

TOURISM IN THE GORJ COUNTY-THE LAST 10 YEARS OF DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The main objective is to become an important tourist destination not only for Romanian tourists, but also for foreigners. The only way to do that is to create long term strategies which determine competitive advantages for the destination. The aim of the article is to make an overview of the tourism development in the county. Throughout the last century the evolution of tourism in the economies of all countries has represented a serious point of reference in the development of tourism strategies. The Gorj county is a representative county in the Romanian tourism due to its remarkable geographical position, to the unique elements of natural attraction that attract each year thousands of tourists. Here we find mountains, caves, areas of mountain climbing, but the most important attraction are the works of Constantin Brâncuși, the Endless Column, the Gate of the Kiss and the Table of Silence. Having such a valuable offer can only be an advantage for marketers in creating a tourism product that can lead to the development of tourism in the Gorj county.

Keywords: tourism, development, destination, tourism strategies.

Classification JEL: Z00,Z3

1. INTRODUCTION

After years of researches in the tourism field it has been unanimously agreed that the development of a destination cannot be realized without establishing the proper strategies for creating a sustainable tourism. The Gorj county is located in the South - West part of Romania, in the Oltenia Region. The county has the incredible chance to benefit from an amazing relief, proper weather for tourism activities, tourists who visit the county can practice different types of tourism here.

As we mentioned earlier, the key to the development of the tourism in the Gorj county is to create a sustainable tourism that will attract each year tourists in the area. According to the World Tourism Organization the "tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities" is the sustainable tourism.[3]

Also, "any tourism development policy should take into account the varying needs and perceptions of potential tourists but, in particular, should arguably give primacy to the perceptions, knowledge and developmental needs of local communities"[2](Sharpley,2009). As it can be noticed in order to develop sustainable strategies it is necessary not only to know what tourists want but also to find out the needs of local communities.

The aim of the article is to try to make a summary of the accommodation structures existent in the Gorj county by starting to discuss about the tourist that come to Romania. The following two tables present comparisons between the years 2013,2014 and 2015 in what regards Romanian and foreign tourists.

Table 1.Tourists arrivals and overnights in 2013 and 2014

December 2014	December 2013					
	Arrivals ¹⁾			Overnight ¹⁾		
	Decembrie 2013 -mii-	Decembrie 2014 -mii-	Decembrie 2014 față de decembrie 2013 -%-	Decembrie 2013 -mii-	Decembrie 2014 -mii-	Decembrie 2014 față de decembrie 2013 -%-
Total	498,1	548,5	110,1	1097,2	1146,1	104,5
Romanian tourists	407,3	438,2	107,6	916,4	926,6	101,1
Foreign tourists of which:	90,8	110,3	121,5	180,8	219,5	121,4
Europe	72,2	83,9	116,2	141,7	163,1	115,1
- European Union	61,1	69,1	113,1	121,0	134,8	111,4
- Asia	10,7	14,9	139,3	23,2	30,7	132,3
- North America	4,7	6,0	127,7	8,9	9,9	111,2
- South America	0,7	0,8	114,3	1,5	1,6	106,7
- Africa	1,1	1,0	90,9	3,0	7,4	246,7

¹⁾ Recorded in the tourist accommodation structures²⁾ After the country of originSource: <http://www.insse.ro/cms/ro/content/turism>

As we can see from table number 1 and table number 2 the figures regarding tourist arrivals and overnights have increased in the three years mentioned. This proves us that service providers have to offer the tourists the best structures of accommodation.

Table 2. Tourists arrivals and overnights in 2014 and 2015

	Arrivals			Overnight		
	Period 1.01-31.10 2014 -mii-	Period 1.01-31.10 2015 -mii-	Per.1.01- 31.10.2015 față de per.1.01- 31.10.2014 -%-	Period 1.01-31.10 2014 -mii-	Period 1.01-31.10 2015 -mii-	Per.1.01- 31.10.2015 față de per.1.01- 31.10.2015 -%-
Total	7284,6	8518,9	116,9	17684,2	20461,9	115,7
Romanian Tourists	5621,1	6567,3	116,8	14406,6	16581,0	115,1
Foreign tourists of which:	1663,5	1951,6	117,3	3277,6	3880,9	118,4
Europe	1283,7	1457,1	113,5	2481,3	2824,9	113,8
European Union	1100,6	1250,2	113,6	2096,9	2370,3	113,0
- Asia	196,0	276,6	141,1	428,6	579,5	135,2
- North America	116,1	132,8	114,4	212,3	259,6	122,3
- South America	13,7	14,2	103,6	27,3	29,6	108,4
- Africa	16,0	14,8	92,5	60,7	89,6	147,6

Source : <http://www.insse.ro/cms/ro/content/turism>

2. TOURISM IN THE GORJ COUNTY

2.1 Accommodation structures

Tourism development cannot be ensured without the existence of accommodation structures. Tourists can be divided according to the number of days they stay in a destination, successful destinations attract tourists for more than 1 day and that is why it is mandatory to have proper units of tourism accommodation.

Table 3. Tourism accommodation structures with accommodation functions at 31 of July

Gorj County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Total	36	41	40	40	61	61	69	79	79
Hotels and motels	10	14	3	12	16	15	21	22	22
Tourist INN	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chalets	2	1	1	1	5	6	7	7	7
Camping and units of cottage type	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tourist Vilas	1	1	-	1	1	1	1	2	2
Pension	3	3	3	3	4	14	18	18	18
Vacation village	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Agrotouristic pensions	18	20	21	21	33	19	17	25	25
Youth hotels	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hostel	1	1	1	1	1	5	4	4	4
Tourism Halt	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Source: <http://www.gorj.insse.ro/main.php?id=446>

According to the Romanian laws the tourist accommodation capacity it is divided as we can see in table number 1. The figures in table represent the period 2005-2013 and the data used are from the National Institute of Statistic.

As we can see from the table starting with the year 2005 there has been an upward trend in the accommodation structures. The table highlights the fact that the unit of accommodation which is best represented in cities is the "hotel and motels" which shows the fact that investors prefer to put their money in units of accommodation that offer quality services to tourists. The agrotouristic pensions show also an upward trend due to the preference of tourists for clean air and healthy activities.

2.2. Tourism accommodation capacity

In what regards the tourism accommodation capacity and activity we must state that there has been a continuous evolution since the year 1990. From the figures offered by the National Institute of Statistics we can notice that in the year 1990 the net use of the capacity had been of 54%, from the existent places of accommodation, meaning 4426 places but only 662,6 were in function. The situation in the year 2013 is different, the places existent were 2521, the ones in function 766,9 and the net use of the capacity in function of 22,3 as we can see from table number 2.

Table 4. Tourist accommodation capacity in the Gorj County

<i>Year</i>	<i>Accommodation capacity</i>		<i>Arrivals</i>	<i>Overnight</i>	<i>Net use of the capacity in function (%)</i>
	<i>Existent (places)</i>	<i>In function</i>			
Gorj					
1990	4426 ¹⁾	662,6	174,2	358,5	54,1
1995	1797 ²⁾	399,3	94,9	164,8	41,3
2000	1475 ²⁾	415,3	38,6	86,0	20,7
2001	1258 ²⁾	409,5	46,4	103,3	25,2
2002	1199 ²⁾	357,5	37,9	104,2	29,2
2003	1159 ²⁾	343,3	36,4	83,6	24,4
2004	1170 ²⁾	328,7	38,6	90,0	27,4
2005	1320 ²⁾	339,0	37,6	84,6	24,9
2006	1484 ²⁾	411,2	51,6	98,1	23,9
2007	1439 ²⁾	404,0	58,1	105,5	26,1
2008	1357 ²⁾	443,4	63,2	119,7	27,0
2009	1967 ²⁾	574,3	59,1	116,0	20,2
2010	1974 ²⁾	556,4	55,0	105,7	19,0
2011	2255 ²⁾	657,0	63,8	136,7	20,8
2012	2509 ²⁾	728,6	74,6	173,3	23,8
2013	2521 ²⁾	766,9	75,1	171,2	22,3

1) The accommodation capacity existent at the end of the year.

2) The accommodation capacity existent at 31 of July.

SOURCE: [HTTP://WWW.GORJ.INSSE.RO/MAIN.PHP?ID=446](http://www.gorj.insse.ro/main.php?id=446)

The fact that in 2013 the capacity in function was only of 766 places shows a small increase in percentage highlights the fact that there have not been made any serious investments in this area.

CONCLUSIONS

Taking all of these into consideration we can conclude that although the Gorj county benefits from several types of resources that could make it one of the most beautiful destinations from Romania there have not been made any serious investments in the tourism area that could increase the number of tourists. The key to success would be to develop a relationship between the local authorities and the investors.

As it has been seen at the beginning of the article, the number of tourists visiting Romania increases each year. Here we include not only foreign tourists but also Romanian tourists. The need to travel is becoming more and more important. The service providers must understand that satisfied tourists need quality accommodation structures.

The Gorj county is famous for its beautiful landscape and cultural monuments but it also has to become famous for the quality of the services provided by the tourist providers.

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