THE EVOLUTION OF ROMANIAN TOURISM FROM THE BEGINNING OF CRISES TO PRESENT DAY

EVOLUŢIA TURISMULUI ÎN ROMANIA DE LA ÎNCEPUTUL CRIZEI ŞI PÂNĂ ÎN PREZENT

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Abstract: *Tourism is one of the largest industries in the global economy and has been both a key driver and a beneficiary of the prolonged period of economic growth seen in recent years. It also has significant social and cultural benefits because of its potential to promote understanding and international relationships. These socioeconomic dimensions make tourism a vital component of globalization. But the many events taking place at global level call into question how the tourism industry is affected. The intensity of business organizations is reflected in the national economy and hence overall performance. The tourism industry has been affected by other crises in the previous period but the current crisis is characterized by some specific aspects that differentiate it from other crises. Despite the current difficulties, the Tourism sector remains a critical economic sector worldwide and one that provides significant potential for economic growth and development internationally. A growing national Tourism sector contributes to raises national income, employment, and can improve a country's balance of payments. This paper examines the trend of tourism in Romania, based on statistical data.*

Key words*: tourism industry, tourism, performance*

INTRODUCTION

We cannot overlook the fact that the global economic crisis has affected everyone. Crisis was manifested first at global corporate business

and then transferred to private, so tourism has also suffered. This situation was felt in the number of tourists, which decreased significantly by about 20% (in hotels).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The global economic crisis has strong effect on Romania, which has not a developed market economy, but an economy based on consumption and credit. What can we expect in terms of tourism nobody can tell. The rich suffer less; unfortunately the most of the population, affected by the economic crisis, will bear its costs: unemployment - due to failures in the private sector, leaving investors to other countries, etc.

This makes Romania to be financially vulnerable, as the Romanian economy from 1989 worked after a model of so-called "market economy", which was based on the privatization of all state enterprises in all fields' activity: industrial, extractive, communications, agriculture, tourism (of course), etc. Although financial and economic crisis seems far from exhausted, some analysts are speaking that a new crisis generated by oil shortages will occur in 2013. Thus, experts say that future mess exceeds, by its magnitude, the current instability.

The net investments in hotels and restaurants in 2010 was lower than in 2008, but higher than in 2009, as seen in figure 1.

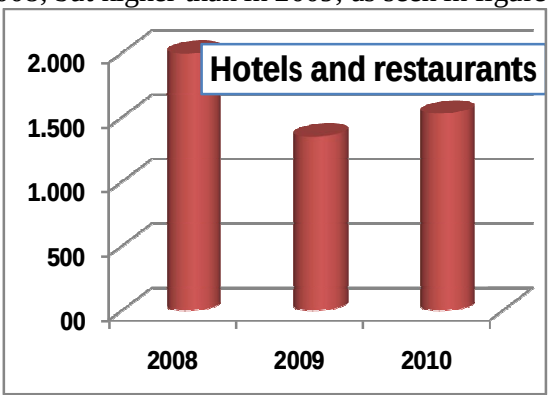


Fig. 1. Net investments, by activity of national economy (lei million current prices)

In terms of quality-price report, Romania has ceased to be an attractive tourist market (see the worst indicators giving Romania a competitive disadvantage as a tourist destination), see Table 1.

Table 1.

The most important development disadvantages in tourism

The worst indicators	Score on the competitive disadvantages
Quality of roads	2,59
Sustainability of the development of the tourism industry	2,57
The effectiveness of the marketing and brand building	2,43
Tourism rank among the priorities of government	2,41
The transparency of the government policy	2,10
The access to improved drinking water	1,87
The tourism opening	1,86

Source: Eurostat, Panorama on Tourism, 2008

So, what says the statistic data?

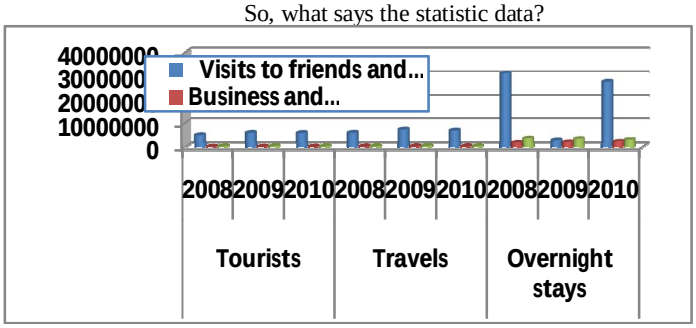


Fig. 2. Number of tourists, travels and overnight stays, by main purpose of the travel

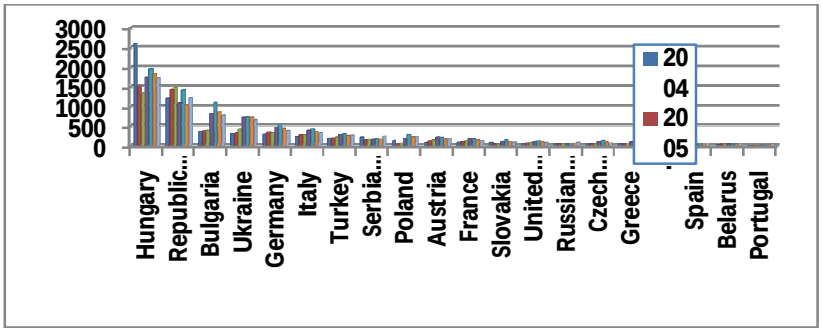


Fig. 3. Top 20 arrivals of foreign visitors in Romania, by main origin countries and departures of Romanian visitors abroad (Thousands arrivals)

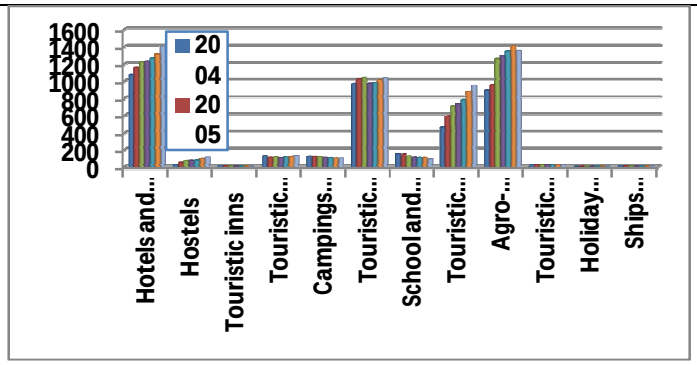


Fig. 4. Establishments of touristic reception with functions of touristic accommodation

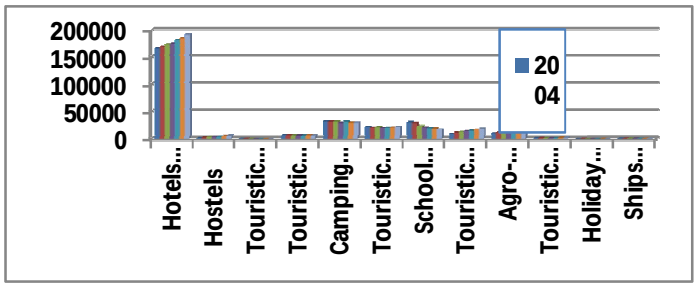


Fig. 5 Existing touristic accommodation capacity (places)

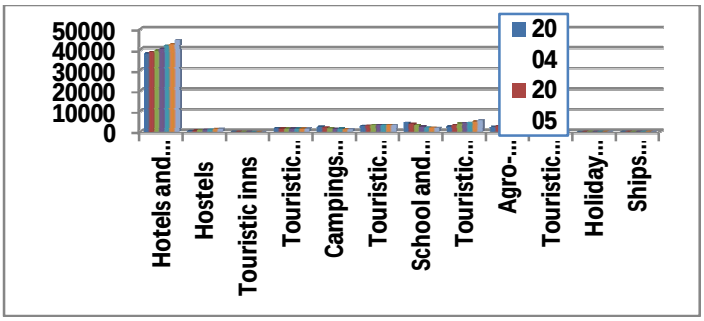


Fig. 6. In operation touristic accommodation capacity (thou places-days)

Number of tourists, travels and overnight stays was lower in 2010 than in 2008 at almost all categories, a great difference was at last one in

2009 comparative to the other years.

Referring to visits abroad, Romanian neighbors (Hungary, Moldavia, Bulgaria) are those who visited the country most often (figure 3), followed by Ukraine, Germany and Italy (where are workers from Romania).

Still growing are all categories at Establishments of touristic reception with functions of touristic accommodation (figure 4), Existing touristic accommodation capacity (places), figure 5, and In operation touristic accommodation capacity (thou places-days), figure 6. Even in the area of agro tourism is seen the same trend. If the number of accommodation was not occupied (on average) even half (to the hotels), in other cases, the number of overnight were very close to the number of accommodation.

CONCLUSIONS

If by 2008 in tourism was a lower influence, since January 2009, the crisis has begun to become more painful, especially during the extra season (eg. January and February months are weaker in terms of mass tourism), and now absolutely all further segments will be affected. For the following periods the tourism sector is expected to decrease in income, but its magnitude depends on the crisis.

Some people from industry or other sectors, say the Romanian tourism could exploit this crisis to grow by attracting tourists from Europe to close destinations, like Romania or Bulgaria. It is worth mentioning however that if we failed to attract tourists so far, probably this will not happen during the crisis.

Indeed, it may be an opportunity for tourism in countries which can reduce their tariffs, but conserved its quality services. We, Romanians, increase prices because the occupancy decreases. And extrapolating, we do not offer services cheaper or better.

Promoting tourism only with slogans such as "Romania always surprising" made with a budget of five million euro, equivalent to that of 1980, did not work. And the rush for enrichment of the coastal hoteliers, who offer pathetic services on the prices of Ibiza, is useless.

REFERENCES

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