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“Gh. Zane” Institute for Economic and Social Research

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
National Agency for Mountain Areas, Vatra Dornei

ROMANIAN ACADEMY
“Costin C. Kirilescu” National Institute for Economic Research
Centre of Mountain Economy, Vatra Dornei

The 23rd Academic Conference

TOURISM AND RURAL SPACE
IN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL
CONTEXT



27 May 2021
Online Conference

ACADEMIA ROMÂNĂ – FILIALA IAȘI
Institutul de Cercetări Economice și Sociale „Gh. Zane”

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Agenția Națională a Zonei Montane, Vatra Dornei

ACADEMIA ROMÂNĂ
Institutul Național de Cercetări Economice „Costin C. Kirilescu”
Centrul de Economie Montană, Vatra Dornei

Conferința științifică

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ÎN CONTEXT NAȚIONAL
ȘI INTERNAȚIONAL

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Aim of the Conference

The aim of the Academic Conference on Tourism and Rural Space in National and International Context - TARS is to assess and promote the economic scientific research portfolio on rural tourism, to argue and substantiate its Romanian development strategies. Moreover, to provide European and international best practices.

The 2021 Edition intends to explore some of the main concerns of both theorists and practitioners of rural tourism on the following topics: rural tourism and agritourism in the context of sustainable development at national, regional, and global level; traditionalism vs modernism in rural tourism; national and regional strategies for rural tourism development; e-tourism management and marketing; the behaviour of service providers and customers in rural tourism; the role of legislation in rural tourism promotion and development; rural tourism from multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives: economics, sociology, law, psychology, anthropology, ethnography, folklore, etc.; international good practices.

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Opening Ceremony

Welcome Messages

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Institute for Economic Research, Romanian Academy

Keynote Speakers

Dr. Gül ERKOL BAYRAM

Sinop University, Sinop, Turkey

- ✧ *Tour guides in rural areas post-pandemics / Ghiduri turistice în zonele rurale post-pandemii*

Dr. habil. Gheorghe SĂVOIU

University of Pitești, Romania

- ✧ *Responsible business in hotel tourism as a response to Covid-19 / Afaceri responsabile în turismul hotelier ca răspuns la Covid-19*
- ✧ *Road to recovery in rural tourism / Drumul spre redresare în turismul rural*
- ✧ *Tourist passport in times of pandemic / Pașaportul turistului în perioade de pandemie*

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Chairs

Dr. Alina-Petronela Haller

Dr. Dănuț Ungureanu

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Laura DIACONU, *Coronavirus pandemic and airline industry: between facts and prospects / Pandemia de COVID-19 și industria aeronautică: între fapte și perspective*

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Chairs

Dr. Dănuț Ungureanu

Dr. Alina-Petronela Haller

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Daniela ANTONESCU, *The economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis on global tourism / Impactul economic al crizei COVID-19 asupra turismului la nivel global*

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Natalia ANTOCI, *Development of inbound and domestic tourism in the Republic of Moldova in the context of new global travel trends / Dezvoltarea turismului receptor și al celui intern din Republica Moldova în contextul noilor tendințe de călătorie la nivel global*

Travel trends determine the evolution of the tourism industry and also has an impact on all sectors operating in this industry. Tourism is an industry with a complex profile, which highlights both the country's tourism potential and a wide range of services, which contributes to meeting certain moral, cultural, spiritual needs and, last but not least, meeting the needs of tourism consumption. of people, who intend to benefit from certain tourist services, thus increasing the world economy. In the conditions of crises of the world economy, which often produce the negative impact on the development of several national economies, tourism has proved, for several countries, to be a good solution to get out of these crises. Moreover, currently, both developing and developed countries pay special attention to the development of strategies to intensify domestic and international tourism as those that contribute to overcoming economic crises.

Daniela ANTONESCU, *The economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis on global tourism / Impactul economic al crizei COVID-19 asupra turismului la nivel global*

The COVID-19 pandemic crisis is challenging the all countries in the world. Unprecedented global travel restrictions affect the global economy since World War II. With international travel bans affecting over 90% of the world population and wide-spread restrictions on public gatherings and community mobility, tourism largely ceased in March 2020. Early evidence on impacts on tourism sector have been harmful. The international specialized organisations estimated that international arrivals could decline by 20 to 30% relative to 2019. Tourism is especially susceptible to measures to counteract pandemics because of restricted mobility and social distancing. The paper analysis the effects of COVID-19 crisis on global tourism sector and explores how the pandemic may change society, the economy, and tourism.

Vasile AVĂDĂNEI, Lidia AVĂDĂNEI, *Entrepreneurial opportunities in tourism for young people with traditional practical vocations. Application in Ozana Valley touristic area / Oportunități antreprenoriale în turism pentru tinerii cu vocații practice tradiționale. Aplicație în zona turistică Valea Ozanei*

In recent decades, the emphasis has been on the development of tourism. Tourism investment policies have been somewhat chaotic without a unitary performance-oriented concept. Both the private environment and the public sector highlighted the peculiarities of the places created opportunities, built objectives that are not correlated with a coherent and

consistent message of communication. Thus, gaps appear in the territorial puzzle that fragments the message of tourist promotion and the picture of post-visit satisfaction. The paper is elaborated on three pillars: the first pillar refers to the tourist basin Ozana Valley from Neamț County (Romania) which is one of the most important and most frequented tourist areas in the country. The positive elements that fuel a huge potential for development were highlighted. The area has already been ranked in the world charts, which makes it notorious. The second pillar refers to a concept of classification of the component elements using the “order in complication” method, through which each relevant element is developed in order to increase the added value of the tourist services in the area. The 12 cultural districts recompose a diversity and an individuality of each element so that the definition of the target groups, the frequency of the area. The mapping mode is a strong point of the paper. Also, the way ecosystems are organized. The third element refers to local human resources. It is necessary that, both as employment and as entrepreneurship, the human factor be recruited from local resources. This preserves the deepest elements of cultural specificity. The area has the institutional capacity to specialize young people to develop and support local activities in a complex ecosystem. These are the three school units with a technological profile on specializations that can be associated with tourism. The traditional paradigm can make room for small producers. They can record incomes necessary for daily living and can find the motivation to preserve the traditions and the

local material and intangible heritage. Most importantly, arguments and reasons are provided for population stabilization.

Vasile AVĂDĂNEI, Lidia AVĂDĂNEI, *Young people decide on the tourist future of Piatra Neamț / Tinerii decid asupra viitorului turistic al municipiului Piatra Neamț*

The paper starts from the drama of young people after graduating from school. In general, there is an expectation regarding the employment of young people in well-known companies for successful careers. This year was associated with the fact that tourism is a development priority for both Neamț County and Piatra Neamț. We put in front of the young people the hypothesis that they would be the decision makers of some policies, actions, initiatives through which they create job opportunities. Two work fronts resulted. First front was the hypothetical role of young people as a generator of jobs. The second front was formed by the challenge of building a vision for attracting tourists. The result was an interactive dialogue that generated some interesting ideas and highlighted the fact that youth is a resource worth considering for the future of local development.

Mariana BĂLAN, *The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on cultural tourism / Impactul pandemiei de COVID-19 asupra turismului cultural*

During recent decades, tourism has become one of the most dynamic and fastest growing economic sectors in

the world. Tourism is the economic sector that contributes to job creation both directly and indirectly, especially for women and young people. Thus, in 2019, the number of jobs in tourism accounted for 10.3% of total jobs worldwide, and the contribution of tourism to global GDP was 8%. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic is an important and evolving challenge for the tourism sector. Measures taken by countries around the world to counter the pandemic have severely affected the tourism industry, and recent developments in this health and economic crisis show that the likelihood of this sector returning to normal in the near future is very low. Based on the latest developments in quarantine measures, travel bans, border closures and previous crisis patterns, various international tourism bodies anticipate significant reductions in jobs and incomes in this economic sector. The widespread impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and measures to combat it significantly affect all aspects of our lives and living environment, including tourism and cultural heritage. The paper presents a brief assessment of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism in general and especially cultural tourism, worldwide, at European and at national levels.

Geanina BRÎNZĂ, Gina Ionela BUTNARU, *Agritourism businesses as a successful solution during the COVID-19 pandemic / Afacerile agroturistice ca soluție de succes în timpul pandemiei de COVID-19*

The tourism market has felt a strong impact as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Blockages and border closures

have caused the abrupt closure of tourist activities (Wojcieszak-Zbierska et al., 2020). As a result, agrotourism has a high potential in terms of tourism recovery. Recreational, leisure or educational activities carried out in the agricultural area, the rural lifestyle that tourists can not find in urban areas are prerequisites for success for the tourism sector. Agri-tourism opportunities aim at combating poverty, reducing depopulation, supporting women and young people through innovative actions and implementing digitalisation in tourism, especially for underdeveloped countries (UNTWO, 2021). This study is an analysis on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on agrotourism, by following the prospects of economic recovery, identifying risks and agro-tourism opportunities.

Gina Ionela BUTNARU, Mirela ȘTEFĂNICĂ, Maria Magdalena MAFTEI, *The impact of strategies to improve the quality management system on the performance of rural tourism enterprises / Impactul strategiilor de îmbunătățire a sistemului de management al calității asupra performanței întreprinderilor din turismul rural*

The performance of an organization is a fundamental requirement in a market with an increasingly fierce competition and is conditioned by the competence of managers and executors through whose performance its economic and financial performance can be obtained. Analyzed from this point of view, performance is a strategic and integrated process that ensures long-term success in the activity of a company, in general, and a

tourist accommodation structure, in particular. Therefore, increased interest should be given both to studies that analyze the strategies implemented by managers and their influence on performance, and to measure and manage business performance. Thus, in this paper, based on the data collected by survey, the main strategies for improving the quality management system implemented by the managers of 82 rural tourist accommodation units from the North-East region of Romania were highlighted. At the same time, the results show that there is a link between strategies to improve the quality of accommodation services and the performance of the organization, and based on it outlined the most important guidelines and strategic directions of action that could lead to increased performance.

Laetitia CASANGIU, Registered traditional agri-food products from Dobruja region (Romania) / Produse agroalimentare tradiționale înregistrate din regiunea Dobrogea (România)

Local traditional products have been “rediscovered” in the last years and are taking on a more and more important role in the preferences of the consumers, both because of the fact that they have a powerful symbolic value, and for their nutritional properties and qualities. Prepared after methods and recipes that have been passed on from generation to generation, with local raw materials, these products represent a viable alternative to the excessively processed products that are typical of industrial products intended for mass consumption. The present study sets

out to bring into focus the traditional food from Dobrogea registered at a European and national level with the purpose of making them better known and promoting them in the activities of gastronomic tourism. Furthermore, the endeavour of their identification and presentation has the role, on the one hand, to raise the consumer's awareness on the existence of some traditional foods that follow certain quality standards, and, on the other hand, to set an example of good practice for all the producers interested to adopt a higher production stage that can offer them better visibility on the market.

Vergina CHIRIȚESCU, Tudor RADU, Anca-Alina BACIU, Aurel RADU, *The role of local action groups (LAG) in the development of mountain rural tourism. Case study: LAG Posadas Land / Rolul grupurilor de acțiune locală (GAL) în dezvoltarea turismului rural montan. Studiu de caz: GAL Ținutul Posadelor*

The local action groups (LAGs), through the implementation of the Local Development Strategies (SDL), represent a concrete and verified solution for the valorization of the resource potential of the Romanian rural areas. LAGs can support local communities to join the new approach to the development of the European village, an approach that encourages the return and/or settlement of young people in rural areas and their integrated development (economic, social, ecological, cultural, etc.). The LEADER axis, through its transversal character, contributes to all the rural development

objectives identified at the level of national and European programs, innovation being one of the main elements of the LEADER approach. This paper will focus on presenting the role of LAGs in the development of rural tourism in mountain areas, both conceptually and the funding available through SDLs. It will also include a case study conducted for the mountain area in the territory of the LAG Ținutul Posadelor.

Cristina CHIȘCĂ, Gina Ionela BUTNARU, *Protection of tourism consumers: an approach from the perspective of the residents of Bălți city in the Republic of Moldova / Protecția consumatorilor din turism – o abordare din perspectiva locuitorilor orașului Bălți din Republica Moldova*

The issue of consumer protection is one of the most complex and current issues of tourism in the modern world. Currently, the issue of consumer protection is an emergency for the Republic of Moldova through conflicts between tourism companies and their customers, but also by violating consumer rights during their holidays, which has led to unfavorable experiences for consumers of tourism services in various forms. Therefore, tourism companies need to pay special attention and properly address this issue, as well as be aware of the importance of consumer protection in achieving customer satisfaction. The purpose of this study is to analyze the problems encountered by consumers through the need to know their rights to protection in tourism. The data obtained by applying a questionnaire to a group of 174 respondents, residents of the city of Bălți in the Republic

of Moldova, were analyzed. The results showed that the three formulated hypotheses were rejected.

Raluca Irina CLIPA, Mihaela Brîndușa TUDOSE, *Analysis of the performance of tourism companies in the different phases of economic cycles / Analiza performanței companiilor de turism în diferitele faze ale ciclurilor economice*

The paper analyzes the impact of macroeconomic factors on the financial performance of tourism companies in Romania. In order to ensure a higher representativeness of the data, the analysis period is extended to 20 years (2000-2019). The sample is represented by 40 tourism companies (with CAEN code 5510), and the selection criterion is the size of turnover. Data were collected from secondary sources. The regression analysis used three categories of variables: dependent variable (turnover), independent variables (GDP growth rate, unemployment rate) and control variables (company size, degree of indebtedness, current liquidity, share of receivables in the figure turnover and turnover growth rate). The results of the first econometric analysis (which included data for the whole period) indicated that the analyzed macroeconomic variables have a statistically negative and significant influence on financial performance (assessed by the dynamics of turnover). Regarding the impact of internal factors, the analysis identified two variables with positive and significant influence (degree of indebtedness and company size) and another two with negative and significant influence (share of receivables and growth rate

of turnover). The results of the other two regression analyzes, performed on the pre-crisis (2000-2008) and post-crisis (2016-2019) periods, indicated that the impact of GDP change on the performance of tourism companies may be different (positive and significant in the periods pre-crisis and negative and insignificant in post-crisis periods). The results of the study are valuable both scientifically and practically, as they provide managers with information on the correlation of sales growth strategies according to the national economic context.

Nadina CREINICEAN, Rodica TRIFĂNESCU, *Measure 7.2 - "Investments in the creation and the modernization of small-scale basic infrastructures" under the National Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 in the context of sustainable development of mountain tourism / Măsura 7.2 - „Investiții în crearea și modernizarea infrastructurilor de bază la scară mică” în cadrul Programului Național de Dezvoltare Rurală 2014-2020 în contextul dezvoltării durabile a turismului montan*

The National Rural Development Program has financed - between 2014 and 2020 - investment projects aimed at the construction, extension and / or modernization of the road network of local interest, according to the programming period, under Measure 7.2. The beneficiaries of this measures of financial support were the local public administration authorities in the rural area and the inter-community development associations. A major objective of the public policy concerning these aspects, along with that of tourism planning, is to

promote the even spatial and temporal distribution of benefits deriving from tourism - to the greatest extent possible. Therefore, the spatial dimension of tourism planning can be reflected in the ease with which tourists can access a rich variety of international transport nodes - by either air, rail, or sea gateways - and which are latter supported by a sustainable internal transport system. The issue of local transport infrastructures outside the national road and the railway system is a matter of efficiency / operability. It is connected with a relatively easy access to valuable tourist attractions. The law on tourist destination management organizations (DMOs) (LAW no. 275, of 23 November 2018, on the approval of Government Ordinance no. 15/2017 amending and supplementing Government Ordinance no. 58/1998 on the organization and development of tourism in Romania) has set the ground for a new organizational and cooperation model. The final result of the application of the provisions of this regulatory document should represent a structured and coherent tourist destination management system, which features the possibility to make full use of all the resources necessary for a sustainable development. In this context, an analysis of the projects financed under Measure 7.2 “Investments in the creation and modernization of small-scale basic infrastructures” was carried out. The data used in conducting the research were provided by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Ved Pal Singh DESWAL, *Tourism as a key in the well-being of citizens: glimpses from India / Turismul ca element-cheie în starea de bine a cetățenilor: fragmente din India*

Today, in the era of competition and post-COVID challenges, the tourism has become an important part of our life for everyone because it gives the necessary break from the monotonous life as a result of lockdown of couple of months during the covid period. Various studies have revealed that tourism influences peoples' quality of life. India's Travel & Tourism sector ranks 7th in the world in terms of its total contribution to the country's GDP, according a report by the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC).

Laura DIACONU, *Coronavirus pandemic and airline industry: between facts and prospects / Pandemia de COVID-19 și industria aeronautică: între fapte și perspective*

The 2019 coronavirus pandemic has disrupted the business environment from all the sectors. One of the first and worst affected was tourism, in general, and airline industry, in particular. The purpose of this study is to investigate the short-term effects of Coronavirus pandemic on the airline industry and the potential recovery pathways. Using an empirical approach based on the secondary data investigation, we found out that, during 2020, both airlines and airports confronted with ratings' downgrades or even bankruptcy due to the severe cash burn generated by travel restrictions. To cope with the crisis, the most common measures taken by the

airlines were rationalizing the fleet, reducing staff numbers and reconfiguring their networks and capacity. In the beginning of 2021, there are signs that the industry is recovering, but the process is very slow. Meanwhile, many governments gave a high priority to the air transport industry, to protect not only the aviation itself but also the related sectors.

Marilena DONCEAN, *Professional development of human resources in tourism in the economy after COVID-19 / Dezvoltarea profesională a resurselor umane din turism în economia post-COVID*

The continuing professional development of human resources has become not only a technique or science in the contemporary world but, above all, a social movement designed to help the workforce understand their place and role in society, making people able to adapt to the requirements and demands of current world, to become efficient and performant. The crisis caused by pandemic Covid 19, revealed the problems in society, which will certainly contribute to a radical change in people's mentality. In the service sphere - in general, and in the field of tourism - in particular, the human factor is of particular importance. The relationship between tourism and human capital is complex, of interconditioning, with each of the two elements playing both a cause and an effect role. Therefore, stimulating tourism growth is an important means of relaunching the workforce, but also the development and the braking of tourism development depends on the existence or non-existence of human

resources in the reference territory. The human component, in the field of tourism, is included in the service that is purchased by customers, more than in other areas. The growing demand of tourists for high-quality personalized tourism services is often difficult to meet, as some tourist sectors lack qualified staff and lack high-quality staff, often due to the unattractiveness of the working environment in tourism. The aim of the study is to gather information and statistical data on the problems of professional development and training, to analyze best practices and on their basis, to propose ways of improving the human resources system in tourism, both in times of crisis and in general.

Sange GOMBU, *Measuring efficiency of hotels in Bomdila-Tawang tourist destinations / Măsurarea eficienței hotelurilor din destinațiile turistice Bomdila-Tawang*

Tourism and hospitality are one of the largest and fastest-growing industries and a key driver for the rapid growth of the service sector in India and the world. On the back of huge tourism potential in the country, the hospitality industry presently employs about 2.5 million people also provides support to other allied industries. Arunachal Pradesh, over the years, has observed a rapid rise of tourists' inflow which led to an increase in its share in the State's GDP. Bomdila-Tawang Tourist circuit is one of the important tourist circuits that have contributed to boosting tourism in the state. The present studies employed Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) BCC and CCR model in order to measure the efficiency of Hotels in

the Bomdila-Tawang Tourist circuit. DEA is a non-parametric technique of estimating the efficiency of Decision-Making Units (DMUs). DEA in hotels mostly applied in order to find overall efficiency, managerial efficiency, and scale efficiency.

Doina GURÎȚĂ, *Marketing strategies for religious tourism in the Neamț area / Strategii de marketing pentru turismul religios în zona Neamț*

Religious tourism has an important socio-cultural component, being a practice that positions man within a sacred and spiritual space. Thus, religious tourism has the ability to influence the motivational state of a person seeking cultural and religious objects and places that support his spiritual existence. This article analyzes some possible marketing strategies to help the sustainable development of the economy of our country and especially of the North East area. In the first part I made an analysis of the tourist potential in the Neamț area and I came in the second part of the article with a proposal and strategies following an on-site research, through an interview based on an interview.

Alina-Petronela HALLER, *Analysis of the role of sustainable tourism in the European regional economy over the period before the COVID-19 crisis / Analiza rolului turismului sustenabil în economia regională europeană în perioada premergătoare crizei COVID-19*

Tourism developed a lot in the period before the COVID-19 crisis. As sustainability has become a necessary concept

to characterize economic activity now, and especially in the future, sustainable tourism has begun to be the notion analyzed mainly without claiming to consider it a new form that tourism takes. The main objective of the study is to analyze the extent to which European regional growth is sensitive to changes in the tourism sector and to see if there is a link between European growth and tourism in two situations, namely when we analyze only the relationship between growth and sector-specific factors, and in the situation where we add in the analysis additional elements such as capital stock, exports and labor. To achieve the research objective, we used a sensitivity analysis and a multiple regression method, and the period to which we refer is 1995-2017, prior to the current crisis. The results show that, in European regions, economic growth is sensitive to changes in the tourism sector, especially in the Mediterranean countries (MC), Western European countries (WEC) and Central and Eastern European countries (CEE). We notice a lower sensitivity in the case of the Nordic countries (NC). The regression analysis led to the demonstration of a link between European growth and tourism, especially in terms of expenditure and revenue, a relationship that does not disappear but only decreases in intensity when we include in the analysis factors that have an indirect link with the tourism sector such as be capital stock, exports and labor. We found that tourism was, in the pre-crisis COVID-19 period, a factor of European growth but not singular. Even if tourism expenditures and revenues have a positive effect on growth, the impact of capital stock and exports is higher than that of tourism factors.

Alina-Petronela HALLER, Georgia-Daniela TACU
HÂRȘAN, *Sustainability and resilience of European tourism
/ Sustenabilitatea și reziliența turismului european*

Tourism sustainable nature minimizes the risks that it usually entails. Tourism is included among the growth and development factors with a relatively high level of risk and therefore, it is necessary for tourism to become sustainable and resilient. The main research objective is to assess the extent to which the resilience of sustainable tourism in Bulgaria, Poland and Romania depends on the interaction with labour market, economic growth, energy consumption, and renewable energy consumption. The period we analyzed is 1995-2014 because of the lack of data and the method applied is Granger causality. The results show a bicausality for Romania and Poland, and partial bicausality and also monocausality in the case of Bulgaria because the labour force and economic growth are not the cause of total energy consumption and neither are the number of tourists, the labour force and economic growth the causes of renewable energy consumption. So, the resilience of sustainable tourism is dependent on the situation in other fields of activity because the tourism sector does not have the capacity for self-regeneration.

Mariana HERȚELIU, *Characteristics of Romanian farms
within North-East mountain area / Caracteristicile fermelor
românești din zona montană de nord-est*

Romania records the most fragmented farms' structure in Europe. Using data provided by agricultural censuses and structural survey, in this study will be shown the main

characteristics of the farms located in mountain area within North-East region. Three out of six North-East region counties overlaps with mountain area (from North to South): Suceava, Neamț and Bacău. The provided statistical information reported on the county level and not on the locality level. Hence there is a bias in the correct identification of the mountain farms.

Elena-Manuela IȘTOC, Ionel IȘTOC, *Protection, preservation, promoting vernacular architecture and design and the local economic development through rural tourism in Sibiu area / Protejarea, conservarea, promovarea arhitecturii și designului vernacular și dezvoltarea economică locală prin turism rural în județul Sibiu*

Rural tourism takes place in the rural environment. It is inextricably linked to the vernacular architecture and design, and the cultural lifestyle of villages. Rural tourism is often used as a tool to help develop different regions. Rural tourism could offer a possible solution to some of the problems associated with heritage degradation, lost economic opportunities and population decline. The Sibiu area stands out with a special vernacular architecture and preserves exceptional cultural value but which are not recognized as a development factor and are therefore not properly managed. The purpose of this paper is to try to clarify whether tourism strategies can solve rural regeneration in the Sibiu area.

Daniela MATEI, *Determinant factors of the development of rural communities with tourism-related activities. Case*

study: Sucevița resort / Vectori ai dezvoltării comunităților rurale cu activitate turistică. Studiu de caz: stațiunea Sucevița

The mountain area of Bukovina is continuously shaped by numerous economic processes in which the natural environment plays a key role. In the context of the economic dynamics of recent years, the initial status of the determinant elements of the geographical environment (water areas, forested areas, soil quality, cultural landscape, privileged geographical position) has led to the emergence of a new determinant for local development: tourism and leisure activities, present in most mountainous areas with adequate accessibility. This determinant factor triggers a redistribution of the resources available to rural communities and alters the functional profile of the settlements where the tourism business' growth has already reached threshold of development. A relevant example in this respect is the commune of Sucevița, which became a tourist destination of national interest in 2017. The main reasons behind this recent development are the dynamics and complexity of the tourism infrastructure, which have led to an increase in inbound tourism flows. This shift to a new level of overall local development has set in motion both internal and external factors, which we attempt to make sense of. In view of the above circumstances, the paper aims to identify a new potential set of determinants for the development of a rural community in which the scale of tourism activities has resulted in the coexistence of two types of rurality that can be identified in the same geographical area: one dominated by the traditional

primary sector, the other in which tourism has substantially changed the way of life of the inhabitants and the perception of the use of the resources offered by the natural environment. In addition to the research of the new determining elements of local development, we will also analyze the social transformations brought about by the evolution of tourism, to which end we have formulated three questions: Are the two types of rurality competing? Are active the economic actors (tourism entrepreneurs) imposing their own type of rurality on the passive actors? Does this behavior change the community's traditional social relations patterns?

Virgil NICULA, Simona SPÂNU, *Opportunities to develop Romanian rural tourism in pandemic conditions / Oportunități de dezvoltare a turismului rural românesc în condiții de pandemie*

In the conditions of physical distance and travel in less crowded places, the Romanian rural tourism has the chance to represent a viable option for spending the holidays. The arguments in favor of rural tourism are represented by the small capacity of agritourism pensions, the possibility for tourists to explore the rural area in small groups (1-2 families), to consume local products and to enjoy traditional gastronomy. The official statistical data were analyzed comparatively for two areas with developed rural tourism, namely the villages from Mărginimea Sibiului and those from Bucovina. It is certain that rural tourism is one of the holiday preferences for the near future, which is why pension

administrators have the opportunity to diversify the offer of tourism products.

Peter NIENTIED, Dritan SHUTINA, *“New normal” tourism innovation in times of uncertainty: the Western Balkans / Inovația turistică a „noului normal” în vremuri de incertitudine: Balcanii de Vest*

Tourism in the six Western Balkans countries (WB6; Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North-Macedonia and Serbia) has developed rapidly last decade. WB tourism is an important sector, especially in Montenegro and Albania, where tourism contributes 22% and 15% to GDP respectively in 2018, according to UNWTO 2020 statistics. But also Bosnia Herzegovina, Kosovo, Serbia and North Macedonia show growth and have tourism ambitions. The need for tourism with higher added value has been stressed - key words include higher tourism quality, better infrastructure, prolonging the short summer season and improved hospitality skills. In 2020, COVID-19 severely impacted world-wide, including WB6. COVID-19 may not be an innovation (Hjalager, 2015; Gomezelj, 2016), but it is a transformative force likely to lead to tourism innovation. Many scholars (e.g. Ioannides and Gyimóthy, 2020, Zenker and Kock, 2020) suggested that the present COVID-19 circumstances should be used for rethinking the nature of the tourism product in a ‘new normal’ world. Nientied and Shutina (2020) made a case for more sustainable, resilient and WB6-regional based tourism. However, what a ‘new normal’ could mean for tourism is highly uncertain. “We

will live in a ‘new-normal’ tourism world – and it is our task to understand and explain it right now” say Zenker and Kock (2020, 3) in their call for a new tourism research agenda. This research aims to explore a tourism innovation research agenda for WB6 in the context of what a ‘new normal’ could be. The paper takes shape as an essay. It will comprise a brief summary of the COVID-19 context and a review of priority tourism research themes. Methods will include a literature review and social media search, an analysis of policy documents and interviews with tourism providers and policy makers. To be discussed in the paper are the following themes: COVID-19 as context for tourism innovation; signals of emerging trends; tourism development in conditions of high uncertainties and complexities; modernization and new authenticity. Our preliminary findings suggest that a prolonged COVID-19 period will have an impact on tourism behaviour, but it is in the category of ‘known-unknown’, and likely also ‘unknown-unknown’. Conceivably, new destination images should stress a safe and sustainable. Against the current trend of WB6 tourism modernization, we discuss ‘new authenticity’ as tourism innovation. Meanwhile tourism providers, each on their own, are trying to survive and hope they can go back to the ‘old normal’ with some minimal adjustments. This looks like a flawed strategy in a period requiring collaboration and collective learning. The present post COVID-19 situation is quite unpredictable. Uncertainties are plentiful (virus mutations, vaccinations, vaccination passport for air travel, tourism behaviour, etc.) and therefore findings can be less relevant when new

developments occur. Thinking about tourism futures is urgent for both governments and tourism providers. The arguments for the WB contexts, should have wider applicability in the Central and Eastern European region.

Simona SPÂNU, Virgil NICULA, *Gorj village in danger of extinction, in the conditions of decarbonization of the mining areas / Satul Gorj în pericol de dispariție în condițiile decarbonizării zonelor miniere*

One of the biggest risks faced by the Romanian rural demography is the aging and depopulation of villages. With an often-precarious infrastructure, with a low level of education and health insurance, the rural population of Gorj County is faced with a new risk, that of dismissal of miners by reducing the activity of the Oltenia Energy Complex and the closure of the Motru-Rovinari coal mining operations. The lack of job offers, the insecurity of retraining and professional reconversion can generate a demographic exodus to the Romanian urban area or to other European countries. In these conditions, we propose some solutions to revive the economic activity in the area, offering the chance to preserve traditional agricultural activities, to develop rural tourism and to ensure good living conditions for the inhabitants of Gorj villages.

Oana Nicole STOICAN, Mirela STOICAN, Daniela VĂRVĂRUC, *Costinești: hystory and balneotherapy / Costinești – istorie și practică balneară*

Costinești resort is the symbol of the seaside for young people, which is why it has attracted a significant number of high school or student tourists. But the therapeutic importance of these resorts was not and should not be neglected by the presence of valuable spa resources, especially for diseases of the musculoskeletal system. The present paper aims to identify the importance of these resorts for medical tourism, to make a brief description of its evolution over time and to identify current tourist activity. In this sense, the natural and anthropic tourist objectives are mentioned, the spa resources at its disposal, as well as the treatment and leisure base. The natural resources of these resorts bring it to the forefront, as a resort for leisure but also for spa tourism.

Oana Nicole STOICAN, Mirela STOICAN, Daniela VĂRVĂRUC, *Soveja: hystory and balneotherapy / Soveja – istorie și practică balneară*

This paper tries to highlight the most important historical and medical aspects, which have marked the existence of Soveja resort over time. Starting from a simple Daco-Roman settlement, Soveja represents a symbol of the Romanian nation, considering the numerous transitions of the peoples in this area. Proven for a long time, Soveja was part of the Mărășești-Mărăști-Oituz front in the First World War. After 1870, people began to be attracted to the therapeutic benefits of the area, especially for respiratory diseases. In the communist era, Soveja enjoyed a real economic boom, building hotels and even a

children's camp. Unfortunately, after 1990, the hotel units were closed and the therapeutic options were eliminated.

Cristina ȘURLEA, Laurențiu ROȘU, *Tourism and the importance of honey consumption in healthy diet / Turismul și importanța consumului de miere în alimentația sănătoasă*

The opinion that in Romania the diseases and the deficiencies caused by alimentation no longer exist has almost become a common place. But the reality is different! On one hand, the Roumanians eat too much, too fat, too sweet and far too much meat; on the other hand, they eat too few vitamins, minerals and fibrous foods. The question is how did this wrong alimentation become so popular? One reason would be the industrial processing of many aliments. Over 60% of the aliments offered are industrially finite products. The daily necessary of energy is ensured – at present – in a percentage of 75-80%, by overprocessed foods, such as the meats, the margarine, the extraction flour, etc. While, in the private households, the aliments are usually only washed, cut and boiled, the alimentary industry often makes use of solvents and chemical acids, in order to decompose the natural raw materials into their components and thus to make new products. The more complicated was the processing of an aliment, the lower is its vitamins and natural minerals content and the higher is the danger of the formation of certain harmful substances during the elaboration of the respective aliment. Very often, the quantity of supplementary

substances which are added to, aliments is also large enough. Such manipulations serve health only in very rare cases.

Veronica ȚĂRAN BACIU, Dănuț UNGUREANU, *Superior capitalization of local agri-food products through tourism. Quality mountain product / Valorificarea superioara a produselor agroalimentare locale prin turism. Produsul montan de calitate*

The mountain products are an integral part of the mountain territories' image and they are associated by the consumers with the landscapes, customs and local traditions. The term mountain is associated with the idea of purity, authenticity and quality. The mountain area is recognized for its low pollution, which makes food originating from this area more valuable, this type of food is healthier, because in the mountain area the animals feed on a larger variety of plants, some of which are medicinal plants. The raw materials, and also the animal feed, come from the mountain area, It helps maintain biodiversity and traditional agricultural practices, ensures food safety, they are fresh and of high quality, they contribute to the development of the local economy by creating employment and raising the standard of living. Ensuring a balanced territorial development that will contribute to the vitality of the rural areas (inhabited mountains – “live mountains”) and to the increase of this area's attractiveness, stabilization of the population, reduction of the migration and renewal of the generations of agricultors represents a very important indicator in

order to achieve the plenitude of the Romanian mountain space. Revitalising the tourism in the rural mountain area can be achieved by partnership work and cooperation between all the responsible actors from the tourism and agrifoods sectors. Investing in the accommodation units should observe the specifics of the area and the traditional architecture. These should be also correlated with the gastronomic products specific to the area and with the local traditions.

Dana-Alina UNGUREANU, Dănuț UNGUREANU, *Psychosocial aspects of mountain residents in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic / Aspecte psiho-sociale ale rezidenților montani în contextul pandemiei de COVID-19*

While physical distance, relative isolation and lower population density play in favor for rural areas in terms of the direct impact of COVID-19, as the contagion spreads rural areas are increasingly hard hit. Rural inhabitants have dramatically less access to adequate health services, education, internet and communications technology, social protection and public infrastructure. People with health conditions are more likely to be infected and affected by the virus, and poor populations often have higher rates of chronic diseases, as well as poorer diets that undermine the body's immunities to illness. As rural areas tend to be less densely populated, social support can be more difficult to obtain during acute suicidal crises. Predictable social assistance, in the form of cash or in-kind transfers, as well as health insurance and specific workforce guarantees, is the key to mitigating the health

and economic impacts of the pandemic. Moreover, social protection enables compliance with confinement measures. For many rural small-scale producers and workers, the generation of income depends on their physical access to markets, and on-farm jobs.

Dana-Alina UNGUREANU, Dănuț UNGUREANU, *Relevant differences between urban and rural from the perspective of young people's lifestyle / Diferențe relevante între urban și rural din perspectiva stilului de viață al tinerilor*

The central theme of this study is how young people and young adults experience obstacles and opportunities in relation to their past, present and potential future in a rural area. There are certainly differences in the lifestyle of young people in rural and urban areas, observable for most of them. In this article we will focus on the following perspectives: living conditions, access to transportation, access to digitalization, to health and social services. Although social services seem to be a particularly relevant issue for the social groups of older people, it also targets the impact on children. Moving is an important element of difficulty in rural areas, involving relevant aspects of life. Although the desire to repopulate the mountainous rural environment is very high, there are aspects that the elderly have not thought about and on which the success of choosing the rural area really depends. Young people are less and less concerned with the management of farms, most of the actions that are chosen by them and successfully completed are those aimed at choosing a healthy lifestyle, like eating healthy food and being away

from urban stress. In other words, the lifestyle that young people have in mind when moving to rural mountains is completely different from what older people expect.

Dănuț UNGUREANU, Dănuț GÎȚAN, Dana-Alina UNGUREANU, *Mountain groups, committees for mountain massives, and the National Mountain Council in the equation of sustainable development of mountain areas / Grupele de munți, comitetele de masivi montani și Consiliul Național al Muntelui, în ecuația dezvoltării sustenabile a zonelor montane*

The mountain area is characterized by natural limitations of agricultural productivity, which lead to reduced agricultural production, due to unfavorable climatic and biophysical conditions for optimal agricultural activities. In order to apply the policies and strategies for the development and protection of the mountain environment, a massive committee is constituted at territorial level for each of the 9 mountain groups provided in the annex to the Mountain Law no. 197/2018, body without legal personality, with advisory role. And, at the national level, the National Council of the Mountain is constituted, with advisory role, which will ensure the cooperation between the Government and the representatives of the mountain area, for the implementation of its specific strategies and policies.

Dănuț UNGUREANU, Dana-Alina UNGUREANU, *Traditional food cooked and served “at its own home”. Local Gastronomic Points: from idea to reality / Mîncarea*

*tradițională, gătită și servită „la ea acasă”. Punctele
Gastronomice Locale – de la idee la realitate*

The local gastronomic points are units represented by the private kitchens inside the rural houses, where culinary products are prepared and served, according to recipes specific to the area, directly to the final consumer, for a maximum number of 12 people. Cooking products must be prepared from raw materials mainly from primary production on their own farm, as well as from local producers or from authorized / registered veterinary and food safety establishments. A condition that a Local Gastronomic Point must meet is that the food be prepared only by the owner or by his family members, and their health must be checked periodically. The raw materials from which the food is prepared must come only from veterinary authorized / registered units and for food safety, focusing on those local products specific to the area where the gastronomic point operates. The local gastronomic points are meant to bring peasant products as an active part of the economic development of rural areas, especially where there is tourist potential.

Daniel VICHILU, Gina Ionela BUTNARU, Alexandru ANICHIȚI, *The study of seasonality effects on tourism in the Republic of Moldova / Studiul efectelor sezonalityții în turismul Republicii Moldova*

The specialized literature has addressed the issue of seasonality from a variety of perspectives and as such, seasonality is generally defined depending on the context in which it is studied: hospitality, tourism or leisure. The

purpose of this paper is to analyze the phenomenon of seasonality and its effects in accommodation units in the Republic of Moldova. Using quarterly data obtained from the statistical office of the Republic of Moldova on tourist arrivals in different tourist accommodation structures in the country, this paper tries to quantify the phenomenon of seasonality in tourism and show that to understand the nature of seasonality it is not enough to use information from one source. For comparison purposes, several quantification methods are used.

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