

TOURIST FLOWS TO AND FROM ROMANIA BETWEEN THE YEARS 1970 - 2010

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Abstract

Romania's international tourist movement is characterized by a contradictory trend, confirming its sensitivity to changes in economic, social and political plan of contemporary world.

Thus, a series of positive events, specific to the world economy as: the intensification of integration and international cooperation process, globalization and internationalization of economic and social life, penetration of high technology in all sectors of the economy, industrialization, but also negative ones, such as crises or periods of economic recession, expanding poverty and unemployment, hallmarks the dynamics and structure of tourist traffic. Along with these, the developments of each economy play a decisive role on the configuration of tourist flows.

International tourist movement is divided into two distinct streams: arrivals of foreign visitors in Romania and departures of Romanian visitors abroad. These are the indicators that we analyze in this work.

Keywords: arrivals, departures, visitors, and foreigners.

INTRODUCTION

The first attempts of organized tourism in Romania were made between 1967 and 1968, for groups of tourists on Romanian Black Sea coast. It seems that was a promising start, because in 1972 the Ministry of Tourism elaborate Order 297/1972, after which the Centre for Research for international tourism promotion proceed on the identification and selection of representative rural Romanian villages that were to be launched in tourism. From these studies, in agreement with the county tourism offices and local government bodies has been established that can be placed in inland and international tourism about 118 domestic villages (Alecă I, Constantine M., 2006).

As from 16 July 1973, through number 744/1973 Tourism Ministry's order were declared experimental, tourist villages, called "tourist villages", the following 14 cities: *Lerești (Argeș), Fundata și Sirmea (Brașov), Sibiel (Sibiu), Tismana (Gorj), Murighiol și Crișan (Tulcea), Racoș (Timiș), Sfântu Gheorghe (Tulcea), Bogdan Vodă (Maramureș), Vatra Moldoviței (Suceava), Poiana Sărată (Bacău), Vaideeni (Vâlcea).*

The following year, by Decree no. 225/1974 was banned foreign tourists accommodation in private houses, tourist villages became inoperative for international tourism.

Short period of "formalization" of tourism didn't make possible the organization of business travel or proper development of tourist villages. In many localities have not been approved the households which were accommodation eligible (Rucăr Vatra Moldoviței, Vaiduni), while in others, the accommodation of Romanian tourist was unorganized and without a record (Crisan, Bogdan Voda, Rucăr). With very few exceptions, this situation lasted until 1989.

Since 1990, interest in rural tourism revived. Arise various associations and bodies which through the proposed objectives want affirmation and development of tourism in rural areas. One of these is The Romanian Federation for mountainous development (1990), which aims to support all forms of the inhabitants of the mountains, including the promotion, organization and development of tourism. Follow the Romanian Agency for Agro tourism (1995) which aims the connection of Romanian tourism to the international system and the National Association for Ecological and Cultural Tourism in Rural Romania (ANTREC) in 1994 and became a member of the European Federation of Rural Tourism (EUROGITES).

Concrete concerns were developed for this specific area: Ministry Tourism, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of National Education (Education) and the Romanian Government itself.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The material used to accomplish this work includes: the most recent bibliographic sources in the industry, existing national statistics, as well as author's thesis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Concerning the arrivals of foreign tourists, a foray into a relatively long time (40 years), highlights the existence of at least three distinct periods (Fig. 1). A first period, delimited by the moment of debut of rigorous statistical records (1966) and the beginning of '80s is marked by an upward trend in very high rhythms. Year 1981 - year record of arrivals of foreign tourists, with over 7 million - marked an increase of over 10 times compared to 1966, and about three times compared to 1970. To a large extent, this period coincides with a sustained development of the Romanian economy, with massive industrialization process and externally, with an intensification and diversification of international trade. A second stage located in the interval 1982-1989, is characterized by a decreasing trend in foreign tourist arrivals and corresponds to a period of contradictory developments in the Romanian economy, the slowdown of the growth rate

and a policy of relative isolation in International plan. After the events of 1989, we can speak of a new era in Romanian tourism, the policy of international openness, the transition to a market economy, European integration efforts, the movement of tourists was revived, there were resumed the traditional links with European partners (Germany, the Northern countries, Israel), contoured new areas of emission (Far East). Under the new conditions, tourist arrivals have increased from 4850 thousand in 1989 to 6532 thousand in 1990. This policy, however unsubstantiated by profound transformations in the Romanian economy, an adequate touristic material base and / or quality services, etc..., did not favor a significant and lasting increase in tourist arrivals. As a result, their numbers continued to decline until 2002. Between 2003-2008 foreign tourist arrivals in Romania recorded a significant growth in 2008 reaching the highest value in the last 40 years, as in the following years from 2009 to 2010 because of existing global economic crisis the number of tourists who visited our country has fallen - in 2010 registering a value of approx. 7.5 million people compared with 2008 when the number of foreign tourist arrivals was around 8.8 million. (Fig.1).

Concerning the second flow, departures of Romanian tourists abroad, it should be noted the dramatic increase in their number in 1990 - nearly 11.3 million compared to 898,000 in 1989 and annual variations around 1 million during 1985 - 1989 - and maintaining a relatively high level, 9 - 10 million annually until 1995. The explanation for this explosive development lies in the international politics opening of Romania achieved after 1989, the facilities granted by the Romanian Government to the potential tourists, and the receptiveness of European countries to the wishes of the population. This particular increase in tourist departures transformed Romania from a recipient country in a transmitter. The new status is argued, rather, for subjective reasons (the desire for knowledge, limitation of travel until 1989 and others) rather than the objective, such as: the level of economic development and financial possibilities of the population, insufficient supply or more advantageous prices. On this last regard, it should be noted that Romania has a tourist potential that justifies the status of the receiver.

After 1995, the number of departures of tourists has decreased significantly as a result of the deterioration of living conditions in Romania, but also to some limitations (mainly the requirement of a minimum spending amount available from 500 Euros) required by most European countries. By 2002 the number of Romanian tourists who went abroad registered an insignificant increase. In subsequent years, the Romanian economy revived a least, it reaches a number of tourists going abroad for

about 13 million in 2008. It currently is between 10 and 11 million annually (Table 1).

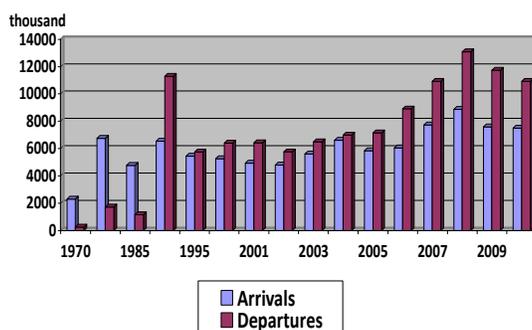


Fig. 1. Evolution of the Romanian tourism - tourist arrivals from other countries, respectively departures Romanian tourists abroad in the period 1970-2010

In the table below we can see that a few countries (Moldova, Hungary, Bulgaria, Germany, Italy) focused a large part of the tourist emission to Romania. This situation is explained by the relatively small distances between countries of origin of tourists and Romania, the existence of gradual liberalization agreements movements by similarities in language, culture and history, tradition - a good period of time were only promoted destinations belonging to Eastern Europe space.

Table 1

Evolution of tourist arrivals in Romania from other countries and the departure of the Romanian tourists abroad in the period 2006-2010 (thousand persons)

Specify	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Total arrivals, of which:	6037	7722	8862	7575	7498
Austria	152	218	210	181	178
France	130	185	183	150	131
Germany	343	473	522	443	394
Italy	278	398	433	375	331
Hungary	1367	1743	1950	1836	1735
Bulgaria	399	818	1114	877	786
Republic of Moldova	1490	1110	1429	1043	989
Total departures	8906	10980	13072	11722	10905

*Source: National Institute of Statistics Romania, 2010

Analysis of international tourist traffic cannot be complete without discussing the economic effects. In this sense, presents a special importance the knowledge of evolution of collections and expenditures in international tourism.

Reviewing the overall performance of Romania's international tourism, respectively the balance of payments, it remarks on one hand, the

modest level of activity - tourism contributes 5-6% to revenue in the current account of balance of payments - and the other hand, the close relationship between it and the dynamics of arrivals and departures of tourists (Table 2).

Table 2

International tourism balance of payments			-mil.USD-
Years	Collections	Payments	Sold
1985	182	64	118
1990	106	103	3
1995	590	697	□107
2000	359	420	□61
2001	362	449	□87
2002	392	416	□24
2003	396	423	□27
2004	406	434	□28
2005	852	750	102
2006	1034	1035	□1

* Source: National Institute of Statistics Romania, 2010

After a long period with a positive balance, characteristic to a host country status, followed moments with symbolic results (2-3 million) positive or negative, so, after 1995, the balance becomes negative chronic. This situation is caused, in present, far less by the transmitter status and more by movement structure (high share of transit) and quality of tourists (with limited financial means, with short stays).

CONCLUSIONS

Succinct analysis of the phenomenon of Romanian tourism, undertaken in this paper highlights achievements and downs recorded over a period of 40 years (1970-2010).

Of course, a complete picture of the size, evolution and structure of internal tourist traffic involves mobilizing a large number of indicators and deepen their determinants.

But we can detach from this paper that the international tourists movement of Romania recorded a modest level compared to the resources of our country and thus the increase reserves in the future.

But the development of international tourism and a better capitalization of the natural and human potential assume, on the one hand, efforts to rebound the Romanian economy, of which tourism is heavily dependent on and on the other hand, develop an appropriate strategy, aiming the increase the level quality of services, modernization of specific materials and general infrastructure, achieving an aggressive promotional policy, broadening international cooperation in the field.

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