

THE SITUATION OF TOURISM AND ITS RECOVERY POLICIES IN ROMANIA AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

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Abstract

Tourism contributes with 9.5% to the European Union's gross domestic product. Tourism plays an important role in the EU due to its economic and employment potential, as well as its social and environmental implications. In 2019, Europe was the main destination in the world. Along with the advent of the pandemic, with a series of restrictions on the movement of people, the population reacted in the first place, giving up the trips they proposed.

Is estimated that the EU tourism industry, on which about 13 million people depend, loses € 1 billion in monthly revenue as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. In the major destinations, hotels were deserted also restaurants, bars, tourist attractions, theme parks and closed museums. Many EU countries have reintroduced border controls or banned certain travelers from entering their territory, leaving them to struggle to return home. The situation is particularly difficult in several EU countries that are key tourist destinations, such as Italy, Spain and France.

In 2019, tourism contributes only with 5% to GDP in Romania, being a very dynamic sector. The effects of the pandemic on Romanian tourism can be seen in the statistics: arrivals registered in the tourist reception structures decreased by 44.4% in July 2020 compared to July 2019, to 917,800 arrivals. Overnight stays decreased by 44.7%, to 2,436,500.

The EU is proposing a series of guidances to ensure a gradual and coordinated reopening of tourist services and units as soon as the health situation allows it. At the same time, the guidances provide strict conditions for the protection of the health and safety of travelers as well as of tourism workers throughout Europe.

Key words: tourist units, Coronavirus outbreak

INTRODUCTION

The development of tourism has a series of economic, social and environmental consequences, these effects can be both positive and negative. The development of tourism in destinations must be managed in such a way as to ensure economic growth, social progress and environmental protection, in the long term, in conditions of sustainability.

From the point of view of the impact that tourism has on the economy, the specialized literature has identified the existence of three approaches:

- underestimating the place and role of tourism in the economy, considering insignificant the contribution of tourism to economic development;
- overestimating the place and role of tourism in the economy, considering that tourism is the most important economic branch and the only one capable of ensuring economic recovery and / or sustainable economic development;
- realistic approach - according to which tourism is an important component of the tertiary sector of the economy, having significant effects on the economy and ensuring an economic development only through synergy with other economic sectors.

The outbreak of the coronavirus paralyzed the tourism industry, leaving travelers without the opportunity to travel to the desired places and economies in countries whose gross domestic product depended on tourism devastated.

Going through this experience I realized that tourism is an important component of our country's economy.

The decrease of the demand for products and services on the domestic market and the restriction of the international circulation are the main factors that affect the activity of the companies from the tourism sectors.

These companies are facing a continuous decline in revenue. The state has taken various measures to attenuate the economic impact of the pandemic, from delaying the current investment and reducing administrative costs to reducing staff costs.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

For this work I used statistical data offered by the national institute of statistics and the statistical department of Oradea. The paper covers well the field of qualitative research, seen as a first-order alternative, but also as a necessary complement to the quantitative methods. For the research method I used qualitative exploratory research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The pandemic divided Romanian tourists into 2 categories, some more reluctant who canceled their reservations and others who looked for some open doors to be able to travel further away from the country. The fact that most countries let you enter only with a negative covid test has significantly reduced the movement of Romanians across the border in the summer of 2020.

Holiday vouchers and cards were among the main methods of acquiring holidays that contributed to the restart of domestic tourism. Also, was observed the tendency of tourists to book holidays with caution. About 60% of them preferred last-minute holidays this year, booked less than 48 hours before the start of the holiday, contrary to the trends of previous years when reservations were made early to take advantage of early booking offers.

In the table I tried a comparison between the situation of arrivals and overnight stays in the tourist reception structures with accommodation functions in July of this year, making a comparison with July last year.

Tabel 1

Arrivals and overnight stays in the establishments of tourist reception with functions of
cazare- July

		Arrivals			Overnight stays	
	July	July	July	July	July	July
	2019	2020	2020	2019	2020	2020
	-mii-	-mii-	to	-mii-	-mii-	to
			July			July
			2019			2019
			-%-			-%
Total	1651,3	917,8	55,6	4407,3	2436,5	55,3
Romanian tourists	1350,2	887,7	65,7	3809,2	2370,3	62,2
Foreign tourists **) from which:	301,1	30,1	10,0	598,1	66,2	11,1
- Europe	217,0	26,7	12,3	415,5	58,3	14,0
European Union ***)	170,1	22,6	13,3	322,1	49,4	15,3
- Asia	43,2	1,0	2,3	98,4	1,9	1,9

- North America	22,0	1,3	5,9	50,4	3,3	6,5
- South America	2,5	*	–	5,3	*	–
- Africa	2,3	*	–	4,4	1,0	22,7

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Analyzing the table we can see that both the number of arrivals and overnight stays for Romanian tourists traveling in the country is 55.6% lower in 2020 compared to 2019.

The number of foreign tourists who traveled to Romania decreased the most, from 300 thousand tourists in 2019 to 30 thousand tourists in 2020.

Table 2

The distribution of tourist arrivals in the establishments of tourists, tourist areas, in July 2020 compared to July 2019

	Jul-19	Jul-20
Bucharest and county seat cities, exclusively Tulcea	72,1	72,8
Other settlements and tourist routes	13,8	15,3
Resorts from the mountain area	8,6	5,2
Resorts from the spa area	1,7	1,2
Resorts from the seaside, exclusively Constanta city	2,7	4,6
Danube Delta area, including Tulcea city	1,1	0,9

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We also analyzed the distribution of foreign tourist arrivals in tourist reception structures in July 2020 compared to July 2019 and we noticed that foreign tourists who visited our country and wanted to go the resorts in the seaside area increased from 2.7% in 2019 to 4.6% in 2020.

Table 3

Arrivals of foreign visitors in Romania and departures of Romanian visitors abroad in July and between January and July 2020

	Jul-20	%	ian-iulie2020	%
TOTAL ARRIVALS	494331		3219168	
- Road transport	417531	84,5	2588663	80,4
- Rail transport	3551	0,7	30085	0,9
- Airline	64385	13,0	545681	17,0
- Naval transport	8864	1,8	54739	1,7

TOTAL DEPARTURES	874654		5995689	
- Road transport	663109	75,8	4189067	69,9
- Rail transport	2496	0,3	27681	0,4
- Airline	206652	23,6	1766810	29,5
- Naval transport	2397	0,3	12131	0,2

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Distribution of arrivals of foreign tourists in tourist reception structures, by tourist areas, in July 2020 compared to July 2019.

Due to these uncertain conditions, the majority of those who made a trip between January and July 2020 preferred to do it by car 84.5%.

CONCLUSIONS

The European Union (EU) acted quickly in this regard helping this sector, for example, by providing financial support to businesses, including many small and medium-sized enterprises that have suffered.

Financial support for tourism comes mostly from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund (CF). Together, these two funds allocated 4 billion EUR to the tourism sector in 2014-2020. To date, they have co-financed almost 10,000 projects covering a wide range of activities, from promotion to hospitality, infrastructure and the development of local attractions.

The EU should develop a prevention and management mechanism to protect companies and workers in the tourism sector and ensure passenger safety, MEPs said in a resolution voted on 17 April.

Since March, Parliament's Committee on Transport and Tourism insisted on firm and coordinated EU action to overcome the crisis.

Committee Chair Karima Delli welcomed the Commission's package on tourism and transport on 13 May and declared: "It is essential to assure citizens that tourism and travel will be possible and safe this year. We should use this crisis to rethink tourism across the EU. "

On 15 May, Parliament approved aid measures for the transport sector to minimize as much as possible the effects of the pandemic on airlines, railways, roads and shipping companies.

Given the fact that the entire field of tourism has been affected since the declaration of the pandemic, the executive adds, in the entire industry has been adopted a policy to postpone the holidays, and not to cancel them.

"Both the airlines and our local partners offer the opportunity to change travel dates or receive travel vouchers valid for 1 or 2 years.

In our turn, we offered customers the option to choose between changing the travel dates or receiving a voucher valid for 2 years.

However, most of the tourists opted to choose a new period for their vacation, says one of the owners of a tourism company.

The best measure, in our country, has not appeared and may be a reduced working time, combined with technical unemployment paid by the state, for a period of at least 1 year from now.

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