ANALYZE OF RURAL TOURISM ACCOMMODATION FACILITIES POTENTIAL IN ROMANIA

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The paper tries to offer a comprehensive analyze of the rural tourism accommodation facilities potential in Romania, at a previous moment of joining to European Union. Based only on official data, it were computed and analyzed on the same time, the share of rural accommodations of total accommodation facilities, the share of rural accommodation facilities on the national level, the share of tourists from rural areas on total number of tourists, the share of Romanian tourists and of foreigners tourists on total number of tourists from rural areas. Using these data and being aware that Romanian is not a country well known by European citizens but a curiosity, with the support of administrative bodies, those can be turn on in an opportunity for national tourism.

Keywords: rural tourism, accommodation facilities, number of tourists, destination of tourists, statistical analyze.

Nevertheless, the touristic activities in Romania, is, at the moment, a not enough used potential for economical growing. The number of tourists coming to visit our country is increasing, and the trend can be observed, by simply comparing the number of foreigners entered.

Table 1

Number of tourists in Romania - semester I 2007 comparing with semester I 2006

	Tourists			Nights spent		
	Semester I 2007 (thou tourists)	Semester I 2006 (thou tourists)	Semester I 2007 comparing with semester I 2006 (%)	Semester I 2007 (thou tourists)	Semester I 2006 (thou tourists)	Semester I 2007 comparing with semester I 2006 (%)
Romanian tourists	2303.0	2001.2	115.1	6374.9	5733.9	111.2
Foreigners tourists	166,7	144,0	115,8	394,6	353,6	111,6
Total	**2994.1**	**2606.7**	**114.9**	**7953.4**	**7109.1**	**111.9**

Reference: [1]

According to National Institute for Statistics, in June 2007, both the number of visitors entered in Romania and the nights spent on touristic accommodation increased with 21.5%, respectively 17.6%, comparing with the same month of the last year. The same, on the first semester of the year 2007, the number of visitors entered in Romania and the nights spent on touristic accommodation, comparing with the same period of the year 2006, increased with no less than 14.9%, respectively 11.9%. [1] This short introspection into the evolution of number of

tourists in Romania, could offer an image of the attractiveness of this country's natural and human made objective. Being at its beginning of the way as member of European Union, Romania is not a country well known by European citizens but a curiosity, and, with a support from administrative bodies, than can be an opportunity for tourism.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

But, the Romanian touristic accommodations are not, always, as the tourists expect and this is a subject to discuss. The paper is focused on rural area, so, analyze will be paying attention to this areas. According to the legislation [2], the main traditional accommodation facilities in rural area are touristic pensions (having a maximum of 10 rooms and no more than 30 beds with special places for preparing and serving the meals), and agroturistic pensions (having between 3 and 10 rooms, and where the owners live and assure food and raw materials mainly from local sources). For sure, beside these, on rural areas can be found other forms of accommodation (being situated on rural areas and offering the similar services with the previous ones), such are campings and houselet-type units, rustic hotels, touristic villas and bungalows, motels, school camps and so on.

Having in mind the fact that the main classical accommodation facilities are clearly shown into the publications of the National Institute of Statistics, the paper will explore a number of indices based on the data offered by this institute. It will be computed and analyzed on the same time, the share of rural accommodations of total accommodation facilities, the share of rural accommodation facilities on the national level, the share of tourists from rural areas on total number of tourists, the share of Romanian tourists and of foreigners tourists on total number of tourists from rural areas.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The evolution of the accommodation facilities in rural areas (for the period 2000-2006) is presented in Table 2, and can be easily observed its increasing trend which can be explained, partially, by the general development of tourism in Romania.

Table 2

The time evolution of the accommodation facilities in rural areas

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
No. of rural touristic pensions	160	193	221	266	431	956	1259
No. of agroturistic pensions	240	343	461	515	461	n.a.	n.a.
Total rural accommodation facilities	400	536	682	781	892	n.a.	n.a.
Total accommodation facilities	3121	3266	3338	3598	3900	4426	4710
Share of rural accommodation in total accommodation facilities	12,81	16,41	20,43	21,70	22,87	-	-

Reference: [3]

This trend is more accentuated for the rural accommodations in the period 2000-2004 (no less than 123.00%) comparing with the total accommodation facilities (50.91%), fact that could be seen by the share of rural accommodations

which escalate from 12.81% in 2000, to almost double, 22.87% in 2004. The average number of new touristic pensions registered every year on the period 2000-2004, was approximately 123, with a average increase rate of accommodation facilities from rural area of 22.20%.

$$\overline{\Delta}_y = \frac{\Delta_y^{\%}}{n-1} = \frac{y(n) - y(1)}{n-1} = \frac{892 - 400}{5-1} = \frac{492}{4} = 123 \text{ pensions}$$

$$\overline{R}_y = \overline{I}_Y * 100 - 100, \quad \overline{I}_Y = \sqrt[n-1]{\frac{y_n}{y_1}} = \sqrt[5-1]{\frac{892}{400}} = \sqrt[4]{2,23} = 1.2220$$

$$\overline{R}_y = 1.2220 * 100 - 100 = 22.20\%$$

Referring to the touristic accommodation capacity (meaning the number of touristic places, excluding supplementary beds that could be used if necessary, registered to the last official document of the facility), table 3 reveals the fact that in the period 2000-2004 this indicator had an increasing trend in rural areas, as a direct effect of increasing the number of accommodation facilities in the same areas.

Table 3

The evolution of touristic accommodation capacity

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Accommodation capacity of rural touristic pensions	1815	2188	2596	3272	5351	11151	14551
Accommodation capacity of agroturistic pensions	1729	2560	3623	4238	4054	n.a.	n.a.
Total accommodation capacity from rural area	3544	4748	6219	7510	9405	n.a.	n.a.
Total accommodation capacity	280005	277047	272596	273614	275941	282661	287158
Share of accommodation capacity from rural area in total accommodation capacity	1.26	1.71	2.28	2.74	3.40	-	-

Reference: [3]

It is relatively easy to observe the reduced share of rural accommodation capacity on the total accommodation capacity. Some of the reasons are that in rural area many of the owners that offer touristic services did not registered their business, and, as we previously mentioned, the experience of organized rural tourism in Romania is new and limited. Anyway, on the analyzed period of time, the accommodation capacity from rural area (figured in number of places) increased annually with an average value of 1465.25 places.

$$\overline{\Delta}_y = \frac{\Delta_y^{\%}}{n-1} = \frac{9405 - 3544}{5-1} = 1465.25 \text{ places}$$

$$\overline{I}_y = \sqrt[n-1]{\frac{y_n}{y_1}} = \sqrt[4]{\frac{9405}{3544}} = 1.2763$$

$$\overline{R}_y = 1.2763 * 100 - 100 = 27.63\%$$

The average increasing rate of accommodation capacity from rural area in the period 2000-2004 was 27.63%, being with 5.43% higher the average increasing rate of rural touristic accommodation facilities, especially because the issue of rural

tourism activities development is mainly focused on intensity and sustainable development. The owners of rural pensions are inclined to set up facilities with large accommodation capacity and not with a reduced numbers of beds. From table 3 results the fact that the share of accommodation capacity from rural area in total national accommodation capacity is increasing every year, but it can be seen that is still significantly small (3.40% in year 2004), so seems to be planty of room for its further development.

For observing the time evolution of rural tourism is necessary, too, to look after the state of fact of touristic demand, analyzed using two indices: number of tourists checked-in on rural touristic accommodation (meaning the staying overnight of any person travelling for non-remunerable reasons out of his/hers at least 12 months residence town) are the and number of nights spent on those accommodation facilities. For the period of time 2000-2004, can be seen a year-by-year positive evolution of the number of arrived tourists, no matter if they are go to the rural area or not.

Table 4

The time evolution of tourists accommodated in Romania

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Rural touristic pension					
Total number of accommodated tourists	15596	21244	32201	47444	96823
Total number of Romanian tourists	14071	18425	28736	42173	86242
Total number of foreigners tourists	1525	2819	3465	5271	10581
Agroturistic pension					
Total number of accommodated tourists	12556	20414	32610	42002	52164
Total number of Romanian tourists	10891	17606	274436	34922	45346
Total number of foreigners tourists	1665	2808	5171	7080	6818
Total number of accommodated tourists in rural areas	**28152**	**41658**	**64811**	**89446**	**148987**
Total number of Romanian tourists accommodated in rural area	24862	36031	56175	77095	131588
Total number of Romanian tourists accommodated in rural area	3190	5627	8636	12351	17399
Share of Romanian tourists in total tourists accommodated in rural area	86.67	86.49	86.68	86.19	88.32
Share of foreigners tourists in total tourists accommodated in rural area	11.33	13.51	13.52	13.81	11.68
Total number of tourists accommodated in Romania	492019	4874777	4847496	5056693	5638517
Share of tourists accommodated in rural area in total tourists accommodated	0.57	0.85	1.33	1.76	2.64

Reference: [3]

Based on the table number 4, could be appreciated that, constantly, less that 15% of the total tourists from rural areas are coming from outside of Romania, meaning that the attractiveness of this form of tourism is much more emphasized among the domestic population. This is the negative aspect, but it cannot be neglected the fact that every year the number of tourists choosing the rural area (including the foreigners ones) is increasing quite significant. Actually, the evolution on time of the tourists accommodated in tourist facilities from rural area had the more accentuated rate of increasing among the all forms of tourism (the

average increasing rate being no less than 51.56%, meaning that the average number of new tourist choosing accommodation facilities from rural area was 30208.75, a number quite similar with the entire population of a town like Cugir). All these facts are effects of the above mentioned indices, the increasing of the number of the accommodation facilities in rural area and of their accommodation capacity was a major objective factor. For sure, there cannot be ignored the subjective factors related to the preference of tourist to choose to spend their spare time in nature, at as far as possible from cities.

The last indicator taken into consideration in this analyze is the number of stayings overnights (meaning any person registered to any kind of accommodation facility, no matter if he/she physically spent the night there or not), which is directly influenced by the number of arrived tourists to the rural tourist accommodation facilities and indirectly influenced by the rural tourism supply (meaning, generally, the quality of services offered).

$$\overline{\Delta}_y = \frac{\Delta_y^{n/1}}{n-1} = \frac{148987 - 28152}{5-1} = \frac{120835}{4} = 30208.75 \text{ tourists}$$

$$\overline{I}_y = \sqrt[n-1]{\frac{y_n}{y_1}} = \sqrt[5-1]{\frac{148987}{28152}} = \sqrt[4]{5,2890} = 1.5165$$

$$\overline{R}_y = 1,5165 * 100 - 100 = 51.65\%$$

Table 5

The time evolution of stayings overnight in rural tourist accommodation facilities

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Rural touristic pension					
Total number of stayings overnight	**37738**	**40083**	**60123**	**103614**	**193361**
Number of Romanian stayings overnight	31744	33906	51895	91274	169180
Number of foreigners stayings overnight	5994	6177	8228	12340	24181
Agroturistic pension					
Total number of stayings overnight	**26850**	**48266**	**84012**	**121774**	**127476**
Number of Romanian stayings overnight	22060	39875	70905	98768	108488
Number of foreigners stayings overnight	4790	8391	13107	23006	18988
Total stayings overnight	**64588**	**88349**	**144135**	**225388**	**320837**
Total number of Romanian stayings overnight	53804	73781	122800	190042	277668
Total number of foreigners stayings overnight	10784	14568	21335	35346	43169
Share of Romanian stayings overnight in total stayings overnight	83.30	83.51	85.19	84.31	86.54
Share of foreigners stayings overnight in total stayings overnight	16.70	16.49	14.81	15.69	13.46

Reference: [3]

With the same trend as the other indices analyzed, the number of stayings overnight in rural tourist accommodation facilities increased dramatically – in the year 2004 knowing a number that could be equal with around 880 persons accommodated continuously for all the nights of the year.

On the same time, the percentage of the stayings overnight in rural tourist accommodation facilities of the Romanian tourists is more or less similar with the share of Romanian tourists in total tourists accommodated in rural area, with a value roughly speaking of 85% for all years, just a little bit smaller in the favor of

the first one. That means that the average of the period spent by foreigner tourists was, generally, larger. But, even if the absolute number of the foreigners stayings overnight increased year-by-year, relatively to the total stayings overnight, the value decreased from 16.70% in year 2000 to 13.46% in year 2004. The average increase from a year to the next year was quite significant, having a value of 64062.25 stayings overnight.

$$\Delta_y = \frac{\Delta_y^{n/1}}{n-1} = \frac{\Delta_y^{5/1}}{5-1} = \frac{320837 - 64588}{4} = \frac{256249}{4} = 64062.25$$

$$\bar{I}_y = {}_{n-1}\sqrt{\frac{y_n}{y_1}} = \sqrt[4]{\frac{320837}{64588}} = \sqrt[4]{4.9674} = 1.4929$$

$$\bar{R}_y = 1.4929 * 100 - 100 = 49.29\%$$

But the average increase rate of stayings overnight (being 49.29%) did not exceed the average increase rate of tourist arrivals, leading to the conclusion that the average period of time spent in rural accommodation facilities decreased over the four analyzed years.

CONCLUSIONS

The reason why tourists would prefer rural areas could be understood having in mind the general desire of tourists to leave polluted, noisy and crowded cities for a much more relaxing neighborhood, even if they have to relinquish to some of the comfort issues they are used to have on their day-by-day life. Comparing with traditional forms of tourism, rural tourism is relatively new in Romania, and that is one of the reasons why the number of the officially recognized accommodation facilities is quite reduced, comparing with the total number of touristic accommodation facilities.

Each and every above analyzed indicator is in close relation with the others, any change of one of them having as direct results changes of the rest of them. They could lead to the final conclusion that tourism in Romania is a subject in fully process of development, the number of accommodation facilities increasing dramatically every year. Probably the next step in rural tourism development is to enhance the level of investment not only in buildings but in promotion, in people and in the quality of their knowledge and attitude for making rural tourism a very profitable business.

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