multiple forms of tourism. Through the National Tourism Development Master Plan, Romania has established the targets that have to be achieved until 2026. Also, since 2009, National Institute of Research and Development in Tourism has drafted the National Strategy for Ecotourism Development in Romania in which is defined the concept, the international experience regarding this concept and the present situation of ecotourism in Romania. These documents represent a guideline in terms of tourism development for our country.

### Romanian tourism sector analysis

We have analysed the establishment of touristic reception, the touristic destination, the ownership status, the places of accommodation, the trend of the arrivals and of the staying overnights of tourists, the

index of net using the touristic accommodation capacity in function.

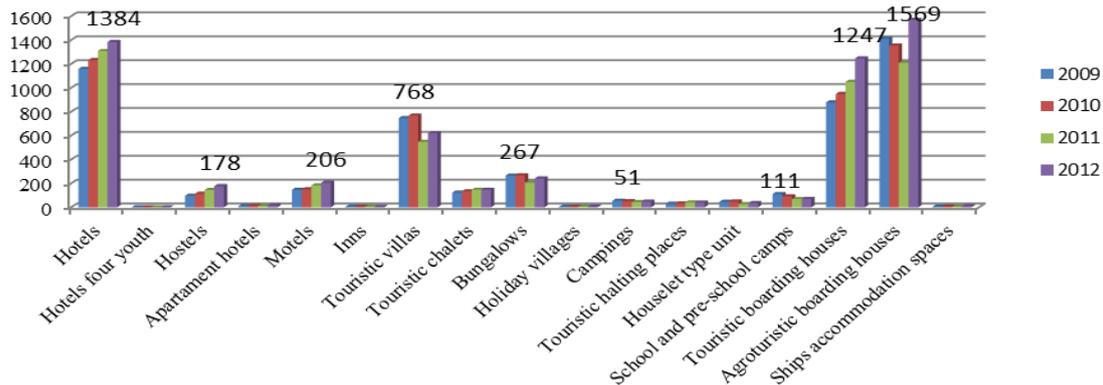


Figure 1: Type of establishment of touristic reception (no.)

Source: developed by authors, 2013

The trend of establishment of touristic reception from Romania has fluctuated in the 2009-2012 period reaching a minimum in 2011 when the number of establishments was 5003 and a maximum in 2012 when the number was 5821. Also, agro-touristic boarding houses, hotels, touristic boarding houses and touristic villas had in 2012 the largest share in the total touristic accommodation with 26.95%, 23.78%, 21.42% and 10.67%. From those establishments, touristic villas had the highest number of establishment with state integral ownership in 2012 (2.74%), but this percentage was reduced from 9.91% in 2009. This means that it is produced the gradual privatization of these structures. In 2012, the majority of establishment of touristic reception have had the comfort of 3 and 2 stars and for agro-touristic boarding houses 3 and 2 flowers. Regarding the touristic destinations, these are spas, seaside excluding Constanta town, mountain resorts, Danube Delta area including Tulcea town, Bucharest and county residence town excluding Tulcea and other localities and touristic routes. After other localities and touristic routes' category, the biggest number of establishments of touristic reception is in mountain resorts, however exists a fast growth of establishments in Bucharest and county residence town, excluding Tulcea, due to the fast development of business tourism. Also, in 2009,

the biggest number of establishments of touristic reception was in South-East development region of Romania, which contains the seaside and the Danube Delta (1311 establishments), followed closely by the Center development region (1207), but in 2012 the situation was reversed, the Center region becoming on first position with 1526 establishments as against 1079 in South-East region, due to its position in the historical region of Transylvania, which was promoted quite a lot lately due to local legends.

The places of accommodation had reached a minimum also in 2011, but the maximum in 2010. In 2012, the biggest number of places have had, in this order: the hotels (180714), agro-touristic boarding houses (27453), touristic boarding houses (25019), touristic villas (14775), camping (12816) and school and pre-school camps (10908 places). In 2009-2012 the number of places at seaside was diminished with 31.97% and at Danube Delta area with 4.43%. The other touristic destinations had grown in percentage in 2012 against 2009, Bucharest and county residence town excluding Tulcea having the biggest growth with 28.34%.

The index of net using the touristic accommodation capacity in function shows how much is used an accommodation structure based on the staying overnights (www.insse.ro).

Table 1. Index of net using the touristic accommodation capacity in function by type of ownership

Type of ownership (%)	2009	2010	2011	2012
Total	28.4	25.2	26.3	25.9
State integral ownership	34	29.4	54.5	50.2
Privat integral ownership	26	23.5	25.1	24.4
Community ownership	56.5	45.8	37	34
Foreign integral ownership	32.7	33.4	29.9	32.2
National and local interest public ownership	32.9	29	23.8	21.5

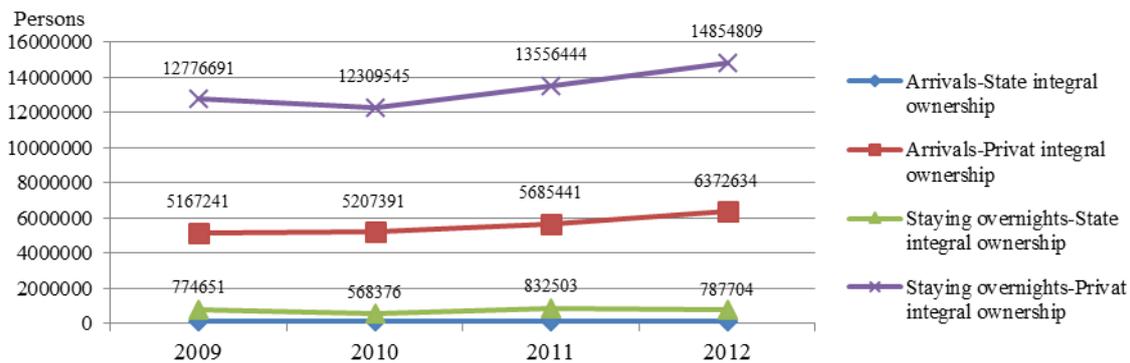
From table 1 we can conclude that the percentage of net using of the touristic accommodation capacity in function is relatively low

per total. The better use of the establishments of touristic reception with state integral ownership can be explain by the social dimension of the state through

the gratuities offered to the Romanian population. We can say that the tourism balance for arrivals and departures is negative and that is why we should take measures to attract foreign tourists that can bring money in Romania.

The trend of the arrivals and of the staying overnights of tourists is increasing and the difference between those two consists in the fact that the arrival of tourists is registered only for the ones that travel outside the city of residence and therefore the number of tourists for this category is lower than the number of staying overnights of tourists. Considering the number of establishment of touristic reception and the places of accommodation, the motels have had a big number of arrivals of tourists accommodated in the

structure of tourists reception and the arrivals are in a continuous growth. In the case of staying overnights, motels and hostels stand out by the big number of persons accommodated. From fig.2 we find that the target set for 2011 in the tourism master plan consisting in 27.48 million visitors for overnights was not achieved (UNWTO and MDRAP,2006). It has been reached only 15.6 million persons. In what concerns the arrivals, these consisted in 7.68 million visitors instead of 8.01 estimated in the master plan. One of the reason why the trend of the arrivals and the staying overnights is until 2010 on a descending line, is because the economic crises started in 2008 affected these indicators.

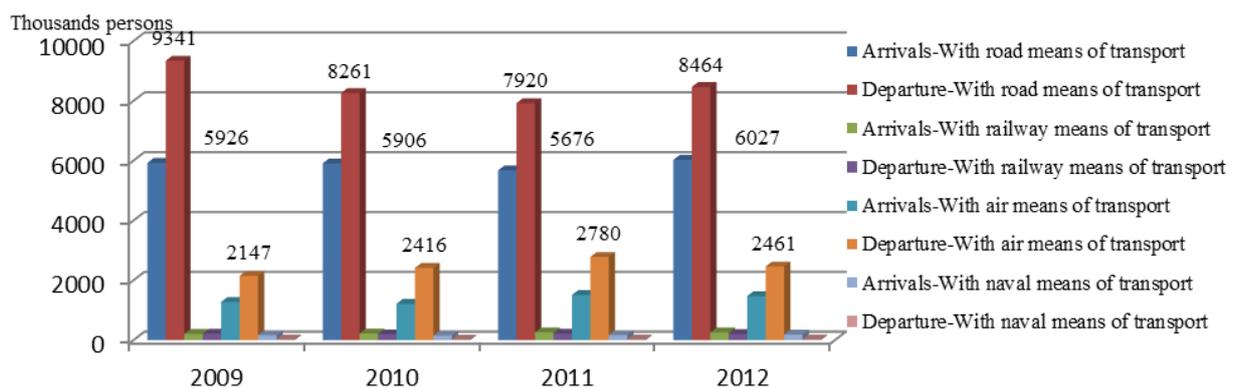


**Figure 2: Arrivals and staying overnights of tourists in establishment of touristic reception**  
Source: developed by authors, 2013

The year 2011 has represented a key year in terms of foreign investments. The arrivals of tourists accommodated in the structure of tourists reception by foreign integral ownership has grown with 180.76% in 2011 then 2010 and also has grown the staying overnights with 237.24%. Of course, the community

ownership and the national and local interest public ownership have been decreasing.

Considering the mean of transportation used by tourists, we noticed that the road means of transport are used predominantly for departures as well as the arrivals.



**Figure 3: Arrivals and staying overnights of tourists in establishment of touristic reception**  
Source: developed by authors, 2013

In 2012, the average expenditure in Romania for domestic trips was 88.78 euro/trip, the value being lower than in the case of Bulgaria who had 104.13 euro/trip. For the outbound trips the average expenditure in Romania was 427.4 euro/trip, the value

being higher than the one from Bulgaria who had 366.03 euro/trip (eurostat.eu). A good situation for our country would have been when the average expenditure for domestic trips would have been bigger than the average expenditure for outbound trips

because would have meant that there is a higher intake of money for our country.

So, although we have a master plan for tourism and a strategy for ecotourism the effects of implementing those two are not the expected ones.

The first has goals that we have not met and, for the second, there are no statistical data, not even on a national level, regarding the development of ecotourism in Romania.

**Table 2.SWOT analysis of the Romanian tourism sector**

<b>S – Strengths</b>	<b>W – Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Natural resources, history, culture and traditions are very diverse, which is a great tourism potential for Romania.</li> <li>→ Climatic conditions allow Romania to attract tourists in all seasons and give the possibility of practicing various forms of tourism: SPA, cultural – religious tourism, adventure, sports and business tourism.</li> <li>→ Tourist growth as a result of joining EU and of increasing the promotion of Romanian tourism.</li> <li>→ The growing foreign investments in the tourism sector due to the increase of accommodation with full foreign ownership.</li> <li>→ The increase of the establishment of touristic reception in Romania in 2009-2012 period.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ The number of tourists'arrivals is lower than the number of departure abroad, meaning that the tourism balance is negative.</li> <li>→ The average expenditure in Romania for domestic trips still has a small value comparing with the majority of EU countries.</li> <li>→ Insufficient promotion of Romanian tourism sector abroad and in the country.</li> <li>→ Poor quality of the infrastructure.</li> <li>→ Low confidence of the Romanian population in the quality of services and standards in the tourism sector sustained by the fact that the departure abroad is higher than the arrivals. This determines the tourists to move to other tourist destinations abroad where they receive superior service at comparable prices.</li> </ul>
<b>O - Opportunities</b>	<b>T - Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Great potential for the development of new forms of tourism, namely: agro-tourism and ecotourism, considering the natural resources and the culture.</li> <li>→ Elaborating and implementing national measures and strategies to support the development of Romanian tourism.</li> <li>→ The existing EU funds for tourism development starting with 2014 and its supporting infrastructure.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Strong competition in international tourism, especially in terms of well-known resorts.</li> <li>→ Low efficiency of the implementation of national strategies on tourism and lack of its assessment.</li> <li>→ Ineffective use of EU funds for tourism development in 2007-2013.</li> <li>→ Poor qualification of human resources and their lack of motivation due to the low incomes obtained.</li> </ul>

Based on the SWOT analysis, we suggest that the decision factors to evaluate the current strategies for tourism, to improve them if it is necessary for creating new opportunities for the investors. Obtaining the funding for the development, maintenance and promotion of a business in tourism is a key point in the development of the tourism sector. Thus, it should be proposed and implemented new and various forms of financing to come as an aid for tourism investors.

**V.V.CONCLUSION**

While promoting and implementing green economy, it is required a better utilization of tourism resources. This involves both an efficient use of tourism values and a protection and conservation of these resources.

From the secondary data analysis we conclude that the establishments for tourist reception have slightly increased in 2012 and this growth can be seen in the increased number of agrotouristic boarding

houses, hotels and touristic boarding houses in the Romanian Center development region. Also, is pointed out a gradual increase in the privatization of these structures. The net using of the touristic accommodation capacity in function is relatively low and shows that the promotion of the tourism sector is a key factor in this matter. Relationship between arrivals and departures for Romania is below one, which means that it must be encouraged foreign tourist arrivals. In what concerns the average expenditure in Romania, this is lower for domestic trips than for the outbound trips, meaning that there is a lower intake of money for our country.

Given the facts presented above, we encourage the competent authorities to make an evaluation of the current strategies for tourism implemented in Romania, to improve them and to encourage the development of this sector. We propose to accelerate the privatization of the establishments for tourist reception and to improve continuously the legislative framework. Also, we suggest the introduction of financial instruments for developing the tourism that

would be easily accessible and specific for tourism. Romanian tourism is a key sector for developing our economy and has many competitive advantages which can and should be harnessed for the good of our society.

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