

THE DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL OF RURAL TOURISM IN ROMANIA –ANALYSIS OF TOURISTIC INDICATORS

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Abstract

Rural tourism in Romania has great development potential because of existing human and natural resources. In this work was done an analysis of some indicators of rural tourism activity, such as number of rural accommodation structures in Romania, existing accommodation capacity, accommodation capacity in operation (in use), tourist arrivals and overnight stays in rural guesthouses and their analysis in the period 2006 - 2009 found out that in Romania the number of care facilities is constantly growing in this period, and indicators implicitly the existing accommodation capacity and in operation recorded higher values, arrivals and overnights recording growth till 2008 and 2009 recorded a major loss.

Key words: *rural guesthouses , accommodation capacity in use/in operation, touristic arrivals, touristic overnight stays*

INTRODUCTION

Rural tourism in Romania has experienced an upward trend in recent years due to improved economic and social-cultural conditions. This trend is primarily the result of economic influences manifested in the country, they have imposed directly or indirectly a new necessity and "fashion" to "escape" in rural areas.

Currently there is a tendency of continuous improvement of infrastructure, structure of quantitative and qualitative elements composing the Romania's rural tourism offer, in order to align it with international standards.

Featuring a natural environment conducive to practice rural tourism, Romania was able to work towards the preparation and promotion of rural touristic offer, in order to align with international standards.

Currently, there are in Romania, mainly in rural areas, two types of accommodation: rural guesthouses and farmhouses. These major forms of accommodation are recognized under terms of legislation, approval by the national rural housing structures system in our country, their record is found in the publications of the National Institute of Statistics and European Studies (INSSE) (Badiu, 2008).

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Comparative analysis was used, which provides information, performs linear ordering and typological classifications in territorial or temporal. This method can be complementary with indices and statistical indicators method (number of hostels, accommodation capacity, number of tourist arrivals in rural pensions, number overnight stays in rural tourist pensions, in addition to these there are few indicators of the tourism demand, the tourist traffic, and the quality of tourist travel).

Statistical analysis follows the evolution of indicators measuring the satisfied touristic demand.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

If you monitor the number of rural boarding houses in Romania, you can see its continuous growth in the period (2004-2009) in the first year, 2005, the number of these guesthouses increased by 64 units which represents an increase of **7.2 %** from the previous year (2004); in 2006 stands the highest growth in this studied period, namely an increase in absolute values of 367 units meaning an increase of **38.4%**.

Table 1

Rural guesthouses in the category of comfort, from Romania

Year	Comfort categories(flowers)					Total
	5	4	3	2	1	
2004	-	18	89	597	188	892
2005	-	22	142	652	140	956
2006	7	33	192	906	121	1259
2007	10	41	238	865	138	1292
2008	10	47	252	929	110	1348
2009	12	66	389	835	110	1412

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Romania, 2010

In the years 2007, 2008, 2009 are also recorded increases in the number of national rural guesthouses, but not so spectacular namely in 2007 is **2.6%** growth in 2008 of **4.3%** and **4.7%** in 2009. Thus reach the final year of study to a total number of such structures of 1412 units, which means an increase of accommodations structures with 520 in absolute value, meaning a **58.29%** real growth from the beginning of the study (2004).

Increased number of national guesthouses, means an overall development of rural tourism in our country, which is largely due to a national and European programs developed to support Romanian tourism development (eg SAPARD, PHARE), and due to the skills development , more precisely managerial skills of the managers of such structures.

In the period 2006-2009 has been a continuous increase of the existing accommodation capacity (table2), following the increasing number of rural touristic guesthouses in Romania.

The process of increasing the supply of accommodation available in places, offered to the tourists arrived in rural touristic guesthouses, are explained by the increasing privatization, in the sense of more number of private accommodation, but also by funding these structures of these rural touristic areas, through programs such as, PHARE and SAPARD, available to anyone willing to invest in this area.

Table 2

Existing accommodation capacity in Romania and in operation from 2006 to 2009

<i>Year</i>	<i>Rural guesthouses accommodation capacity in Romania</i>	
	<i>Existing(places)</i>	<i>In operation(th places-days)</i>
2006	14511	3188
2007	15448	3628
2008	16906	4039
2009	18652	4435

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Romania, 2010

As shown in Figure 1 the manifestation trend of number of tourists evolution follows the trend of the indicators of rural touristic supply in the sense of a sustained growth at least until 2008 inclusive. Thus in year 2007 there is an increase of 72 (thousand) tourists stays, compared to year 2006 means 33.2% more than the base year. Arrivals growth in 2008, continues with a number of 69 (thousand) tourists in addition to the previous year, with 23.8% more than in 2007. It is the first time in our entire analysis ,in 2006-2009 period, when it is noticed a decrease, namely in 2009 compared to 2008 there is a decrease in the number of accommodated tourists ,with 26 (thousand), representing a real decrease of 7.3 %. It can be affirmed with certainty that this fall of the arrivals in the rural reception took place due to the situation of recession Romania faced and is still facing, at least in the first half of 2009.

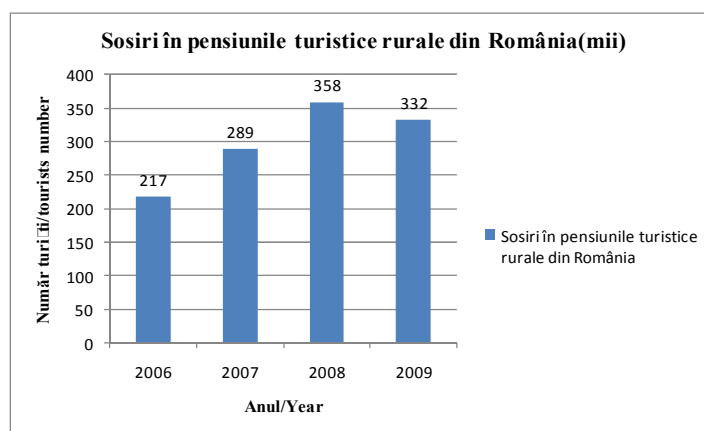


Fig.1 Number of touristic arrivals in rural touristic boarding houses from Romania 2006 – 2009

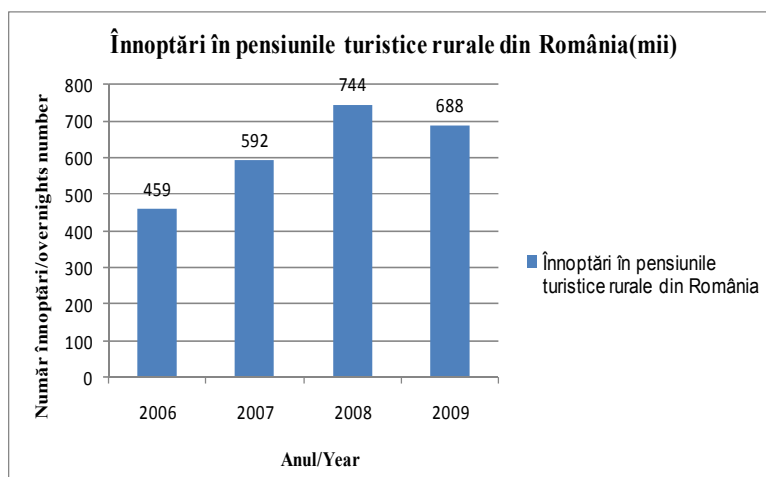


Fig 2.Overnight stays in rural touristic boarding houses from Romania 2006 – 2009

As it can be seen , the trend of overnight stays in rural delivery structures at national level is an increasing one, at least until the end of 2008, when the slowdown starts in our country and with it begins its specific effects, namely fewer overnight stays . This way are registered increases by 28.9%, 25.7% in the first two years studied (2007.2008) but decreases by 7.5% in 2009 over the previous year, though, compared with the base year (2006) is also recorded an increase of 49.9% of overnight stays.

CONCLUSIONS

Research results indicate that in rural areas of Romanian tourism grows and the quality of accommodation and services is constantly improving. Promoting this sector abroad, would lead to a better understanding of the realities of national interest, to improve Romania's image, especially now in the context of reconfiguration and implementation of national brand and local brand default.

Considering the economic downturn taking place mainly at the beginning of 2009, it can be seen, however, nationally, the trend of the number of hostels in rural tourism is an upward one. The upward trend of rural touristic guesthouses number is the result of the development of tourism in general and specifically in case of rural tourism.

Increasing the number of rural accommodation structures from Romania, means an increased capacity of existing accommodation and hence of the capacity of accommodation units in operation during the period analyzed (2006-2009). Regarding the number of arrivals from these units, it has an upward trend until 2008, but in 2009 there is a sudden drop (below 2006) the number of tourists accommodated. A similar situation is observed in the tourist overnight stays in the accommodation structures, noting that in 2009 there is a slight decrease, the negative effects of economic recession is truly felt in 2010 and even in 2011.

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