

ROMANIA'S TOURISM TRENDS AND CHARACTERISTICS ON THE SEASIDE RESORTS OF THE BLACK SEA IN THE PERIOD 2010-2019

Agatha POPESCU^{1,2,3}, Alina MARCUTA¹, Liviu MARCUTA¹, Cristina TINDECHE¹,
Adelaida HONTUS¹, Daniela PLESOIANU⁴

¹University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine Bucharest, 59 Marasti Boulevard, District 1, 011464, Bucharest Romania, Phone: +40213182564, Fax: +40213182888, Email: agatha_popescu@yahoo.com, alinamarcuta@yahoo.com, liviumarcuta@yahoo.com, tindecche_cristina@yahoo.com, adelaidahontus@yahoo.com

²Academy of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences "Gheorghe Ionescu-Sisesti", 61 Marasti Boulevard, District 1, 011464, Bucharest Romania, Email: agatha_popescu@yahoo.com

³Academy of the Romanian Scientists, 1 Ilfov Street, Bucharest, 030167, Romania, Email: agatha_popescu@yahoo.com

⁴Ovidius University, 1, University Avenue, Campus, Building B, Constanta, Romania, Email: plesoianudaniela@hotmail.com

Corresponding author: agatha_popescu@yahoo.com

Abstract

The purpose of the paper was the analysis of the tourism dynamics in Romania's seaside resorts in the period 2010-2019 in order to identify the main trends and characteristics of tourism in this destination. Based on fixed indices and regression models, the results proved that the seaside resorts are high attraction destinations for spending holidays especially in the summer season and also in extra-season. In 2019, tourist arrivals reached 1,153.7 thousands and the overnight stays accounted for 4,658 thousands, being higher than in 2010 by +64.2%, and, respectively, by +58.75%. The use rate of accommodation units in the seaside resorts increased from 33.8% in 2010 to 51.01% in 2019 being much higher than at the national level. More than 97% tourists on the seashore are Romanians. A number of 816.6 thousands tourists, meaning 10 times more than in 2010, took part to one-day trips organized in the proximity of the seaside by the local travel agencies. Even in the pandemic of covid-19, the Romanian seaside resorts were among the most preferred destinations. The main characteristics of Romania's seaside tourism are: the higher attraction for Romanian tourists than for foreigners, the seasonality and also extra-seasonality of offer and demand, the disruption between the decline of the accommodation capacity (units and places) and the increased number of tourists, the large variety of tourism forms for spending time in an active (heliomarine cure, balneary procedures, nautical sports, fishing, entertainment, gastronomic, wine tasting, cultural-historical etc). The seaside resorts have to continue their efforts to offer a modern and comfortable infrastructure, a large range of opportunities for spending vacations and safe stays in order to increase the number of tourists and incomes.

Key words: tourism, seaside resorts, trends, characteristics, The Black Seashore, Romania

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the most dynamic branch of the world economy with a deep impact on the economic, social and cultural development of many countries [22, 23].

In 2019, world tourism reached 1.5 billion tourists by 4% more than in 2018, and also the tourism receipts accounted for USD 1.478 trillion in 2019 being by +1.44% higher than in 2018. This means that the average expenditure per international tourist was USD 985.33. And this reflects the close relationship

between these two indicators which justify the power of tourism in the global economy [24].

The growth rate in international tourism exceeded the growth rate of the global GDP in the period 2017-2019, which confirms again the high growth rate in tourism industry [42].

Europe is the top destination with 743 million international tourist arrivals in the year 2019 by 4% more than in 2018 and representing 51% of the global market.

In 2019, Europe's receipts from tourism accounted USD 572.9 Billion, representing

38.76% of the global receipts in tourism. In consequence the average expenditure per tourist in Europe was USD 771.06 [42].

The coastal lines are a very attractive destination due to the scenic beauty of the oceans and seas, beaches, large range services of accommodation, entertainment and gastronomy put at the disposal by the stakeholders who develop business in tourism close to the seaside [15].

Also, the development of seaside tourism has a deep impact on 'the changes of socio-economic and settlement patterns, on local population' culture, and environment [12].

Coastal tourism is the major sector of tourism in Europe with a contribution of 47% to the number of overnight stays in accommodation units, 60% in employment, and 15% of the land area of the EU belongs to the coastal municipalities [8].

The South Mediterranean area is the most preferred destination coming on the 1st position for 40.8% of the international arrivals from the European countries and for 18.46% of the world arrivals. Numerous tourists are seek of sun, beaches, nautical sports, relaxation and leisure, entertainment on the seaside of Spain, France, Italy, Monaco, Slovenia, Croatia, Greece, Portugal, Turkey.

The South Mediterranean region received USD 234.4 Billion receipts from tourism [21, 43, 38].

Also, the Black Sea region attracts nearly 6% of world tourists every year. Despite that the figure is smaller than tourism flows in other regions of the globe, it has a great potential for developing a sustainable tourism in the coastline countries Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine and Georgia [6]. The share of the Black region in the Europe's tourism accounted for 14% as the tourist arrivals registered a high growth rate during the last two decades. About 115 million international tourists visited the Black Sea the countries which benefited of USD 57 billion receipts [44, 3].

That is "Development of Tourism and Protection of Cultural Heritage" project of cooperation between 13 BSEC member states

is destined "to promote sustainable tourism, economic developments, investments, mutual understanding and cultural exchange within the cooperation in the region for the period 2018-2020" [3].

Among the countries with exit to the Black Sea are Romania and Bulgaria situated close to each other and being in a continuous competitiveness in attracting more tourist by offering high quality and diverse tourist services in general, but especially on their seaside. For these countries tourism has a deep economic impact. The larger number of tourists and receipts achieved by Bulgaria compared to Romania is a competitive advantage which has to strengthen the efforts of the both countries to develop sustainable strategies in tourism [2, 5, 10, 27, 28, 32, 39]. During the last decade, Romania's tourism is continuously developing, in 2019 it reached over 13 million visitors and contributed by Euro 5 billion to GDP, much more than in the previous years [25, 30].

In this context, the paper objective was to analyze the dynamics of tourism in the seaside resorts of Romania in the last decade, 2010-2019, for pointing out the main trends and characteristics of this tourist destination.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study is based on a large range of information sources regarding the Romanian seaside and the empirical data were collected from the National Institute of Statistics, Tempo Online data base for the period 2010-2019 regarding the main tourism data in the seaside resorts, except Constanta municipality.

The main aspects taken into account to characterize tourism have been the following ones:

- (i) Geographical features regarding: position, relief, climate, and natural resources;
- (ii) Cultural and historical resources and other attractions for tourists;
- (iii) Tourism offer in terms of the number of units for tourists' accommodation and the number of places (beds), the use degree of the accommodation capacity in tourism on the Romanian side;

(iv) Tourism demand in terms of tourists' arrivals and overnight stays;

(v) The relationship existing between tourists' arrivals and overnight stays, between overnight stays and accommodation capacity.

The methods used in this research have been the following one:

(i) Monographic method;

(ii) Statistical analysis based on the time series for the interval 2010-2019 of the main indicators characterizing tourism:

Statistical average:

$$\bar{y} = \frac{\sum_{t=1}^n y_t}{n}$$

Fixed basis indexed method for calculating the growth/decline rate: $I_{FB} = (y_n / y_1) * 100$

The use coefficient of the accommodation capacity (CUAC):

CUAC = [Number of overnight stays / (Number of beds * Number of days in operation)] * 100

Regression analysis based on the linear equation: $Y = bx + a$, where Y is the dependent variable and X is the independent variable for studying the determination relationship between the following pairs of variables:

(a) The regression of overnight stays depending on tourists' arrivals;

(b) The regression of overnight stays depending on the accommodation capacity in operation in terms of beds-days,

(c) The regression of the number of beds depending on tourists' arrivals.

The results were described and displayed in the designed graphics and tables, being accompanied by comments. Finally, the main aspects resulting from this research work have been presented in brief.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A brief monographic approach of Romania's seaside at the Black Sea

Romania's Black Sea coastline is an area of high tourist attraction especially in summer season, starting from the month of June and continuing in July and August, but sometimes the extra-seasons in May and September are also suitable and pleasant.

From a geographical point of view, the Romanian seaside is stretching for a length of

245 km (152 miles) between the North border with Ukraine and the frontier with Bulgaria in the South.

For getting there it is very easy, because the distance from Bucharest, the capital of Romania and Constanta, the main city on the Romanian seaside is only 227 km, and various means of connection are available such as: cars, buses, trains allow the tourists to arrive in maximum two hours at the desired destination and also flights to Mihail Kogalniceanu airport situated close to Constanta.

The North area of the seaside is dominated by the Danube Delta and the coastline lakes along a distance of 163 km (101.3 miles) up to Navodari city, and the South zone begins from Navodari and stretches to Vama Veche for a distance of 82 km (50.9 miles).

The beaches are excellent being oriented to East offering an unique image of sunrise from the Black Sea and the pleasant warm of the sunshine almost 14 hours a day in the summer season. The sand is fine of a light golden colour, the width of the beaches being generous varying between 200-300 m in the North area and 100-200 m in the South, where they are surrounded by small bays and high cliffs.

Climate is a temperate continental with marine influence, with summers lacking of heat due to the breeze, warm and pleasant autumns that extend the summer season. The winters are mild, but the wind blows hard from the sea. Sometimes, they could be harsh, the sea freezing up to 200 meters from the shore illustrating a fairytale landscape.

The seaside area has the mildest climate in Romania with an average annual temperature of 11.2-11.3°C, and in summer season temperatures range between 25 and 35°C (77-95°F), and are pleasant and easily supported due to the breeze which starts about 11 o'clock and lasts during the day.

The precipitations are in average below 377 mm/year, but the sun shines about 2,500 hours per year and very rarely it could happen as the clouds to bring short and light summer rains.

The air is fresh, clean, pleasant, loaded with marine aerosols with healing effects.

The sea water has a reduced salinity and a higher temperature than other seas, sometimes it could reach even 28°C, the entrance to the sea is smooth, on a controllable depth especially in the North of the coast, while to the South the water is a little deeper right from the shore.

The chain of seaside charming resorts includes from North to South: Navodari, Mamaia, Eforie Nord, Eforie Sud, Techirghiol, Costinesti, Olimp, Neptun, Jupiter, Cap Aurora, Venus, Saturn, Mangalia, 2 Mai and Vama Veche (Map 1).



Map 1. Romania's resorts at the Black Sea
Source: Romania Travel [35].

A large range of tourism forms could be practice in the area of the Romanian seaside among which there are the following ones;

- *Tourism or summer heliomarine cure* which means: beach, swimming in the sea water, inhaling aerosols, walks on the sand and through the sea water etc.

-*Spa (balneary) tourism* due to the presence of the sapropelic mud with a salt content over 50 g/liter in the Techirghiol Lake water and of the peat mud in the area of the beaches from Saturn, Venus and Mangalia.

Also, sulfurous mineral waters with a temperature of 21-28°C in the area of Mangalia is another valuable therapeutic factor.

The spa sanatoriums in Eforie Nord and Techirghiol and Mangalia and the spa polyclinic in Neptun offer therapeutic services of exceptional quality through the internship of a high-class specialists in balneology and a modern infrastructure for performing various recovery and treatment procedures.

-*Nautical sports tourism* has a wide range of possibilities for invigorating the body and raising adrenaline: sea rides with inflatable boats and water bikes, skijet, parasailing, surfing, windsurfing, stand up paddle surfing, kitesurfing, flyboarding, nautical skiing, scuba-diving, snorkeling, yachting.

-*Fishing tourism* for amateurs and professionals could be practiced in the Black Sea or in the fresh waters of the lakes existing near the coast.

-*Entertainment tourism* is well defined on the Romanian coast from the amusement parks in Mamaia and Saturn Holiday Villages, Aqua Park Mamaia to which could be added the nightlife in clubs, discos, outdoor concerts like those in Constanta, Mamaia, Costinesti, Mangalia, the dance rings etc;

-*Gastronomic tourism* displays a range of appetizing and delicious culinary products from the international cuisine but also the traditional Romanian cuisine that can be served at the multitude of terraces, restaurants and fast food units, some luxurious others with rustic and seafood specifics.

-*Wine tasting tourism* can be an unforgettable experience at Murfatlar and Ostrov wineries that present a wide range of white, rosé, red, sparkling wines, etc. medaled at various international competitions that have brought fame to the aromas and bouquet of Romanian wines across the border.

-*Cultural-historical tourism* offers a wide range of objectives of great interest for tourists.

First of all, it is about **Constanta City**, the gateway city to the Black Sea coat, an old city which was founded around 600 B.C, with a rich history, good economic status, amazing architecture and a multicultural life, because in this city but also in the Dobrogea region there are besides the Romanian population

there are many minorities represented Aromanians, Turks, Tatars, Lipovans, Greeks, Ukrainians and Bulgarians.

The old part of the city of Constanta includes, first of all, *Ovidiu Square* in the canopy of which is *the Statue of the great ancient Roman poet Publius Ovidius Naso*, who wrote the well known Poems "Tristia" and "Epistulae Ex Ponto", during his exile at Pontus Euxinus. The statue was built in 1887 by Ettore Ferrari, who sculpted Abraham Lincoln's statue in New York. An identical copy of Ovid's statue was built in 1925 in Sulmona, his native place in Italy.

The Museum of National History and Archeology Constanta, founded in 1879 by Remus Opreanu, has an impressive patrimony consisting of 430,000 objects from the paleolithic era till nowadays, reflecting the history of the country and also of Dobrogea region (Greek, Roman, Byzantine and medieval tools, ceramics, architectural items, sculptures, statues, jewels, numismatics, icons, furniture, documents, maps, photos, magazines etc [41].

The Roman Mosaic, belonging to the same museum, is unique in Europe by its dimensions. It was built in the 4th century and extended in the 6th century, during the Roman Empire, and was the place of market and goods storage linking the port and the city. The mosaic pavement has a unique beauty and nowadays only about 860 s.m. are well preserved of its total surface of 2,000 s.m. [17].

Museum of Folk Art in Constanta has a rich collection of about 15,000 exhibits which reflect the folk culture in Romania and Dobrogea region: icons, wood objects, folk suits, barks, fabrics, ornaments, household objects etc [16].

The Casino of Constanta is the symbol of the city. It dates since 1910 being built by the architect Daniel Renard who designed it in the similar style with the well known casinos in Europe. It was a luxury place, with elegant rooms, nicely decorated walls, sophisticated chandeliers, expensive carpets and furniture. It was a place where the mirage of gambling attracted rich people from all over the world.

Its terrace was the preferred place for sailors and the elite of the time [4].

Genoese Lighthouse in Constanta is a historical monument situated close to the Casino, behind the Statue of the greatest Romanian poet Mihai Eminescu, sculpted by Oscar Han. The lighthouse was built in 1890 by Artin Aslan, a French engineer of Armenian origin. The origins of the lighthouse dates from 1300 to guide the ships within a 2-miles radius of the sea to the small port of Constanta. Its light can be seen from a distance of almost 10 marine miles [46].

The Orthodox Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul in Constanta is the seat of the Romanian Orthodox Archbishop of Tomis and also a monastery. It was built in a Greek-Roman style based on the plans of the architects Alexandru Orascu, Carol Benesch and Ion Mincu and was inaugurated in 1895.

The Roman - Catholic Church Saint Anthony of Padova in Constanta was built in 1938 in a neo-Romanic style following the plans of the architect Romano de Simon.

The Greek Orthodox Church Metamorphosis in Constanta was built by the desire of the Greek community between 1865-1868, and by the order of the Sultan Abdul Aziz Bin Mehmet Han based on the plans of the Greek architect Iani Teoharidi [40].

St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church in Constanta is a historical monument founded in 1880 and is another example of the multiculturalism in Dobrogea region.

The Hunchiar Mosque is the oldest Muslim religious edifice in Constanta, being built in a Moorish architectural style and another example of the multiculturalism in Dobrogea region.

Grand Mosque or Carol Mosque in Constanta is one of most impressive architectural monuments in the city, being built in a Neo-Egyptian and Neo-Byzantine styles with elements of Neo-Romanesque architecture. It was designed by George Constantinescu who was inspired by the Konya Mosque in Anatolia [45].

The Aquarium of Constanta is situated on the shore of the Black Sea and close to the Casino. The Marine Section is the largest and

most representative section of the Aquarium and houses fish and invertebrate species found in the Black Sea, Danube Delta and migrants from the Mediterranean Sea

Constanța Museum of Natural Sciences Complex (Constanta Dolphinarium) includes the Dolphinarium, the Planetarium, Astronomic Observatory and the Mini Zoo Reservation inaugurated in 1972, offers spectacular and invigorating shows to visitors and the protagonists are dolphins, sea lions and penguins [7].

Also, *the double-decker bus rides* on the route Constanta Train Station and Mamaia Nord offer a panorama of the city in its splendor, and *the gondola* in Mamaia resort flies over the resort from the entrance up to Tomis.

Day trips organized by local travel agencies are increasingly requested by tourists. Among the most popular tourist destinations are: Tropeum Traiani Monument to Adamclisi, Dervent Monastery, St. Andrew Monastery, Casian Monastery, Casian Cave, Histria Fortress, the Danube Delta, Enisala Fortress, the cruises on Siutghiol Lake and the Black Sea, Dobrogea Gorges and Queen Maria of Romania Castle in Balchik, from the former quadrilateral region that belonged to Romania [1, 8, 11, 14, 34, 37, 47].

Tourism Offer in the resorts from the Romania's coastline at the Black Sea

The accommodation offer consists of two groups of possibilities:

(a) the classical accommodation in standardized units like: hotels, hostels, motels,

bungalows, holiday houses, campgrounds, tourist and agro-tourist guesthouses, and (b) accommodation in the private sector to locals especially in the rural areas of Costinesti, 2 Mai, Vama Veche, and also in the cities.

In this study, there are used only the official data from the National Institute of Statistics, 2020, therefore, they refer only to accommodation in standardized tourist units.

The number of accommodation units with tourism function on Romania's seaside accounted for 848 in the year 2019, being by 16.38% less numerous than in the year 2010, when there were 1,014 units. Therefore, accommodation capacity in terms of units has recorded in general a descending trend in the last decade,

in comparison with the continuous growth of the number of accommodation units at the level of Romania which in 2019 accounted for 8,402 units, being by 60.89% more numerous than in the year 2010 when the country had 5,222 units with function for tourists' accommodation.

However, the highest decline was registered in the year 2011, but after that the number of accommodation units started recovering increasing year by year (Fig. 1).

As a result, the share of the tourist accommodation units in the resorts of Romania's seashore in the total number of units at the national level declined from 19.41% in the year 2010 to 10.09% in the year 2019.

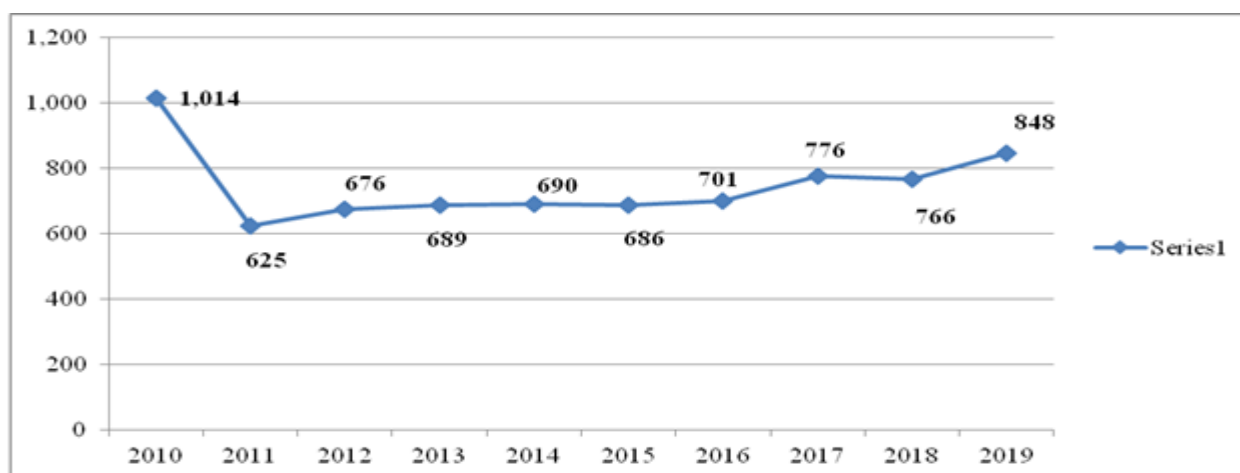


Fig. 1. The dynamics of the number of the accommodation units in Romania's resorts at the Black Sea, 2010-2019
Source: Own design based on the data from [18].

The structure of the accommodation units with tourism function in the year 2019 was the following one: hotels 291 (34.3%), hostels 53 (6.2), motels 1 (0.4%), tourist villas (18.4%), bungalows 284 (33.5%), campgrounds 12 (0.4%), tourist stops 2 (0.4%), small houses 10 (1.3%), school camps

3 (0.4%), tourist guesthouses 15 (1.0%) and agro-tourist guesthouses 15 (1.9%).

The number of places (beds) in the accommodation units with function for tourists' reception on Romania's seashore also declined by 29.69% from 121,003 places in the year 2010 to 85,081 places in 2019 (Fig. 2).

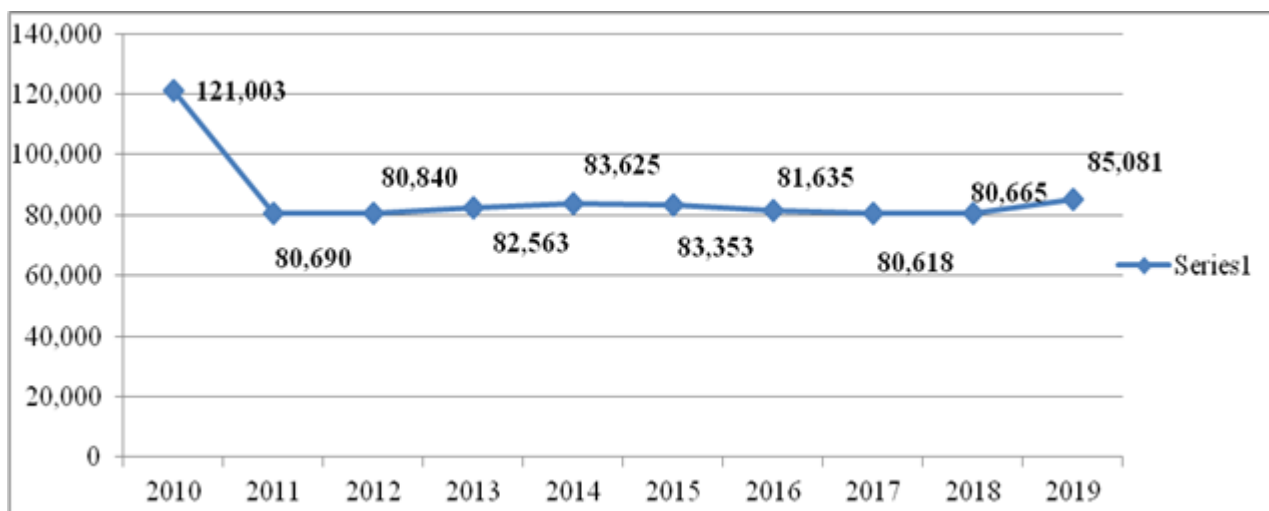


Fig. 2. The dynamics of the number of places in the accommodation units in Romania's resorts at the Black Sea, 2010-2019

Source: Own design based on the data from [18].

This descending trend does not fit to the general increasing tendency of the number of places in Romania's tourism, whose growth was by +14.39% from 311,698 places in 2010 to 356,562 places in the year 2019. However, after the deep decrease registered in the year 2011, in the following year the number of places varied up and down, but with a slight increasing tendency to the year 2019.

In consequence, the share of the number of places in the accommodation units existing on the Romanian coastline at the Black Sea in the total number of places existing in Romania's tourism declined from 38.82% in 2010 to 23.86% in 2019.

Tourism demand in the resorts from the Romania's coastline at the Black Sea

The number of tourists' arrivals in the resorts from the Romanian seaside has continuously increased taking into account both the number of Romanian and foreign tourists, so that in the year 2019, it accounted for 1,153.7 thousands compared to 702.6 thousands in 2010, therefore being by

+64.20% higher in the last year of the analyzed decade.

Romanian tourists are dominant and their number increased by 66.8% from 671.1 thousands in 2010 to 1,119.4 thousands in 2019.

The number of foreign tourists arrivals registered a slight increasing tendency from 31.5 thousands in 2010 to 34.3 thousands in 2019, therefore the growth rate on the whole interval was 8.8% (Fig. 3).

In consequence, Romanian tourists have the share of 95.5% in 2010 and 97.02% in 2019, while foreign tourists accounted for 4.5% in 2010 and 2.9% in 2019.

If we compare with the number of Romanian and foreign tourists arrived on the seashore in the total number of tourists who visited Romania, we may find that in 2019 their shares were 8.62% taking into account both Romanians and foreigners, 10.47% for Romanian and, respectively, 1.27% for foreign tourists. Analyzing the evolution of tourists' weights in the interval 2010-2019, we

may easily notice that the shares declined from 11.56% in 2010 to 8.62% in 2019 for Romanians and foreigners, from 14.20% in

2010 to 10.47% in 2019 in case of Romanians and from 2.33% in 2010 to 1.27% in 2019 for foreign tourists.

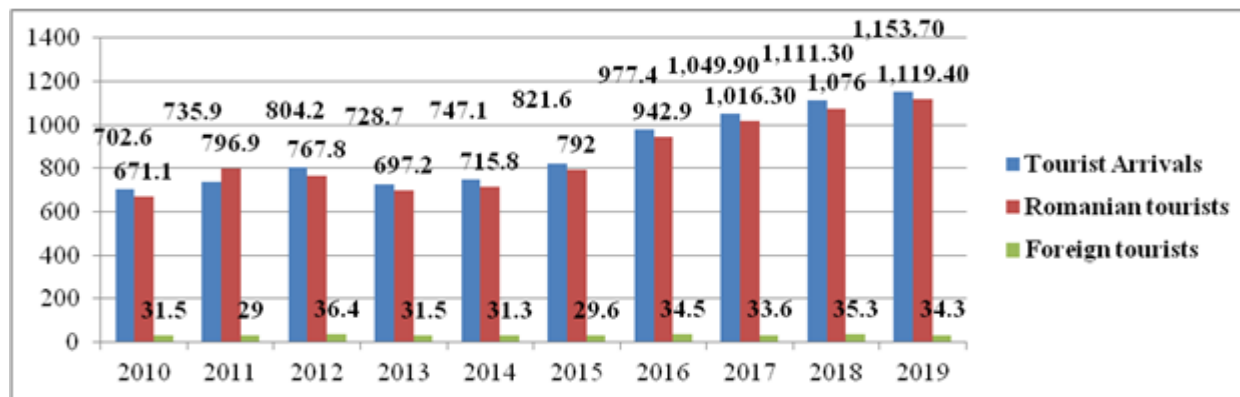


Fig. 3. The dynamics of tourist arrival in the accommodation units in Romania's resorts at the Black Sea, 2010-2019
 Source: Own design based on the data from [18].

This reflects that the growth rate of tourists visiting other destinations in Romania has been higher than the increase rate to the resorts of Romania's seashore [31, 29].

However, taking into account the high growth rate of tourist arrivals and the low growth rate of the accommodation units and places, it is obviously that there is an unbalances ratio between demand and tourism offer on the Romanian seaside [33].

And this is an exception from the general increasing trend of offer in terms of accommodation units and places at the country level and also at the macro and micro

development regions adapted to high tourist flows [31, 26].

The number of overnight stays has recorded a continuous increase in the seaside resorts of Romania so that in the analyzed interval it accounted for 58.75% from 2,934 thousands in the year 2010 to 4,658 thousands in 2019.

The overnight stays belonging to the Romanian tourist increased much more, by 61.94% from 2,800 thousands in 2010 to 4,534.6 thousands in 2019, while the number of foreign tourists' overnight stays declined by 7.85% from 133.9 thousands in 2010 to 123.4 thousands in 2019 (Fig. 4).

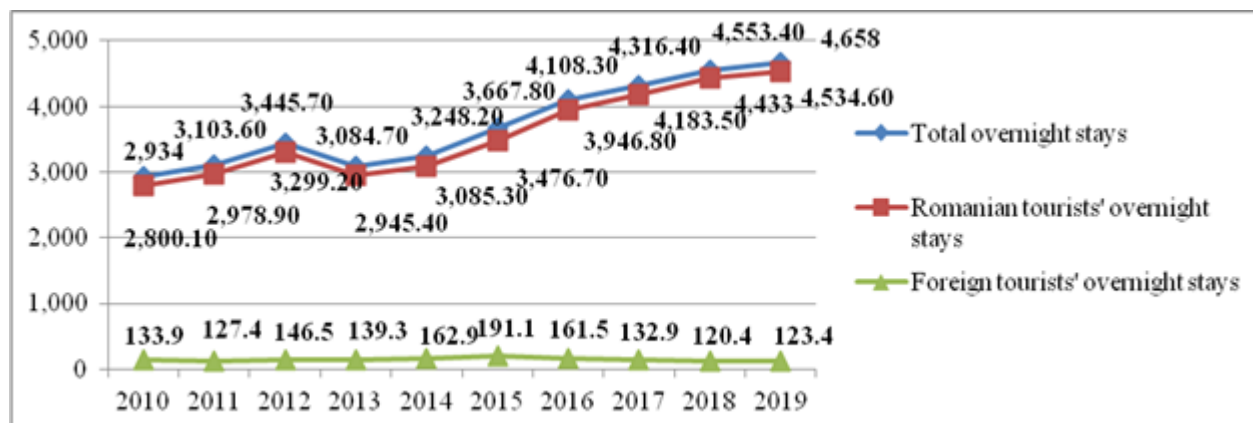


Fig. 4. The dynamics of tourists overnight stays in the accommodation units in Romania's resorts at the Black Sea, 2010-2019

Source: Own design based on the data from [18].

These figures show that Romanian tourists prefer much more to spend their vacations in various seashore resorts, while foreign tourists

prefer to visit other destinations, which is a normal situation.

The share of the Romanian tourists in the total number of overnight stays is dominant and increased from 95.43% in 2010 to 97.35% in 2019.

As a result, the share of overnight stays in the seashore resorts in total overnight stays at the national level declined from 18.27% in 2010 to 15.48% in 2019.

If we take into account the overnight stays belonging to Romanian tourists, also their share declined from 21.07% in 2010 to 18.28% in 2019, and in case of the foreign tourists, their weight decreased from 4.83% in 2010 to 2.33% in 2019.

The use rate of the tourist accommodation capacity in the resorts of Romania's seaside

Taking into consideration the increased number of tourists and the decreased number of units and places in the accommodation units from the seashore resorts of Romania, the use rate of the tourist accommodation capacity registered a higher level and dynamics in the seashore resorts compared to the levels recorded in Romania's tourism. Therefore, in case of the seashore resorts, the use rate of the accommodation capacity increased from 32.68% in 2010 to 51.01% in 2019, and this fast growth exceeded the use rate in Romania's tourism, which succeeded to raise from 25.15% to 33.88% in the same interval (Table 1).

Table 1. The use rate of the accommodation capacity in the units from Romania's seashore resorts versus in Romania's tourism, 2010-2019 (%)

	The use rate of the accommodation capacity in the units from Romania's seashore resorts	The use rate of the accommodation capacity in Romania's tourism
2010	32.68	25.15
2011	30.17	26.27
2012	36.34	25.85
2013	34.89	25.13
2014	34.82	26.10
2015	38.97	28.73
2016	46.69	30.53
2017	46.80	30.90
2018	50.40	32.15
2019	51.01	33.88

Source: Own calculation based on the data from [18].

The participation of tourists to the one days travels to various attractions in the proximity of Romanian seashore

The growth of the number of tourists spending their holidays on the Romanian seashore had led to an intensive request and participation to the tours organized by the local tourism agencies to various attractions in the proximity of the coastline or in Dobrogea region.

In 2019, a number of 643,545 tourists, that is 12.9 times more than in 2010, participated to this type of excursions.

Also, 173,090 tourists in 2019, meaning 5.6 times more than in 2010 participated to the one-day trips on itineraries organized by the agencies with the selling activity.

In 2019, the shares of these tourists in the total number of tourists on the Romanian seashore reached 60.47% in case of the participants to the tours organized by the local travel agencies and 74.82% in case of the tourists who applied for travels organized by agencies with selling activity (Table 2).

Table 2. The number of tourists accommodated in seaside resorts who applied for organized travels to various tourist attractions in the proximity of the Romania's seashore in 2019 versus 2010

One-day trip organizer	2010	2019	2019/2010 %
Tour operator agency	49,865	643,545	1,290.57
Agency with sales activity	30,895	173,090	560.25

Source: Own calculation based in the data from NIS, 2020.

One of the tourism agencies which organizes seaside tours, trips to the Danube Delta, Murfatlar wine tasting and offers other sorts of tourist services is "Vacante minunate"[19, 20].

The unbalanced ratio between the tourist demand and tourist offer

The regression of overnight stays depending on tourists' arrivals is presented in Fig.5. The regression equation, $Y = 0.2644x - 98.047$ shows that for an increase of 1,000 tourists arrivals the accommodation demand in terms of overnight stays will go up by 2,644. Taking into account the t value and the significance

threshold P-value, this coefficient is statistically significant.

The value of the determination coefficient, $R^2 = 0.984$, is a positive and strong one, reflecting a high relationship between these two indicators (Fig. 5).

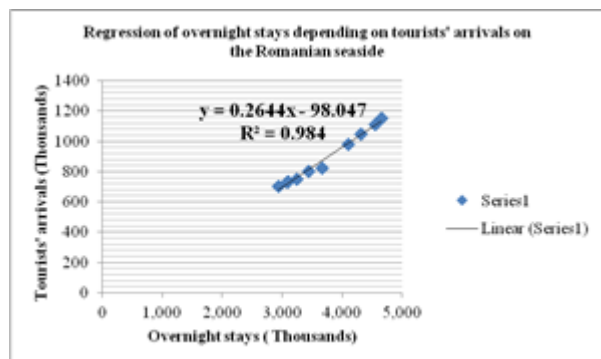


Fig. 5. Regression of overnight stays depending on tourists' arrivals on the Romanian seaside, 2010-2019
 Source: Own design based on the date from [18].

The regression of overnight stays depending on the accommodation capacity in operation in terms of beds-days is presented in Fig. 6. In this case, the regression equation, $Y = -0.2001x + 9,993.2$ reflects that for increase of the accommodation offer by 1,000 beds-days, the overnight stays with determine a reduction of overnight stays by 2,001. The same situation is confirmed by the coefficient of determination whose value is $R^2 = 0.0909$, reflecting that only 9.09 % of the variation of overnight stays will be determined by the variation of the beds-days (Fig. 6).

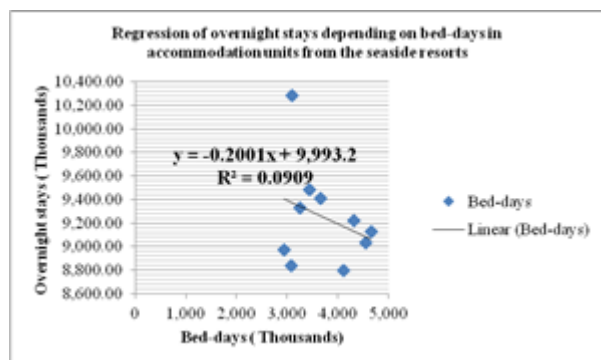


Fig. 6. Regression of overnight stays depending on the number of bed-days on the Romanian seaside, 2010-2019
 Source: Own design based on the date from [18].

The regression of the number of beds depending on tourists' arrivals is presented in

Fig. 7. The regression equation, $Y = -25.645x + 108,658$ shows that for increase of the number of tourists arrivals by 1,000, the accommodation capacity declines by 25.645 places (beds) which confirms that between accommodation capacity in terms of beds and the tourist arrivals is not a balanced ration. The coefficient of determination, $R^2 = 0.1278$ reflects that just 12.78 % of the variation of the accommodation capacity in terms of beds is a result of the variation in the number of tourists' arrivals (Fig. 7).

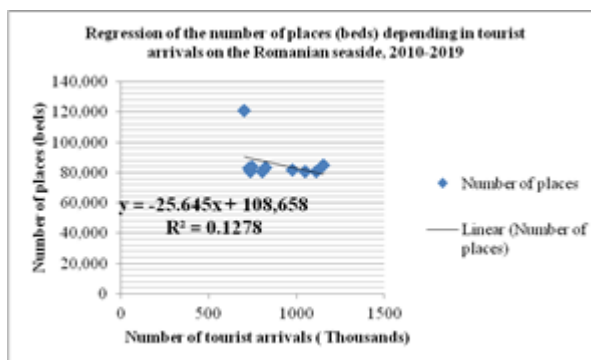


Fig. 7. Regression of number of places (beds) depending on the number of tourists' arrivals in the accommodation units on the Romanian seaside, 2010-2019
 Source: Own design based on the date from [18].

Romanian seashore facing with Covid-19 pandemic

The pandemic of covid-19 caused important problems almost to all economic sectors, but especially to tourism.

The population had to respect the measures imposed by authorities not to spread the virus in Spring season and the relaxation measures applied since May 15 have allowed to think of vacations and where to spend them in safe environment.

At the beginning of May, tourism managers of "Litoralul romanesc" Travel Agency, the greatest tour operator on the Romanian seaside launched an online survey on a sample of 1,181 individuals based on a questionnaire for testing tourists' intention to spend their vacation on the seashore and which are their wishes related to the measures of security to offer them a safe stay in accommodation units, in restaurants and beaches.

The processed answers of the questioned persons proved that "most of tourists prefer to

spend their vacations in Romania (48%), and that they intend to choose the resorts from the Black Sea because they feel safer here (17%), the Romanian seaside is closer to their homes (10.3%) and could be easily reached by car (17%) and that it is safer to spend your holiday in our country than abroad (7.5%)". Also, "almost questioned persons affirmed their wish as the tourism units to assure them a safe vacation" taking the corresponding measures of hygiene as imposed by authorities [36].

The managers of tourism units on the Romanian seaside have taken important decisions to offer a safe vacation for their tourists. In this respect we mention: checking the temperature of employees and tourists at the entrance in hotels and other sort of accommodation units, assuring the disinfectant dispensers at the entrance in the accommodation units and restaurants, the obligation of the personnel working in tourism units and restaurants to wear masks, rooms to be disinfected after each tourist, the playgrounds for children to be disinfected, the beaches belonging to hotels to ensure a greater distance between umbrellas and sunbeds, the restaurants were prepared to assure a greater distance between the tables.

In 2019, the summer season on the Romania seashore started later than usual due to the corona virus pandemic and the measures which had to be respected for not spreading it. "About, 160,000 Romanians have applied for spending their summer in the seashore resorts, but their number was by 20% smaller than in 2019.

The most numerous tourists came from Bucharest (38.11%), and from the following counties: Timis (5.24%), Iasi (5.11%), Prahova (4.52%), Cluj (4.42%), Brasov (4.32%), Arges (2.9%), Bacau (2.18%), Galati (2.06%) and Dambovita (1.88%) as mentioned by the greatest tour operator Litoralul Romanesc".

Another feature was the fact that many tourists made reservations in the last minute, because probably they did not know how the pandemic will evolve and at the moment when the restriction measures have been

relaxed they decide that the best destination for their holidays is the Romanian seashore.

Also, many tourists practiced spending the week-ends on the seashore, which made a pressure on tourism accommodation units and restaurants, and beaches have been full of people who in many cases did not respected the rules of protection.

The most desired seashore resorts in 2019 were Mamaia, Eforie Nord, Jupiter, Neptun, Saturn, Venus, Costinesti and Eforie Sud.

The average stay length was 5.3 days a little bit longer compared to 5.1 days in 2019 [13].

The average cost of a vacation this year was similar with the year 2019, that is Euro 471/person.

This reflect that the tourism in the seaside resorts of Romania has continued to be a preferred destination by Romanians even under the conditions of the pandemic, but the smaller number of tourists compared to 2019 caused substantial losses in tourism sector.

CONCLUSIONS

The research results emphasized the increased importance of Romania's tourism on the Black Sea seaside during the holiday period and week-ends pointing out that a higher and higher number of tourists applied for accommodation in the units existing in the seashore resorts.

The tourist flow in terms of tourists arrivals and also of overnight stays raised during the last decade in this tourist destination of Romania

Tourism offer in terms of the number of accommodations units and number of places (beds) registered a deep decline in the year 2011, but it started a slight recover which growth rate is behind the increase rate of the number of tourists.

This led to high and fast dynamics of the use rate of the accommodation capacity in the seashore resorts compared to the use rate of the accommodation capacity in Romania's tourism.

To synthesize the main characteristics of Romania's tourism on the seashore we could mention the following:

- the Romanian seaside has become a destination more and more attractive for Romanian tourists and in a smaller proportion for foreign tourists;

- the seashore tourism has a high seasonality as it runs usually in summer season, meaning June, July, August and sometimes in extra season being encouraged by the discount applied by accommodation units and travel agencies in May and September;

- over 95 % of tourists who prefer to enjoy their vacations on the seashore are Romanians;

- during the analyzed decade, 2010-2019, it was noticed an unbalance between the high demand and the lower tourist offer; while the number of tourists arrivals increased, the number of accommodation units and places decreased and raise with a small growth rate;

- on Romanian seaside tourists have at their disposal a large range of tourism forms to spend their time in an active way, to recover their forces and strengthen their body and health;

-more and more tourists accommodated in the seaside resorts are keen to participate in one-day excursions for visiting different objectives in the proximity of the seashore.

In conclusion, the resorts of Romanian seaside have an important contribution to the development of tourism which is confirmed by the brief summary of the statistics regarding the key indicators in the year 2019, reflecting the share of the seaside resorts in Romania's tourism: 10.09% for the accommodation units, 23.86% for the number of places (beds), 8.62% for tourist arrivals (Romanians and foreigners), 10.47% for Romanian tourists' arrivals, 1.27% for foreign tourists' arrivals, 15.48% for overnight stays (Romanians and foreigners), 18.28% for Romanians' overnight stays, 2.33% for foreign tourists' overnight stays, 10.28% for the places-days, 51.01% for the use rate of accommodation units.

The beautiful landscapes of the Black Sea, the joy of spending vacations laying in the sun, swimming or making nautical sports, benefiting of entertainment opportunities during the night life, tasting the local culinary

offer based main of fish and seafood, the flavored wines, and the comfortable infrastructure are a guarantee that the seaside resorts will continue to be a very attractive destination for many tourists in the next years. Seaside tourism is a real opportunity for the development of business and strengthen the local economy and also the national tourism, therefore it has a socio-economical and environment impact.

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