

**COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF STATISTICAL DATA ON TOURIST ACCOMMODATION IN ROMANIA AND THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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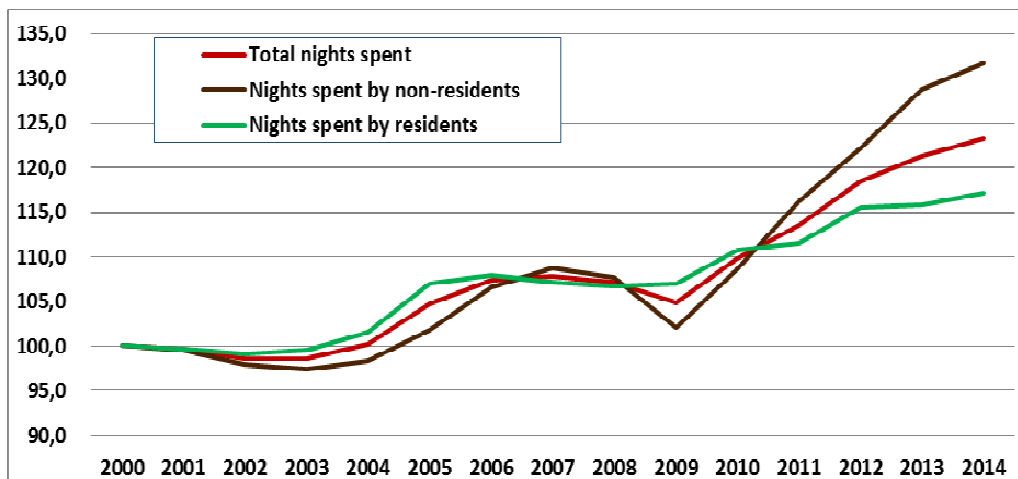
**Abstract:** *Tourism is an important economic activity with a rapidly social, cultural and environmental evolving. Tourism plays a crucial role in generating wealth and jobs and its importance and impact is growing on other policy areas - from regional policy, diversification of rural economies, maritime policy, employment, sustainability and competitiveness to social policy and inclusion. This article presents an overview of statistics for the accommodation services sector in Romania, year 2014, compared to previous years and other EU countries. There are presented data about number of nights spent at tourist accommodation establishments and tourists travelling abroad in Romania compared to EU countries, top EU destinations, difficulties why foreign tourists run away from Romania and reasons why foreign tourists no longer visit our country.*

**Key words:** *tourism, statistics, accommodation services, travels*

**INTRODUCTION**

Tourism, in a statistical context, refers to the activity of visitors taking a trip to a destination outside their usual environment, for less than a year. It can be for any main purpose, including business, leisure or other personal reasons other than to be employed by a resident person, household or enterprise in the place visited. Tourism is a dynamic and competitive industry that requires the ability to adapt constantly to customers' changing needs and desires, as the customer's satisfaction, safety and enjoyment are particularly the focus of tourism businesses. Tourism has a very important role in generating wealth and jobs for any country, has implications on the economy, on the natural and built environment, on the local population at the destination and on the tourists themselves.

In recent years there has been a rise in the number of tourists in the whole Europe, regarding the number of tourists as well as overnights. Referencing the year 2000 level, of EU countries, the number of tourists who stayed overnight increased on average by 25%, the largest increase, 30%, being for the non-residents.



**Figure 1. Number of nights spent at tourist accommodation establishments, EU-28, 2000-2014 (year 2000 = 100)**

Between October 2014 and 2013, most EU countries saw increases of tourists, even if not very large. Although Romania stood among those, the number of these tourists is important. If countries like Germany, Spain, France, and Italy had more than 20 million tourists in our country they were under 2.5 million. It is good that we are in mid table, that we exceeded countries such as Bulgaria, Malta, Cyprus and Slovenia, but the difference between us and the first class is enormous.

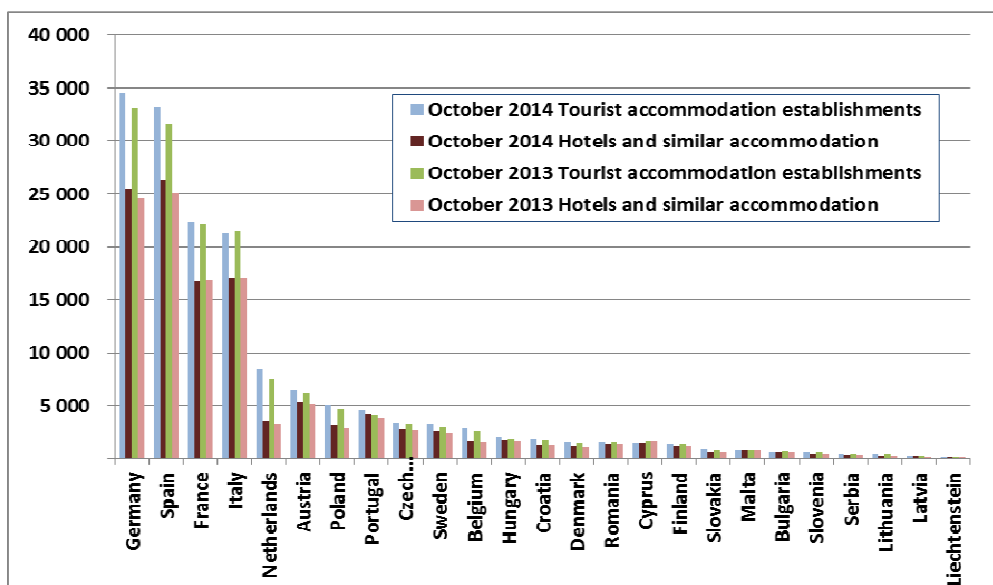


Figure 2. Nights spent at tourist accommodation establishments, October 2014 (Thousand)

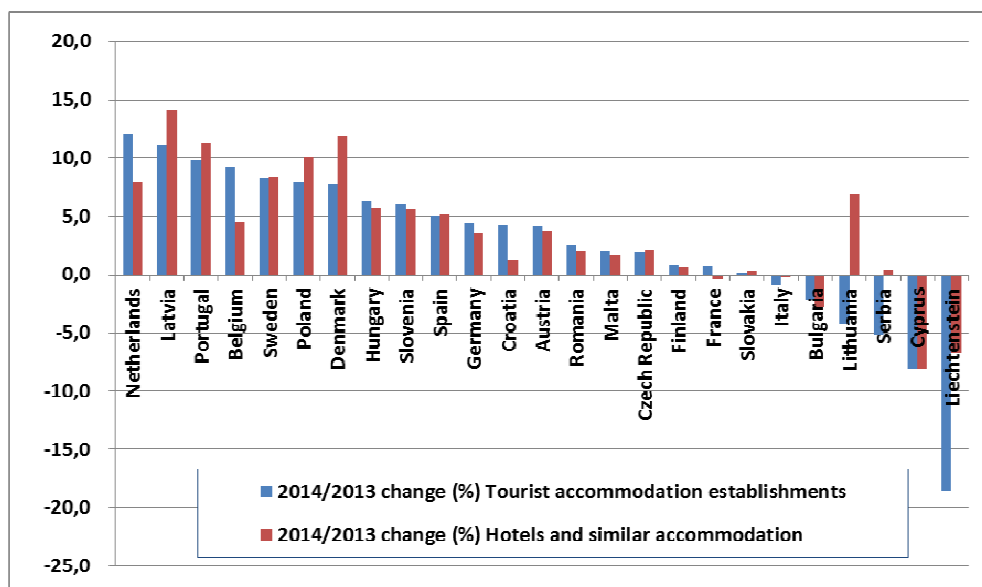


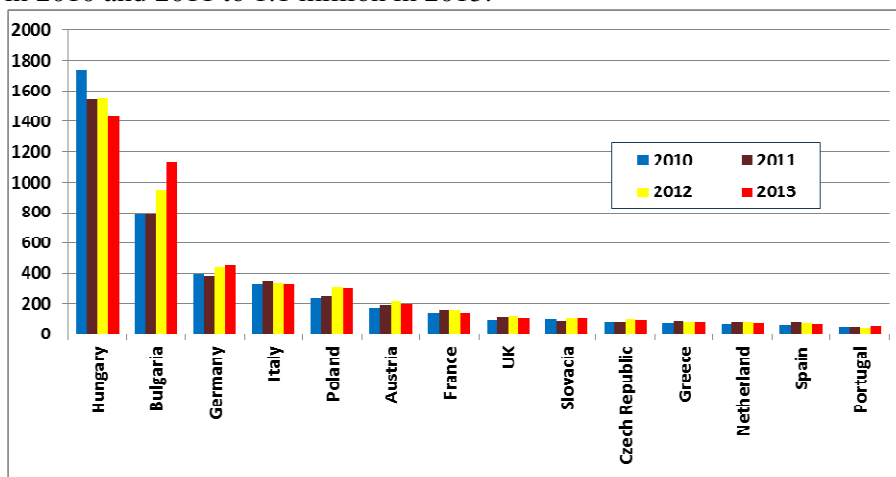
Figure 3. Nights spent at tourist accommodation establishments, change 2014/2013 (%)

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

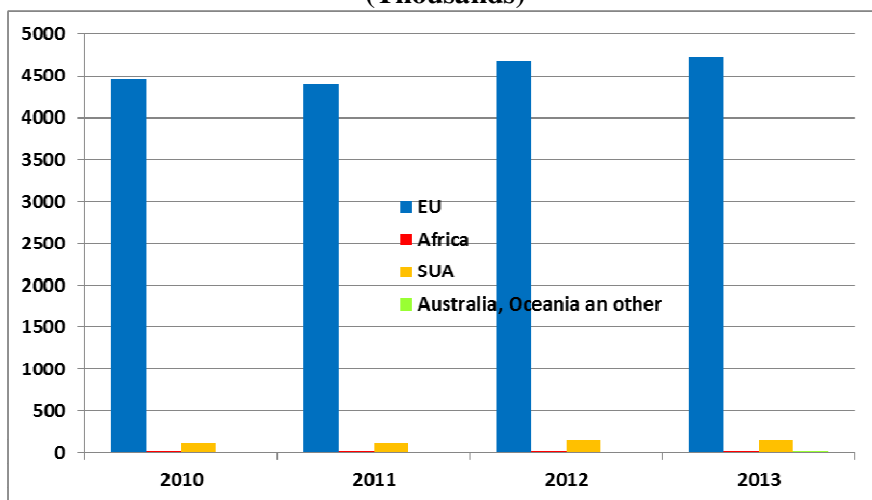
This paper proposes an analysis of foreign tourist visits to EU countries and comparison with data from Romania, the Western Region and Timis County, analysis performed using a quantitative method especially - analysis of documents or secondary analysis of data from institutional documents, based on data provided by Eurostat, INSE and the statistical yearbooks and Romania. Secondary analysis of quantitative data refers to the analysis of data collected by another researcher or institution often another question. Secondary analysis is a modern archived data processing technique, consisting of harnessing data already collected and reported by other persons and institutions for purposes other than those of the researched subject.

**RESEARCH RESULTS**

When referring to our country, in recent years, as we said, there was an increase in the number of tourists, the majority coming from Hungary, Bulgaria, Germany and Italy. Hungary, the country where we have most tourists, however recorded a decline from 1.7 million in 2010 to 1.4 million in 2013. The largest increase was from Bulgaria, from about 800000 in 2010 and 2011 to 1.1 million in 2013.



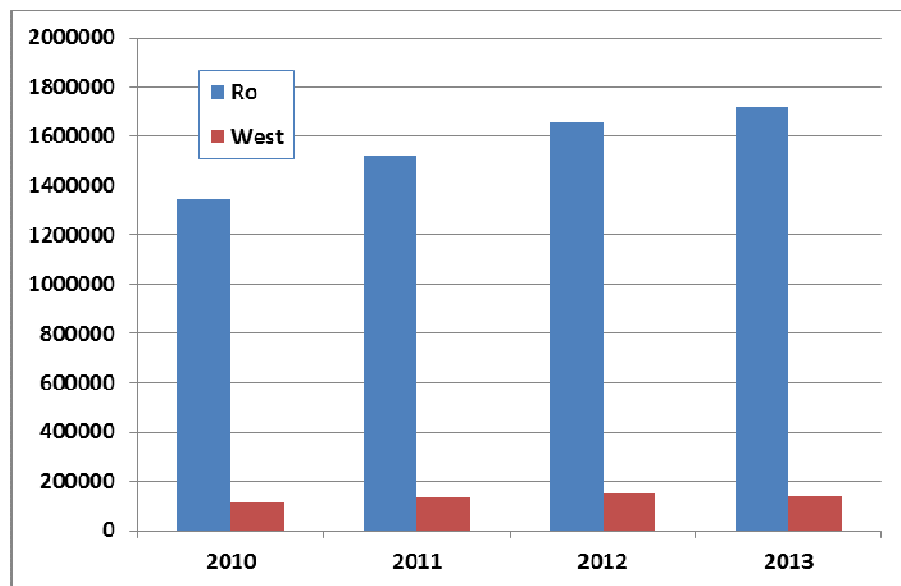
**Figure 4. Arrivals of foreign visitors in Romania by Europe countries of origin (Thousands)**



**Figure 5. Arrivals of foreign visitors in Romania by continents and countries of origin (Thousands)**

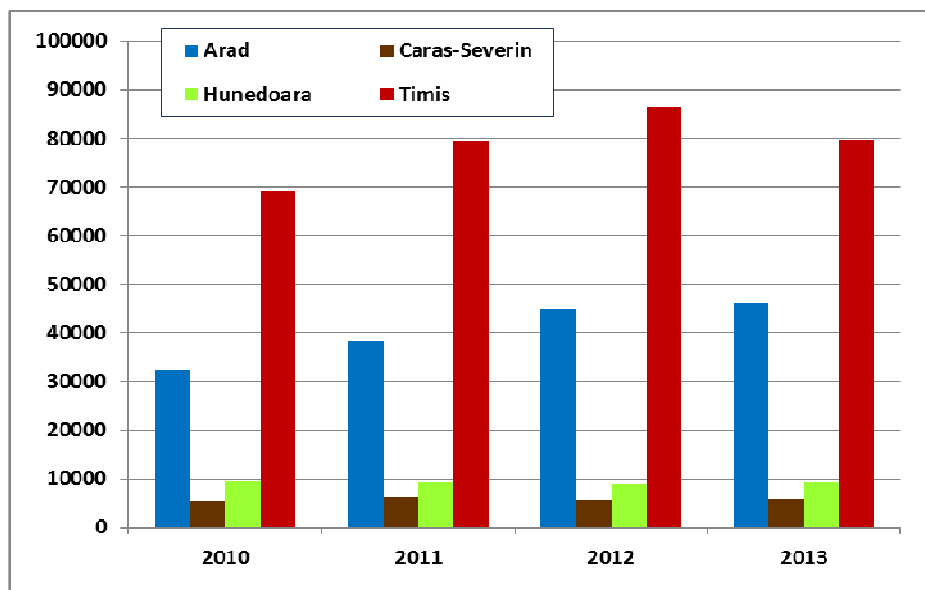
If we refer to the continents (except Asia), Europe visit us most often, followed by the US, the number of tourists from other parts of the world being very small.

In the western region of Romania, the number of foreign tourists was approximately 6 times smaller than the rest of the country, even recorded a decrease in 2013 compared to 2012, even if the whole country has been increasing.



**Figure 6. Foreign tourists arrivals in tourist accommodation structures in Romania and West Region**

Across the four counties in the region, most tourists came in Timis and Arad, and the fewest in Caras-Severin, even if the last ranked have more beautiful and varied landscape. Preference for Timis and Arad can mean visits mainly for business and less for tourism.



**Figure 7. Foreign tourists arrivals in tourist accommodation structures in West region**

This results regarding the tourists that are staying in rural locations, Arad and Caras-Severin counties hold the first two places. There can be noticed the small number of such tourists around 1000 people/county, the rest up to the tens of thousands are those staying in other locations, such as hotels in cities and did not come for tourist activities.

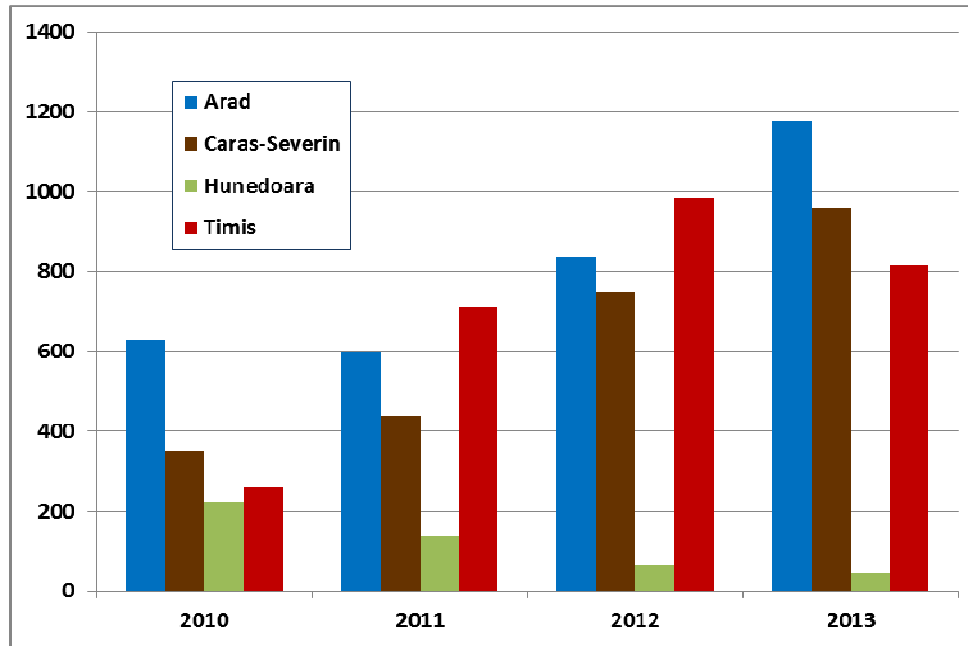


Figure 8. Foreign tourists arrivals in rural locations structures in Vest region

## CONCLUSIONS

The vast majority of those who come in Romania are in business and not for recreational purposes, so they are "forced" us "visit". Why foreign tourists fleeing from Romania? Causes fears and beliefs are in Western man, on the former communist countries of Eastern Europe. Moreover, in recent times, citizens of these countries were made the label of "social tourists" - people who migrate from poorer Eastern European countries in the West, due to generous social benefits here. Since the past, people in the West have considered Eastern Europe as part of undeveloped and uncivilized continent, hence their fear to open in front of them. Two main factors underlying these Western fears: poor economic development of the countries in Eastern and authoritarian regimes, sometimes dictatorial in these countries. On the other hand, the tourists do not care how democratic is a country, since it offers sun, beach and sea. Other countries, however, had a well-developed infrastructure, to Eastern European countries. And this is a decisive factor in the poor development of tourism in the Balkans. A holiday in Romania, for example, does not compare with the one in the Caribbean. In social terms, the latter brings more prestige. Exceptions are only tourists in the poorest of society, for that matter just price.

Hotels in Romania are the second lowest in Europe after occupancy during the summer and have the last position in the ranking for share of foreigners in the total number of tourists, the causes being weak flow of tourists, business bad image abroad, high tariffs and evasion. Romania is less known worldwide, and the little the foreigners know is negative. Our country is far behind in terms of international image, even compared to Bulgaria, to which services are not far away. However, approximately 80% of foreigners

who come here, are impressed because they expect to find something very bad.

Also, in Romania there isn't a stable economic framework to attract foreign investors, so hotels in the city to be fuller in the summer. According to Eurostat data, between June and September of last year, occupancy of the tourism in Romania was 32.9% and the only European country that lies worse in this chapter is Lithuania, with 31.6%. Hotels in the neighborhood, for example Bulgaria were filled to 45.7% and Hungary had an occupancy rate of 40%. The best are Cyprus and Croatia, whose hotels were filled at a rate of 81.6% and 80%.

Why foreign tourists are not coming in Romania? Explanations are many and already stereotyped, such as transport infrastructure (not just street), tourist areas infrastructure, the lack of effective and consistent promotion tied to a country brand and lack of local promotion. Romania is still unknown as a tourist destination, the prices of hotels and tour operators are very high compared to the tourist programs in neighboring countries, such as Hungary, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Austria, and services (accommodation, meals and transport) in Romania are significantly weaker than in the countries mentioned. Sometimes, the price / quality adversely affect tourism perception, even if Romania is considered, in comparison with other European countries, a cheap country.

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