STUDY REGARDING THE TOURIST POTENTIAL OF BUZĂU COUNTY

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Abstract: *The present paper intends to carry out, objectively, an assessment of the tourism potential in Buzau County. The varied landscapes, especially in the mountain and hill area, as well as the popular, ethnographic and historical elements offer a special attraction for tourists visiting the area. In this area tourists have the opportunity to visit the natural setting and the history of the county such as: Mud Volcanoes (Vulcanii, The Bottomless Lake, The Sculpture Camp in Măgura, The Living Fires of Lopatari, The Vasile Voiculescu Memorial House and also they can enjoy the monumental architecture from area.*

Key words: *Buzău, tourism, tourist potential, tourist attractions, tourists*

INTRODUCTION

According to some authors, the development of tourism implies the existence of a tourism potential which, through its attractiveness, ensures the integration of a tourist region or regions in the domestic and international tourist circuits and allows the tourists access by appropriate arrangements. [1,2,3]

Equipped with an exceptional tourist potential, enjoying a favorable climate for tourism, with a rich flora and fauna, with numerous historical monuments of art and architecture, Buzau County can meet the requirements of important segments of domestic and international tourism demand through spa, cultural or religious tourism.

The sub-Carpathian area of Buzau is one of the most attractive areas of our country due to the presence of unique phenomena in the country such as: Mud volcanoes (Vulcanii Noroiosi), the endocarst phenomena in the Meledic Plateau, the presence of mineral waters that are the basis of the development of the spa resort in Sărata Monteoru, rich in historical places sites and Dacian fortresses, churches and monasteries.

The county of Buzau differs from the other counties in Romania by the fact that it enjoys the beautiful forms of relief of plains, hills and mountains. [6]

Therefore, we can say, with certainty, that Buzău county can occupy a leading place in the Romanian tourist areas.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

In this paper we consulted different bibliographic sources, from which we obtained data regarding the tourist potential in the chosen geographical area. With the data collected from the different materials, we managed to carry out an analysis of the tourist flow in the area of Buzau county, as well as of the main tourist areas in the county.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Located in the south-east of Romania, in the south-east of the Eastern Carpathians, focused on the upper and middle course of the Buzău river, Buzău county has an area of 6,102.6 kmp (2.6% of the country's territory) and is adjacent to Braşov and Covasna counties to the northwest, Vrancea to the northeast, Brăila to the east, Ialomiţa to the south and Prahova to the west.

Buzău municipality is the city of residence of Buzău county, being on the right bank of the Buzău river, at the level of the sub-Carpathian hills. [5, 13]

Buzău County makes the connection between the Carpathian Arch and the Danube Plain, because it occupies an area on the border between the three Romanian historical provinces - Muntenia, Moldova and Transylvania. [10]

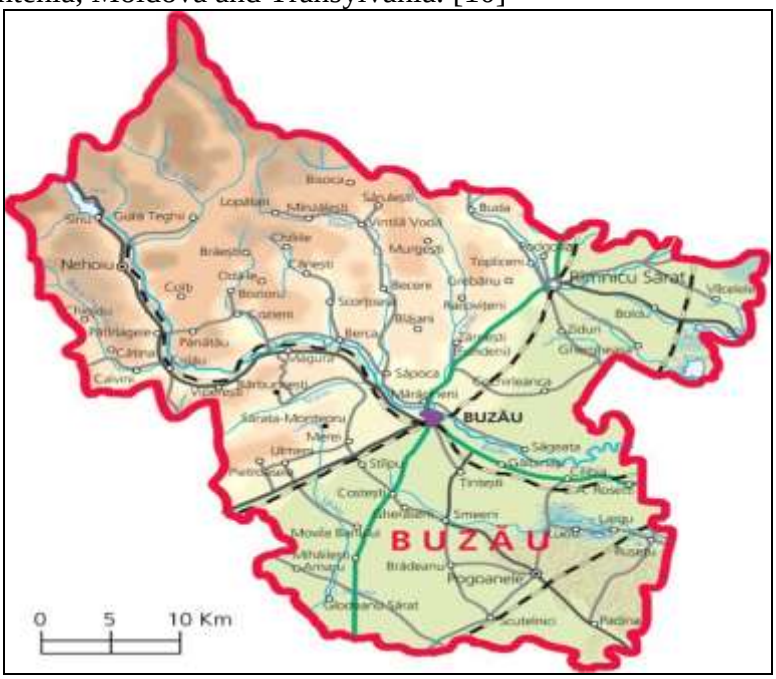

Figure 1. Map of Buzău County

Source: http://www.buzau.insse.ro/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/HartaBZ.jpg [11]

The harmonious arrangement of the three forms of relief characterizes Buzău county: to the north are the Buzău Mountains, part of the Carpathians of Curvature, to the south is the plain, belonging to the Romanian Plain, and in the middle, a region of hills covered with orchards. [8]

On the territory of Buzău county you can distinguish the mountainous areas of the Buzău and Vrancea Mountains, the Penteleu Massif, the Podu Calului Massif, the Siriu Massif, the Monteoru Massif, the Ivanetu Massif, the Buzău Hills, the plains (Câmpia Buzăului, Câmpia Râmnicului, Câmpia Sărata, Câmpia Călmăţuiului, Câmpia Padinei - part of Bărăgan). [5]

Due to rivers, lakes, springs and groundwater, which give a rare beauty to Buzău County, tourism can develop harmoniously, especially at the end of the week.

The beauty and the relief of the county together with the tourist and cultural objectives can contribute through the tourists to a pleasant development of the area.

Over time Buzău county has collected many medieval monuments, historical, cultural and religious monuments, monasteries, hermitages, museums, memorial houses, but also buildings with modern architecture, therefore tourists have what to visit in the area.

In the studied area, the following types of tourism are practiced: balneo-medical tourism (Sărata-Monteoru, Băile Siriu), agrotourism (Sarata Monteoru, Buzau Valley - Berca, Nehoiu, Gura Teghii, Siriu), ecumenical tourism, cultural tourism, mountain tourism and hunting tourism.

Lately the tourists are oriented towards the recreational areas in the rural area, where they want to carry out various activities, choosing the agrotourism areas. This is given by the multitude of recreational activities that take place in such areas, but also by the advantages that they can benefit such as: low tariff of accommodation expenses, but also by the environment less polluted than in urban areas. [5]

The development of tourism in Buzau county, especially of the agro-tourism is due to the difference of the tariffs compared to the other forms of tourism. Thus, the rural tourism mainly relies on the natural-climatic aspects. [11, 12]

The strategy for promoting Buzău County is about promoting and capitalizing on local products. [11, 12]

Through the strategy of promoting agro-tourism in Buzău county, it is necessary to take into account first of all the creation of an original image through the originality of the agro-tourism products, by presenting the particularities of the area and the whole community of the area from an agrotouristic point of view, but also through the possibilities of practicing the other forms. of tourism. [5, 12, 17]

Next we will present the most important tourist objectives in Buzau county: [4]

The most well-known tourist attraction in the region, the **Mud volcanoes** are found in Beciu, as well as in the communes Scorţoasa and Berca, which represent a protected area of national interest, being a natural reserve, botanical and geological. At least impressively, these formations are the result of gas explosions gathered at a great depth in the ground, about 3000 meters below the level of the earth's crust, which, in an attempt to reach the surface, passes through the groundwater, combining water with clay soil. Mud volcanoes are constantly "active" and the landscape changes its appearance, even from day to day, which is truly spectacular.

Depending on the size of the mist, the Muddy Volcanoes are divided into the Pâclele Mici, which have heights between 2 and 8 meters and extend on 10 hectares and the Pâclele Mari, with three main volcanoes, which cover an area of 20 hectares, each volcano measuring more than 100 meters in diameter. [16]

The treasure from Pietroasa, named by those who discovered it "Hen with the golden chicks", due to the bird-like fibulae, was brought to light in 1837 by two stone workers, Ion Lemnaru and Stan Avram, father-in-law and son-in-law, while removing limestone blocks from a quarry in the area known as Via Ardelenilor, located 400 meters west of the church in Ochiu Boului, Pietroasa Mică.

"Hen with the golden chicks" is the most important gold and gemstone treasure ever discovered in Europe. Until 1922, when Tutankhamun's tomb was discovered, the Pietroasa Treasury was the largest in the world. The treasure from Pietroasa currently has 12 pieces, with a total weight of 19,820 kilos of gold.

The live fire - located in Lopătari commune, represents a natural phenomenon, which is highlighted by the release of natural gas that comes to the surface through the cracks of the earth's crust.

The release of gas results in the formation of a flame, which is active almost all the time, due to the sun's rays. The fire is called alive due to the fact that it is visible almost always, especially at night and when the vegetation is minimal. [14]

The Babes from Ulmet are, more precisely, trovants suspended in bizarre positions, which can be found on the outskirts of Ulmet, part of Bozioru commune. The old locals called this trovants "living stones" because of their formation mode, through sedimentary deposits, very similar to the pearl formation. Also, the locals gave each of the huge stones a name, taking after each one's appearance.

The composition of the Babes from Ulmet therefore includes the Microphone, Chair, Slide, Cassette and Five Cassettes.

The bottomless lake. Despite the name, the lake has a depth of only 2.5 m, but it is a periglacial lake located at an altitude of 1420 m in the Siriului Mountains.

The popular name comes from a legend of a shepherd who would have thrown his stick in the lake and would have found it later in the Danube.

The lake is also called the Vulture Lake, thanks to the writer Alexandru Vlahuţă, who mentioned that the place would be the spring hall of the vultures. The area is protected because it is the only area where black goats can still be found, endangered species.

Meledic Plateau – is also a protected natural area and is within the radius of Lopătari and Manzalesti communes. Meledic Plateau is a mixed natural reserve, and the area has as substrate: clays, tiles, blankets, massive salt and clay systems. [15]

The plateau has a declared area of 136 hectares and is about 60 km from Buzau. Here is the longest salt cave (a world record obtained in 1980), the cave "6S", which has a length of 1,220 m.

The entrance to the cave is almost blocked by the landslides caused by rain. In addition to this cave, the plateau also has other caves, including "The cave with 3 entrances". Also in the plateau there are two lakes: the Great Lake (with a depth of 20 m) and the Lake of the Castle. [17]

Cașoca Waterfall is located 10 km from Siriu Dam, in the Podul Calului Massif, being certified documentary since 1354 and is considered the most beautiful waterfall in the county.

The waterfall on the river of the same name has a fall of 17 meters. The waterfall is also known as the Pruncea Waterfall. On the left side of it is the hiding place of Gheorghelaș outlaw, a former pandour in the army of Tudor Vladimirescu.

The waterfall is noted for its beauty, the splendor of the water that strikes the rocks and shatters into thousands of splashes, the coolness it offers you and the unmatched silence you find here.

Sărata-Monteoru resort is located 20 km from Buzău city. Here is also the Monteoru Camp, located in a small depression of the Subcarpathians of curvature on the NW slope of the Big Hill, in the center of the spa-climatic resort Sărata-Monteoru, on the radius of the commune of Merei.

Many tourists come here for pleasure, summer at the beach or any season for the fresh air and the natural beauty of the area, but also for treatment. The main therapeutic factor is the chlorosodium, magnesian, sulfurous, iodized mineral souces and the sapropelic sludge, mainly beneficial for rheumatic, gynecological and digestive disorders.

In conclusion, we can say with certainty that Buzău County enjoys the riches of nature through the landscapes that define it, but also by the unique reservations that nature

has left to the county's heritage: Living Fire from Patarlagele commune, the Mud volcanoes, the lakes and rivers that surround it.

In terms of accommodation and gastronomy, the infrastructure is not fully developed. Some tourist regions in the area have a fairly large offer of pensions and hotels, and in other regions the accommodation structure is completely lacking. Rural tourism is predominantly offering accommodation in agrotourism pensions. There are no international hotels except Buzau city. Restaurants are quite rare throughout the region. In contrast, a large number of pensions offer accommodation and meals, with local products being privileged.

In the following we will present an analysis of the situation of tourism activity in the county:

Table 1

Accommodation spaces in Buzau county

Accomodation space type	Total
Total accommodation units	**109**
Hotels and motels	27
Camping and cottage units	1
Tourist villas	13
Tourist pension	4
Agrotourism pensions	62
Hostels	1
Tourist stops	1

Source: www.buzau.insse.ro - produse si servicii - statistici judetene [9]

Due to the insufficient number of accommodation spaces in Buzau county, we can say that the development of tourism in this area is difficult, even if the natural landscape offers a pleasant environment.

Table 2

The tourist capacity and tourist accommodation activity

Years	Accommodation capacity		Arrivals (thousands)	Overnight stays (thousands)	Indices of net capacity utilization
	Places existance	In operation (thousands places-days)			
2010	2574	939,3	58,6	148,6	15,8
2011	2748	9680	48,1	153,9	15,9
2012	3097	1126	57,0	166,7	14,8
2013	3158	1150,8	63,6	182,9	15,9
2014	3186	1103,6	68,4	173,5	15,7
2015	3164	1117,9	68,3	169,0	15,1
2016	3112	1119,3	71,8	175,7	15,7
2017	3518	1255,6	91,3	197,6	15,7

Source: www.buzau.insse.ro - produse si servicii - statistici judetene [9]

For the development of tourism in the area of Buzau county, first of all it should be done the construction of accommodation units, which offer complete services of rest and relaxation. For the construction of such accommodation spaces, first of all the infrastructure of the county roads must become large, to facilitate the access to the tourist areas.

From my point of view the setting up of tourist accommodation units should be done at the level of the areas with high tourist potential (in the area of the Mud Volcanoes, the development of the transport network of Berca and Monteoru commune), in order to make the access much easier.

Next we will present the capacity and activity of tourist accommodation in the studied area.

For the analysis of the tourist situation of Buzau county, the period 2010-2017 was chosen. As can be seen the tourist capacity and activity of Buzau County, since 2010 has seen an increase in tourism activity.

Therefore, in 2010, the tourist activity was based on 2574 places, and the number of tourists arriving in the county was 58.6 thousand.

In 2017, the level of tourist capacity was raised to a number of 3518 places and a number of 91.3 thousand tourists arriving in the county.

For the development of tourism in the area, Buzău county must focus on developing the interest of rural tourism or ecotourism, by accessing funds, which will contribute to the development of cultural and natural heritage. [6]

CONCLUSIONS

The tourism potential of Buzau County is high, as the area offers the practice of several types of tourism such as: spa-climatic tourism, cultural tourism, rural tourism, weekend tourism, relaxation tourism.

In order to develop the tourism potential in the area, it is necessary to create a tourist center to promote the area, as well as the development of accommodation units and the creation of specialized tourist activities.

The poor development of the county and forest roads leads to a low quality of the tourist services, as well as the number of tourists being low.

In order to promote tourism in the area, various school trips should be carried out, both for students from the county and for students from other areas of the country, in order to know the places, the history and the beauty of nature, which will be transmitted further in the future.

The development of tourism in the area could also be done by promoting tourism, through various videos or advertising, through television or the Internet, in which to present the benefits offered by the area.

A good promotion of the numerous tourist resources existing here and the modernization of the technical-material base that makes possible the exploitation of these resources, are important factors for the relaunch of tourism in this area.

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