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Tourist and agro-tourist potential in the Southeast region

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TOURIST AND AGRO-TOURIST POTENTIAL IN THE SOUTHEAST REGION

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Abstract

The South-East Development Region is characterized by a rich and harmoniously distributed tourist potential. The presence of the Black Sea coast and the Danube Delta on the territory of the region, but also the mountainous area are some of the biggest tourist attractions. In addition, in the region we find spas - climate, agritourism pensions, monasteries, cultural relics, etc., which makes it possible to practice several forms of tourism: seaside, mountain, cruise, rural tourism, agrotourism, religious, cultural and historical (etic, Roman, Greek, Byzantine cities).

This paper was conducted in order to analyze the tourism potential of the region, using indicators that reflect the evolution of tourist units and their spread in the region.

Keywords: development region, tourism, agrotourism, tourist potential, tourist activity

JEL Classification: L83

INTRODUCTION

Romania was and will remain a paradise of valleys and mountain peaks, plains and hills, with the shore and horizon of the sea, Danube, Delta, legendary river courses, with a great variety and harmony of landforms in a geographical space no very vast.

Rich in deposits of mineral waters, skunks and other scientifically identified and certified healing factors, not yet fully exploited to their full potential in many seaside resorts throughout the country. Romania has an exceptional variety of such natural factors, especially since they are distributed in a natural setting of great beauty. In the last 30 years, with all the transformations produced, tourism remains a true ally and a source of human health.

The South-East region is located in the south-eastern part of Romania, covering 35,762 km² or 15% of the total area of the country, the region is the second largest of the 8 of Romania. The South - East region includes almost all forms of relief: the Danube meadow, the Bărăgan plain, the Dobrogea plateau with the Măcin Mountains, and the northwestern part of the region includes a part of the Carpathians and Subcarpathians of Curvature. At the same time, the region is crossed by the Danube river, includes the Danube Delta and is bordered on the east by the entire Romanian Black Sea coast. However, the plain relief, with a continental climatic specificity, is predominant.

Romanian agrotourism has a very important contribution in the development of the rural area, it contributes to the life of the village both economically, socially and culturally. The long-term development of the village is closely linked to agriculture, infrastructure and environmental protection. (Dona I., 2005)

The arrangements for carrying out various tourism activities, although they have amplified in the last 2 decades, have a varying degree of modernization and uneven distribution.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

For the evaluation of the calculations we used the main quantification indicators for measuring the potential of tourism in the development of the economy, namely:

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- the number of tourists, obtained by accumulating information from different statistical documents, efficiently calculating shorter or longer periods of time, depending on the user. The indicator can determine the tourist traffic on the total tourist area, or tourist actions.

- the number of tourist days or overnight stays is determined from the total number of days registered in the accommodation spaces, by types of accommodation units, by types of actions and the area of origin of tourists;

The indicators used in the analysis undertaken are: arithmetic mean, standard deviation, coefficient of variation, percentage changes, annual growth rate.

$$\text{Arithmetic mean } \bar{X} = \frac{\sum xi}{n}$$

where: X_i = values of average productions / number of years (i); n = number of years considered.

The indicators used were taken from the literature (Ceapoiu, 1968) (Snak et al., 2003), (Culmeşti and Doroi, 2016):

- The average annual growth rate is calculated according to the formula:

$$r = \sqrt[n-1]{\prod p_n/p_0 - 1}$$

where: r = average annual growth rate; $\prod p_n/p_0$ = chained growth indicators

- Standard deviation::

$$\sigma = \sqrt{\frac{\sum (\bar{x} - x_i)^2}{n-1}}$$

where: σ = standard deviation; x_i = values of average productions over a number of years; n = number of years considered

$$\text{- Coefficient of variation: } C = \frac{\sigma}{\bar{X}} \times 100$$

where: C = coefficient of variation (expressed in%)

The coefficient of variation can be: between 0-10% - small variation; between 10-20% - medium variation; over 20% - big variation.

The mean square deviation and the coefficient of variation - indicators that allow evaluative assessments to the degree of uniformity of the activity of economic agents (Draghici and Mara, 2010)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

By Development Regions, a significant increase in the number of agritourism pensions is found in the South-West Oltenia Region, with an annual rate of 14.9%, so that in 2019 their number is 3.5 times higher compared to 2010. The only region where there are decreases is the Bucharest-Ilfov Region, with a rate of -11.5% per year, so that from 6 units in 2010 it reaches 2 units in 2019. The minimum of the period was registered in 2016 when there is only one agritourism guesthouse in this region.

At the level of the South-East Development Region, we see increases in the number of agritourism pensions, with a rate of 9.4%, so that in 2019 we have 130 units more than in 2010.

Table 1. The evolution of the number of agritourism pensions in Romania by Development Regions in the period 2010-2019

Regions of Development	2010	2012	2014	2016	2019	Min	Max	Arithmetic mean	Annual growth rate	2019/ 2010
	nr	%	%	%						
<u>TOTAL</u>	1354	1569	1665	2028	2800	1210	2821	1951,9	8,4	206,8
Region N-V	266	252	226	284	538	206	538	321,2	8,1	202,3
Region Centru	487	594	663	823	892	424	984	727	7,0	183,2
Region aN-E	229	265	288	352	458	223	458	332,8	8,0	200,0
Region S-E	104	89	88	88	234	71	234	117	9,4	225,0

Regions of Development	2010	2012	2014	2016	2019	Min	Max	Arithmetic mean	Annual growth rate	2019/ 2010
Braila	:	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0,0	0,0
Buzau	33	42	45	47	62	30	62	46,6	7,3	187,9
Constanța	35	7	7	7	20	5	35	10,9	-6,0	52,14
Galati	:	:	:	:	3	3	3	3	0,0	0,0
Tulcea	12	18	16	15	118	10	133	36,7	28,9	983,3
Vrancea	24	21	19	18	30	13	30	21,1	2,5	125,0
Region Sud-Mun.	109	147	174	210	256	109	256	188	10,0	234,9
Region Buc. - If	6	2	2	1	2	1	6	2,2	-11,5	33,3
Region S-V Olt.	60	108	108	120	209	60	209	122,2	14,9	348,3
Region Vest	93	112	116	150	211	85	211	141,5	9,5	226,9

Source: INS data processing

Within the region, the most developed counties in terms of the number of agritourism pensions are:

- Tulcea with 118 units in 2019, with 106 more than in 2010;
- Buzau with a number of 62 units in 2019, with 87.9% more than in 2010, registering a growth rate of 7.3%;
- Vrancea occupies the 3rd place, with 30 units, in 2019, with 6 more than in 2010.
- even if in 2010 the largest share is the number of agritourism pensions in the region was owned by Constanța County, their number decreases during this period with a rate of -6%. Thus, from 35 units in 2010 it reaches 5 units in 2017, representing the minimum of the analyzed period, so that in the final year to increase to 20 agritourism pensions.

Table 2. Evolution of accommodation capacity in agritourism pensions (places), in the South-East Region, 2010-2019

Region / county	2010	2012	2014	2016	2019	Min	Max	Arithmetic mean	Annual growth rate	2019/ 2010
	places	places	places	places	places	nr	nr	nr	%	%
TOTAL	20208	27453	30480	37394	49053	20208	49053	34230,7	10,4	242,7
Region S-E	2106	2047	1930	1817	4708	1386	4708	2395,5	9,4	223,6
Braila	:	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	0,0	100,0
Buzau	499	809	867	911	1187	496	1187	877,1	10,1	237,9
Constanța	883	239	239	253	470	184	883	318,3	-6,8	53,2
Galati	:	:	:	:	26	26	26	26	0,0	100,0
Tulcea	354	588	505	358	2555	208	2649	836,6	24,6	721,8
Vrancea	370	401	309	285	460	193	460	347,7	2,4	124,3

Source: INS data processing

In the South-East Region there are increases with a rate of 9.4%, the number of places in agritourism pensions doubling in 2019 compared to 2010. In the component counties, an impressive increase is observed in the number of places in agritourism pensions in Tulcea with a rate of 24.6%, so that in 2019 it reaches 2555 places, compared to 2010 when there were only 354 places. A decline is registered in Constanța, the number of places in agritourism pensions being reduced to 470 places in 2019, representing 53.2% compared to their number in 2010.

Table 3. Evolution of the tourist accommodation capacity in operation in agrotourism pensions (place - days), in the South-East Region in the period 2010-2019

Region / county	2010	2012	2014	2016	2019	Min	Max	arithmetic mean	annual growth rate	2019/ 2010
	thousand place-days								%	%
TOTAL	4891,9	6864,9	8220,0	10336,7	12616,0	4891,9	12616,0	8960,6	11,1	257,9
Regiunea S-E	299,9	386,4	391,0	414,4	899,5	291,1	899,5	479,2	13,0	299,9
Brăila	:	2,5	3,7	3,7	3,7	2,5	3,7	3,5	4,5	149,0

Region / county	2010	2012	2014	2016	2019	Min	Max	arithmetic mean	annual growth rate	2019/ 2010
	thousand place-days							%	%	
Buzău	181,8	275,2	306,2	328,7	433,3	181,8	433,3	316,8	10,1	238,3
Constanța	30,9	10,7	13,2	17,6	43,6	10,0	43,6	18,6	3,9	140,9
Galați	:	:	:	2,1	7,3	2,1	7,3	5,0	13,0	300,5
Tulcea	43,8	27,6	19,0	23,4	342,4	4,1	342,4	84,0	25,7	781,9
Vrancea	43,4	70,5	48,9	39,0	69,3	39,0	70,5	54,5	5,3	159,6

Source: INS data processing

In the South-East Development Region, there are increases in accommodation capacity in operation, the number of places-days reaching 899.5 thousand in 2019, of approx. 3 times higher than the reference year 2010, with an annual growth rate of 13%.

Among the component counties of the South-East Region, the highest share is held by Buzău County, from 60.61% in 2010, reaching 84.91% in 2017, but decreasing to 48.16% in 2019. Tulcea is a county where the accommodation capacity in operation has increased dramatically from 43.8 thousand places-days in 2010, to 342.4 thousand places days in 2019, representing over 38% of the total accommodation capacity in operation in the region.

Brăila and Galați are the least developed counties in terms of agrotourism, so that accommodation capacity is low, with a number of places-days between 2.5-3.7 thousand and 2.1- 7.3 thousand, for the analyzed period. The tourist traffic follows the evolution of the number of tourists, both Romanian and foreign, who arrived or spent the night in different geographical areas of Romania regardless of the reason for traveling.

In Romania, the number of tourist arrivals in agritourism pensions, during the period under study 2010-2019, increased at an annual rate of 17.87%, so that from 289.9 thousand people in 2010 it reached 1272.9 thousand people in 2019 (Table 4.).

Among those who visited our country, approx. 92% are Romanians and only about 8% are foreigners.

On the first place with the highest number of arrivals, in the analyzed period is the Center Development Region, which in 2010 registered 85.73 thousand people and in 2019 a number of 432.25 thousand registering a growth rate of 19,5%.

Table 4. Dynamics of the number of tourist arrivals in agritourism pensions in the South-East Region, in the period 2010-2019

Region / county	2010		2012		2016		2019		annual growth rate	2019/ 2010
	thousand pers.	%	thousand pers..	%	thousand pers..	%	thousand pers..	%	%	%
TOTAL	289,92	93,21	447,11	93,25	813,45	91,99	1272,88	92,06	17,87	439,04
Region S-E	19,27	96,08	22,59	95,42	29,36	95,93	83,05	96,45	17,63	431,09
Brăila			0,19	100,0	2,28	100,0	1,26	100,0	23,21	654,17
Buzău	9,24	96,26	12,72	97,44	15,43	97,24	27,24	98,44	12,76	294,79
Constanța	3,23	96,26	1,30	100,0	2,59	99,65	5,65	99,75	6,41	174,99
Galați					0,02	100,0	1,14	94,37	38,66	5984,21
Tulcea	1,56	91,86	2,15	94,47	4,36	88,64	40,51	94,06	43,59	2595,13
Vrancea	5,23	96,90	6,23	90,52	4,69	94,33	7,26	99,45	3,70	138,64

Source: INS data processing

In the South-East Region, the number of arrivals increased at a rate of 17.6%, from 19.27 thousand people in 2010 to 83.05 thousand in 2019, most of them being Romanian, with a share of about 95-96%.

And in the component counties of the South-East Region, the number of arrivals increased, for example in Buzău county, from 9241 people in 2010 to 27242 people in 2019.

In 2019, the interest of foreign tourists was manifested, especially for Tulcea, representing 6% of the number of arrivals in the county.

The analysis of the number of overnight stays in agrotourism pensions in Romania (table 5) highlighted their increase over the analyzed period 2010-2019, with an annual rate of 17.18%.

Table 5. Dynamics of the number of overnight stays of tourists in agritourism pensions in the South-East Region in the period 2010-2019

Region /county	2010		2012		2016		2019		annual growth rate	2019/2010
	Miithousand	%	Mii	%	Mii	%	Mii	%		
TOTAL	604,61	90,64	906,50	91,40	1597,94	91,19	2518,61	92,05	17,18	416,57
Region S-E	45,24	96,28	43,21	95,43	54,59	95,68	176,26	95,83	16,31	389,65
Brăila	:	0,89	100,0	2,43	100,0	1,26	100,0	3,95	141,76	
Buzău	16,39	95,36	21,26	97,42	23,87	97,36	43,45	98,46	11,45	265,19
Constanța	13,67	98,57	6,47	100,0	9,13	99,70	15,42	99,82	1,35	112,83
Galați	:		:	0,06	100,0	1,83	93,44	39,08	1946,81	
Tulcea	3,78	92,82	5,57	94,29	13,10	90,62	105,66	93,88	44,80	2798,28
Vrancea	11,40	96,01	9,02	87,73	6,02	92,10	8,63	99,19	-3,05	75,69

Source: INS data processing

In the South-East Development Region, overnight stays increased during the studied period with an annual rate of 16.3%, reaching in 2019 a number 3 times higher compared to 2010 (45.24 thousand overnight stays). Only 4.17% of tourists who spent the night in the region are foreigners, especially in Tulcea County.

Comparing the overnight stays to the accommodation capacity in operation in the agritourism pensions (table 6), it is found that in 2010 the annual occupancy rate was 12.36%, increasing to 19.96% in 2019, being a very high occupancy rate. small indicating the preferences of tourists to spend only the weekends in these structures of tourist reception.

Table 6. Evolution of the annual employment rate in agritourism pensions, in the South-East Region, in the period 2010-2019

Region /county	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018	2019
	%	%	%	%	%	%
TOTAL	12,36	13,20	13,16	15,46	18,05	19,96
Region S-E	15,08	11,18	12,29	13,17	17,29	19,59
Brăila	-	36,16	41,32	66,28	56,88	34,41
Buzău	9,01	7,72	6,54	7,26	8,10	10,03
Constanța	44,20	60,69	47,85	51,98	45,07	35,40
Galați	-	-	-	2,81	18,54	24,96
Tulcea	8,62	20,18	47,82	55,88	29,48	30,86
Vrancea	26,27	12,80	22,72	15,44	11,92	12,45

Source: INS data processing

In the South-East Region, in 2010 the annual employment rate was 15.08%, and in the following years it decreases to 11.18%, but at the end of the period it rises to 19.59%. In the component counties of the South-East Region, the employment rate reached the highest level in Brăila County of 73.52% in 2015 and of 66.28% in 2016, but in 2019 it decreases to 34.41%.

Also, a higher annual occupancy rate was observed in Constanța County of 60.69% in 2012, but by 2019 it decreases to 35.4%. The occupancy rate in Tulcea increased considerably, reaching 30.86% in 2019 compared to 2010 when it was 8.62%, but the maximum level was recorded in 2015 when it was 59.28%.

In the South-East Region, the duration of the stay in the agritourism pensions, registers a minimum of 1.6 days in 2017 and a maximum of 2.3 days in 2010, and in 2019 it reaches a duration of 2.1 days, decreasing during this period with a rate of -1.1%. In the component counties of the region, increases are registered only in Tulcea and Galați with a rate of 0.8% and 0.3%, respectively, the duration of the stay during this period being on average 2.6 days and 1.9 days, respectively.

Significant decreases are observed in Brăila County, which started in 2012 with a stay of 4.6 days and reaches 1 day in 2019, with an annual rate of -15.6%. And in Vrancea county the length of stay decreases, from 2.2 days in 2010 to 1.2 in 2019 with a rate of -6.5%.

The decrease of the tourist stay in the locality denotes, a low capacity of attraction of the area, high prices compared to the services offered, poor exploitation of local attractions, the locals do not know how to attract tourists in the area and those who come for the first time do not return.

Romanian tourists stay on average 2 days in agritourism pensions, decreasing in the analyzed period with a rate of -0.3%. (Table 7.).

Table 7. Evolution of the average length of stay for Romanian tourists, in the South-East Region, in the period 2010-2019

Region /county	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018	2019	Min	Max	Media	Coef. var.	Ritm anual
	nr.	nr.	nr.	nr.	nr.	nr.	nr.	nr.	%	semf	%
TOTAL	2,0	2,0	1,9	1,9	1,9	2,0	1,9	2,0	2,0	2,2	mică -0,3
Region S-E	2,4	1,9	1,7	1,9	1,9	2,1	1,6	2,4	1,9	10,8	mijl -1,2
Brăila		4,6	2,2	1,1	1,0	1,0	1,0	4,6	2,1	71,4	mare -15,6
Buzău	1,8	1,7	1,6	1,5	1,5	1,6	1,5	1,8	1,6	5,2	mică -1,1
Constanța	4,3	5,0	3,8	3,5	3,0	2,7	2,7	5,0	3,8	17,7	mijl -5,0
Galați				3,1	2,1	1,6	1,3	3,1	1,9	36,7	mare 0,2
Tulcea	2,4	2,6	2,2	3,1	2,2	2,6	2,2	3,1	2,6	9,8	mică 0,7
Vrancea	2,2	1,4	1,2	1,3	1,2	1,2	1,2	2,2	1,4	21,5	mare -6,4

Source: prelucrare date INS, *c.var<10% serie de date foarte omogenă, variația este mică, media este semnificativă; 10-20% serie de date omogenă; >20% serie de date seria este eterogenă, variație este foarte mare, media nu este reprezentativă

In the South-East region, the length of stay decreases from 2.4 days at the beginning of the period to 1.6 days in 2017, but towards the end of the period it increases to 2.1 days. The most attractive county was Constanța, which registers in the period 2010-2019, an average length of stay of 3.8 days, but also in this county the power of attraction decreases, so that from 4.3-5 days of stay at the beginning of the period reaches 2.7 days, with an annual rate of -5%.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion we can say that:

- Out of the total accommodation structures, it is observed that the tourist and agrotourism pensions are representative, in the analyzed period having a growth rate of 6.5% and 8.4% respectively, which means an increase of the possibilities to spend holidays in a quiet and natural environment.

- At the level of the South-East Development Region we see increases in the number of agritourism pensions, with a rate of 9.4%, so that in 2019 we have 130 units more than in 2010.

- In the South-East Development Region there are increases in accommodation capacity in operation, the number of places-days reaching 899.5 thousand in 2019, of approx. 3 times higher than the reference year 2010, with an annual growth rate of 13%.

- The number of arrivals increased at a rate of 17.6%, from 19.27 thousand people in 2010 to 83.05 thousand in 2019, most of them being Romanian, with a share of about 95-96%.

- overnight stays increased in the studied period with an annual rate of 16.3%, reaching in 2019 a number 3 times higher compared to 2010 (45.24 thousand overnight stays)

- The decrease of the tourist stay in the locality denotes, a low capacity of attraction of the area, high prices compared to the services offered, poor exploitation of local attractions, the locals do not know how to attract tourists in the area and those who come for the first time do not return .

- The tourist traffic follows the evolution of the number of tourists, both Romanian and foreign, who arrived or spent the night in different geographical areas of Romania regardless of the reason for traveling.

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