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THE TOURISTIC AND AGROTOURISTIC POTENTIAL OF TULCEA COUNTY – ROMANIA

Eugenia-Dorina CIOBANU(RĂDOI)¹, Manea DRĂGHICI²

Summary: *The article sets to identify and analyze the tourism development potential of Tulcea County, its place regarding this matter within the South-East Region and the capitalization degree of the existing potential. After the analysis, it appears that the South-East Region has an extremely high touristic development potential, as it has been capitalized very little at the moment. Through investments, quality touristic products could be made that could compete with touristic products from other strong tourism companies.*

Key words: *tourism, agrotourism, agrotouristic bed and breakfast.*

JEL Clasification : *Q01*

INTRODUCTION

The touristic potential is defined as the unit of natural and anthropical elements that exist in a certain area, that triggers the tourists interest and as a consequence, the achievement of touristic activities.[1]

The touristic potential represents the way of internal formation of the touristic heritage, respectively the structural and functional capacity of a territory to sustain the development of activities with a touristic profile, to determine the existence of touristic destinations through the presence within (the territory) of elements of attraction with peculiar physico-geographical, cultural and socio-economic valence (including the touristic infrastructure etc.).[2]

The touristic heritage represents on one side the unit – defined as touristic potential – of the natural, social, economic, cultural elements, and on the other side, the entirety of accommodations intended for existing touristic activities in a territory (city, county, region, country etc) – reflected by the ethnical-material base – in which there are included: the communication means, accommodation, reposal, treatment, food, facilities for amusement and practice.[3]

The South-East Region is part of the 8 development regions in Romania and it's made up of 6 counties: Brăila, Buzău, Constanța, Galați, Tulcea and Vrancea.

Regarding the surface, the region comes second in dimension of the 8 regions in the country and has almost all the known forms of relief: the Danube Meadow, the Bărăgan Plain, the Dobrogea Plateau, the Măcin Mountains and a part of the Carpathians and Sub Carpathians of Curvature on the north-west side, the Danube river that crosses the region, the Danube Delta made by the Danube at its influx in the sea and the whole Romanian seaside of the Black Sea on the east side.[4]

Even though the smallest population density in the entire region is in Tulcea county, the largest being found in Galați County, however, the highest possibilities of touristic development are in Tulcea given the existence of the touristic aim, unique in our country, that has an out of the ordinary natural beauty, the Danube Delta, the Biosphere Rezervation, one of the less altered places by human pollution, protected by law and preserved by locals.

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

The analysis of the region from a touristic and agrotouristic point of view has been made with help from the following markers: the tally of the touristic development potential sorted by localities and groups of localities, the structure of the touristic units in the region and their scatter within the South-East Region.

The data has been taken from the National Tourism Authority website – Public information section[5].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Through analysing the statistical data, respectively the total tally on touristic development taken from the List of areas with high touristic potential – Annex 10 from Submeasure 6.2 – Support for founding non-agrarian activities in the rural areas – from Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development/Rural Investments Financing Agency website, we can conclude regarding the tourism development degree of the localities in the South-East Development Region that most of the localities that are developed from a touristic point of view and have development possibilities in that sense, are in Constanța and Tulcea County, the existence of the Danube Delta and the Black Sea seaside being the advantage of this area.

With a number of 25 localities in Constanța County and 24 localities in Tulcea County we have here an added up percentage of 43% of the total of administrative-territorial units with a high touristic potential.

Brăila, Galați and Buzău counties, with a number 14, 15, respectively 16 localities with a high touristic potential, represent the areas that are more frail from a touristic point of view, within the analysed development region, adding up together only 39% from the total of administrative-territorial units with a high touristic potential in the South-East Development Region.

Vrancea County is on the third place in touristic importance, containing 19 localities with high touristic potential, the calculated percentage being 17% from the total of administrative-territorial units with a high touristic potential in the South-East Development Region.

We can see in Table 1 that the majority of localities in the analysed developing region, are tallied with 20-29 points, respectively 63 localities out of the 113 in the region, adding up a percent of 56% from total, tallied in the 20-29 tallies category.

One locality is being tallied with 1-9 points because it's located in Brăila County and only 5 units are tallied with 40-50 points, in Constanța and Tulcea County.

A number of 44 localities are in the 10-19 tally categories and 30-39 points, the first tally category with 13 localities and the second one with 31 localities.

In the above 50 points category of tourism development potential, there isn't any locality in the South-East Region that fits.

We can say that the South-East Development Region has a high touristic potential, emphasizing on Constanța and Tulcea counties, where are the highest possibilities of development in this field.

Table 1. The localities structure in the South-East Region
by touristic development total talling

Nr. crt.	Judetul	UM	Total		Punctaj total potențial de dezvoltare					
			localități	%	1-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-50	>50
1	Brăila	Nr. loc	14	12,4	1	4	9	x	x	x
		%	100,0	x	7,1	28,6	64,3	x	x	x
2	Buzău	Nr. loc	16	14,2	x	3	8	5	x	x
		%	100,0	x	x	18,8	50,0	31,3	x	x
3	Constanța	Nr. loc	25	22,1	x	2	8	11	4	x
		%	100,0	x	x	8,0	32,0	44,0	16,0	x
4	Galați	Nr. loc	15	13,3	x	1	11	3	x	x
		%	100	x	x	6,7	73,3	20,0	x	x
5	Tulcea	Nr. loc	24	21,2	x	2	14	7	1	x
		%	100	x	x	8,3	58,3	29,2	4,2	x
6	Vrancea	Nr. loc	19	16,8	x	1	13	5	x	x
		%	100,0	x	x	5,3	68,4	26,3	x	x
Total localități în Regiunea Sud-Est		Nr. loc	113	100,0	1	13	63	32	5	x
		%	100	x	0,9	11,5	55,8	28,3	4,4	x

Source: AFIR

In order to analyse the capitalisation degree of the touristic and agrotouristic potential in the South-East Region we used the marker, the structure of the number of authorised touristic units, by types of categories and degree of comfort, for each and every county in the region.

The analysed and presented data have as reference year 2015.

From table nr. 2, it appears that within the South-East Development Region there are a total number of 1943 authorised accommodation units, the bigger weight belonging to Constanța County, with a number of 1309 units and a percentage of 67% of all the authorised accommodation units in the analysed region. We can conclude that this county capitalizes very well its touristic potential.

Tulcea county comes right after Constanța, with a number of 346 accommodation units and a percentage of 18% of total, that's where we believe that there are possibilities and space for development and capitalization of the touristic potential that Tulcea County has. Buzău, Vrancea, Brăila and Galați counties, have percentages under 10%, of the total of accommodation units in the South-East Region, which means that they still have reservations in capitalizing the touristic potential they have.

The most often found units in the region are the hotels with 430 accommodation units and touristic mansions with a number of 425 accommodation units.

The touristic bed and breakfasts are on the third place, with a total number of accommodation units of 391 from which only 10 accommodation units are agrotouristic bed and breakfasts, representing just 1 % of the accommodation units.

Most of the touristic bed and breakfasts are located in Tulcea County, respectively 151 accommodation units, from which 4 bed and breakfasts are agrotouristic.

By not having any authorized rural touristic or agrotouristic bed and breakfast, Brăila and Vrancea County prove that they did not initiate this form of tourism yet, a form that is sought more and more today by tourists in the country or from abroad.

Tabelul 2. The structure of the number of authorized touristic units from the South-East Region in 2015

Nr. crt.	Judet	UM	Total unitati		H o t e l	Pensiuni		V i l a	A l t e l e *
			N u m a r	%		T o t a l	din care agroturistica:		
1	Brăila	nr. unitati	44	2,3	16	12	x	3	13
2	Buzău	nr. unitati	116	6,0	16	61	3	6	33
3	Constanța	nr. unitati	1309	67,4	349	108	1	337	515
4	Galați	nr. unitati	48	2,5	18	11	2	5	14
5	Tulcea	nr. unitati	346	17,8	23	151	4	69	103
6	Vrancea	nr. unitati	80	4,1	8	48	x	5	19
Total localitati în Regiunea Sud-Est		nr. unitati	1943	100,0	430	391	10	425	697
		%	100	X	22,1	20,1	0,5	21,9	35,9

Source: ANT

From the data analysed and presented in Table 2 it appears that even though the South-East Region generally and Tulcea County especially have a rich and diverse touristic potential, rural tourism and agrotourism are types of tourism that are developed very little .

The quality of the accommodation structures from the South-East Development Region has been analysed by the degree of comfort that it provides and it's ranked with a number of stars/flowers for the accommodation function units that are presented in Table nr 3.

Table 3. The structure of the number of authorized touristic units from the South-East Region, sorted by quality categories in 2015*

Nr. crt.	Judet	UM	Total unitati		dîn care unități după nr de stele/flori *				
			numar	%	"1"	"2"	"3"	"4"	"5"
1	Brăila	nr	44	2,28	5	15	20	4	x
		%	100,0	X	11,4	34,1	45,5	9,1	x
2	Buzău	nr	113	5,9	7	52	48	6	x
		%	100,0	X	6,2	46,0	42,5	5,3	x
3	Constanța	nr	1306	67,7	216	442	529	80	39
		%	100,0	X	16,5	33,8	40,5	6,1	3,0
4	Galați	nr	46	2,4	4	10	28	3	1
		%	100,0	X	8,7	21,7	60,9	6,5	2,2
5	Tulcea	nr	341	17,7	5	48	160	89	39
		%	100,0	X	1,5	1,5	1,5	1,5	1,5
6	Vrancea	nr	80	4,1	6	23	41	9	1
		%	7,50	X	7,50	28,75	51,25	11,25	1,25
Total localitati în Regiunea Sud-Est		nr	1930	100,0	243	590	826	191	80
		%	100,0	X	12,6	30,6	42,8	9,9	4,1

Source : ANT

From a total of 1930 accommodation units in the development region categorized by the number of stars/flowers as resulting from Table nr 3, almost a half, respectively 43% of the units total are categorized with 3 stars/flowers.

The overweight of the units categorized with 3 stars/flowers stays the same in each county from the analysed region.

With 2 stars/flowers are categorized 31% of accommodation units total, 13% of accommodation units total are categorized with 1 star/flower and 10% of accommodation units total are categorized with 4 stars/flowers.

The units that are categorized with 5 stars/flowers add up at region level a total of 4, from which 2 are located in Constanța County and 2 in Tulcea County.

It appears that at the South-East Development Region level, the accommodation units have a medium quality level as they are categorized with 2 and 3 stars/flowers and have the highest degree of occupancy.

The luxury units, respectively the accommodation units that are categorized with 4 and 5 stars/flowers, are few but they still exceed in percentage the number of accommodation units with poor quality that are categorized with 1 star/flower.

Table nr. 4 contains data about a particular category within accommodation units, respectively the rural touristic bed and breakfasts and the agrotouristic bed and breakfasts located in the South-East Development Region, sorted by quality (number of flowers).

The number of these accommodation structures in the analyzed area is very small, as there are only 13 rural touristic bed and breakfasts and agrotouristic bed and breakfasts functional in the whole region, Tulcea County having 5 registered units from total and 4 functional units are found in Buzău County.

There isn't any rural touristic bed and breakfast and agrotouristic bed and breakfast in Brăila and Vrancea counties which is a waste for these areas that have a high degree of authenticity, respectively an abundant agrotouristic potential.

We believe that rural tourism and agrotourism are not developed sufficiently given the level of agrotouristic potential that the South-East Development Region has.

Table 4. The structure of the number of authorized rural and agrotouristic bed and breakfasts in the South-East Development Region based on quality categories in 2015

Nr. crt.	Judet	UM	Total unitati		din care unități după nr de flori				
			numar	%	"1"	"2"	"3"	"4"	"5"
1	Brăila	nr. unitati	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
		%	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
2	Buzău	nr. unitati	4	30,8	x	1	3	x	x
		%	100,0	x	x	25,0	75,0	x	x
3	Constanța	nr. unitati	2	15,4	x	1	1	x	x
		%	100,0	x	x	50,0	50,0	x	x
4	Galați	nr. unitati	2	15,4	x	x	x	x	2
		%	100,0	x	x	x	x	x	100,0
5	Tulcea	nr. unitati	5	38,5	x	4	1	x	x
		%	100,0	X	x	80,0	20,0	x	x
6	Vrancea	nr. unitati	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
		%	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Total localitati în Regiunea Sud-Est		nr. unitati	13	100,0	x	6	5	x	2
		%	100,0	x	x	46,2	38,5	x	15,4

Source: ANT

CONCLUSIONS

We believe that the touristic potential of the South-East Development Region is capitalized insufficiently as opposed to the demand for touristic and agrotouristic products existing on a national and international level.

The main mean for economic development in Tulcea County, that would not need large investments consists of rural tourism that is an increasing source of interest for tourists.

Under these conditions a good quality rural tourism requires a minimum modern sanitary endowment, comfort conditions for both accommodation and catering, access routes and civilised communication means and especially the reception staff's special professional training [7].

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