

STUDY REGARDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURIST POTENTIAL FROM ARAD COUNTY

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Abstract: *The tourist potential of Arad County is one of great value. The harmonious combination of relief forms, the favorable climate, fauna and flora elements, the presence of mineral waters and the abundance of historical and architectural monuments make this area a real tourist convergence area. The touristic potential, focused on the cultural-historical side and on the well-developed business context, distinguishes Arad County from the other competing tourist destinations from the country. Through this paper, the authors attempt to provide an overview of the existing tourism potential in Arad County and to propose some solutions for capitalizing the existing tourism resources.*

Keywords: *bank card, payment, payment instrument, electronic money, bank.*

INTRODUCTION

The tourist potential represents an essential part of the tourist offer and an indispensable condition for the development of tourism. Due to the size and diversity of its elements, through their value and originality, the tourist potential represents the main motivation for tourism.

The touristic potential of Arad County is rich and varied, and tourists can definitely spend unforgettable moments. The beauty and diversity of the relief, together with the most important tourist and cultural objectives, are also attractive elements for those who want to enjoy themselves and escape from the stress of everyday life. What separates our county from other competing tourist destinations from this part of the country is its tourism potential focused on the cultural-historical side and on the well-developed business context that coexists in many of the tourist offerings. [3]

MATERIAL AND METHODS

In order to realize this work we have consulted different bibliographic sources, as well as data obtained from the Arad City Hall and from the National Institute of Statistics.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Located in the western part of the country, Arad County is bordered to the south by Timis County, to the north by Bihor County, to the east by Hunedoara County, and to West by Hungary. Its favorable geographical position is also accentuated by the intersection of European roads.

With an area of 7,754 sq km, Arad County holds a percentage of 3.65% of the entire surface of Romania, being the sixth county as extension of the country.

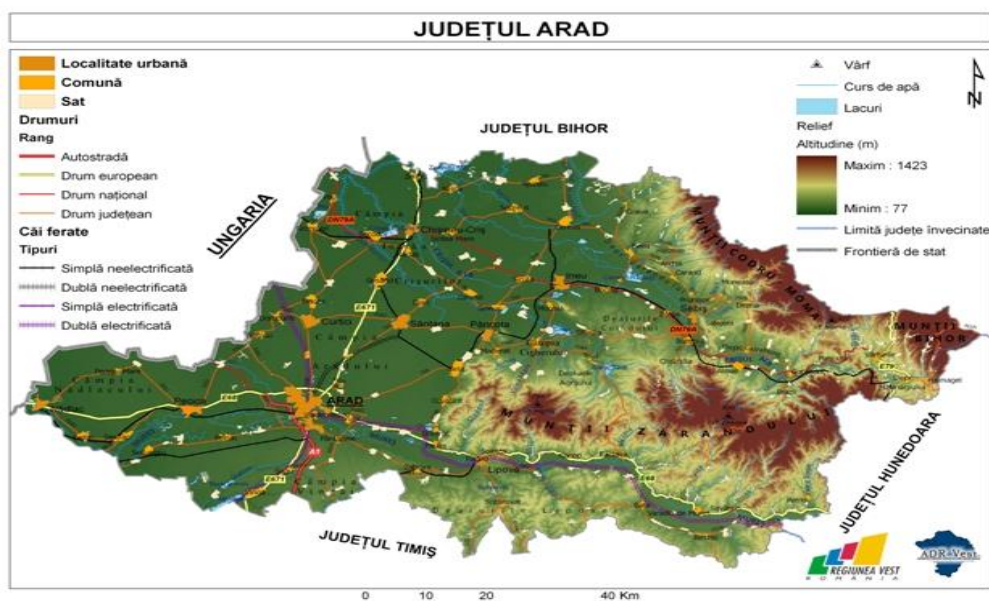


Figure 1. Map of Arad County [4]

On the territory of Arad County it can be distinguished several tourist areas, differentiated according to the specific natural and anthropic potential, by the types and grouping of the tourist objectives, the touristic exploitation of the potential held, the possibilities and the quality of the access infrastructure. These areas are: Codru Moma, Mures Valley, Arad and Gurahont-Halmagiu, as can be seen in the table below.

Table 1.

The hierarchy of rural tourist areas from Arad County

Place in hierarchy	Tourist locations		Places with uncaptalized or poorly exploited tourism potential
	- with tourist potential	- with tourist facilities	
1.Codru Moma	Dezna	Moneasa	Dezna
2. Mures Valley	Lipova, Conop, Barzava, Varadia de Mures, Savarsin, Birchis, Petris	Lipova, Conop, Savarsin, Petris	Barzava, Varadia de Mures, Savarsin, Birchis, Petris
3. Arad vineyard	Ghioroc, Paulis, Siria, Pancota	Paulis, Siria, Pancota	Paulis, Siria, Pancota
4. Gurahont-Halmagiu	Gurahont, Halmagiu, Varfurile	Halmagiu	Gurahont, Plescuta, Halmagiu, Halmagel, Varfurile

Source: Consiliul Județean Arad, Plan de amenajare a teritoriului județean Arad - actualizare, forma finală – decembrie 2009, etapa I – faza II – elemente care condiționează dezvoltarea, p.103, [1]

The picturesque of mountain areas, the variety of flora and fauna, the mineral and thermal water springs, the hunting and rich fishery fund combined with the elements of architecture, folk art and folklore ensure the possibility of practicing different forms of tourism in the studied area.

In this paper the analysis of the existing situation regarding the tourism activity was made by means of the two indicators, namely: tourist offer and tourist circulation.

The evolution of the number of accommodation units, with touristic accommodation functions, by structures, in the County of Arad, during the 2010-2016 period, is shown in the table below.

The total number of accommodation units by types of structures in Arad County has been steadily increasing until 2012, and since 2013 it has started to decrease slightly. It can be seen that the largest number of units is represented by tourist guesthouses and hotels, followed by agrotourist guesthouses.

Table 2.

The evolution of the total number of units by type of structure

Specification	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total in Arad County	138	139	170	169	160	145	145
Hotels	31	28	32	33	33	33	34
Hostels	0	1	2	3	4	6	6
Motels	4	3	4	5	5	4	4
Tourist villas	10	9	12	13	10	9	9
Tourist cottages	2	3	5	4	4	4	4
Bungalows	10	12	18	15	15	7	7
Holiday villages	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Campgrounds	2	2	3	5	5	5	5
Tourist stops	2	2	2	2	2	0	0
Tourist houses	5	3	4	4	1	3	3
Camps for pupils and preschools	2	2	2	0	0	0	0
Tourist guesthouses	46	54	57	57	54	49	49
Agrotourist guesthouses	24	20	29	28	26	25	24

Source: National Institute of Statistics, 2017, [2]

From the table above we can notice the disappearance of accommodation structures, namely: holiday villages, tourist stops and camps for students and preschools.

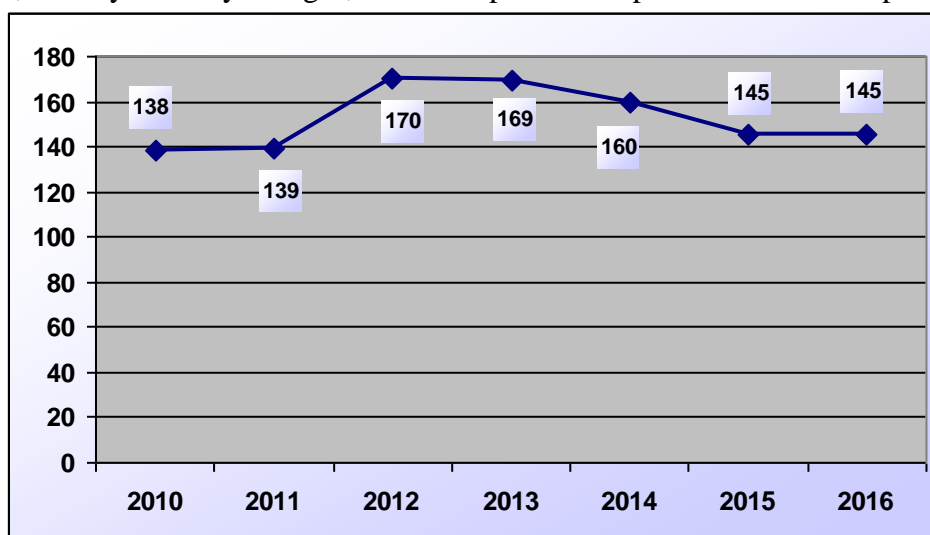


Figure 2. The evolution of the total number of units by type of structure

The evolution of tourist accommodation capacity by types of structures, in Arad County, during 2010-2016 period, is shown in Table 3:

Table 3.

**The evolution of existent tourist accommodation capacity by types of structures
- number of seats -**

Specification	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total in Arad County	5554	5182	6192	6311	5944	5695	5551
Hotels	2554	2274	2655	2667	2696	2756	2687
Hostels	0	44	76	128	174	149	121
Motels	145	119	131	142	124	102	102
Tourist villas	522	386	481	521	306	244	266
Tourist cottages	58	78	140	101	100	109	107
Bungalows	56	24	74	153	153	105	104
Holiday villages	0	0	0	0	180	0	0
Campgrounds	232	232	268	475	475	473	389
Tourist stops	62	62	44	44	44	0	0
Tourist houses	355	120	300	276	8	124	137
Camps for pupils and preschools	215	214	224	0	0	0	0
Tourist guesthouses	983	1214	1243	1234	1167	1097	1105
Agrotourist guesthouses	372	415	556	570	517	536	533

Source: National Institute of Statistics, 2017, [2]

From the analysis of the table above, the following issues arise:

- ✚ The number of accommodation places in hotels has a fluctuant evolution. After an accelerated increase until the year 2010, there is a decrease in the year 2011, and from the year 2012 there is a significant increase until the year 2015, so that in the year 2016 it will decrease slightly.
- ✚ In case of agrotourist gushouses, we can see that there is an accelerated increase from the year 2010 until the year 2013, so that in the year 2014 the number of places will decrease slightly. The same thing is seen in case of tourist guesthouses.
- ✚ The decrease of the number of motels led to a slight decrease in accommodation capacity in Arad County.

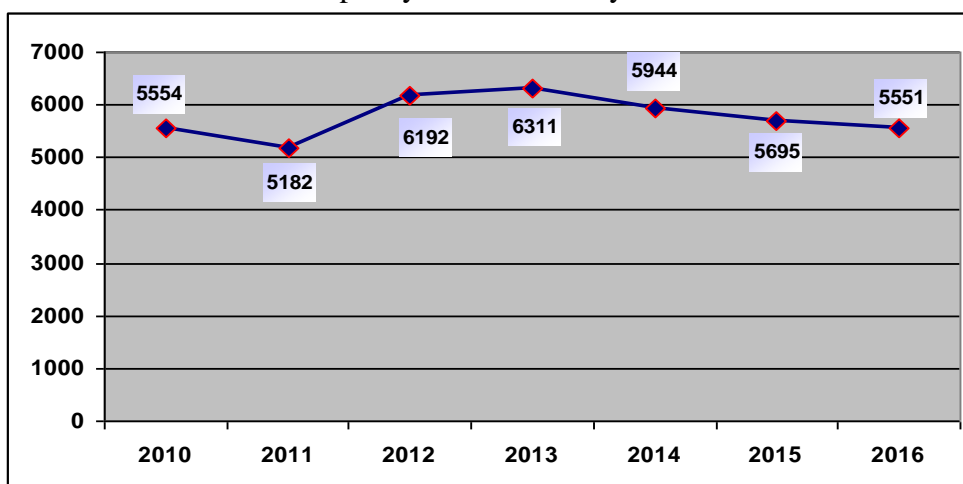


Figure 3. The evolution of existent tourist accommodation capacity by types of structures

From Graphic 3 it can be seen the evolution of the number of seats in 2010-2016 period. We can notice a steady growth from the year 2011 to the year 2013, and from the year 2014 a slight decrease in accommodation places is observed.

In the following we will analyze the evolution of tourists' arrivals in Arad County's tourist accommodation facilities.

Table 4.

Number of tourists' arrivals in tourist accommodation structures

Specification	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total	161799	190361	197277	197300	205521	214826	199675
Hotels	117997	143163	142296	138290	136698	146364	130125
Hostels	0	0	1091	1474	4942	3203	2450
Motels	1058	1988	1418	2010	2554	1416	744
Tourist villas	1093	1167	1317	1796	2669	3107	2289
Tourist cottages	1449	2425	2192	1530	1561	2071	2032
Bungalows	0	0	0	657	1239	747	1332
Holiday villages	0	0	0	251	115	0:	106
Campgrounds	159	136	284	1239	1282	1621	1900
Tourist stops	35	340	32	0	0	0	0
Tourist houses	229	72	0	0	880	629	99
Camps for pupils and preschools	2915	2194	1686	0	0	0	0
Tourist guesthouses	31776	34238	39750	41585	45945	44300	45704
Agrotourist guesthouses	5088	4638	7211	8468	7636	11368	12894

Source: National Institute of Statistics, 2017, [2]

For the analyzed period, we can see that the number of tourists has increased continuously until the year 2015, and in the year 2016 it registered a slight decrease. We can notice the preference of tourists to accommodate in agrotourist guesthouses, tourist hostels, tourist villas, campsites, the number of this doubling lately.

According to the National Institute of Statistics, the number of overnight stays in the reception facilities, in the studied area, shows an increasing trend, however the number of foreign tourists is quite low.

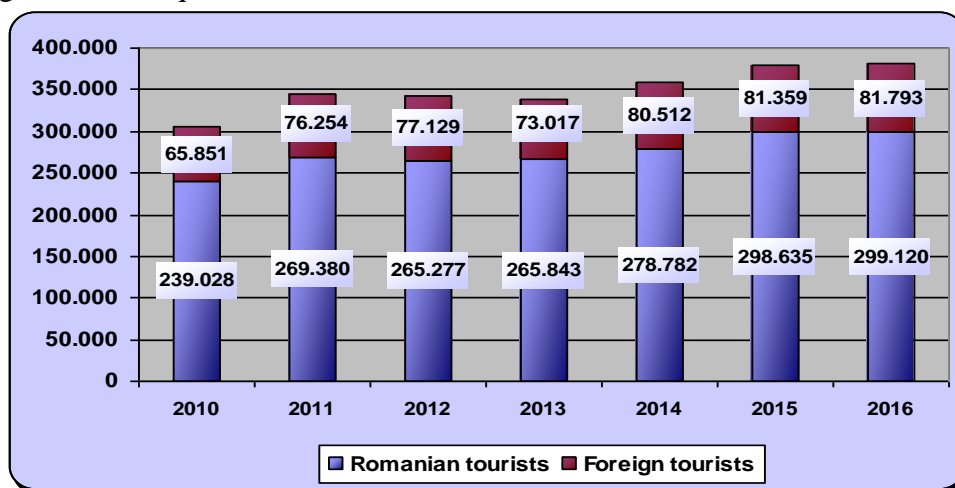


Figure 4. Overnight stays of the tourists in the Arad County tourist accommodation facilities

In the case of Romanian tourists, the number of overnight stays increased from 239,028 in the year 2010 to 299,120 overnight stays in the year 2016 and in the case of foreign tourists the increase was from 65,851 tourists in the year 2010 to 81,793 overnight stays in the year 2016.

CONCLUSIONS

The tourism potential of the county ensures the practicing of several types of tourism, such as: balneo-climatic tourism, cultural tourism, rural tourism, active and sports tourism, speleological tourism, hunting and fishing tourism, business tourism, weekend tourism, transit tourism, etc.

For the development of tourism in Arad County it is necessary to publish and promote a tourist guide presenting all the possibilities of practicing the active tourism, designing and promoting of a brand of the county, that would synthesize the County's specificity, the creation and expansion of some forms of specialized tourism by conceiving diversified tourism products trying to respond to various hobbies.

The lack of utilities in some regions, the lack of a tourist brand, poor quality road infrastructure, poor quality of tourist services, these are some of the weak points that make Arad County not attractive from tourist point of view.

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