

THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF RURAL TOURISM

Radu-Adrian MORARU¹, Cristina SIMEANU¹, Dan ȘUMOVȘCHI²

e-mail: ramoraru@yahoo.com

Abstract

Tourism development in rural areas has drawn attention not only to its economic and social effects, but also to its ecological impact, being closely related to the quality of the natural and man-made environment. Rural tourism takes place in areas that usually are sensitive to external pressures and the impact of tourism on the ecological environment is more visible in rural areas. Tourism can have a useful influence on the rural tourist destination, but it can also be a detrimental factor. There are various studies claiming that the development of rural tourism can also have both positive and negative consequences. Between tourism and environment is a very close relationship, environmental degradation contributing overwhelmingly to the loss of tourist value. Thus, environmental conservation and protection are more important than some potential economic and social benefits. The negative effects are multiple and their intensity and origin depend on different elements that influence the sustainability of tourism. In general, it is estimated that the positive aspects of rural tourism are much more numerous than the negative ones.

Keywords: rural tourism, environmental impact, sustainability, development