



RESEARCH REGARDING THE TOURISM POTENTIAL OF HUNEDOARA COUNTY

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Abstract: Hunedoara County has a diverse and valuable tourism heritage, yet turning this potential into economic performance requires complex assessments based on both statistical data and direct field observations. The aim of this paper is to analyze the tourism potential of Hunedoara County by monitoring the evolution of tourist accommodation structures, the existing and operational accommodation capacity, tourist arrivals and overnight stays, as well as their distribution by category of origin. The research relies on data provided by the National Institute of Statistics, complemented by information collected directly in the field regarding the exploitation of tourism resources and the perception of local stakeholders on tourism development. The results reveal a positive but uneven growth of tourism infrastructure, a high dependence on domestic tourists, and short average stays, which limit the sector's profitability. In this context, the sustainable capitalization of the existing potential requires integrated measures aimed at diversifying tourism products, improving infrastructure, and strengthening the promotion of Hunedoara County as a competitive destination in the tourism market.

• Introduction

Tourism is a strategic sector for regional economic development, contributing to the diversification of economic activities, job creation, and the sustainable use of natural and cultural resources.

In this context, Hunedoara County stands out for its particularly diverse tourist heritage, which includes renowned cultural and historical sites such as Corvin Castle and the Dacian sites in the Orăștie Mountains, natural areas of high ecological value, as well as rural localities with authentic ethnographic and traditional potential. However, the county's tourism development faces a number of challenges, including the uneven distribution of investments, pronounced seasonality, and the low degree of exploitation of important tourist resources.

• Material and method

The methodology used in this paper combines statistical analysis of secondary data with direct observation in the field, in order to capture both the dynamics of quantitative indicators and qualitative aspects regarding the exploitation of tourism resources. The statistical analysis was based on official data published by the National Institute of Statistics, through the TEMPO-Online platform, regarding the evolution of tourist accommodation structures, existing and operational accommodation capacity, tourist arrivals and overnight stays, as well as their origin (residents/non-residents).

• Results and discussions

The evolution of tourist accommodation structures in Hunedoara County between 2015 and 2024 highlights significant changes in the size and diversity of the accommodation base, as reflected in the data presented in Table 1.

The table shows a significant increase in the total number of tourist accommodation structures, from 108 units in 2015 to 473 units in 2024, indicating a continuous expansion of the accommodation offer.

The evolution of tourist accommodation structures by origin (urban and rural) between 2015 and 2024 highlights significant differences in the pace of development of the tourist base in Hunedoara County, as shown in the graph below.

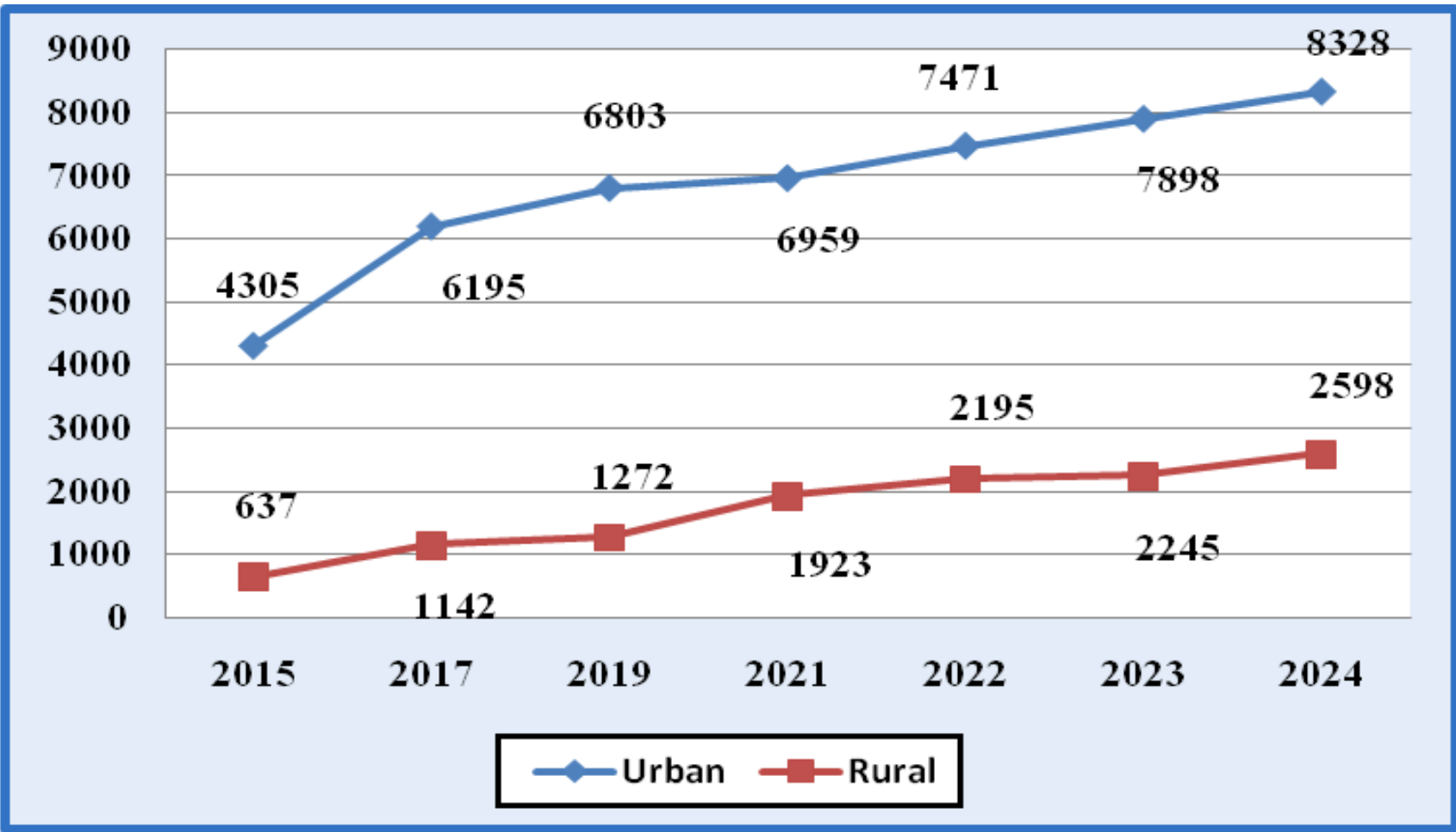


Figure 1. The evolution of tourist accommodation structures by origin

The evolution of tourist accommodation structures by origin shows steady growth in both urban and rural areas, with significant differences between the two remaining throughout the period analyzed. The graph shows that urban areas remain dominant, with much higher values, while rural areas are experiencing the fastest growth, especially after 2019.

The evolution of tourist arrivals in tourist accommodation structures in Hunedoara County between 2015 and 2024 shows significant variations determined by both the economic context and cyclical factors. Romanian tourists represent the dominant category throughout the period, while foreign tourist arrivals remain low, with a slow recovery after 2021.

•Conclusions

Hunedoara County relies mainly on domestic tourism, being preferred for short stays, ecotourism, cultural, mountain, and rural tourism. Thanks to the diversity of its landscape and iconic landmarks—such as Corvin Castle, the Dacian fortresses in the Orăștie Mountains, and Retezat National Park—the county has all the prerequisites to become a competitive destination at the national level.

Although the area under study is undergoing continuous development, it requires more intensive promotion and an integrated strategy for the sustainable use of resources, through the diversification of tourism products, the modernization of infrastructure, and the involvement of local communities.

Table 1.
The evolution of tourist accommodation structures, between
2015 and 2024

Types of tourist accommodation structures	2015	2017	2019	2021	2023	2024
Total	108	217	274	371	424	473
Hotels	23	24	26	26	31	32
Hostels	2	7	8	7	8	10
Apartments and rooms for rent	0	0	0	70	88	112
Motels	6	8	9	7	10	10
Inns	0	0	0	0	1	1
Tourist villas	19	32	44	44	45	49
Tourist cabins	4	34	47	45	46	44
Bungalows	0	1	8	1	1	1
Holiday villages	1	1	1	0	0	0
Campsites	1	1	1	2	5	8
Tourist rest stops	0	1	2	0	2	1
Tourist cottages	1	1	1	0	1	3
Camps for schoolchildren and preschoolers	2	2	2	2	2	2
Tourist guesthouses	25	54	66	72	72	71
Agritourism guesthouses	24	51	59	95	112	129