

THE TOURISM AND AGROTOURISM POTENTIAL OF BISTRIȚA-NĂȘĂUD COUNTY-ROMANIA IN THE NORTH WEST DEVELOPMENT REGION

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Abstract

This work was compiled in order to identify and analyze the tourism potential of the North-West Development Region as a whole and the tourism potential of Bistrița-Năsăud County in detail, as well as its capitalization degree. In order to achieve this approach, in our analysis we used evolution and structure indicators for the next indicators of the tourism potential: touristic units structure, their dispersal within the North-West Development Region, the areas of this perimeter which presents potential for touristic development, etc. As a result of this analysis, the data showed an area with a very high tourism potential for developing competitive touristic products, but unfortunately this potential is extremely poorly capitalized. The same trend was noticed also to Bistrița-Năsăud County which although has an important potentially in agrotourism, the basis for its exploitation is insufficient.

Keywords: agrotourism, tourism, tourist pension

INTRODUCTION

Based on the literature and research methodology, in this article we are going to straighten out attention to the following aspects: analysis of the tourism potential of the North-West Development Region and of the development degree of regional touristic offer.

The touristic potential of an area can be defined generally as "all what constitutes as tourist attractions and that lends to an arrangement for visiting and receipt of travelers" [6].

For the overall touristic attraction, are used also tourism fund touristic heritage. Touristic fund represent the totality of natural and cultural resources with touristic destination, to denote the tourism potential and tourism heritage has a wider coverage, including specific technical-material base and elements of infrastructure that helps the exploitation and valorization of touristic riches. [6]

The North-West Region (Northern Transylvania) is one of the 8 development regions from Romania and includes 6

counties: Bihor, Bistrița-Năsăud, Cluj, Maramures, Satu Mare and Sălaj.

The region is one of the most picturesque from Romania, from the Apuseni Mountains that have a special charm up to special cultural and popular heritage in the unique ethnographic areas in this part of Europe.

The region enjoys an outstanding tourist attractions and resources which employs it between regions with perspectives of development: thermal waters, salt mines; there are a number of projects of development of mountain resorts; popular culture and cultural and ethnography heritage with top destinations among the top objectives of Romania, fortresses and historic monuments, etc. [2, 8] [9]

Inside Transylvania is distinguished a County, with an unmatched Transylvanian spirit. Bistrița-Năsăud County has a number of objectives, which through their artistic and historical content increase value of a touristic territory, allowing diversification of touristic palette.

The beauty of this region is determined primarily by its diversified topography, predominantly hilly and mountainous. The rural of Bistrița-Năsăud County has a special tourism potential. In folkloric areas from the country such as Valea Bârgaielor, Valea Someșului, Valea Șieului residents store nowadays the ancient traditions and customs, which constitute unique attractions. Bistrița Bârgăului, Ilva Mare, Lesu or Livezile are true centers of folk fabrics and seams. [1] [3]

MATERIALS AND METHODS

For the realization of this work were analyzed and interpreted the following indicators both in structure and evolution: structure of tourist establishments authorized by structures types, number of seats and quality categories, tourism potential development of the counties belonging to the North West Region.

The data analyzed and presented in this article were provided by the national authority for tourism for year 2015.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1. The villages structure of the North-West Region after the total score of tourist development

| No. | County | MU | Total | | Total score for touristic development potential | | | | | |
|---|-----------------|---------------------|------------|-------------|---|-----------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| | | | villages | % | 1-9 | 10-19 | 20-29 | 30-39 | 40-50 | >50 |
| 1 | Bihor | Villages No. | 26 | 14% | 0 | 2 | 14 | 8 | 1 | 1 |
| | | % | 100 | x | 0% | 8% | 54% | 31% | 4% | 4% |
| 2 | Bistrita-Nasaud | Villages No. | 37 | 21% | 0 | 1 | 16 | 16 | 4 | 0 |
| | | % | 100 | x | 0% | 3% | 43% | 43% | 11% | 0% |
| 3 | Cluj | Villages No. | 27 | 15% | 0 | 2 | 14 | 10 | 1 | 0 |
| | | % | 100 | x | 0% | 7% | 52% | 37% | 4% | 0% |
| 4 | Maramures | Villages No. | 54 | 30% | 1 | 2 | 31 | 14 | 5 | 1 |
| | | % | 100 | x | 2% | 4% | 57% | 26% | 9% | 2% |
| 5 | Satu Mare | Villages No. | 10 | 6% | 0 | 1 | 7 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| | | % | 100 | x | 0% | 10% | 70% | 20% | 0% | 0% |
| 6 | Salaj | Villages No. | 26 | 14% | 0 | 9 | 13 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| | | % | 100 | x | 0% | 35% | 50% | 12% | 4% | 0% |
| North-West Region total villages | | Villages No. | 180 | 100% | 1 | 17 | 95 | 53 | 12 | 2 |
| | | % | 100 | x | 1% | 9% | 53% | 29% | 7% | 1% |

Own calculation by: Annex 9 - List of areas with high tourism potential

[http://portal.afir.info/informatii_generale_pndr_investitii_prin_pndr_sm_6_2_infiintare_activitati_neagricole?amp;lang=RO\[5\]](http://portal.afir.info/informatii_generale_pndr_investitii_prin_pndr_sm_6_2_infiintare_activitati_neagricole?amp;lang=RO[5])

In the following we will analyze the tourism and agrotourism potential in the North-West Region and we start this analysis from the establishments number structure approved by types of touristic structures for each county of the region. All the data presented has as reference the year 2015.

Development within the North West Region of the villages identified as having tourism potential, according to the order of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of no. 567/2008 modified by Order 54/13 March, in the framework of the North-West Region, a rate of just 1% represent administrative-territorial units with a minimum tourism potential and also 1% units with very high potential for tourism development with a total score of more than 50 points. Most localities are accurate within 20-39 points interval, these accounting 82% of total communes identified as having tourism potential. The same trend in the Northwest region, can be found in the County of Bistrița-Năsăud, a percentage of 86% of the municipalities identified with tourism potential fits within the score 20-39.

In terms of the number of municipalities identified, most are located in the County of Maramureș (54 localities), Bistrița-Năsăud with 37 villages.

The structure and distribution of the villages has emerged from data published in the Annex. 2 of the Order No. 54/13 March 2012.

As it appears from Table 2 in the North-West Region is recorded a total of 1,301 authorized units, the largest share being owned by the Cluj County, with a share of 29%.

Starting from the data entered in the table, we notice that more than half of the total number of tourist units are represented by hostels,

accommodation units encountered mostly in rural areas.

Unfortunately, for the agro tourism phenomenon, only 9% of the accommodation units are represented by agrotouristic pensions. At the Bistrița-Năsăud County level the situation is even more tragic, in this county there are only 3 authorized agro touristic pensions.

A first conclusion which can be detached from these first data is that although the North-West region in general, as well as Bistrița-Năsăud County feature a rich and varied touristic

potential, rural tourism and agrotourism are very underdeveloped.

It should be mentioned that most developed counties of the Region are Cluj and Maramureș are located within a small distance of each other, on the territory of those two counties are the most units in general, but also the most accommodation units specific to rural tourism, agrotourism in number of 49/50. At the tail of the ranking in terms of agrotourism, located very close to each other Bistrița-Năsăud, i.e. Satu Mare with three units, respectively 2.

Table 2. The structure of the authorized touristic units number in the North-West Region in 2015

| No. | County | MU | Total units | | From which pension: | | | villa | others* |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|-----------|--------------|-------------|---------------------|------------|---------------|-----------|------------|
| | | | No. | % | hotel | total | agrotouristic | | |
| 1 | Bihor | No. units | 341 | 26% | 45 | 184 | 4 | 25 | 87 |
| 2 | Bistrița-Năsăud | No. units | 76 | 6% | 18 | 38 | 3 | 2 | 18 |
| 3 | Cluj | No. units | 377 | 29% | 61 | 203 | 49 | 27 | 86 |
| 4 | Maramureș | No. units | 364 | 28% | 25 | 259 | 50 | 5 | 75 |
| 5 | Sălaj | No. units | 58 | 4% | 8 | 38 | 7 | 3 | 9 |
| 6 | Satu Mare | No. units | 85 | 7% | 16 | 16 | 2 | 9 | 44 |
| North-West Region total | | No. units | 1,301 | 100% | 173 | 738 | 115 | 71 | 319 |
| touristic units | | % | 100 | X | 13% | 57% | 9% | 5% | 25% |

* includes all other accommodation: hostels, motels, inns, bungalows, houses, tourist stops, camps for students and preschoolers

Own calculation by: "List of touristic establishments with classified tourism accommodation "
[http://turism.gov.ro/informatii-publice/\[4](http://turism.gov.ro/informatii-publice/[4)

In close connection with the number and structure of accommodation units we have the number of accommodations indicator, listed in table 3, grouped according to the type of the unit. From these figures there are the following conclusions: in the region there are a total of 1,301 touristic units with a number of places of 37,932. Of these places, the majority are found in hotel units namely 17,641. A large number of accommodation places immediately after those in hotel units, are found in touristic

pensions, but only a number of 998 places (3% of total) can be found in agrotouristic pensions, in direct proportion to the number of pensions, a very small number.

In terms of accommodation places, the counties don't maintain the same hierarchy as in the case of touristic establishments, Bihor County recording the highest number of accommodation places, in condition that the counties of Maramureș and Cluj have most of the accommodation structures.

Table 3. The tourist accommodation number structure of the authorized touristic units, depending on the type of unit in the North-West Development Region

| No. | County | MU | Total units | | From which pension: | | | villa | others* |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|------------|---------------|-------------|---------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| | | | No. | % | hotel | total | agrotouristic | | |
| 1 | Bihor | No. places | 13,280 | 35% | 7,389 | 3,317 | 50 | 486 | 2,088 |
| 2 | Bistrița-Năsăud | No. places | 3,204 | 8% | 1,958 | 689 | 42 | 64 | 493 |
| 3 | Cluj | No. places | 10,560 | 28% | 5,037 | 3,287 | 383 | 672 | 1,564 |
| 4 | Maramureș | No. places | 6,744 | 18% | 1,801 | 3,224 | 412 | 98 | 1,621 |
| 5 | Sălaj | No. places | 1,499 | 4% | 479 | 712 | 87 | 64 | 244 |
| 6 | Satu Mare | No. places | 2,645 | 7% | 977 | 330 | 24 | 161 | 1,177 |
| North-West Region total | | No. places | 37,932 | 100% | 17,641 | 11,559 | 998 | 1,545 | 7,187 |
| | | % | 100% | X | 47% | 30% | 3% | 4% | 19% |

Own calculation by: "List of touristic establishments with classified tourism accommodation "
[http://turism.gov.ro/informatii-publice/\[4](http://turism.gov.ro/informatii-publice/[4)

Following, we will approach the accommodation quality. To analyze the agrotourism phenomenon within tourism in general, we will delineate the accommodation structures belonging to the rural: rural and

agro-touristic pensions classified with flowers from the rest of the touristic structures, classified with stars/flowers-urban touristic pensions.

Table 4. The number structure of authorized touristic units in the Northwest Development Region by quality categories in the year 2015 *

| No. | County | UM | Total units | | Of which units by the stars/flowers number* | | | | |
|--|-----------------|-----------|-------------|------|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | | | No. | % | 1 star /flower | 2 stars /flowers | 3 stars /flowers | 4 stars /flowers | 5 stars /flowers |
| 1 | Bihor | No. units | 327 | 28% | 28 | 88 | 195 | 15 | 1 |
| | | % | 100% | X | 9% | 27% | 60% | 5% | 0% |
| 2 | Bistrița-Năsăud | No. units | 73 | 6% | 2 | 29 | 38 | 3 | 1 |
| | | % | 100% | X | 3% | 40% | 52% | 4% | 1% |
| 3 | Cluj | No. units | 325 | 28% | 18 | 80 | 176 | 46 | 5 |
| | | % | 100% | X | 6% | 25% | 54% | 14% | 2% |
| 4 | Maramureș | No. units | 306 | 26% | 11 | 131 | 151 | 13 | |
| | | % | 100% | X | 4% | 43% | 49% | 4% | 0% |
| 5 | Satu Mare | No. units | 83 | 7% | 6 | 28 | 46 | 3 | |
| | | % | 100% | X | 7% | 34% | 55% | 4% | 0% |
| 6 | Sălaj | No. units | 50 | 4% | 2 | 8 | 35 | 5 | |
| | | % | 100% | X | 4% | 16% | 70% | 10% | 0% |
| North-West Region total touristic units | | No. units | 1164 | 100% | 67 | 364 | 641 | 85 | 7 |
| | | % | 100% | X | 6% | 31% | 55% | 7% | 1% |

* less rural touristic pensions and agro-touristic pensions

Own calculation by: "List of touristic establishments with classified tourism accommodation "

<http://turism.gov.ro/informatii-publice> [4]

At the region level we have a total of 1,164 units classified with stars, more than half of the units being categorized with 3 stars (55%). The predominance of 3-star accommodation is maintained at the level of each county in the region.

Fortunately the number of accommodation

units that register only 1 star is quite small, being only 6% of all establishments in the region.

Equally small is the number of units at the upper pole, region-wide with a rate of 7% on 4-star units and 1% on 5-stars units.

Table 5. The structure of rural and agrotouristic guesthouses number authorized in the Northwest Development Region by quality categories in 2015

| No. | County | UM | Total units | | Of which units by the flowers number | | | | |
|--|-----------------|-----------|-------------|------|--------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | | | No. | % | 1 flower | 2 flowers | 3 flowers | 4 flowers | 5 flowers |
| 1 | Bihor | No. units | 14 | 10% | 1 | 5 | 7 | 1 | |
| | | % | 100% | X | 7% | 36% | 50% | 7% | 0% |
| 2 | Bistrița-Năsăud | No. units | 3 | 2% | | 2 | 1 | | |
| | | % | 100% | X | 0% | 67% | 33% | 0% | 0% |
| 3 | Cluj | No. units | 52 | 38% | 1 | 45 | 6 | | |
| | | % | 100% | X | 2% | 87% | 12% | 0% | 0% |
| 4 | Maramureș | No. units | 58 | 42% | 1 | 41 | 15 | 1 | |
| | | % | 100% | X | 2% | 71% | 26% | 2% | 0% |
| 5 | Satu Mare | No. units | 2 | 1% | | 1 | | 1 | |
| | | % | 100% | X | 0% | 50% | 0% | 50% | 0% |
| 6 | Sălaj | No. units | 8 | 6% | | 4 | 4 | | |
| | | % | 100% | X | 0% | 50% | 50% | 0% | 0% |
| North-West Region total touristic units | | No. units | | 100% | 3 | 98 | 33 | 3 | |
| | | % | | X | 2% | 72% | 24% | 2% | 0% |

Own calculation by: "List of touristic establishments with classified tourism accommodation "

<http://turism.gov.ro/informatii-publice>[4]

With regard to the situation on counties, Sălajul although it has only 50 units, most of them fall in the categories of quality 3 and 4-star with a total of 80%. Sălaj is located immediately after the Bistrița-Năsăud County, with a total of 73 units, of which a percentage of 57% units with comfort-category 3-5 stars. From the analysis of the figures presented in table 5, we can infer that from the point of view of comfort the accommodation basis is made by the accommodation units with a comfort over minimum to medium, with the majority of units of 2 and 3 stars.

The last table we enroll in our analysis is that of the tourist establishments represented by rural and agrotouristic pensions from North-West Region by quality categories (Table 5). The number of these structures is extremely limited, being authorized in 2015 only 137 units in the Northwest region.

Just as we saw at the quality criteria by number of stars at this chapter are predominant also the units of 2 and 3 flowers, where fits most agro touristic guesthouses a number of 131 from total 137 units (96% of total establishments).

In terms of Bistrița-Năsăud County with a rich potential in agrotourism, we meet only 3 agrotouristic pensions.

CONCLUSIONS

In our country, there is not enough capitalized the tourism heritage, and the touristic product is in course of crystallization.

A rural tourism quality involves services and benefits. It goes without saying that rural tourism equipment must have a modern, sanitary conditions of comfort for both hosting and catering, roadways, and the civilized means of communication.

The full use of natural, economic and human resources to an area with a rich tourism potential can be achieved by involving local communities in the tourism sector, by supporting the initiative groups for the development and promotion of local tourist offer, in order to protect the environment and cultural assets.

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