

# ASPECTS CONCERNING THE TOURISM AND AGRO TOURISM POTENTIAL IN VÂRTOP – ARIEȘENI AREA FROM APUSENI MOUNTAINS

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**Abstract** The Apuseni Mountains represent one of the most attractive tourist destination in Romania. The studied area comprises the territory of Arieșeni commune, which is placed in the northern part of Alba county and the holiday village named Vârtop, close to the border of Bihor county. The location represents a circle placed at equal distances from several big towns, such as: Cluj-Napoca, Oradea, Arad, Deva and Alba Iulia, therefore it represents an attraction for the tourists belonging to these areas. The population of Arieșeni commune counts 1810 inhabitants. It is distributed in 18 villages, whereby the most important villages are Casa de Piatră, Vârtop, Galbena and Bubești. The main elements of tourism attraction are:

- the ski slope from Vârtop;
- the climatic potential, which is favourable to hiking, climbing, mountaineering, winter sports, repose, relaxation etc., during both seasons: the summer and the winter. The statistics point out that the yearly average duration of the snow cover lasts 150 days, ensuring a ski season of 5 months each year;
- Gârdișoara Gorges; Vârciorog Waterfall; Glacier Cave Vârtop; Crow Castle in Padis Plateau; Gura Apei Cave; Huda Orbului Cave; Hodobana Cave; Aven Cave with two entrances; Izbul Tăușului Cave etc. There are also anthropic touristic resources represented by museums, wooden churches, ethnographic and folklore festivals. The tourism of repose and relaxation is practiced most during the summer time, being favoured by a very pleasant natural environment, the water and air purity, the altitude of over 800 m that ensures pleasant temperatures. The vegetation has a vertical distribution and contains deciduous forests, beech forests, mixed forests and valley subalpine meadows with a great variety of floristic composition. In Vârtop-Arieșeni area, there is evidence of 88 guesthouses, having a tourist accommodation capacity of 1190 beds in 2008.

**Key words:** tourism, agro tourism, mountains