# MEASURES PROPOSED TO IMPROVE TOURIST ACTIVITIES IN THE VATRA DORNEI AREA

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***Abstract**: Vatra Dornei is a municipality in Suceava county, Bucovina, which has a wide range of activities to offer, regardless of age, vacations start with an accommodation, but not just any kind of accommodation, but one in a mountain cabin, which reflects the spirit and authenticity of the area. In this area, tourists can venture on hiking trails in the Rarau Mountains and the Giumalău Mountains, but not only that, they also may choose for guided tours that can offer an intimate way to connect with nature, for the bravest there is the opportunity to practice cycling on mountain and paragliding flights over the picturesque landscapes of Vatra Dornei, which in winter can be contemplated by sled rides pulled by 10 Siberian huskies.*

***Key words**: measures, tourism, Vatra Dornei, improvement*

## INTRODUCTION

Tourism has become one of the most complex economic branches in the world, the whole society being involved in its development. at the same time, tourism reflects the entire society and can be considered a real barometer of it. [3,7] Tourism is one of the elements that is given the widest consideration in the economic-social development policy of the world's states, through the prism of its commercial aspects, as a recreational, knowledge and training factor. [2,6] The high development rates experienced by tourism are the direct consequence of the development of other economic sectors. [1,5]

From an economic point of view, the development of tourism is realized through the demand for an increased range of services and consumer goods, a demand that stimulates the producing and service-providing sectors, leading to an increase in economic activities and consumption. [4,8]

Vatra Dornei municipality is located in the southwestern part of Suceava county, in the Dornelor Depression, with the following geographic coordinates: 47° 21' north latitude and 25° 22' east longitude. The city's neighbors are the following municipalities: Pojorâta (to the north), Iacobeni (to the northwest), Dorna Candrenilor (to the west), Șaru Dornei (to the south) and Dorna-Arini (to the east).

The town of Vatra Dornei is crossed by the European road E58 (DN 17), an important road connecting the north of Moldova with Transylvania. The distances from Vatra Dornei to the nearest towns on this road are as follows: 110 km to the municipality of Suceava (the county seat of the same name), 43 km to the municipality of Câmpulung Moldovenesc, 84 km to the municipality of Bistrița, 74 km to the town of Gura Humorului and 66 km to the town of Frasin.[9]

## MATERIAL AND METHOD

In order to carry out this scientific work, we carried out both bibliographic studies and field studies, visiting the area of Vatra Dornei, thus observing the tourist potential and opportunities for growth, and by proposing some tourist facilities we can attract a greater flow of tourists, which would contribute to the development of both tourism and the local community.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

In view of the proposal for tourist development in Vatra Dornei, we will first present the natural and anthropogenic potential of the area analyzed by us.

Compared to the large geographical units of the country, the territory of the county partly overlaps the Eastern Carpathians and the Suceva Plateau. The relief of the county is characterized by a great variety of forms: mountains, intramontane depressions, hills, plateaus, plains, terraced valleys and meadows. [10]

The mountain area, integrated into the chain of the Eastern Carpathians, includes massifs and complexes of peaks separated from each other by deep valleys or depression areas, such as: Suhard and Călimani Massifs; The Giumalau – Rarău massifs.

The relief of the Călimani mountains (the highest volcanic mountains on the territory of Romania, the only ones that exceed 2,000 m altitude - Pietrosul Călimani Peak) offers the most spectacular forms with the potential of great attractiveness: the Căliman volcanic crater, with a diameter of about 10 km, the strange shapes . of volcanic rocks on Reţitiş, Tămău, Lucaciu and Pietrosul, the ruins-looking rocks "12 Apostles" or the Jnepeniș Reserve with Pinus Cembra, where you can find a natural grove in an intimate mixture of spruce and hemlock, unique in the country and very rare in Europe.

The relief of the Rarău massif offers one of the most interesting geological forms in the Eastern Carpathian chain - "Lady's Stones", as well as the gorges on Valea Caselor and Izvorul Alb and Peștera Liiecilor. Another tourist attraction factor is the Cheile Moara Dracului area, a sector of very narrow gorges (between 2-3 meters wide, approximately 40 m long), located on the Caselor stream.

Giumalău Mountains, the property's main attraction for nature lovers, its plateaus offering one of the grandest views in the Eastern Carpathians. The secular forest of Giumalău, with its massive conifer species, and the Zugreni Gorge, dug at the southern foot of the mountains, are the main attractions of the Giumalău Mountains.

The Suhard Mountains are best known for the Oușorul peak (1,639 m), which guards the Dornelor Depression. However, the highest peak is located in the northwestern part of the Suhard Mountains, namely the Omu Peak, 1,932 meters above sea level. The main ridge of these mountains is the main attraction, due to the beauty of the scenery and the ease with which it can be traversed.

Surrounded by the Bistriței Aurii mountains to the north, the Bistriței Mountains to the southeast, the Călimani Mountains to the south and the Bârgăului Mountains to the west, is the Dornelor Depression. A distinct geographical unit, it narrows to the east, towards the Zugren gorges, and opens wide to the west, being drained by the Bistrița river. [10]

Apart from the two main watercourses at the confluence of which the Dornelor Depression was formed – Bistrita Aurie and Dorna, the locality is crossed by several streams: Argestru, Chilia, Colăcelul, Roșu, Negrești. [11]

A particularly important aspect is the presence of mineral springs, which impose a specific note on the Șării Dornelor area. Thus, the carbonated water deposits give a number of 37 springs, which appear on the territory of the localities of Poiana Coșnei, Dorna Candrenilor, Poiana Negrii, Vatra Dornei, Ortoaia, Șaru Dornei, Panaci, Glodu, Dârmoxa, Broșteni. Mineral water sources are also known at Poiana Stampei, Dornișoara, Neagra Șarului and Drăgoioasa. [12]

Dornelor Palace or Vatra Dornei Casino is a building built in the period 1896-1898 in the town of Vatra Dornei (today in Suceava county). It is located on Republicii street no. 5, between the Spa Park and the Dorna river.

The building, formerly known as the Casino of Baths or the Central Pavilion of Baths, has over time fulfilled several functions: a gambling hall, a concert and performance hall, as well as a workers' club. Currently, the Casino is completely renovated, regaining its former grace. It was opened to the public on Tuesday, November 28, 2023, the 105th anniversary of the Union of Bucovina with Romania.[13]

**Figure 1. Casino Vatra Dornei before 1916**
*Source: https://www.wikiwand.com/ro/Cazinoul_din_Vatra_Dornei*

Vatra Dornei station is a railway station built in 1902 in the town of Vatra Dornei (today in Suceava county of Romania). It is located on Dornelor street no. 13.

**Figure 2. Vatra Dornei Train station**
*Source: https://www.wikiwand.com/ro/Gara_Vatra_Dornei*

The railway station in Vatra Dornei was built at the same time as the railway line, being inaugurated in 1902. Later, in 1910, a new railway station was built on the left bank of the Dorna river: Vatra Dornei Bai Railway Station, intended for tourists arriving at the resort, to the baths .

After the First World War, Bucovina became a component part of Romania; the railway was taken over by the Romanian company CFR. [14]

The Great Temple of Vatra Dornei is a place of Jewish worship in the municipality of Vatra Dornei, located on Mihai Eminescu street no. 54, at the foot of Runc Hill. It was built in the period 1898-1902.

**Figure 3. The Great Temple in Vatra Dornei**
*Source: https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vatra_Dornei*

The first synagogue in Vatra Dornei (Great Temple) was built between 1898-1902 on land donated by the Orthodox Church under the Runc hill. Also at the beginning of the 20th century, a

smaller synagogue was built on Luceafărul street. The spiritual leader of the community was Rabbi Fraenkel, followed by Rabbis Margosches (father and son).

The Museum of Ethnography was established in 1897 and was opened to the public in September of that year, together with the Municipal Palace (the current City Hall of Vatra Dornei Municipality). The museum occupies one of the rooms on the ground floor of the building, where today the hall of folk costumes is located. [15]

**Figure 4. Museum of Ethnography**

*Source: https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vatra_Dornei*

Following the identification of the characteristics of the natural and human resources in the analyzed area, we made some proposals to improve the tourist activity, as follows:

We propose to future tourists from this area to discover the joy of a summer or winter camp in Vatra Dornei. Whether it's summer or winter, Vatra Dornei is the perfect place for a camp, offering a wide range of activities that are both fun and beneficial. This camp is not only aimed at young people and especially students, but it is also for those who may be older, but have an energetic childlike soul. This camp will have as accommodation several alpine houses/huts that will be strategically located, so that tourists can have the best mountain vacation.

The first thing that tourists can do, after a little relaxation at the accommodation, is a hike to get to know Vatra Dornei better, to identify part of the natural and human resources in the area. The routes can be diverse, from easy walks to challenging hikes. Tourists can choose routes between Rarau, Giumalau or Călimani Mountains, but not only. Along the hike you might spot local wildlife, deer or eagles, and many other breathtaking panoramic views. Guided tours can also provide an intimate way for tourists to connect with nature, experiencing scenic landscapes, journeys through forests and meadows in a quiet way. On this route, it would be a shame not to show your loved ones where they have been, so a special photo tour is proposed, where you can capture the beauty of wildlife and amazing landscapes, creating memories that will last a lifetime. At the end of this tour, a contest will be organized in which the most special photos will be displayed in a collage at the reception and the winner will be awarded with surprise prizes. All these routes will be carried out by accompanying the tourists by local tourist guides who love this area, where the feeling of belonging to this area is very strongly manifested.

Also with the help of the guide, a tour will be offered for lovers of culture and history, the tour including the visit of the following sights: the Vatra Dorna Station, the Băilor Casino or the Central Pavilion of Băilor, the Great Temple and the Museum of Ethnography.

In case the tourists got bored of walking on the hike, there is also the mountain enema option. There are different levels of difficulty, suitable for beginners as well as experienced ones, so they will be able to spend the day exploring the trails, feeling the adrenaline in their veins. Bicycles can be offered right from the place where you choose to stay, that is, from the cottages proposed by us.

For tourists who want even more adventure during the summer, paragliding flights over the picturesque landscapes of Vatra Dornei can be offered. The flights will be made with professional instructors who will put tourists' minds at ease if they have any concerns about how the activity

will be carried out. It is a perfect way to see Vatra Dornei from above and more than likely tourists will not regret the decision to jump and fly like a bird.

Because our proposal is organized in the form of a camp, tourists would not be able to stay at least one night under the stars, at a campfire sharing the impressions of the hikes made, with unforgettable views, this would be a perfect way to connect with nature.

During the winter, the Vatra Dornei area is a snowy paradise for winter sports enthusiasts. The ski resorts here are perfect for all skill levels, whether they are beginners or seasoned pros. After a day of skiing or snowboarding, tourists can warm up with a hot chocolate by the fire or relax in one of the cozy mountain huts, and if tourists do not have their own winter sports equipment, there is the possibility of renting it.

If tourists are not very good at skiing or snowboarding, there is also the possibility to enjoy tobogganing. Also sleigh rides are a perfect way to explore the snowy landscapes at a leisurely pace. If tourists want to have an experience like in the movies, they can be offered something unforgettable, sleds pulled by 10 Siberian huskies, over a distance between 5 and 30 km.

For those who are passionate about skating, we can offer the opportunity to skate on an ice rink with qualified staff and the necessary equipment, next to the ice rink we propose a snowball shooting contest.

After every day full of activities, what could be better than relaxing in the natural thermal springs of Vatra Dornei. These springs have both physical and mental healing properties. You can also pamper yourself with a massage and spa treatments.

## CONCLUSIONS

A camp in Vatra Dornei, whether summer or winter, offers an incredible mix of adventure, relaxation and cultural immersion. The range of activities ensures there is something for everyone, making it a perfect destination for families and groups of friends. By staying active, connected with nature and enjoying the local culture, tourists will be able to leave Vatra Dornei not only with great memories, but also feeling refreshed and revitalized.

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