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THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF MEHEDINȚI COUNTY THROUGH AGRITOURISM ACTIVITIES

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Abstract: Preserving a rural world, with everything that is has significant in economic, social, cultural terms, involves the initiation and development of rural tourism. Rural tourism and agritourism can participate in maintaining the viability and stability of rural localities, in particular condition of the depopulation phenomenon, which is obviously manifested by the departure of young people to urban areas and the abandonment of old households and land.

• Introduction

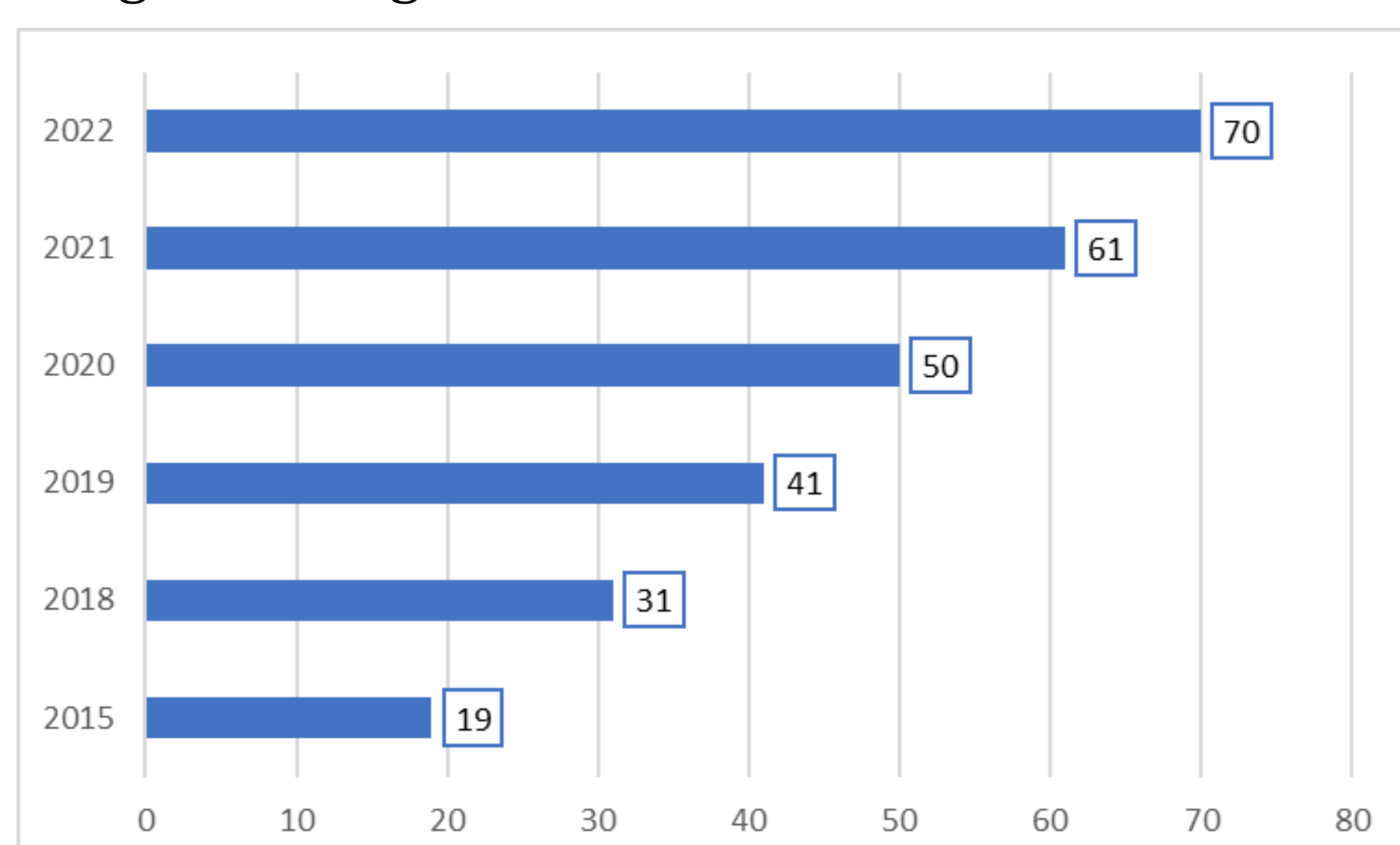
The geographical location of Mehedinți County and the beauty of the landscapes offer optimal conditions for the development of very varied forms of tourism. To be suitable for agritourism, rural communities must be located in an unpolluted area, possess numerous ethnographic and cultural values as well as numerous local traditions specific to the area, with a rich historical past or possess other categories of resources that provide authenticity and print the local specifics. In Mehedinți plateau we find a series of localities where we can develop this new form of tourism. Here we meet many rural communities where traditions, culture and popular celebrations are still very well preserved and can be exploited through agritourism.

• Material and method

This paper highlights the implications that the development of agritourism has on the development of the rural area of Mehedinți County. In order to highlight the agritourism activity stage of development, in the studied area, we used as a research method, the statistical analysis of the data provided by the National Institute of Statistics as well as various local information sources. Based on the information used, a series of conclusions were drawn regarding the effects produced by the rural tourism activity on the rural communities of Mehedinți.

• Results and discussions

The analysis of the number of agritourism guesthouses in the SV Oltenia Region shows that Mehedinți County is the third county with agritourism potential, concentrating 26.02% from total number of agritourism guesthouses existing at the regional level.

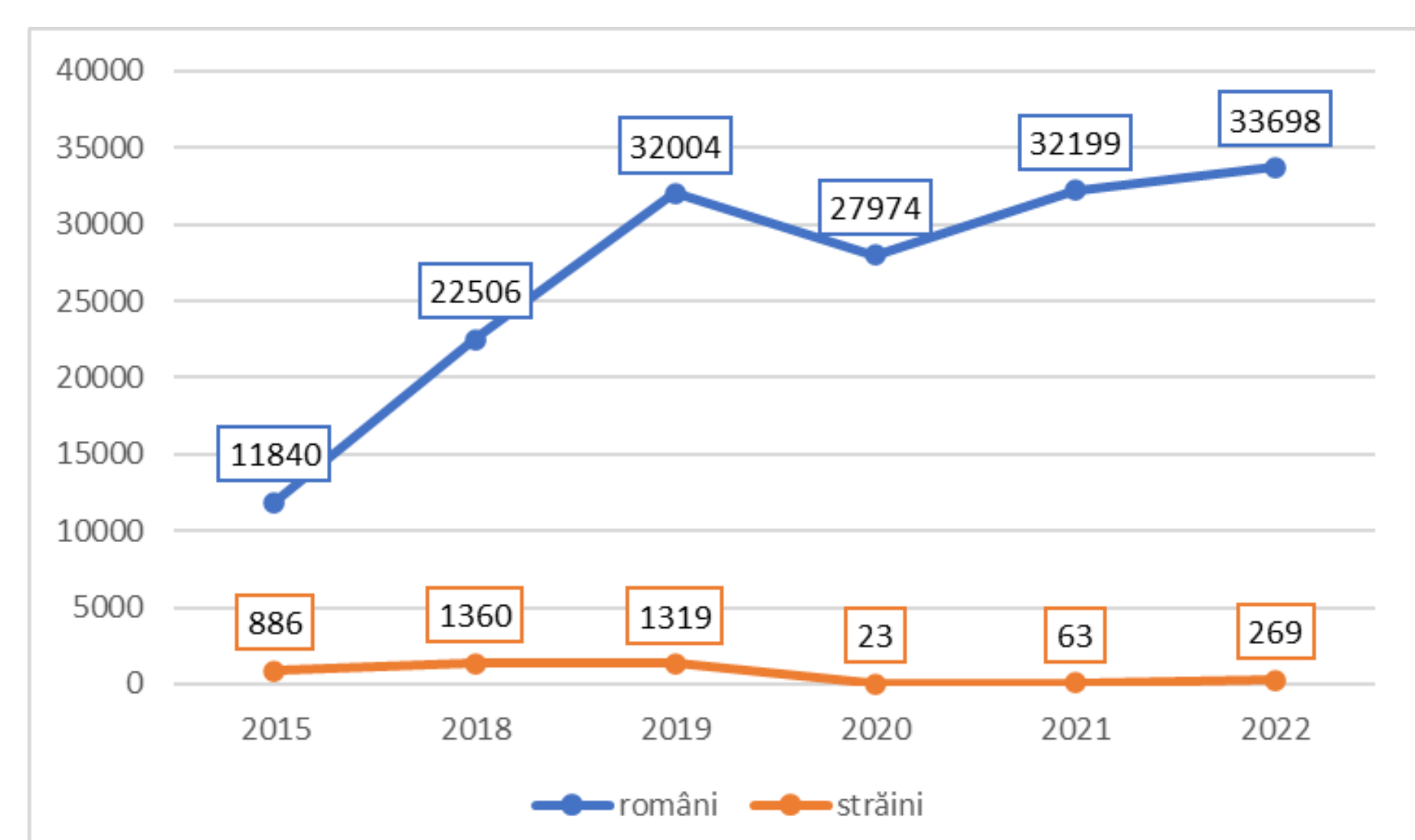


The evolution of agritourism guesthouses number

In 2015-2022, the number of agritourism guesthouses, at the level of Mehedinți County, increased by 268.42%, a fact due to the intensification of rural tourism activity in this area as well as the support of rural development, from European funds.



Mehedinți County is located in southwest Romania, being part of the Southwest Oltenia development Region. It is located on the left bank of the Danube, at its exit from the gorge. Mehedinți County is located on the territory of two geographical regions Oltenia and Banat and borders Dolj County, Caraș-Severin, Gorj and two Balkan Peninsulas, Serbia and Bulgaria.



The evolution of tourist arrivals, by categories, Mehedinți county, 2015-2022

At the level of Mehedinți county, the arrivals of Romanian tourists decreased by 12.59%, while, in the case of foreign tourists, the decrease was 98.25%.

• Conclusions

The capitalization of the local tourism potential, natural and anthropic, of local products and the possibility of connecting agricultural and recreational activities, indicates that the profitability of the agritourism activity in Mehedinți County is high, being in fact an additional source of income for the inhabitants of the rural environment.

The low population density from the villages of Mehedinți County, the unaltered preservation of natural resources, in a fairly large proportion, the high degree of protection and conservation of biodiversity gives the Mehedinți landscape a pronounced rural touristic character supporting sustainable development.

The intensification of agritourism activity in rural areas of Mehedinți County requires actions aimed at both monitoring and diversifying and developing a competitive tourist offer at the national and, why not, international level. In this sense, it is necessary to adopt some measures aimed at improving the promotion activities of local tourist resources, so that the tourist products offered can be included in the national and international tourist circuits, as unique tourist destinations.