

STUDY REGARDING THE TOURIST POTENTIAL OF THE MARAMURES COUNTY

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Abstract: *Romania has great possibilities for rural tourism development, its practice being not only possible, but also necessary in the current stage. The incomes from this field will contribute to the raising of the living standards of the rural population, contributing seriously to the improving of the overall image of Romania in the world. Maramures area represents one of the regions richest in elements of tourist attraction in witch the natural objectives combines harmoniously with the social-historical ones. Through this paper I wish to point out the fact that the Maramures is one of the areas of the country with a valuable tourism potential, being distinguishable through its beauty and riches, through ethnographic and folklore areas witch has preserve almost unaltered their traditions, customs and folk art. Maramures area can become a main vector of tourist attraction, taking into account the valuable potential that it has, but witch is insufficiently exploited. In this respect it must be established a set of strategies with the help of which to capitalize the great potential that it has.*

Key words: *tourism, tourist potential, development, Maramures*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism development implies the existence of a tourism potential which, through its attractiveness, to ensure the integration of an area or region with tourist vocation in domestic and international tourist circuits and to allow the access of the tourists through appropriate arrangements. [4]

In a general sense the tourist potential of a territory or of a tourist resort is defined as being „the ensemble of natural, cultural, historical, economic and social components, scientifically, quantitatively and qualitatively recognized and proven through practice and showing the possibilities for tourism capitalizing and gives a certain functionality for tourism ". [2]

Therefore, we can say that the tourist potential represents an essential component of tourism offer and special condition for tourism development. By its sizes and diversity of its elements, by their value and originality, the tourism potential represents the primary motivation of tourist traffic. [1,3]

One of the areas with a rich tourism potential represents Maramures, a real ethnographic treasure of Romania, mirrored in the original folk architecture, authentic traditions, colors of the folk costume and the beauty of the language of its residents. Maramures County kept real treasures of beauty, in a peculiar universe: landscapes of an unparalleled scenic, dozen of mineral springs, stretched alpine meadows, many waters, compact woodlands with a fauna what brought fame among hunters [6].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This article aims to highlight the tourism potential that Maramures County has. To achieve the objectives we used traditional methods of working, such as: identification and data collection, processing, analysis, observation and their interpretation.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Maramures County is located in the north part of the country and is bordered by the Counties Satu-Mare, Salaj, Cluj, Bistrita-Nasaud and Suceava, being bordered at the north by the border with Ukraine, with an area of 6215 km² (2.6% from the surface of the country) and a varied landscape as morphology and complex from geologic point of view.

The modern administrative land consists from three countries and two areas: Maramures Country, Lapus Country, Chioar Country, Codru Region and Baia Mare - Baia Sprie area. In addition to those five, Maramures country is the largest, covering almost half from the total area of administrative land.



Figure 1 Map of Maramures county

Maramures County has a special valuable natural heritage which includes 35 protected areas, from witch a national park - Rodna Mountains National Park - Biosphere Reserve and also a natural park - Maramures Mountains Natural Park. [8]

Maramures represents a special tourist area, with distinct characteristics and personality, making noticed by its beauties and riches and by climatic and spa resorts. Called also Wood Country, Maramures County is famous for the ethnographic and folklore areas witch have preserved almost unaltered ports, traditions, customs and folk art, being also one of the regions richest in elements of tourist attraction where the natural objectives blends harmoniously with the social and historical ones.

Maramures, due to its natural and entropic wealth is a County that enjoys the most from the myriad types of tourism practiced and offers many places worth visiting, such as: the Joyful Cemetery from Sapanta - the most attractive stage of a holiday in Maramures, Iza Valley, Vaser Valley, Baia Mare, Sighetul Marmatiei, the Church Izvorul Negru, the waterfall Cascada Cailor, the Monastery Barsana, etc.

In the conditions of the existence of such a tourist potential tourist we can also say that Maramures has a large number and variety of accommodation units, from hostels or guesthouses to cottages and villas, thus satisfying all taste of tourists.

If in the cities and resorts of Maramures prevail hotels and urban guesthouses, rural area is well known through agrotourist guesthouses, become tourist attractions themselves, some of them functioning in traditional wooden houses.

Table 1

Structures of tourist reception

- number -

Maramures County	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total	112	191	172	171	180	168	197
Hotels	16	22	24	23	22	21	25
Tourist villas	1	3	3	3	3	3	1
Tourist cottages	1	2	2	1	1	2	2
Tourist guesthouses	19	49	53	53	64	58	72
Agrotourist guesthouses	66	104	77	78	78	71	79

Source: <http://statistici.insse.ro/shop/>

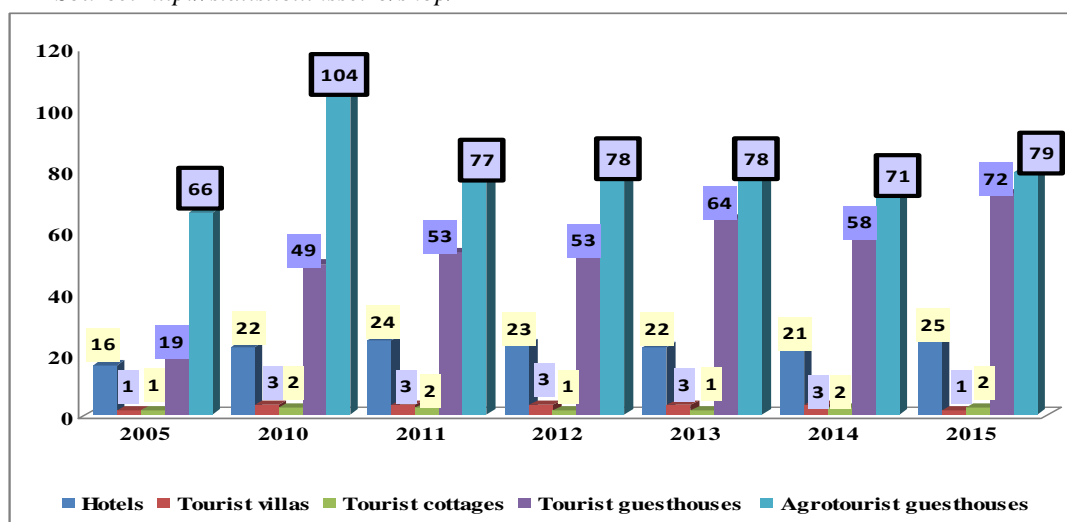


Figure 2 The evolution of tourist reception units from Maramures County

Regarding the structure of accommodation units, by category (Figure 2) the largest share holds agrotourist guesthouses, representing 40.10% from the total of accommodation units.

In the 2005-2015 periods there was an increase of the number of tourist accommodation units, noticing an upward trend in the most part of accommodation units in 2015 over the previous year, except for tourist villas that are decreasing from the previous year. At the level of tourist accommodation capacity it is recorded the same upward trend as in the case of tourist accommodation structures, as it can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2

The accommodation capacity existing and in operation of Maramures County

Years	The existing accommodation capacity (places)	The accommodation capacity in operation (places-days)
2005	2873	976902
2010	4368	1563958
2011	4629	1569958
2012	4730	1541731
2013	4805	1713831
2014	4636	1679290
2015	5614	1830604

Source: <http://statistici.insse.ro/shop/>

In the 2005-2015 periods there was an increase of the existing accommodation capacity with 23.79% and the one in operation with 38.74%.

In Maramures County **the existing accommodation capacity** has an increasing trend from 2005 to 2013, in the year 2014, registering a slight decrease, and in 2015 has increased with 978 units.

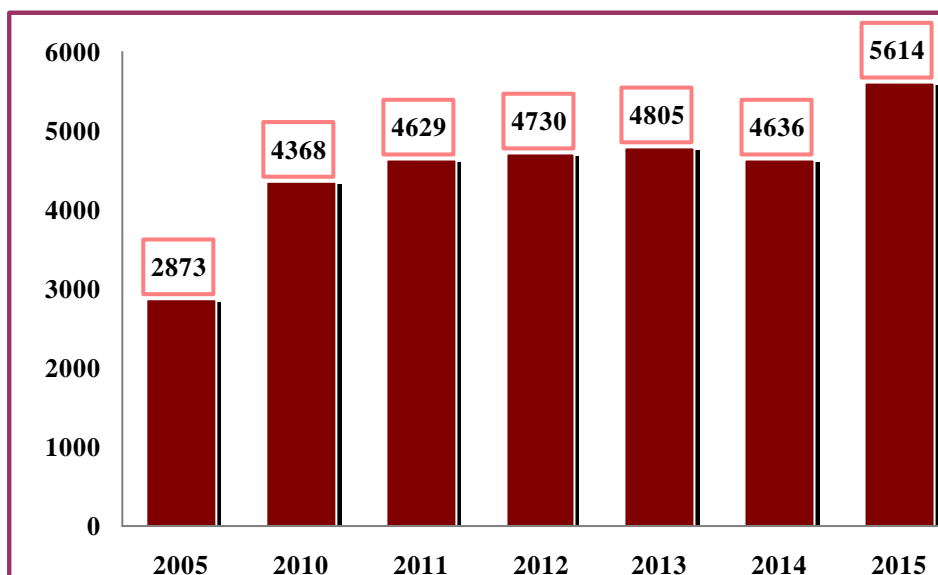


Figure 3 The evolution of existing accommodation capacity

The same situation has occurred in **the accommodation capacity in operation**, with some exceptions, in 2012 and 2014 the trend is downwards, and in 2015 the increase being significant, as it can be seen in Figure 4.

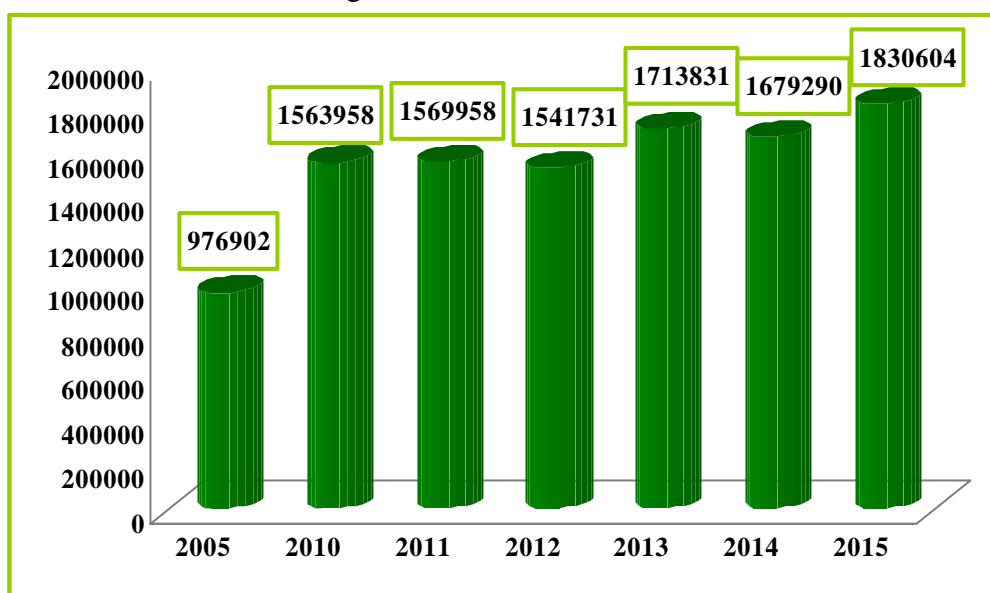


Figure 4 The evolution of accommodation capacity in operation

At the level of North West Region, Maramures County holds 18.57% from the total of existing accommodation capacity in service, occupying the third position, after Cluj County with a share of 30.61% and Bihor County with 29.67%.

Table 3

Arrivals of tourists in accommodation units from North West Region

Specification	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total						
NW region	702838	799774	852523	899370	972856	1140667
Maramures	92500	107095	107660	109083	121136	154633
Romanian						
NW region	578155	656140	703045	750384	803075	931900
Maramures	73349	87075	86166	89630	99643	125463
Foreigners						
NW region	124683	143634	149478	148986	169781	208767
Maramures	19151	20020	21494	19453	21493	29170

Source: <http://statistici.insse.ro/shop/>

In the 2010-2015 periods, the evolution of the total number of tourists arriving in North West, showing an upward trend, the growth rate for this period was of 62.29%.

Making an analysis of this indicator at the level of North-West region, by categories of tourists it can observe the same trend, both in the case of Romanian tourists and foreign ones.

In the level Maramures County, the average length of stay in the tourist reception units, in 2015 was 1.82 days, downward from 2010 where the average duration was 2.17 days.

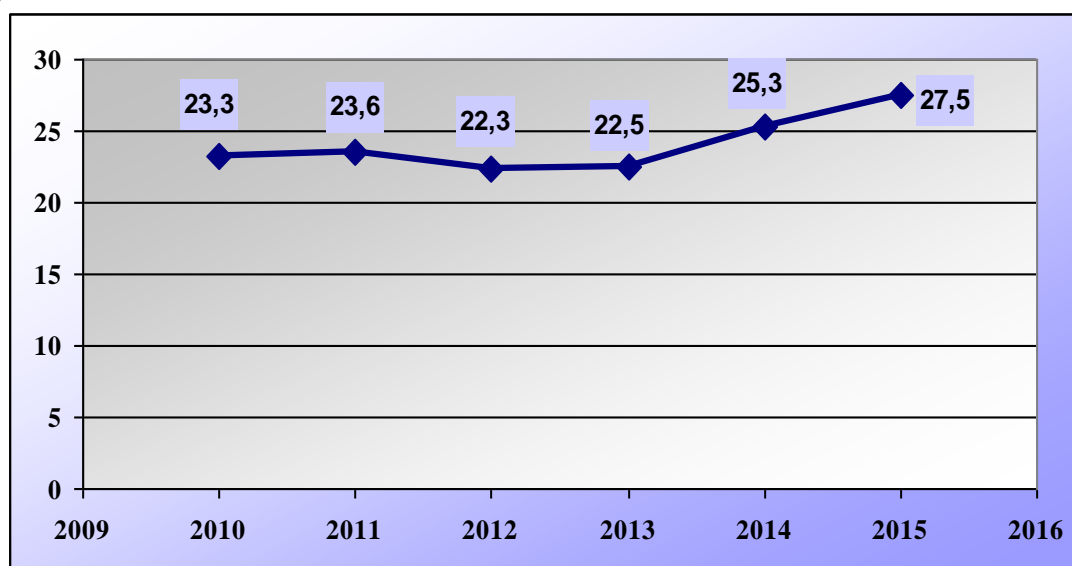


Figure 5 The evolution of intensive use index, Maramures County

In the period 2010-2015, the index of intensive of accommodation capacity showed a decreasing trend, but also of growth, as it can be seen in Figure 5.

According to data from Department of Statistics Maramures, the net use index of tourist accommodation capacity was 16.0% on total tourists' reception units with accommodation functions and by types of tourist reception units, the indications for use

were at hotels 22.4%, 14.7% at hostels, 11.3% at villas, 14.2% at guesthouses, school and preschool camps 17.5%.

CONCLUSIONS

Due to extremely varied tourism potential, of the cultural-historical and architectural heritage and of the rich flora and fauna potential in species and unique ecosystems in Europe, the Maramures area may fit among the attractive tourist destinations from Romania and even Europe.

The ethnographic framework attracts in particular tourists through the beauty and diversity of the houses, traditional gates, tools, costumes, pottery, churches, customs and folklore, unique by meaning, old and progress.

Maramures area is famous for agrotourist guesthouses where tourists, away from the daily routine and the problems of urban congestion, can return to a simple life. Tourists in these guesthouses, not only rest but may take part to the activities specific to the area, such as pottery, wood carving, sewing, embroidery, etc.

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