

Tourism Destination Management – New Approaches in Romania

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Abstract

Tourism is an important industry for a long time, even vital in some countries, while being an important employer. Romania has an important tourism potential and a background which can be an important tourist destination. The paper proposes to analyse development strategies for three forms of tourism -spa, mountain, coastal- in European context. The hypothesis is that the Romanian tourism, for all forms analysed, are in a process of readjustment to the current requirements of international tourist market, in a period of transition and transformations.

Keywords: coastal tourism, development strategies, mountain tourism, resort management, spa tourism

JEL Code: L83, O20,Q56

Introduction

The tourism industry has evolved very much in the last period because of the increased leisure and income of the people. They spend more money for holidays and mountain areas offer possibility for four season activities.

This phenomenon was study by the researchers and practitioners and they conclude for a community development is necessary that residents to involve in tourism activity for satisfaction of their needs, because tourism industry has a multiplier effect on the local economy (Calaretu, B., 2011).

For tourism destination development, this is the typical value chain: the combination of services that contribute to the delivery of the tourism product/ experience (tour

organization, accommodation, catering, entertainment, transport), in which local organizations (formal and informal). Value chain analysis is a tool that permits a deeper look into economic flows and distribution within the tourism destination. Through this understanding, interventions can be planned in order to improve pro-poor benefits and sustainable development through the strength of destination governance and the implementation of economic mechanisms (Tigu, G., Calaretu, B., Ditu-Furtuna, C., 2012).

Because of the importance of tourism in the economy, sustainable development has become a key concept regarding the planning and development of tourist resorts. Because many aspects - economic, environmental, community, integration into the national development strategy of tourism industry etc. - to be taken into account when implementing a project, it is necessary to study the effects of long-term of the respective project.

A successful resort development project encompasses three crucial factors: (1) it ensures that the quality and level of each amenity and any combinations thereof are fully compliant with the present market needs; (2) the roles of the amenities are prioritized over the life cycle of the development; (3) the amenity costs and benefits are balanced by arranging the appropriate development level and schedules (Phillips, P. L., 1995).

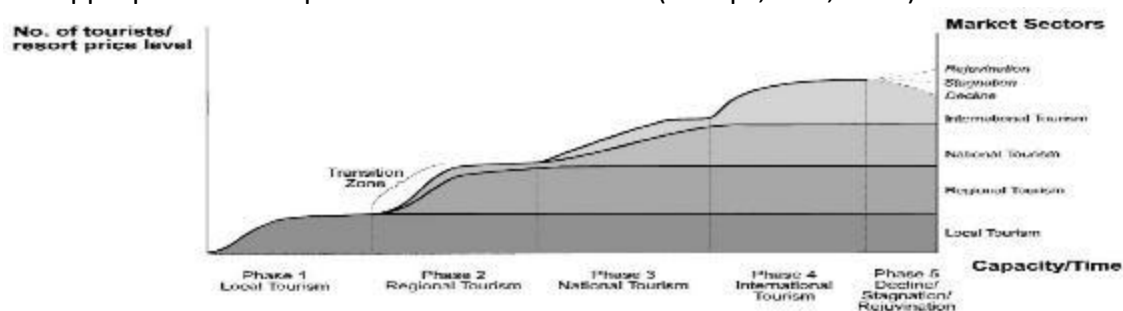


Fig. no. 1 The resort development spectrum

Source: Prideaux, B. - The resort development spectrum - a new approach to modeling resort development, *Tourism Management* 21, 2000, p. 225-240

As we can see from the above model, entering a new phase of development involves:

- developing endowments and tourist resort facilities;
- greater promotion to attract a new segment of tourists who will pay more for tourism products than the previous category;
- infrastructure development to ensure a constant tourist flow;
- development of services connected to tourism industry;
- etc.

Resort development depends on the capacity support area, the distance from the emitting basins but especially tourist patrimony in the area.

1. Destination management in European resorts

Tourism is a new EU policy area introduced by the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) Art. 195. The European Commission actively supports policy development for the tourism sector and has over the years highlighted the need for sustainable and competitive tourism at European level through a number of policy documents, in particular the 2007 and 2010 Communications "Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European Tourism" and "Europe, the world's Nr. 1 tourist destination - a new

political framework for tourism in Europe” (Challenges and Opportunities for Maritime and Coastal Tourism in the EU, framework, EUROPEAN COMMISSION)

The motivations for resort development have typically brought together a coalition of interested parties. Local authorities often benefit through raising the taxable base of the authority, and further economic development may contribute to the alleviation of a range of social and economic problems. Existing business owners may see benefits from attracting a greater number of people to their area. Representatives of labor may see benefits for increasing the range of job opportunities. An instigator of many resort developments has been property developers, who see economic gain resulting from turning undeveloped agricultural land into commercial real estate. (Adrian, P., Virginie M., 2010).

Main policy of the authorities for planning and development of mountain resorts is the sustainability that involves the social responsibility of tourists and local community. First objective of tourism operators is to keep a balance between physical capacity of the site to accommodate skiers and the economic needs of firms to make a profit (Tigu. G., Calaretu, B., 2011).

All this strategy describe below have to include a ecological view, for example The Three Valleys, located in France, is the world’s largest ski resort that operates 1,920 snow cannons, 183 ski lifts, and 67 trail groomers that use only hydro-electric power for their electricity requirements. This fully renewable energy is provided by the Gaz Electricite’ Company of Grenoble, which uses power generated by small hydropower centrals in the French Alps. The Three Valleys also uses biodegradable diesel in all of its company vehicles.

The European Commission have been presented a brochure ‘Structural policies and European territory: The mountains’ that describe some “Best practice” for development of mountain areas. This practices include a integrated strategy because they address all fields from economic projects (farm diversification, restructuring industry, tourism) to social ones (poverty eradication), and also address infrastructure (E - programs), environment (biodiversity conservation, parks), training and expertise (for unemployed people, farmers, local actors, visitors) institutional arrangements (mountain associations, forum), co-operation (Interregional conventions). Also they involve all kind of actors – public, associative, firms and entrepreneurs, inhabitants (European Commission Final Report, 2004).

The literature shows that in mountain areas, especially in tourist resorts for winter sports, the lack of integrated development plan leads to the clear difference between locals and opinions of those who only holiday in these tourist destinations (Halseth, G., 2004).

There is also a suggestion that a large number of unused holiday homes affects the appearance and perceived “cosiness” of a resort. It has been noted that a scattered settlement structure can make it less attractive and the often closed-up windows produce so called “ghost neighbourhoods” (Bieger, T., Beritelli, P., Weinert, R., 2007).

Today spa visits, health tourism, wellness, beauty and fitness programs, regenerative, reconditioning and relaxation stays, are all dynamically growing products and tourist product packages which, combined with all-inclusive accommodation, catering, entertainment, sporting and other activities, are responding to the most challenging demands of individual tourists, as well as tourist offices and agencies.

Spa tourism in Europe has recently been going through a renaissance, and future dynamic growth is to be expected as a result of the unification of Europe – with the expansion of the member states of the Union. This not only means overall growth in the standard of living and the health awareness of the citizens of Central and Eastern Europe; it also involves preparing partnership agreements, assuming mutual co-operation within Europe in the fields

of health and social welfare: i.e. potential extension of healthcare insurance to cover events abroad.

Coastal tourism is based on a unique resource combination at the border of land and sea environments: sun, water, beaches, outstanding scenic views, rich biological diversity (birds, whales, corals etc.), sea food and good transportation infrastructure. Based on these resources, various profitable services have been developed in many coastal destinations such as well maintain beaches, diving, boat-trips, bird watching tours, restaurants or medical facilities (Tigu, G., Tuclea C., 2007).

Coastal tourism in Europe is nowadays facing increased competition and has a pressing need for major investment, modernization of infrastructure and preservation of the natural assets of sea, beaches, wetlands and so on.

Tourism policy, together with initiatives taken in the context of the Integrated Maritime Policy, such as increasing Marine Knowledge, promoting Maritime Spatial Planning and Integrated Coastal Zone Management as well as promoting maritime heritage, will provide the basis to support the sustainability and competitiveness of the maritime and coastal tourism sector (European Commission Report, 2004).

So, there are four priority areas for the development of a European Maritime and Coastal Tourism Strategy - competitiveness, responsible and high-quality tourism, Europe- a bouquet of high quality destinations, maximize financial support.

In „Towards quality coastal Tourism” there are 15 case studies of European coastal destinations. Three of them, are resume presenting in table no 1.

Table no. 1 Approaches of coastal resorts management in Europe

Resort	Calvia	Cap d’Agde	Tuscan Coast
Country	Spain	France	Italy
The plan	-Triggered by a new policy initiative to deal with a decline in the quality of the product and of the environment -Tight centralised control of tourism management by the local authorities, through a public enterprise	-Triggered by the need to improve what is on offer and bring it into line with what costumers now require -Strong management based on the tourism office	-Triggered by the issue of seasonal peaks and need to rehabilitate the industry -Extensive cooperation between the public and private sectors, coordinated by a tourism promotion agency
Results	-Effects of the “Hotel and tourist apartment quality system’ programme” -Detailed budgeting	-Strong integration as a results of inter-municipal action -Integration of quality into urban environments	-Growth in alternative tourism and extension of the tourism season -Improvement in the quality of visitor care and information

Source: by authors based by European Commission case studies - Towards quality coastal Tourism, p. 69,75,87

Decision-makers and stakeholders should follow some action directions: diversify products and services offer, encourage public-private partnership, developing a multi-level

perspective on the tourism international market, including environmental protection measures.

The report on "Tourism Trends for Europe" - 2006, European Travel Commission (ETC), have identified a number of trends for growth -quality services, leisure facilities, post and pre-season period, increasing degree of comfort and luxury - and lowering sunny holiday demand, decreasing the importance of artificial supply.

2. Tourism in Romania

In Romania, tourism represents an economic sector with a valuable development potential, but to date, it is insufficiently well explored. For this reason, tourism could become an attractive source of interest for both investors and tourists (Romanian and foreign). But this idea is more theoretical than practical, because of the keen competition from neighbouring countries (Hungary, Bulgaria, and Croatia) and the complexity of issues concerning the competitiveness level of Romanian tourism.

Romania used to be a hot-spot for foreign tourists and it used to have a developed internal tourism, carried on legal based still from inter-war period. In the first half of sixties, the Romanian tourism accommodation capacity has experienced a significant development, especially at the Black Sea side. At the beginning of seventies, Romania was already a well-known, established tourist destination, especially among the principal European countries, generating significant tourism arrivals, especially from Germany, United Kingdom, the Scandinavian countries, France, Italy, Austria and Belgium (Tigu, G., Arsene, O., 2008).

In terms of economic impact of the tourism industry in Romania, WTTC has produced a report that analysed the main economic indicators tourism. These indicators are: direct contribution to GDP, the total contribution to GDP, employment in tourism, visitor exports and investment.

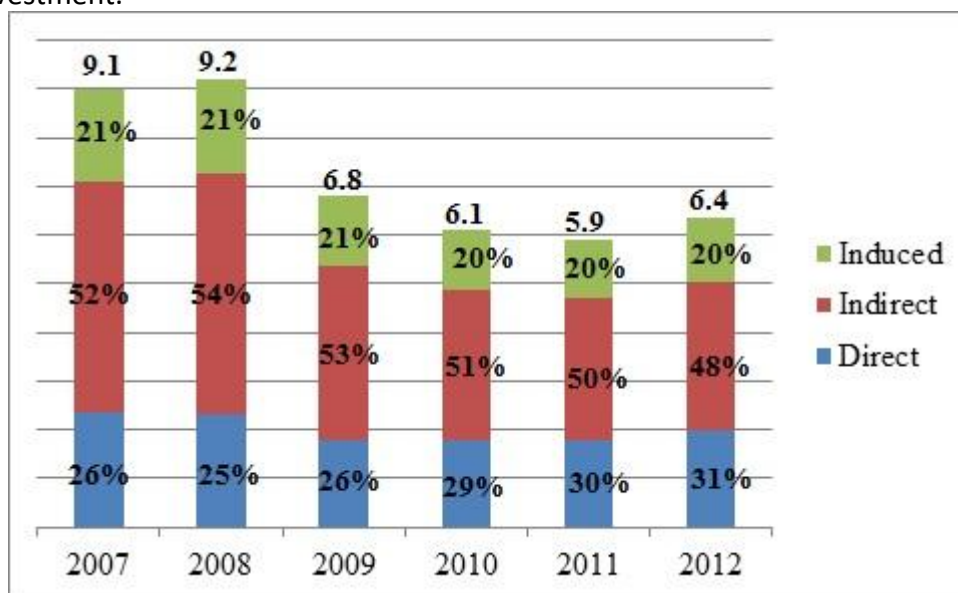


Fig. no. 2 Total contribution of tourism to Romanian national GDP (bn. EUR)
Source: PWC report

The direct contribution of travel & tourism to GDP is expected to be 9.6 billion RON in 2011 (1.9% of GDP). Primarily this reflects the economic activity generated by industries Such as hotels, travel agents, airlines and other passenger transportation services (excluding

commuter services). But also it includes, for example, the activities of the restaurant and leisure industries directly supported by tourists.

The total contribution of travel & tourism to GDP (including Wider effects from investment, the supply chain and induced income impacts) is expected to be 22.5 billion RON in 2011 (4.5% of GDP).

Travel & tourism is expected to generate 239,000 jobs directly in 2011 (2.8% of total employment). This includes employment by hotels, travel agents, airlines and other passenger transportation services (excluding commuter services). It also includes the activities of the restaurant and leisure industries directly supported by tourists.

The total contribution of travel & tourism to employment (including wider effects from investment, the supply chain and induced income impacts) is expected to be 446.000 jobs in 2011 (5,2% of total employment). By 2021, travel & tourism is forecast to support 535,000 jobs (6.0% of total employment), an increase of 1.8% per annum over the period.

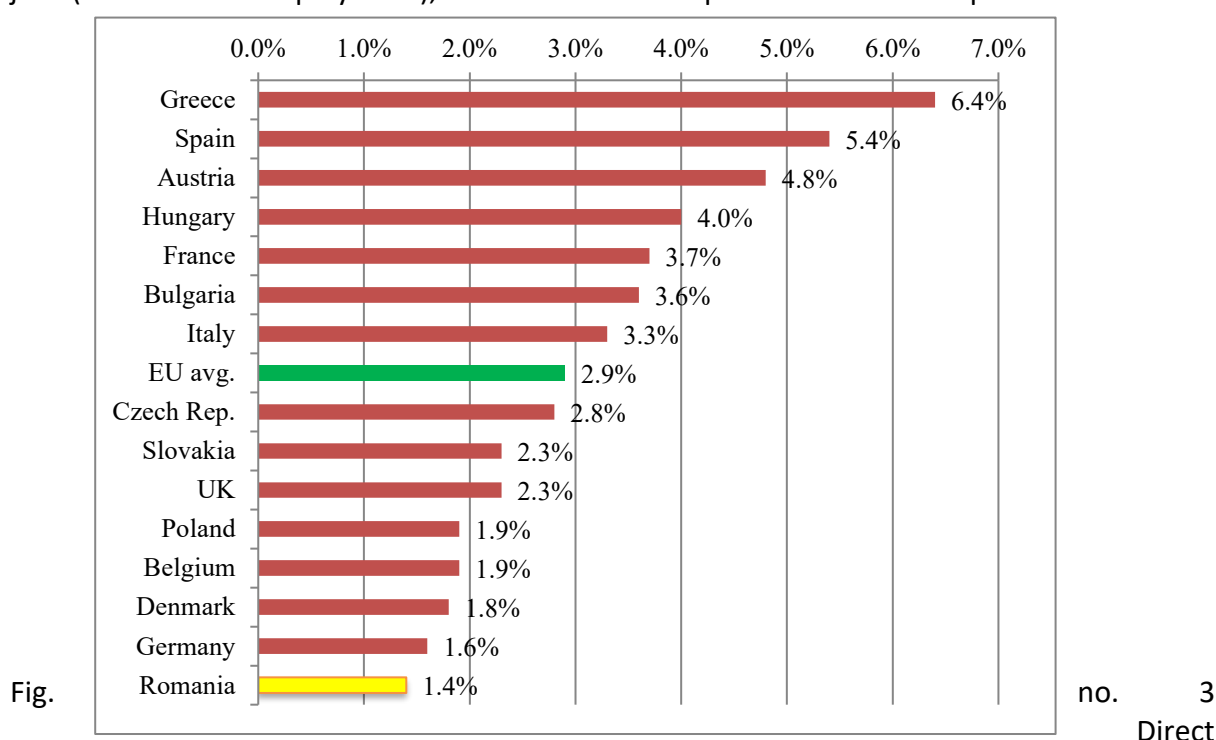


Fig. no. 3 Direct contribution of travel & tourism to national GDP in 2011 (%)

Source: Cretu, A. 2012, *Romanian hospitality industry in European context*, Hospitality Forum Conference, May 31, Bucharest

Visitor exports are a key component of the direct contribution of Travel & tourism. Romania is expected to attract 1,266,000 international tourist (overnight visitor) arrivals in 2011, generating 7.0 billion RON in visitor exports (foreign visitor spending, including spending on transportation).

Travel & tourism is expected to attract capital investment of 11.2 billion, rising by 7.7% per annum to 23.5 billion RON. This means that travel & tourism's share of total national investment will rise from 7.4% in 2011 to 7.7% in 2021.

Leisure travel spending (inbound and domestic) is expected to generate 94.2% of direct travel & tourism GDP in 2011 compared with 5.8% for business travel spending. Leisure travel spending is expected to total 17.3 billion RON in 2011, and business travel spending is expected to total 1.1 billion RON in 2011.

Domestic travel spending is expected to generate 59.1% of direct travel & tourism GDP in 2011 compared with 40.9% for visitor exports. (i.e. foreign visitor spending or international tourism receipts).

3. Research methodology

To analyse the performance of new strategies addressed in Romania, in terms of management of tourism destinations, we studied the actions mentioned in the master plan for Romanian tourism development.

After reviewing these actions, we moved on to analysis the effects they had on tourist traffic. The main tourist indicators analysed were: accommodation capacity, number of arrivals, number of overnight stays, average occupancy, average length of stay. Regarding the period analysed, we chose the time interval 2005 - 2011, because the Master Development Plan was prepared in 2007.

For the analysis of indicators mentioned above we used the recorded data of National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies from Romania. Another source is represented by the scientific articles that had the case study: Romanian tourism.

For qualitative analysis of tourism destinations management approaches we have analysed how the actions mentioned in the master plan were successfully implemented and whether their effect was the predicted one.

Absence of a report by stating the degree of implementation strategies limited our research. To compensate this we studied the local development plans of the most important resorts in Romania: Sinaia, Brasov, Constanta, Baile Felix etc.

To increase the relevance of this research we considered necessary to analyse specific types of tourism, such as: spa tourism, mountain tourism and coastal tourism.

4. Results and discussion

Due to the diversity of types of tourism we considered opportune possibility of studying separately spa tourism, mountain and coast. The results we obtained are shown below.

4.1. Spa tourism

The Romanian Spa Market is a growing market, with great potential, open and not well established. This is correct from the both supply and demand point of view. The Beauty, Wellness & Spa Market is crowded, but not yet a concurrent one. Most of the players from the market have not services, staff and products at high standards. An almost missing element of beauty services is the staff and centres etiquette (Colonisteanu, C.R. 2007).

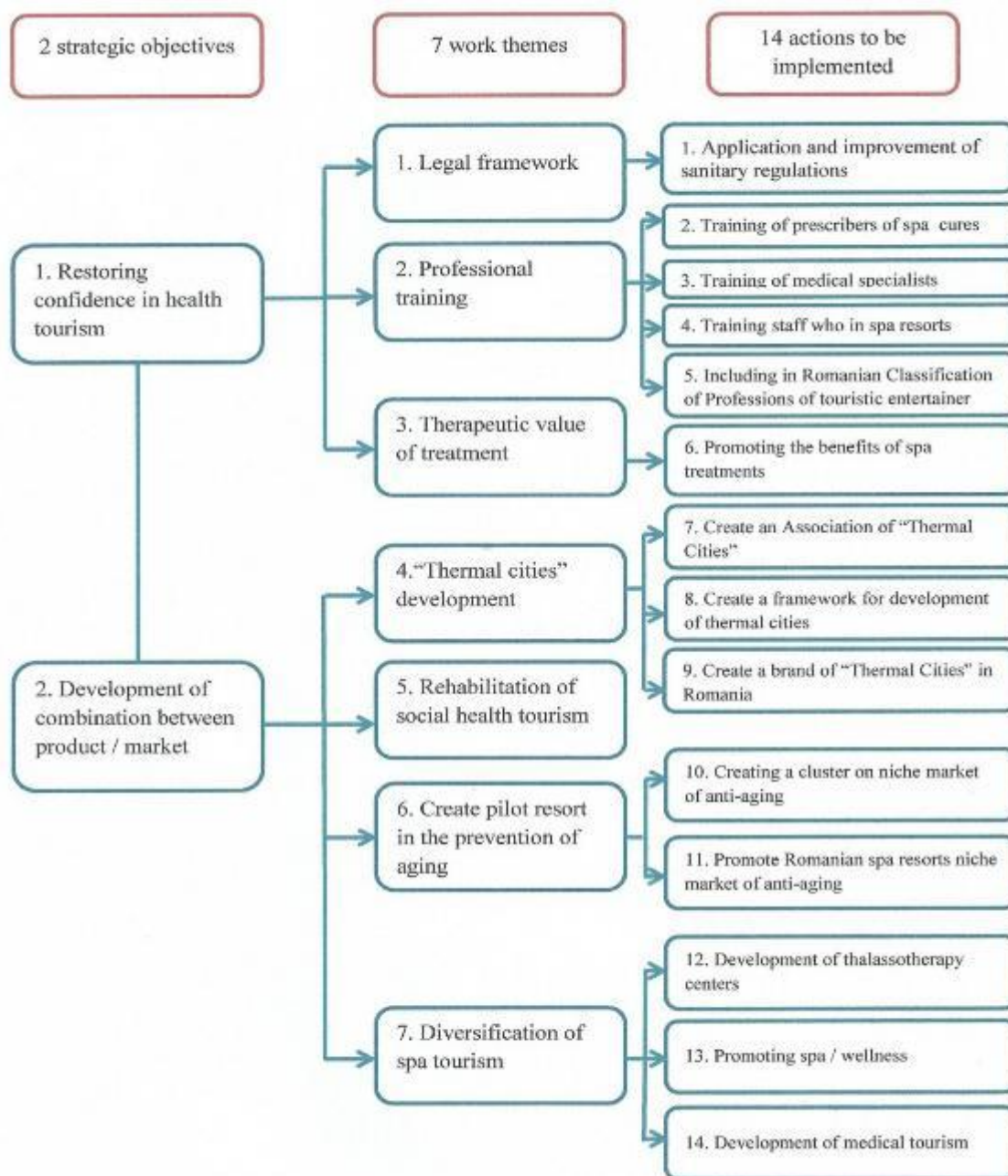


Fig. no. 4 Romanian national strategy for spa tourism

Source: Romanian master plan of spa tourism

Due tradition of health tourism in Romania, this type of travel is considered as an important element in the national strategy for tourism development in our country. So the benefits of a tourism master plan for 2010 – 2013, that has the following strategic objectives, present in figure no. 4.

Main directions of spa resorts management are:

- specializing in treatment for preventing aging resort - resorts proposed for this project were: Covasna, Mangalia and Snagov. In master plan were studied also the potential market and the conclusion was that in 2030 approximately 33% of the European population will be over 60.

- development of thermal towns - in the first phase of this strategy is proposed testing a pilot resort;
- repositioning of traditional spas, thus trying to shift social spa tourism (through courses subsidized National House of Pensions or National Health Insurance Fund.) to mass tourism, that patients pays a part the costs of treatment.
- modernization of existing centres through private investment;
- diversification cures by implementing new technologies and retraining of medical staff that work in a spa treatment centres;
- shorten medical treatment subsidized National House of Pensions and National Health Insurance Fund.;
- development of proximity spas, thus potentially try spa resort development around transmitters cities, the best example being the city Snagov due to relatively low distance from Bucharest.

To study the effects of the above measures have analysed the following indicators tourist accommodation capacity evolution, evolution of arrivals and overnight stays, average length of stay and average occupancy.

In the figure below (fig. no. 5) is shown the evolution of accommodation number in spa resorts. Can be notice a decrease of 14.6% in 2005 -2010, based on the implementation of actions mentioned above but also on the global economic situation. After this period will increase the number of seats as a result of reclassification of some tourism accommodation structures; this increase was only 5.14%, the number of accommodation places being in 2011 of 9,621,022.

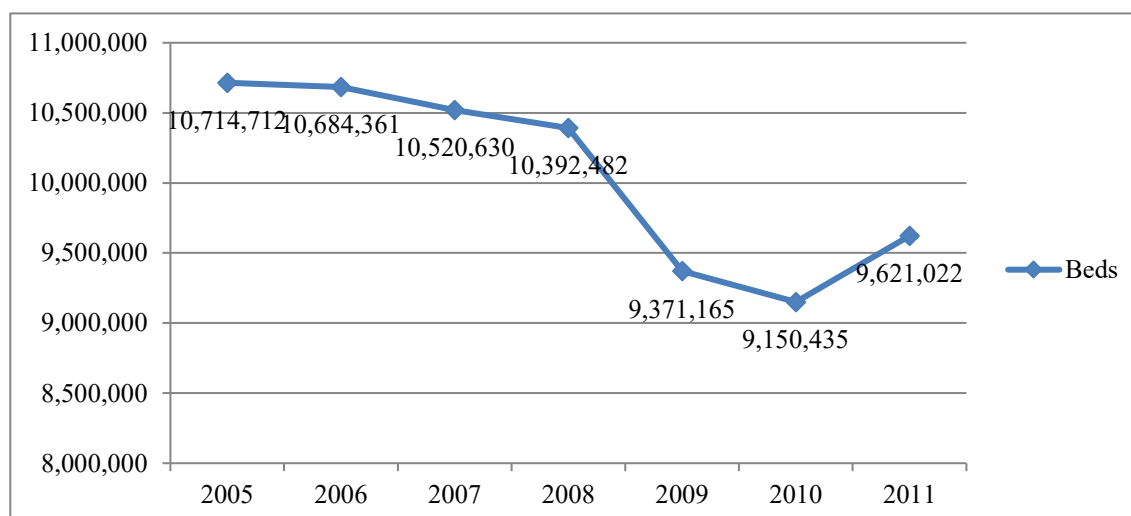


Fig. no. 5 Evolution of accommodation places in Romanian spa resorts

Source: Romanian national institute for statistics and economic studies

The evolution of the number of arrivals in spas is oscillating; in the first half, 2005 - 2007, there was an increase of 14.16% in the number of arrivals, followed by a marked decrease of 23.46% from 2007 to 2010, and in 2011 a new period of growth, 21.27%, much more pronounced than previous growth.

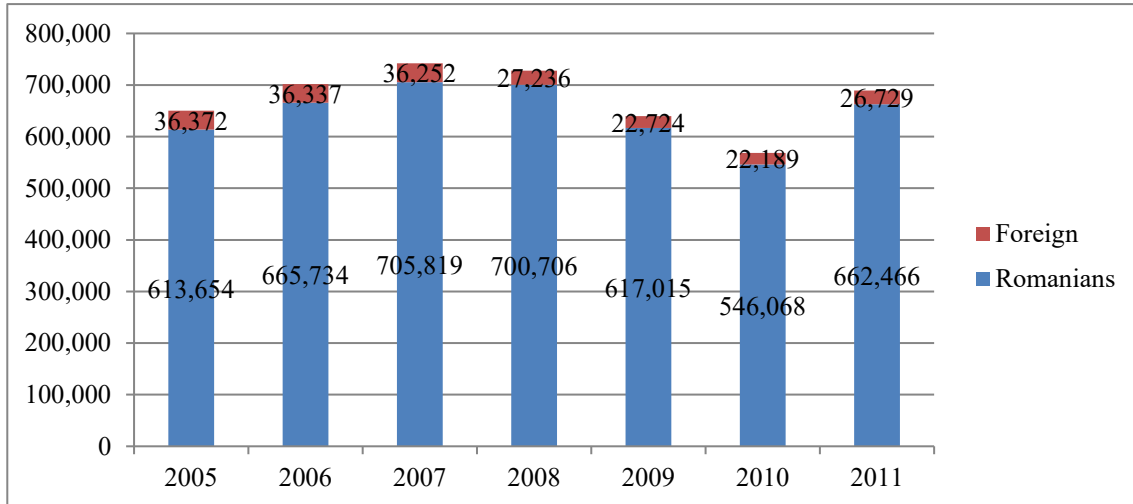


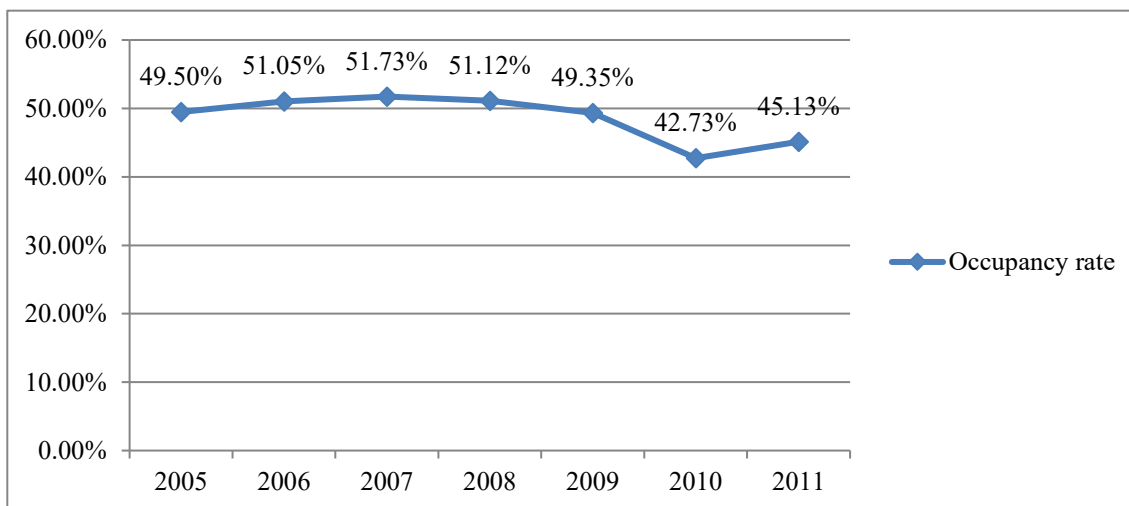
Fig. no. 6 Evolution of arrivals in Romanian spa resorts

Source: Romanian national institute for statistics and economic studies

In structure of this index were changes, so the number of arrivals of Romanian tourists has increased by 7.95% over the entire period analysed, and the number of foreign tourists arriving in spas fell 26.53%. In 2011 approximately 96.12% of arrivals were Romanians, so is clear the need for intensive promotion at European level to attract a large number of foreign tourists in Romania spa resorts.

The number of overnight stays it follows the same trend, with the specification that on entire analysed period the value of this indicator fell by 18.14%.

Fig. no. 7 Evolution of occupancy rate in Romanian spa resorts



Source: Romanian national institute for statistics and economic studies

Another important element in our analysis, the average of length stay, this indicator also experienced a decrease from 8.16 days / tourist, in 2005, to 6.30 days / tourist, in 2011. This decrease is due to policies to reduce the duration of treatment subsidized by the National House of Pensions and National Health Insurance Fund.

By analysing the average occupancy of the accommodation in resorts areas in Romania, we conclude that the dynamics of overnight stays was faster than dynamic

accommodation capacity, especially during the fall. During the entire period analysed, the value of this indicator fell by 8.83%, reaching the level of 45.13% in 2011, however this value is bigger than one registered nationwide, which is represent that spa tourism is a more effective than other types of tourism.

4.2 Mountain tourism

Due to morphological diversity of mountain resorts, mountain tourism is not treated as a separate item in the national strategy for tourism development in Romania. However, at local area, mountain resorts have integrated development plans, especially in areas with intense tourist traffic, and Sinaia, Buşteni, Braşov etc.

Most Romanian mountain resorts developed on winter sports. Romania currently has 30 certified mountain resorts for winter sports. This represents a quarter of total capacity possible slopes in the country and there are plans of local authorities to develop new resorts. It is clear from research material interests and trends on domestic tourism market that winter sports village is one of the main activities that Romanians like to attend. This sector will grow significantly in the medium and long term.

Development strategy exclusive on winter sports in the mountain resorts is short term strategy. The share of foreign tourists is low due to the relatively large distance from the central European countries, especially of low potential of Carpathians compared to Alps. A second reason is the height of the mountains of Romania is below the minimum that guarantees the presence of snow in many cases. If growing phenomenon of "global warming", the party will become increasingly dependent on artificial snow.

Focus on winter sports, especially skiing, led to the creation of local failures in terms of tourist traffic seasonality, seasonal unemployment, dependence on the local economy, etc. tourism consumption.

In many Romanian mountain resorts local authority are trying to implement their projects to improve in four season resort and to relieve dysfunctions created in the previous period. This tactic involves developing several packages based on recreational activities such as:

- cycling - the creation of tourist routes adapted cycling (at this moment there are few routes in Bucegi Mountains, but not approved by Ministry of Tourism);
- climbing - land routes and mountain walls;
- hiking - to sightsee but also photo shooting;
- fishing resorts benefiting from the presence of a river in their territory;
- various cultural activities (festivals);
- riding centre - a centre like this is located in the Râşnov;
- creation of amusement parks
- team-building

The accommodation capacity is shown in the following figure (figure no. 8). We can observe a constant growth, about 2% per year, which results in a constant investment in accommodation facilities of mountain resorts. Very attractive from this point of view, were areas with intense tourist traffic, Prahova Valley and Poiana Braşov.

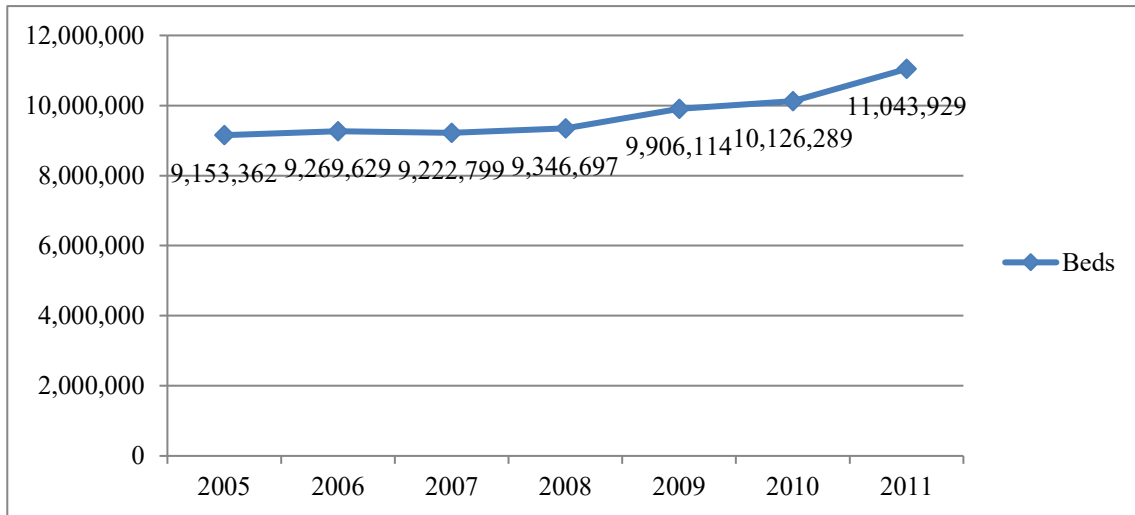


Fig. no. 8 Evolution of accommodation capacity, in Romanian mountain resorts

Source: Romanian national institute for statistics and economic studies

Evolution of the number of arrivals and the number of overnights is similar, so in the first period, 2005 - 2008, the value of these indicators is growing, followed by a period of decline until 2010, and again a period of increase from 2011.

Is also worth mentioning constant structure of these indicators, so about 88% of tourists are Romanians, which means that mountain tourism from Romania is not considered attractive for foreign tourists, despite intense promotion of Romanian mountain resorts in Europe.

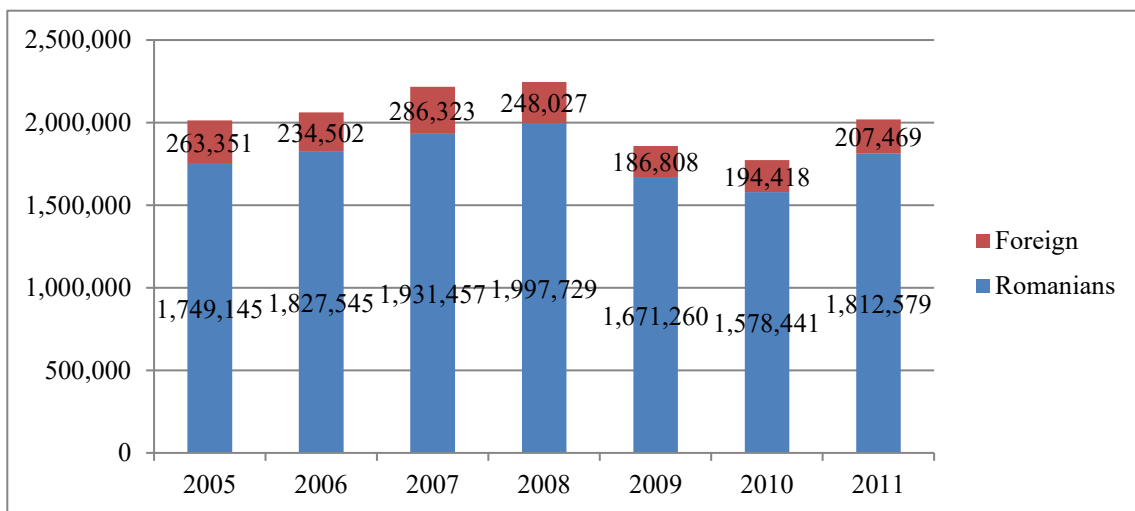


Fig. no. 9 Evolution of overnights, in Romanian mountain resorts

Source: Romanian national institute for statistics and economic studies

Average length of stay and support the above conclusion, as this indicator is continuously decreasing from 2.43 days / tourist in 2005 to 2.1 days / tourist in 2011.

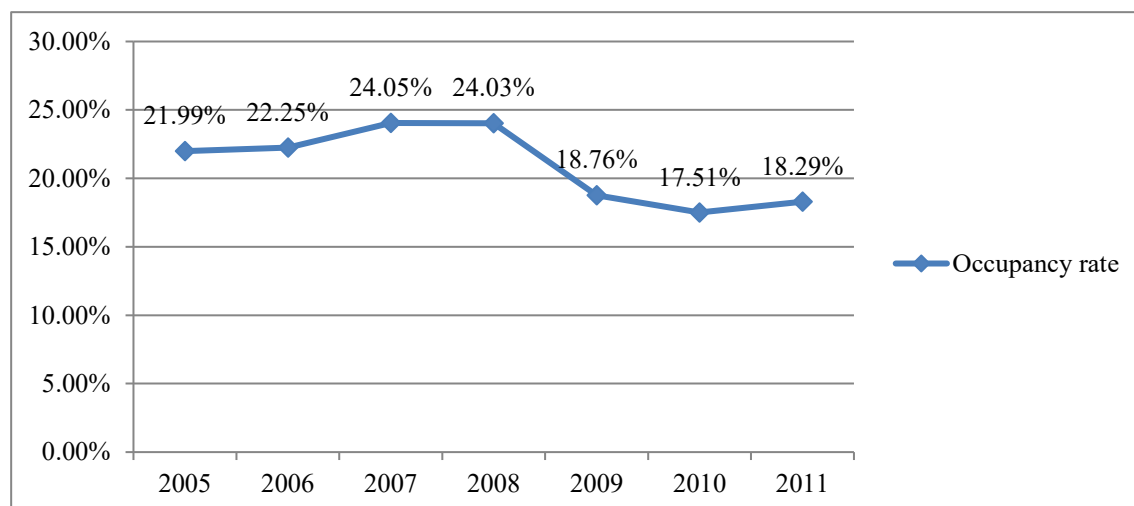


Fig. no. 10 Evolution of occupancy rate, in Romanian mountain resorts

Source: Romanian national institute for statistics and economic studies

Last tourism indicator is the average occupancy analysis, its value dropped by 3.7 percentage points in 2005 - 2011. Factors that have led to this trend are: concentration of tourist accommodation structures in some mountain resorts, the quality price (rates considered tourists too big compared with the low quality), lack of recreational activities.

A new approach of management development is implemented in Sinaia mountain resort, local authority made a project in which the modification of the center of the resort is rearrange to neoclassical style, with the specific elements of heavy carved wood and decorative elements.

4.3 Coastal tourism

Black Sea has a length of 193.5 km between Ukraine and Bulgaria, from Danube Delta in the north to the main beach resorts in the south. The tourist resorts are: Gura Portiței, Mamaia, Eforie Nord, Eforie Sud, Costinești, Olimp, Neptun, Cap Aurora, Venus, Jupiter, Saturn, 2 Mai, Vama Veche.

Among the important objectives of the National Tourism Development Master Plan 2007-2026 that affects coastal tourism are - ensuring sustainable development of tourism, recognition of tourism as a key factor in the national economy, developing and implementing marketing plans tourist destination by the public sector with private sector cooperation, encouraging municipalities, county and regional for an integrated development plans, Identifying opportunities and taking action to allow expansion season for resorts on the Black Sea.

The master development plan specifies a series of concrete actions:

- Action 11. Kogălniceanu Airport in Constanta and Constanta County Council to continue negotiations with the low cost airlines to increase capacity of the way.
- Action 54. Local authorities prepare development plans based integrated resorts current market requirements and to ensure providing reasons for visiting throughout year. These plans must treat both aspects of public convenience, such as spaces parking and facilities for various entertainment or conferences, facilities of leisure and amusement areas for resort, so that they can operate throughout the year.

➤ Action 55. Local authorities to establish management company resorts to all shareholders which to hold a number of shares owned in proportion to land ownership. These companies to work together to create a consistent product offerings of the resort and establish future directions and resort marketing.

There are several difficulties facing the Romanian seaside resorts:

- Poor accommodation, oversized accommodation units;
- Short Season, non-competitive price;
- Lack of training and inexperienced staff;
- Strong competition, lack of cooperation between operators;
- Lack of leisure and entertainment;
- Beach erosion;
- weak infrastructure;
- agglomerated and weak transport;
- Conflicts between hotel operators and concessionaires of beaches.

In essence, each resort or group of resorts must develop a plan large-scale development, poor infrastructure reconstruction to incorporate existing accommodation units and market development adapted to the resorts to become viable.

To study the effects of the above measures have analysed the following indicators tourist accommodation capacity evolution, evolution of arrivals and overnight stays, average length of stay and average occupancy.

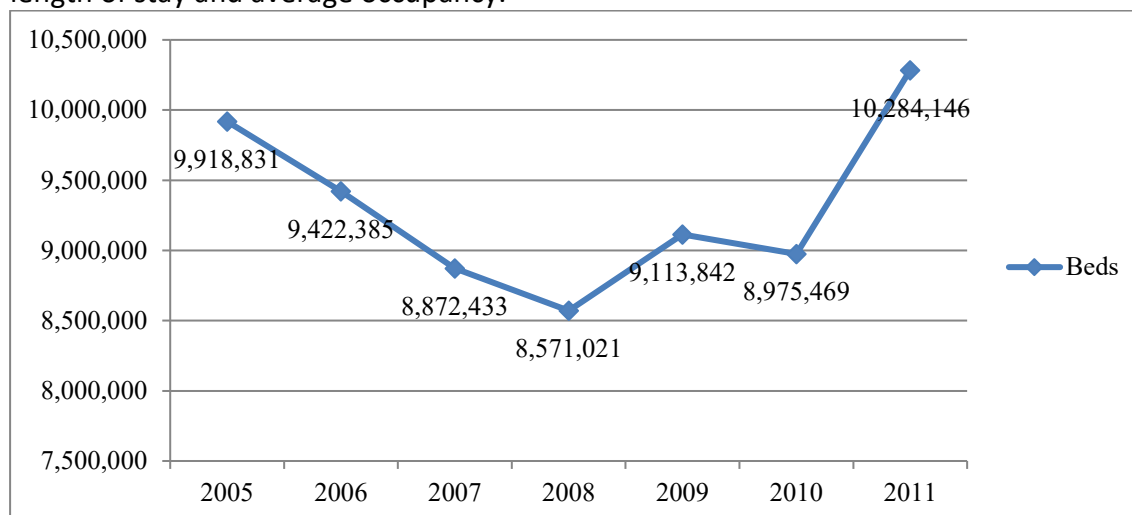


Fig. no. 11 Evolution of accommodation capacity, in Romanian coastal resorts

Source: Romanian national institute for statistics and economic studies

For the analysed period, 2005-2011, the total number of places increased by slightly than 3%. Trend was decreasing between 2005 and 2008, when there was a minimum of 8,571,021 places respectively in 2009-2010, and significant increases in 2008-2009 and 2010-2011.

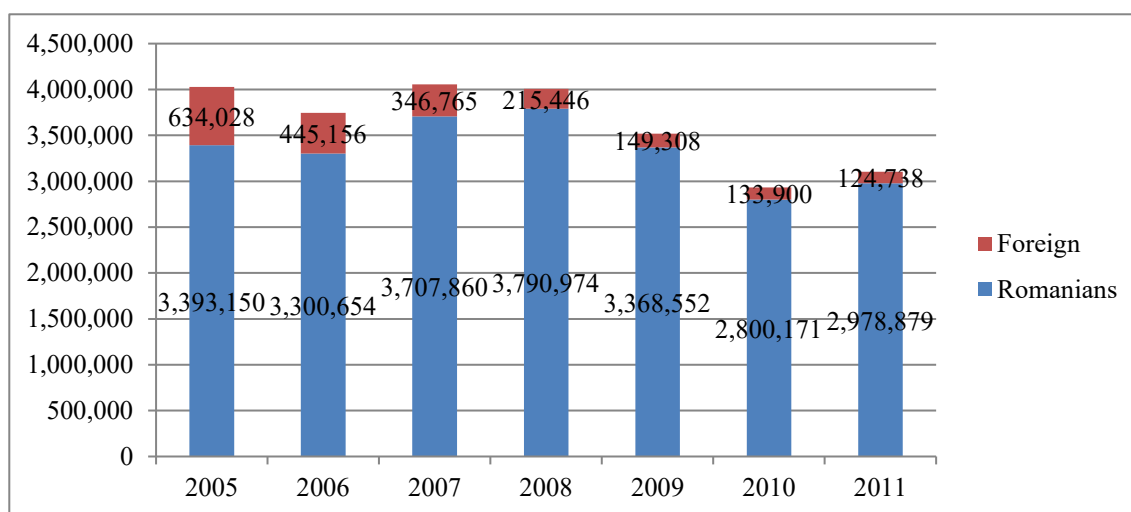
Table no. 2 Number of arrivals in Romanian coastal resorts

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total	713,529	686,502	796,162	832,589	788,356	702,566	735,881
Romanians	625,347	624,690	737,971	791,020	756,749	671,182	706,882
Foreign	88,182	61,812	58,191	41,569	31,607	31,384	28,999

Source: Romanian national institute for statistics and economic studies

Analysing the number of visitors for the period 2005-2011 shows an overall increase of 3%, with an oscillatory trend, decreases for 2005-2006, 2008-2009 and 2009-2010, respectively increases in 2006-2007 and 2010-2011. Romanian tourists make the trend, foreign tourists with a decreasing trend throughout the period analysed, ranging from 88182 to 28999 in 2011. Percentage in 2011 was 96% of Romanian tourists, compared to nearly 13% in 2005.

Number of overnights for the period under review decreased from 4027178 to 3103617, the oscillatory trend with a minimum in 2010, below 3 million nights. Romanian



tourists percentage increased from 84% in 2005 to 96% in 2011.

Fig. no. 12 Evolution of number of overnights, in Romanian coastal resorts

Source: Romanian national institute for statistics and economic studies

Average stay decreased from 5.64 nights in 2006, each year until 2010 - 4.18 nights, with a slight increase to 4.22 in the last year considered. The trend was set by the evolution of the Romanian tourists average stay. Average stay of foreign tourists decreased widely from 7.19 and 7.2 nights for 2005 and 2006, at 4.27 and 4.3 nights in 2010-2011. For all the years analysed, the average stay was higher in the case of foreign tourists.

Table no.3 Occupancy rate in Romanian coastal resorts

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total	40.60%	39.75%	45.70%	46.74%	38.60%	32.69%	30.18%

Source: Romanian national institute for statistics and economic studies

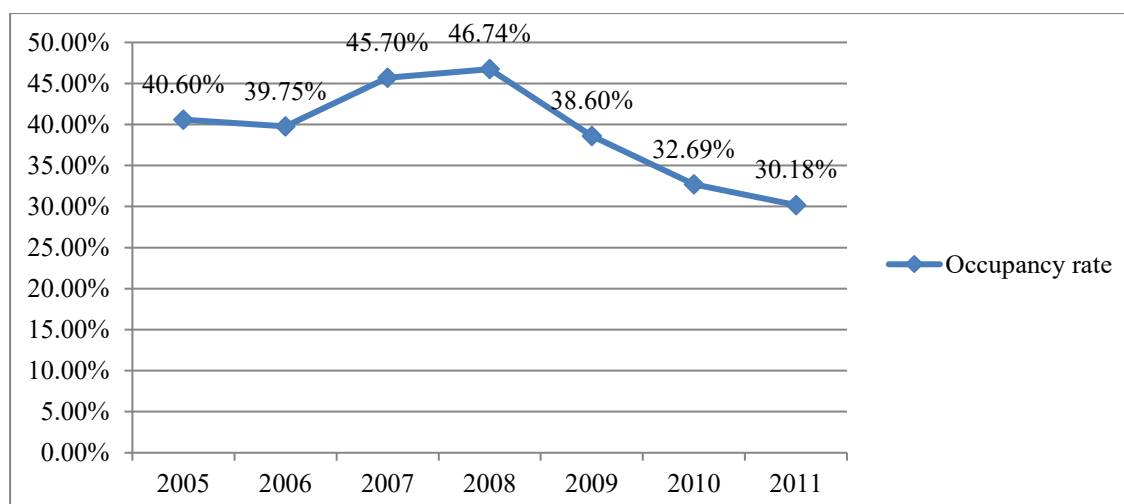


Fig. no. 13 Evolution of occupancy rate, in Romanian coastal resorts

Source: Romanian national institute for statistics and economic studies

An essential indicator for a complete analysis is occupancy. For the analysed period, the employment rate dropped 10 percentage points, from 40% to 30% (which is rather worrying of 25%) only registering growth for 2006-2008 (7 percentage points) in 2008 with value maximum, 46.74%, and in 2006-2007 the most important growth-6 percentage points.

Conclusion

The main conclusion is that the management of tourist destinations in Romania is changing, being rather an adaptation to market requirements. But awareness of major changes caused a nationwide movement in which concerns for integrated development of tourist resorts.

Romanian resorts transformation in four season resort is a long process. Implementing this process began in 2007 and is due for completion in 2026.

From qualitative and quantitative point of view, we witnessed a continuous improvement of the infrastructure, particularly in terms of the network of hotels, hostels and tourist villas, in cities, resorts, as well as in rural areas. In the last several years, the investments focused also on the restoration of some elements of the cultural heritage, on developing or modernizing the connecting roads to some of the resorts (in the mountains, in the coastal regions or to medical resorts), on developing leisure equipment like sports centres, swimming pools, hiking trails, beaches, slopes (54 new slopes were built in the last 3 years), cable transport and water sports equipment in the Danube Delta, respectively on developing the tourism potential of some salt mines, spa centres, tourism information centres etc.

If we refer only to mountain tourism main conclusion is focusing on winter sports, but the big problem is technical obsolescence of equipment and features of the slopes.

Most cable transport installations are older than 25 years, this does not ensure efficient operating. In the last seven years there were several installations of lifts (gondolas) and Sinaia resorts and Piatra Neamt.

Another issue to be considered by local authorities is the lack of airports, agencies national and international. Only Poiana Brasov has an airport and its effect on tourist traffic is a major one, increasing traffic in the resort, especially during the winter.

An opportunity for Romania is developing of ecotourism, because owns large protected areas: national parks, national parks, Biosphere Reserve Danube Delta. But for an efficient exploitation is necessary to create plans for sustainable development and visitor management.

Even if the number of arrivals and overnight stays increased lately, we thought should be implement several other actions:

- programs to improve the quality of services provided - this should be implemented by 2010, but although several programs were developed such effect was minimal (in the opinion of tourists)

A point raised by the European Commission was distrust in the ability to implement the plans made by the authorities. So many projects were to be financed from structural funds were rejected because of poor organizational level of local authorities. The best example is the development of mountain resort in the Petrosani- Parang area, so it took an allocation of 120 million euros from the national budget for the project.

- attract new market segments, especially tourists from the former soviet area;
- diversification of leisure, creating animation tourist centres;
- elimination of speculative strategies, especially for seaside tourism;
- modernization of the accommodation, especially those of spa resorts – we consider introducing quality criteria for the classification of tourists accommodation structures, an imperative measure because by the meeting of quantitative criteria (especially technical) can't fully satisfy the tourists demands.

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