

INTERNATIONAL TOURISM - ECONOMIC PARAMETERS AND STATUS QUO

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Rezumat

An analysis of the Romanian tourism cannot be obtained without following the development of the tourism indicators at international level. A first image reveals a thriving international tourism with an upward trend. Also, the forecasts regarding tourism, based on the extrapolation of the factors' influence, anticipate a continuous growth of it.

The influence of the international events slows the level of growth of the indicators, but it cannot determine a decrease in them.

Tourism is considered, mainly, a form of recreation with other activities and forms of leisure.

In terms of tourism, according to the new regulations, it designates "the activities of persons ,during travel and stays, in locations outside of the normal residence for a consecutive period not exceeding one year, with the purpose of leisure, business or other reasons "[1]

Key words: the movement of the world tourist, tourism development prerequisites

JEL Classification: L83

1. Introduction

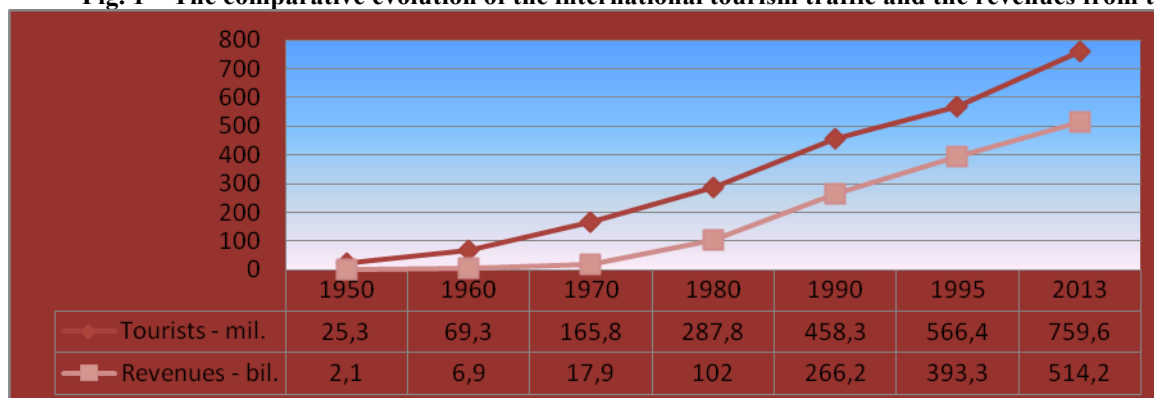
Focusing our attention on the phenomenon of nowadays, according to the figures and facts of the world tourism, since the 90s, journeys on Earth have become one of the largest and most dynamic industries.

The international tourism traffic, having a plurality of facets, imposes an analysis at least from the perspective of the territorial evolution and distribution.

It should be added that the most expressive characterization indicators of them are the arrivals/departures of tourists and the revenues/expenditures from the international tourism [2]

Regarding the size, during 1950-2013, [11] the international journeys have recorded an increase of over 25 times, from 25,4 millions to 759,6 millions, with an average annual rate of 7.4%; at the same time, revenues have increased over 200 times, from 2,1 billion USD to 455,5 billion USD (see Table 1 and Figure 1) [13]

Fig. 1 – The comparative evolution of the international tourism traffic and the revenues from tourism



Source: WTO, Tourism Highlights

Observing the tourist traffic, we notice that the strongest concentration – almost 80% - is in the two continents, Europe and America (mainly the North) and, indirectly, in the most developed countries (see Table 1). Such a concentration is argued by the economic power of these countries that offer large possibilities of travelling, the fact that they provide a large variety of attractions and, not least, their tourism experience.

Table no. 1 Distribution on areas of the international tourism traffic and the changes over time

Year Area	1960 %	1970 %	1980 %	1990 %	1995 %	2013 %
Africa						
- arrivals	1,1	1,5	2,8	3,3	3,4	4,5
- revenues	2,6	2,2	2,6	2,0	1,8	2,8
The Americas (N+S)						
- arrivals	24,1	23,0	21,6	20,5	19,5	16,4
- revenues	35,7	26,7	24,6	26,7	25,5	21,9
Asia and Pacific						
- arrivals	1,0	3,0	7,4	11,6	14,7	17,3
- revenues	2,9	6,1	8,4	14,9	18,5	18,2
Europe						
- arrivals	72,5	70,5	65,6	62,2	59,2	57,7
- revenues	56,8	62,1	59,5	53,6	51,5	54,5
Middle East						
- arrivals	1,0	1,4	2,1	1,7	2,4	4,2
- revenues	1,5	2,3	3,4	2,0	1,8	2,7

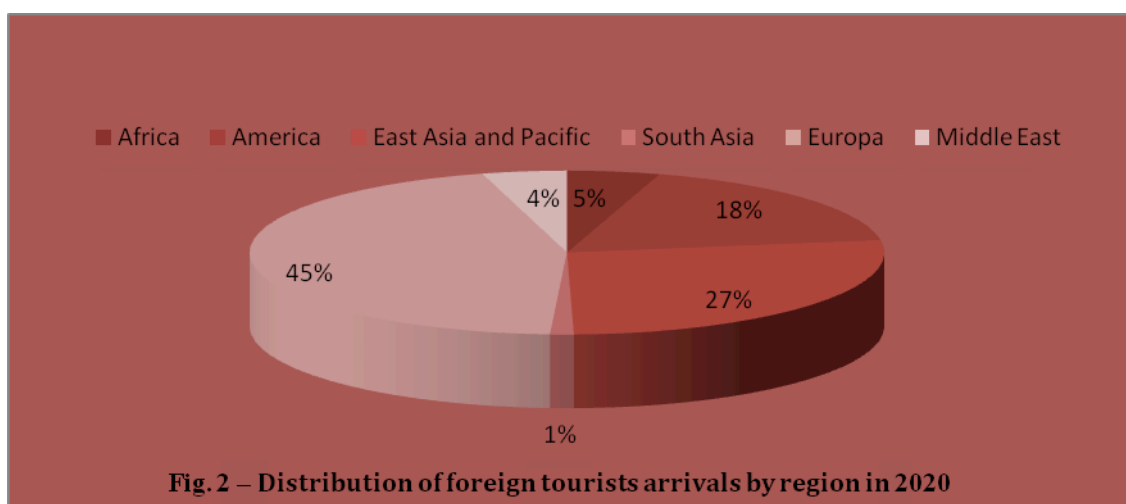
Source: WTO, Tourism Highlights

Regarding the dynamics, Europe – the area with the most intense tourist activity- registered, after 1970, a more modest growth (below the world average), reflected by a decrease in the participation rate to 57,7% in 2013, compared to 72,5 in 1960.

Among the reasons for this decrease we find both the rise of the Asian countries and a number of political and economic changes across the continent, and the saturation of the tourist demand in this area. [14]

According to estimates, over 5 years, Europe will continue to hold the leading position in the hierarchy of tourist areas (see Figure 2). [13]

Figure no. 2 Distribution of the arrivals of foreign tourist on regions, estimated for 2020



Source: WTO, Tourism Highlights

To achieve a complete picture of the size and dynamics of international tourism, a deeper analysis on each country is required. Depending on the tourism potential available, the level of economic and social development and the results of the work undertaken, the states manifest as countries receiving and/or transmitting tourists.

In the category of receptors of tourists stand the European countries recognized through the value and richness of their attractions, but also through their traditions in travel arrangements, such as France, Spain, Italy, Austria, Greece and Turkey. Outside Europe, the most important positions are occupied by: USA, Mexico, China. [13]

2. THE PREMISES OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN ROMANIA [11]

Romania has a valuable and diverse natural tourism potential that constitutes the richest resource of the country and provides the opportunity to develop a sector of activity, which is on the rise worldwide and with benefic results for the economy of the countries that promote tourism.

The basics elements of the natural potential, those that offer the necessary qualities for tourism development, are represented by:

❖ **varied topography**, with balanced forms distributed in the territory (31 % mountains, 36 % hills, 33 % fields and meadows) and easily accessible;

❖ **moderate - continental temperate climate**, with a comforting thermal regime and a therapeutic significant value of the bio-climate (tonic-stimulant, sparing, with strong negative air ionization), favorable to practice various forms of tourism throughout the year.

❖ **mountain tourism area** which benefits from a moderate climate characterized by thermal comfort, reduced blizzards, few avalanches and a persistence of the of the snow cover up to 180-200 days/year, easy access possibilities, favorable for mountaineering, hiking, various forms of skiing and other winter sports [2].

To these elements we add the existence in the mountain area of numerous caves accessible for practicing caving-tourism, forests of social, recreational and scientific interest (natural reserves and national parks) which have a valuable hunting zone, a network of rivers and natural/anthropogenic lakes with varied fisheries fond which give the possibility of practicing various forms of water sports.

❖ **spa touring potential** recognized by the richness and value of the treatment factors such as: mineral and thermo water, natural gas emanations treatment, therapeutic mud and lakes used in the prophylaxis and therapy of various diseases as well as for maintenance.

The quality of the certified reserves for hydro resources places **Romania among the first in Europe**.

❖ **Tourism potential of Danube Delta** [3] by its ecological, landscape and fauna valences are attractions for conducting cruises and expeditions in a unique landscape with a unique character in Europe;

❖ **Tourism potential of the Black Sea coast** with various tourism resources such as: seawater, the size of the water, the marine bioclimatic, the thermo water, the seawater and the sludge treatment, the lack of tides, etc. offering to the coastline the optimal conditions to meet a wide range of tourist motivations: rest and recreation, complex spa treatment (prophylactic, therapeutic, remedial), water sports and sports, etc. In the 70s, the Romanian coast was one of the favorite destinations of tourists from the Western and North Europe;

❖ **Fauna and flora potential**, rich in species of scientific interest or for hunting and fishing, characterized by the existence of unique ecosystems.

The natural tourism potential complements happily with a high cultural and historical heritage representative for Romania, given the millennia history of the Romanian people, nominated by:

🏰 **The existence of over 680 cultural heritage values of national and international interest**, among which are: churches and monasteries, monuments and architectural and art ensembles, historical centers and archaeological sites – some of which were incorporated as values of the World Heritage of UNESCO (fortified churches, churches with exterior frescoes, fortresses, the city of Sighisoara etc.);

🏡 **The Romanian folklore and ethnographic treasure of great originality**, represented by: the architecture specific to villages from Romanian historical provinces, the wooden churches of Maramures and Salaj, woodworking, ceramics, costumes, crafts, art decoration, religious and traditional ethnic cultural manifestations; fairs and ethnographic museum exhibition outdoor or in pavilions, etc.

The Romanian tourism cannot be observed as a whole, much less the international one, without making a characterization of the current state of the Romanian tourism, both financially (investment, development and modernization, etc.) and in terms of tourism indicators.

WTO summarizes the impact factors in the development of the international tourism of Romania, as follows (Figure no.3).

In summary, the main causes that contributed to the decline of the Romanian tourism can be shaped: [12]

- lack of an action program,, consistent and stable, regarding tourism development;
- lack of investment funds for the development, modification and rehabilitation of the general and specific infrastructure due to the slow and complicated process of privatization;
- applying an inappropriate taxation, the lack of facilities in the bank loans domain etc;
- tourism sector reform started late, although some attempts of economic reform had been made since the early 90s, but the duration of their application spread over a large period of time;
- with few exceptions, tourism had not proved to be very attractive for foreign investors due to lack of assets (financial resources) available to the business in the field;

Figure no.3 The impact factors in the development of the international tourism of Romania [12]

No. crt.	Domain	Positive factors	Negative factors
1.	Tourism products	The existence in the study phase of some investment projects for new hotels both in major cities and tourist resorts	lack of an action program, consistent and stable regarding tourism development
		Adoption of new laws governing the conduct and control of the tourism activities and helps to improve tourism services	lack or poor state of public services in many resorts and rural areas
		The significant increase in the accommodation capacity in particular the number of rooms and private apartments	lack of credit for investments and heritage restoration, insufficient funds allocated for tourism development
		improving and developing the offer for other products and programs (sports, entertainment, cultural events, excursions, etc.)	lack of credit for promotional activities
		modernization of the existing hotels and construction of new hotels and other accommodation structures	strong competition from countries in Central and Eastern Europe
		development of rural tourism and the network of guesthouses that serve breakfast	an unstable political climate in some neighboring countries
		successful experiences of new forms of tourism in some tourist areas of the country	
		development and diversification of leisure facilities and equipment	
		increasing professionalism in the activity of training people	
		adoption of a legislative framework which allowed the opening of new technical schools and teacher training centers operating in tourism (Bucharest, Suceava, Constanta, Brasov, Timisoara and Cluj, etc.)	
		development of leisure hotel structures (nightclubs, casinos, gaming centers, clubs, health centers, conference centers and business, etc.)	
		Hotels privatization	
		the existence of a pleasant climate, rich nature and abundance of historical monuments	
2.	Marketing and promotion	rich tourist offer on the internet	Budgetary constraints
		Romania's participation in major trade fairs - exhibitions	Lack of a technical and financial support from the State for promotion
		Increase the promotional publications number	disparity between the work of promotion and marketing
		Development of audio visual advertising (CD-ROM, videos)	lack of credit for the development of promotional activities in the country and abroad
		Tourism advertising in media around the world	insufficiency of tourist information in the tourist resorts
3.	Other domains	upgrading customs border	Political instability in the Balkan area
		declaring the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve and development of ecotourism	the existence of inadequate technical-urban systems in some major cities and tourist resorts
		opportunity to exploit the reserves in the ecological tourism and other national/natural parks, declared as such by law	
		Awareness, through various actions, of the population on the value and the need to protect the environment	

- practicing high bank interest and therefore unattractive, while permanent depreciation of the national currency and the persistently high rates of inflation;
- long duration required for the reconstruction of the private property, in the case of the nationalized assets;
- existence of a hybrid management, unnatural between the rigors of the competitive economy and the super-centralized society mentality;
- diminishing the purchasing power of the population and reordering the priorities;
- reorientation of part of the domestic tourism demand by the foreign destinations.

3. CONCLUSIONS

In a world where the global trend of tourism is the increase in the tourist traffic and revenues from tourism, Romania began to regain its balance recording, beginning with 2002-2013, significant increases in most tourism indicators (number of tourists, remuneration volume, volume of foreign visitors). [9]

Many of the causes that slowed the development of tourism in Romania found their origin either in the managerial incompetence of those who worked in tourism or in the actions taken by the national administration. As a result of the insufficient national policies for the development of the Romanian tourism, at the level of an unattractive national economy, attracting foreign capital was cumbersome and the need to invest too much. [7]

The strategic planning tasks are those of preparing the vital actions of the company/organization, those targeting the future for a long period of time, anticipating the sustainable consequences it may have. Strategic planning demonstrates a remarkable adaptability and resilience capacity in a changing and partly unknown environment. [13]

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