

THE TOURISM POTENTIAL OF THE NORTHWESTERN DEVELOPMENT REGION

Cozac Elena*, Codorean (Matei) Rodica Daniela, Codrea Diana Ioana, Ştiop Narcisa Carmen, Vuşca Claudia

*University of Oradea, Faculty of Environmental Protection, 26 Gen. Magheru St., 410048 Oradea, Romania, e-mail: elena_cozac@yahoo.com

Abstract

The diversity of natural and anthropic tourist resources located in the geographical environment of the northwest of the country determines a complex and varied tourist potential in the developing region.

The North-West Development Region in terms of tourism has enough values that can integrate it in both national and international tourism. The study of the tourism phenomenon in the NW region in correlation with other economic and social sectors highlights the importance of tourism in the economic growth perspective of the development region.

The practice of tourism in the region is made depending on the value and variety of tourist resources, access to tourist resources and quality of services.

Key words: tourist potential, tourist resources, development region

INTRODUCTION

In Romania, unfortunately, the development regions are not seen as levers for the implementation of regional policies but rather as administrative-territorial units, which results in a certain fear in the implementation of certain processes and decisions.

The North-West Development Region is a regional subdivision of Romania created in 1998 to coordinate the regional development necessary for Romania to join the European Union.

The North-West Development Region corresponds to the NUTS-II level divisions in the EU. Although it is becoming increasingly important in the field of regional development, this region has no administrative status, not having a legislative council or executive body. It is not an administrative-territorial unit, it has no legal personality, being the result of a free agreement between the county and local councils. The North-West Development Region was created by the voluntary association of the local public administrations from the counties of Bihor, Bistriţa-Năsăud, Cluj, Maramureş, Satu-Mare and Sălaj.

Its function is to allocate EU funds for regional development, and to interpret and research regional statistics. The development region also

coordinates regional infrastructure projects and became a member of the Committee of the Regions when Romania joined the EU in 2007.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The North-West region through its particularly attractive relief (it is one of the development regions that includes all forms of relief-fig.1) has a high tourist potential. Here we find important tourist resources, sometimes even with international recognition, the exploitation of which brings important revenues for the authorities and owners.

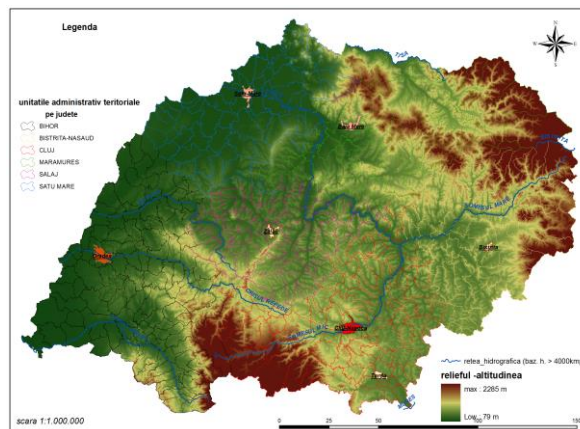


Fig.1 Relief map from the NW Region

The natural tourist resources mainly include various types of mountain relief with different attractions and objectives and hydromineral and thermal resources. Here we find:

- the alpine, glacial relief, specific to the Rodna Mountains and, partially, to the Maramureș Mountains, where they are present: ridges, circuses, cliffs, glacial valleys;
- the volcanic relief, present in the Oaș, Gutâi, Țibleș Mountains and partially in the Călimani and Bârgău Mountains, where we meet volcanic cones, cliffs, volcanic plateaus;
- the karst relief, from the Apuseni Mountains, where the gorges are present (Crișul Repede, Turzii, Bogăi, Someșului Cald), but especially caves in very large numbers: Meziad, Urșilor Cave, Vântului Cave, Tăușoare;
- the thermal waters from the Plain and the Western Hills: Băile Felix, Boghiș, Marghita, Tășnad;
- carbonated and bicarbonate mineral waters from Săpânța, Rodna, Sângeorz Băi, Poiana Ilvei;

- chlorosodium waters from Turda, Cojocna, Ocna Dej, Figa.

There are areas in the region where the scientific value and landscaping imposed the need for their protection and as a result appeared nature reserves with the rank of national park - these are the Apuseni Park and the Pietrosul Rodnei reservation.

Anthropic tourist resources include: historical relics (Roman forts, medieval fortresses), religious buildings (churches, monasteries, cathedrals, Merry Cemetery in Săpânța, wooden churches), ethnographic areas known as "countries" (Oaş, Maramureş, Moţilor, Beiuşului), monuments, dams and reservoirs, etc.

The tourist infrastructure in the region is poorly developed if we compare it to the multitude and complexity of tourist resources because much of it is inherited from the communist period. The main disadvantages refer to the existence of inadequate accommodation capacities from a qualitative point of view, the difficult access to many of the areas with tourist potential, the existence of service packages that are sometimes insufficient to satisfy the motivations of tourists.

The main accommodation units are located in urban areas where their shape and size are varied.

The most numerous tourist reception structures in the region are located in Cluj and Maramureş counties, which together total almost 70% of the total accommodation capacity (Cluj and Maramureş counties are the counties with the highest tourist potential in the region). At the opposite pole are the counties of Sălaj and Bistriţa-Năsăud. Bihor County owes its use of accommodation capacity largely by capitalizing on the thermal waters of Băile Felix and 1 Mai resorts.

After 1990, in the region, as in the whole country, new structures of more intimate and family tourist reception appear, which have influenced the private and community initiatives - it is about the tourist pensions.

Regarding the use of tourist reception capacities in the region, we can say that it has an ascending dynamic within each county. There is a safe and constant clientele for the entire period of time within a year for the Băile Felix and 1 Mai spas.

The efficient capitalization of the tourist resources determined the appearance of the tourist resorts, which are present in many places in the region, starting with the spa resorts (Băile Felix, 1 Mai, Ocna Şugatag, Sângeorz) and up to those for practicing winter sports (Stâna de Vale, Borşa, Băișoara).

CONCLUSION

Considering the tourist potential of the region, it is possible to elaborate types and forms of tourism that can highlight the rich tourist resources that the region has. Thus, the following categories stand out:

- spa tourism, determined by the existence of hydromineral resources and encountered especially in the western part of the region;
- mountain tourism, determined by the existence of the Carpathian sector, where you can practice winter sports, mountain hiking, speotourism;
- cultural tourism, the result of the existence of large urban centers in the region (Oradea, Cluj-Napoca, Baia Mare, Bistrița, Zalău, Satu Mare);
- rural tourism, which highlights the existence of a rural civilization and culture (Maramureș, Beiuș, Lăpuș);
- festival tourism, by organizing UNTOLD in Cluj-Napoca;
- religious tourism, which highlights on the one hand the multitude of religious buildings in the region and on the other hand the spirituality of the inhabitants of the region.

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