EVOLUTION OF TOURISM DURING THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

EVOLUȚIA TURISMULUI ÎN PERIOADA CRIZEI ECONOMICE

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Abstract: *The negative effects of the economic crisis have affected almost all the world's countries. The economic recession has adversely affected the evolution of tourism in our country, as well as world tourism. Tourism was one of the sectors which did not benefit from the crisis; on the contrary it has led to the decrease of revenues obtained from the tourism services provided.*

Key words*: the economic crisis, tourism, the gross domestic product*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an authoritative source to be considered within the economies of the states characterized by the development of this activity sector. At the level of national economy the share held in GDP is low and yet it is a sector in which considerable sums are spent, especially for its visibility. The development of this sector in Romania is beneficial in two ways:

- it creates jobs for our country's population;
- large incomes are obtained from the tourist services offered.

Both presented aspects contribute to the development and strengthening of the Romanian economy, so that the support of this activity sector may have a substantial contribution in the future to the gross domestic product.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The presentation of the number of tourists received in tourist reception structures during the economic crisis, but especially a few years

before the effects of the crisis were felt in Romania, will show whether these effects were also felt in tourism. Tourism can be one of the activity sectors which have benefited or, on the contrary, it can be one of the sectors that have suffered losses during the crisis. This paper aims to analyze the evolution of tourism in our country, but also its comparison with the global evolution.

The analysis of tourism evolution in Romania is focused on highlighting the number of Romanian and foreign tourists who were received in the tourist reception structures in Romania during 2006 - 2010 (for 2010 the data include only the first 10 months of the year). The data presented in graph no. 1 and in tables no. 1, no. 2 and no. 3 are the official data provided by the National Institute of Statistics.

Clearly the number of tourists in our country was higher than the official one, a part of tourism in Romania being included in the underground economy, and obviously it is impossible to quantify. The arguments and conclusions of this paper work will take into account strictly the official data which the institutions in our country make available to those interested.

RESULTS AND DISCUTIONS

The occurrence of the crisis in Romania is easy to demonstrate by the figures recorded for the gross domestic product. The highlighting of these results is made in table number 1. The decrease of the gross domestic product was registered in our country since 2009, so later than worldwide. The year 2010 has failed to lead to positive results, but it diminished the decline from the previous year, while the forecast for this year are optimistic. For 2011 a gross domestic product growth of 1.5% is forecast, compared to 2010.

Romania's gross domestic product

Table no. 1 (%)

2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
7,7	**6**	**7,3**	**- 7,1**	**- 1,9**

Source: Romanian Statistical Yearbook 2008, Monthly Statistical Bulletin no.1, 12/2010, no.1/2009

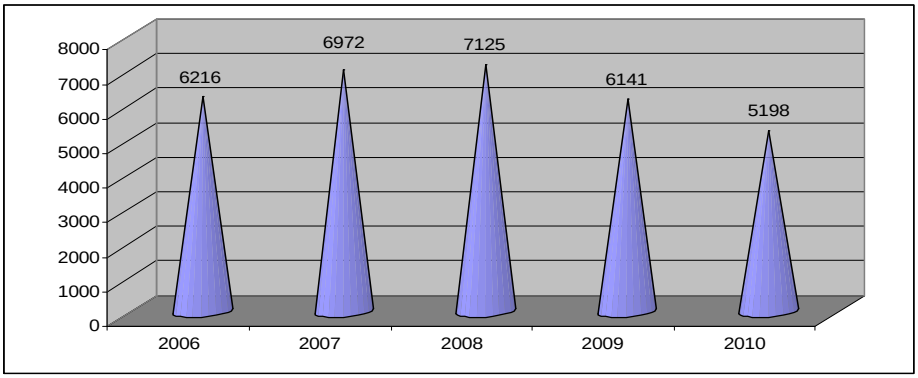
The last two years are the ones in which the economic crisis took hold of the Romanian economy. Its negative effects on the tourism in our country can be demonstrated by analyzing the number of tourists for a five-

year period, in order to compare the indicators with those of the pre-crisis period.

The number of Romanian and foreign tourists in the tourist reception structures from our country has recorded an annual growth during 2006 - 2008, and the next two years recorded a decrease. The figure recorded in 2009, of 6,141 million tourists, was lower than the value obtained in the first year of analysis (2006), and the gap as compared to 2008, the year with the largest number of tourists, is of 984 thousand tourists.

Evolution of tourists received in tourist reception structures in Romania

Graph no. 1



Source: Monthly Statistical Bulletin no. 10/2010, Monthly Statistical Bulletin no.12/ 2009, 2008, 2007, 2006

The structure of tourists in the last analyzed year is of 77% Romanian tourists and of 23% foreign tourists. The higher number of Romanian tourists is obvious in all the five years analyzed, an evolution which reflects the Romanian tourism reality. Our country has failed to develop its tourism so that the number of foreign tourists to become the majority.

Arrivals in tourist reception structures - Romanian tourists

Table no. 2 (thousands of persons)

Year	Romanians	%
2006	**4836**	**0**
2007	**5421**	**12**
2008	**5659**	**4**
2009	**4865**	**-14**
2010	**4026**	**- 17**

Source: Monthly Statistical Bulletin no. 10/2010, Monthly Statistical Bulletin no. 12/2009, 2008, 2007, 2006

The Romanian tourists registered in the tourist reception structures are found in the same trend as the total number of tourists, the increases during the period 2006 - 2008 are accompanied by dramatic decreases in following years. In 2009, compared to 2008, there was a 14% decrease in the number of Romanian tourists, and for the last year the decrease is of 17%. For the last year we should take into account the fact that the figures correspond only to the first 10 months of the year, and the last two months can bring changes to the indicator.

Arrivals in tourist reception structures - foreign tourists

Table no. 3 (thousands of persons)

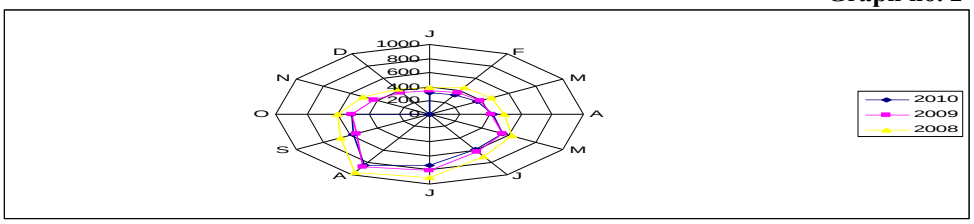
Year	Foreigners	%
2006	**1380**	**0**
2007	**1551**	**12**
2008	**1466**	**-5**
2009	**1276**	**-13**
2010	**1172**	**- 8**

Source: Monthly Statistical Bulletin no. 10/2010, Monthly Statistical Bulletin no. 12/2009, 2008, 2007, 2006

The values recorded in table number 3 revolve around the value of 1,300 thousand tourists, with variations depending on the reference year. The interesting observation is that unlike the number of Romanian tourists, the number of foreign tourists has been diminishing since 2008 when the crisis was felt in the developed countries.

Number of tourists in Romania

Graph no. 2



Source: Monthly Statistical Bulletin no. 10/2010, Monthly Statistical Bulletin no. 12/2009, 2008, 2007, 2006

The tourists chose to visit our country during the summer months, especially in August. This is the month when the highest number of tourists was recorded, followed by July and June. In 2010 the number of tourists

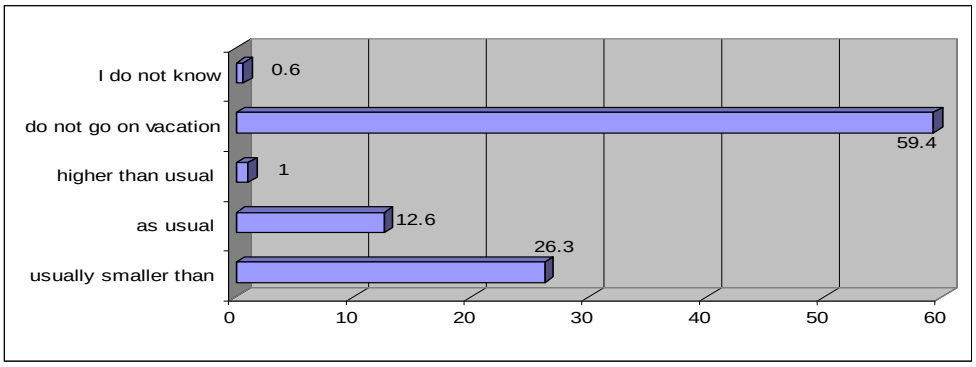
registered in the tourist reception structures was of 843,000, in 2009 it was of 862 thousand, and in 2008 of 959,000 tourists.

Concerning the domestic tourism, the trend for 2010 is presented with the help of the research report "Tourist services consumption in Romania" conducted by INSOMAR in June - July 2010.

The survey questions are related to several aspects of tourism in Romania, to the attitude of employees in tourism, etc. Among the questions used in this survey, the question on the budget for holiday or vacation in 2010 shows that the situation in our country still does not encourage tourism. Almost 60% of the respondents do not intend to go on vacation or on holiday, and 26% will allocate a smaller budget than usual. [2]

The budget for 2010 for holiday/vacation

Graph no.3



Source: Research Report "Tourism services consumption in Romania", INSOMAR, June – July 2010

The increase of the number of unemployed, the decrease of revenues, the uncertainty about the economic evolution in the next period accounted for only a few of the causes that have convinced the Romanian citizen to ponder more before spending the income held. Thus, during the period in which the economic crisis has become a reality in our country too, automatically, the number of tourists in Romania has dropped.

CONCLUSIONS

In Romania, the effects of the crisis were felt a year later than in the U.S., and the decline of the Romanian tourism began in 2009. Of course, not

even before 2009 was the number of tourists in Romania significant, but it recorded a slight increase. Reducing the number of tourists has also been influenced by the population's alarm about the avian and swine influenza pandemics.

Clearly, tourism in Romania has not been among the activity sectors that benefited from advantages as a result of the crisis emergence, but, on the contrary it is among those which have been affected by it.

Worldwide the decline in international tourism began in 2008, but 2009 recorded the most dramatic decrease of -4.2%. 2010 has brought a considerable increase in international tourism of 6.7%, but especially in emerging countries, which have been the main engine of recovery. The forecast for 2011 is the record of a 4-5% increase. [5]

The economic crisis has led to a decrease in the number of tourists both nationally and globally, tourism was no longer among the activity sectors that have benefited from the crisis, on the contrary, it recorded declines breaking the upward trend from the last period.

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