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ASPECTS OF THE TOURISM MARKET DEVELOPMENT IN THE DOBRUDGEAN RURAL AREA

ELENA SIMA¹

Abstract. *The rural area from Dobrudgea has an extensive and highly diversified tourism potential. The main tourist attractions are represented by: natural resources – such as spas and balneo-climateric resorts; religious heritage; cultural and historical heritage; ethnographic and gastronomy elements. The tourism infrastructure in these rural areas is well represented by a good range of accommodation structures such as small budget hotels or B&Bs. However, by comparison, there are very few leisure and service supply structures such as entertainment facilities, bars, restaurants, theatres, cinemas or shopping facilities. In this context, the objective of this paper is to highlight some of the main characteristics or aspects that characterise the rural tourism market development in the Dobrudgean rural area. The methodology used is based on secondary data analyses under the form of a synthesis of information from articles and studies published in specialty journals, in Government documents as well as in other development strategies dedicated to tourism and the rural space. The findings of this scientific research study argues that the successful rural tourism promotion and development very much depends on an efficient and sustainable exploitation of the existing tourism potential, on the development of a viable network of private small and medium-sized enterprises in the tourism sector and also on the involvement of governmental and non-governmental institutions.*

Keywords: *rural space; rural tourism market; tourism activities, Dobrudgea.*

JEL Classification: *R20, L83.*

INTRODUCTION

Essential component of rural development policy, rural tourism is perceived as a priority for the continuous and sustainable development of the rural community, as well as the preservation of the rural landscape and its heritage. It holds great potential in re-launching the economy of rural communities (as occupational alternative for the rural labour force, a way to diversify the economic activities in the rural environment and a way to stabilise and employ long term the rural population). Rural tourism also holds an important place in the overall Romanian tourism development plan. The aspiration is that rural tourism can provide high quality accommodation, comfort, and entertainment. The desire is to develop the rural festivals and events branch of rural tourism, as well as sporting activities and other engaging activities for the tourist. The ideal rural tourism development would encourage the local population to actively engage with these activities and foster a long term, lasting relationship with the tourist (1,2,5).

In Romania, the development and promotion of touristic activities in the rural space was intensified through the implementation of various European Union programmes. These programmes were mainly a source of financing and focused on several aspects:

- to increase, improve and diversify the small-scale tourism accommodation facilities and private investments in the leisure tourism infrastructure;
- to develop the information and promotion tourism centres and to improve and diversify the tourism services connected with the rural tourism through the elaboration of promotion and information materials, orientation, counselling and training in the entrepreneurial and non-agricultural domain granted to the inhabitants in the rural environment;
- to develop the local on-line biking systems for the rural tourism accommodation facilities within the rural area connected at regional and national systems. (4,6,15)

The paper explores how the Dobrudgean rural tourism market was approached in tourism policies between 2007-2013; how the rural economy reacted and developed due to the sustained promotion and development of rural tourism; and how it can further develop and help rural communities in the Dobrudgean area.

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MATERIAL AND METHOD

The methodology adopted for this study consists of secondary data analysis. Secondary data is data that was previously collected and processed and has been reanalysed to satisfy the needs of this study. The analysed information was collected through the documentary study of the works on the approached theme. The statistical data on which the analysis was based were at two counties level: Constanța and Tulcea. They covered the period 2006-2017 and had the following sources: NIS statistical data available online – www.TEMPO-online, other online sources with information from articles and studies published in specialty magazines, as well as the National Rural Development Plan (NRDP) 2007-2013 and non-governmental reports and documents.

The paper contains a brief characterization of the touristic activity in the rural area, in Jurilovca and Murighiol - rural localities in Tulcea county and Costinești and Limanu- rural localities in Constanta county (table 1).

Table 1. List of rural localities statistically monitored from the touristic activity point of view

| Crt. no. | Tulcea County | Constanța County |
|----------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Baia | 23 August |
| 2 | Bestepe | Agigea |
| 3 | C.A. Rosetti | Corbu |
| 4 | Chilia Veche | Costinești |
| 5 | Crișan | Horia |
| 6 | Jurilovca | Limanu |
| 7 | Mahmudia | Mihail Kogalniceanu |
| 8 | Maliuc | Oltina |
| 9 | Murighiol | Saligny |
| 10 | Nufăru | Seimeni |
| 11 | Sfântu Gheorghe | Tuzla |
| 12 | Somova | Valu Traian |
| 13 | Valea Nucarilor | - |

Source: Tempo-online database, 2018, <http://www.insse.ro/>

The main tourism activity indicators are analysed: the tourism reception structure, the tourism accommodation capacity, arrivals and overnight stays of tourists, both per total county and by rural areas. On the basis of these synthetic indicators the net utilization index of the tourist accommodation capacity in operation was calculated, according to the following formula:

$$I_n = (N / C_f) \times 100,$$

where: I_n is the net utilization index of the tourism accommodation capacity in operation; N is the number of overnight stays in a certain period; C_f is the tourist accommodation capacity in operation. This index was calculated both at county level and by rural localities with touristic activity situated in the Danube Delta and on the Black Sea shore.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In the period 2007-2013, the field of *rural tourism* was financially supported within the National Rural Development Plan (NRDP), through Axis 3: Axis 3: “The improvement of life quality in the rural areas and rural economy diversification”, Measure 313 “Encouragement of tourism activities”. The investment supported through the measure 313 of NRDP, was completed by the SOP HRD (POS DRU) 2007-2013 regarding the orientation, counselling and training in the entrepreneurial and non-agricultural sector granted to the inhabitants in the rural area, especially to those coming from an agricultural background (15).

The general objective of the Measure: 313 was the development of touristic activities in rural zones, which could contribute to the increase of jobs' number and to alternative incomes, as well as to the rural space attractivity (11,9).

The financial support granted through this measure had in view investments in:

- the infrastructure of touristic reception and leisure activities (in which there are registered also actions regarding the constructions, modernization, expansion and endowment of the touristic reception structures and private investments in the touristic infrastructure for leisure, independent or dependent on the touristic reception structure),
- the small-scale infrastructure (as well as the centres for touristic information, guide marks arrangements/touristic routes etc.),
- development and/or marketing of touristic services connected to the rural tourism (elaboration of promotional materials, information, etc.).

According to article 55 of the Regulation (EC) 1974/2006 for all the types of actions regarding the elaboration of promotional leaflets for promoting tourist activities such as first publication of leaflets, billposter etc., The general costs related to the project will be supported, such as: purchasing of machinery hard-ware, soft-ware inclusively their purchasing in leasing, the installation work and assemblage, the general costs for drawing up the project such as expenditure representing the architects', engineers' and consultants', fees, feasibility studies/justifying memoir, taxes for issue certificates, clearances and authorisations which are necessary for the project implementation, as stated in the national legislation, purchase of patents and licenses, up to 10% from project eligible value and up to 5% for the project which not includes construction (15).

The activity of rural tourism and agro-tourism is being promoted by the National Association of Rural, Ecological and Cultural Tourism (ANTREC) – Bucharest, which publishes catalogues and booklets, international and national use booklets. The catalogues published are respecting the EUROGÎTES codifications regarding the pictographs for each touristic and agro-touristic boarding house. The promotion of the rural touristic supply is realised through the exhibitions and the National Tourism Fair in Romania, where ANTREC, with its branches participates with local handicrafts and trades. Also, ANTREC is present at all fairs and international tourism stock exchanges (10).

The promoted touristic and agro-tourism boarding houses are situated in the *Danube Delta* - one of the best known touristic destinations of Romania, geographically made of three types of areals: low (Danube Delta and Meadow), lagoons (Razim-Sinoie complex) and coasts (the South-Dobrudgian seashore of the Black Sea), on the *Black Sea Shore* - laid on 245 km, between the grind Chituc-the gulf Musura at the border with Ukraine and the locality: Vama Veche at the border with Bulgaria, as well as in the continental zone of Dobrudgea - less known to the tourists, characterized by the specialists by the notion of „structural and stones mosaic”, with a specific bioclimate and many protected areas, from North to South (3, 12, 13).

Danube Delta is one of our greatest museums, a morpho-hydrographic and biological laboratory, where all is labile and in search of balance, an open and fragile system, a touristic region of national and international interest, a natural unity, where Man's hand and mind entered in the genesis charm, in his use or detriment, but also Nature's (7).

Before 1990, Danube Delta was an important touristic region of our country, both for the internal circulation, and for the foreign tourism. There used to be a good will for the German tourists (mainly for the Eastern ones). The best appreciated touristic forms were the nautical tourism (the trips by boat and kayak downstream Tulcea) or the stationary tourism (at the touristic base from Lacul Roşu). Besides the main routes (The Danube's arms and some canals) necessary for the link with the human dwellings and economic exploitation of the natural, agricultural, forestry and fishery resources, in the Danube Delta there are other areas for leisure and touristic routes for trips regarded by the Administrative Council of the Reservation.

At present, in the Danube Delta, the touristic forms knowing a real success are: the rural tourism, agro-tourism and eco-tourism with accommodation at the local people. The most frequented localities are: Crişan and Maliuc situated along the Sulina Arm, localities: Nufăru,

Mahmudia and Murighiol situated along the Sfântu Gheorghe Arm, as well as the Jurilovca locality situated on the bank of Razim Lake. In touristic purposes it is used for its helio-marine potential of the Sea beaches from Sulina, Sfântu Gheorghe and Gura Portiței.

The tourism development of the South-Dobrudgian shore region started at the end of the XIX-th century and start of the XX-th, with the balneary climatic stations: Eforie, Techirghiol, Mamaia and Mangalia (8). The housing capacity and touristic arrangements have increased in a considerable way during the interbelic period, but mainly in the decades: 6 and 7 of the XX-th century.

Besides the housing supply in the standard network (hotels, motels, little houses, campings etc.) in the shore localities a real dwelling industry developed under boarding house system, mainly in the rural settlements: Schitu, Costinești, 2 Mai and Vama Veche. This system perpetuated also after the year 1990, being accompanied by an ample development of the constructions of boarding house type in the private sector. Thus, on localities' list there were added new names as: Corbu, Năvodari, Mamaia-Sat, Lazu, Agigea, Tuzla, 23 August, Limanu.

During the last years, besides the season and balneary tourism, the changes of behavioural type at the level of the customers in tourism have reduced the importance of the mass tourism organized in favour of other forms, as: *the transit tourism, of week-end or professional, scientific, of business, cultural and sports*.

In Tulcea County, five of the rural localities with touristic activity are situated in the Danube Delta (Sfântu Gheorghe, C.A. Rosetti, Chilia Veche, Crișan and Maliuc), and the access is navally ensured on the three Danube Arms: Chilia, Sulina and Sfântu Gheorghe. The other rural localities with touristic activity are in the limitrophe zone to the Delta and have access on the modernized county roads.

In Constanța County, six of the rural localities with touristic activity are situated on the Black Sea Bank (Corbu, Agigea, Tuzla, Costinești, 23 August and Limanu with the villages 2 Mai and Vama Veche), four are situated on the right bank of the Danube River (Oltina, Saligny, Seimeni, Horia), and two (Valu lui Traian and Mihail Kogălniceanu) are situated at a 16 km distance respectively 27 km from Constanța municipality, the nearest town on the Black Sea Bank.

The Danube Delta was and remains an important touristic objective, both for the internal tourism, and for the foreign one. In the analysed period, most of the housing structures and the most intense touristic circulation were statistically registered in: *Murighiol* situated on the Sfântu Gheorghe Arm and *Jurilovca* situated on the bank of the Razim lake.

Constanța county has inscribed in the statistical database 12 rural localities of which six (Limanu, 23 August, Costinești, Tuzla, Agigea, Corbu) are situated in the zone of the proper touristic shore, near the stations having infrastructure for accommodation, leisure and cure. The housing capacity and the touristic arrangements in the rural localities on the Black Sea shore represent 98% of the total number of the rural touristic structures of Constanta county and is concentrated in the localities: Costinești and Limanu.

The main types of structures with functions of touristic housing, in which it is developing the touristic activity of the rural localities in the Danube Delta and from the Black Sea shore are: the hotels, touristic villas and the agro-touristic boarding houses. The number, the comfort degree and their facilities are fluctuant from year to year and from one locality to other.

From the point of view of the *touristic circulation (arrivals and beds of tourists)*, in the analysed period, the most intense touristic activity was registered in localities: Jurilovca and Murighiol from the Danube Delta and on the shore of the Black Sea in the localities: Costinești and Limanu with the villages 2 Mai and Vama Veche.

Jurilovca commune (with the villages: Jurilovca - commune residence, Sălcioara and Vișina) has lately become the biggest community of fishermen in the Delta, having a Center for fish collection and processing brought here both from the Danube's waters and from the lakes forming the lagoon complex Razim-Sinoe and from those of the Black Sea. The sustained effort of the local communities has transformed the locality also into a point of touristic attraction, the housing capacity and the tourism activity being supported by the presence of the small entrepreneurs who

are administrating, starting with the year 2012, a number of 26 touristic villas, a touristic lodge and an agro-touristic boarding house(13).

The number of tourists arrived and bedded in the touristic reception structures in Lipova has increased in the last years (table 2) also due to the fact that from this locality you can reach by the little ship to Gura Portiței, a vacation village situated on the narrow land strip between Golovița lake and the Black Sea, and by car to the ruins, partially restored, of the Greek and Roman fortress: Arganum (centuries: VII bc-VI ac).

Murighiol commune is by its capacity of housing and touristic capacity (table 3) an attraction point accessible to tourists, because, very near to the village a net of canals is opening, through which you can enter the most savage and picturesque from the Danube Delta Biosphere Reservation.

Table 2. The tourism accommodation capacity and the tourism activity of Jurilovca

| Years | Structures Number | The tourism accommodation capacity | | The tourism accommodation activity | | |
|-------|----------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| | | existing no. places | in use no. places-days | arrivals no. | overnight stays no. beds | utilization indices |
| 2006 | 16 | 348 | 55320 | 1327 | 1368 | 2,5 |
| 2007 | 27 | 198 | 24184 | 3213 | 4455 | 18,4 |
| 2008 | 18 | 366 | 26548 | 9824 | 21534 | 81,1 |
| 2009 | 29 | 345 | 10400 | 2566 | 6776 | 65,2 |
| 2010 | 29 | 345 | 23488 | 4279 | 6952 | 29,6 |
| 2011 | 32 | 343 | 33943 | 4791 | 10357 | 30,5 |
| 2012 | 28 | 345 | 10950 | 1762 | 2992 | 27,3 |
| 2013 | 29 | 345 | 52707 | 9457 | 30060 | 57,0 |
| 2014 | 29 | 323 | 15364 | 7533 | 13326 | 86,7 |
| 2015 | 29 | 323 | 18967 | 6104 | 16731 | 88,2 |
| 2016 | 29 | 323 | 24904 | 7138 | 20976 | 84,3 |
| 2017 | 18 | 323 | 27604 | 5055 | 16520 | 59,8 |

Source: TEMPO-Online statistical database, 2018, <http://www.insse.ro/>

Table 3. The tourism accommodation capacity and the tourism activity of Murighiol

| Years | Structures Number | The tourism accommodation capacity | | The tourism accommodation activity | | |
|-------|----------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| | | existing no. places | in use no. places-days | arrivals no. | overnight stays no. beds | utilization indices |
| 2006 | 16 | 556 | 56045 | 7891 | 13618 | 24,3 |
| 2007 | 13 | 479 | 24938 | 7908 | 15235 | 61,1 |
| 2008 | 11 | 396 | 67114 | 9862 | 16534 | 24,6 |
| 2009 | 27 | 469 | 21257 | 5984 | 12432 | 58,5 |
| 2010 | 25 | 392 | 39619 | 4676 | 8569 | 21,6 |
| 2011 | 11 | 461 | 42726 | 3254 | 6579 | 15,4 |
| 2012 | 25 | 565 | 35466 | 3985 | 7763 | 22,0 |
| 2013 | 24 | 525 | 20298 | 1753 | 3682 | 18,2 |
| 2014 | 24 | 541 | 14772 | 3621 | 8109 | 54,0 |
| 2015 | 24 | 456 | 15380 | 3586 | 8388 | 55,0 |
| 2016 | 24 | 456 | 20130 | 2301 | 5267 | 26,2 |
| 2017 | 25 | 456 | 61306 | 8980 | 13322 | 21,7 |

Source: TEMPO-Online statistical data base, 2018, <http://www.insse.ro/>

In *Costinești locality*, tourism started in the years 1920, but it took off starting the year 1949, together with the inauguration of the first pioneers' camp and continued, ten years later, when they opened the international students' camp (with a few hundreds of blue tents along the sea front), and since the year 1966, the locality was declared as youth station. After the year 1989, Costinești was officially inscribed on the list of touristic stations of national interest, as well as on the list of

balneary and climatic stations attested (in the year 2004) by the General Direction of the National Authority for Tourism within the Ministry of Transports, Constructions and Tourism, due to the beneficial climate factors and the conditions for the maintaining and improvement of the health and/or work capacity, as well as rest and relaxation (8).

Limanu commune is a locality full of life and colour, due to villages: 2 Mai, which in summer time, becomes one of the most asked for stations of the Romanian shore and: Vama Veche, which became a touristic brand of national importance with a unique resonance space of freedom and harmony with nature. The main attraction of the two mini-stations is the closeness to nature, the simple free spirited atmosphere, and mainly, the reduced housing tariffs and the convenient prices for the fish dishes, fresh from the Black Sea (12).

Table 4. The tourism accommodation capacity and the tourism activity of Costinești

| Years | Structures number | The tourism accommodation capacity | | The tourism accommodation activity | | |
|-------|----------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| | | existing no. places | in use no. places-days | arrivals no. | overnight stays no. beds | utilization indices |
| 2006 | 192 | 6500 | 256819 | 18937 | 83414 | 35,5 |
| 2007 | 191 | 6468 | 255572 | 23190 | 93677 | 36,7 |
| 2008 | 191 | 6468 | 274623 | 23926 | 110812 | 40,4 |
| 2009 | 193 | 6429 | 353807 | 28625 | 130773 | 37,0 |
| 2010 | 198 | 6882 | 233106 | 20507 | 76078 | 32,6 |
| 2011 | 131 | 4910 | 332700 | 22848 | 93399 | 28,1 |
| 2012 | 157 | 5268 | 364929 | 29069 | 120260 | 33,0 |
| 2013 | 154 | 5282 | 309640 | 23532 | 93446 | 30,2 |
| 2014 | 146 | 5021 | 278416 | 24745 | 105796 | 38,0 |
| 2015 | 154 | 5949 | 413619 | 33386 | 135548 | 32,8 |
| 2016 | 154 | 6011 | 392618 | 38402 | 165022 | 42,0 |
| 2017 | 152 | 6109 | 407653 | 43090 | 179587 | 44,1 |

Source: TEMPO-Online statistical database, 2018, <http://www.insse.ro/>

Table 5. The tourism accommodation capacity and the tourism activity of Limanu

| Years | Structures number | The tourism accommodation capacity | | The tourism accommodation activity | | |
|-------|----------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| | | existing no. places | in use no. places-days | arrivals no. | overnight stays no. beds | utilization indices |
| 2006 | 14 | 822 | 32746 | 3059 | 12866 | 39,3 |
| 2007 | 15 | 832 | 42676 | 3449 | 15765 | 37,0 |
| 2008 | 15 | 826 | 44344 | 3723 | 18759 | 42,3 |
| 2009 | 15 | 832 | 43210 | 3017 | 13712 | 31,7 |
| 2010 | 16 | 901 | 44684 | 3054 | 12432 | 27,8 |
| 2011 | 14 | 909 | 88002 | 8171 | 22908 | 26,0 |
| 2012 | 20 | 1050 | 97394 | 10362 | 29146 | 30,0 |
| 2013 | 20 | 1050 | 92859 | 9548 | 29366 | 31,6 |
| 2014 | 19 | 986 | 85390 | 13468 | 37351 | 43,7 |
| 2015 | 21 | 1124 | 110370 | 16622 | 52909 | 48,0 |
| 2016 | 20 | 1122 | 77080 | 15108 | 39944 | 51,8 |
| 2017 | 18 | 1054 | 90242 | 14800 | 45332 | 50,2 |

Source: Tempo-online database, 2018, <http://www.insse.ro/>

Also, in the area there are two of the Dobrudgean attractions destined to specialists:

- Limanu cave, very huge (with an area of: 3400 m) and full of ramifications, it used to be inhabited for thousands of years, because the objects found are dated from different historical periods and the chambers had a certain functionality;

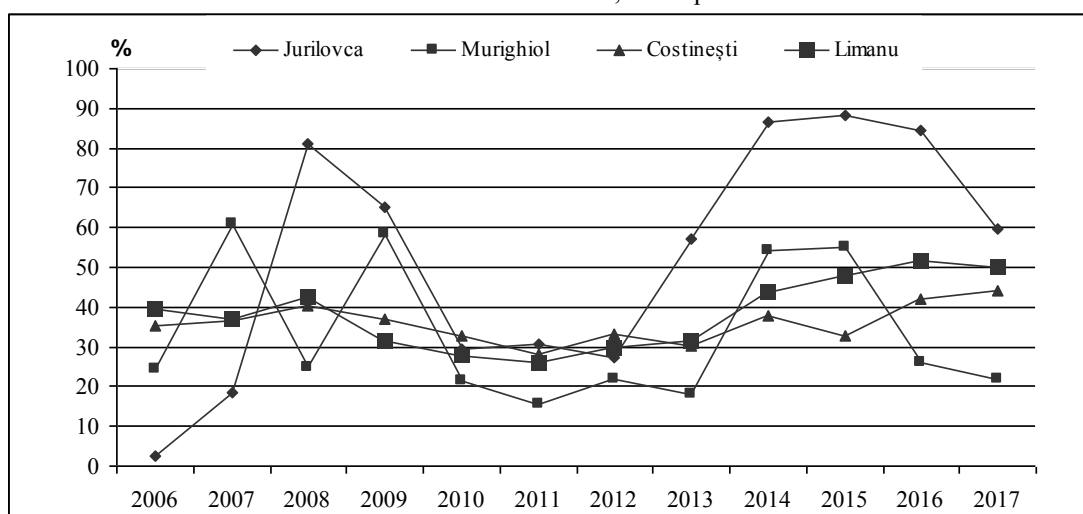
- Hagieni forest, a natural reservation with zoo-botanical profile, spread on 100 ha, with limestone plateaus, with steppe and bushes, a place where anyone can realise the significance of the

Dobrudgean bio-diversity, where there are living three of the most poisonous serpent species (the Dobrudgean horned viper, the 'bad snake' and Esculap's snake).

Together with Romania's accession to the EU, it increased the competitiveness of the tourism activity of the inhabitants in the four analysed rural localities, situated in the Biosphere Reservation Danube Delta and on the shore of Black Sea. Nevertheless, the statistical data show us that after the year 2006, the number of tourism accommodation structures decreased, but it increased the housing capacity and the comfort degree.

This aspect is sustained through the *net utilization indices of the tourism accommodation capacity in use* (calculated by reporting the number of overnight stays to the tourism accommodation capacity in use in a certain period). For the studied localities, this index evolution (figure 1) is strongly influenced by the following factors of Romanian tourism development: the law framework, the importance granted to the rural tourism at local and national level, the development degree of the general and specific infrastructure etc.

Figure 1. Evolution of the utilization indices of the tourist accommodation capacity in use, in the studied tourism rural localities, in the period 2006-2017



Source: Tempo-online database, 2018, <http://www.insse.ro/>

Analysing figure 1 we can observe the fact that in locality: Jurilovca the approach and consolidation of a positive attitude towards tourism had a different evolution. Although the period of economic crisis had a word, the leisure tourism grew rapidly, especially made for the sports fishing at *Cyprinus carpi*, pike, zander, catfish, honey locust etc. In direct relation to the flow of tourists they developed the transport on Golovița lake to the vacation village: Gura Portiței and it grew the number of touristic circuits, organized for the Danube Delta visiting.

The Dobrudgean rural tourism in the Delta or on sea addresses both to Romanian and foreign customers. The segment appealing most to this kind of services is that the second age persons and less to the third age ones. These prefer the quietness of a rural boarding house, more than the noise of the crowdy stations on the shore. We must not neglect the young people, but their share is more reduced, due to the preference for the places full of agitation. The foreign tourists, who appeal most to the supplies of the rural tourism are those interested in the knowledge of history and local traditions, by visiting the picturesque zones, of great beauty, keeping the old habits: houses architecture, folklore clothes, handicrafts, food specialties.

CONCLUSIONS

In Tulcea county, Danube Delta was and remains an important tourism objective, and Măcinului Mountains are not too well known; the tourism accommodation facilities and public food are less developed, which is limiting the tourism number in the zone. The best known tourism rural settlements in Danube Delta are: Crișan, Maliuc, Mahmudia and Murighiol, and locality: Jurilovca

situated on bank of lake: Razim, but those in which most of the tourism circulation is registered are: Jurilovca and Murighiol.

In Constanța county the trends in arrangement of the rural space for tourism have in view the zone of the shore, the localities along Danube and the localities with archaeological sites and religious objectives. The highest variety of tourism reception structures, and most of the season tourism activity is registered in the commune: Costinești with the villages Schitu and Costinești, and in commune: Limanu with the villages 2 Mai and Vama Veche.

According to data analyse, the in-sufficient promotion of the zone, the limited collaboration between the most important actors, the lack of investments in this sector, tourism policies, the repeated blocking of local authorities' projects and of those in local tourism, the in-coherence and absence of a strategy at central authorities level, the lack of a coherent vision for the development of Romanian tourism, the lack of interest of the State to the development and promotion of the Romanian tourism, the lack of funding of programs and special offers organized by the employers' associations in tourism, represent the reasons for which the Dobrudgean rural tourism in the Delta and Sea is not considered a representative touristic product.

A qualitative estimation of the tourism sector in the Delta shows the fact that the development process was founded on commercialization of products less diversified with a high geographical concentration, configurating a standard supply the commercial actions of which are based mainly on sales of housing places from the main zones (of coast).

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