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ROMANIAN TOURISM PERFORMANCE IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF KEY TOURISM INDICATORS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

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Abstract: *Tourism represents an important sector for economic development, while strengthening the competitiveness of tourist destinations remains a major concern at the European level. This paper examines the position of Romanian tourism in comparison with Bulgaria, Hungary, Croatia, and Greece, highlighting the main differences in tourism performance during the 2019–2025 period. The results indicate that, although Romania possesses diverse tourism resources, their potential remains underutilized compared to competing European destinations. Compared to Greece and Croatia, Romania records a lower number of overnight stays, lower tourism intensity, and greater dependence on domestic demand. Furthermore, differences in seasonality highlight the structural characteristics of the tourism markets analyzed. The conclusions emphasize the need for development policies aimed at increasing international attractiveness, diversifying tourism offerings, and improving infrastructure in order to strengthen Romania's position in the European tourism market.*

• Introduction

Tourism is an important sector of the global economy, contributing to economic growth, job creation, and regional development. At the European Union level, tourism plays a significant role in the economies of many Member States, being influenced by economic, social, and technological factors, as well as by public policies aimed at developing infrastructure, improving services, and promoting tourist destinations. Romania has diverse tourism potential, encompassing natural resources, cultural heritage, spa resorts, mountainous areas, and rural destinations. However, fully exploiting this potential and strengthening the country's position in the European tourism market remain significant challenges.

• Material and method

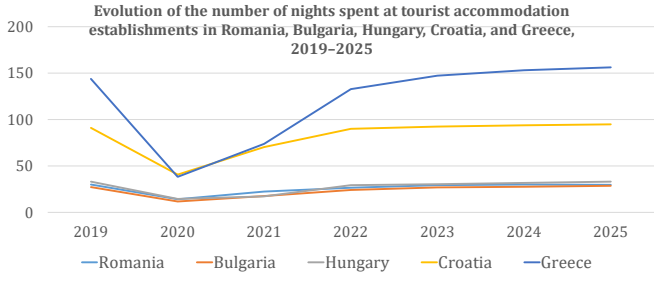
The research is based on a comparative analysis of the main statistical indicators of tourism activity in five European Union Member States: Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Croatia, and Greece. These countries were selected based on their geographical location, the diversity of their tourism resources, and the existing differences in the development of their tourism sectors. The statistical data used in this study were obtained from the Eurostat database, which provides harmonized information on tourism activity across European Union Member States, ensuring the comparability of the analyzed indicators.

The research methodology includes descriptive and comparative analyses of the selected indicators, using tables and graphical representations to highlight differences among the countries under study. Percentage changes in the main indicators are also calculated to identify trends over the period examined

• Results and discussions

Evolution of tourism activity in the selected countries during the period 2019–2025

Tourism activity is an important component of the European economy, characterized by significant differences among countries in terms of tourism demand, international attractiveness, and the utilization of tourism resources. Analyzing the evolution of the number of nights spent at tourist accommodation establishments makes it possible to highlight the dynamics of the tourism sector and Romania's relative position compared to Bulgaria, Hungary, Croatia, and Greece.

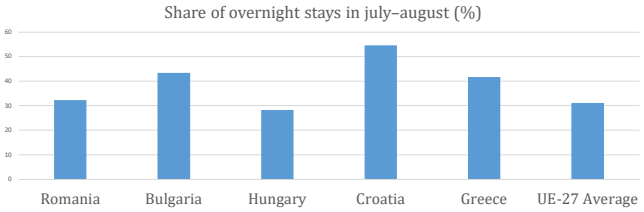


Comparative analysis of international tourism attractiveness

A relevant indicator for assessing a destination's position in the international tourism market is the share of overnight stays by non-resident tourists in the total number of overnight stays recorded at tourist accommodation establishments. The comparative analysis of the share of overnight stays by non-resident tourists reveals significant differences among the five countries analyzed. The highest values are recorded in Croatia (90.3%) and Greece (83.8%), reflecting the strong orientation of these destinations towards the international tourism market.

Analysis of tourism seasonality

Seasonality is an important characteristic of tourism activity, reflecting the concentration of tourism demand during certain periods of the year. It is influenced by climatic conditions, holiday periods, destination characteristics, and the structure of tourism supply. For the comparative analysis of seasonality in Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Croatia, and Greece, the share of overnight stays recorded in July and August in the total annual number of tourist overnight stays can be used.



Romania recorded a share of 32.3%, close to the European Union average (31.1%), while Hungary exhibited the lowest seasonal concentration among the countries analyzed (28.2%). These differences may be explained by the structure of tourism supply and the relative importance of the various forms of tourism practiced in each country.

• Conclusions

The comparative analysis of the main tourism indicators in Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Croatia, and Greece reveals significant differences in terms of the scale of tourism activity, international attractiveness, and tourism intensity.

The results show that Greece and Croatia stand out for their high number of tourist overnight stays and strong orientation towards international markets. In contrast, Romanian tourism is characterized by the predominance of domestic demand and relatively low tourism intensity, suggesting opportunities for further development and strengthening its position in the European tourism market.