

VALORIZATION OF THE TOURISM POTENTIAL OF MARGINA COMMUNE, TIMIȘ COUNTY – PREMISES FOR SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: *The paper analyzes the tourism potential of Margina Commune, Timiș County, and aims to identify the most effective ways to capitalize on it within the context of sustainable rural development. Located at the junction between the Lugoj Plain and the hilly area of the Poiana Ruscă Mountains, the commune benefits from valuable natural, cultural, and human resources that can form the basis of a diversified local economy. The research methodology combined statistical analysis of demographic and economic data with a qualitative evaluation of the local tourism heritage. The results highlight a positive development dynamic of the community, supported by local involvement in rural tourism projects, the promotion of Banat gastronomy and traditions, as well as favorable road accessibility. However, the tourism infrastructure and promotional capacity remain limited, requiring strategic interventions. The paper proposes concrete directions for the development of Margina Commune, such as the creation of thematic route networks, the digitalization of the tourism offer, and the establishment of public-private partnerships. Ultimately, it is concluded that rural tourism, based on local identity and community participation, represents a real opportunity for sustainable economic development for Margina Commune and its surrounding area.*

Keywords: *tourism potential, rural development, local heritage, Margina, sustainable tourism*

INTRODUCTION

The topic addressed in this paper is “Valorization of the tourism potential of Margina commune, Timiș county – premises for sustainable rural development”, a topic of great interest because, in the context of socio-economic realities, the sustainable development of rural localities must be based on the efficient management and valorisation of existing resources [1,3,4].

In recent years, rural tourism has been recognized as a key instrument for economic diversification, job creation, and preservation of cultural heritage in rural areas [13,14,15].

At the European level, policies aimed at rural development emphasize the importance of tourism as a catalyst for balanced territorial development and community resilience [9,10]. In Romania, several studies highlight the role of rural tourism in reducing regional disparities and enhancing local competitiveness, particularly in areas with valuable natural and cultural assets [2,5,8].

In this context, the present study aims to analyze the tourism potential of Margina Commune and to identify strategic directions for its valorization, contributing to sustainable rural development and the strengthening of the local economy.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research methodology is based on a mixed quantitative-qualitative approach, combining the statistical analysis of demographic and economic data from official sources with the qualitative assessment of natural, cultural, and ethnographic tourism resources. The analyzed indicators were integrated into a multicriteria analysis framework to evaluate the overall tourism potential of Margina Commune in the context of sustainable rural development.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Geographical location. The commune of Margina is in the eastern part of Timiș county, on the limit with Hunedoara county. Its location at the contact between the Lugoj Plain and the hilly area of the Poienii Ruscăi foothills gives the locality a special identity, located at the intersection of the Banat and Transylvanian areas.



Figure 1. Location of Margina commune on the map of Timiș County

Source: [12]

Natural resources of Margina. The commune enjoys a diverse natural setting, characterized by hilly terrain, deciduous forests, natural meadows and numerous watercourses (Bega Poieni, Bega Luncanilor). These resources support recreational activities, hiking, and ecotourism, and the high biodiversity can be integrated into future green tourism projects.

Analysis of the demographic resources of Margina. Analysis of the statistical data shows that Margina had 2447 inhabitants in 1992, 2391 inhabitants according to the 2011 census, and reached 2189 inhabitants in 2024 (after a slight decrease).

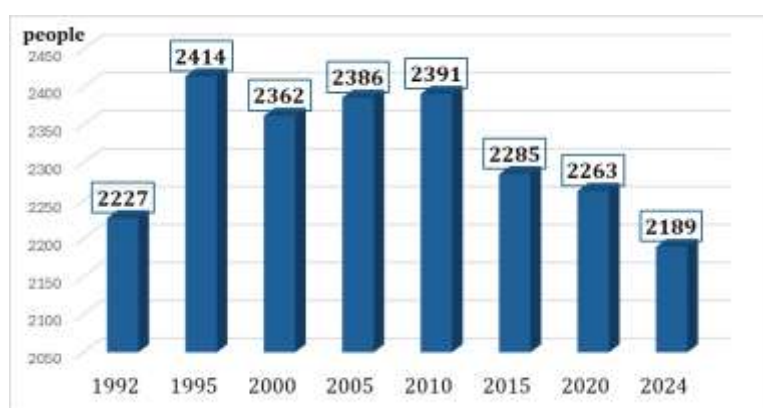


Figure 2. Evolution of population in Marina during the period 1992-2024

Source: Own processing according to [7]

Economic analysis of Margina. Regarding the economy of Margina, agricultural activities predominate crop cultivation, animal husbandry, hay making. However, there are also small industrial activities, as well as activities in the services sector – tourism rural, agri-tourism and trade in agricultural product – are also present. Of economic importance for the locality was the vinegar factory of Margina, a strong local brand [6,11].

Tourism. The area where Margina is located is beautiful and picturesque, with a remarkable tourist heritage, which combines natural, cultural and ethnographic elements . The most representative tourist attractions in the area are:

- The “Cuvioasa Paraschiva” Wooden Church in Margina is a valuable historical monument dating back to the 18th century, representative of Banat wooden religious architecture, distinguished by its traditional construction techniques and interior painting. (figure 3),

- The Wooden Church in Coșevița preserves specific architectural features of rural Banat churches, including a simple wooden structure and decorative elements reflecting local craftsmanship and religious traditions.

- The Wooden Church in Zorani is another important cultural landmark, integrated into the rural landscape and illustrating the continuity of traditional spiritual life in the area.

- Românești Cave s one of the most significant natural attractions in the region, known for its karst formations and for hosting cultural events, such as classical music concerts, which enhance its tourism appeal (figure 4).

- Transluncani, also known as the “Western Transalpina,” is a scenic mountain road that offers impressive panoramic views and connects Margina to the Poiana Ruscă Mountains, being attractive for road tourism and nature exploration (figure 5).

- traditional Banat households represent an essential component of the local ethnographic heritage, characterized by vernacular architecture, courtyards, and household organization specific to the Banat rural area.

- traditional local events (festivals, fairs, and cultural celebrations) contribute to preserving customs, gastronomy, and folklore, while strengthening community identity and attracting visitors.

- craft workshops and others (wood processing, weaving, traditional gastronomy) provide experiential tourism opportunities, allowing visitors to engage directly with local traditions and skills.



Figure 3. The “Cuvioasa Paraschiva” Wooden Church in Margina

Source: [16]



Figure 4. Românești Cave

Source: [17]



Figure 5. Transluncani - Western Transalpinia

Source: [18]

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis highlights the fact that Margina can become a representative model of sustainable rural development based on local heritage.

Although the economy is still predominantly agricultural, the commune's tourism potential - based on natural, cultural and social resources - offers real opportunities for economic diversification.

Increasing local competitiveness depends on the capacity of the administration and the community to attract investments, to capitalize on existing resources and to develop the infrastructure necessary for sustainable tourism.

In the future, Margina can become a reference pole for rural and ecological tourism in the eastern area of Timiș county, integrating into the regional tourism development networks of the Mountain Banat.

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