

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE GUESTHOUSES IN THE TOURISM OF THE BRASOV COUNTY, ROMANIA

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Abstract

The paper analyzed the tourism indicators in the Brasov County in terms of tourist inflow and accommodation capacity pointing out the importance of agro-tourist and tourist guesthouses in the period 2007-2016, based on the empirical data provided by the National Institute of Statistics and also estimated the forecast for 2017-2021 horizon. The tourism indicators was calculated according their formulas, and their dynamics was assessed using the index method and average growth rate. The tourism offer in the Brasov County registered a high development in terms of accommodation capacity. In 2017, there were 955 tourist accommodation units, of which 69.73 % guesthouse and 29,811 places, of which 65.02 % in guesthouses. The number of places in agro-tourist guesthouses had a higher dynamics than in the tourist guesthouses. The tourist inflow doubled its figure in 2016, accounting for 1,114,395 visitors in 2016, of which 83.07 % were Romanian tourists. The number of Romanian visitors increased more than 2 times, while the number of foreigners by 71.4 %. Of the total number of visitors, 26.51 % were accommodated in guesthouses. The number of visitors accommodated in agro-tourist guesthouses was 2.58 times higher in agro-tourist guesthouses and 2 times higher in tourist guesthouses. The overnight stays recorded an ascending trend, accounting for 2,213,002 in the year 2016, of which 12.89 % in agro-tourist guesthouses and 14.15 % in tourist guesthouses. About 85 % of overnight stays in guesthouses belong to the Romanian tourists. The length of stay has declined to 1.98 days at the county level, but a little higher 2.13 days in agro-tourist guesthouses. The tourism density doubled its figure, accounting for 2.02 tourist/inhabitant. The occupancy rate was in average 21.40 % at the county level, but lower in the guesthouses. Tourism will continue its development in the Brasov County, and in 2021, it was expected to receive 1.43 million tourists, by 27.7 % more than in 2016, and the accommodation capacity to reach 36,683 places. The Brasov county is an example of high quality tourism, an area where guesthouses play an important role in the tourism market.

Key words: tourism, indicators, tourist guest houses, agro-tourist guesthouses, life quality, Brasov County,

INTRODUCTION

The Brasov area has been and continues to be an important destination both for the Romanian and foreign tourists. The charm of the medieval and at the same time modern city of Brasov, with its historical and cultural heritage, the beautiful mountain landscapes in the surroundings, inviting tourists to spend an active time outdoors, the large variety of tourism offer regarding accommodation and local gastronomy, traditions and customs, events and the hospitality of the local

population are the key strengths of the Brasov county [1, 8].

An important factor for the development of tourism and economy is rural tourism which could become an objective of the rural development strategies.

The multi-plurality of the activities in the rural space has a high importance in rural development and in assuring a higher life quality and living standard for the local communities and their inhabitants [9, 10].

Rural tourism, agro-tourism, ecotourism are means which could contribute to the diversification of the activities in the rural

space, offering jobs and additional income sources for the local population, and also they could contribute to the valorisation of the natural, historical and cultural heritage [5, 6]. Rural tourism could be a component of the sustainable development of the regions, micro regions, communes and villages of Romania. It is also, a tool for promoting the beautiful landscapes, high value heritage of culture, history and traditions. Visitors need to be welcome, accommodated, nourish and entertained with hospitality by their hosts. In this purpose, the owners of tourist and agro-tourist guesthouses are prepared to offer a large range of services and facilities to their guests. [4].

In the structure of accommodation units in Romania, tourist and agro-tourist guesthouses are more and more attractive for Romanian tourists due to a diversified offer and a more convenient tariff per night compared to other types of accommodation units [13].

In this context, the purpose of the paper was to: (i) synthesize the tourist attractions in the Brasov County and its surroundings, (ii) analyze the main tourism indicators at the county level, but also at the tourist and agro-tourist guesthouses in the last decade 2007-2016 and (iii) estimate the level of the main indicators for the horizon 2017-2021.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study used the specific tourism indicators to characterize the tourist flow and the offer in terms of accommodation as follows: the number of units with accommodation function for tourist reception, the number of places (beds), the number of tourist arrivals, the number of overnight stays, the average length of stay, the tourist density, the occupancy rate, and the tourist function.

The mathematical formulas for some tourism indicators have been the following ones:

The average length of stay: $D = \sum NO_i / \sum NT_i$, where $\sum NO_i$ = the number of overnight stays (tourist-days) and $\sum NT_i$ = the number of tourists.

The tourism density, $F_1 = \sum NO_i / P$, and also $F_2 = \sum NT_i / P$, where P = population in the Brasov County.

The occupancy rate, $G_o = [NO / (NP \times Z)] 100$, where: NO = number of overnight stays, NP = number of places, $Z = 365$ days.

The tourism function indicator, $F = (NP / P) 100$, where: NP = number of places and P = population.

All these indicators mentioned above were determined both at the level of the County of Brasov, and also at the level of the tourist guesthouses and agro-tourist guesthouses, based on the data provided by the National Institute of Statistics Tempo Online Data base for the period 2007-2016.

The research is based on various methods to process and interpret the data as follows: the Index method, regarding the indices with fixed basis, $I_{FB} = (X_n / X_0) 100$, where X_n is the variable X in the years n , and X_0 is the value of the variable X in the year zero.

The share of a variable in the total value of the variables was calculated using the formula: $S\% = (X_n / X_T) 100$, where X_i = the value of the variable n and X_T = the sum of the values of the variables.

The comparison method was used to identify the differences between the level of variables and indices in the tourist guesthouses and in the agro-tourist guesthouses.

The forecast for the horizon 2017-2021 was established taking into account the level of the variables achieved in the mast year of the analysis, 2016, and the average annual growth rate achieved in the period 2007-2016, using the formulas:

Average annual growth $= \sum (X_t - X_{t-1}) / n - 1$, where X_t = the value of the variable in the year $t = 1, 2, \dots, n$ and X_{t-1} is the value of the variable in the year $t-1$.

The expected value of the variable $X = X_{n+1} + \sum (X_t - X_{t-1}) / n - 1$.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The main tourist attractions in the City of Brasov and Brasov County.

Brasov is a beautiful and old city, officially attested in documents back in 1235. It is a medieval city with specific buildings mainly in the historical center in the Council Square, but also in various parts of the city where tourists could discover the gates of the city:

Catherine's Gate, Scheii Gate, the White Tower, the Black Tower, the Citadel of the Guard, the Graft Bastion, The Weavers Bastion, the Rope Road the narrowest in Romania and in Europe.

The culture of Brasov is a mixture of the cultures whose features have been established by the local population including Ethnic Romanians, Hungarians and Saxons.

Brasov is a historical, cultural, an industrial, business, education city. It is suitable for an active tourism: mountain, climbing, hiking, winter sports (skiing, skating etc), cycling, horse riding, spa, and relaxation. It is also a business city and good for shopping.

The main tourist attractions in the city are: *the Black Church* (1477), the most representative gothic church with the biggest bell in Romania, with the biggest organ in the South Eastern Europe and with a rich collection of old Persian carpets, *St. Nicholas Church* in Scheii Brasovului and the *Museum of the first Romanian school* (1495), *St. Bartholomew Church*, the oldest in the city, *St. Peter and Paul Roman-Catholic Cathedral* in baroque style, with nice paintings and stained glasses, *the Orthodox Cathedral* in the main square of the city, the *Synagoga Neologa*, and the *Fortified Church* in Sinpetru. Brasov has many museums among which the most important are: *the Museum of Ethnography*, including a large variety of textiles used for producing folk costumes, *The Art Museum* with masterpieces of the Romanian painters, mainly of Nicolae Grigorescu but also of foreign painters, *The County Museum of History*, the "*Casa Muresenilor*" *Museum*. [14].

In Brasov, there are many cultural events such as: *The Brasov's Days*, *The Juni's Parade*, *The National Festival of Contemporary Theater*. Important performances are played at the *National Theater* and the *Opera House*, and many concerts are sustained by the *Philharmonic orchestra*.

Brasov has a "ZOO" in "Noua" District.

In the surroundings, the tourists could visit: the *Poiana Brasov*, with its elegant hotels and villas, ski slopes and the telecab which bring the tourists right on the top of *Postavarul Mountain*.

The Mountain Tampa could be easily climbed directly from the middle of the city.

At *Bran*, the tourists may visit the well know "*the Bran Catle*" nicknamed "*the Dracula Castle*", as well as the charming villages of *Bran*, *Moeciu* and *Sirnea*, where they could enjoy seeing the Romanian traditions, folk costumes, dance, and taste traditional meals or to take part to agro and eco-tourist activities.

In *Rasnov*, the tourists could visit the *Fortress*, and the *Dino Park*, and also to practice winters sports, and in summer season to participate to cultural events. In the small city, it is an Evangelical Church and the oldest Orthodox stone-church in South-Eastern Europe. In *Valea Cetatii* it is a cave which could be explored by the people passionate of caving.

In *Prejmer*, there is the "*Prehmaer Fortress*", and in *Harman*, the "*Evangelische Fortified Church*" (1240) linked to the existence of the Knights of Malta.

In *Bunesti Commune*, the tourists could visit the charming traditional villages *Viscri*, *Cris* and *Meshendorf*.

In the city of *Fagaras*, it is the *Fagaras Fortress* (1310) destined to defend the country against the Otoman invasion and, close to it, at *Sambata de Jos*, it is the *Lipizzan Horse Farm*, the *Monastery* and a *Trout Growing Farm*.

From Brasov, in 45 minutes by car, coach or train, the tourists could arrive in the *Prahova Valley* to visit the well known mountain resorts: *Predeal*, *Azuga*, *Busteni*, *Sinaia*, and of course to visit the famous *Royal Peles Castle* and go up the mountain by telecable car.

Rupea and *Sighisoara* are other two charming medieval cities in the Brasov County. [2, 12].

The evolution of the number of tourist accommodation units, the number of tourist guesthouses and the number of agro-tourist guesthouses

In the Brasov County, the number of the accommodation units with function for tourist reception has increased by 102.76 % in the analyzed period from 471 units in the year 2007 to 955 units in the year 2017.

The number of tourist guesthouses has also recorded an ascending trend, increasing by

86.13 % from 137 units in the year 2007 to 255 units in the year 2017.

At the same time, the number of agro-tourist guesthouses registered the highest growth rate in the whole period of the analysis, +105.50 %, from 200 units in the year 2007 to 411 units in the year 2017.

The number of agro-tourist guesthouses was higher than the number of tourist guesthouses in all the analyzed years, as many owners of farms have diversified their activities offering accommodation and board using their own fresh products in order to satisfy better the tourists' needs and to get additional income from agro-tourism. (Fig.1).

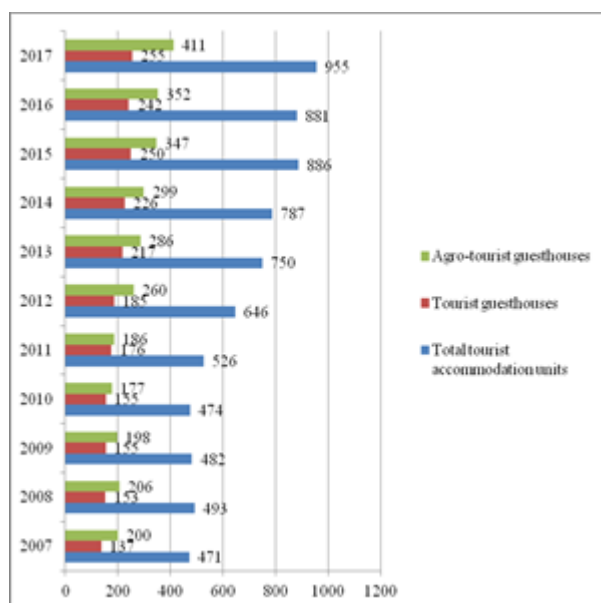


Fig.1. The evolution of the number of tourist accommodation units, of which the number of tourist guesthouses and the number of agro-tourist guesthouses in the Brasov County, 2007-2017

Source: Own design based on the data provided by the National Institute of Statistics Tempo Online Database, 2018. [11].

The Brasov County is on the top position regarding the number of accommodation units with function for tourists reception, being followed by Constanta, Harghita, Suceava and Prahova counties [3].

The share of the tourist and agro-tourist guesthouses in the total number of accommodation units with function for tourist reception registered a slight increase.

In case of the tourist guesthouses, their share declined from 29.09 % in the year 2007 to

26.70 % in the year 2017. However, in the year 2015, it was recorded the lowest share, 28.22%, and in the year 2011 the highest one, 33.46 %.

In case of the agro-tourist guesthouses, their share increased from 42.46 % in the year 2007 to 43.03 % in the year 2017. However, in the year 2011, it was recorded the lowest share, 35.36 %.

Therefore, the agro-tourist guesthouses are dominant in the Brasov County compared to the tourist guesthouses (Fig.2.).

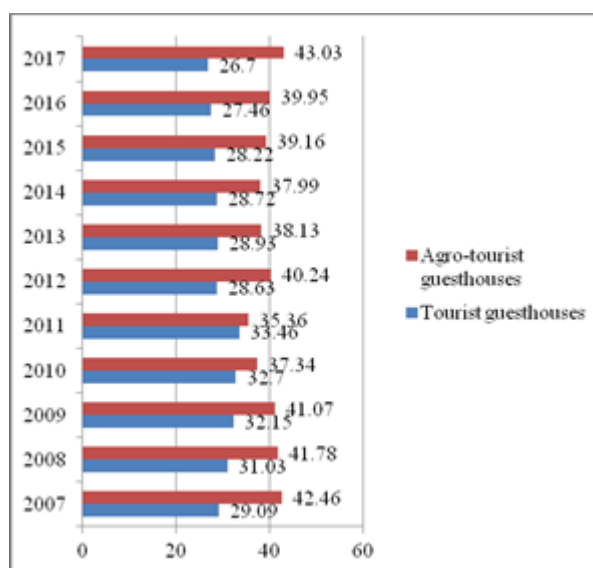


Fig.2. The evolution of the share of tourist guesthouses and agro-tourist guesthouses in the number of tourist accommodation units in the Brasov County, 2007-2017 (%)

Source: Own design based on the data provided by the National Institute of Statistics Tempo Online Database, 2018. [11].

The evolution of the number of places in the tourist accommodation units, tourist guesthouses and agro-tourist guesthouses

The number of places in the number of the accommodation units with function for tourist reception increased by 135.95 % in the analyzed period from 12,634 places in the year 2007 to 29,811 places in the year 2017.

The number of places in the tourist guesthouses has also recorded an ascending trend, increasing by 119.29 % from 2,488 places in the year 2007 to 5,456 places in the year 2017.

At the same time, the number of places in the agro-tourist guesthouses registered the highest

growth rate in the whole period of the analysis, +190.69 %, from 2,396 places in the year 2007 to 6,965 places in the year 2017.

The number of places (beds) in agro-tourist guesthouses was higher than the number of places in tourist guesthouses as the number of agro-tourist guesthouses is much higher than the number of tourist guesthouses. (Table 1).

Table 1. The evolution of the number of places (beds) in the accommodation units with function for tourist reception, in the tourist guesthouses and agro-tourist guesthouses in the Brasov County, 2007-2017

	Total number of places in the Brasov County	Number of places in the tourist guesthouses	Number of places in the agro-tourist guesthouses
2007	12,634	2,488	2,396
2008	15,729	2,801	2,639
2009	14,728	2,996	2,772
2010	16,742	3,146	2,676
2011	17,795	3,556	3,067
2012	21,699	3,947	4,402
2013	25,524	4,719	5,024
2014	26,145	4,927	5,477
2015	28,616	5,524	6,234
2016	28,320	5,311	6,173
2017	29,811	5,456	6,965
2017/2007 %	235.95	219.29	290.69

Source: Own calculation based on the data provided by the National Institute of Statistics Tempo Online Database, 2018 [11].

The share of the number of places in tourist and agro-tourist guesthouses in the total number of places existing in the accommodation units with function for tourist reception registered a different situation depending on the type of guesthouse.

In case of the tourist guesthouses, the share of the number of places recorded a slight growth from 18.24 % in the year 2007 to 18.30 % in the year 2017.

However, in the year 2009, this type of guesthouse registered the highest share, 20.34 %, while in the year 2008, it recorded the lowest share, only 17.80 %.

In case of the agro-tourist houses, the share of the places registered in general a continuous increase from 18.96 % in the year 2007 to 23.36 % in the year 2017. In the year 2010, it

was noticed the lowest share, only 15.98 % (Fig.3).

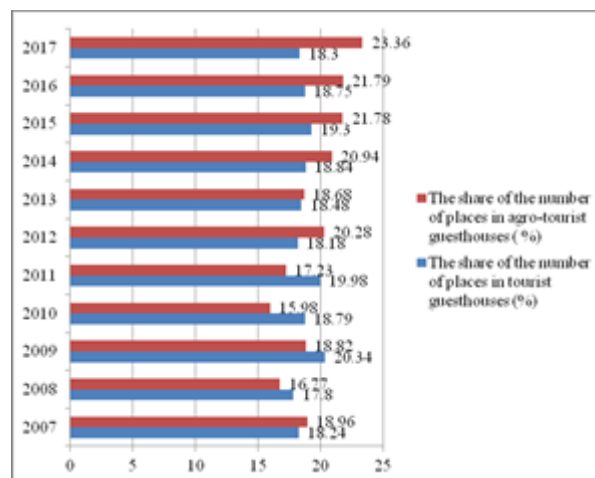


Fig.3. The share of the number of places in tourist guesthouses and agro-tourist guesthouses in the total number of places existing in the Brasov County, 2007-2017 (%)

Source: Own design based on the data provided by the National Institute of Statistics Tempo Online Database, 2018 [11].

The tourism function indicator recorded a continuous ascending trend from 2.12 % in the year 2007 to 5.41 % in the year 2016. This reflects that the tourism offer in terms of the number of places was higher and higher to satisfy better the tourists' demand.(Fig.4.)

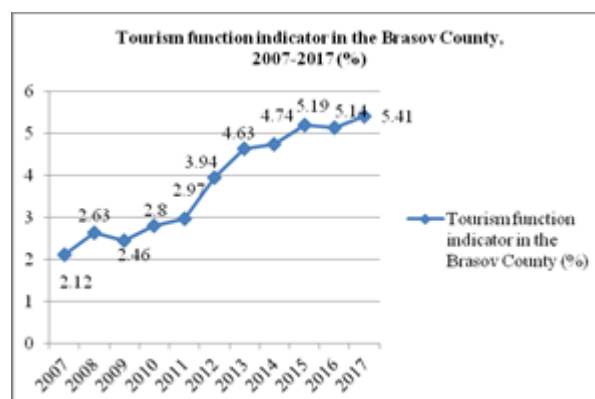


Fig.4. The tourism function indicator in the Brasov County, 2007-2017 (%)

Source: Own design based on the data provided by the National Institute of Statistics Tempo Online Database, 2018. [11].

The evolution of the number of tourist arrivals in the Brasov County and in the tourist and agro-tourist guesthouses.

The Brasov County received more and more tourists in the analyzed period. In the year

2017, the number of tourist arrivals accounted for 1,114,395 being by 100.13 %, therefore more than double compared to the 2007 level, when it was recorded 556,816 arrivals.

In case of the tourist guesthouses, the number of tourists also increased, + 99.07 %, from 81,325 arrivals in the year 2007 to 161,899 in the year 2017.

The agro-tourist guesthouses recorded the highest growth rate of the number of tourist arrivals in the analyzed period, more exactly 258.96 %, therefore, 2.58 more than in 2007. In 2017, the number of arrivals reached 133,626 compared to 37,225 in the year 2007 (Table 2).

The figure show the preference of tourists mainly for tourist guesthouses, because they recorded the highest number of arrivals. But, if we take into account the high dynamism of the tourist arrivals in case of the agro-tourist guesthouses, we could estimate that in a few years, the number of tourists which will be accommodated in agro-tourist guesthouses will exceed the number of tourists received by the tourist guesthouses.

Table 2. The evolution of the number of tourist arrivals in the Brasov County, and in the tourist guesthouses and agro-tourist guesthouses, 2007-2017

	Total number of tourist arrivals in the Brasov County	Number of tourist arrivals in the tourist guesthouses	Number of tourist arrivals in the agro-tourist guesthouses
2007	556,816	81,325	37,225
2008	581,983	97,474	52,257
2009	451,683	75,677	41,916
2010	510,196	80,224	45,735
2011	642,829	90,270	65,633
2012	737,810	96,391	72,665
2013	834,979	117,695	87,094
2014	865,689	118,659	94,091
2015	887,601	137,070	110,417
2016	1,114,395	161,899	133,626
2016/2007 %	200.13	199.07	358.96

Source: Own calculation based on the data provided by the National Institute of Statistics Tempo Online Database, 2018. [11].

The Brasov County comes on the 3rd position after Bucharest and Constanta for the number

of tourist arrivals, [3]. Regarding the tourists profile, of the number of visitors of the Brasov County, about 85 % were Romanians, 5.4 % Germans, 3.6 % Italians, 3.5 % Swiss and 1.8 % Israelis. About a half of tourist number (50%) spent up to two nights in Brasov, 16.3 % spent 3 nights and 15.9 % spent 4 nights in Brasov [7].

The share of the number of tourist arrivals in the tourist and agro-tourist guesthouses in the total number of arrivals in the Brasov County registered a different evolution depending on the type of guesthouse.

In case of the tourist guesthouses, the share of the number of arrivals recorded an alternative evolution from a year to another, but in general, it declined from 14.60 % in the year 2007 to 14.52 % in the year 2017. However, in the years 2008 and 2009, this type of guesthouses registered the highest share, 16.74% and 16.75 %, while in the year 2012, it recorded the lowest share, only 13.06 %.

In case of the agro-tourist houses, the share of the number of tourist arrivals registered a continuous increase from 6.68 % in the year 2007 to 12 % in the year 2017. Therefore, in 2017 it was a an almost double number of tourists who preferred accommodation in the agro-tourist houses (Fig.5).

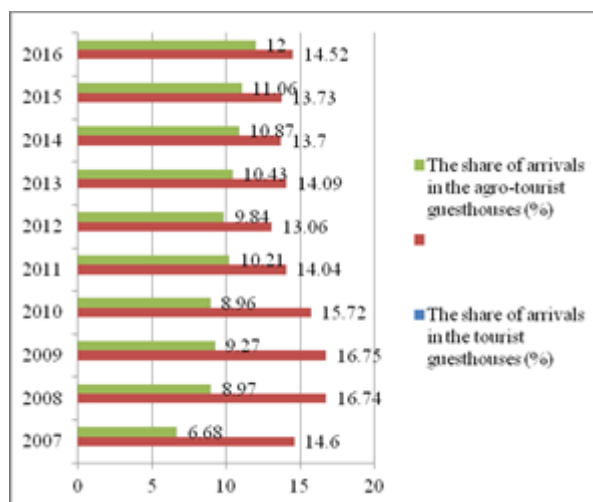


Fig.5. The share of the number of tourist arrivals in tourist guesthouses and agro-tourist guesthouses in the total number of tourist arrivals in the Brasov County, 2007-2017 (%)

Source: Own design based on the data provided by the National Institute of Statistics Tempo Online Database, 2018. [11].

The evolution of the number of Romanian and foreign tourists in the Brasov County and in the tourist and agro-tourist guesthouses.

The number of Romanian tourists visiting the Brasov County increased by 106.73 % in the analyzed period, from 452,586 tourists in 2007 to 935,674 tourists in 2016.

The number of foreign tourists also increased by 71.46 % from 104,230 in the year 2007 to 178,721 in the year 2016, reflecting the higher and higher interest of foreigner to visit Romania and the Brasov County due to its specific attractions.

The share of the Romanian tourists is the highest one, ranging between 81.29 % in the year 2007 and 83.07 % in the year 2016. But the highest share was 85.21 % recorded in the year 2013.

Obviously, the share of the foreign tourists is still a low one, varying between 18.71 % in 2007 and 16.93 % in 2016. The top share was recorded in the year 2007, and the lowest share 14.79 % in the year 2013. But, this situation is determined by the higher growth rate of the number of Romanian tourists who are attracted to visit the Brasov County.(Table 3).

Table 3. The evolution of the number of Romanian and foreign tourist and their share in the total number of tourists in the Brasov County, 2007-2016

	Romanian tourists	Foreign tourists	Share of the Romanian tourists (%)	Share of the foreign tourists (%)
2007	452,586	104,230	81.29	18.71
2008	480,422	101,561	82.55	17.45
2009	376,716	74,967	83.41	16.59
2010	422,094	88,102	82.74	17.26
2011	528,327	104,502	83.75	16.25
2012	626,917	110,893	84.97	15.03
2013	711,440	123,539	85.21	14.79
2014	727,244	138,445	84.01	15.99
2015	839,344	158,257	84.14	15.86
2016	935,674	178,721	83.07	16.93
2016/2007 %	206.73	171.46	-	-

Source: Own calculation based on the data provided by the National Institute of Statistics Tempo Online Database, 2018. [11].

The share of the Romanian tourists in the tourist guesthouses in the total number of tourists in the Brasov County is very high and

varied between 83.43 % in the year 2007 and 87.97 % in the year 2016.

Also, the share of the Romanian tourists in the agro-tourist guesthouses in the total number of tourists in the Brasov County is very high, ranging between 94.97 % in the year 2007 and 94.99 % in the year 2016.

The low percentage of foreign tourists accommodated in the guesthouses is explained by their preference for hotels and also another cause is the low promotion of the tourist guesthouses and agro-tourist guesthouses.(Fig.6).

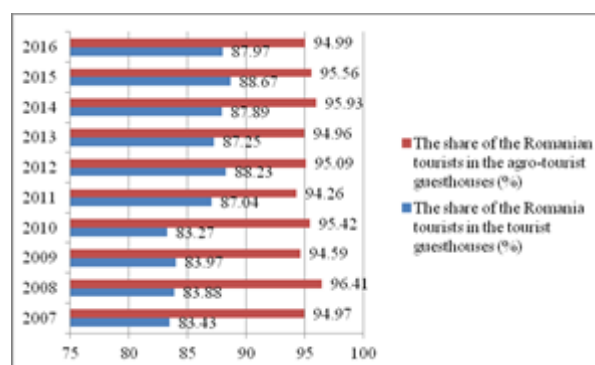


Fig.6. The share of the number of Romanian tourists in tourist guesthouses and agro-tourist guesthouses in the total number of tourists in the Brasov County, 2007-2017 (%)

Source: Own design based on the data provided by the National Institute of Statistics Tempo Online Database, 2018. [11].

The evolution of the number of overnight stays in the Brasov County and in the tourist and agro-tourist guesthouses.

The number of overnight stays in the Brasov County increased by 85.73 % in the analyzed period, from 1,191,469 in the year 2007 to 2,213,002 in the year 2016.

The number of overnight stays has also increased in the guesthouses. In case of the tourist guesthouses, the number of overnight stays increased by 71.51 %, from 182,671 in the year 2007 to 313,321 in the year 2016, while in case of the agro-tourist guesthouses the number of overnight stays increased by 185.97 %, from 99,728 in the year 2007 to 285.97 in the year 2016.

Therefore, despite that the number of tourists accommodated in the agro-tourist guesthouses is lower than the number of tourists accommodated in the tourist guesthouses, the

number of overnights stays in the agro-tourist guesthouses has a higher growth rate (Table 4).

Table 4. The evolution of the number of overnight stays in the Brasov County, and in the tourist guesthouses and agro-tourist guesthouses, 2007-2017

	Total number of overnight stays in the Brasov County	Number of overnight stays in the tourist guesthouses	Number of overnight stays in the agro-tourist guesthouses
2007	1,191,469	182,671	99,728
2008	1,279,594	215,467	132,630
2009	985,033	160,710	105,037
2010	1,078,297	165,210	110,767
2011	1,329,831	184,170	151,697
2012	1,486,524	191,603	162,502
2013	1,754,320	238,517	198,197
2014	1,781,818	242,583	208,267
2015	2,060,959	266,041	241,913
2016	2,213,002	313,321	285,200
2016/2007 %	185.73	171.52	285.97

Source: Own calculation based on the data provided by the National Institute of Statistics Tempo Online Database, 2018. [11].

The Brasov County comes on the 3rd position after Constanta and Bucharest for the number of overnight stays. (2013) [3].

The share of the overnight stays in the tourist guesthouses and agro-tourist guesthouses in the total number of overnight stays in the Brasov County.

The share of the overnight stays in the tourist guesthouses in the total number of overnight stays at the county level varied between 15.33 % in the year 2007 and 14.15 % in the year 2016. Therefore, it registered a slight decreasing trend.

The share of the overnight stays in the agro-tourist guesthouses in the total number of overnight stays at the county level varied between 8.37 % in 2007 and 12.89 % in the year 2016 (Fig.7).

This is explained by the high growth rate of the tourist arrivals and the average length of stay.

The share of the number of overnight stays of the Romanian tourists in the Brasov County is high and varied between 79.54 % % in the year 2007 and 82.79 % in the year 2016.

Also, the share of the overnight stays of the Romanian tourists in the tourist guesthouses

varied between 79.11 % in the year 2007 and 85.89 % in the year 2016.

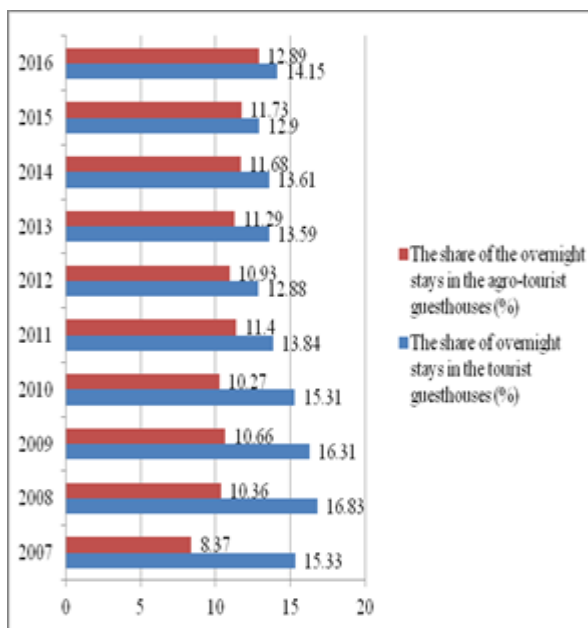


Fig.7. The share of the number of overnight stays in tourist guesthouses and agro-tourist guesthouses in the total number of overnight stays in the Brasov County, 2007-2017 (%)

Source: Own design based on the data provided by the National Institute of Statistics Tempo Online Database, 2018. [11].

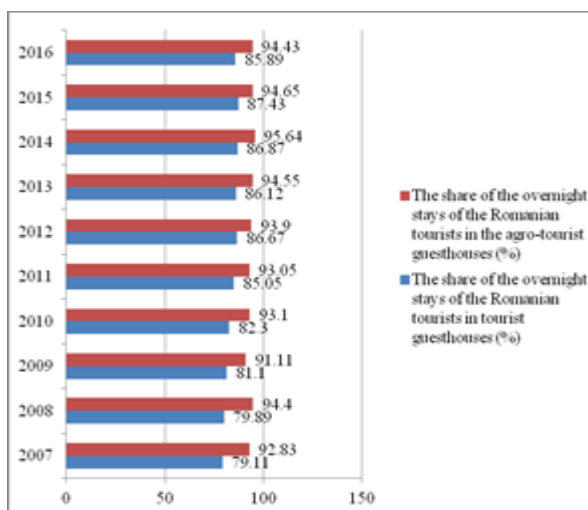


Fig.8. The share of the overnight stays of the Romanian tourists in the Brasov County , in the tourist guesthouses and agro-tourist guesthouses, 2007-2017 (%)

Source: Own design based on the data provided by the National Institute of Statistics Tempo Online Database, 2018. [11].

The share of the overnight stays of the Romanian tourists in the agro-tourist

guesthouses ranged between 92.83 % in the year 2007 and 94.43 % in the year 2016.

Also, it was noticed a low percentage of the overnight stays belonging to the foreign tourists explained by their preference for hotels and the low promotion of the tourist guesthouses and agro-tourist guesthouses.(Fig.8).

The average length of stay in the Brasov County, in the tourist guesthouses and agro-tourist guesthouses.

The average length of stay in the Brasov County is in general small and having a general decreasing trend from 2.13 days in the year 2007 to 1.98 days in the year 2016.

In the tourist guesthouses, the average length of stay also had a general declining trend from 2.24 days in 2007 to 1.93 days in 2016.

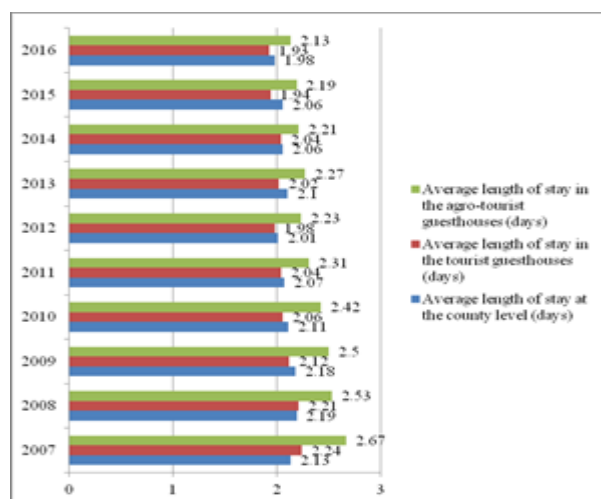


Fig.9. The average length of stay in the Brasov County, in the tourist guesthouses and agro-tourist guesthouses, 2007-2017 (days)

Source: Own design based on the data provided by the National Institute of Statistics Tempo Online Database, 2018. [11].

In the agro-tourist guesthouses, the average length of stay also registered a general decreasing trend from 2.67 days in 2007 to 2.13 days in 2016. Comparing the figures, we could notice that the highest average length of stay is recorded in the agro-tourist guesthouses compared to the average at the county level and to the average in the tourist guesthouses. This could be explained by the fact that the agro-tourist guesthouses offer fresh meals prepared from the raw products achieved in the farm of household.(Fig.9).

The evolution of the tourism density.

Taking into account the number of tourists, the number of overnight stays and the population in the Brasov County, the values tourist density varied depending on the items used in the formula. the results are presented in Fig.10.

The tourism density calculated as the ratio between the number of overnight stays and the local population, varied between 2 overnight stays (tourist-days)/inhabitant in the year 2007 and 4.02 overnight stays (tourist-days)/inhabitant in the year 2016, meaning an increase of 101 %.

Taking into account the number of tourists divided by the local population, the tourist density varied between 0.94 tourists/inhabitant in 2007 and 2.02 tourists/inhabitant in 2016, reflecting an increase of 114.89 %. (Fig.10).

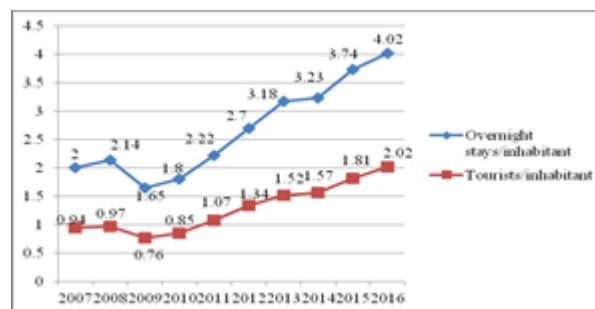


Fig.10. The tourism density in the Brasov County, 2007-2017 (overnight stays/ inhabitant and tourists/inhabitant)

Source: Own design based on the data provided by the National Institute of Statistics Tempo Online Database, 2018. [11].

The evolution of the occupancy rate in the Brasov County.

Taking into account the number of overnight stays and the number of places, the occupancy rate varied at the County level, and also at the level of tourist guesthouses and agro-tourist guesthouses, as shown in Fig.11.

At the county level, the occupancy rate was 25.83 % in 2007, but in the coming years it recorded a decline till the year 2014, and then it started to recover, so that in the year 2016 it accounted for 21.40 %.

At the tourist guesthouses level, the occupancy rate registered a general decreasing trend from 20.11 % in 2007 to 16.16 % in

2016. This situation was due to the higher growth rate of the number of places compared to the growth rate of the number of overnight stays.

In case of the agro-tourist guesthouses, the occupancy rate has the lowest level. In 2007, it was 11.40 %, and varied up and down along the time, but in 2016 it reached 12.65 %. The highest occupancy rate, 13.55 %, was recorded in 2011 (Fig.11).

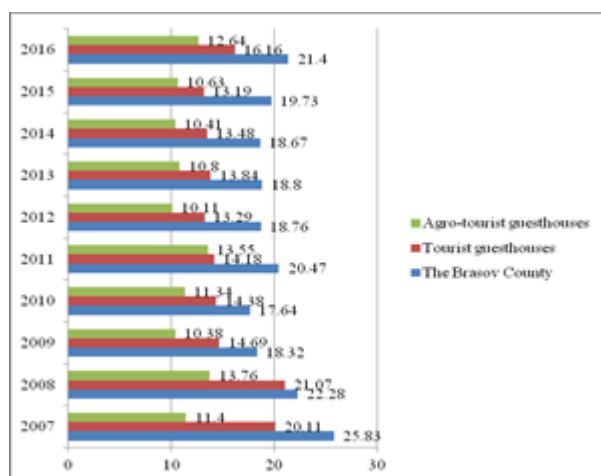


Fig.11. The tourism occupancy rate in the Brasov County, tourist guesthouses and agro-tourist guesthouses, 2007-2017 (%)

Source: Own design based on the data provided by the National Institute of Statistics Tempo Online Database, 2018. [11].

The forecast of the main indicators in the Brasov County tourism for the horizon 2017-2021.

The estimates for the number of places, tourist arrivals, and overnight stays at the county

level, and also in the tourist guesthouses and agro-tourist guesthouses are based on the level achieved in the last year of the analysis and on the average growth rate registered in the period 2007-2016. The results are shown in Table 5.

As one can see, it is expected as in 2021, in the Brasov County the number of places in the accommodation units for tourist reception to reach 36,683 being by 23.05 % higher than in 2017. In the tourist guesthouses it is expected to achieve 6,644 places by 21.77 % more than in 2017 and in the agro-tourist guesthouses to carry out 8,793 places, meaning by 26.24 % more than in 2017.

The number of tourist arrivals, it is expected account for 1,424,160 visitors in the Brasov County in the year 2021 meaning by 27.79 % more than in 2016. The tourist guesthouses it is expected to receive 206,664 tourists in the year 2021, by 27.64 % more than in 2016, while in the agro-tourist guesthouses it is expected to accommodate 187,181 tourists in 2021 by 40.07 % more than in 2016.

In the Brasov County, the number of overnight stays will account for 2,780,522 in the year 2021 being by 25.64 % higher than in 2016. In the tourist guesthouses, it is expected to register 385,906 overnight stays in the year 2021 by 23.16 % more than in 2016, while in the agro-tourist guesthouses, it is expected to register 388,240 overnight stays in the year 2021 by 36.12 % more than in 2016.

Table 5. The forecast of the number of places, the number of tourist arrivals and overnights stays in the Brasov County and in tourist guesthouses and agro-tourist guesthouses in the horizon 2017-2021

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
No. of places in the tourist accommodation units in the Brasov County	29,811	31,529	33,247	34,965	36,683
No. of places in the tourist guesthouses	5,456	5,753	6,050	6,347	6,644
No. of places in the agro-tourist guesthouses	6,965	7,422	7,879	8,336	8,793
No. of tourist arrivals in the Brasov County	1,176,348	1,238,301	1,300,254	1,362,207	1,424,160
No. of tourist arrivals in the tourist guesthouses	170,852	179,805	188,758	197,711	206,664
No. of tourist arrivals in the agro-tourist guesthouses	144,337	155,048	165,759	176,470	187,181
No. of overnight stays in the Brasov County	2,326,506	2,440,010	2,553,514	2,667,018	2,780,522
No. of overnight stays in the tourist guesthouses	327,838	342,355	3,56,872	371,389	385,906
No. of overnight stays in the agro-tourist guesthouses	305,808	326,416	347,024	367,632	388,240

Source: Own calculation.

CONCLUSIONS

The paper presented the natural and antropoc resources in the Brasov city and its surroundings and the development of main tourism indicators in the last decade, 2007-2016 and their forecast for the period 2017-2021, which prove that this part of Romania is an important tourist destination.

The Brasov county has a good tourism infrastructure in terms of accommodation units, their number accounting for 955 in the year 2017, of which 69.73 % are guesthouses, more exactly 43.03 % agro-tourist guesthouses and 26.7 % tourist guesthouses.

In the Brasov county, the accommodation capacity in terms of places has continuously increased, reaching 29,811 places in the year 2017. Of this number, 12,421 places (41.66 %) are in guesthouses, of which 23.36 % in agro-tourist guesthouses and 18.30 % in tourist guesthouses. The number of places in agro-tourist guesthouses had a higher dynamics than in the tourist guesthouses.

Due to the development of tourism capacity, the tourism function indicator has doubled in the analyzed period.

The Brasov area was visited by more tourists year by year, and their number has doubled in the analyzed period, accounting for 1,114,395 visitors in 2017, of which 295,525 (26.51 %) were been accommodated in guesthouses.

These figures show that most of tourists prefer other types of accommodation units, instead of guesthouses. But, in 2017, the number of visitors accommodated in agro-tourist guesthouses was 2.58 times higher in agro-tourist guesthouses and 2 times higher in tourist guesthouses, reflecting an increased preference for these types of units where offer is more attractive regarding the ratio between price and the quality of services.

In the total number of visitors, the Romanian tourists are dominant with a share of 83.07 %. In 2016, the number of Romanian visitors was more than double, the number of foreign tourist increased by 71.4 %.

The preference of the Romanian tourists for guesthouses is obvious as long as 94.97% were accommodated in agro-tourist guesthouses and 87.97 % in tourist

guesthouses. Therefore, the foreign tourists prefer hotels.

The number of overnight stays in the Brasov county had an ascending evolution, reaching 2,213,002 in the year 2016, of which 12.89 % in agro-tourist guesthouses and 14.15 % in tourist guesthouses. The number of stays in agro-tourist guesthouses was 2.5 times higher than in 2007.

The share of the overnight stays of the Romanian tourists is obvious higher in guesthouses, 84.4 % in agro-tourist guesthouses and 85.9% in tourist guesthouses. The average duration of stay registered a general descending trend accounting for 1.98 days at the county level, 1.93 days in tourist guesthouses and 2.13 days in agro-tourist guesthouses.

The tourism density in 2016 was double in the Brasov County, accounting for 2.02 tourist/inhabitant or 4.02 tourist-days/inhabitant, doubled figures compared to the year 2007.

The occupancy rate was in average 21.40 % at the county level, while in the guest houses is much lower: 16.16 % in the tourist guesthouses and 12.65 % in agro-tourist guesthouses.

Taking into account the progress carried out during the last decade, it is expected that in the future the tourist inflow and the accommodation capacity in the Brasov county, and mainly in the guesthouses to continue its development. In the year 2021, it was estimated that the Brasov County will be visited by 1.43 million tourists, meaning by 27.7 % more than in 2016, and the accommodation capacity to reach 36,683 places to better meet the tourists' needs.

As a final conclusion, the Brasov county is an example of high quality tourism, and an area where the agro-tourist guesthouses and tourist guesthouses play a more and more important role in the local tourism due to their attractive offer in terms of accommodation, board and other facilities.

The increased tourist flow is closely related to the growth of tourism receipts and with a better living standard and life quality for hosts and guests.

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