

## ROMANIAN-MOLDAVIAN TOURISM ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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### Abstract

*Romania and Moldova are committed to encouraging the mutual exchange of data and information in the field of tourism, as well as the exchange of experience in organizing and developing touristic activities. Specialized articles, open access from Clarivate Analytics and Research Gate were used for documentation. The data necessary for the research were collected from the information of the National Institute of Statistics of Romania, respectively of the National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova. The research results showed that Romania is the third country as a tourist destination in the preferences of Moldovan tourists, while Romanian tourists are the main category of visitors to the neighboring country. Wine tourism and tourist attractions in the Lower Prut Meadow are the main attractions for Romanian visitors, while Moldovan tourists are attracted by the ski resorts and the Black Sea beach of Romania. The results of the study may be useful for tour operators, officials with responsibilities in this economic sector and for the development of more in-depth research in doctoral studies.*

**Key words:** tourism, Romania, Moldova, evolution, trends

### INTRODUCTION

Tourism was the most dynamic branch of world economy till the pandemic of Covid-19 which started in the year 2020. All the countries have been affected, including Romania and Republic of Moldova [10]. Tourism destinations can be enhanced by a combination of the factors of competitiveness and attractiveness. While competitiveness is given by the supply structure and service quality, the attractiveness derives from the demand side of tourism [13].

Romania is well known for its high attraction regarding the sea-shore and mountain resorts, and the historical and cultural heritage in Maramures, Bucovina, Transilvania and, of course, Bucharest, the capital [11, 12].

Republic of Moldova, despite that is a smaller country, has many interesting tourist attractions, some of them describing the common history between Moldova and Romania, which are "two sisters" countries.

such as: numerous natural reservations where biodiversity in terms of flora and fauna are amazing, the wines full of flavour which

conquered the hearts of many Europeans and won golden medals at international fairs, especially by Cricova Vinery; Taul Park and Prommer Inn, Capriana Monastery situated at 40 km from Chisinau, Saharna Monastery well known as a site for pilgrimage, Soroca Fortress, Old Orhei, a locality full of history, Curchi Monastery, "Padurea Domneasca" Natural Rezervation [5, 15].

Chisinau, the capital, is a friendly and safe city, full of green spaces, and important buildings which tell us about its history and cultural heritage. The Cathedral of the Jesus, Birth, the Arch of Triumph, Puskin Park, with the Statue of the Steven the Great, National Museum of History, National Museum of Fine Arts, the Botanical Garden, the National Theater etc [5, 15].

Therefore, Republic of Moldova has a great tourism potential which deserves to be discovered, including a large variety of attractions: naturals areas, forests, hills, vineyards, orchards, natural reservations, medieval sites, fortresses, spa resorts, fests, being a well known country for ecotourism,

spa tourism, historical and cultural tourism and health and recreation tourism [18].

Since 2014, the Moldovan Government has established the Strategy for Tourism Development till 2020 destined to valorise the tourism potential of the country [3].

Between Romania and Moldova are close economic, social and cultural relationship, and tourism is a part of these good relationships of collaboration for years. That is why the flow of tourists from the both sides has increased year by year.

In this context, the purpose of the paper was to analyze the dynamics of tourist arrivals, the most visited places preferred by tourists, the purposes of visits, in order that the results to enhance the activity of tourism agencies and tour operators in the both countries.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

To set up this paper there were used various information sources such as: published articles in well known international journals, press releases, articles published on internet etc.

Also, the data were collected for the period 2008-2020 from National Institute of Statistics of Romania [9] and National Bureau of Statistics of Republic of Moldova [8].

The studied aspects and indicators have been: tourism attractions, Romanian tourist arrivals in Republic of Moldova, Moldovan tourist arrivals in Romania, inbound and out bound tourism in Republic of Moldova.

The research methods were represented by a deep documentation based on information sources, data structuralisation and representation in graphics, a corresponding interpretation of the evolution of the studied indicators.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### **Romania - one of the favourite destination for the citizens of the Republic of Moldova**

Romania is an important tourist attraction for the Moldavian visitors, but it is ranked the 3rd after Turkey and Bulgaria.

According to the statistical data, the number of Moldavian tourists who visited Romania in the interval 2000 - 2020 varied from the minimum of 857,000 in the year 2002 and the maximum of 2,330,000 in the year 2018.

In 2020, the year when the pandemic of Covid-19 started, Romania was visited by only 870,000 Moldavian citizens ( Fig. 1).

In the period January-June 2008, Romania's touristic offer attracted more than 14,000 tourists from the Republic of Moldova, which represents an increase of 6.6% compared to the same time last year [7].

Through travel agencies and tour operators in January-June 2019, 121.2 thousand tourists and hikers went abroad from the Republic of Moldova, 11.3% more than the same period last year.

Citizens of the Republic of Moldova preferred to travel mainly to Turkey (30.2% of the abroad travels), Bulgaria (22.2%) and Romania (17.1%). Most Moldovans visited other countries for recreation and leisure purposes [2].

In January-June 2019, travel agencies and tour operators provided tourist services to 151.6 thousand tourists and hikers, 12.2% more than in the corresponding period of 2018 [8].

The Federation of Romanian Tourism Employers [14] created in 2014 an online booking system where one can find 20% cheaper price offers for the Romanian sea coast.

"About 40 hotels, members of the Federation, have made special offers, so far for the year 2014, addressing the market in the Republic of Moldova.

Unfortunately, Republic of Moldova lost this market for the current Seaside season, due to the expiration of the visa liberalization period. In fact, the Federation has personalized offers for different markets, such as those for Israel or Germany" as mentioned The Federation of Romanian Tourism Employers [14].

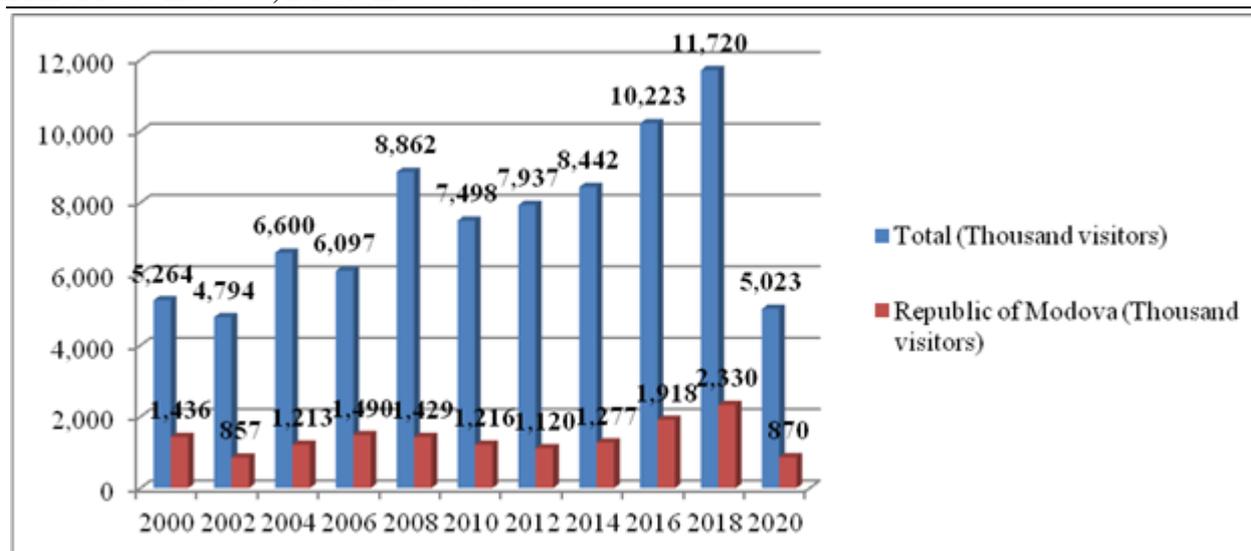


Fig. 1. Foreign visitors' arrivals in Romania by continent and country of origin, pointing out the arrivals of Moldavian tourists

Source: [8, 9].

### Most tourists visiting the Republic of Moldova are from Romania

Most of the tourists who visited the Republic of Moldova during the analyzed period were from Romania. More precisely, 17.2% of the total people monitored were Romanian. Other significant shares in the total number of tourists arriving in the Republic of Moldova went to the citizens of Austria (13.8%), Germany and Ukraine (8.6% each) and the Russian Federation (6.4%), according to InfoPrut.

### România, cooperation treaty with the Republic of Moldova, in the field of tourism

The development of the relations between Romania and the Republic of Moldova, by encouraging the collaboration between the profile industries from the two states, is a priority for the Ministry of Tourism. Thus, the new agreement seeks to intensify the cooperation in key areas for the sustainable development of tourism in the two states [6].

"At the moment, the cooperation between the two governments is more intense than ever. The touristic potential of Moldova and Romania cannot be disputed by anyone. We share the same history and the same values. Therefore, this collaboration agreement was born from a belief that we can have a common future. Romania is willing to make every effort to support the Republic of Moldova in

maintaining its European route, and tourism is an area that can accelerate the journey of this road with beneficial consequences on both sides of the Prut" [7].

Romania and Moldova are committed to encouraging the mutual exchange of data and information on tourism legislation and regulations, statistical data, as well as the exchange of experience in the field of tourism, organization and development of tourism activities.

At the same time, the Agreement provides for enhanced cooperation on investment projects of common interest in the field of tourism, through the development of projects eligible for financial support from the European Union, and through a sustained exchange of information on investments and facilities in the field.

In terms of promotion, the two countries agreed on the development of tourism promotion and information materials, the organization of documentary visits for journalists and experts in the field, as well as the participation in tourism events and fairs. In this sense, Romania has already developed a common cultural route with the Republic of Moldova, "Route of Voievod Stefan cel Mare". In Romania, the route includes the citadel of Suceava, Putna, the Palace of Culture in Iasi, the Neamt Fortress, the

founders of the fortress of Vaslui and other places loaded with the history of Stefan.

The "Wine Road" is also a joint project aimed at developing tourism in the two countries. The new route includes several wineries in Romania and the Republic of Moldova and aims to promote the two countries through a unitary tourist product that will attract foreigners, especially from the Asian market [4].

#### **The number of Romanian tourists participating in foreign tourist actions organized by travel agencies, by destination countries emphasizing the ones visiting the Republic of Moldova**

The number of Romanian tourist who travelled abroad by means of the tourism agencies specialized in organization activities registered a high variation from a year to another in the period 2008-2020.

The lowest number of 257,235 recorded in the year 2010, and the peak was achieved in the year 2012 and accounted for 902,783. Then, the number of this type of agencies decreased to 355, 853 in the year 2014, but after that it was noticed a recover to 646,663 in the year 2018.

In 2020, due to the pandemic of Covid-19, the restrictions imposed by authorities affected very much tourism sector, and an important number of tourism agencies were closed. Therefore, in 2020, only 256,756 Romanian tourists used the services of the tourism agencies which remained open.

The number of Romanian tourists who prefer the services offered by the tourism agencies with an intermediary activity is much lower, representing about 16% of the total number of tourists who apply to tourism agencies. Its evolution was in general similar with the number of tourists who used the services of the agencies with organization activities in tourism in the period 2008-2020.

In the Republic of Moldova, the number of Romanian tourists who travelled to the Republic of Moldova using the services of the tourist agencies was very small and varied

between 20 in 2009, the smallest number and 651 in the year 2010, the highest level. In 2020, only 127 tourists made use of the services of the agencies (Fig. 2).

#### **Tourist activity of travel agencies and tour operators in the Republic of Moldova**

The National Bureau of Statistics informs that, in January-June 2019, travel agencies and tour operators provided tourist services to 151.6 thousand tourists and hikers, 12.2% more than in the corresponding period of 2018.

Increasing the number of tourists and hikers was conditioned by the increase in the number of participants in domestic tourism (+ 23.0%), in sender tourism (+ 11.3%) and inbound tourism (+ 1.1%).

#### **Number of tourists and hikers, participants in tourism organized by travel agencies and tour operators, by purpose of visits in the Republic of Moldova**

##### *Inbound tourism*

Out of the 8.4 thousand foreign tourists and hikers who visited the Republic of Moldova in January-June 2019 and benefited from the services of travel agencies and tour operators, 83.1% arrived for recreation and leisure purposes, 14.2% - business and professional, and 2.7% for various treatments.

More significant shares in the total number of foreign tourists and hikers arriving in the Republic of Moldova belonged to the citizens of Romania (17.2%), Austria (13.8%), Germany and Ukraine (8.6% each), Russian Federation (6.4%), United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (5.4%), Poland (4.6%), China (3.9%), Italy (3.3%), States United States and France (2.0% each), Czech Republic (1.9%), Japan (1.8%), Bulgaria (1.7%), Turkey (1.6%), Israel (1%) 4%), Switzerland (1.2%), Lithuania (1.0%), Armenia and Sweden (0.9% each), Norway (0.8%).

##### *Outbound tourism*

The tourist who went abroad for various purposes, especially for relaxation leisure and entertainment are presented in Fig. 3.

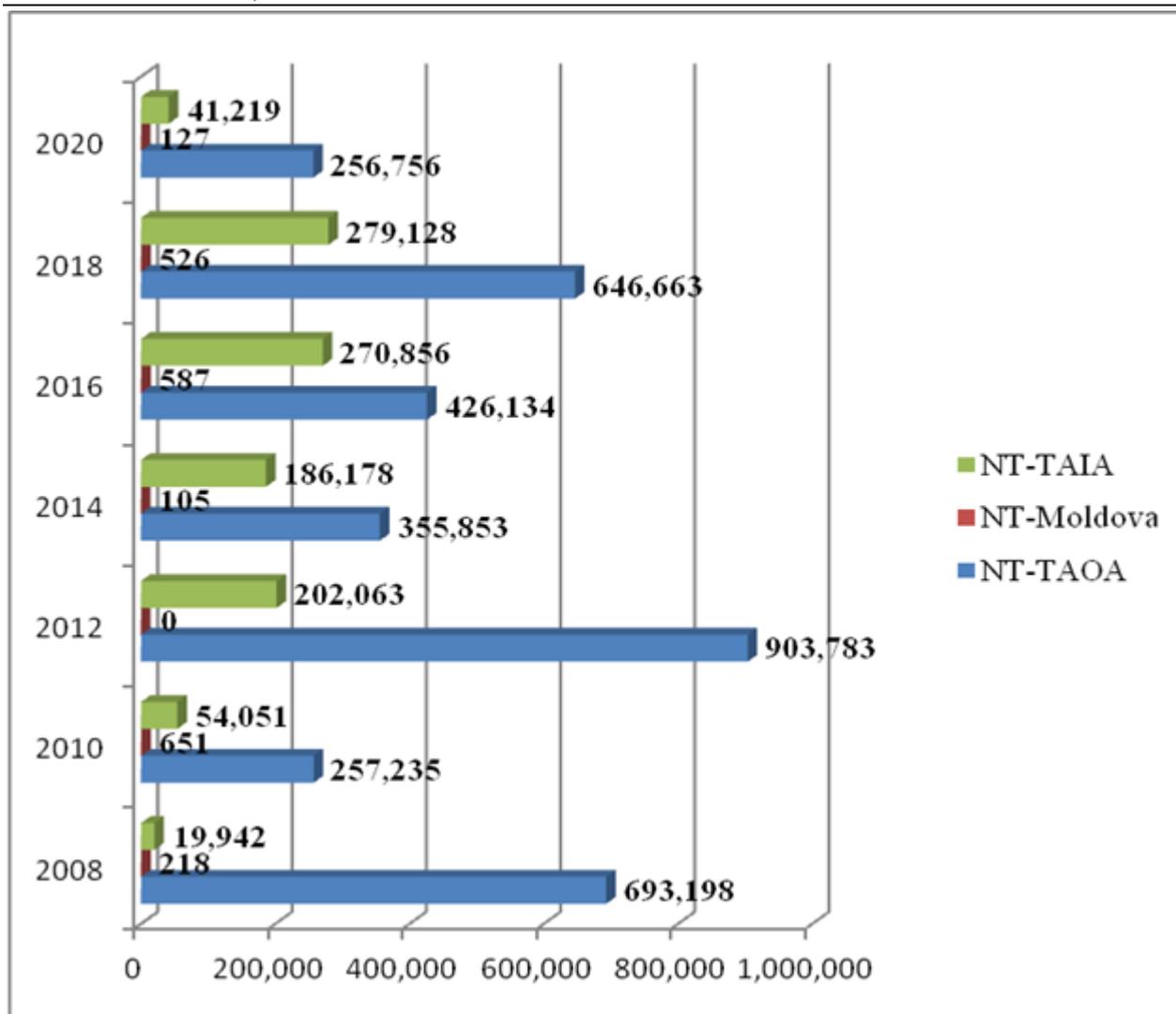


Fig. 2. The number of Romanian tourists participating in foreign tourist actions organized by travel agencies, by destination countries

Legend: NT-TAOA- No of tourists-Tourism Agencies with Organization Activity  
 NT- TAIA- No. of tourists- Tourism Agencies with Intermediary Activity  
 NT- Republic of Moldova- Total No. of Tourists -Tourism Agencies

Source: National Institute of Statistics, NIS, 2022 [9].

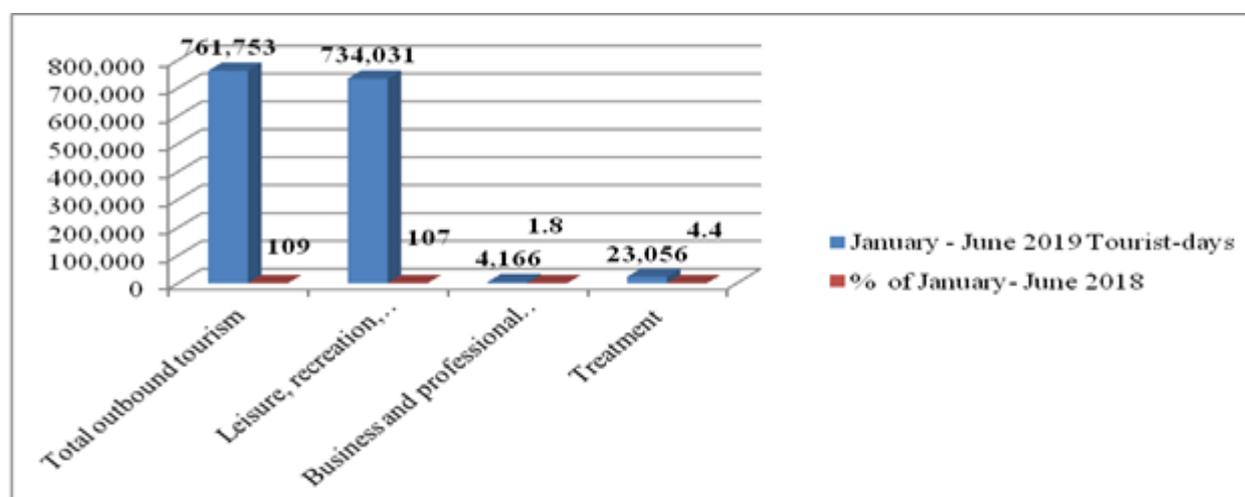


Fig. 3. Outbound tourism - Tourist - days, by purpose of the travel

Source: [8].

### Tourist areas in the Republic of Moldova with hunting potential

*The Lower Prut Scientific Reserve* (Rezervatia stiintifica Lunca Prutului de Jos) is a protected area located in the lower reaches of the Prut River, including Lake Belevu and its surroundings, in the South- West of the Republic of Moldova. Between the villages of Văleni and Slobozia Mare in the Cahul district, Lake Belevu is the ideal place for nature lovers.



Photo 1. Lake Belevu.  
Source: [16].

The lake is home to herds of Pelicans heading for the Danube, White Egrets, Gray Herons and other birds.

In May-July, white and yellow water lilies bloom on Lake Belevu. Due to the impressive diversity of habitats and life forms that it hosts in a relatively small space, "Prutul de Jos" is a true museum of biodiversity.

*"Codrii" Natural Rezervation* (Rezervația Naturală "Codrii") Within this reservation there is a rich "Museum of Nature", located in the hilly center of the Republic of Moldova, on the Plateau of Central Moldova (Straseni district), occupying approx. 40% of the surface of this high plateau.



Photo 2. "Codrii" Natural Rezervation  
Source: [1].

The reserve is protected by about 1,000 species of plants, 43 species of mammals, 145 species of birds, 7 species of reptiles, 10 species of amphibians and more than 10,000 species of insects.

*"Vadul lui Vodă"* The picturesque valley of the Dniester River, the forest-park and the beaches on the bank of the Dniester contributed to the transformation of the area adjacent to Vadul lui Voda, located 23 km East from Chisinau.



Photo 3. "Vadul lui Voda"  
Source: [17].

"Vadul lui Vodă" has become a beloved place of relaxation, not only for the inhabitants of the city but also for many guests who come from the Republic of Moldova and also from abroad.

Tourists are attracted by the spa-treatment and recreational objectives of this area.

*Moldovan Wines- an important attraction for tourists*

Republic of Moldova has a good wine production which is a testimony for its history, culture and agricultural performance.

Various winemaking vineries such as: Cricova, Milestii Mici, Branesti Cellars, Lion Gri are well known tourist destinations [4].

### CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the research results showed that Romania is the third country as a tourist destination in the preferences of Moldovan tourists who are interested to spend their vacations in the Black Sea resorts and also in the ski resorts.

The Romanian people are attracted by the beauty of the landscapes, the capital Chisinau,

Moldovan wines and gastronomy, cultural and historical places.

As a recommendation, in the recent years, the Republic of Moldova has become a famous destination due to cultural events and festivals and tourists could benefit of great fun during their vacations especially when the big festivals are organized, because there we'll find a lot of good cheer, beautiful people, tasty food and aromatic wines.

The "two sisters" countries have to intensify the promotion of their tourist destinations in order to increase the number of arrivals and overnight stays.

Special packages could be offered to tourist at a discounted price in extra season.

The development of common cultural and historical events could be another opportunity to strengthen the friendship and solidarity between the people and contribute to the development of tourism in the both countries.

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