

ASPECTS REGARDING THE INCURRED EXPENSES MADE BY NON-RESIDENT TOURISTS IN ROMANIA, IN 2022

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***Abstract:** Romania has a discreet presence on the map of European tourism. Without a good promotion strategy, without brand or identity, without investment in external promotion, without vision, Romania loses the chance to attract more foreign tourists and will not succeed in aligning European tourism. In 2022, the total number of non-resident tourists staying in tourist accommodation structures almost doubled to 1.579 million, their expenses amounting to 4.280 billion lei, i.e., on average, a non-resident tourist had spent 2709.4 lei. Besides these aspects related to the number of non-resident tourists staying in Romania, we will present what was the purpose of the non-resident tourists' visit to our country, the reason for the trip, the means of transport preferred by non-resident tourists, but also aspects related to the travel organizer.*

Key words: *tourists, non-residents, transport, purpose of travel, expenses*

INTRODUCTION

Governments have lost the battles with all their neighbors on tourism in the last decade. Tourism grew thanks to entrepreneurs, but the Romanian state did not know how to capitalize on the potential. In general, our country is considered a country with an important tourist potential. Romania consists of a wide range of natural, cultural and historical characteristics and objectives. The tourist accommodation capacity in Romania, despite the difficult period with the pandemic, has increased. At the international tourism level, Romania has a certain importance, reflected by the number of people who arrive in Romania annually.

Although the number of non-resident tourists arriving in Romania almost doubled in the first nine months of the year, tourism remained the only service that generated a current account deficit, as the holidays of Romanians abroad were not offset by those of foreigners in Romania.

According to the Romanian authorities, travel and tourism services generated a current account deficit of almost two billion euros in the first nine months of 2022, an increase of 56.7% compared to the same period in 2021. Tourism is the only service that generates a current account deficit in Romania's balance of payments. However, Romania is becoming increasingly attractive to foreign tourists. They learn about Romania from friends, influencers, social networks and travel agencies. [2,7,9]

While Austria has a budget of 70 million euro to promote tourism, Romania spends just under 3 million euro a year. Unfortunately, Romania has lost the battle with the Bulgarian and Greek coasts but is also losing out to Croatia. Romania has no promotional website, no promotional video, no medium or long-term strategy and no money for the image. Romania has failed to promote tourism abroad, and the Romanian state has failed to fulfil its duty to create a national brand and finance external promotion. [3]

Due to the nature of tourism activities, there are several categories of tourism in our country, such as spa tourism, winter sports tourism, coastal tourism, cultural tourism, trekking, ecumenical tourism, rural tourism, agrotourism, etc., which, if they received adequate budgets from the state if they benefited from a strong promotion strategy, our country would slowly manage to come out of the shadows and adapt to the needs and desires of non-resident tourists who want to visit the country. [1,4,15]

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This work aims to highlight, firstly, the number of non-resident tourists visiting our country, but also the main categories of expenditure made by tourists. To get a picture of the choice of accommodation made by non-resident tourists, the data collected from the accommodation units helped us a lot.

At the end of their stay, tourists were asked to fill in a small questionnaire on the period spent on holiday, in which, in addition to the country of residence, they provided some details on how they organised their trip, in general how they managed the budget for accommodation and meals, visits, excursions, the means of transport used for the holiday and the main reason for coming to our country. [8,12]

To carry out this study, it was necessary to consult the bibliography, study various statistical data, scientific works in the field of study and many documents that helped us to identify the most important data and aspects for this study. The study covers the period from 01 January 2022 to 30 September 2022. We chose this period because it was the most complex and comprehensive in terms of data. After extensive research, we were able to centralise the most important data, present it in tabular or graphical form, and finally interpret it and present our conclusions about the study. [14]

RESEARCH RESULTS

Despite the return to normal life, the number of non-resident tourists in the period under review was lower than in 2019, the year before the pandemic, when we were visited by 2,669 million tourists and their expenditure totalled 6,895 billion lei. The worst year for tourism, not only for us, was 2020. [2]

In 2020, the number of non-resident tourists staying in collective tourist accommodation facilities was 452,1 thousand, and their expenditure totalled 1179,8 million lei. Although the study covers only the first 9 months of 2022, the number of non-resident tourists who visited us was much higher than the total number of tourists who visited our country in the whole of 2021. The same is applies for non-resident tourists who stayed in different accommodation structures, their expenditure was much higher in the first 9 months of 2022 than in the whole of 2021.

Even if it was difficult, this did not prevent us from realize a situation of the total number of non-resident tourists who arrived in Romania, according to their place of residence. In Figure 1, we have centralised the tourists numerically. It can be seen that the total number of tourists who visited us in the first 9 months of 2022 exceeded 1,167 million. Most of them came from Europe, the EU and North America. [5,16]

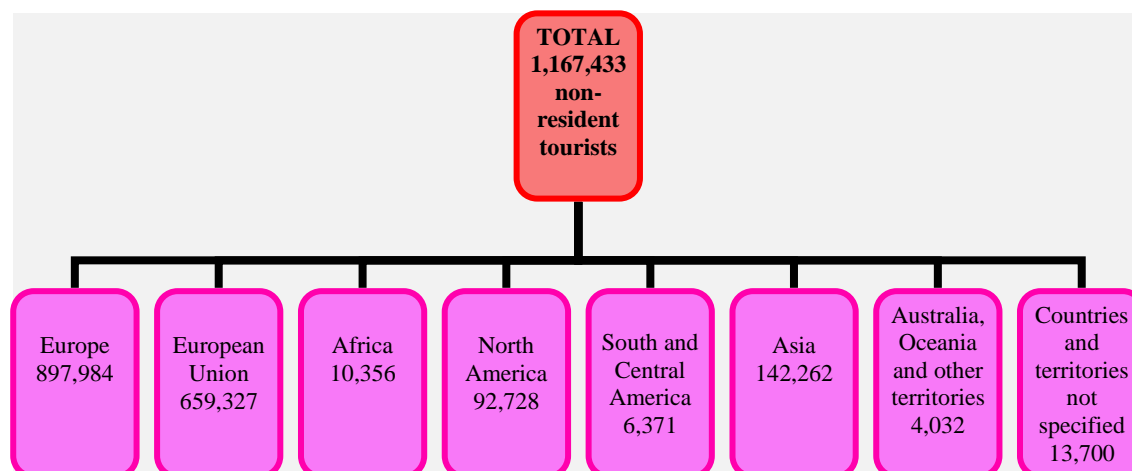


Figure 1. Distribution of non-resident tourists by area of residence

Source: Authors' processing following research and data centralization [8,14,17]

In addition to this numerical presentation of non-resident tourists, we considered it necessary to present a percentage breakdown, as this makes it easier to observe the situation by area of residence of tourists who have visited our country. (Figure 2.)

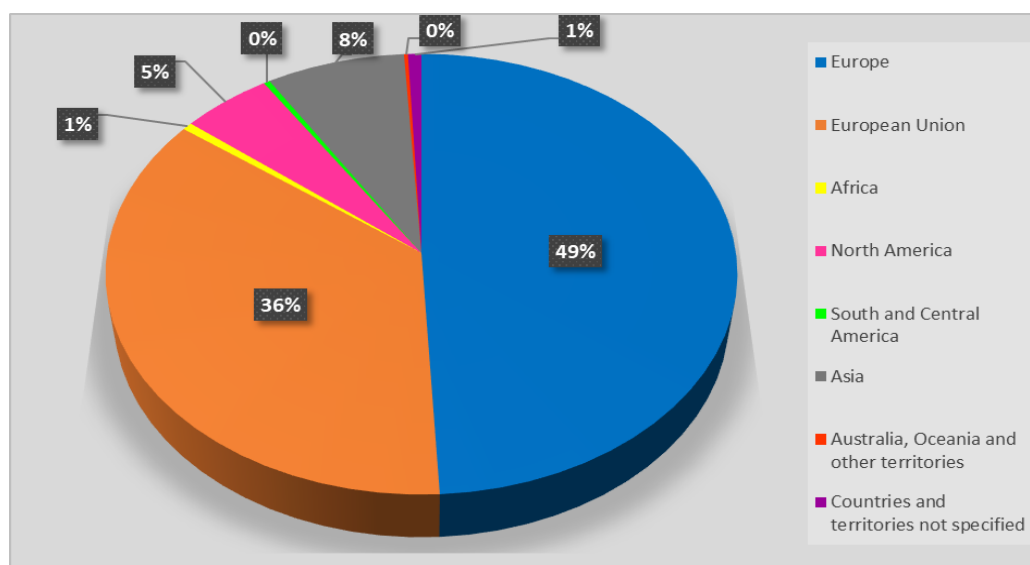


Figure 2. Distribution of non-resident tourists by area (%)

Source: Authors' processing following research and data centralization [8,14,17]

Of all non-residents arriving in Romania, about 45% organised their stay through a travel agency, 34% organised their stay themselves, 14.0% opted for other ways of organising their trip, while 7.1% organised their trip both on their own and through a travel agency (Figure 3) [11].

Careful and rigorous centralisation was required to obtain these data. In this way, we were able to draw up a table that shows the number of tourists by place of residence and how they chose to organise their trip (Table 1). It is easier to observe the tourists' options by a tour operator (%) and in Figure 3.

Table 1.

The situation of the number of non-resident tourists, according to the travel organizer (number)

Residence area	Travel agencies	On their own	By trade unions or other forms	They appealed both to travel agencies and on their own account
Europe	355,447	347,184	137,683	57,670
European Union	268,546	240,519	108,156	42,106
Africa	4,581	2,377	3,091	307
North America	54,810	19,941	9,313	8,664
South and Central America	2,721	1,227	2,035	388
Asia	84,937	29,091	14,702	13,532
Australia, Oceania and other territories	2,375	1,430	125	102
Countries and territories not specified	13,700	0	0	0
TOTAL	518,571	401,250	166,949	80,663

Source: Authors' processing following research and data centralization [8,13,14,17]

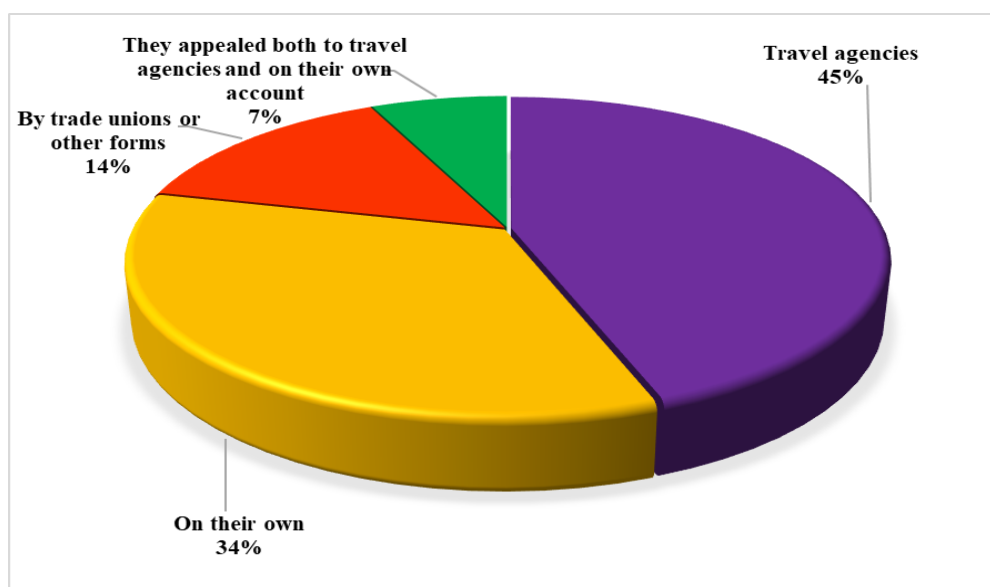


Figure 3. Non-resident tourists' options depending on the travel organizer (%)

Source: Authors' processing following research and data centralization [8,14,17]

Once tourists have decided to organise their trip in different ways, it is natural that they also choose the means of transport.

The main means of transport used for the trip to Romania was the aeroplane, used by 75.2% of the total number of tourists, while 16.7% used their car, 5.1% coaches and buses and 3.0% arrived by other means of transport (train, riverboats, rented cars, motorcycles, etc.).

The numerical situation of these data is detailed in Figure 4. [6, 10]

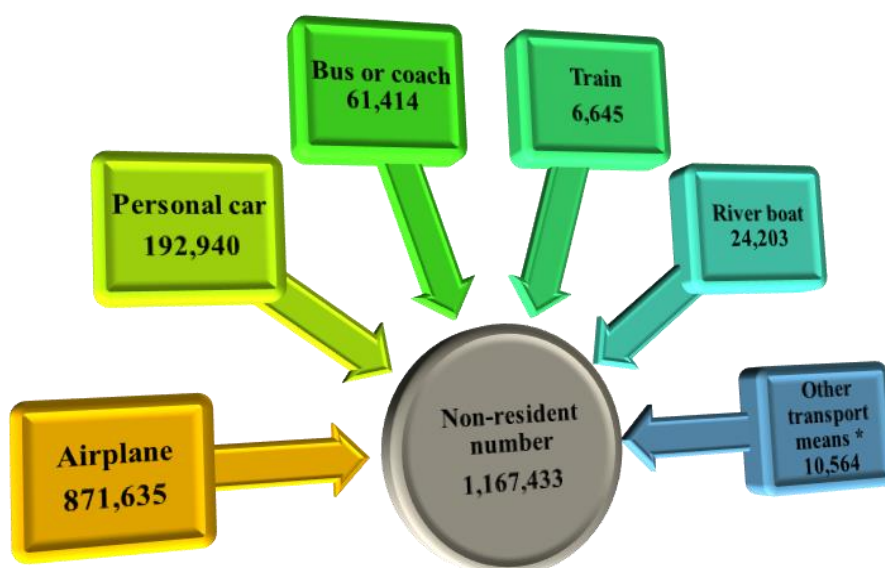


Figure 4. The situation of the main means of transport used by tourists (number)

Source: Authors' processing following research and data centralization [8,13,14,17]

* Rented cars, motorbikes etc.

Travel for professional and business purposes (including participation in congresses, conferences, courses, fairs and exhibitions) was the main reason for the stay of 55% of non-resident tourists in Romania, and their expenditure represented 55.3% of the total expenditure.

Private travel was the second most popular reason for the stay of 45% of non-resident tourists in Romania, accounting for 44.68% of total expenditure (Figure 5.) [12, 15,17].

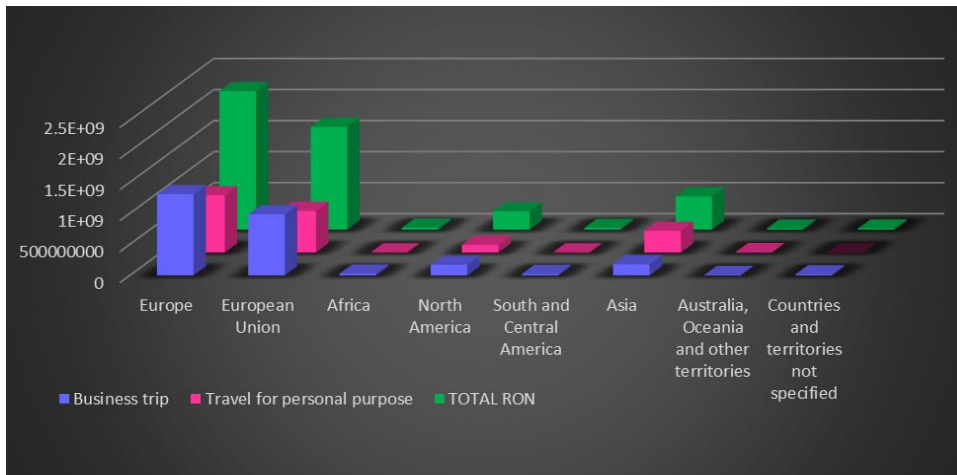


Figure 5. Expenses occasioned during the stay in Romania, according to the area of residence and the purpose of the trip (Billions RON)

Source: Authors' processing following research and data centralization [2, 6, 10, 14]

Of the total expenditure for professional and business purposes, 49.5% was spent on accommodation, 18.5% on restaurants and bars and 14.7% on shopping. Of total expenditure for private purposes, 45.5% was spent on accommodation, 16.6% on shopping and 15.4% on restaurants and bars. [2,5,13]

Figure 6. shows how tourist expenditure is divided into different categories according to the purpose of the trip. [8]

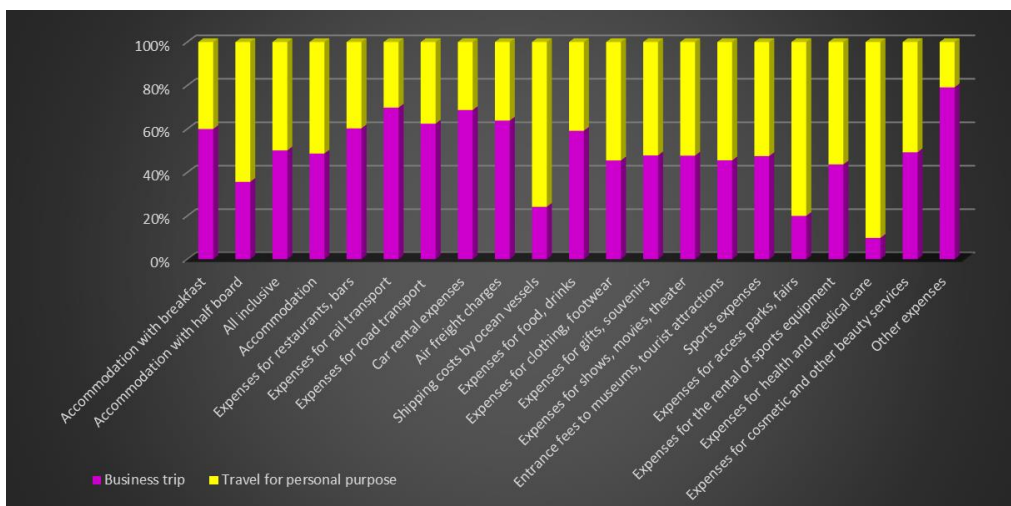


Figure 6. Expenses made by non-residents for the stay in Romania, by types of expenses and the purpose of the trip

Source: Authors' processing following research and data centralization [2, 6, 12, 14]

So far, we have presented the situation of the total expenditure of the tourists who have visited us. Next, we thought of highlighting the expenditure of non-resident tourists who arrived in Romania and stayed in collective tourist accommodation facilities during the period under study.

We think it is important to look strictly at the expenditure of tourists who used accommodation facilities in our country. After analysing and centralising the data on these expenditures, we have centralised their situation both numerically and graphically (Tabel 2., Figure 7). [7,16]

Tabel 2.

The main types of expenses of non-residents who arrived and stayed in various accommodation units

The main types of expenses	Total (Bilions RON)
Accommodation expenses	1,503,916,715
Expenses for restaurant, bars	541,007,663
Costs for transportation	20,255,2421
Expenses for shopping	473,562,392
Expenses for recreation	228,298,008
Health expenses	88,498,707
Health expenses	119,265,123

Source: Authors' processing following research and data centralization [8,13,14,17]

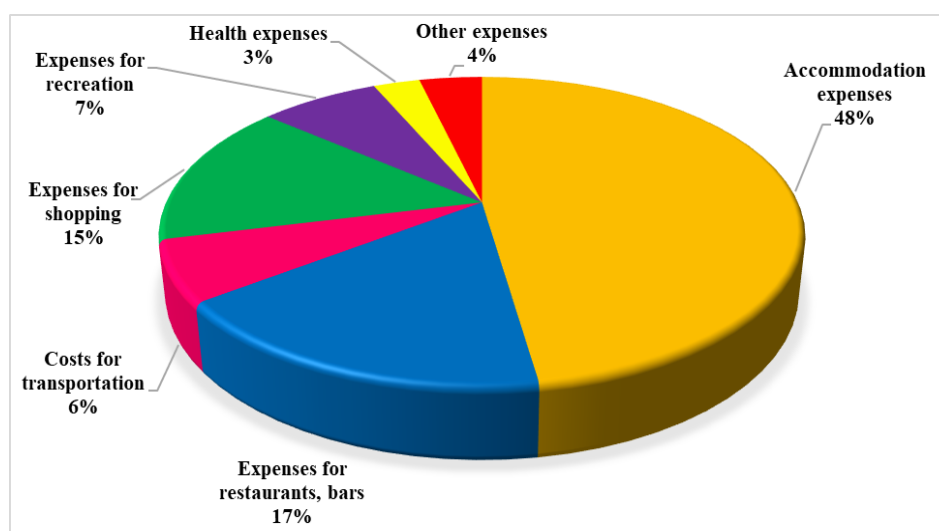


Figure 7. Expenses of non-resident tourists who arrived in Romania and stayed in collective tourist accommodation structures between 01.01- 30.09.2022 (%)

Source: Authors' processing following research and data centralization [8,13,14,17]

The share of expenditure groups in the total expenditure of non-resident tourists arriving in Romania and staying in private accommodation facilities (apartments and rooms for rent), in the period analysed, we managed to centralise and present in Figure 8, which can be seen below, and in Figure 9 you can see the tourist expenditure according to the chosen travel organiser (%).

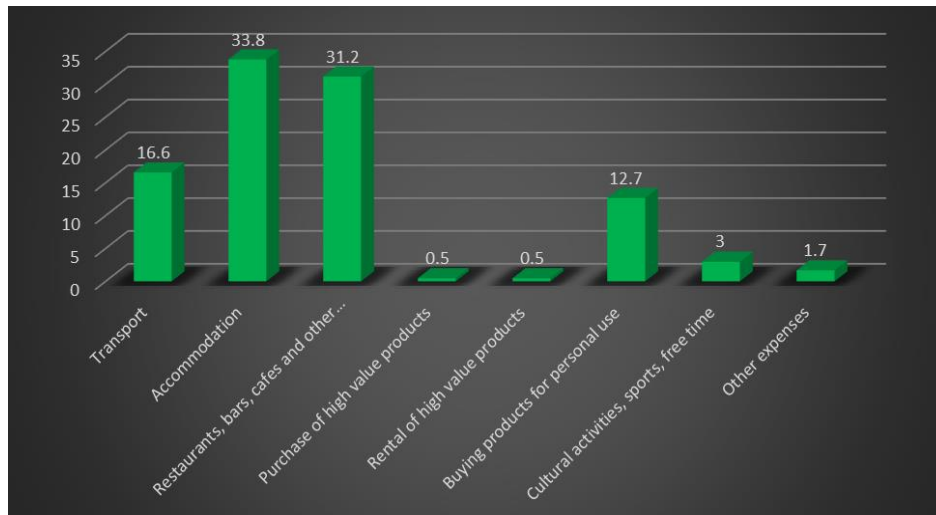


Figure 8. Share of expenditure groups in total expenditure for non-resident tourists arriving in Romania and staying in private accommodation structures (apartments and rooms for rent) between 01.01-30.09.2022 (%)

Source: Authors' processing following research and data centralization [2,8,14,15]

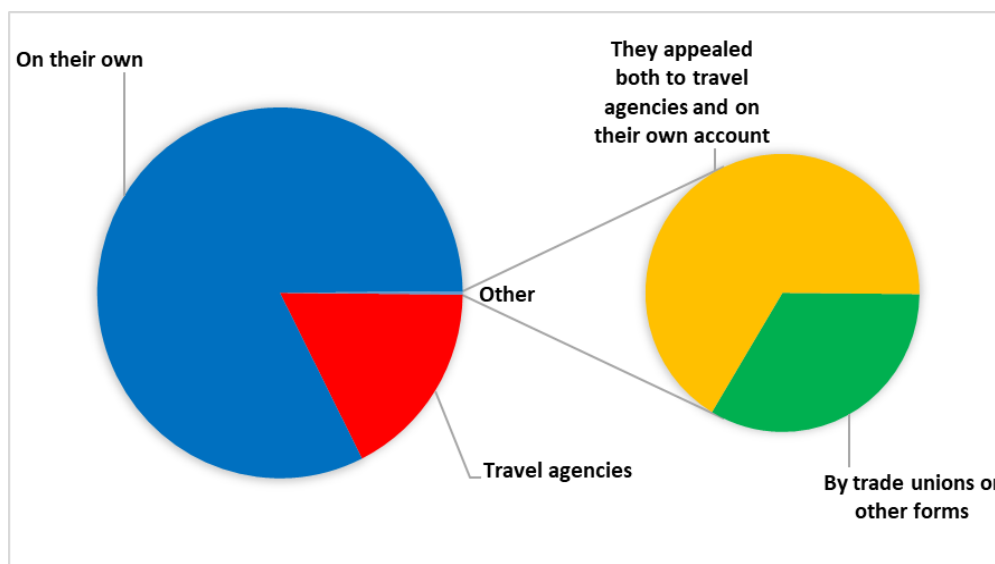


Figure 9. The expenses paid in Romania by tourists who used various forms of accommodation and the travel organizer

Source: Authors' processing following research and data centralization [2,8,14,15]

CONCLUSIONS

Although they could be a valuable resource for our country, foreign tourists are visiting us less and less. The authorities estimate that 1.5 million foreigners will visit us in 2022, half as many as in 2019.

The total number of non-resident tourists staying in collective tourist accommodation facilities during the period under review was 1,167 million, and their expenditure amounted to 3,15 billion lei (on average 2704.3 RON/person).

To help travel agencies to attract more tourists, the State announces that it will pay a part of the expenses for foreigners who spend more than four consecutive nights in our country.

Agencies will receive €40 for each foreign tourist who has paid for a stay of at least four nights. In addition, an extra 2 euro will be paid for each additional night spent on the same holiday. The pandemic has devastated tourism in many countries, but we're struggling to recover.

With lower revenues and profits, hoteliers have cut back on investment. The measure is welcome, the tourism industry says, but the four-night threshold puts them at a disadvantage because most foreigners come for short stays.

On average, a foreigner spends 40% more on cafes, restaurants, massages and other things they can do on holiday.

All this means more revenue for traders and more tax money for local authorities. This is evident on social media.

On Facebook, the Ministry of Tourism's page has barely 5,000 followers, and the posts are more about officials than promoting the country. The Instagram account, popular with young people and travellers, was only launched in September and is followed by just 270 people.

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