

ACCOMMODATION PREFERENCES OF FOREIGN TOURISTS IN ROMANIA

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Abstract

The present work is a study on indicators that define tourism in Romania. Analysis focused on indicators of the number of tourists and tourist arrivals in accommodation establishments in Romania, in total and in agro-touristic boarding houses on four macro-administrative units and by category of comfort in our country. The methodology used to track the preferences of foreign tourists in accommodation establishments in Romania was to analyse the dynamics of the mentioned indicators, the seasonality of arrivals and forecasting the arrivals of foreign tourists. The data used are from the Statistical Yearbook of Romania, covering the period 2010-2013; some of them are quarterly data. The results have indicated a preference of the arrivals especially in Q3 of each year, in macro-regions M3 and M1, for foreigners and in the macro-regions M1 and M2 for the Romanian tourists. Another results designed the preferences of tourists related to the degree of comfort, which has decreased in time with the increasing levels of comfort; over time, the tourist's number increases on the total from year to year; in particular, in the agro hostels this number is growing slowly.

Key words: *overnights stays, preference, Romania, tourism*

INTRODUCTION

Because various forms of relief existing in our country, tourism in Romania is a phenomenon that takes place throughout the entire year. Romania has accommodation and catering capabilities for the development of tourism activities in the mountains, in the hills and in the coastal area. But the Romanian tourist profile is some different. According to statistics from Eurostat (<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=tabl>), in 2012 the largest number of trips by purpose for the Romanian tourists is in personal interest and visits to friends or relatives (60 %). The fewer trips made by the Romanian tourists are those in professional and business interests (about 2.5 %). However, studying the evolution of tourism in a country with tradition, means bringing new elements important in making decisions about adapting accommodation capacity in different areas or on anticipation of tourists to certain stringent requirements. At the same time, be introduced to the preferences of tourists to

certain areas involves encouraging operators to those places or creating new services or tourist attractions where they are lacking. In our case, the analysis of preferences for accommodation of foreign tourists from accommodation units, may means, if this phenomenon shows stability over a long period of time, adapting tourism supply to maintain a flow of tourists in established areas and, possibly, of new tour offers a new segment of tourists. From another point of view, although the economic aspect is important and contributes to the development of tourist areas, developing intercultural exchange through tourism is neglected because it is an essential vector in the transmission of perception on the areas visited. And as Pipike J. (2012) said, "The concept of tourism emerged as people travelled to new locations to partake activities and experiences". Still, we don't have forget, as Hussein R and Ennew C. and Kortam W. (2012) noted that "innovation adoption has been conceptualized in different ways and studied from several perspectives".

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The methodology used in the present study was to analyse the dynamics of the arrivals of tourists in Romania's macroeconomic areas and the number of accommodation days in Romania. The touristic establishments have been analysed, according to statistics, on total level and in agro-touristic boarding houses. Then we studied for Romanian tourists and foreign tourists, by additive method, some elements related to the seasonality of the tourism in Romania. Projection of future data for the years 2014 and 2015, has been showed a decreasing trend of foreign tourists in Romania in the category of 5-star comfort, the other indicators analysed have had a positive projection. Some of the data and reported results were achieved and depending on the comfort level of tourist accommodation. According to statistics published by the National Institute of Statistics, the 4 macro-regions of Romania are: Macro-region 1, with North-western and Central Region, Macro-region 2, with the North-east and South-east regions, Macro-region 3, with South Muntenia Region and Bucharest-Ilfov and Macro-region 4, with the South West region and Western region.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

First, we present in the following the number of trips by purpose in EU countries in 2012. From here we see countries where tourists have had a strong professional orientation or personal trips.

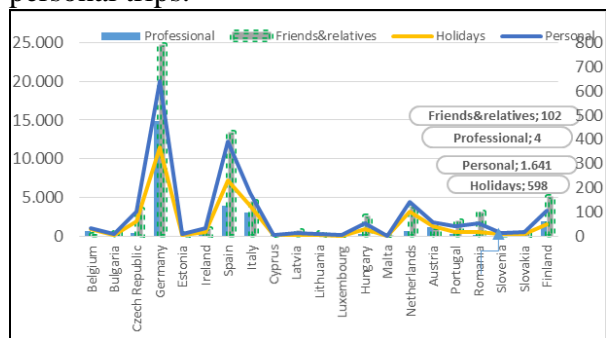


Fig. 1. Number of trips by purpose, 2012, '10000units
 *Denmark, Greece, France, Poland, Sweden, United Kingdom- countries with non-available data on Eurostat database

We have continued to analyze the dynamics of the data on the arrivals for the Romanian and foreign tourists in the agro-touristic boarding houses, monthly data during 4 years (2010-2013).

The chart below, shows the preferences of Romanian tourists for agro touristic pensions which occurred mainly in summer; from June to August are the months in which Romanian tourists arrived heavily in the tourist areas. We note also the increasing trend of this indicator for the period.

Regarding foreign tourists arrivals, these have made occurred especially in winter, where it can be assumed that they often come in tourist accommodation in mountain areas.

It has to be noted for this indicator less fluctuation than the similar growth rate for Romanian tourists.

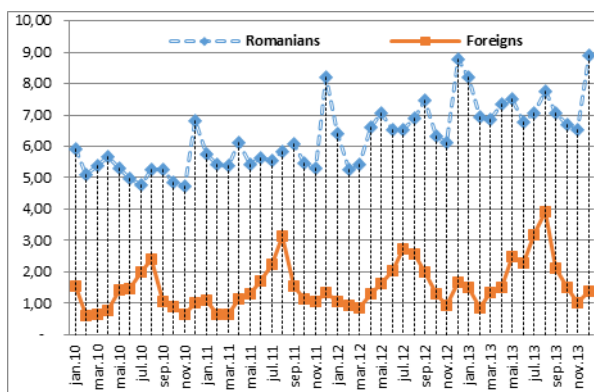


Fig. 2. Arrivals in the agro-touristic boarding houses, % of the total arrivals

If we remain in the analysis of the number of arrivals in agro-hostels, monthly data represented on the Romanian four macro-regions, we have the situation shown in the figure below.

Thus, we see that the number of arrivals is in all macro-regions marked by an increase in the winter months, where we assume that these arrivals were from the mountain areas.

Because we have found it interesting to analyze the preferences of foreign tourists in Romania, it is presented in the chart that follows the number of tourist arrivals, according to macro-regions and the type of tourists (foreign and Romanian).

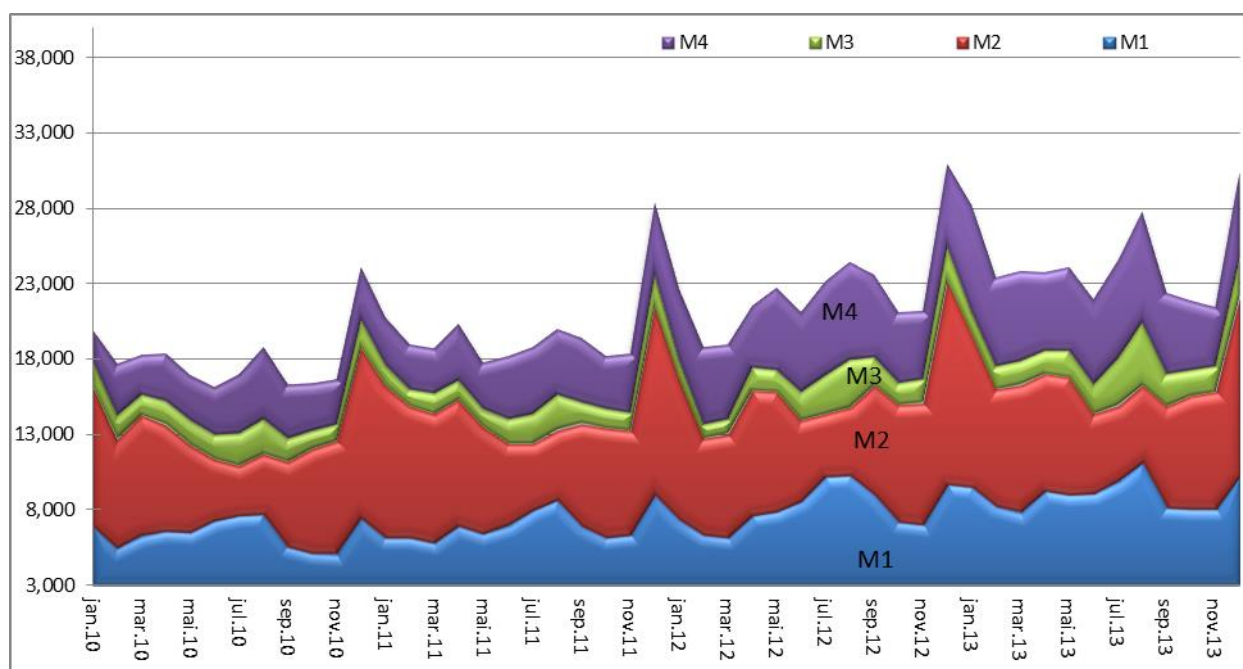


Fig. 3. Arrivals in the agro-touristic boarding houses, macro-regional level, 2010-2013

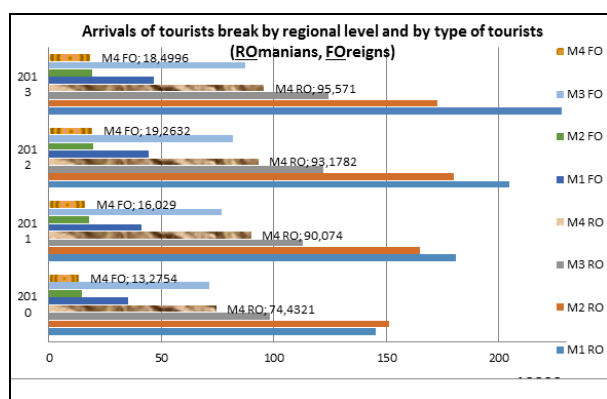


Fig. 4. Arrivals of tourists break by regional level and by type of tourists

From the previous presentation, which certainly can be seen is that in terms of foreign tourists, during the four years analyzed and according to the four macro-regions, the tourists have overall preferred coming in Romania in macro-region 2 and 4, the number of arrivals in macro-regions 1 to 3, is relatively equal. Notable differences will emerge from the analysis overnight stays in the establishments of touristic reception, by category of comfort. This information is presented in the table below, break by Total and by agro-touristic boarding houses categories.

Table 1. Overnight stays in the establishments of touristic reception, by category of comfort (number)

Establishments of touristic reception	Category of comfort	2010	2011	2012	2013
Total	5 stars	639.245	874.924	932.362	957.593
	4 stars	2.370.528	2.908.362	3.500.755	3.778.047
	3 stars	4.223.286	5.704.871	6.614.492	7.443.889
Agro-touristic boarding houses	5 flowers	134.510	185.620	221.290	206.520
	4 flowers	722.250	1.179.800	1.418.580	1.701.880
	3 flowers	2.356.800	3.213.530	4.520.880	5.046.060

Source: www.insse.ro

*flower is the ranking category for the agro-touristic boarding houses, 5 flowers – the highest level, 1 flowers- the lowest level

The table above resume the number of overnight stays on whole, breaking by the category of comfort. So, we can see that at total level the large majority of tourists stayed in the establishments of touristic reception of 3 stars comfort; this number increased constantly during the analyzed period. The equivalent of some 50% of this volume stayed in the 4 stars touristic establishments and 15% in the 5 stars touristic establishments. Concern the agro-touristic boarding houses, we also founded an increased number of the overnight stays for the 4 last years, the great majority of the tourists has been staying in the 3 flowers category of comfort. Still, the number of

tourists in the 5 flowers did not increased as rapidly as the 3 flowers overnight stays.

Table 2: Overnight stays in the establishments of touristic reception, by category of comfort and type of tourists (number)

Establishments of touristic reception	Category of comfort	2010	2011	2012	2013
Total	5 stars	639.245	874.924	932.362	957.593
	<i>of which Foreigns (%)</i>	<i>68,96</i>	<i>62,07</i>	<i>60,35</i>	<i>64,74</i>
	4 stars	2.370.528	2.908.362	3.500.755	3.778.047
	<i>of which Foreigns (%)</i>	<i>37,97</i>	<i>35,86</i>	<i>33,60</i>	<i>32,87</i>
	3 stars	4.223.286	5.704.871	6.614.492	7.443.889
	<i>of which Foreigns (%)</i>	<i>22,02</i>	<i>18,79</i>	<i>17,29</i>	<i>15,87</i>
Agro-touristic boarding houses	5 flowers	13.451	18.562	22.129	20.652
	<i>of which Foreigns (%)</i>	<i>30,59</i>	<i>20,22</i>	<i>15,96</i>	<i>12,22</i>
	4 flowers	72.225	117.980	141.858	170.188
	<i>of which Foreigns (%)</i>	<i>10,11</i>	<i>9,69</i>	<i>12,38</i>	<i>10,51</i>
	3 flowers	235.680	321.353	452.088	504.606
	<i>of which Foreigns (%)</i>	<i>6,57</i>	<i>6,56</i>	<i>6,35</i>	<i>7,90</i>

Source: www.insse.ro, own calculations

Breaking down by type of tourists, the previous database has been presented in the table above. So we have founded more than 60% of foreign tourists, from the total number of tourists, in the 5 stars tourist establishments and around 15% - 22% in the 3 stars. As for the agro-touristic boarding houses, the data has been also shown that 12% - 30% of the total tourists are foreign staying in the 5 flowers category of comfort; still, this share has been decreased constantly. We so mark

for the two other categories (4 and 3 flowers) a constant share of foreign tourists. The last part on this paper concern the seasonality analysis. We have taken into consideration data on the arrivals in the agro-touristic boarding houses, breaking by type of tourist (Romanians and foreign) at the Total level, and the second series data on the overnights stays in the 3, 4, 5 stars category of comfort. The results are presented in the table below.

Table 3. Index of seasonality, the additive model

		Arrivals in the agro-touristic boarding houses		Overnight stays 3 stars	Overnight stays 4 stars	Overnight stays 5 stars	
		Romanians	Foreign				
1	Gross seasonal deviations	Q I	(29.941)	(4.167)	(3.547)	(1.521)	(276)
		Q II	(2.451)	724	702	358	(88)
		Q III	39.388	5.355	3.703	1.706	516
		Q IV	(11.217)	(2.496)	(2.021)	(667)	(43)
2	Average of Gross seasonal deviations	(1.055)	(146)	(291)	(31)	27	
3	Corrected seasonal deviations	Q I	(28.886)	(4.021)	(3.256)	(1.490)	(303)
		Q II	(1.396)	870	993	389	(116)
		Q III	40.443	5.501	3.994	1.737	489
		Q IV	(10.161)	(2.350)	(1.730)	(636)	(70)

Source: own calculations

From the data analysis, we can say that for quarters 1, 2 and 4 of each year, the seasonal factor led the Romanian tourists arrivals in agro-touristic boarding houses, to a decrease from the trend line. The most pronounced decreased was for Q1, with 28886 units. For the category of foreign tourists arrivals in agro-touristic hostels, during the Q1 and Q4, the seasonal factor caused also a decrease from the trend line. Increases were recorded in the other two quarters, especially in Q2.

In terms of total overnights stays, breaking down by category of comfort, there was a decreased from the trend line due to the seasonal factor, for quarters 1 and 4; but for the 4-star category of comfort, there were decreases in Q2.

The increase from the trend line, imposed by the seasonal factor was, as we have already shown, in the 3rd quarter. The largest increase was in the 3 stars accommodation units. Quarterly forecasts for the next two years by the number of overnights stays in the 5 stars is decreasing, except for the 3rd quarter, which is positive, but still fits on a downward trend (Fig. 5).

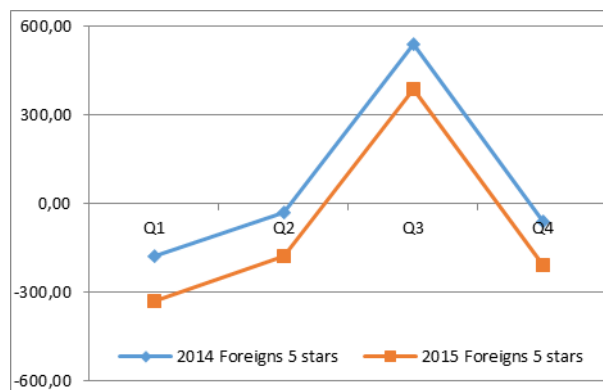


Fig. 5. Forecasting 2014, 2015 overnights stays of the foreign tourists in Romania; Q1-Q4 are the four quarters

CONCLUSIONS

Ideas with which we conclude the present study are the following. In terms of the number of stays in accommodation according to the category of comfort, between foreign and Romanian, the total and rural locations, we saw that on Total, the percentage of

foreign tourists is much higher compared to that of Romanians; the percentage increases with the category of comfort, but decreasing during the four years analyzed (2010-2013). Regarding agro-touristic boarding houses, comply with the same preference increasing, with increasing category of comfort and represented the majority of foreigners; the differences between the weights of the three categories of comfort (3 to 5 flowers) are not so great. In the comfort category 3 flowers, during the four years, the share is almost constant (6-7%) and 9-12 % for 4 flowers category of comfort. Category 5 flowers, where the share of foreigners is twice higher than in the two other set forth together, yet only 30 % between categories of tourists, witnessed a sharp drop of more than 50% in the four years analyzed.

Regarding the arrivals in agro-touristic boarding houses, foreign and Romanian tourists, analyzed by categories of comfort, the seasonal deviations obtained were positives during Q3, for all mentioned indicators; the same results were founded for Q2, except for the Romanian arrivals and at total level for foreign tourists staying in 5 stars category of comfort.

The largest deviations seasonal pullback were obtained for the 1st quarter period. For 2014 and 2015, forecasting arrivals are increasing in rural locations and at Total level, for the 3 analyzed categories of comfort, there were recorded increases in quarters 1, 2 and 4, except for the category of comfort 5-star; in Q3 forecasts remain positive but decreasing.

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