

## MOUNTAIN TOURISM IN ROMANIA

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### **Abstract**

*The practice of mountain tourism in Romania constitutes a complex tourist activity through numerous tourist resources that are capitalized but also through the ability to satisfy various travel motivations.*

*Carpathian Mountains are the venue of mountain tourism in Romania, mountains which focuses a wide variety of unique and original landscapes, diverse valuable anthropic objectives and a population that still preserves its customs and traditions unaltered.*

**Key words:** mountain tourism, resorts mountain

### **INTRODUCTION**

In Romania, the practice of mountain tourism has good conditions of development due to the potential offered by the three mountain chains of the Carpathian (Eastern Carpathians, Southern Carpathians and Western Carpathians), each of them with its characteristics and landscapes.

In the mountains of Romania can be practiced trekking, mountaineering, climbing, paragliding and winter sports.

Touristic arrangement of the mountain area has begun in the last century.

Without exception, all groups, associations and tourism companies that had functioned until 1936 - the year of foundation of the National Office of Tourism - had remarkable contributions to the touristic equipping of the Carpathians in Romania. By the activity of these companies binds the propagation and development of mountain tourism, the first concrete action to create the objectives of material basic (shelter houses, lodges, shelters, roads, highway, markings), of first-aid stations. Of the most attention have enjoyed Bucegi massifs, Piatra Craiului, Ciucaș, Postăvarul, Făgăraș Ceahlău, Parâng, and Cindrel, by the latter being linked the emergence of the first mountain resorts from Romania -Păltiniș.

In the postwar years, especially in recent decades, alongside existing resorts, which already acquired tradition in the interwar period (Sinaia,

Bușteni, Predeal), assert new ones, such as Poiana Brașov, Borșa Semic, Stâna de Vale.

Efforts focus toward intensive development of mountain tourism in order to increase the competitiveness in the international market. Primary have developed the amenities for practicing winter sports, especially in Valea Prahovei - Brașov area, Poiana Brașov, Sinaia and Predeal resorts being intensively equipped with slopes for alpine skiing and cross country skiing, bob slopes, sledding, skating, cable transportation.

In Romania, special natural conditions, among other factors have determined the development of three resorts -Poiana Brașov, Sinaia and Predeal- which focuses on an area of about 150 km<sup>2</sup>, 63% of existing accommodation capacities in Romanian mountain resorts, 70% of total landscaped slopes and mechanical installations of climbed and 40% of tourist traffic in the mountain area, respectively, 52% of arrivals of foreign tourists.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

The most important component of mountain tourism represents winter sports.

Among the types of winter sports, ski tourism has a high natural potential for development.



Today in our country there are 30 mountain resorts where you can practice these sports. From the 120 existing slopes, only 30 are homologated, seven are endowed with artificial snow equipment and 13 have nocturnal. Of the 30 mountain resorts, only 7 present facilities adequate to

Fig.1 Pârție de schi din Poiana Brașov (sursa infopeniuni.ro) the international tourism.

Also, the ski slopes are not equipped with safety nets, are small and neglected.

Romania's current ski area is several hundred times lower than in the reference alpine countries (ie. 120 times lower than of Germany and 510 times lower than of France). This is present in 20 massifs (of a total of 72) and respectively 16 mountainous counties (out of 27). Most of the landscaped ski area is concentrated in a single area, which belongs to Prahova, Braşov and the Dâmboviţa counties (thus accounting for 62.9% of the total).

*Table 1*

The ski area on the mountain massifs

Nr. crt.	Mountain massifs	The schi area		
		Surface(ha)	Nr. slopes	Lenght (km)
1.	Postăvarul	57,4	13	13,49
2.	Piatra Mare	10,0	1	2,00
3.	Clăbucet Predeal	41,9	9	9,72
4.	Baiul	10,0	2	4,00
5.	Bucegi	116,0	16	23,01
6.	Cindrel	26,1	4	5,10
7.	Bihor	14,4	5	3,65
8.	Rodna	8,1	2	2,70
9.	Gutâi și Țibleș	25,8	2	4,60
10.	Semenic	8,8	2	1,20

**sursa [www.mturism.ro](http://www.mturism.ro)**

The technical equipment includes 65 teleferics - cable cars, chairlifts and ski lifts, totaling 65 km in length (compared to the 3,696 teleferics in Austria, 3,033 in France, 1,534 in Switzerland) and almost 80 km of landscaped slopes (compared to 9500 km in Austria and 2,500 in France). Installations for attendance the ski area lifts and chair lifts are dominated by their weight cumulative being 86%. Regarding the spatial distribution, the area that includes national and international tourism offers focuses the most and more modern teleferics.

Another important element that characterizes the quality offers for winter sports is the existence of skiing schools and their endowment with monitors and their qualifications as well as the programs offered.

. In countries with developed winter tourism and monitors the number of schools is impressive: practically there isn't winter sports resort that doesn't have at least 2-3 schools (adults, beginners and advanced, children, acrobatic skiing etc.) so France and Switzerland have over 200 and Austria over 400.

Areas and slopes attached to the ski schools are specially designed, marked and signposted, they are endowed with audio-talkies, cameras equipment etc. There are organized classes for adults, either beginners or advanced, but also for children (preschool and school); are also organized for over two decades, ski courses, but also special courses, in some resorts, for acrobatic, artistic ski (free style). In Romania, their numbers is very low and at the same time are not properly equipped.

To practice trekking are very important mountain trails. In the mountains of Romania there are over 246 landscaped trails. A large part of these are not appropriately marked the lack of markings representing a weakness for practicing trekking.

Looking synthetically at the mountain tourism in Romania we can capture the following:

**Strengths:**

- ✓ mountain tourism potential in all seasons;
- ✓ higher level of conservation of mountain areas;
- ✓ lower levels of pollution in air, water and soil;
- ✓ increase of the area of protected areas in mountain areas;
- ✓ rich flora and fauna in all the mountain massifs.

**Weaknesses:**

- ✓ partly modernized ski area;
- ✓ existence of some cable transport installations obsolete, physically and morally used;
- ✓ not arranging entirely mountainous tourist trails from the massifs circulated;
- ✓ lack of information about the state of the mountain routes (degree of difficulty, availability depending on the season);
- ✓ the lack of tourist reception structures with accommodation functions specific to mountain areas (cottages, shelters etc.).

**Opportunities:**

- ✓ increasing demand concerning ecotourism in protected areas;
- ✓ development of accommodation facilities mainly in rural areas, increasing interest of tour operators for mountain tourism in general;
- ✓ increasing demand for practicing active tourism on European markets.

**Threats:**

- ✓ quality and diversification of profile tourism services abroad;
- ✓ the ski area more developed in most European countries;
- ✓ reducing population incomes generally in parallel with rising prices for skiing facilities;
- ✓ the relatively high cost of such products which limits access to the public;
- ✓ the lack of promotional materials for mountain areas or poor quality of information in most cases.

Mountain tourism is also determined by the existence of ecosystems of a substantial value from biodiversity conservation point of view with the variety of karst phenomena and traditional activities, had required the creation of natural park which aims to protect and preserve them.

Among mountain ecosystems, the most important is the forested karst, characteristic of the Apuseni Mountains, sheltering species of plants and animals protected both nationally and internationally.

In the Apuseni Mountains we find a mosaic of habitats in different degrees of threat, from very little affected to those who are very close to not be support of biodiversity. The main threats that may affect biodiversity of the park, habitats and landscape are: human intervention, new wood exploitation techniques, modern public infrastructure development (public roads and forestry, power lines, mobile phone masts), holiday homes, tourist facilities (guesthouses, summer camps). Not their singular emergence pose real problems to the Apuseni Mountains area, but the abundance, speed and intensity of these investments which could lead in a few years to massive deterioration of typical characteristics of the landscape.

Unfortunately exploitation of forest resources is not made in compliance with the principle forestry regime. It was reached thus that certain exploitation to affect areas of particular value from terms of biodiversity, in some areas being affected and the protective function of forests. Such an example is the forest located in the hydrological basin reception of

Molhasurile from Izbuc, whose operation could jeopardize the hydrological regime of the marsh habitats.

## CONCLUSION

Mountain tourism has a diversified and valuable tourism potential which in some areas is subjected to a process of degradation and both natural tourism resources and of anthropogenic tourism resources, all of these being the result of poor legislative implementation.

Romanian Carpathians are the most wild mountain perimeter of Europe and the highest mountain massif, on the continent, located within the same borders. These mountains occupy a third of Romania's total area (about 80,000 sq km).

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