

## THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND ECOLOGIC IMPACT OF THE TOURISM IN THE VATRA DORNEI AREA

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### ABSTRACT

*The tourism can hold a decisional role in the development of an area that does not have access to remarkable economic resources and has the capacity to contribute decisively to the exploitation of specific natural and antropic resources (mineral water, sediment, proper areals for sport or recreative activities, etc.) which attract the touristic fluxes and lead to the apparition and development of the locality as a trousitic resort. In this context, the work aims to highlight the contribution and impact of the touristic activities to the socio-economic development of the Vatre Dornei area.*

### KEYWORDS

*sustainable development, agro tourism, Vatra Dornei, economy structure*

### INTRODUCTION

Tourism represents one of the most complex economy sectors, because it involves, in one form or another, the entire society. As socio-economic and cultural phenomenon it depends on almost all the fields of activity, influencing in the same time their evolution.

This sector - tourism - involves a hard-measurable circuit and values the natural and antropic potential of a region, constantly making it richer, satisfying multiple human motivations.

As a continuous phenomenon, tourism was born from a necessity and became important with the evolution of its means - the increase in psychic and nervous energy consumption, the break in the human-nature balance, the only capable to purify and bring back the used strength and the safety of non-aggressive elements - because of the urban area development. It has a multiplying effect, introducing aspects that could not have been valued otherwise, such as: landscape, hospitality, solicitude, information (geographical, economic, cultural, historical, gastronomic, artistic, etc.) in the economic circuit.

Vatra Dornei is an intermountain area, with limited agriculture development possibilities - mainly based on bovine farming - and with an industry based on a rich forest fund, mineral water resources, therapeutically sediments, attractive landscape, resources that could not be better promoted than through tourism. Having these benefits, the area was also offered an honorific rank: the Pearl of Bucovina.

The accommodation facilities in Vatra Dornei consist in 13 hotels, 5 villas and a series of touristic hostels and households, summing up approximately 2 200 places.

The Vatra Dornei spa includes four treatment centres, with mineral baths sections, sediment body wraps, hydro-therapy, and gym for recovering medicine.

There are 6 springs for the internal treatment and over 30 for the external cure (mineral springs, bicarbonate, calcium, chalybeate, gently sulfur, oligo-metallic elements, thermal, etc.).

The Vatra Dornei resort holds a rich tradition in treating diseases with the use of mineral waters. The mineral water in the area as well as those in the Dornelor hollow is the "raw material" for thousands of procedures available in the modern treatment centres. The number of tourists that visit Vatra Dornei town annually is around 60 000.

The private investments in tourism were over 300 milliard lei, being placed in new accommodation capacities, as well as in the modernization of the existent ones and their rising to the European standards. Taking into consideration the dynamic of the tourism



between 1992 and 2002, an increase in the total accommodation capacity of 15% is observed, together with the increase in the number of tourists with 25% and the turnover in euro doubling. The occupational rate of the accommodation facilities was 70% and 75%.

The total increase in 2002, compared to 1999, is 25% - number of tourists, 15% - accommodation capacity and 100% - turnover.

**Table 1. SWOT analysis of the socio-economic system**

SWOT	Positive factors	Negative factors
Internal factors	<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <p>The most representative buildings in town are architectonic monuments from the 19th century. The most important is the Vatra Dornei Casino, built in 1897 after a plan of the Austrian royal court;</p> <p>The existence of proper conditions for the cultural and historical tourism, as well as hunting;</p> <p>Important network of public institutions;</p> <p>Developed technical and utilitarian facilities networks (water, electrical power, heating, digital telephoning system, TV cable, internet);</p> <p>The development of touristic services</p> <p>Developed commercial network;</p> <p>Underprivileged area - facilities for the investors;</p> <p>Advances privatization, active private initiative</p> <p>The existence of the Agro Tourism College and the Centre for Training and Innovation for Development in the Carpathians;</p> <p>Airport in the area;</p> <p>Production facilities that are available;</p> <p>Available terrains;</p> <p>Natural resources: construction materials, wood, mineral waters, peat exploitation;</p> <p>Financial institutions;</p> <p>Diversified educational system;</p> <p>Cheap and qualified work force;</p> <p>Recreational programmes and areas;</p> <p>The availability of local administration for terrain concession;</p> <p>Well educated human potential.</p>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <p>The state of the architectural patrimony and its economic non-usage;</p> <p>The non-satisfactory road infrastructure state;</p> <p>The insufficient development of communication between the institutions of public administration;</p> <p>The ageing technical and utilitarian networks;</p> <p>The poor marketing activity of private organizations for tourism;</p> <p>The poor development of the services for the population;</p> <p>Insufficient local budget - limited possibilities for the modernization of the urban infrastructure;</p> <p>The inexistence of pre-university and university educational institutions for tourism;</p> <p>The small airplanes landing tarmac requires investments to be replaced in the touristic circuit;</p> <p>Less developed infrastructure;</p> <p>The decrease in the purchasing power of the community;</p> <p>The lack of correlation between offer and demand;</p> <p>Personnel shortage in mining;</p> <p>Weak project management for the sustainability of the financing projects.</p>
External factors	<p>Public private partnership;</p> <p>The utilization of public debt instruments (loans and municipal bonds) as sources from the local budget, for the introduction of important objectives in the touristic circuit;</p> <p>Partnerships with the National Institute for Research and Development in Tourism, for identifying the investors in the local tourism;</p> <p>The existence of the General Urbanity Plan (Master Plan) - urban development</p>	<p>The fragility of the civil society representation system;</p> <p>The insufficient budgetary resources;</p> <p>The economic capacity of the existing investors is below the necessary budget for rehabilitation and infrastructure development;</p> <p>The inexistence of modern transportation routes in the regional plans (highways, fast</p>



	instrument; Credit schemes and grants; The existence of fiscal facilities because of the underprivileged status of the area; The formation of a core of small enterprises surrounding the major investors.	roads); Personnel shortage in the mining sector; The migration of the work force (mainly emigration).
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### The economical impact of tourism

Seen as an economic activity, tourism includes a diverse range of services, including: information services, sale points, touristic travel, accommodation, food, beverage, alcoholic drinks, treatment in spas, recreation and relaxation actions, etc. Apart from these services that directly depend on the tourism other activities that represent a significant part of the sales income in tourism appear: car sales, car service, post service, etc.

Besides the direct positive effects, tourism influences in a favorable way many other sectors of the economy and even the national economy.

✦ Firstly, this influence is achieved by the sectors that are part of the touristic activity through the demand of goods and services addressed to a variety of sectors.

Therefore, the tourism positively influences:

- The construction industry, it helps ensure the material basis for its development (construction of new accommodation units, public alimentation units, recreational areas, airports, roads, etc.)
- The car construction industry, to provide different installations and machinery needed for the equipment of accommodation units, kitchens and offering transportation vehicles
- Wood industry to provide the clothes materials, carpets, curtains materials - the producers are invited to provide a diverse series of products, of which some are used for the decoration of the rooms and public alimentation units, others are offered to tourists for buying
- Agriculture and alimentary industry are asked to support the alimentary consumption of the tourists with their products.

Tourism stimulates the expansion of the activities of the above-mentioned sectors and to creating new working-places.

✦ Secondly, the positive influence is also represented by the result of tourist mobility. This is measured in the number of internal and foreign tourists who use a series of services, such as public transportation, medical services, cinemas, theatre, postal services, fixed and mobile telephone systems, hairdressers and beauty centres services, maintenance and restoration services.

✦ Thirdly, the tourists buy, among other souvenirs (the foreigners especially make folk or hand-made acquisitions), a series of alimentary and industrial products, contributing therefore to the acceleration of the rotation speed of the production funds of some organizations. In different areas of the country, these encounter an intense action in the touristic peak period.

Being part of one of the activities that satisfy personal needs, tourism is a key precedent of the final consumption, with significant economic effects that must not be ignored. Even more, it is proved that tourism contributes to the production of national income, using its role of responding to a human need, and especially of participating to the work capacity recovery. Activities that contribute to income generation are not only the public alimentation and touristic transportation, but also activities of the personnel in the accommodation units and treatment centres.

The living workforce expenses hold an important proportion of the taxes, which means that each contribution to the increase in national income creates an increase in the work needed or already made.



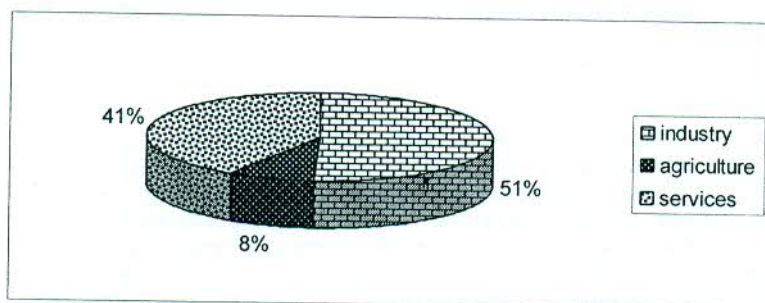
The currency share of tourism to the balance of payments is more convenient than the exterior commerce input. Being considered an export in the area of the country, the products used for the food production for the foreign tourists or for their acquisition are not added customs taxes or any other taxes, including transportation, wrapping, insurance. Therefore, making use of the material resources and internal workforce for the international tourism offers more benefits than the goods export.

The store in touristic resorts and the localities intensely visited by foreign tourists can be considered real "exhibitions" that offer foreigners a way to meet the Romanian export merchandise. Becoming consumers during their vacation in our country they create an active goods demand for import after they return to their country of origin.

Besides the contribution to the creation of national income, balancing of the payments sheet and exploitation of internal possibilities, the touristic activity plays an important role in the development of certain regions, areas and localities through the facilities and conditions that it implies, contributing to the economic and cultural raise in standard of the perimeters and the creation of better life conditions for the local population. As in the Dornelor hollow tourism has become one of the main preoccupations of the locals (confirmed by the large number of hostels and households and their ascension), the area significantly improved its infrastructure and raised the number of villas for tourists. This development also took place by the restrictions implemented by the World Tourism Organization (WTO) to the households that wish to participate in tourism.

Due to the existent conditions, the Dornelor hollow represents a constant demand for touristic activities because of its rich natural potential.

Being a complex activity, tourism is capable of generating mutations in the territorial profile development. From this point of view, the experts consider it a way of softening the interregional and intraregional differences at a local or national scale. Apart from including touristic areas and regions in the value circuit, the tourism has consequences in their geography, upon urbanization and the construction of households or vacation houses.



*Graphic 1. The structure on activity sectors for the population of Vatra Dornei*

It is well known that tourism is a great workforce consumer and this is because the technical progress penetrates slowly the tourism sector, and its specific operations cannot be mechanized or automated at the level reached by other sectors (such as industry). Also, the intensification process faces its own limitations, after these a quality diminishing risk appears.

The inevitable effects of this development include workforce stability, its migration phenomenon elimination, with all the consequence caused by them for the life-standard. Apart from permanent jobs, tourism offers temporary jobs, which represent approximately a third of the total working places and increases the demand of labour force for other sectors and fields of activity.



In Vatra Dornei, intense touristic activity area, the number of people working in tourism represented 7% of the total population in 2006. Analyzed from the socio-professional structure point of view, in 2006, Vatra Dornei covered an industrial function and services function as follows: 41% in services, 8% in agriculture and 51% in industry.

The expansion of tourism determines the apparition of new professions and influences the process of training experts for the sector. As a consumer of goods and services, tourism has consequences upon the work force utilization in other economic sectors, such as agriculture, public alimentation, industry, construction, etc. The input of tourism to the development of the economic life is more obvious in the green areas, where agriculture cannot satisfy the demand in agricultural products because of the restricted area of the arable and the climate.

Therefore, rural tourism contributes to the economic life of the state with the following:

- ✓ The possibility of setting a development policy on a long term and in correlation with other sectors policies: agriculture, infrastructure, environment preservation, etc.;
- ✓ The possibility of becoming a support for new business and work places and the determination of a new development locally and regionally;
- ✓ The encouragement of traditional local activities, especially handicraft, but also those activities that help the development of a specific commerce and the creation of work places;
- ✓ The increase in revenue for the rural population, generated by the usage of local resources, especially the ecological agro alimentary products designated for the tourists or sold by these and also the existent touristic potential (for recreation, excursions, etc.);
- ✓ The dynamic factor of the growth in life quality in the rural area.

#### **The social impact**

We may say that tourism fastens the social changes which are produced because of the evolution of economy and the expansion of the communications framework. Tourism personalizes and brings the society and the culture to light, especially by its marketing means, as well as other means.

One of the main features of tourism is its importance to the human being, as individuals, as well as a society in general. Therefore we may say that tourism offers an alternative for spending the spare time in a pleasant manner, the population becoming more active and sociable through recreation, through the direct contact with a wider space, different from the day-to-day one. The active recreation, the fresh air, the balneary treatment are elements that become active factors for the health maintenance and consolidation, for the regeneration of the work capability.

The industrialization and urbanization are social processes that take away the humans from the nature, tourism having the role of reintroducing him to the nature.

Acting together with other factors, tourism contributes to the reintegration of the humans into the nature and the social environment, keeping him, at least temporarily, in the most spectacular and beautiful areas. This transfer from the residential environment to the touristic one contributes to the formation of new life style, which contradicts the conservator and sedentary environment.

We can state that today's tourism has a multidimensional social efficiency, by:

- ⚡ Selling on the people to a pleasant and beneficial spare-time spending;
- ⚡ Stimulating the elderly persons as well as the young one to becoming tourists;
- ⚡ The care for the humans and their health, knowledge, recreation, optimism maintenance;
- ⚡ The love for the mother country, the taste for beauty;
- ⚡ The friendship and esteem for other nations;
- ⚡ The rise in the quality of life.

The treatment and spa tourism responds through its content, effects and perspectives to the social component of efficiency and its meaning. While analyzing



this tourism type and its social efficiency, the essential problem where we need to start from is represented by the temporarily incapacity of work, the causes which generated it and the measures needed for its limitation. At an international level, the research for a solution expanded, after the World Health Organization estimations showed that 10-11% of the population is affected by the temporarily incapacity of work. This is the context that best highlights the role of the resort tourism for physical regeneration and also psychic, for recovering after the incapacity.

The social importance of tourism also consists in its more and more active role for the creation of jobs, contributing therefore to the efficient and stable use of work force, especially in the less developed areas (from the economic point of view). This social aspect of tourism has direct implications upon limiting the migration and commutation, influencing the consolidation of families and especially the maintenance of younger population in the area.

In the resort where the seasonal tourism is less developed, the development of tourism becomes an efficient and stable use of local work force. Because of the traditions kept in the locations and the cultural activities, the local population benefits from superior life conditions.

For example, the younger people from a family which built a hostel continue their studies at a faculty for tourism in order to lead the business further and even improve it. In consequence they will not leave the location; on the contrary, they will contribute to its development.

The migration apart from the residence, for tourism, is bound to culture and civilization, There is no doubt regarding the interdependence between tourism, civilization and culture.

Firstly, the touristic activity is an act of culture, because the tourist gathers an important range of knowledge, from various areas.

Secondly, the civilization and cultural development influences the attractiveness and quality of the touristic product offered, through its consumption efficiency, because:

- a civilized society ensures the conditions for a better quality of the services, facilities and offers more diversified possibilities for recreation;
- the evolution of culture fuels and diversifies the cultural tourism offer (museums, memorial houses, cultural centres, etc.) with important social effects for the tourists;
- the culture of a country comes together with its promotion means (for example, authors, literature, cinemas, mass-audience means);
- the cultural objectives, which describe a civilized country, contribute to the diminishing of the seasonal tourism in an economy and stimulates the cultural circuits, scientific events (congresses, conferences, symposiums, etc.).

Tourism is defined internationally as an ambassador of peace, a way for knowledge, understanding between people; it is not only an economic sector, of payments and revenue. In its nature, tourism is, as Professor A. Mariotti says, a real negation of the political conflicts, the opposite of war. There is no other economic and social phenomenon which needs peacefulness.

In the same time, the social effects of tourism, referring to health preservation, environmental preservation, generate economic effects, such as the increase of the indirect net revenue because of the pollution limitation, health preservation for the tourists. In other words, the social effects of tourism are transformed, on different levels, in economic effects, acting for the benefit of the society.

#### **The ecological impact**

The ecological impact can be caused, apart from natural factors, by the informational significance of an antropic action. For example, non-polluter sports used for recreation purposes, such as paragliding, have a negative impact upon the predators in the area. Eagles, kites, falcons, see the "human predators", otherwise peaceful, as other large predators, even more dangerous, that they were not used to. They frequently abandon the area and the nests, looking for more peaceful areas in

their point of view. Because they represent the community of peak predators, which highly depend on other consumers and producers, a series of consequences which will reach the whole trophy chain will result. On the other hand, where they will migrate, the competition for food and adequate space will sharpen, resulting in an even higher pressure upon the capture.

Besides the ecological impact on tourism, the action or action source can be natural or antropop, as follows:

- supra-development (hotels, roads) alliterated the landscape and affected protected areas;
- the high density of tourists determines the multiplication of waste generations and the insufficient treating processes of waste waters, as well as the increase in the quantities of hydrocarbons in the rivers;
- the traffic jamming and air pollution in the surrounding areas;
- changes in the traditional life style, especially in poorer areas.

Therefore, the natural environment and the rational utilization of natural resources gain a certain priority in the general policy and concept for sustainable development and space organization, offering a special attention to the territory usage.

### CONCLUSIONS

The impact of tourism in the Vatra Dornei area is generally positive, therefore the promotion and development of tourism must continue and rely on the modernization and recovering of the accommodation infrastructure; on the aggressive marketing promotion of Vatra Dornei as a resource and touristic services provider; recreational tourism organization, fishing and hunting facilities; the rehabilitation of recreational areas in Vatra Dornei; the enlargement and modernization of the sky area and the creation of the infrastructure needed for tourism.

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