

## STUDY ON THE INVENTORY AND CHARACTERIZATION OF TOURIST POTENTIAL AND ACTIVITY IN THE CORABIA - OLT AREA, ROMANIA

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### *Abstract*

*The paper presents a multidisciplinary and complex study carried out in the Corabia - Olt area, in which, in the first stage, an inventory and characterization of the natural tourist potential of the area is carried out, which is not very rich and attractive, but as a novelty for the area, an attempt is made to the very important asset for tourism in general is highlighted, that the town is located on the bank of the largest water course in Romania and even in Europe, the Danube River. After that, a study is carried out regarding the anthropic tourism potential, which from the data presented was found to be rich, diversified and very valuable through the touristic sights of historical, cultural and religious importance that it possesses. Unlike other areas in the country, which have an equally rich anthropogenic tourism potential, the town of Corabia can clearly differentiate itself in terms of the tourist offer, by making maximum use of the advantages offered by the tourist port, with all its endowments. The study on the characterization of the tourist activity based on some quality indices that we determined, highlighted the fact that the tourist activity in the area is less, but it can be revived by creating an attractive and original offer, based on the practice of tourism specialized in hunting and fishing and in cruise and transit tourism, through cross-border cooperation with other countries bordering the Danube.*

*Key words:* agritourism, boarding house, management, tourism, tourist potential

### INTRODUCTION

It is well known that tourism is a key sector of the European economy, comprising a wide variety of products and destinations and involving many relevant actors, generating more than 5% of EU GDP, with around 1.8 million operators that are active in the field and have an employed staff around the level of 5.2% of the total workforce (approximately 9.7 million jobs). Together with related sectors, tourism's estimated contribution to GDP is much higher: tourism indirectly generates more than 10% of the European Union's GDP, providing jobs for around 12% of the workforce [3, 14, 16].

A significant contribution in this field is also made by the member countries of the Danube Region, who requested the Commission to propose a framework through which to provide effective solutions to the key problems faced by this region. The four outlined priorities, called "pillars", are: connecting the Danube region; environmental protection in the Danube region; ensuring the prosperity of the Danube region; consolidation of the Danube

region. The EU strategy for the Danube region confirms and supports the ongoing development of the river cruise tourism industry. The Danube Tourism Commission (DTC) knows from its own experience the practical problems that arise, such as the administrative procedures imposed on crews. Facilitating dialogue between the many authorities and cruise companies involved can accelerate and facilitate initiatives to encourage both companies and tourists [5, 9, 18, 20].

Knowing very well the situation of the tourism industry in Romania, the Government of Romania established that it is urgent and necessary to develop a Master Plan for the development of this industry, covering a period of 20 years, until 2026 and including six-year action program years correlated with financial support through structural instruments. The immediate objective is the formulation of a general policy framework for the development and sustainable management of the tourism industry in terms of natural and cultural resources and the presentation of this objective

in the form of a long-term tourism development plan [6, 12, 26, 38].

Each Member State develops a National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF), as a reference document for the programming of the Structural and Cohesion Funds. At the NSRF level, tourism is analyzed from the perspective of the competitiveness of the Romanian economy and its growth prospects. Relevant aspects for the development of tourism are analyzed in the context of the sections dedicated to the territorial dimension, rural development and the promotion of a balanced territorial development [29, 30, 40]. Aligning with balanced regional development, there are counties in Romania that have already inventoried the entire natural and cultural endowment they have as tourist attractions, so that a patrimonial re-evaluation of priorities for promotion or re-promotion is sufficient, in order to determine the necessary funds. In the regional policy regarding the valorisation at the European level of touristic objectives of a certain value, correctly ranked in terms of attractiveness, intrinsic value, national importance, etc., financial means must also be provided for their protection [17, 32, 33].

In the current study carried out in the area of Corabia, a city located on the banks of the Danube, we want to contribute to a good extent to the inventory of the tourist potential and to the complex and realistic analysis of the actual situation of tourism, since ignorance, indifference and lack of education, important elements of local, natural and cultural heritage are left to fate, with serious repercussions both in the short and long term. Also, based on the results obtained, we want to contribute to the improvement to a good extent to the development and promotion of tourism in the area, both on a national level and, why not, on a European and world level.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

In the conducted study, the correct and well-documented inventory of the natural and human tourism potential of the Corabia area was primarily aimed at. This study was carried out by consulting a series of monographic data, from several materials published over time, as

well as a field study to see what the real situation of these data is. In addition to these, I have consulted several thematic maps of the respective area, where the details are reproduced in detail with the help of symbols and conventional signs [8, 13].

The inventory of the natural tourist potential confirmed our hypothesis that the Corabia area has a lower potential compared to other tourist areas in the country, but still, the town being placed on the bank of the Danube River can very well exploit this asset and create a original and authentic tourist offer, by which it can clearly differentiate itself from other offers at the national or even international level. This offer can be developed and promoted very well through the cross-border cooperation between the member countries of the Danube Region, which should have a common policy and strategy for the implementation and development of tourism in the region. From the beginning, I considered that the topic addressed in this study is one of topicality and of particular relevance for the area, because even the localities along the Danube in our country must keep up with similar localities on the other side, from other countries, which it seems from the data we have that they realized more quickly and responsibly what the real possibilities are for the implementation and development of such tourism [2, 4].

Starting from these assumptions, we carried out this research using the case study method [1, 10, 15, 22]. In the first part of the work, we carried out a careful analysis of the situation of the access roads in the area and the natural tourist potential, which is less interesting and attractive for tourists, but which can be compensated by making the most of the assets given by the location of the localities in the proximity of the Danube River.

In the second part, a complex and multidisciplinary study was carried out of the data that make up the anthropic tourist potential of the area, from which it emerges that it is a rich one, with many objectives of great touristic and cultural value. The last part of the research focused on the analysis of the main indicators through which we can perform the analysis and characterization of tourist activities in the area.

We also analyzed the natural and anthropic tourism potential in a radius of at least 30 km, around the town of Corabia, because in the tourism research all the tourist objectives and attractions in this radius can significantly influence the tourist activity.

In this sense, the existing reception structures in the locality at the reference time 1990 and today were studied. After that, other relevant indicators were determined in the characterization of the tourist activity, such as; the number of tourists arriving in the area, the number of overnight stays, the average number of tourist arrivals, the average length of stay and the degree of occupancy, all of which were determined based on data collected from the field and from the National Institute of Statistics (NIS) [22, 27, 34].

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The case study was carried out on the area and the town of Corabia, located at the southern end of Olt county, on the left bank of the Danube, the second largest river in Europe, from which 2/3 of its length flows through the territory of our country, being an urban center of great economic, cultural and strategic importance, Corabia in Bulgarian Korab (кораб), in Russian Korabovo (кораб), in Turkish (Korab) is a city in Olt County, formed by the component localities Corabia (residence), Tudor Vladimirescu and from the village of Vârtopu. It has a population of 16,441 inhabitants (2011) [11, 28, 36, 39].

The city of Corabia was formed and developed in the south of the former Balta County, which was then called Romanati County, and today, Olt County, between older settlements: Corabia Veche to the west, Daşova to the east and Siliştoara, which over time became suburbs of the city. After the last administrative-territorial division of 16.02.1968, the localities of Celei, Vârtop, Tudor Vladimirescu and the suburban commune of Gârcov also became part of the city. Although the city of Corabia is of recent date, having been established in 1871, material traces, written documents and oral tradition confirm its existence, starting from ancient times [11, 28, 39].

### **Study on the accessibility of the area and the natural tourist potential**

The city of Corabia is connected by the secondary railway 910, a secondary branch of the highway 900 (Bucuresti Nord - Jimbolia), with the city of Caracal, the railway 910 having a total length of 41 km, consisting of a simple non-electrified railway. The Corabia-Caracal-Piatra Olt-Sibiu railway starts from Corabia, which is intersected by the Bucharest-Caracal-Craiova-Timişoara and Bucharest-Piatra Olt-Craiova-Simeria-Arad railways.

The town of Corabia is traversed from north to east by National Road 54, a road of considerable importance, connecting to the north with the town of Caracal and to the E with the town of Turnu Măgurele and then the capital Bucharest. National road 54 (DN 54), has a length of 15.31 km on the territory of the city of Corabia, and national road DN 54A, with a length of 6.46 km on the territory of the city of Corabia. County roads of interest are county road 543 (DJ 543), with a length of 5.9 km on the territory of the city of Corabia, and DJ 544A, with a length of 4.8 km on the territory of the city of Corabia. The total number of streets is 94 in the total length of 110 km. The city is crossed by the Danube to the south [11, 28, 39].

The economic value of the Danube is well known, the port of Corabia being an important connection point of the county with the other Danube cities and the Black Sea. River transport is ensured with the help of the port of Corabia, the only port in Olt County, being positioned between kilometres 628 + 500 -630. It covers an area of 227,763 m<sup>2</sup>, which is under the administration of A.P.D.F. - TO. George. The jurisdictional radius of the port extends from km 655 to km 617 [11, 28, 31].

In addition to these very important and easy-to-use access routes, the city is located only 94 km from Craiova International Airport, which has recently been undergoing an important expansion and modernization process, thus greatly increasing air traffic from area.

### **The relief and the soil**

Located on the terrace of the same name, bathed by the waters of the Danube, the town of Corabia is 50 m above sea level, thus being the lowest urban settlement in the county. The

town of Corabia is part of the Corabia Plain, located to the right of Olt and stretches from the southern edge of the county to the Danube. The Danube Valley, oriented from the west, has an obvious asymmetric character, with the right side of the high and steep Pre-Balkan Plateau dominating the lower Danube plateau with extended terraces on the Romanian shore. The bed of the Danube has a width that varies between 1 and 1.5 km, and branches into numerous arms that close islands of different sizes, such as: Păpădia, Grădiștea, Dragoveiul, Băloiul, Calovaț, in the meadow it reaches a width of 8-9 km, near the town of Potelul and narrows at Corabia, where it is wider on the Bulgarian shore. The terraces are developed in well-defined steps, starting from the Tăuca-Orlea-Corabia-Gareav line and up to the Obârsia-Crușov line, the most developed being the 15-20 m high one, called the Corabia terrace. The varied and extensive microrelief consists of sand dunes in the Obârsia-Potelu area, roofs in the Boianului Plain, beams and microdepressions. It consists of meadows, surprises and landslides, fields and torrential reception basins, dejection cones, and in the south of numerous anthropogenic forms such as gorges [11, 28, 39].

The predominant soil is chernozem in the following varieties: 87% silvosteppe leached chernozem, with a medium texture throughout the northern part of the city; 5% chocolate chernozem stretching as a narrow strip accompanying the road to the east; 5% chocolate chernozem of the slope, which forms a narrow strip to the west, towards Celei; 2% alluvial soil in the meadow area, along the Danube valley [11, 28, 39].

#### ***The climate***

Geographical position and relief largely determine the manifestation of climatic elements. In the territory of the city, the climate is temperate-continental with a more arid shade due to the waves of dry air from the east, which cause harsh winters and dry summers. The average annual temperature is 11.2 degrees Celsius. The area of the city of Corabia is distinguished both by the average of the higher summer months (32.2 degrees Celsius) and by the extreme values that have been recorded so far: 42 degrees Celsius in July of 1945 and - 32

degrees Celsius in January 1924 and 1942. About 200-210 days of the year there is no frost [11, 28, 39].

The amount of annual precipitation is on average 500 mm, differentially influencing the evolution of the vegetation period and the development of work on agricultural crops. The winds that characterize the climate are: Crivățul - which brings blizzards and snow in winter, rain in spring and drought in summer; Austrul-a dry wind that blows from the southwest; Băltăreț - who brings rain. Average wind speed is 5 m/s. The wind regime directly influences water losses through evaporation, accepting soil moisture deficit [11, 28, 31].

#### ***Hydrography***

The Danube waters the Olt County in the southern part for a distance of 47 km and collects the county's entire hydrographic network on the territory of the city of Corabia. Regarding the floods and the maximum flow in the Corabia sector, from the recorded hydrometric data it appears that the Danube reached a maximum level of 722 cm and even 796 cm influenced by the freezing phenomena. The Danube has a multiannual average level of 275 cm and an absolute average level of 101 cm, resulting in a maximum amplitude of 832 cm. The economic value of the Danube is well-known, the port of Corabia being an important connection point of the county with the other Danube cities and the Black Sea [11, 28, 36, 39].

Groundwater has variable depths and a rather large influence in some sectors of the county (Vădastra, Vișina) causing excess moisture in rainy years. The water table is at depths of 0-3 m in the Olt and Danube meadows, 5-10 m and 10-15 m in the Olt and Danube terraces, over 20 m in the Boian high field [11, 28, 36, 39].

***The flora*** it is mainly represented by the following plant species: Steppe vegetation predominates, followed by meadow vegetation. Among the important crops in the area, we mention: wheat, corn and some industrial plants, such as sugar beet and sunflower. As fodder plants we find: alfalfa, Sudan grass and "borceag" (a mix between a cereal and a leguminous plant) [7]. The most common fruit trees are: the apple, the apple

tree, the cork tree and the plum tree. With the damming of the Danube, the return of the land from the meadow for agriculture made it possible to cultivate large areas of: apricot, peach, apple and plum. Cherry is also grown in Răzleț [11, 28, 39].

In the Danube meadow you can find sedge, sedge, cane, and among the trees, willow, Canadian poplar and pyramidal poplar. From the spontaneous vegetation we find: fir, cypress, swelling, tumbleweed, etc. In the forests and on their edges, we find axeman and violins. In the city park, as well as in the landscaped green spaces, you can admire roses, sage, tulips, violets, woodpeckers, wood stilts, carnations and bluebells. In the areas of the Danube Meadow, where the water stagnates, reeds, sedges, water lilies and water lilies grow. An important role in this area is played by medicinal plants such as linden, the city of Corabia is rightly considered the city of linden trees. An important resource is also the agricultural land exploited through grain crops, technical plants, vines and fruit trees. The hunting area is represented by forests and hunting reserves such as Reșca, Seaca, Brebeni, Teslui, Sarului forest [11, 28, 39].

**The fauna** that lives on the studied territory is represented, mainly, by the following species: the woodpecker, the vole and the field mouse. A common fauna animal is the rabbit. The birds specific to the area are: sparrowhawks, larks, starlings and nightingales. Herons, sitars, ducks, wild geese are also found. Over the entire surface of the county, the Slatina Forestry Directorate manages 13 hunting funds with a total area of 111,391 hectares, of which 107,296 hectares are productive for hunting, an area where various species of animals live such as: red deer, fallow deer, roe deer, wild boar, foxes, rabbits, pheasant, partridges, wild and marsh game [19, 21, 25]. The fishing grounds offer wide opportunities for sport fishing: on the Danube where carp, bream, pike, pike, grayling, Danube mackerel predominate, on the lakes in the west of Olt or on the natural ponds carp, catfish, bream, pike, redfish, the perch [19, 21, 25].

#### **Study on the anthropic tourism potential**

In addition to the main tourist attractions in Corabia, the Danube and its meadow, for those

who want to visit the historical monuments in the city there are the Sucidava Fortress, the Holy Trinity Cathedral, the Independence Monument, the Cross of Heroes, the Church of Saint Spyridon, the Church of Saint Demetrius, the Bust and the Obelisk priest Radu Șapcă, as well as the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography. To these are added the islands of Băloiu and Păpădia, where hunting or fishing parties can be organized. Also, a very important and representative tourist objective for the studied area is the Sucidava archaeological complex, where, through a program with European funding, extensive works were carried out to highlight the archaeological discoveries and facilitate access for tourists, including the construction of a space museum. The walls of the Byzantine fortress Celei-Corabia with the Secret Fountain – a unique monument of Byzantine Roman architecture [11, 23, 28, 31, 39].

At the same time, the museum, installed in the most representative building in the city, that of the House of Culture, attracts many visitors through its high-value exhibits. The building, a heritage objective, in itself, represents an architectural monument. In 2020, an extensive rehabilitation process was completed that brought back the beauty and elegance of the era in which it was built. Also in 2020, The Danube cliff park was redeveloped, the local authorities wanting to integrate the entire area into a complex project to facilitate tourism, including a forest park, picnic area and a recreation area on the non-permanent Coșcan stream [11, 23, 28, 31, 39].

In the immediate vicinity of the Danube, a tourist port was built, with European funding, which was populated, by the locals, with boats that make trips on the Danube, thus being able to visit the Ostrovul Băloiu, which belongs to the Romanian state, located in the middle of the Danube. Tourists sailing on the Danube, in transit, can use the facilities of the Tourist Port. In this area there is also the Sucidava hotel, where tourists staying here can enjoy the special scenery of the Danube. Also taking into account the fact that the city is not polluted by industrial agents, the central park, recently redeveloped through a project with European funds under the theme of the Fishermen's

Public Garden in Corabia, which offers moments of peace and relaxation [11, 23, 28, 36].

In addition to the anthropogenic tourist attractions in the locality, tourists can also visit a series of historical and cultural vestiges of particular importance at the level of the region, in Olt county, such as: the Geto-Dacian fortified settlement at Sprâncenata; The medieval watchtower from Hotăreni; Câmpu Mare Fortress; The memorial house of the outlaw Iancu Jianu from Caracal; Nicolae Titulescu memorial center in the village of the same name; Neolithic vestiges from Vădastra, Fărcașele, Brebene, Slatina, Oboga, Orlea; Tabula Pentingeriana (map of the Roman world drawn up between 260-271 AD) which preserved the names of some daves (centres) such as Acidava (located in the village of Enoșești, center of the Geto-Dacians) and Sucidava (located in Corabia-Celei, juice center); The ruins of the Roman Fortress and the secret well at Sucidava (in Celei, near Corabia), built by Emperor Aurelian in the years 271-275; The ruins of the largest Roman city in Southern Dacia Romula - Malva, at Reșca (com. Dobrosloveni) 8 km from Caracal [11, 23, 28, 31, 39].

For ecumenical tourism, we mention the religious edifices with a spread in almost all localities, which are generally well preserved, among them we mention: Brâncoveni Monastery - century. XVI; Clocociov Monastery - the beginning of the century. XVI; Striharet Monastery; Călui Monastery (Oboga commune, 15 km from the city of Balș); The Royal Church of Caracal, etc. [11, 23, 37].

The development of cultural tourism in the area can be favored by the existence of numerous buildings with a major contribution to the cultural background of the entire region, such as: the Scornicești Museum (1979) dedicated to the leader of Romania from 1965 to 1989 (Nicolae Ceaușescu); Olt - Slatina County Museum (1952), with sections of history and ethnography, with over 25,000 pieces specific to the culture and civilization of Olt; The History Museum - Caracal, famous for the brothel where the famous outlaw Iancu Jianu lived; Museum of History and Ethnography - Corabia; The Museum of History and Natural

Sciences - Orlea (5 km from Corabia); Caracal National Theater [11, 23, 28, 36, 31].

A unique tourist attraction is the Secret Fountain, the wonder preserved for 14 centuries in the land of the fortress, a unique monument in Romano-Byzantine architecture. It is spectacular due to its construction system and its archaeological value. The underground construction has two components: the well itself, located at a depth of about 18 meters from the level of the fortress plateau and the 26-meter-long access corridor, which descends from the fortress premises to the spring. Legend has it that the water from the undried spring is attributed with the virtue of intensifying the love of couples and uniting those who are separated.

#### **Study on the tourist activity in the Corabia area**

The development and promotion of tourism presupposes the existence of a tourist potential which, through its attractiveness, aims to incite and ensure the integration of an area, a region with a tourist vocation in the domestic and international tourist circuits and which allows the access of tourists through the appropriate facilities. The first priority in carrying out this study was a new and innovative approach to the idea of capitalizing on the tourism potential in the area, namely the implementation of an integrated vision of tourism development at the level of the area, which expresses the added value that can also result from the promotion of the connections that can create between different points of attraction, located throughout the territory.

Table 1. Number of tourist reception structures with accommodation functions in Corabia

Types of structures of tourist reception	Years					
	1990	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Hotels and Hostels	1	-	2	2	2	2
Camps	1	-	-	-	-	-
Boarding houses	-	1	1	1	1	1
Total	2	1	3	3	3	3

Source: processing according to data collected from the field and from NIS [24].

This integrated vision must include, in addition to the previously presented studies that focused

on the natural and anthropogenic potential, and the realistic presentation and analysis of the current situation in the tourism industry in the Corabia area. In order to better and more responsibly characterize the tourist activity as a whole, we took into account several indicators, based on which to make its correct interpretation.

From Table 1 it can be seen that in Corabia there is a smaller number of tourist reception structures, in the reference year 1990 there was only one hotel and a campsite, which provided accommodation for a small number of tourists. Boarding houses didn't exist until this year, because accommodation in guesthouses and locals was totally prohibited by law during the communist period, with the exception of a few localities from our country, which were included in the ONT (National Tourism Organization) program. Later, after the revolution, the private tourism activity began to develop more and more, boarding houses appeared, especially in the areas of Bran, Moeciu, Mărginimea Sibiului and other areas. In the south, and especially in the studied area, it is observed that their number is reduced, of only one during the entire research period. Also, from this table it can be seen that in addition to the hotel in operation, existing since the communist period, a hostel also appeared. An important thing to note is the fact that after 1990, the only existing campsite disappeared, a negative aspect, because with a minimum of equipment, these campsites could provide accommodation for tourists, who wanted to admire the beauty and wildness of the landscapes from the Danube route.

Table 2. The number of existing accommodation places in the tourist reception structures in Corabia

Types of structures of tourist reception	Years					
	1990	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Hotels/Hostels	35	-	35	47	47	48
Camps	83	-	-	-	-	-
Boarding houses	-	12	12	12	12	12
Total	128	12	47	59	59	60

Source: processing according to data collected from the field and from NIS [24].

The number of accommodation places was higher in the reference year 1990, due to the existence of 83 accommodation places at the

campsite, which was still operating in this year. In the period 2018-2022, their number varied from 47, to 60 in 2022, when there is also a revival of tourist activity after the period of decline during the pandemic.

A very important aspect to point out is the fact that although the number of places has decreased, the quality of accommodation services has improved, because the Sucidava hotel has been modernized and new accommodation structures have appeared that have been classified at least 3 stars/daisies (Table 2).

Table 3. Number of tourists arriving in tourist reception structures in Corabia

Types of structures of tourist reception	Years					
	1990	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Hotels and Hostels	75	-	950	601	1,243	1,411
Boarding houses	-	497	602	353	386	418
Total	75	497	1,552	954	1,629	1,829

Source: processing according to data collected from the field and from NIS [24].

Table 3 shows that the number of tourists arriving in 1990 was very low, because this year was considered to be a year in which the economic and port activity in the locality was greatly reduced, due to the political instability of that period. In the period 2018-2022, it varied from 497, to 1,829 in 2022, this being also the year with the most tourists who visited this area, especially as part of transit or business tourism. The lowest number of tourists was recorded in 2020, when the direct effects of the pandemic on the tourism activity were also felt considerably in this area.

Table 4. Number of overnight stays in tourist reception structures in Corabia

Types of structures of tourist reception	Years					
	1990	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Hotels and Hostels	158	-	2,187	1,863	2,983	3,158
Boarding houses	-	1,144	1,454	1,127	1,005	1,187
Total	158	1,144	3,641	2,963	3,988	4,345

Source: processing according to data collected from the field and from NIS [24].

Regarding the number of overnight stays in Table 4, it can be seen that it varied directly

proportional to the number of tourists arriving, reaching minimum and maximum values in the same reference years as this one. The maximum value was reached in 2022, the year in which from the field study we found that in addition to the transit tourism practiced, in the vast majority of cases, tourists interested in a series of ancient historical vestiges existing in the proximity of the town of Corabia, as well as other cultural-historical and religious values, previously presented in the study on human tourism potential.

Table 5. Average length of stay in tourist reception structures in Corabia

Types of structures of tourist reception	Years					
	1990	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Hotels and Hostels	2.0	-	2.3	3.1	2.4	2.2
Boarding houses	-	2.3	2.4	3.2	2.6	2.8
Total	2.0	2.3	2.35	3.15	2.5	2.5

Source: processing according to data collected from the field and from NIS [24].

The data entered in Table 5 show us very clearly that transit and cross-border tourism is practiced in the Corabia area, because the maximum length of stay does not exceed 3.15, and is around the value of 2.3-2.5, during the entire study period, the value lower, being recorded in the reference year 1990.

In the guesthouses, the short average duration of only about 2.5 nights over the entire duration of the study, shows us that they practice transit tourism as well as recreation at weekends, when the free period is not more than 3 days. Pensions practicing a more flexible management and more adapted to the new conditions in tourism, are also oriented towards the practice of business and conference tourism and last but not least towards ecological and cultural tourism.

Regarding the number of tourists arriving per day in tourist reception structures in Corabia, it can be seen from the data entered in table 6, that it is lower in boarding houses, of a maximum of 1.65 in 2019, compared to the maximum reached by hotel-type structures, of

3.86 in the year 2022. A year in which it is found that group and itinerant tourist activity has greatly revived, after the pandemic period, when the maximum restrictions on the movement and safety of tourists in 2020, led to the registration of a minimum number of tourists to guesthouses, of 0.97 tourists/day, as well as in the hotel industry of only 1.65. The low number of tourists arriving per day shows us that although the area has a very rich natural and especially anthropogenic tourism potential, it is not sufficiently promoted, an aspect primarily due to the lack of an integrated program to promote and support tourist activity, in to co-opt both the local authorities and the private actors in the field of tourism in the area.

Table 6. Number of tourists arriving per day in tourist reception structures in Corabia

Types of structures of tourist reception	Years					
	1990	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Hotels and Hostels	0.2	-	2.6	1.65	3.4	3.86
Boarding houses	-	1.36	1.65	0.97	1.06	1.15
Total	0.2	1.36	4.25	2.62	4.46	5.01

Source: processing according to data collected from the field and from NIS [24].

From the analysis of the data entered in Table 7, it can be observed that in the years of study the capacity of accommodation in operation is much higher in the reception structures of the hotel type, of a maximum of 15,792 place-days, in the year 2022, compared to only 3,576, in the same year, at boarding houses.

Although the accommodation capacity in operation is still reduced at the level of the small town of Corabia, a lack of its use is noted, at least at a level comparable to the values at the national level.

The utilization index of accommodation capacities at the locality level is not higher than 18%, but still it is more than 2% higher than the net utilization index of accommodation places for May 2023, which was 12.6% on total tourist accommodation structures." sent to the Regional Directorate of Statistics Olt.



Table 7. Accommodation capacity in operation (places-days) of the on types of tourist reception structures in Corabia, in the period 2018-2022

Year	Accommodation capacity in operation(places-days) of the hotels and hostels		Accommodation capacity in operation (places-days) of the boarding house		Total accommodation capacity in operation (places-days) in Corabia
	Number of days operation (Nzf)	Accommodation Capacity in function C.C.F.L.	Number of days operation (Nzf)	Accommodation capacity in function C.C.F.L.	
1990	302	10,570	-	-	10,570
2018	324	-	269	3,228	3,228
2019	337	11,795	287	3,444	15,239
2020	282	13,254	221	2,652	15,906
2021	305	14,335	258	3,096	17,431
2022	329	15,792	298	3,576	19,368

Source: processing according to data collected from the field and from NIS [24].

The accommodation capacity in operation at the level of the Corabia locality should increase considerably with the appearance of new investments in the field, due to the implementation and development of attractive forms of tourism specific to the localities located on the banks of the Danube. In addition to the appearance of new accommodation structures, the existing ones must be modernized and brought to a higher quality standard, leading to an increase in the effective number of their operation.

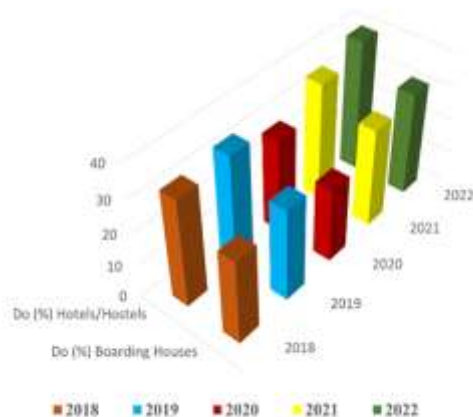


Fig. 1. Degree of occupancy (Do) of the structures of tourist reception from Corabia  
 Source: processing according to data collected from the field and from NIS [24].

The degree of occupancy (Do) of the tourist reception structures in Corabia is at a low level, which is, as can be seen from figure 1, a maximum of 39.9%, in the year 2022, in the hotel-type structures and 31.3%, in the structures type of tourist guesthouses. Its lowest value was recorded in 2020, both in hotels and in guesthouses, this being also

correlated with the reduced number of days of operation, in the same year. Its reduced value is also due to the reduced average length of stay, recorded in the tourist reception structures in the area. It could increase considerably by achieving cross-border cooperation between the countries along the Danube, through which they have a common strategy for the development and promotion of tourism, and especially transit and cruise tourism, on the Danube.

As it is well known, an important asset in attracting tourists to an area is quality gastronomy, which according to the criteria for identifying the quality of a future tourist destination is in eighth place, within the level II criteria.

For this, we present in Table 8 two of the most important tourist structures classified for public catering, from Corabia. These structures, as can be seen from the table, are classified at 3 stars, according to the obtained classification certificate.

Their classification at this quality level attests to the fact that the services provided are at an appropriate quality level, even if they are not at the highest level, and tourists are insured in terms of the services offered and the safety and traceability of the food and specialties served. These two classic restaurants offer Romanian and foreign tourists the opportunity to experience traditional Romanian specialties: local fish soup, belly soup, "sarmale" or "mititei". They are prepared according to our own recipes that give them a special taste "like at home".

Table 8. Tourist reception structures with classified public catering functions in Corabia

Type of structure	Name	Category	No. of places	Economic operator	Number in the Trade Register	No. Certificate	Certificate issue date
Classic restaurant	La Belgianu	3 stars	150	SC Corabia Expres SRL	J28/78/1998	10445A	15 June 2011
Classic restaurant	Sucidava	3 stars	118	SC Hotel Sucidava SRL	J28/759/2003	16585	15-04-2019

Source: Tourism authorization, <http://turism.gov.ro/web/autorizare-turism/> [35].

Also, these structures are considered to be one of the few places where a variety of bread, cakes and pastries are prepared in their own kitchen, a detail that guests appreciate and enjoy a lot. At the same time, the culinary experience is completed by a dessert prepared by our own chefs, which includes a portion of burnt sugar cream or a vanilla ice cream with forest fruits, but also a traditional one of "papanasi" with cream.

## CONCLUSIONS

From the study it was concluded that the natural tourist potential is less attractive for tourists, because it is not sprinkled with exceptional mountain landscapes, the area can be revitalized from this point of view by exploiting to the maximum the huge advantages, given the fact that the town is located on the banks of the most important river in our country and even in Europe.

In order to exploit this potential to the maximum, the locality must implement a series of tourism programs in collaboration with the member states of the Danube Region, which should focus primarily on cruise and transit tourism, but also on other forms of tourism specific to the localities located on the Danube route, which until now has hardly been exploited at all. In order to improve the activity of the tourism industry in the Corabia area, the very rich tourist potential, specialized in hunting and fishing, must be exploited to the maximum because, in Olt County, there are 13 hunting funds, the area in which they live: red deer, fallow deer, roe deer, wild boar, foxes, hares, pheasant, partridges, wild and marsh game. The very rich and diversified fish stock offers wide possibilities for practicing sport fishing: on the Danube, carp, bream, pike, pike, grayling, Danube mackerel predominate, and the lakes and the Olt route are populated with

valuable species for fishing such as: catfish, carp, bream, pike, caracuda, redfish, perch.

Unlike the natural tourism potential, the anthropogenic tourism potential in the area is rich and very valuable, having a series of valuable tourist objectives, represented by historical monuments, museums and ancient fortresses. One of the most important tourist attractions is the Sucidava citadel, where the Secret Fountain is located, a wonder preserved for 14 centuries, a unique monument of Roman-Byzantine architecture. It is spectacular because of the building system and the archaeological value, but also because of the unique story regarding the properties of the water from the source of this well.

From the study of tourist activity based on rigorously calculated, analyzed and interpreted data, it was concluded that it is one less adapted to the new conditions and trends in modern tourism, because it was not sufficiently able to adapt quickly and constantly to the continuous demand's transformation and modernization of tourism from us in the country and especially from the international one. The lower values of the main indices on the basis of which the quality of the tourist activity in the Corabia area is characterized highlighted the fact that in the area the existing tourist reception structures are not able to use the existing tourist capacities to the maximum, an aspect largely due to the specific conditions in the pandemic period, but also the management practiced and the lack of support from the local authorities for the entire tourist activity.

In the future, the tourist activity in the Corabia area must focus on attracting tourists through new original and personalized offers that include event tourism based on cultural-artistic events with national and even international participation, traditional local festivals, traditions and customs, holidays popular and other local events taking place in the area.

Also, the offer can be an authentic one by making the most of the original legend of Secret Fountains, from the Sucidava fortress and the navigable channel of the Danube, which connects with some of the largest cities and capitals of Europe, for the realization of specialized tourism on cruises and culturalization, ships can dock in the tourist port of Corabia, and accommodation can also be done at tourist reception structures in the area.

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