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MANAGING RISK AND ALLURE AT VOLCANOES IN HAWAII: HOW CLOSE IS TOO CLOSE?

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Abstract: Volcanoes and other sites of dynamic natural processes have long attracted tourists, but they can also be dangerous sites that risk the health and well-being of visitors. This study examines tourist perceptions of risk and enjoyment in volcanic areas on Hawaii Island. Specifically this study involved interviews with tourists within and outside Hawai Volcanoes National Park to gauge their sense of safety at volcanic sites as well as their satisfaction with the tourism experience. The study found that despite frequent injuries and even fatalities near the volcano, there is both a high level of tourist satisfaction as well as a low level of perceived risk. The success of tourism in this area can be attributed to the fact that the tourist areas can be divided into different "*riskscapes*" where, due to different rules and government jurisdictions, tourists can self-select either activities that get them closer to the riskier features or keep them in safer viewing zones.

Key words: geotourism, risk, riskscape, safety, volcanoes, Hawaii

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As tourist attractions, volcanoes and other sites of dynamic natural processes present a unique blend of both allure and risk. These sites act as magnets for tourists and can be the principle drivers for economic development in the communities that surround them (Bernie, 2010; Cooper & Cooper, 2010). Sites of dynamic natural processes are attractive, in part, because of their awesome power and unpredictability which inevitably results in significant risks for visitors. While awesome displays of nature attract tourists, when tourists are actually harmed or travel infrastructure is disrupted visitor numbers and spending can drop (Hall & Lew, 2009). Therefore, like with other forms of tourism such as adventure tourism and theme parks, there is a thin margin for successfully attracting tourists. An attraction must be risky enough to appear exciting but not so risky so that potential tourists perceive the attraction to be a serious threat to their lives or health. Unlike theme parks, zip lines, and other constructed tourism sites, natural attractions like volcanoes are different in that the phenomena itself cannot be controlled. Instead, tourism managers and policy makers near volcanoes must employ spatial strategies to manage *where* tourists can be. Tourist areas have to be delineated that place tourists in spaces that are close enough to experience the awesome spectacle of a dynamic natural process, but not in spaces where they will experience the hazards of that process.

While this article focuses on a case study of volcano tourism in Hawaii, we contend that our study can inform the work of academics, tourism operators, planners and policy makers that study and manage tourism at other risky sites of dynamic natural processes such as other volcanoes, glaciers, rivers, seashores, and canyons. As demonstrated by the case of Rwanda, the development of a tourism industry around a site of volcanism can be a powerful impetus for economic recovery and vitality even if the tourism in the volcanic area is directed toward other attractions that are in vicinity. In and around Rwanda's National Park of Volcanoes (NPV), also called Parc of Virunga, tourism directed at viewing mountain gorillas near the volcano funds infrastructure improvements that benefit local community members as well as tourists. It also has produced, through the multiplier effect, benefits for local agricultural producers as well as funding for nature conservation strategies (Farasani et al., 2011; Laws, 2011; Ntaganda, 2012; Smith, 2011). These benefits, however, could be put at risk if the safety of visitors is compromised by volcanic activity. In the case of tourism near volcanoes in places like Rwanda, Washington State USA, Iceland, Italy and Hawaii planners and managers must deal with a fundamental question similar to what managers at other sites must deal with: how can we bring tourists close enough to a dangerous natural phenomenon to ensure they enjoy the experience, but not so close that they feel unsafe? As with other destinations, answering this question around volcanic areas in Hawaii is complicated by the fact that multiple government agencies are in charge of the land surrounding the attraction and also by the fact that there are different segments of the tourist market that desire different experiences and are willing to take on different levels of risk. In this article we present the findings of our research on tourist perceptions of safety and visitor satisfaction at volcanic sites on Hawaii Island (also referred to as the "*Big Island*"). First however, we will more specifically address the risks and the motivations for this kind of tourism.

HAZARDS AND RISKS OF VOLCANO TOURISM

Volcanoes and their eruptions can result in a wide range of health impacts, arguably more varied than in any other kind of natural disaster, and continual eruptions may endanger local inhabitants as well as tourists (Cooper & Cooper, 2010; Erfurt-Cooper, 2009; Lane et al., 2003; Sheth et al., 2010; Haynes et al., 2007). Along with increased lava flow, these health concerns may contribute heavily to a decrease in overall tourism in the area (Zouzias et al., 2007; Easterling, 1997). Cuts and grazes from falls on

sharp volcanic rocks, in addition to respiratory and eye irritation, are cited as the most common injuries associated with the volcanoes and experienced by volcano tourists and volcano tourism employees (Heggie et al., 2008). A small number of deaths of visitors to volcanic areas have been reported in different parts of the world following exposures to sulfur dioxide; they occur most often when hiking to active lava flows, or as a result of not following clearly posted warnings (Hansell et al., 2006; Haynes et al., 2008). At some volcano tourism locations around the world, warnings are not worded clearly enough, or in enough of the languages commonly spoken by tourists to a destination, leaving those tourists vulnerable to accidents and exposure to hazards (Bird et al., 2010). Specifically at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, most injuries result from tourists not being adequately prepared for hiking, such as not wearing appropriate footwear or carrying enough water, or from lack of experience in hiking (Heggie & Heggie, 2007). The most common illnesses encountered by the lava hikers were dehydration, respiratory irritation, and headaches or migraines; while the most common injuries consisted of scrapes, cuts, and blisters caused by difficult hiking over lava (Heggie & Heggie, 2007).

MOTIVATIONS FOR VOLCANO TOURISM

Given this list of risks, why are volcanoes such popular attractions? As gohawaii.com (a popular Hawaii tourism website) states, visitors to the volcanoes on the Big Island are drawn by the promise of "*a chance to witness the primal process of creation and destruction make this park one of the most popular visitor attraction in Hawaii and a sacred place for Native Hawaiians*" (gohawaii.com, 2013). There is a quasi-religious motivation as tourists are compelled to experience sites of creation and destruction both awe-inspiring and extraordinary (Hall & Lew, 2009). George Applegate, head of the Hawaii Island Visitors Bureau, noted that the primary reason people come to Hawaii Island is "*to be inspired*" and that the volcano is a big part of that (personal communication, 2013). Some researchers have theorized that much of this motivation is unconscious and triggered by word-of-mouth accounts from others' experiences (Martin, 2010). Artists, photographers and documentary filmmakers have also frequently been inspired by active volcanoes and share that inspiration through their media (USGS 2012, Dixon et al,. 2012). As Dixon et al note, it may not be the actual eruptions that motivate tourists to visit but instead, "*It is while 'waiting' for the eruption, which sometimes does not happen, that observers are presented with the complexity of natural disasters, as well as the challenges faced by those who predict natural hazards*" (2012). Also, rather than waiting for an eruption or, watching an active one in awe, many tourists cite other recreational activities including hiking, camping, and climbing as their motivations to visit an active volcano (Cooper & Cooper 2010; Heggie, 2010; Siciliano-Rosen, 2009).

VOLCANO TOURISM IN HAWAII

While there are different motivations for tourists to visit volcanoes the end result is that volcano tourism is a vital part of Hawaii's tourism economy. Across the state of Hawaii tourism accounts for a large portion of the economy and Hawaii Island's volcanoes are among the most visited sites. Over 7.6 million visitors came to the state of Hawaii in 2012 accounting for one third of the annual $29 billion in revenue for the state (Hawaii Tourism Authority, State of Hawaii Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism). While much of this tourism activity focuses on the heavily developed Oahu Island, the Big Island still receives a large number of tourists. With its black-sand beaches and rocky terrain, and a famously rainy windward side, the Big Island attracts less of the "*sun and sand*" tourist market than do Oahu, Kauai and Maui. Unlike the other islands in the chain, however, the Big Island is the island with a currently erupting volcano. At present the island hosts three volcanoes which the US Geological Survey categorizes as active: Hualalai,

Mauna Loa and Kilauea. Kilauea on the southern part of the island has been erupting continuously since 1983 and is located within the boundaries of Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. The national park drew 1.43 million visitors in 2012 (National Park Service) which is close to the listed amount of annual visitors to the Big Island of 1.48 million in 2012 (Hawaii Tourism Authority).[1]

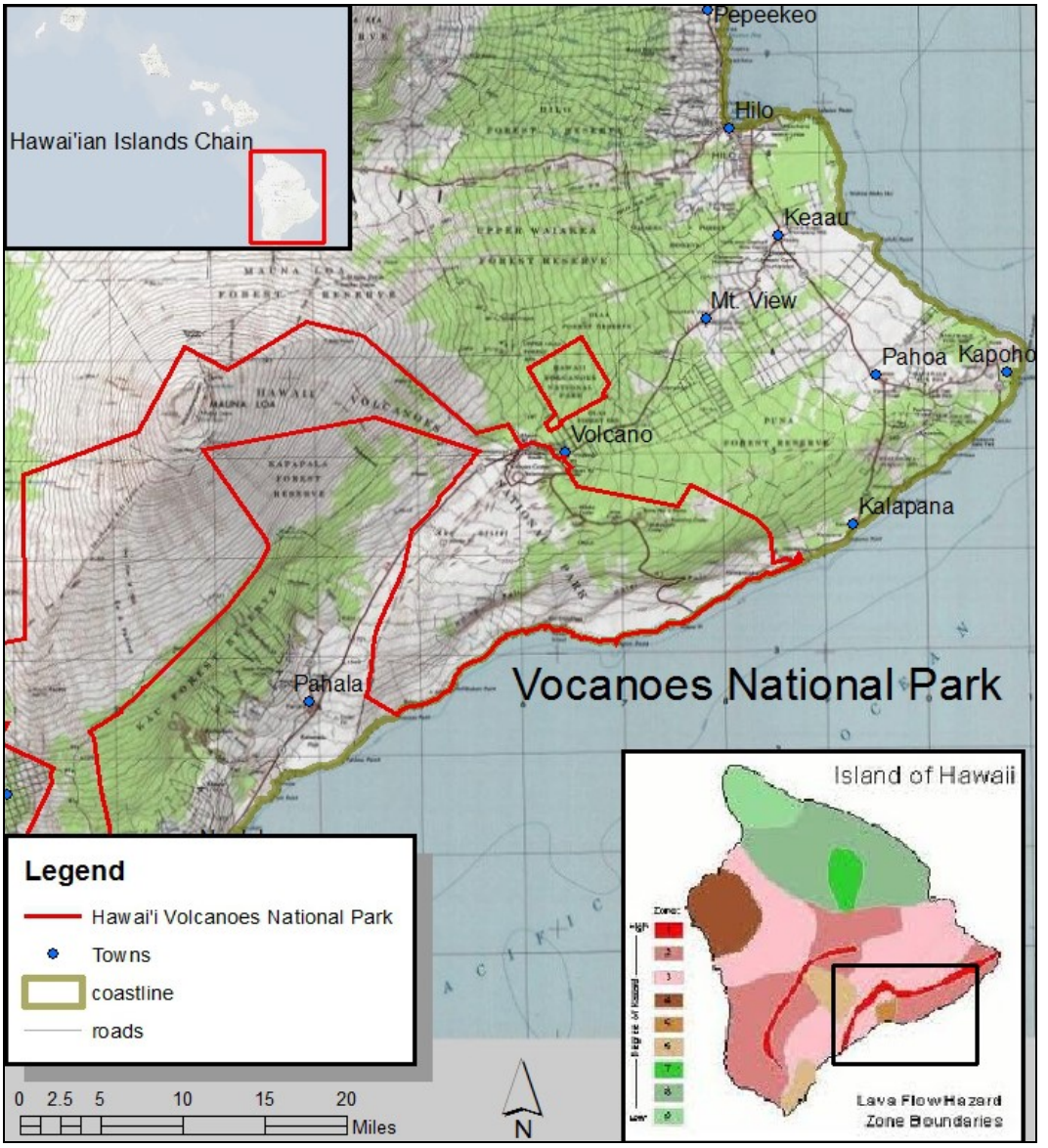

Figure 1. Map of Hawaii Volcanoes National Park and Surrounding Area
The deeper red areas of hazard map represent the most hazardous areas (Source: Michael Cook)

As shown in Figure 1, the national park is not the only place on the island to witness volcanic eruptions and the landscapes recently affected by them. While the

[1] It should be noted that this is the total number of visitors to Hawaii Volcano National Park including tourists, residents and repeat visitors.

summit of Kilauea is inside the park boundary (and as of 2013 was still releasing quite a bit of steam and gases) most recent active lava flows have come from Pu`u O`o Crater, which is a vent outside of the national park boundary near the town of Kalapana.

These flows lay on private land (and land monitored by the County of Hawaii) and these are the best places in 2013 for tourists to view running lava. These sites are less monitored than sites within the national park and individuals can get closer to active lava flows. Individuals and small tourism outfits offer their services as guides to tourists who want assistance getting right up to the lava flows in these areas (One tourism operator is known as "*Poke-a-Stick Lava Tours*" which promises just that: allowing tourists to get close enough to poke the lava with a stick). The majority of tourists to the Kalapana area, however, attempt to view the flows by parking at the "*County Viewing Area*" and taking a 1 kilometer walk to a better viewing spot or going on their own along an approximately 5 kilometer path near the ocean from Uncle Robert's Market in the town of Kalapana. The latter option is considered more risky since it is unmonitored and also requires that tourists walk along lava benches (unstable land formations created by lava entering the ocean that are prone to collapse). The viewing area, however, also has its own risks. It is only monitored on some days and only from 4pm to 10pm. During the week prior to our interviews in 2013, one tourist had visited the viewing area when no staff was present and disappeared. The tourist has never been found and is presumed dead. This was followed two months later by another confirmed fatality at the viewing area.

RESEARCH METHODS

To better understand how tourism operators, planners, and researchers can manage tourism operations near sites of dynamic natural processes we conducted a study of tourist perceptions of risks and tourist satisfaction at volcanic attractions on the Big Island of Hawaii in the spring of 2013. The primary method used was interviews with tourists. We approached tourists at random and asked if they would be willing to conduct a short interview with us and answer our questions. The majority of interviews were done in English (70), but five were conducted in Japanese. There was nearly a balance in the gender of the respondents: 38 females and 37 males.

Our interviews were structured by a common list of open-ended qualitative questions, demographic questions, and Likert Scale questions. The Likert Scale employed choices ranging from 1 to 7, 1 for (Strongly Disagree) and 7 for (Strongly Agree) about different aspects of their visit. These questions, aimed at gathering qualitative information by volcano visitors, examined perceptions of personal safety at the viewing areas as well as queried tourists' attitudes about whether the experience met, exceeded, or fell below their expectations. We also asked questions regarding how tourists learned about the Hawaiian volcanoes and whether they had visited other volcanoes. The demographic questions analyzed the tourists' places of origin, education and income level, age, where they were staying on island, and the number of people traveling with them. A total of 75 interviews were conducted at multiple locations within two major areas of volcano tourism on the Big Island of Hawaii; namely Volcanoes National Park and Kalapana. Inside Volcanoes National Park we conducted interviews at several gathering and viewing locations including the Jagger Geology Museum, the National Park Visitors Center, and the Caldera Viewing area. The Kalapana locations for data collection were at the County Viewing Area and at Uncle Robert's Night Market in the town of Kalapana.

RESEARCH RESULTS

While our study focused on tourists' satisfaction with the volcano experience and their perceptions of risk there are a few other factors that bear mentioning.

First, according to our study, tourists heard about the volcano from a fairly even variety of sources. Approximately 15% or interviewees learned about the volcanoes through media while 14% of people got to know about the volcano through internet and 15% from print sources such as books, magazines, brochures, or other advertisements. In addition, the data shows that another 15% of the tourists questioned learned about volcanoes by word-of-mouth from a family member, a friend, or someone in their tour group. 13% discovered the volcano through school or college courses. Lastly, only 9% of the tourists we interviewed mentioned they learned about the volcano through tour companies, tour guides, or tour guidebooks (Figure 2). A surprisingly large number of respondents (just over 50%) had visited other volcanoes. Interviewees reported visiting volcanoes in Washington State USA, Iceland, Japan, New Zealand, Yellowstone USA, Italy, Nicaragua and Costa Rica. As far as income, 7% of the study participants reported an annual income of less than $25,000. 10% reported income between $25,000-$50,000. 25% reported income from $50,000-$75,000. 23% declared income between $75,000-$100,000. 14% made from $100,000-$200,000 per year, and 20% reported an income greater than $200,000.

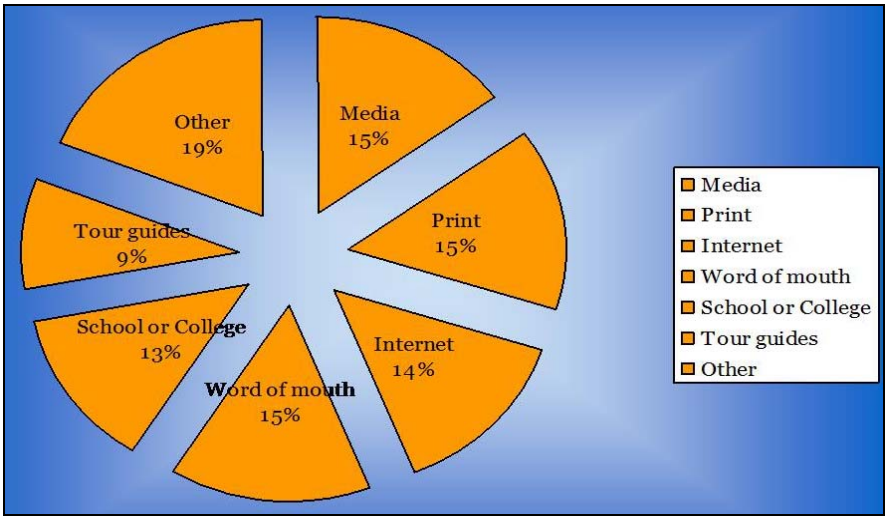

Figure 2. How did people learn about the volcano?

While seeing the volcano was a primary motivation for visiting Hawaii Island for most of the interviewees they also spent time doing other activities on island that impacted the local economy. Approximately 33% of the tourists surveyed noted going to the beach and/or participating in other ocean activities such as swimming with dolphins, snorkeling, surfing, swimming, whale watching, diving, and sunbathing. 25% engaged in nature activities such as hiking, camping, zip lines, and biking. 16% of the tourists surveyed also stated they had gone on driving tours around the island and mentioned sightseeing activities such as visiting coffee plantations, botanical gardens, farmers' markets, the zoo, Kealakekua Bay, Mauna Kea, and Waipio Valley. Additionally, a small percentage (6%) of the tourists surveyed reported going on a helicopter tour.

As for the main subject of our research, we found that, overall, tourists reported having a rewarding experience at the volcanic sites and they did not feel unsafe. More specifically, on the Likert Scale question "*I enjoyed visiting the volcano / lava viewing area" the most popular response was "strongly agree*". On the Likert Scale question "*I would recommend a trip to see the volcano to others*" the average on the scale of 1 to 7 (with 7 being strongly agree, 1 being strongly disagree and 4 being

"*neutral/don't know*") was 6.38 with a standard deviation of .148. While this is non-parametric data and so averages should be looked at skeptically it still speaks to the fact that respondents overwhelmingly strongly agreed they would recommend the experience to others.

For the Likert Scale question "*My experience visiting the volcano met or exceeded my expectations*" the response was not as overwhelmingly affirmative, but still positive with an average of 5.58 with a standard deviation of .187. There were several qualitative responses offered by people who were disappointed with the experience. The most common response was that they thought they could get closer to the caldera or to the lava flow and see it better. Some also complained that they thought they should be able to drive closer to the lava flow and some complained about not being able to drive around the whole caldera at the national park (which is currently partially closed due to high sulfur emissions from the summit). Others thought the caldera would be bigger.

When asked about safety concerns, most respondents did not report any. For the Likert Scale question, "*I felt unsafe at some point during my visit*" (1 being "*strongly disagree*," 7 "*strongly agree*" and 4 being "*neutral/don't know*") the most common response was 1. The average for this question was 1.79 with a standard deviation of .197. Therefore it could be said that the overall level of concern over safety was fairly low. There was an interesting pattern, however, in that older respondents appeared to have more safety concerns than younger travelers. To examine this relationship more fully we conducted a Kruskal-Wallis test to test the relationship between the age of the tourist and whether she/he felt safe viewing the volcano. The test resulted in a significant relationship with a p-value of 0.050 (α=0.050). In other words, we found that there is a correlation between a tourist's age and feeling unsafe while visiting the volcanic sites.

CONCLUSIONS

Given the economic importance of tourism at sites of dynamic natural processes around the world, it is important for tourists, planners, researchers and managers to carefully analyze the risks and rewards of this kind of tourism. This example from volcano tourism in Hawaii can help inform efforts by tourism managers to walk the precarious line between getting tourists close enough to a dangerous natural phenomenon that they enjoy the experience, but not so close that they feel unsafe. Based on our research results that visitors overwhelmingly simultaneously feel safe and enjoy the experience we claim that the model of tourism around volcanic landscapes in Hawaii is a successful example of how this can be done. The division of the volcanic landscape between Volcanoes National Park and non-federal lands was not planned -at least it certainly is not the result of human decision making. Many of the lava flows in the Kalapana area have occurred since the 1980s, well after the boundaries of the National Park were established (Pele the volcano goddess, it is said, goes where she wants to go). Despite the fact that the different jurisdictions were not planned, the situation results in some unexpected benefits for tourism on the island.

Essentially the mosaic of different jurisdictions in the volcanic areas of the island allows for a varied landscape of risk or "*riskscape*" (Morello-Frosch and Shenassa 2006). The restrictions and safety precautions within the national park, for instance are more stringent than those outside the park. In this way tourists can select where to go based on their own acceptable level of perceived risk and measure that against their desire to get closer to what they want to see. This means that tourists who desire a safer experience, such as older tourists and families, can view the volcano inside the national park where stronger safety precautions are in place. This is very important as our study indicated that this older segment of the tourist market makes up a large portion of the tourists that visit the volcano. On the other hand, the more adventurous segments of the

tourism market that may feel disappointed in this safer experience can still have the option to explore other, riskier opportunities.

It is important to note that this model of varied risk exposure does not eliminate risk. It does not even minimize it. People can and do sustain injuries, sometimes fatal ones, while visiting the volcanic attractions in Hawaii. However, this model allows individual tourists to select the amount of risk they feel comfortable taking. This may be one reason why deaths and injuries, when they do occur, do not substantially affect tourism numbers to the volcanic attractions in Hawaii. It is widely recognized locally, and by tourists through the interpretive programs given by Park Service personnel, that the volcano CAN be experienced in relative safety and that most injuries and deaths occur when tourists choose to do high-risk activities in certain high risk spaces (i.e. walking on a lava bench to poke flowing lava with a stick).

Having a varied riskscape around these sites of dynamic natural activities like volcanoes, when coupled with appropriate education strategies to inform visitors of the risks, can be a successful model for getting the most out of these tourism sites in terms of both economic benefit and the quality of tourism experieinces. While the distribution of land jurisdictions near the volcano in Hawaii is somewhat accidental, other locations doing similar forms of tourism would do well to imitate Hawaii's example of having different tourist options based on different levels of acceptable risk. This will enable host communities and tourism enterprises to benefit more by simultaneously catering to multiple segments of the tourism market.

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LEGISLATIVE ASPECTS CONCERNING TOURISM PLANNING ISSUES IN ROMANIA

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Abstract: Strategy planning in general and integrated tourism development in particular has an important role for local development and application of planning concepts, taking into account their official purposes. Thus, based on the primary purpose of urbanism to stimulate the development of complex settlements, by developing and implementing development strategies in the short, medium and long term. A study of planning and integrated tourism development includes as an important component of the mechanism that determines the functionality of the territorial system studied, a good knowledge of the institutions (actors) involved in coordination, approval and implementation and documentation underlying the whole approach to succession in their natural logic.

Key words: Regional/spatial planning, regions, transport infrastructure, institutions

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CONCEPT OF REGIONAL / SPATIAL PLANNING

The analytical studies started from the study of bibliographical materials, taking into consideration the existing information (Ilieş et al., 2008; Ilieş et al., 2011), originated by researchers (Petrea & Petrea, 2000) for various purposes. The information analyzed in this study come from direct observations of authors in the study area, as well as from literature and official sources of statistical data. The main documents that define the concept of regional/spatial planning in Romania are connected to the European documents from this field. This ensures harmoniously a sustainable and spatial development of the different areas of the country and materializes in studies, plans, programs and projects that unify at territorial level the economic, social, environmental and cultural policies. According to the definitions found in the professional literature, we can say that regional/spatial planning, respectively integrated tourism planning of territory represents an assembly of complex activities (Ionaşcu, 2002) reflected in the continuous structural-functional (re)organisation of a territorial system.

REGIONAL/SPATIAL PLANNING AT EUROPEAN LEVEL

Regarding the process of regional/spatial planning at European level, at the beginning of the 60s, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, preoccupied

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with the execessive concentration of regional disparities, declares within the resolution no. 210/1061 that *„it is convinced that a hamoniously spatial development of the economic, social, cultural activities is impossible without a policy of regional/spatial planning*".

In 1958, the Parliamentary Assembly suggests to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to employ a new way of European cooperation in the regional/spatial planning field and to organize in this respect a permanent ministerial European conference, charged with the elaboration of new political orientations of regional/spatial development on the European Continent and to ensure the harmonization of national policies in the regional/spatial planning field. Thus, for this purpose, the Resolutions 525 and 526/1968 were issued.

The first European Conference of Ministers Responsible for Regional/Spatial Planning (CEMAT) took place in 1970 at Bonn, Germany. Since 1970, CEMAT has gathered in 12 sessions and enacted over time, fundamental documents for the European regional/spatial planning. After 1991, Romania participated constantly at the CEMAT Sessions by representatives of the ministry responsible with regional/spatial planning.

„European Regional / Spatial Planning Charter" – enacted in 1983 by CEMAT at Torremolinos (Spain) – defines regional/spatial planning as „the spatial expression of the economic, social, cultural and environemntal policies of all societies" with the following fundamental objectives: a balanced socio-economic development of regions, an improvement of the quality of life, a responsible management of the natural resources and the protection of the environment, a rational use of the soil.

The main European documents in force that synthesize the experience concerning regional/spatial planning to which Romania aligns its policies with are:

- *European Regional/Spatial Planning Charter* (figure 1) – document belonging to the European Council, agreed within the 6th European Conference of Ministers Responsible for Regional/Spatial Planning (CEMAT), that took place at Torremolinos, Spain (may 1983);

Figure 1. European Regional/Spatial Planning Charter and European Spatial Development Perspective (Source: http://www.mdrl.ro)

- *European Spatial Development Perspective* (ESDP) – Towards a balanced and sustainable development of the territory of the European Union – document belonging to the European Union, agreed at the Informal Council of Ministers Responsible for Regional/Spatial Planning in the Member States of the European Union – Potsdam, Germany (may 1999);
- *The Guiding Principles for Sustainable Spatial Development of the European Continent* (figure 2) – document belonging to the Council of Europe, adopted at the European Conference of Ministers Responsible for Regional/Spatial Planning (CEMAT) – Hanovra, Germany (september 2000);
- *The Territorial Agenda of the European Union* (figure 2) – document belonging to the European Commission (may 2007).

The activity of spatial/regional planning at European level is supported by Programs of territorial cooperation 2007-2013. Among these we can enumerate INTERREG (program of interregional cooperation) and ESPON.

The cooperation area for INTERREG expands over the entire territory of the European Union (27 Member States), to which is added two partner states with a special statute: Norway and Switzerland. ESPON 2013 is an operational program within the European Territorial Cooperation Objective of the European Union Cohesion Policy by which the European territory research is financed.

In Romania, the activities of regional/spatial planning and of urbanism are hold according to *Law 350/2001* concerning regional/spatial planning and urbanism, with the later changes.

Figure 2. The Guiding Principles for Sustainable Spatial Development of the European Continent and The Territorial Agenda of the European Union (Source: http://www.mdrl.ro)

REGIONAL/SPATIAL PLANNING AT NATIONAL LEVEL

According to Law 350 from 2001, the activity of regional/spatial planning applies to the entire Romanian teritory based on the principle of hierarchy, cohesion and spatial integration at national, regional, county, urban and local level, creating an appropriate

framework for a balanced development and a rational use of the territory as well as a responsible management of the natural resources and the protection of the environment. The main objectives of planning according to Law 350/2001 are:

- a balanced economic and social development of the regions and areas, respecting their particularity;
- improving people's and human communities'quality of life;
- a responsible management of the natural resources;
- the protection of the environment;
- a rational use of the territory.

The tourism is dependent on the environment, it actually represents the main resource and its quality can promote or hinder the development of tourist activities (Cândea et al., 2003). The protection requirements are multiple: ending the advance of projects which affect the environment, carrying out impact studies, a clear delimitation drawn up for soil occupation plans, the delimitation of protected areas, of natural parks and of reservations (Băltăreţu, 2010).

Tourism planning occurs at three levels: national, regional and local. At national level it implies the coordination and management of some large tourism regions or at the level of the whole country, based on the policies issued in this field, of national standards and institutions. At local level it implies the planning, conception and development of individual tourism attractions, of services and facilities that serve tourists needs. The policy of tourism planning is also materialised in the *Emergency Ordinance no. 142/2008* concerning the approval of The Plan of National Spatial Planning, the 8th section – Areas with tourism resources.

The regulatory document identifies at national level the administrative-territorial units on the territory of which exists tourism resources of national interest, that can generate the development of one or more types of tourism activities. In these areas, tourism is considered a primary economic activity, and the investments for the development of this activity will be targeted, by choise, towards these areas. It will stimulate the development of the areas with socio-economic problems, that benefit of tourism resources with high and very high concentration.

A recent program which sights regional development (where tourism is also included) and that Romania drafted it as member state of the European Union is The Regional Operational Program in which are drawn the main directions and priorities for accessing the European funds for financing.

The Regional Operational Program 2007-2013 (ROP) includes all the eight development regions of Romania, established by the Regional Development Law no. 151/1998, modified by the Law no. 315/2001, respecting the European Council Regulation no.1059/2003, regarding the establishment of a common system of statistical classification for territorial units.

The Regional Operational Program is financed for the period 2007-2013 by the state budget and local budgets, as well as by private sources, being co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) – one of the Structural Funds of the European Union. The financial contribution of the EU can reach up to 85% of the total national spending (public and private). The purpose of the ROP is to support, as possible as it can be, a balanced increase in all areas of the country, not only by redistributing public resources, but especially by the assurance that all areas have a minimum level of business and social infrastructure and human capital, thus enabling economic growth. Within this program six primary axes of development were elaborated (http://www.fonduri-structurale-europene.ro):

- Primary Axis 1: Supporting a sustainable development of towns–urban growth poles;
- Primary Axis 2: Improving regional and local transport infrastructure;

- Primary Axis 3: Improving social infrastructure;
- Primary Axis 4: Strengthening the regional and local business environment;
- Primary Axis 5: Sustainable development and tourism promotion
- Primary Axis 6: Technical assistance.

On October 30, 2009, the Management Authority of the Regional Operational Program published the final version from the Applicant's Guide for the intervention area 5.2 *„Creating, developing, modernising tourism infrastructure for natural resources exploitation and increasing the quality of tourism services*". Thus, begining with 23rd of November 2009, one can continually present grant applications within the intervention area 5.2. of the Regional Operational Program 2007-2013.

Each part of this law can be analyzed, interpreted and applied at the existing territorial-administrative structure with the amendment that the application of general criteria for regionalization of the area (Cocean P., 2000), the geographic regionalization of Romanian space (Cocean & Filip, 2008) and identification of mechanisms that ensure the establishment and functioning of regional systems (Ianoş, 2000) could group structures identified by territorial units with high functionality and valorification in touristic aspect.

Another financing program specific for the rural environment would be the National Rural Development Program (NRDP), that has the following general objectives (http://www.fonduri-structurale-europene.ro):

- increasing the competitiveness in the agricultural and forest sectores (strenghtening human potential, restructuring and developing physical capital);
- improving the rural environment and space (sustainable use of agricultural and forestry lands);
- the quality of life in the rural areas and the diversification of rural economy in order to improve the quality of life.

Specific objectives:

- diversifying non-agricultural economic activities in the agricultural farms and encouraging the small entrepreneurs from the rural space;
- creating, improving and diversifying tourism facilities and attractions;
- creating and modernising the basic physical infrastructure from the rural areas;
- improving the quality of social, natural and economic environment from the rural space;
- protecting and conserving the cultural and natural rural heritage;
- developing the local actors' competences, in order to stimulate territory organization.

Based on the Law 151/1998, at the end of the year 1998 (www.cdep.ro), eight Development Regions were established by the association and agreement of the 42 counties and of Bucureşti Municipality. These do not have statute of administrative units, but represents territorial units large enough to constitute a good base for the elaboration and implementation of the regional development strategies, enabling an efficient use of the financial and human resources. Those 8 development regions established in Romania are the following:

1. BUCUREŞTI – ILFOV Region (Bucureşti Municipality and Ilfov County);
2. CENTRE Region (Alba, Braşov, Covasna, Harghita, Mureş and Sibiu Counties);
3. NORTH-EAST Region (Bacău, Botoşani, Iaşi, Neamţ, Suceava and Vaslui Counties);
4. NORTH-WEST Region (Bihor, Bistriţa-Năsăud, Cluj, Maramureş, Sălaj and Satu-Mare Counties);
5. „MUNTENIA" SOUTH Region (Argeş, Călăraşi, Dâmboviţa, Giurgiu, Ialomiţa, Prahova and Teleorman Counties);

6. SOUTH-EAST Region (Brăila, Buzău, Constanţa, Galaţi, Tulcea and Vrancea Counties);
7. „OLTENIA" SOUTH-WEST Region (Gorj, Dolj, Mehedinţi, Olt and Vâlcea Counties);
8. „ROMANIA" WEST Region (Arad, Caraş-Severin, Hunedoara and Timiş Counties).

SPATIAL PLANNING AT COUNTY LEVEL

At county level, the County Councils have the following attributions in this field:

- coordinate the spatial planning activity at county level, according to the law, and establishe the general orientations concerning spatial planning based on the plans of spatial planning. For this purpose, the County Council coordinates the activity of the local councils and gives them technical assistance of speciality;
- ensure the taking-over of the provisions found in the plans of spatial planning at national, regional and local level within the documentations of spatial planning for the administrative territories of the localities belonging to a county;
- ensures the drafting of the Plan of Spatial Planning at County Level, of the plans of spatial planning at local level that are of county interest and approves them according to the law provisions.

SPATIAL PLANNING AT LOCAL LEVEL

The attributions of the local public administration in the spatial planning field ensure compliance with the provisions contained in the approved documentations for spatial planning. In order to fulfill its attributions in the spatial planning field, the local county uses information from all the fields of economic-social activity (http://www.mdrt.ro).

Coordinating institution at this level is the Local council that coordinates and is responsible for coordinating and planning all the work carried on within the administrative territorial unit and ensure compliance with the provisions of the approved planning documentation for implementing the program of urban development of settlements of the village or town.

CONCLUSION

Legal and urban component is an acute problem that arises in the era of globalization reflected in depersonalization and modifications to the aesthetic nature-of landscape-support framework for tourist activities (Gozner, 2010). This partial study is to be filled in by others in detail, in order to be a manual to teach, using sound and logical planning documentation, practices and how to avoid negative impacts on tourism phenomenon on medium and long term.

Legislation in Romania are trying to regulate and coordinate tourism development area of strategic importance for the national economy of Romania and tourism resources management in accordance with the principles of competitiveness, sustainability and sustainable development.

Research of the tourism phenomenon integrates a broad thematic area, from the conceptual clarification and defining its place in the development strategy, highlighting the determinants, trends of evolution and forms of manifestation, coordinates and market mechanisms and the assessment of its impact in the economic, social, cultural, environmental and political milieus.

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THE ROLE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF CYCLOTOURISM IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ORADEA METROPOLITAN AREA (ROMANIA)

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Abstract: Cyclotourism, as a way to maintain and promote health and sustainable transport, imposess itself increasingly lately both locally, nationally and internationally, in the context of a pressing economic crisis, of an increasing fuels price, of the greenhouse gas emissions from transportation and, not least, of the increasing levels of obesity. Set against this background, the present study aims to provide alternative solutions to the problems stated above by promoting cyclotourism in the OMA.

Key words: OMA (Oradea Metropolitan Area), cyclotourism, tourism

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INTRODUCTION

OMA is an intercommunity development association with juridical status that was created following the decision of the General Meeting of Shareholders on 9 May 2005, thus associating Oradea's municipality with the administrative territorial units found in its close proximity: Biharia, Borş, Cetariu, Nojorid, Oşorhei, Paleu, Sînmartin and Sîntandrei. In time, other units joined the association, the Girişu de Criş Commune (31 July 2007), Toboliu Commune (28 December 2007, with its separation from the Girişu de Criş Commune) and Ineu Commune[1] (June 2, 2010), the OMA association having presently 12 members with full rights[2]. On a surface of 755.5 km², this area comprises a structured network of 42 settlements with a total population of 244 937 inhabitants (2012).

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[1] Law no.375 /2007,
[2] http://www.zmo.ro/ro/index.php/despre-noi/scurt-istoric

The largest center of convergence of the population is the city of Oradea which concentrates 83 % of the OMA residents. Therefore, the people mentioned above, along with potential tourists, represent the target group and also the main beneficiaries of the implementation of cyclotourism in OMA. Cycling is one of the most sustainable forms of transport (Gatersleben & Appleton, 2007) and offers health benefits for both the individual tourists and the environment, being an alternative solution of the major problems the humanity is currently facing, namely: climate change, increasing levels of obesity and the oil depletion (Wen & Rissel, 2008, Maibach et al., 2009).

Using bicycles as a means of transport in our daily activity can help to auto congestion and reduce noise and air polution (Cavill & Davis, 2007). Traveling short distances by bike is a relatively quick and low-cost method, accessible to most segments of the population (Lumsdon & Tolley, 2001). In 2004, Sælensminde, within a specialized study, estimated that investments in cycling infrastructures, besides the fact they are more beneficial to society, are 4-5 times lower in cost, which makes them cost-effective in relation to the auto transport infrastructure. However, at a global level, there are major differences in the perception and use of cycling. Thus, in North America, a very small proportion of the population (1.2%) uses bikes (Gatersleben & Appleton, 2007), unlike some European countries (eg, 20% in Denmark and 32% in the Netherlands) (Pucher & Buehler, 2006).

Currently, there are very few studies and research with reference to the OMA that could indicate us with certainty which is the number of people using bicycles for transportation and, even less, of those who practice cycling for touristic purposes, as a leisure activity. Concerning cyclotouristic associations and clubs, we can notice a recent increase of their number and in the activities that they conceive, coordinate and implement. Among the associations with the highest visibility and with the highest number of members, the most remarkable are: the *Bate Şaua să priceapă Iapa* Association/*Beat the Saddle so that the Mare gets it* (Bucharest), *The Cyclists Community* from Bucharest (Bucharest), *The Napoca Cyclotourism club* (Cluj Napoca), *The Sports Club/Clujul Pedaleaza* (Cluj Napoca), The Braşovul Pedalează Association (Braşov), *The Cycling and Ecology Iasi/Bike* Club (Iaşi), *The Bihor Pro Bikers Sports Association* (Oradea) and the *Romanian Cycling Federation* (Bucharest).[3]

The main actions carried by these cyclotouristic associations and clubs are: conducting science and technology introduction courses for children and adults in what concerns pedaling, giving ciclotouristic information, renting bike and car bike carriers, elaborating maps, guides, videos and cycling albums, organizing trips and cyclotouristic holidays, organizing various competitions etc. OMA is represented by the *Bihor Pro Bikers Sports Association* located in Oradea, Ady Endre Street, no. 81, established in 2008. Currently the club has 94 paying members and about 350 supporters.[4]

METODOLOGY

This study is the result of a bibliographical and field research focused on the identification, analysis and quantification of the tourism potential in the Oradea Metropolitan Area, on one hand, and on the identification, development and endorsement of the optimal opportunities of exploitation on the other hand.

The identification, analysis and quantification of the tourism potential in the Oradea Metropolitan Area was possible due a simultaneous combination of methods, techniques and specific work tools. In what concerns the identification, development and endorsement of the optimal opportunities of exploitation of the tourism potential in OMA, we tried to highlight the role and the importance of cyclotouristic networks in the development of the Oradea tourism heritage.

[3] http://www.freerider.ro/asociatii-si-cluburi-cicliste-din-romania
[4] http://www.probikers.ro/

This was possible by highlighting the existing heritage, as compared with its present improvement through cyclotourism. The identified deficiencies in this area required the elaboration of certain proposals for cyclotouristic networks that could cover touristic areas and landmarks. Furthermore, the proposals made advanced a series of challenges that require a number of steps in order to overcome them.

TOURISM POTENTIAL OF OMA

The tourism potential of OMA is the sum of the total potential of all tourist resources (human and natural) and infrastructure (technical and specific).

OMA's natural tourism resources have a medium tourist development potential and are unevenly distributed spatially. Their attractive potential was calculated on the basis of assessing the potential attractiveness of the landscape, the existence of protected areas and natural therapeutic factors. The main natural attractions are: the Pârâul Peţea Nature Reserve, the Şomleu Hill fossil Reserve, the Betfia Aven (Sânmartin commune), the Daffodils Forest (Oşorhei) and Fâneaţa Valea Roşie (Cetariu commune).

The anthropogenic tourism resources, an expression of the human creative genius, are concentrated mainly in the area of Oradea and Sânmartin. The historical monuments prevail, many of them having a national and even international value: the urban ensemble „*The historic center Oradea*", the University Ensemble of Oradea (1912-1913), the Fortress of Oradea (XVIth – XVIIth century). The Castle of Biharia is also worth mentioning in this category, dating from the early medieval period (IXth– Xth century) etc.

The greatness and the peak of the creative genius of the civilization developed on the riverside of Crişul Repede is well reflected in the above mentioned monuments as well as in the architectonic jewels build under the influence of various styles including the byzantine, romanesque, gothic, renaissance, baroque, secession and neo-romanian style. The most representative objects of this type are: the urban ensemble „*Şirul Canonicilor*" (1763-1870), the Prince's Palace (1618 - 1650), *Oradea State Theater* (1900), Oradea's Townhall (1902-1903), the „*Black Eagle*" Palace (1907-1909) and so on. The historic monuments from the OMA's adjacent space are a testimony of the continuity and vitality of local communities, the expression of Romanians living together in close harmony with other ethnic groups such as Hungarians, Hebrews, Macedonians, Italians, Germans, Slovaks, Ruthenians, Serbs, Poles etc.

In the category of religious buildings, a special attention is required to be given to the following buildings: „*St. Martyrs Constantin Brâcoveanu and his sons*" (XVIIIth century), the Church of the premonstratense monastery „*Maica Indurerată*"(1741), the Roman Catholic Bishop Palace that is at present the Ţării Crisurilor Museum (1762), the Roman Catholic Church „*Holy Spirit*", Olosig (1905), the Roman Catholic Church (1770), the Roman Catholic Church - "St. Bridget" which is at present the Ruthenian church „*Holy Trinity*" (1692 - 1722), the Roman Catholic Chapel „*Ingerii păzitori*" (1755), the Roman Catholic Cathedral „*Sf. Maria Mare*" (1752-1780), the Orthodox Cathedral *Adormirea Maicii Domnului* which is at present the Church *Biserica cu Luna* (1784-1790) etc.

From the point of view of the cultural heritage, we can oberve de existence of several festivals and fairs, namely: Craftsmen's Fair, The singing, dancing and costumes festival from Bihor, The rustic festivals of the Cetariu Commune („*Farsang*" or Masquerade-Tăutelec, Wine contest-Cetariu, Rustic festival-Tăutelec, The Cetariu Commune Days-Cetariu, The Grapes Festival-Cetariu, the Chestnut Festival-Şişterea) etc (Stefănescu et al., 2010).[5] The tourism specific infrastructure is unevenly distributed, most of it being concentrated in the localities of Oradea, Băile Felix and Băile 1 Mai. The accommodation base is comprised of 147 accommodation units, which sum up to a

[5] Ştefănescu, B., Horga, I., Şipoş S., (2010), *Patrimoniul cultural al Zonei Metropolitane Oradea*, University of Oradea Publishing House, ISBN 978-606-10-0219-1;

number of 4572 rooms, respectively 8996 seats. Compared to the county, they represent 84.1 % of the total accommodation rooms, or 82.5 % of the accommodation places. In terms of quality they are classified to a star (1 unit), two stars (38 units), three stars (97 units) and four stars (11 units). Regarding their territorial distribution at the level of the administrative unit, they are located in Sânmartin (104), Oradea (31), Hidişelul de Sus (5), Oşorhei (2), Nojorid, Ineu, Borş, Biharea and Paleu (1). Although OMA has a number of 42 settlements, the accommodation infrastructure is only present in 12 settlements, with different significance in terms of number of units and quality (LSPTC, 2012).

With a total of 14 104 seats (80.2% of the total number of seats in the district), the food places network consists of 112 food places classified to a star (2 units), two stars (44 units), three stars (52 units) and four stars (14 units). In terms of territorial distribution, we can notice their concentration in 6 adninistrative territorial units, respectively 11 municipalities. The largest number of food places is located in Oradea (46 units) and Băile Felix (39 units). These two localities gathered 10 927 seats in the food places, representing 78.5% of the total number of seats in the OMA (LSPTAP, 2012).

The treatment infrastructure is well represented in OMA by the localities Băile Felix, Băile 1 Mai şi Oradea. Here are located a number of hotels that offer treatment facilities in which guests can enjoy the following services: balneotherapy, hydrotherapy, electrotherapy, inhalation, massage, laser therapy, kinesiology, light baths, thermo therapy etc. Among these we mention: the International, Crişana, Mureş, Padiş, Poienița, Someş and Nufărul Hotels from Băile Felix, the Ceres and Perla Hotels from Băile 1 Mai, the Continental, Nevis Hotels from Oradea etc.

The existence of geothermal resources created optimal conditions for the development of recreational infrastructure in the localities: Oradea (Municipal swimming pool and Ioşia swimming pool), Băile Felix (Apollo swimming pool, Felix swimming pool, Padiş swimming pool and Aqua Park *„Aqua President*") and Băile 1 Mai (Venus swimming pool and The waves swimming pool, currently non-functional).

The conferences and exhibitions infrastructure is well represented in OMA by the existence of 23 structures of this type with a capacity of cca 3963 persons: Oradea (13 structures), Felix (7 structures) and Băile 1 Mai (3 structures).

In order to diversify tourism, a horse riding base was established in 2005 close to Băile Felix *„Manej il Cavallino*", *„equipped with a wide range of trained horses for beginners and also for masters of horsemanship*"[6]. There are also paragliding flights organized, off road (on the Şomleului Hill, located near Băile 1 Mai) and various fishing competitions on the Valea Viţeilor Lake, Valea Plopilor Lake from Cetariu, Săldăbagiu de Munte, Paleu, Livada and on the Crişul Repede river course. Although it has a wide range of tourist resources, both natural and anthropogenic, OMA is still insufficiently exploited in terms of tourism. One aspect that hinders the tourism development is related to the scarcity of the infrastructure and the lack of an integrated promotion.

The road infrastructure (european roads E 79, E 60, E 71 and county roads DJ 797, DJ 767, DJ 79 etc.), the railway infrastructure (main railways 300, 310, 314 and 402), the air infrastructure (Oradea Airport) and the particularly favorable geo-strategic geographical position, at the contact between the western civilization and eastern Europe, make OMA into a pole of convergence of the main regional and even international tourist flows.

In what concerns the technical-municipal equipement, we observe the existence of the following networks: the water distribution network (843.5 km), the sewage network (793.7 km) and the natural gas distribution network (244, 2 km). If for the commune centers adjacent to OMA the problems of water supply and sewerage have been largely resolved, the same cannot be said about the villages belonging to these centers where things remained at the level of development strategy.

[6] http://www.turismbaile1mai.com/bazahipica.html

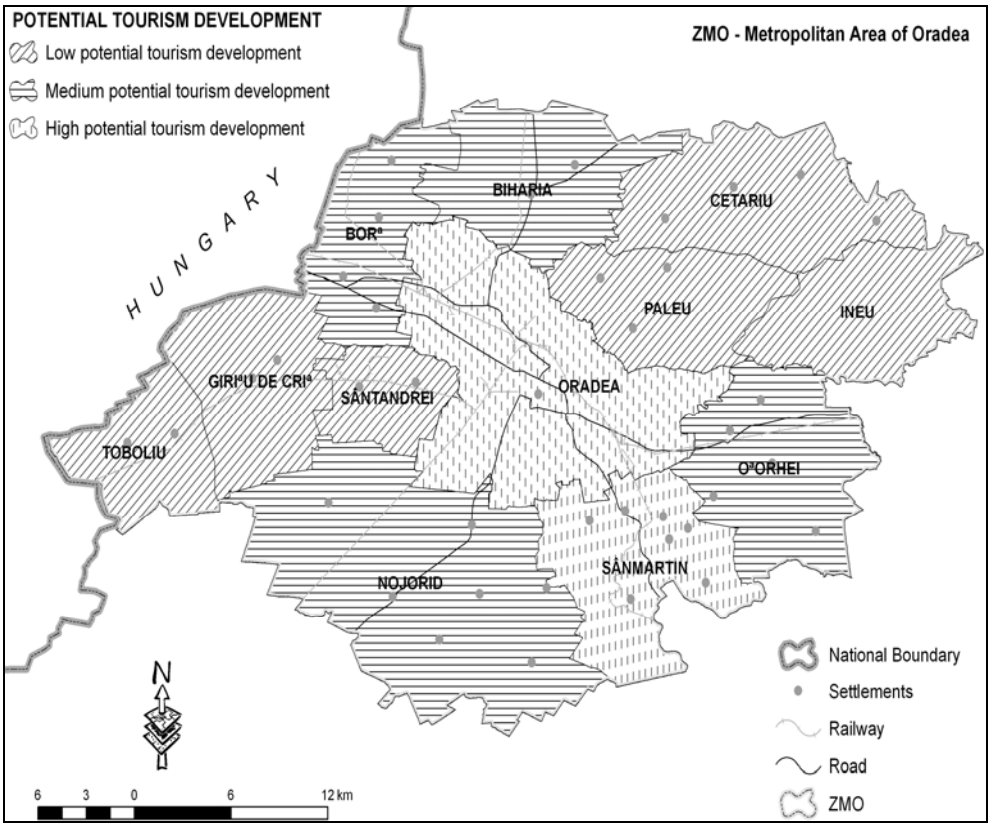

Figure 1. Tourism development potential of OMA /ZMO
(Source: National Spatial Plan, Section VI - Tourist Areas)

The analysis of the tourism development potential in OMA shows that this area has a global tourism development potential relatively average. This is due to the lack of a wide diversification of natural and human tourism resources and an uneven distribution of tourism infrastructure etc. After an analysis at the administrative unit level, the tourism development potential falls into three groups of values, namely:

- Low development potential (Girişu de Criş, Sântandrei, Cetariu, Paleu, Ineu, Toboliu);
- Average growth potential (Biharia, Borş, Nojorid, Oşorhei);
- High development potential (Oradea, Sânmartin) (Figure 1).

THE CURRENT STAGE OF CYCLOTOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN OMA

Currently OMA is unexploited in terms of cyclotourism. This is due to the convergence and collaboration of several factors of a paramount importance including the absence of the specific infrastructure. However it is noted that till 2012 there are four „*bike tracks*" totaling a number of 10.2 km.

Three of these are arranged on both sides of Crişul Repede River, following faithfully the route of the protection dams, on which they are located. The fourth track (4 km long) is located in the southern part of Oradea, making the connection between the Zoo and the Nufărul district. There is also a project for a 23.5 km track, situated between the localities Borş and Băile 1 Mai and Băile Felix, from west to east (Figure 2).

This track has a strategic importance, giving an opportunity and having a role in intercepting and orientating the Hungarian tourist flow from the border area towards the two above mentioned thermal resources. Therefore, both in Oradea and at the OMA level,

there is currently no viable strategy to exploit the tourism potential through cycling. This emerges from the existing poor infrastructure represented by the planning of the four cyclotouristic tracks analyzed in this study.

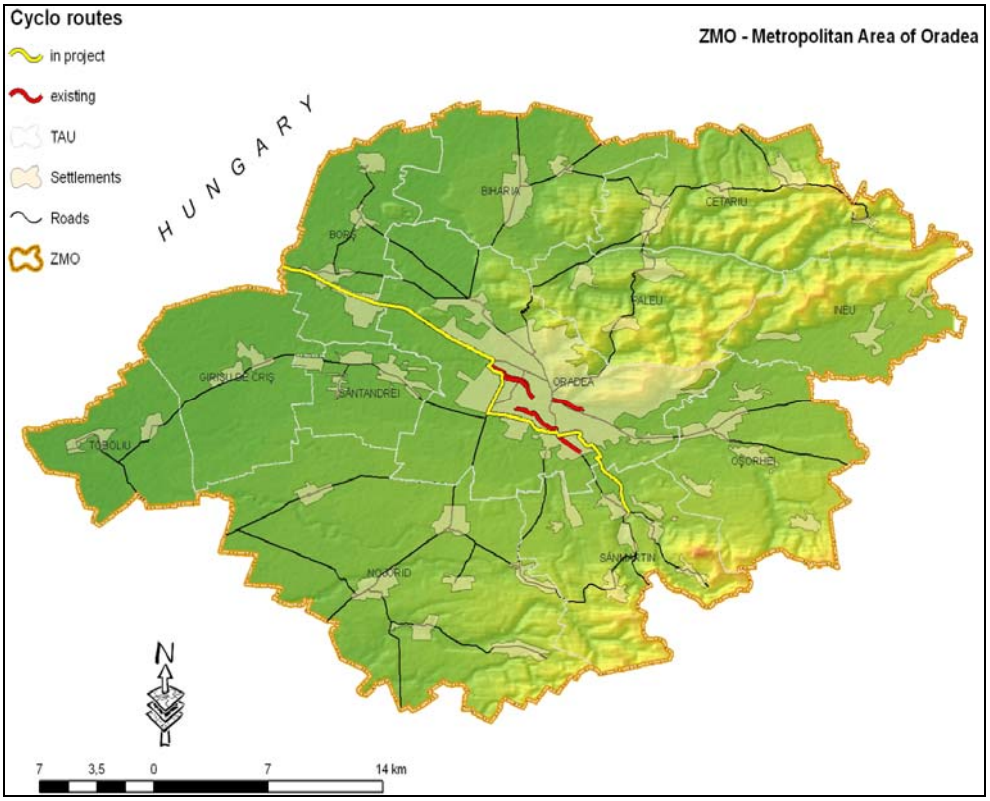

Figure 2. Map of the cyclotourist tracks in OMA /ZMO (2012)

PROPOSALS FOR CYCLOTOURISTIC ROUTES

In order to make proposals regarding the location and the length of the cyclotouristic routes specific to OMA a number of parameters with major impact on their distribution were analyzed in advance, among which stand out: topography, hydrography, acces ways, distribution of human settlements and distribution of the objectives with tourist interest. The relief has been studied, considering his role as a support for the cyclotourist routes and also his disturbing, limiting role or contrary, in the development of cyclotourism. Thus, we analysed the optimal possibilities for the exploitation of the relief through tourism, taking into account the altitude, the type of relief forms and the fragmentation of the relief.

Over time hydrography fascinated man, representing both a convergent and a divergent factor for human communities and the activities they were engaged in. If water used to separate people, forming natural barriers with a strategic role in their defense and safety it currently unites them through the building of many bridges that facilitate the transition from one side to the other, an example being the city civilization developed on the Crişului Repede riverside, Oradea.

The acces ways, with their morphological and functional characteristics, represent another important factor in determining cyclotouristic routes. Thus, while drawing the cyclotourist routes in OMA, it was pursued to avoid traffic arteries as much as possible (DN and DJ), manifesting instead a preference for large municipal and forest roads.

The distribution of human settlements was analyzed in terms of its function as main depository of the metropolitan tourism potential. Basically, it is closely linked to the spatial distribution of the tourism infrastructure and of the tourism resources.

Besides the tourist resources located in the centre of the human settlements, there is another category of resources, the one found outside the built-up area. Among these, the natural tourist resources that are worth mentioning are: the Şomleu Hill fossil Reserve, the Betfia Aven, the Daffodils Forest (Oşorhei) and the Fâneaţa Valea Roşie (Cetariu Commune). The acces of a cycling tourist to these tourist objectives was a sine-qua-non condition that was taken into account when drawing the cyclotouristic routes.

After a detailed analysis of relief, hydrography, railway acceses, human settlements distribution, touristic objectives in OMA, a number of 11 cyclotouristic routes was proposed for this area, with a total length of 296.5 km. Each touristic route that was proposed (Table 1) is characterized by several parameters like route, marking, length, route difficulty, duration of the touristic activity (Cocean, 2011; Gavrila, 2012a; 2012b). The cyclotouristic routes follow closely the spatial distribution of the roads infrastructure and of the hydrotechnic route which is represented by dams. In what concerns the roads infrastructure, we can observe that there is a high accessibility in creating cyclotourist routes on the communal roads, on the forest roads, while the European roads and the national roads were taken into consideration for smaller portions.

Table 1. Cyclotouristic routes proposed for OMA/ZMO

Nr. Crt.	Cyclotouristic routes	Lenght (km)	Duration of action (h)	Degree of difficulty
Main cyclotouristic routes				
1	Şuşturogiu - Păuşa	55,6	10 h	easy to medium
2	Cheresig - Botean	48,5	9 h	easy
3	Toboliu - Fughiu	42,1	7 h	easy
4	Borş – 1 Mai	23,4	6 h	easy
Secondary cyclotouristic routes				
5	Oradea - Cetariu – Biharea- Oradea	37,1	7 h	medium
6	Băile Felix - Păuşa - Şauaieu - Băile Felix	34,6	10 h	medium
7	Băile 1 Mai - Felcheriu - Fughiu	22	5 h	easy to medium
8	Uileacu de Munte - Şuşturogi	10,7	3 h	medium
9	Băile 1 Mai - Betfia - Băile Felix - Băile 1 Mai	10,3	4 h	medium
10	Santăul Mare - Borş	7,8	2 h	easy
11	Fughiu - Husasău de Criş	4,4	1 h	easy
Total		296,5	64 h	

In order to facilitate the orientation, a name (Table 1) and a conventional sign (Figure 3) were attributed for each cycloroute. The conventional sign, at its turn, is composed by a geometrical figure incentred in a circle. The colour of the sign indicates the level of difficulty of the cyclotouristic route. Therefore, red indicates a medium difficulty level while blue indicates an easy route. The passage way between the two levels is marked by a two-coloured pictogramme with a blue geometrical figure incentred in a red circle. The type of the cycloroute is also marked through a conventional sign and thus the circle with a continous line indicates a main route while the circle with an interrupted line indicates the existence of a secondary route. The name of the routes derives from the name of the settlements they cross.

The lenght of the cycloroutes: distributed relatively uniformely at the level of OMA, the cyclotourist routes proposed for this area have a total length of 296.5 km. In what

concerns the lenght of the routes depending on their categories, we can notice the predominance of the main routes (169.6 km), as compared to the secondary routes (126.9 km) (Table 1). The level of difficulty for the cyclotouristic routes poposed for OMA oscillates between easy and medium (Table 1). While establishing the level of difficulty, two essential parameters were taken into account: the difference in level and the type of the circulated surface (earth, asphalt). We have to mention that a cyclotouristic route can be composed of sections that have different levels of difficulty. For example, the northern section of the Şuşturogiu - Păuşa Cycloroute has a medium level of difficulty, while the southern section has an easy level of difficulty.

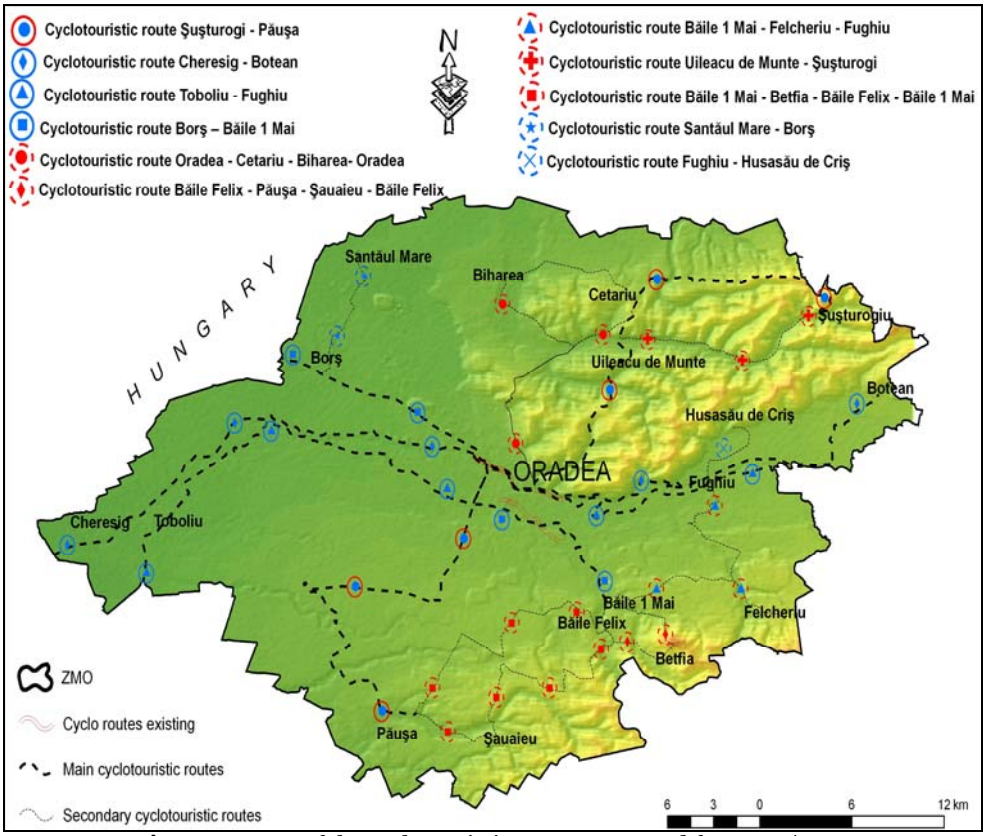

Figure 3. Map of the cyclotouristic routes proposed for OMA/ZMO

The duration of a touristic activity varies from 1 hour (the Fughiu - Husasău de Criş Cycloroute) to 10 hours (the Şuşturogiu – Păuşa Cycloroute and the Băile Felix - Păuşa - Şauaieu - Băile Felix Cycloroute). This indicator is influenced by a series of factors, namely: the length of the cyclotouristic route, the difficulty of the cyclotouristic route, the density of the touristic objectives, the panoramic places located along the route, the tourist's fitness, the tourist's willingness to advance at a lower or higher speed etc.

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED IN THE EXPLOITATION THROUGH CYCLOTOURISM OF THE OMA'S TOURISTIC POTENTIAL

Even if OMA benefits from a large variety of touristic resources, the current stage of exploitation through cyclotourism is almost invisible. The causes find their roots in the poor level of education concerning cyclotourism, in the lack of specific infrastructure, in the lack of advertising and promotion of tourism, in the poor involvement of the

authorities and of the local communities in promoting cyclotourism, in the deficient involvement of the cultural and educational institutions, in the lack of acces infrastructure for various touristic objectives, in the reduced number of projects in the tourism area, in the lack of an efficient strategy (achievable for a sustainable and responsible development of the area), in the advanced deterioration of the touristic objectives, in the lack of an integrated system of development for the local touristic potential, in the lack of the homologated cyclotouristic routes.

Surpassing the above mentioned challenges is a guarantee and also a condition in what concerns the opportunities to exploit through cyclotourism the touristic potential fo OMA. In order to surmount these challenges, it is absolutely necessary to take a certain set of measures, taking sincerely into account the local circumstances.

NECESSARY MEASURES FOR THE EXPLOITATION THROUGH CYCLOTOURISM OF THE OMA'S TOURISTIC POTENTIAL

The identification of the challenges that appear in the opportunities to exploit the touristic potential in OMA triggered the identification of the measures that should be taken in this direction, namely:

-the development of several educational activities in order to arise the awareness on the role and on the importance of cyclotourism in society;

- the development of an infrastructure specific to cyclotouristic activities (special tracks for cyclotourists, bike stands, bike shops and bike repair shops etc);

- the organization of several promotion actions for the cyclotouristic exploitation of OMA;

- the involvement of the authorities and of the local communities in promoting cyclotourism;

- the involvement of the cultural and educational institutions in the creation of certain models that could help the exploitation of the the touristic potential in OMA;

- the improvement of the acces infrastructure for various touristic objectives;

- the growth in number of the projects in the tourism area;

- the development of an efficient strategy (achievable for a sustainable and responsible development of the area);

- the reconditioning and the preservation of certain touristic objectives etc.

- the creation of maximum security conditions for the touristic activities, taking into account the heavy traffic on several sections;

-the development of a marking-promoting system (markings, indicators, informative panels etc) according to the current legislation;

- the homologation of the proposed cyclotouristic routes according to the current legislation;

- the creation of connections and interconnections with other types of routes from the involved area or from the surrounding area etc.

CONCLUSIONS

The main arguments that support the necessity of a better exploitation of the the touristic potential in OMA are represented, on one hand, by the existence of several distinct tourist resources in the studied area, of a high quality infrastructure concentrated in Oradea and of the two resorts located in proximity (Băile Felix, Băile 1 Mai) and, on the other hand, by the necessity of a sustainable and responsible development of the area. Therefore, cyclotourism involves a superior exploitation of the metropolitan touristic offer through an efficient system of connections and interconnections. Other actions that promote the bike as a means of transport have been conducted in Oradea within the project „*Vote for bikes, vote for a cleaner town!*" The purpose of this project was to draw a guide book for the „improvement of the environment through an innovative approach on the urban transportation" with the aim to „*reduce de level of pollution through auto*

congestion at the level of the entire municipality". Moreover, the guidebook represents „*a dissemination intrument dedicated to the local authorities and to the inhabitants of the urban settlements form Romania and from the other countries of the Eastern and Central Europe*" (page 4).[7]

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[7] http://www.cjbihor.ro/pdf/PDJ.pdf

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TOURISM IN GDYNIA TO SECOND WORLD WAR

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to show the rapid development of the fishing village in a seaside resort. The main reasons of the rapid development were health tourism, sea tourism and the construction of a commercial port. This transformation was made possible thanks to its convenient location and the growth of demand for summer holidays and cultural entertainment. The authors have queried the publication of archival materials and compact. The results of research indicate on a very high pitch of civilization Gdynia since 1939.

Key words: Poland, Gdynia, tourism, recreation, leisure, sailing

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INTRODUCTION

Gdynia is situated on the southern shore of the Baltic Sea just twenty kilometers to the northwest of Gdansk. It is a small seaside town, founded by the favorable location and good decisions taken by the Polish government and the local authority. In this time, local newspapers were writing: „*Gdynia as competition for Gdansk and Sopot. Magazines in Gdansk are more often occupied with Gdynia on its pages. Generally they perceive Gdynia's port, as a competition for port of Gdansk and also as the city with great future which is capable of concentrate all central coast traffic and thereby push down Gdansk from its leading position*" (Sokolowska, 2001). Gdynia was built by the whole Polish society. Government's propaganda of success often presented Gdynia as a "*window on the world*" through which Poles can easily migrate for work and bread, others can trade with overseas countries or just take a cruise on one of the Polish liners to America or around Baltic Sea.

The beneficial location of the village, sheltered from the open sea with Hel peninsula, was conducing for rising of sailing clubs in which young students were trained. An important part of building a polish maritime identity was strong Navy based at Oksywie. Development of the Navy was supported by the Naval Defense Fund, through which modern submarines and destroyers were purchased. Gdynia was a window to the world for many Poles, and some of them remained here forever. It is worth to mention about fact of rapid growth of the population, from about 500 people at an early age to 120 thousand in September 1939. Medical tourism and in later years the construction of war, commercial and fishing harbor were essential for the development of a small fishing village into the great port city.

Two years later the situation has not changed. Management companies of Baltic ports such as Kaliningrad, Klaipeda and Gdansk perceived Gdynia as a significant competition: "*The lament in Gdansk because of Gdynia. At the Congress of the German Society of International Law, a director of the Gdansk court delivered a lecture, /.../in*

* Corresponding author

an extremely biased way and incompatible with the real state of things, he presented the situation in the port of Gdansk as deplorable and tried to show that Poland built Gdynia just for political reasons" (Sokolowska, 2001).

LOCATION OF GDYNIA

„It all started a long time ago, back in the Ice Age when the retreating glacier left lane behind various forms of geological monadnocks and pebbles drawn from Scandinavia. Then, on the Gulf of internal sea, the Baltic Sea was not known yet, steep cliff formations began to form characteristic coastline of our region. Climate changed, passed hundreds of years, ocean currents began to shape the natural cover of the, Little Sea", which began to create Hel spit from several sandy islands. That shield, against the onslaught of the waves from the open sea began to act as a natural breakwater, what ensure first people to settle in these once inhospitable shores. As they legend say, the first inhabitants of the coastal areas was the descendants of the valiant Vikings, the Normans from the North, who trough enslavement of local women, settled in these areas, creating a new breed of strong and independent indigenous, combining two languages in one, later they abandoned predatory lifestyle, becoming peaceful fishermen and farmers. After that they become people called, Kashubs" (Gubal, 2005).

Gdynia occupies the northern slopes of the forehead moraine, gently descending to the shore of the Baltic Sea. Only on Kepa Oksywska, Kepa Redlowska and Stone Mountain, there were formed steepy shores called cliffs. The city is located on the grounds of Kashubian seacoast and kashubian lake region. It is located in the temperate climate zone, characterized by variability in weather conditions with a characteristic mild winter and spring cooler than autumn.

SEASIDE SUMMER RESORT

Transport accessibility is one of the determinants, which significantly effects on the development of the region. New roads and emerging land railways enable people's migration, what is more it support the development of trade. At the end of the nineteenth century, the construction of the railway line was started. The line was arranged to contact Konigsberg with Berlin thru Gdansk. The railway track ran near the village of Gdynia, about one kilometer from the shore: "*Even before obtaining civic rights (1926), every year Gdynia hosted hundreds of holidaymakers and tourists from across the Poland, because then it was a small fishing village, but since 1870. Gdynia has a rail link with the world*" (Wrzosek, 1997).

The turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it should be noted as the beginning of the development of the village changing its character from rural farming village into summer resort. Germans from Gdansk perceive in Gdynia very good location to build the resort, so they decided to build in place of the present Kosciuszko Square house for tourists. This object for its time was considered very modern and elegant: Origins of the urban system of Representative District and in fact the first element of urban planning - Kosciuszko Square - is associated with the beginning of the twentieth century, and thus the time when Gdynia was still a village. At the time to south from village buildings, there began to emerge small rural summer resort assumption. Company registered in March 1904. Named "*Ostseebad - Genosenschaft Gdingen*" (Baltic Bath Association Gdynia) have built next to the beach baths which consisted of the two-story Medical House (Kurhaus), bathrooms for men and women, and small amounting 50 m wooden pier. Land belonged to the bath has size of 2.5 ha, which took the shape of a rectangle and reached the border line of the beach and later to the line of Swientojanska street. „*Kurhaus" stood in the central part of the area, surrounded by a small garden-park-, terraces descending to the sandy shore*" (Soltysik, 2009).

To Gdynia for the rest came mostly residents of nearby Gdansk, but also the inhabitants of Warsaw, Poznan, Torun and Wejherowo. The main advantage of the

Gdynia's tourism was very similar environmental conditions in comparison with Gdansk and Sopot, but the prices in Gdynia was incomparably lower. In Gdynia's „*Kurhaus*" you could meet the merchants, traders, lawyers and teachers who were wishing to experience the peace and tranquility by the sea shore, so they rather elected provincial Gdynia then crowded Sopot. They came to Gdynia on a small railway station, and then driven by the horse-drawn carriages they traveled to the summer resort. More wealthy bathers came with own vehicles. The railway station was connected to the, „*Kurhaus*" with large Ceremonial Avenue: „*Before 1908, a new access road to the ,,Kurhaus" was built. It led from Gdynia's railway station, bypassing the south rural habitat and paving its course with straight line to the east, across the fields of Gdynia's hosts and finally to the building itself. This route, first was known as Kurhauweg, then as Kurhausstrasse or Kurhausalee and finally the street or Medical Alley, it was designed with an impetus. It had a width of 12m and consisted of the sandy road running centrally (6m) and a walkway on both sides, each planted by the two rows of trees*". (Soltysik, 2009).

A satisfied customer is the best advertisement of the product and service, so Gdynia was attended by more and more people interested in recreation. ,,*Kurhaus*" offer high quality service at an affordable price often using the service of the local community, which provided the freshly caught fish, gathered undergrowth and crops: "*With its beautiful location, clean water and beautiful beach with a small bridge overcoming on the sea, less wealthy citizens of Gdansk rather chose a summer residence in Gdynia, then Sopot which was full of bubble. Besides a low amount of modest little villas, Gdynia was a fishing settlement. Men at the night sailed for fishing, their daughters or wives took this fish by rail road to Gdansk (In this time there was a fourth class in local trains, providing them to so-called Fischmarkt - Fish Market still exists until now - and poorer women relocate their goods nearer Sopot by foot*" (Darski, 1979).

In the north, towered over the village, there was Kepa Oksywska with the historic parish church of St. Michael with the harvest soil around it. In the south there was Kepi Redlowska, residues kashubian piece of forest, form where you could find a rare trees and bushes of Poland. Between the clumps, there were moraine up fit called Stone Mountain or Kamieniec Pomeranian, which in 1892 was acquired by the German merchant from Gdansk who changed its name to Steinhoff.

In the curse of time, Stone Mountain has become a holiday center of extending summer resort on the shores of the Baltic Sea. There is no doubt that Gdynia compete with Gdansk and Sopot for the primacy of best medical place in this part of the Poland. Poles were choosing for vacation the polish countryside, which offered more and better services at affordable prices. Interest in Gdynia has increased by holidaymakers and by entrepreneurs who saw a good opportunity to earn money just by investing in emerging seaside summer resort. The growing resort assured beyond housing office, food and short sea journeys but also the accomplishment on the canvas of culture, sport and recreation. Soon the restaurants and cafes started to open, offering their services for day and night. Gdynia's cinemas were considered as some of the best in Poland offering movie lovers domestic and foreign films.

Cinema ,,*Enchantress*" owned by B. Zielinski, was housed in a wooden barrack next to a non-existent today Boleslaw Chrobry Square, between the streets on Feb 10 and Bathory. When a few months after the opening of "*Enchantress*" there was created in Gdynia the second competitive cinema called ,,*Sea Eye*", it was located next to coastal boulevard. Then, between the owners of cinemas began competition which resulted in the inflow of good movies for inhabitants of Gdynia. Captain Schmidt, owner of "*Sea Eye*", does not regret the money for import of even the best movies, especially since the income brought him the local entertainment place, which was opened in the same building as the cinema.

About 1935. Zielinski abolished the ,,*Enchantress*", bought a plaza on Waterfront Boulevard, right in front of "*Sea Eye*" and in the posted there pavilion he opened local of entertainment and new cinema, which he called "*Bodega*". At that time, there were

already in Gdynia several cinemas like - "*Fairy Tale" at Kosciuszko Square 8, owned by Kazimierz Peszkowski*" (Nowicka 1988). After the end of First World War, Stone Mountain and its surrounding hills were bodied by numerous guest houses and villas aimed at patients. Hotels and Spa Houses provided services of hospitality and catering, also the entertainment services at the evenings. Around accommodations for tourists, authorities of Gdynia have decided to create a space that would by suited to the guests expectations by its advantages. The vision of the development of Gdynia was worked out on the city plan of Garden with plenty of greenery surrounding the buildings. Space decorated in this way was encouraging people to walk and walking in the direction of Orlowo or Oksywie, where was located a famous restaurant "*Chojkow*" which offered Kashubian delicacies: "*From the earliest years, fish were the primary food for population living here, as if out of necessity. Kashubian fish dishes were served on tables in the coastal "checzach" in a very diverse way, eaten fish was cooked, stewed, baked, fried, salted, smoked and pickled. In the course of culinary operations, heads and fins did not cut off. It was believed that the fish taste better as a whole*" (Ucinski, 1996).

A visit to Gdynia's hills ensured not only breathtaking views, but also the opportunity to visit eateries where innkeepers prepare regional dishes. These escapades were repeatedly described in the memories of Gdynia, tourist guides, monthly magazines and daily newspapers. Walking route at Stone Mountain was considered as the beginning of the hiking trails in the direction of Kolibki and Oksywie. Specially prepared boardwalk and walking trails allowed for hiking, during which people could make new friends. During the walks you could meet patients dressed in beautiful costumes, officers in gala uniform and children running and playing around. From those years come numerous postcards illustrating Gdynia's walking promenades: "*In the twenties, just above the beach there was built so called, Staniszewski path. It was a series of walking paths on a small embankment fortify by a turf. In the thirties, at the foot of Stone Mountain there was built a first shore strengthening in line, which was the most exposed to damage. It was the concrete band, 80 cm high. Behind it, there was the ran series, covered with gravel*" (Gogolewska, 1979).

A large number of guests in Gdynia forced on the local authorities a preparation of the attractions that would add charm to guest's visits by the sea. In agreement with the Navy near the Kashubian Hotel, there was built the band shell, where twice a week in Wednesdays and Sundays music concert of military band was held. Moreover there was opened a flagship store near the boardwalk by Wedel Company, where you could buy hot drinks and delicious chocolate. To drinks there were recommended sugar confectionery by own production which were regularly imported from Warsaw. While walking on the beach toward Orlowo, walkers passed Polanka Redlowska, where equestrian competitions were organized. Due to high cash prizes, the lists of participant consist of the best riders from around Europe with the participants of the Olympic Games ahead. Person who does not indulge in sea baths chose for example to take a walk on the Oksywski top, what held for about three hours one way. The way back could be covered on foot or by giving a lift by the innkeeper or by buying a rowing boat ride from the fishing village Oksywie: "*The beach itself, underneath Stone Mountain was wider and managed in the neighborhood of „Poland Riviera hotel". In 1926 new bathrooms were built here, they called them "Plants of bathing*". The wooden building was more comprehensive than the old one and towards the Sea lead arched bridges with cabins. Using adult bathrooms cost 50 gr at one time, children under the age of 14 - 30 gr. All volunteers could take a tour from the pier of „*Polish Navigation Harbor" to extending port of Gdynia or just sail to Hel or Sopot*" (Plaza-Opacka, 1992).

Gdynia has grown rapidly due to patients and holidaymakers who spent here money. New residents were settled, entrepreneurs were opening new companies and business service with manufacturing and service facilities. As well the hiking enthusiasts from the Polish Society of Local Lore were gathering here. The results of these expeditions were numerous tourist guides and tours maps, praising the Kashubian Earth.

The turning point in the development of Gdynia was the decision of the Parliament of the Republic of Poland about adoption of the Act of 23 September 1922 posing about "*the construction of a sea port at Gdynia, Pomerania*". Enthusiasm has prevailed among the Polish people, because great opportunities for its residents were opened: "*Two years later, interministerial committee established character of Gdynia as a port and summer resort city. Estimated number of residents was determined at 40 to 60 thousand. In 1922, when the decision of building the port was made Gdynia had 1.3 thousand inhabitants, in 1926 Gdynia has become the city with population of 12 thousand and in 1939 just before Second World War it has 127 thousand inhabitants*" (Tarkowska, 2009).

An important element for the development of Gdynia as a major target of tourist trips and escapades, was the establishment of a numerous institutions related to tourism business and the support of the sightseeing idea around the city. At the railway station the information and service point for tourism was opened: "*The attention was deserved for Boleslaw Polkowski, who spearheaded great and useful social initiative as a head of the Department of Statistics in Gdynia. Thanks to him, in Gdynia branch of the Polish Tourist Association was established, where the organizational meeting was held with a lot of space devoted to cultural and educational affairs of Gdynia's society"* (Nowicka, 1988).

Many travel agencies opened its branches in Gdynia, among them domestic and foreign one including: Behnke & Sieg, Bergtrans, Karlsberg, Spiro & Co., Polish Agency for Maritime and also travel agencies "*Orbis*", "*Wagons Lits - Cook*" Tourism Promotion Division. There were also assumed the social organizations involved in the promotion of healthy lifestyle through hiking, cycling and gymnastics. These included the YMCA (1932), a global organization (Young Men's Christian Association), the Polish Society of Nature Lovers (1928) and the Tourism Promotion Division (1935).

MARINE TOURISM

The constant point of each trip arriving to the resort, was the cruise on „*White Fleet*" around the waters of the Gulf of Gdansk. The first cruise ships ran under the banner of „*Polish Navigation*". In a time of very high demand for such a services many privet outfitters appeared in Gdynia, such as Wilke Brothers Company from Gdynia. On board of the small cruise ships, you could sail to Hel, to Jastarnia to Gdansk and Sopot and also to the Pier in Sea Orlowo. Before Gdynia became a city, from its interim port on cargo ships with foreign flags, took place an emigration movement of Poles going abroad to Denmark and America for looking a job and better living conditions: "*For emigration services there was established in 1930 with the participation of the Danish capital, the Polish Transatlantic Marine Society Inc., which in 1934 changed its name to Gdynia-America Shipping Lines Inc. in short GAL. Polish flag appeared on the Atlantic and in American ports. The famous liner „Pilsudski" was a GAL flagship. Company carried on passenger lines: Gdynia - New York, Gdynia - ports of South America and Constanta - Haifa. In August 1939, GAL was in dispose of ships like", "Polonia", "Kosciuszko", "Pulaski", "Pilsudski", "Bathory", "Chrobry" and "Sobies*ki" (Tarkowska, 2009).

A large amount of people ready to leave, forced on the Polish government the necessity to purchase new passenger ships to support this movement. A fast-growing number of passengers traveling to North America bring on the need to find a partner to the joint venture, which would create a permanent passenger line: "*Today, on the occasion of the dedication of new Reunis Chargeurs Lines serving Polish direct connection with America, special ceremony will be held in the city. At 10 a.m. straight from Warsaw the special train is coming, carrying for the opening distinguished guests, among whom there will be Priest Bishop Okoniewski*" (Sokolowska 2001).

Passenger traffic, measured in thousands of people was noticed by companies having their offices in the ports of Western Europe what meant that Poland became an attractive partner for doing business in the transport of people and also solid and liquid goods. The

result of these explorations was the signing of an agreement between the Polish government and the outfitter from the British Islands. Following up, the Polish government has also put on a commodity and man exchange - with countries in the Mediterranean basin with particular emphasis on countries located in the Middle East: „*Polish Lewantynska line. Independently of the newly established line Gdynia - France, Gdynia-England, the Minister of Minister of Industry and Trade joins to organize, planned long line of Lewatyska line, which will be launched in the summer*" (Sokolowska, 2001).

GDYNIA - POLISH SAILING CAPITAL

It's hard to imagine a port city without sails, which accompany Gdynia for centuries. Gdynia's fishermen inhabiting the beaches of Gdynia on Oksywie and Orlowo have always put up the sails on the boat to proceed to catch fish. Exclusively in the early twentieth century in Poland, boats flows on a large water flows with sails just for fun of swimming. For this reason, but also for a perfect location on the shores of the Baltic Sea, Gdynia had any predisposition to the fact that exactly this place is perfect to organize a large marina with all facilities: "*Program of year 1927. Provide for the construction of a marina in Gdynia, winter resort, yard, slip and shelter for sailors, also it contained a request to open Gdynia's branch of YKP. The seed of this branch existed in the form of four old passenger rail cars, set on the edge of the sea, on the basis of group of several members of YKP operating in Gdynia from 16 June 1927*" (Glowacki 1977). Maritime and Colonial League, was systematic introducing a policy in the pages of many Polish publications. The strategic goal was to: "*... encourage Poles, the nation which is from ages an agricultural society, turn into the hard and courageous people of the sea*" - the League ran very diverse and rich educational activities propaganda. However, the main form of the marine awareness developing among polish society, was massive propaganda event organized by the League, from which the major role was played by the Sea Festival (Bialas, 1983).

Sea Festival, which was scheduled for summer 1932, in fact, took place in late July at the direct request of the President of the Organizing Committee. Great propaganda party was addressed to the Poles living in all provinces and districts, especially those located far away from the Polish sea; it was organized jointly with the civil and church authorities. The organizing committee, headed by the Bishop of Chelm, Doctor Stanislaw Okoniewski, undertook to organize a large demonstration of Polish attachment to the sea and religious and patriotic tradition.

Thousands of letters were sent to community organizations in the country and abroad, in order to invite their representatives to Gdynia. In this respect, railways had offered discounts for travel in groups. The members of the Maritime and Colonial League used the discounts entitling them to a cheaper ride for reason of possessing a membership card. Authorities requested to the sport clubs, especially the sailing one, to arrive on yachts in their best representative costumes. Representatives of ethnic groups and ethnic minorities were invited to come dressed in their regional costumes. Cities and organizations with their own orchestra should turn out with the conductors and musicians with instruments. To Gdynia on Sea Festival in July 1932 arrived tens of thousands of visitors. Moderate optimists claim, that it was as much as 100 thousand people from all polish regions. Among the comers, were also representatives of the polish minority in USA and the "*ambassadors*" of polish organizations in Europe and by the Atlantic Ocean.

The ceremony was vouchsafed by the presence of the most important people in the polish state, members of the government, the church authorities and representatives (ambassadors and consuls) countries with which Poland has maintained diplomatic relations. The highlight point of the ceremony was a solemn church service, which was concelebrated by the chairman of the organizing committee, Bishop Stanislaw Okoniewski. After that the military parade took place with representation of all branches of the army. A summation of the Christmas events, was a big parade of warships, passenger ships, sailboats, yachts and

sailboats, boats and fishing boats, rowing boats and lifeboats. Special attention should be paid to the presence of Polish sailing: ORP "*Iskra*" - MW school ship, "*Gift of Pomerania*", which was a school sailing ship from Maritime Academy in Gdynia: *"On May 6, in Gdynia took place the dedication of the navy school ship named „Iskra" and at the same time the raising of the war flag on this ship. This flag from white and red satin with a magnificent silver eagle is the gift from 20 female students of private female schools in Warsaw. It is a gala flag. It was brought to Gdynia by delegation composed of 20 students, one from each of those branches. ORP „Iskra "is a tri-mast schooner equipped with auxiliary motor with the power of 150 HP. „Iskra" was purchased in England and converted into a training ship by the plan executed by Naval Captain Malecki. ORP „Iskra" in the second half of May took several trips on Baltic Sea and in June it goes into the first longer trip to the North Sea, the Atlantic and the Mediterranean Sea. Mediterranean"* (Monthly Sea, 1930).

Poland quickly became a major player on the international scene in the maritime sector. Large merchant fleet and passenger ships represent the interests of the Polish government and private companies on many world's oceans and seas. Polish Navy flag flapped on many ships, from small boats and motor boats to the modern destroyers and submarines. White-and-red flag also flew on many sailing ships and boats sailing on the seas around Europe and even the boats that sailed in cruises around the earth. The biggest Polish sailing ship was the White Frigate called White Swan. Earlier this sail ship was called *"...Princess Eitel Friedrich, "Colbert", „Pomerania", "Dar Pomerania" - four names of one beautiful sailing ship. "It's gold, not a ship! Buy quickly, this is a very good deal " - with these words „Gift of Pomerania" has been advertised, when a representative of the Committee of the Pomeranian National Fleet, Konstantin Maciejewicz, thought about buying a successor of „Lvov", long served Tczew's maritime board school*" (Class, 2010).

The first sailing camps of the "*Polish*" sea were held after regain of independence in a provisional camp on the Hel peninsula, in the fishing village of Jastarnia. Young students of sailing art put up their sails on the mast for the first time and then the whole training base was transferred to Gdynia: "*Between the publicly accessible Fisheries street and the waterfront Wilsonowskim, were located objects of different users, among other things - there was first Polish Yacht Club (built in 1931). Here, as well was the seat of the Sailing Section of „Griffin" sport club. In 1935. Set there a large Sea Scout Centre hangar (previous year assembled in Jastarnia) thus, between 1931-1937 the Gdynia's sailing base was part of the waterfront Wilsonowskiego and the northern part of the President Basin*" (Szermer, 1986).

South Pier was these days the representative place of the Gdynia as elegant port city and the attractive place for tourist. On the complex area, there was located the big fountain, at which tourists eagerly took pictures, sailors on the other hand were walking through the alleys, just like boaters, tourists and patients who stayed in the resort for a longer time. Gdynia's marina was visited by sailors from the depths of the country, who flow of the Vistula River and then by the Gulf of Gdansk, made their way to their destination. Especially for polish sailors and for foreign guests, there was prepared the object on the South Pier: "*Erected now on the south pier "Sailor's Home" is formed as the main base of sailing sport on our coast, Sailor's Home*" is composed of the following parts:

a) club, containing two major yacht clubs in Poland, Polish Yacht Club and Officers Yacht Club, where the sports locker rooms with showers and toilets and a large hall for meetings are common for both clubs;

b) overall, dining and hotel. In this part is a cafe-restaurant, available to the public generally. Big windows overlooking on the pool and the sea and large terraces allow you to watch the sailing life. Hotel on the 2nd and 3rd floor is designed primarily for yachtsman;

c) sports, consisting of a 12x25m indoor swimming pool, with a depth of 2.5 m;

d) physical education center, gym, boxing and fencing room with appropriate changing rooms and medical room. *„Sailor House" ought to be obverse with pale sandstone ground, the lower part - by broken sandstone. In this year, there is plan of*

finishing of the shell state and in 1939 - on autumn - putting into service" (Sokolowska, 2001). Waters of the Gulf of Gdansk was the scene of many sailing regattas and competitions organized for the local sailing clubs and for the sailors from the hinterland. The regatta was organized since 1921, the crew put up on the start line in the craft moving through the water. You could see the rowing fishing boats also with a sail, and the boats with a pair of oars. Participants of the first regatta were also yachts sailing crew. According to the organizers of the V Regatta to Gdynia there arrived straight from Warsaw, seven squadron of keel sailboats.

An important element of the marine education of young Poles had their share in sailing scout teams. For the purposes of maritime training, there was established for boating activities the ,,*Sea Scout Centre*" with base in Gdynia.

Young wolves implement marine sailing craft in the example of the construction of "*Chaika*"saliboats. Exclusively in 1935 the Scout team received seagoing sailboat: ,,*While the Sea holy day the ceremony of dedication of schooner-yacht,, Zawisza black" will be held".Yacht godparents will be Mrs. President, Maria Moscicka and the General Inspector of the Armed Forces General Rydz-Smigly*" (Sokolowska, 2001)

Maritime training on yachts was organized for male and female teams. Girl Scouts among others took a cruise on a yacht, "*Grazyna*" to Bornhlom and Copenhag. For Gdynia's sailings camps hopingly arrived sailing teams from across the Poland, a favorite place to set camp was Polanka Redlowska, from where you could see the whole marina.

AIRPORT

The rapid development of tourism and economy in Gdynia posed new challenges for local government and business In consideration of business with partners in the capital and major polish cities such as Katowice, Poznan, Lublin, Bydgoszcz and foreign companies, in order to facilitate communication accessibility, authorities began to prepare in the late twenties of the twentieth century, the vision of the airport: "*The idea of air stations in Gdynia was born in Bydgoszcz, at the end of 1927, the authorities of the city joined in the organization in order to secure connection of major polish cities with Baltic Sea*". In contemporary conditions, it was possible only through the airport in Gdansk - Wrzeszcz - Zaspa (Flughafen Danzig). Warsaw already launched a flight to Gdansk in 1922. The initiator of scheduled air services - initially from Katowice and Poznan (via Bydgoszcz) was Polish Aviation Association "*Lot*". Authorities in Bydgoszcz argued, that towards increasing development of trade in the port of Gdynia, and anti-polish policy of the Free City of Gdansk, air connection should apply to Gdynia - in the name of solidarity in polish cities. Opinions from Bydgoszcz met with full understanding also in Katowice and Poznan (Toczek, 2008).

The best place for a civilian airport location, for the carriage of passengers and their baggage, mail and goods, turned out to be plain around Rumi-Zagorza. The whole infrastructure was built expeditiously, what enable to take aircraft and passengers: "*Passengers airport was launched in 1935 as well as the modern Air Station in the spring of 1936. From Railway Station to Air Station ran street named Zwirki and Wigury, along which the railway line was planned to be built, directly to the airport. Gdynia's airport in Rumia-Zagorze had two runways, two hangars and air station with the classical facade of pink marble. There were also assembled Lockheed Electra aircraft, which was imported from the U.S. for Polish Airlines „LOT". Daily flights between Warsaw and Gdynia were launched on 1 May 1935. This solution allowed Gdynia's residents to settle all the important matters in the capital during one day. Flight times were as follows: departure from Gdynia at 7.30 a.m., arrival to Warsaw at 9:00 a.m., departure from Warsaw of 3.15 p.m., arrival in Gdynia at 4.45 p.m. In the period from July the first to 15 of August, to Warsaw ran two 10-passenger Lockheed Electra passenger aircraft. Aircraft of Polish Airlines transported annually about 3,000 passengers and 70 tons of luggage. Tickets for the tour cost 45 polish zloty*" (Tarkowska, 2009).

During the heyday of communication, Gdynia's airport was on the road of flights from Copenhagen to Egypt: „*Flight from Copenhagen to Africa ran through Gdynia (570 km), Warsaw (810), Katowice (1070), Athens (2483), Bayreuth, Egypt. '(The Central Archives of modern records in Warsaw). Polish Airlines transported on civil aircraft, hand luggage and courier packages. The authorities have solicited also for the transport of mail from Copenhagen to Cairo: "We want receive a permission to transport the mail from Copenhagen. So we please for urgent settlement of the matter with the local postal management, highlighting the benefits of connection, which gives our line 1535 to Romania, Greece, Palestine, Syria and Egypt via Poland*" (Archives of New Files in Warsaw).

CONCLUSIONS

Gdynia effectively used the geographical location and the growing demand for tourist services at the beginning of twenty century to turn form the small fishing village offering accommodation and regional food, into city of one-hundred-thousand inhabitants, in the period of time to Second World War in 1939. Before it was decided to build the port of Gdynia, the city was a holiday resort, which has used the ideal conditions for summer holiday for domestic and foreign visitors. Also there were built year-round houses and hotels. Rapidly growing popularity extorted on the city authorities the necessity of building new facilities such as: spa houses, restaurants, cafes, cinemas and theaters. Much was done to sweeten the stay on the Polish coast. After selecting by Polish government, the location of the commercial, fishing and boating port in Gdynia, these investments were made at a fast pace with the support of many thousands of Poles.

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RAISING AWARENESS OF VOLUNTEER TOURISM: EXPERIENCING THE VOLUNTEER TOURISM AMONG STUDENTS AND YOUNG RESEARCHERS

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Abstract: The volunteering covers those activities which, generally, took place locally, without involving a long trip outside the locality, having no leisure arrangements. Volunteer tourism is conceptualized as a form of alternative experience. The study explores the intention of students and young researchers in volunteer tourism activities, seen as alternative experience where the scientific knowledge and leisure activity are associated. The analyse reveals a significant relationship between the research activity and the active participation of volunteer tourism and is better known by the researchers or individuals having different hobbies on sustainable environment issues.

Key words: volunteer tourism, raising awareness, tourism geography, students and young researchers

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INTRODUCTION

The world is in a continuous transformation and also the economy. As a part of the economy, the tourism expands and adapts according to the demands of travellers. Tourism could damage the local culture and the environment. Underlying an anthropological critique of tourism, Sheperd (2002) claims that tourism brings dangers

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because it corrupts culture; it transforms what has been sacred into the merely profane; it cheapens the ritualistic, transforming what was authentic into spectacle. The emergence of "*New Moral Tourism*" (Butcher & Smith, 2010) attempting to minimise the negative outcomes of mass tourism, within volunteer tourism, have currently changed the relationships of the international volunteering. However, the interests of tourists for folk traditions, customs, architecture and well being of local communities, interweave with the desire to involve either financial or leisure time in volunteering, mainly for protection and preservation of culture or the environment. These have contributed, in time, of rising to "*the (eco)tourism's niche, called "voluntourism*" (Bud, 2008), probably a mot-valise, especially constructed for media and advertising's web-sites.

"*Volunteer tourism can be associated with a post-Fordist shift in tourism, where Westerners desire something different than the usual mass tourism packages*" (Stoddart & Rogerson, 2004). However, Ellis (2003) argues that mass tourism model adopted by the volunteer tourism is due to its success and popularity. Recently, in its multilayered forms, the volunteer tourism became a business for many tour-operators or labelled environmental associations like NGOs; other researches claimed that the "*monetary gain is inappropriate in the world of the benevolent intentions*" (Tomazos & Cooper, 2012) and raised questions on the transparency of proceedings in terms of profit distribution.

Web Media promote the "*volunteer tourism*" like a combination of words between volunteering and tourism, which integrates the best of a travel experience: art, culture, geography, heritage sites, natural environment, recreation; the ability to add extra value in tourist destination; to support local people and nature.

Volunteer tourism was born inside many NGOs (McMillon et al., 2009), but, starting with 1990, the tourism industry created a niche for people who like volunteer activities with new offers: volunteer vacations, volunteer travels. In the last two decades, studies and research enlarged its definition and comprehension of this phenomenon. Thus, Wearing (2001:1) states that volunteer tourism is specific for "*those tourists who, for various reasons, volunteer in an organized way undertake holidays that might involve aiding or alleviating the material poverty of some groups in the society, the restoration of certain environments or research into aspects of society or environment*". As a new concept and new form of tourism, the volunteer tourism is recognized to make a significant contribution in promoting and developing what is intended to be a sustainable tourism. Volunteer tourism is considered new form of ethical tourism that growing in popularity, being related on "*social consciousness and cross cultural understandings"* (Raymond & Hall, 2008). McGehee and Santos (2005), enhancing the responsibility of care, define volunteer tourism as *"utilizing discretionary time and income to travel out of the sphere of regular activity to assist others in need*".

While tourists, generally speaking, desire rests, knowing culture or rebuild their healthy, the volunteer tourists are those who for various reasons choose to spend their holiday or free time in an organized way, engaged in various activities aimed at supporting especially poor communities, alleviation of poverty, rehabilitation of certain areas, mainly protected ones, or investigating certain aspects of society or the environment, delivering a particular type of free service to a destination.

The declaration of 2001 as "*International Year of Volunteers*" stimulated the promotion of the tourism niche, especially in the communities of the developed countries, which generated tourists and the emergence of new destinations for volunteer tourism in Ecuador, Costa Rica, Ghana, Honduras, Guatemala, India etc. and surprisingly some developed countries like Italy and United Kingdom (Novelli, 2005). The International Ecotourism Society (TIES, 2011) pays attention to this form of tourism, making it a subject for stakeholders or projects likes "*Planeterra*", which aim is to elaborate the guidelines for volunteer tourism.

Despite the novelty of this activity, the volunteer tourism has had a numerous nature-conservation oriented activities or educating consumers from outdoor to indoor (museums) because the benefits of volunteering are perceived as a positive attitude towards preservation or safety into heritage sites (Millar, 1994). Furthermore, companies interested in volunteer tourism are coping with stimulation or commitment upon helping others, but, also, making a profit.

In fact, who are the volunteer tourists? Do they belong to a specific cultural pattern? Which are their reasons to do it? The segment of pining for volunteer tourism is not large because tourists want to escape from work or stress and enjoy leisure. Moreover, in many countries volunteering is a use as a form for punishment (Asner, 2006). To a better understanding its implications, studies and researches particularly focused on the benefits of volunteer tourism. Some find gains for participants including learning about cultures, places, changes in lifestyle (Zahra & McIntosh, 2007) and spreading peace and friendship over the world.

The volunteer tourist's profile was analyzed in many papers. Wearing (2001), Zahra and McIntosh (2007) underline the altruism as a primarily feature, while Brown and Morrison (2003) say that the desire to help others. Brown and Lehto's (2005) found four main characteristics for tourists' motivations: "*cultural immersion, giving back and making a difference, seeking camaraderie with fellow volunteers, ending with family bonding and education*".

Others authors highlighted the sustainability of it and the need of developing countries to be helped (Anderson, 2007). Other studies point out the business interests, the impact of transportation upon the environment (air pollution), changes induced in the host communities, the superficiality of helps (Mustonen, 2006) etc. Related to the motivation, there are many motivations "*more a desire to travel than to contribute or volunteer*" (Sin, 2009:497), or the desire "*to make a difference*" (Butcher & Smith, 2010: 33).

THE VOLUNTEER TOURISM IN ROMANIA: SHARING EXPERIENCE AND CULTURAL VALUES, AS PRACTICAL DISCOURSE

As a country belonging to the former communist area, Romania can be used to draw a pattern for volunteer tourism in the area. Firstly, there is confusion between volunteer tourism and volunteering, the latter one being rejected by the adult population, which about 20 years ago, was involved in raising patriotism activities consisting of agricultural labour, forest restoration, scrap collection, etc. During the post-communist period, Romania became a destination for volunteering and volunteer tourism. Thus, it can be mentioned: "*Médecins Sans Frontières*" which has helped until 2004 the restoration of health in the most vulnerable groups both in rural and urban areas or "*Opération Villages Romains*" started before 1990 with many outputs among tourism activities of villages.

Subsequently, part of the Romanian society felt the need of organizing and directing groups to solve problems outside the political classes who were in setting up, at which point the NGOs appeared. Most of these NGOs migrated or are based on volunteering and hence there is a step to volunteer tourism for those involved in restoration marks, trails and tourist facilities, tourist waste collection; tourist information; monitoring tourist flow, collection of scientific information on flora and fauna, training and work-shops with local community members, renovation and refurbishment of ethno-cultural targets of interest etc.

In Romania, the volunteer tourism is a challenging topic on the tourism market, and it is appropriate to the NGOs projects. On one, side, Romania has a network of volunteers which has subscribed to the European events since 1997, organizing many activities (charity, health education or aids, promoting culture, restoring the environment

of different sites) and on the other side the volunteer tourism organized by NGOs with ecological profile in partnership with National Forests Administration, Protected Areas Directions (Figure 1.). The target groups are teenagers, pupils and students and the leading activities are restoration of tourists' routes, collecting litter made by tourists, tourism monitoring, workshops with local communities, collecting information about traditions, plants and flora, artefacts etc.

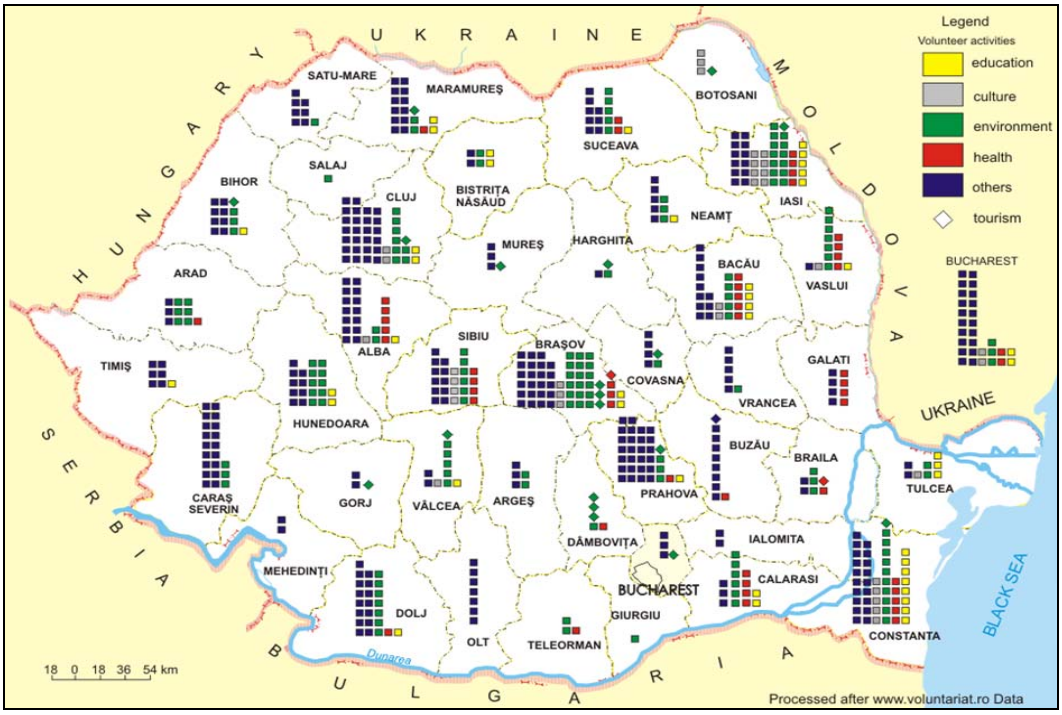

Figure 1. The volunteer activities in 2011, dedicated to the Volunteering Year in European Union (Each unit represent an action) Source: voluntariat.ro

The Romanian volunteer tourist's motivation does not much differ from the global pattern. Some tourists stress the idea of wining self-esteem and working in team building training etc. In the context of declaring 2011 as '*European Year of Volunteers*', this exploratory study aims to analyze the current state of practice of the volunteer tourism among students and young researchers and to assert the premises in the perspectives of this new form of tourism.

Many of the activities promoted by associations and NGOs on volunteer tourism assume that the notion of volunteering is well understood by the community or people who want to participate in these activities. Despite its ambiguous attributes and clichés ideas, the volunteer tourism is a separate type of contemporary tourism. The invention of a new expression like "*voluntourism*" is rather associated with the media. The sign/signifier of volunteer tourism reflects the changing relations of meanings and the hegemony of social reproduction and representation; the volunteer tourism is rather deconstructed, being differently perceived by all the social actors. Language, imagery and discourse used by these organizations are keen to reveal the participatory tourism approach (free visits and contact with locals, sharing experiences, attitudes, customs and values) or are emphasising the socially responsible activities dimension, targeted by multinationals companies (e.g. cleaning and greening activities such as *Let's Do It Romania*).

The language is mandatory, usually attractive, combining both the activity itself and the location (e.g. Let's go to the sea to and let's go brush! Volunteer!). The main message is often assigned to the location; the geography plays a crucial role: an attractive geographical space gives it the impression of relaxation, euphoria and ludic activities related on tourism. Thus, the 'core' concept of 'play' is a 'tool for the analysis of the media experience (Silverstone, 1999). The second part of the message is centred on the work itself, the volunteering, mainly associated with mandatory attributes: Volunteer! Culture plays a vital role in tourism activities, including the volunteer tourism. Although at first glance, the volunteering activity is associated with a controlled activity, raising awareness, knowledge-based, non invasive, and even neutral, aiming at preserving the cultural and natural surroundings, the volunteer tourism is still speculated these cultural values and counting on selling tourism products. Thus, all things [including cultural productions] can be commodities, at a "*certain phase in their careers and in a particular context*" (Appadurai, 1986:16).

It also relies on experience and shared-experience; the inter-cultural exchanges between the people involved and community members concerned are more beneficial. "*The volunteer tourists often interact with locals intensively with hosts and project their caring behaviours towards individuals in host-communities*" (Sin, 2010).

The opportunities and the oriented skilled gained on conducting such activities are even highlighted. Thus, experience and cultural values become commodities and the initiators are counting on the success of their business. So, those volunteers can become tourists involved into cultural and historical representations of the host community. They are tourists gaze. Gazing as a tourist means "*to insert oneself within a historical process and to consume signs or markers of particular histories. Different tourist gazes involve particular processes by which the collective memory of a society is organized and reproduced*" (Urry, 1992:185).

RESEARCH DESIGN

The objectives of this exploratory study consist in drawing a general perception on volunteer tourism' activities among students and young researchers, to analyze the motivational factors within volunteer tourism' activities and the particularly reasons to practice this type of tourism activities. We assume that volunteer tourism activities is an alternative experience where the scientific knowledge and leisure activity are associated; the scientific research and the active participation of young researchers and students are correlated with a sustainable environment knowledge, behaviour and education.

The validity of any research is based on the systematic method of data collection and analysis. The present study used both primary and secondary data. The primary data were collected from 150 respondents. For the first-hand information, respondents were chosen by convenient sampling method. The secondary data were collected from leading journals, magazines and websites relating to the tourism activities, particularly on volunteer tourism activities among it can be mentioned: TIES, and data base of voluntariat.ro etc.

Considering that the volunteer tourism activity is based on social networking, we have applied an online survey in January in 2012 to the students of Geography of University of Bucharest as well to young researchers. Taking into consideration the level of non answers, we have been able to valid only 100 questionnaires.

The questionnaire was focused on the awareness of volunteering tourism notion among the target population (graduated high school, especially scientists or/and social sciences field), the interest for the volunteer tourism in Romania, the intention to participate to the volunteer tourism activities, the information specific resource through social networking and the chance of Romania as a destination for volunteer tourism. The results were processed in statistical software SPSS v17© program.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Researchers (Tomazos, 2010; Wight, 2003) emphasize the confusion that often occurs between what we call volunteer activity, volunteer tourism and marketing. The volunteering covers those activities which, generally, took place locally, without involving a long trip outside the locality, especially without leisure arrangements. There is some paradox here that the volunteer tourism is quite understood as an absence of pay and the people involved usually pay for this combination of business and pleasure (Ellis, 2003; Tomazo & Butler, 2009). The study shows that only a truly motivated and convinced tourist about the importance for the community or a natural ecosystem, and willing to bear the costs of subsistence may be considered a volunteer tourist.

The 100 students and young researchers comprise 58% females and 42% males. 65% were undergraduate students and 35% young researchers. Ages were ranged from 23 and under and 23-40. The target groups were students and the young researchers because of their specific formation in tourism activities and academic focus on environmental issues. The significance for the volunteer tourism term is known by almost of young people (less than 40 years old) which are interest in, too. The range of their activities comprises both institutional volunteer actions and tourism related events.

They have been involved in volunteer activities as the following: 14% in guiding activities, scientific research (11%), 9% as rangers in mountain areas, social assistance (6%), 4% in mountain or marine rescue, 6% instructors in summer schools, and 19 % other activities (cleaning the environment, promotion and youth camps etc). Almost 31% did not practice either volunteer's activities or volunteer tourism. The guiding activities are more familiar to students in geography, mostly due of their experience and performance within the mountains guides activities schools.

The corroboration of these facts with their source for information underlines that the main channel is the Internet (45%), then educational institutions (33%), networking of family and friends (22%). Due to the high cost of promotion via advertising in media or by fliers, these pathways are almost neglected.

The degree of satisfaction for these activities is low, 34% being satisfied and only 18% extremely satisfied. Their motivations do not largely differ in comparison with the well known volunteer's reasons: 'to pursue a hobby, meeting of like-minded people, offering their services to a community, adding value to their own knowledge' (Millar, 1994). Even it has low promotion, the success and the future of volunteer tourism is viewed with generalized scepticism: 30% considered that Romania has few chances to develop volunteer tourism, 53 % moderate chances while 17% from them are decidedly optimistic, declaring that Romania could have high chances in developing volunteer tourism activities.

Viewed both as an alternative tourism and either as an ethical tourism form, the volunteer activity is better known by the researchers or individuals having different hobbies on sustainable environment issues; therefore, the educational level is particularly valuable. A significant relationship was found between level of education and participation in volunteering activities ($\chi^2 = 4.91$, df 2, $p < 0.05$). However, there was no significant relationship between level income and participation in volunteer tourism activities ($\chi^2 = 5.20$, df 2, $p < 0.05$), as well as between the age of the respondent and the familiarity of notion about "*volunteer tourism*" ($\chi^2 = 0.61$, df 1, $p < 0.05$). (35% of respondents declared that they have been participating on volunteer tourism activities, 65% they not).

The activity of young researchers is often related to the natural environment and the practice of volunteer tourism activities. Volunteer tourism has been conceptualized as a form of alternative experience that moves the tourist beyond simply visiting or "*passing*

through" a place as an '*outsider*' (Lyons et al., 2012: 368). It could be seen as alternative experience where the scientific knowledge and leisure activity are associated.

However, particularly for the young researchers, the participation to volunteer tourism activity is viewed as an important factor in raising consciousness of responsibility of tourism activities and awareness of young people of a better involvement into life community. There was found a significant relationship between the research activity and the active participation of volunteer tourism (χ^2=16.98, df 1, p< 0.00) (Table 1).

Table 1. Chi-square Test

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square[1]	16,982a	1	,000		
Continuity Correction[2]	14,333	1	,000		
Likelihood Ratio	17,091	1	,000		
Fisher's Exact Test				,000	,000
Linear-by-Linear Association	16,812	1	,000		
N of Valid Cases	100				

1. 1 cells (25,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3,85
2. Computed only for a 2x2 table

The involvement into life community represents a push factor. The projects of social assistance among young students are very important. They are motivated to participate on social assistance projects. A significant relationship between the intention to participate to volunteer tourism activities and the social assistance projects was found (χ^2 =11.85, df 1, p< 0.01). The willingness to participate to further projects on volunteer tourism activities is seen as very attractive one (68% in my own country, 28% abroad and 4% are not yet decided). We have found a significant relationship between the participation on further projects and the income level (χ^2 =13.37, df 6, p< 0.02).

The willingness to participate in volunteer tourism activities can be interpreted in terms of "*tourist gaze*" (Urry, 2002:2), where the role of the visual nature and the gained experience are essential because "*these experiences are only of importance to the tourist because they are located within a distinctive visual environment*".

The results revealed some interesting insights into how university students view and practice the volunteer tourism activities. Students and young researchers awareness of volunteer tourism could be linked in general with specific knowledge in tourism geography and a greater experience with applied projects on sustainable issues (χ^2 =12.09, df 2, p< 0.02).

The scientific knowledge and experience play a key role in the awareness of volunteer tourism activities. Due to their advanced knowledge and practice in volunteer tourism issues, the young researchers are better and active involved in and may be agents and promoters of NGOs activities.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this research highlighted the importance of volunteer tourism activities among students and young researchers. The volunteer tourist's profile is almost similar with the global type: friendly, altruist, responsible, devoted, educated, adaptable with initiative; attracted by novelty experiences in genuine places; care people and nature; non-dependent of urban comfort; courageous; with communication abilities and having good physical condition.

Motivations to adhere at this form of tourism have at the base the desire to keep the environment clean, to rebuild the tourist patches, help local communities and at top

continuous learning and scientific research. Their choice is related to several factor among are: free time, education, information, age and less financial status or experience in. In this study, many of individuals are not necessary see themselves as „*volunteer tourists*" per se, but they described the activity as „*experience*", "*cultural-shared experience*", and „*human practice in relation with knowledge*".

Volunteer tourism activities can be found as manifestations of the (hyper)consumption society: bio-products, sustainable development, industrial ecosystem: „*the ecology is no longer counter force to a market economy, it operates as a means of recycling them, as a vector of a more respectful offer of the great balance in nature*" (Lipovetsky, 2007). In Romania, the volunteer tourism is still not on the market due to the legacy of Communist regime, when volunteerism was largely spread through the specific organizations, being a support for socialist politics and the main force of some NGO's to attract funds on this purpose.

All stakeholders, policy makers and civil society can contribute to enhancing awareness of voluntary activities involving several forms of tourism, including ecotourism. However, „*ecotourism is aimed primarily at conservation and education tourists in terms of protecting and preserving the environment*" (National Strategy for Ecotourism Development in Romania, I, 2009). In fact, there are so many directions and strategies that underline this: tourists' education, measures to support current business visitor centers, „*by creating partnerships to conduct joint activities with NGOs, voluntary support as the residents and owners of second residence in local communities in which it operates, sponsorship, establishing partnerships*" (National Strategy for Ecotourism Development in Romania, 2009).

The individuals could be mobilized and inclined to activism and responsible activities, but they must be aware of social impacts (McGehee & Norman, 2002). The raising consciousness experience could be obtained on social networking, education programs, and NGOs activities. It is need to create a greater awareness of the value of community involvement as a significant part of students' education. The volunteer tourism is a form of contemporary tourism that allow the empowering of the local community; further researches need to highlight how this 'altruistic tourism' is perceived by the host local community and labelled environmental associations.

This study has its own limits. The survey methodology didn't allow the collection of details regarding the behaviour of volunteer tourist, and the study's results cannot be generalized due the low size of the sample. Additional studies, based on qualitative research methods, for the volunteer tourist's profile could be done in the future.

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THE CULINARY TOURISM IN SLOVAKIA. CASE STUDY OF THE TRADITIONAL LOCAL SHEEP'S MILK PRODUCTS IN THE REGIONS OF ORAVA AND LIPTOV

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Abstract: The paper defines the culinary tourism and its types, it deals with its key motivators and fundamental attributes as a marketing product of tourism in Slovakia. It briefly describes the tradition of sheepherding in Slovakia and it discusses the possibilities of the tourism expansion on the basis of sheepherding with the special emphasis on two regions in the north of the country – Orava and Liptov.

Key words: culinary tourism, gourmet tourism, gastronomic tourism, cuisine tourism, bryndza, parenica, oštiepok.

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INTRODUCTION

Gastronomy or food consumption in its most general sense is one of the integral constituents of the human´s life and thus it is the essential and very important condition of all forms of tourism. According to some scholars, the expenses spend on food can exceed even one third of all the tourism expenses (e.g. according to Quan, Wang 2004; Hall & Sharples 2003) and that makes gastronomy and boarding the key factors influencing the quality of an offered product of a tourist destination and the final tourist experience.

If we consider tourism to be a demand-oriented concept, then, on the basis of the up-to-day data which were published by the World Tourism Organisation in Global Report on Food Tourism, the food tourism is *"... one of the most dynamic segments within the tourism market"* (UNWTO 2012, p. 10). It is also stated later on in this report, that gastronomy and its related forms of food tourism do not only represent a possibility of revitalisation and diversification of a tourist offer but gastronomy also represents a new possibility of supporting and restoration of the primary sector which binds together some other sectors of the economy, represented mostly by different producers, traders, cooks and the like. (UNWTO, 2012, p. 10; Smith & Xiao, 2008).

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The attractiveness of the culinary tourism is also increasing because of the global phenomenon of cultural homogenisation whose image in gastronomy is apparent mostly in developed countries and is also considered as a cultural "*McDonaldization*", (Page & Hall, 2003 in Hall & Sharples ,2003; Ritzer, 1996 in Hall & Sharples, 2003). Traditional local gastronomy and food production as a reflection of a specific complex of natural but also cultural-historical assumptions offer a possibility of differentiation of destination in the tourism market. Therefore, the existing uniqueness determined by the climate, ethnic group, religion, social status, cultural tradition, trends in fashion and likewise, is becoming rudiments of the marketing area plans and a significant differential attribute of some tourist destinations identity.

The paper defines the culinary tourism and its types, it deals with its key motivators and fundamental attributes as a marketing product of tourism in Slovakia. It briefly describes the tradition of sheepherding in Slovakia and it discusses the possibilities of the tourism expansion on the basis of sheepherding with the special emphasis on two regions in the north of the country - Orava and Liptov. The last aim of our paper is to show further potencial of the culinary tourism development in the investigated regions.

THEORETICAL-METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Culinary Tourism and its Types

"The discovery of a new dish confers more happiness on humanity than the discovery of a new star."
(Brillat-Savarin, 2012)

The simplified idea which identifies culinary tourism with a visit to a restaurant or food or meal consumption performed in a way which interferes with the stereotype of our customary everyday diet, mostly away from home, is very inaccurate. Apart from other reasons, it is because the stated simplification considers some activities to be tourist activities, even though they have no such character. In addition to that, it makes it impossible to distinct culinary tourism from other or all the other forms of tourism, where gastronomy is an inevitable part of a journey, but it is not its primary target.

From the point of view of the definition of culinary tourism it is therefore essential to differentiate tourists:

- who see the food consumption as an inevitable part of a traveller's experience and,
- who choose a destination and their traveller's activities, being influenced by food and with the objective to reach the expected culinary experience.

Therefore, when composing a tourist product and a marketing strategy of a tourist destination, it is possible to approach the food consumption and related activities:

- as a means or an inevitable part of a tourist journey,
- or as a target of a tourist journey.

The core and relevance of the distinction of culinary tourism from the other forms of tourism is therefore seen in a way of satisfying the demand for relax, rest, or entertainment by the means of activities which are connected primarily or secondarily to food or gastronomy (Hall & Sharples, 2003).

Reflecting the stated facts, it is possible to consider the culinary tourism to be a form of adventure or cognitive tourism, and the main or important motive of this form is a visit to places which offer an opportunity to taste gourmet or food products. It is not crucial whether there are primary or secondary producers, because the main aim, as stated by Hall and Sharples, is recreation, entertainment, and getting to know the culture of a visited place, which is somehow connected to food and its degustation. Culinary tourism can have a range of forms - from degustation, deliberate visits of some restaurants, demonstrations,

shows to farmers markets, fairs, or gastronomic festivals, but also some other events or tourist activities focused on food or gastronomy (Hall & Sharples, 2003).

Depending on the intensity and the extent of the influence of food as a motivator for undergoing a tourist journey we distinguish:

a) forms of tourism where food is a primary motive of a tourist journey:
-gourmet tourism;
-gastronomic tourism;
-cuisine tourism;

b) forms of tourism where food is a secondary motive of a tourist journey:
-culinary tourism;

c) and the other forms of tourism where the interest in food and food degustation is subordinate to other traveller's interests (Hall, 2003, p.11) (Figure 1).

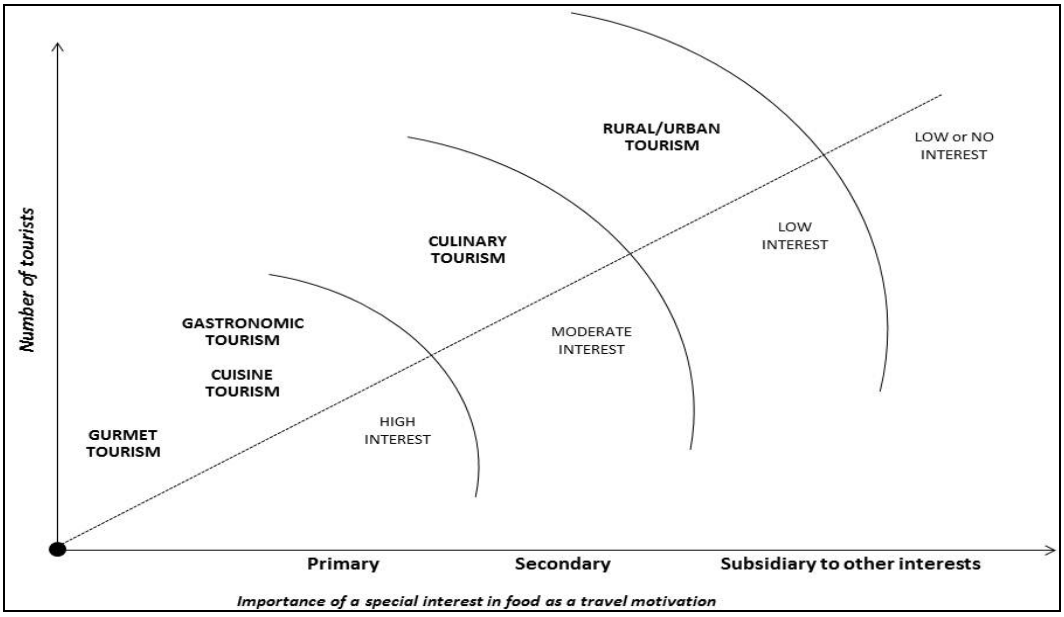

Figure 1. Forms of tourism depending on the extent of the interest in food degustation and in culinary products (Source: Hall, 2003)

Food or food products consumption and degustation as a motivation to travelling in the constraints of culinary tourism can have a primary or secondary aim. As it has been suggested in the introduction, current global homogenisation tendencies and spreading cosmopolitanism lead to a constant expand of an offer and it does so in the area of culinary tourism as well, in which three specific forms have been shaped: gourmet, gastronomic and cuisine (Figure 2).

The smallest share belongs to the gourmet tourism in which the extent of the interest in food and in gourmet products degustation is largest and represents the main motive for undergoing a tourist journey. The name gourmet itself comes from French where it named a specialist in wine quality assessing. Its later expand to all kinds of delicacies and culinary specialities, whose consumption was not primarily related to sustenance as an inevitable part of a man´s needs to survive, is used until now. Products of gourmet tourism are therefore focused on gourmets, i.e. people with a sophisticated sense of assessing the food taste, who look for high-quality luxury food and food specialities and are willing to travel because of them.

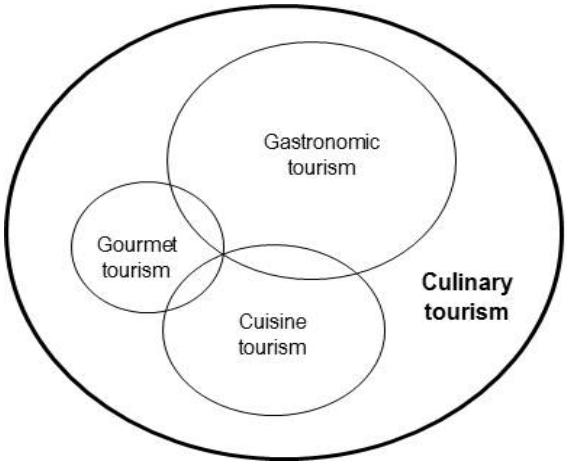

Figure 2. Forms of culinary tourism

Similarly, in the case of gastronomic tourism, the extent of the interest in culinary products degustation is primary, however, its participants are willing to accept a wider range of gastronomic products with the emphasis on quality, status and prestige. Gastronomic tourism is primarily determined by products focused on a visit of quality restaurants (e.g. restaurants on the list *Michelin Guide*). The number of tourists is in this case bigger than in the previous group (Figure 1).

Primary motive of the cuisine tourism is to know and taste traditional local culinary specialities. Formally, it can be farmer markets, fairs, or gastronomic festivals and other events focused on specific food products or gastronomy typical for the given area.

Culinary tourism can be, to this extent, called a main concept, which includes the mentioned forms of tourism and such tourist journeys in which activities connected to food and its degustation are a secondary motivator. Apart from the stated activities, they can be different festivals, demonstrations, or shows focused on food and gastronomy. Culinary specialities consumption and degustation on holiday are in many cases put on the same significance level as a visit of historical monuments or museums (Hjalager & Richards, 2002).

Culinary Tourism as a Marketing Product

The question of finding the added value in a scope of marketing product of culinary tourism and production of a catchy travelling experience brings us to the thinking about the motivators which can adequately stimulate the passion and subsequently lead to a choice of this kind of product. The initial idea leads understandably to the theory of hierarchy of needs which was formulated by A. H. Maslow in 1943 in his work: *A Theory of Human Motivation*. On the basis of this work a lot of tourist motivators theories have been subsequently formulated (Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Ryan, 1997, McIntosh et al., 1995; Pearce, 1993; Uysal & Hagan, 1993; Beard & Ragheb, 1983; Crompton, 1979). Each of already existing theories represents an attempt for the generalisation of a complicated and extensive complex of existing individual needs and passions. The scope and diversity of the possibilities are thus visible because it is more than probable that new attempts will be still created and intended to be categorized.

According to the general theories of tourism motivators by McIntosh et al., 1995, we can differentiate four main motivation categories of culinary tourism which end up with the realisation of a journey:

- *Physical motivators* – are characterised by the attempt of physical experience associated with food (one´s act of eating has physical character including the other aspects of one´s sight, smell and taste perception), merged with the needs which are not easy to fulfil in everyday life (e.g. total relaxation, possibility of trying new and unfamiliar meals, consumption of health and physical condition beneficial meals and the like).
- *Cultural motivators* – in this course the attempt to get to know a new culture through its cuisine is crucial, hence tasting the local meals in a typical way whilst added value is the uniqueness and authenticity of such experience.
- *Interpersonal motivators* – as it is mentioned in the introduction, this is a kind of a social motivator whose base lies in the passion of sharing the feelings from the consumed food and beverages with members of a similarly oriented group which makes this experience more valuable. Food and beverages are in this case considered to be a mean which makes the social interaction easier also among those members of the group who have not known each other before.
- *Social status and prestige motivators* – have always been connected to gastronomy, their foundation is an attempt to eat but mostly to be seen in the *"proper*" restaurant which should prove one´s social status and prestige. In this case, it is necessary to note that with the increase of the limits between individual social classes, the meaning of the culinary tourism as a very important component of one´s life, individual lifestyle, or the identity of an individual, is increasing (Fields K. in Hjalager & Richards, 2002).

From the point of view of the creation of the effective marketing strategy, it is important, apart from the identification of the motivators, to determine also other specifications of the product. One of the very important factors of the culinary tourism is the fixation of it in a scope of space (Hall & Sharples, 2003, p. 10). In this case, the main features of demand are local culinary resources whose "*consumption*" requires a travel to the place of their production. Of course, this does not mean that we can consume local products only *in situ* but their consumption at the place of their production offers some kind of an added value in the form of the experience enhancement by the *genius loci* which is lost by the export of these products. Here, the aspect of local uniqueness or specificity of products (food and gastronomy) are emphasised as important motivators and differential factors which raise competitiveness of a particular tourist destination from the potential consumers´ points of view. The tourism itself and its development contribute significantly to the authenticity of tourist destinations and more often lead to radical changes in local gastronomic customs and to the spreading of so-called *culinary globalisation*. Culinary tourism, mostly its part called gourmet tourism, is motivated to some extent with an ambivalent attempt on experience of the uniqueness in the increasing complexity of the globalised gastronomy offer.

As it has already been mentioned several times, culinary tourism belongs to a very perspective sphere of the tourism industry. A very popular form of events connected to food and the food products degustation is to organise some special culinary events such as markets, festivals, exhibitions, cultural, consumers and industrial events (in many cases organised regularly). Except attracting the tourists, most of the local people, but mostly one day visitors to the place are very important from agricultural, political and social points of view, connected to agriculture, maintenance of a rural country, rural ways of life and communities, and interests in the quality of food (Hall & Sharples, 2008; p. 4). On the regional level, we can identify the whole range of the other contributions:

- increased traffic to the region;
- maintenance or rise of the employment;
- support of local enterprisers, mostly small farmers and producers;
- networking of local stakeholders;
- fetching the investments to the local economy;

- reduction of seasonal impacts by prolonging tourist season;
- maintenance or restoration of cultural regional traditions which are the fundaments of differentiation on the culinary market;
- the improvement of reputation of the local food products;
- contribution to a creation of the brand and the formation of the image of the particular destination trough the local products as many others;

(Smith & Xiao, 2008; Hall & Sharples, 2008; Hall & Mitchell, 2002; Gaceu et al., 2012; Ilieş et al., 2011, Dehoorne et al. 2010).

The analysis of Traditional Slovak Sheep´s Milk Dairy Production in Slovakia

In Slovak context, culinary tourism is one of the possibilities to overcome recession and to restore for a long period neglected countryside on the basis of the traditional food products support or renewal of the production which have been considered to be a part of our national identity and culture or by spreading of the new products which may become the representative ones.

A very important argument for creating a culinary tourism related to the milk products making in Slovakia is truly a long tradition which extends to the prehistoric times. It is indirectly proven by the archaeological findings of sheep bones and ceramics for straining coagulated milk discovered in the Domica cave which date back to 2, 000 years BC. Sheep´s milk processing until it became a sour curd cheese product similar to cheese, subsequently dried because of its better storage, has been forming in our area for many centuries (Herian, 2010). In the Middle Ages, the technology of cow´s milk processing and production of cheese came to our territory from the European seaside and the alpine areas (Herian, 2010). In the 11th century, sheep´s milk products were the most popular products. In that time, the sheep formed three quarters of the whole number of the cattle. In the 13th and 14th centuries Podunajska Lowland was the main production field (Žilinčík, 2013). From the sheepherding point of view the key period was in the 15th and 18th centuries when the Wallachian colonisation took place and brought a new mountain pastoral so-called alpine way of sheep breeding. During the reign of Maria Terezia and Jozef II, there was a significant modernisation which contributed to the increase of wool, meat and milk production. Historical-geographical regions of Orava, Turiec, Liptov, Zvolen, Spiš, Gemer and Šariš are considered to be traditional areas of the production of *bryndza* with healing powers (Jan Čaplovič in Stoličná, 2011). The main problem was the "*shelf life*" of sheep´s milk products. At the beginning, *bryndza* was produced as a solid cheese made of sheep´s milk which was tinned with an admixture of salt. So-called mild *bryndza* as it is known nowadays was a result of a protected technology of grinding and mixing sheep cheese with special brine. The authorship is assigned to Teodor Wald who modified Jan Vagač´s method (Stoličná, 2011; Beer, 2003; Herian, 2010).

Nowadays, Slovak products made of sheep´s milk represent products of high quality with special characteristics. They are connected to a particular territory or place and their name is connected to their historical trademark. On the basis of these and other attributes, the Slovak Republic has actually three protected geographical indications for sheep milk products registered in DOOR: EU database of agricultural products and foods - *Slovenská bryndza*, *Slovenská parenica*, *Slovenský oštiepok* and two agricultural products and foods registered in TSG – Traditional Speciality Guaranteed - *Ovčí salašnícky údený syr*, *Ovčí hrudkový syr – salašnícky*.

Slovenská bryndza known as "*white gold*" is defined as *"a natural, white, mature, spreadable cheese in granular form, manufactured according to the traditional method,*

by milling a lump of matured sheep's cheese or by milling a mixture of lump sheep's cheese and lump cow's cheese. The percentage of lump sheep's cheese is greater than 50 %. It has a delicate odour and taste and has a pleasantly sour sheep's cheese taste that is slightly spicy and salty." (DOOR, 2013).

From the geographical point of view, the area of *bryzndza* production is concentrated in a mountainous part of Slovakia, where there are suitable conditions for sheep breeding. The demarcated area of *Slovenská bryndza* production (Figure 3) represents more than 80% of the whole Slovak territory, where sheep breeds such as *Valaška, Cigája, Východofrízska ovca and Zošľachtená valaška* are pastured. *Bryndza* is produced in the same way in the whole demarcated area.

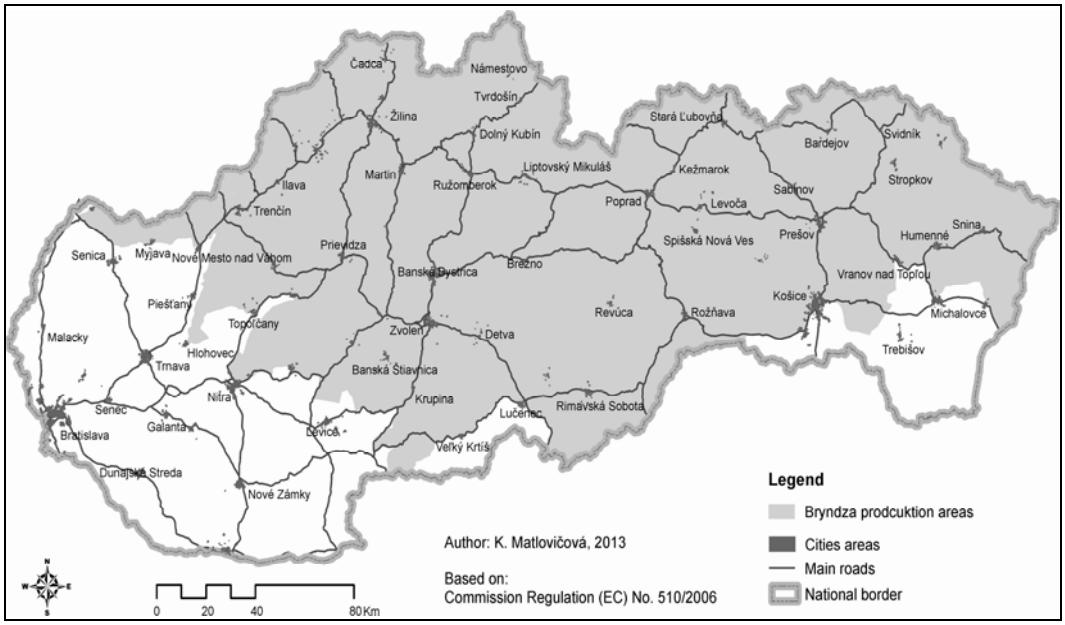

Figure 3. Territorial demarcation of the geographical *bryndza* production area
(*Source: The map demarcates the area as it is stated in the application form and the decision on the registration of "bryndza" PGI – Protected Geographical Indications in DOOR 2013*)

Thanks to the long tradition of its production as well as its constant popularity at present, *bryndza* has become a part of a tourist trademark of Slovakia. It is often a part of a diet of many Slovaks not only because of its unique taste but it has several positive health effects. It supports digestion as well as it helps with the colon cancer prevention. As it is stated in many sources (Euroinfo bryndza, 2010; Herian 2010), one milliard of micro-organisms are found in one gram of *bryndza*, which is incomparably more than in yoghurts. *Bryndza* consumption has a positive effect on the immunity system, reduction of the sugar level in blood, allergies, and reduction in blood pressure. In marketing campaigns, Slovakia is often connected to *bryndza* as a health beneficial product, from which many national dishes are prepared. And that is why foreign visitors deliberately search for traditional Slovak restaurants *salaš* and *koliba* (meaning shepherd´s or herdsman´s hut and it can describe either a special type of a restaurant as in this case, or a small-scale mountainside sheep farm) where they can try traditional Slovak specialities such as *bryndzové halušky* (dumplings made from flour, water and potato served with bryndza)*, pirohy plnené bryndzou* (pastry stuffed with bryndza)*, bryndzové placky a pagáčiky* (battercakes and cakes) and others (DOOR bryndza, 2010, p.2-3). A certain

form of a legal protection of the uniqueness of this product, which is provided by the registration in Protected Geographical Indications by the Regulation of the European Commission from the 18th July 2008, helped the promotion of Slovakia by the means of culinary specialities made of *bryndza* (Euroinfo bryndza, 2010).

Another traditional Slovak product on the basis of sheep´s milk is Slovenská parenica. It is labelled as one of the masterships of cheese-making craftsmanship and is the second Slovak milk product protected by the geographical indication, which is produced in the mountain shepherd´s huts. It is characterised as *"a steamed, lightly smoked cheese wound into two rolls 6-8 cm in diameter and 5-8 cm high, connected in an 'S'-shape. The rolls are bound with cheese string or chain. Prior to being rolled up, the cheese strip is 2-3 mm thick, 5-8 cm wide and 4-6 m long. 'Slovenská parenica' has a delicate taste, the odour of sheep's milk and a smoky smell. It is known for the characteristically pronounced fibrous structure of the curd. It contains a minimum 53 % dry matter and 50 % fat in dry matter."* (DOOR parenica, 2010, p.2)

Fresh and raw sheep´s milk or a mixture of fresh and raw sheep´s and cow´s milk is used for its production whilst it is ordained to contain a minimum of 50% of sheep´s milk. The production of *slovenská parenica* has more than two hundred years of tradition. It is produced only in some of the Slovak shepherd´s huts and it is almost impossible to buy it in a retail shop (only parenica-like cheeses are sold), (Euroinfo parenica 2010). The fact that it is really a unique Slovak food product is proven not only by the registration in the Protected designation of origin and in the Protected geographical indications from the 10th July 2008 but also the statement of a well-known dairyman Professor Otakar Laxa (in DOOR, 2010, p.2-3) who regarded this cheese as "*the Queen of cheeses*" in his book *Syrařství* (Cheese-making), first ed. in 1908, and describes it as follows: "*There are no other cheeses which are so typically Slovak as parenica cheeses and they should be regarded as unique in the cheese-making sector*" (in DOOR parenica, 2010, p.2-3).

Slovenský oštiepok is characterised by its special shape, that of a large egg, pine cone or ellipsoid with decoration. It is produced by adding an original culture comprising lactic acid bacteria of the genus *Lactococcus*, which gives *oštiepok* its characteristic taste and scent. As well as with the previous two typical Slovak specialities *Slovenská bryndza* and *Slovenská parenica* is geographical demarcation the same for *Slovenský oštiepok* and it represents almost 80% of the whole Slovak territory. (Figure 3; DOOR oštiepok, 2010). "*Slovenský oštiepok is a half-fat semi-hard cheese, which may be steamed or unsteamed and smoked or unsmoked. The basic raw material used to produce Slovenský oštiepok is sheep's milk, a mixture of sheep's and cow's milk or cow's milk. Slovenský oštiepok is produced either directly at a salaš (small-scale mountainside sheep farm), using the traditional on-farm method of production, or at dairies, using the industrial method*" (DOOR oštiepok, 2010, p.1-2).

Historically, the production of this speciality dates back to the early 18th century. In the early 20th century, they started to make the cheese industrially with a significant admixture of cow´s milk. Unlike the traditional on-farm method is this procedure more complex. Apart from curdling, drying and smoking, they use pasteurisation, add cultures, heat up, press and sour, and finally they steam and form the cheese. The finished product cannot be cut or repacked. Quality of milk, attributes of the original culture and natural microflora of the Slovak regions determine characteristic features of *Slovenský oštiepok*. A similar product to *Slovenský oštiepok* is produced in Poland, however it is made in a different way, and is protected by the name *Oszcypek*. *Slovenský oštiepok* was registered in the Protected geographical indications on the 26th September 2008 and it is registered by the same name in the international registry of *The World Intellectual Property Organisation* in Geneva.

The Use of Traditional Sheep´s Milk Products for Tourism in Orava and Liptov Regions

The uniqueness of the above described products is not the only possible available fundament on which the culinary tourism may be built in Slovakia. Apart from the already mentioned milk products, Slovakia can also offer several other milk products such as *korbáčiky* (a steamed string cheese interwoven into fine braids), *žinčica* (a drink made of sheep milk whey, a by-product in the process of making *bryndza*), and a whole range of quality cheeses but also some other products such as quality wines, beers, special liquors or high quality honey and many Slovak meat products, mostly smoked ones. Gastronomy and the cuisine tourism have the potential to be developed more. Traditional Slovak cuisine is understandably based on the local climate conditions, influenced by a considerable elevation of the terrain of the country, which are at the same time a limit from the point of view of the agricultural production. Mostly *bryndzové halušky* (dumplings made from flour, water and potato served with bryndza)*, pirohy plnené bryndzou* (pastry stuffed with bryndza), are considered to be national dishes and are parts of the communication strategies of Slovak tourist trademark. There are also other products offered to the tourists, they are mostly regional specialities made of sauerkraut (e.g. *kapustnica* – sauerkraut soup, *kapustníky* – battercakes made of sauerkraut), made of potatoes (e.g. *lokše* - pancakes made of potato-dough baked directly on the stove, *fučka* – mashed potatoes with barley, *zemiakové placky* - potato pancakes fried in oil), made of dairy products (e.g. *demikát* – a type of soup made of *bryndza*, *halušky s tvarohom* – similar to *bryndzové halušky* but made of quark instead of *bryndza* and spreads made of *bryndza*), made of flour (e.g. *Bratislavské rožky* – a fine bakery or pastry ware with poppy-seed or walnut filling and a glossy and marbled surface, *trdelník* - a fine bakery product of hollow cylindrical shape, *šúľance* – potatoe dumplings with walnuts, poppy seeds, quark or breadcrumbs sprinkle, *pagáče* – special oil-cakes) and made of variety of meat (e.g. smoked sausages and brawn).

The traditional sheep´s milk products making has been recently accompanied with a lot of problems. Commercialisation of the production and the attempt to eliminate the final price of the product has led into the creation of lower quality products which carry the original branding designated mostly for the retail market. *Bryndza* production can serve as a great example here. Since the price of sheep´s milk is actually higher than the price of cow´s milk, the producers began not only to add cow´s milk into *bryndza* but gradually raised the amount of cow´s milk in it with the aim to reduce its total price. Thus, "real sheep *bryndza*" made of 100% of sheep´s milk started to have problems with its demand. In order to eliminate the subsequent declination of the small-scale mountainside sheep farms (*salaš*) and small producers of this product, in the beginning of 2013, the Guild of Sheep Cheese Producers came with the idea to register their product with the Industrial Property Office of the Slovak Republic in Banská Bystrica as an original trademark *"Ovčia bryndza salašnícka"* (logo in the shape of a white clover leaf on the green base, Figure 4) for the products which contain sheep´s lump cheese only (SITA, 2013).

Figure 4. Logo of the 100% Sheep´s Bryndza – "*Ovčia bryndza salašnícka*" (Source: SITA, 2013)

The core of the culinary tourism on the basis of the traditional sheep´s milk products is, apart from the degustation of real and original sheep products straight in the places called *salaš*, the demonstration or, if possible, the involvement of the tourists into the production process. By composing the discussed tourist product, it is necessary to bear in mind also their significant seasonality caused by closing of the *salaš* businesses from October to May. For this kind of tourist products, summer months are the most optimal as it is possible to variegate the programme of their stay with some additional relaxing activities associated with the stay in the nature.

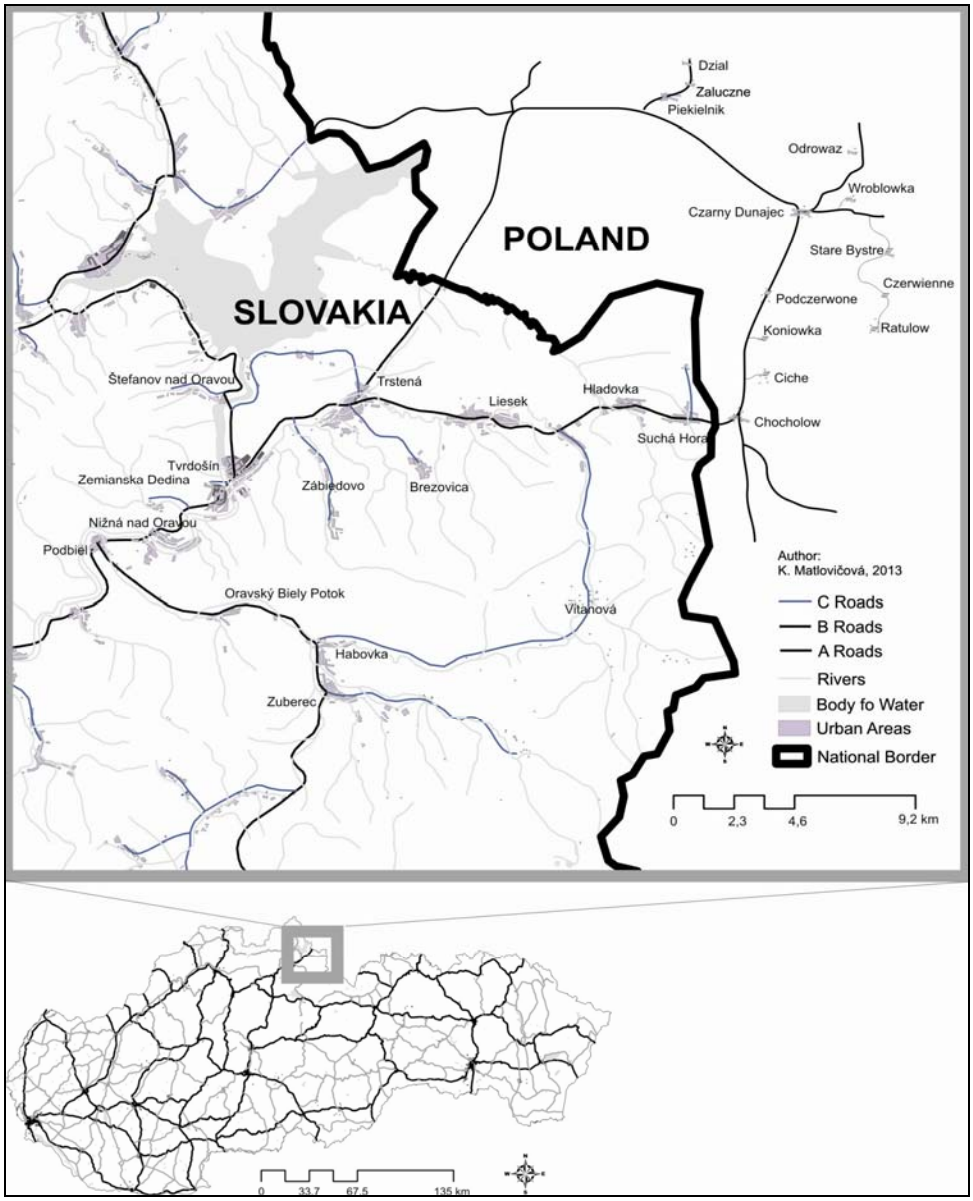

Figure 5. Slovak-Polish Cheese Route Horná Orava – Gmina Czarny Dunajec
(Source: adapted on the basis of the data from Syrová cesta, 2010)

From existing products of the culinary tourism, the Slovak-Polish cheese route *Horná Orava-gmina Czarny Dunajec* (Zuberec, Oravský Biely Potok, Podbiel, Tvrdošín, Vitanová, Liesek, Čimhová, Vasiľov and in Poland Czorsztyn, Wróblówka, Czarny Dunajec, Czerwienne (Figure 5) can be mentioned here. The region of upper Orava is a traditional shepherd area with a lot of shepherds´ huts and agricultural collective farms where sheep cheese and products made in its traditional way are produced. During their stay, tourists can visit seven shepherds´ huts and production factories (Tvrdošín dairy, Gazdovský dvor - farmyard Peter Jurky, Agricultural Collective Farm LČV, Salaš in Oravský Biely Potok, Salaš in Bachledówka, Salaš in Baligówka near the Czarny Dunajec, Salaš in Czorsztyna, Salaš in Wróblówka). A part of the programme is also a visit to the local cultural-historical sites and Slovak-Polish border attractions as well as the possibility of the recreation activities in the mountains or by the lakeside (Oravská Dam), (Syrová cesta, 2013).

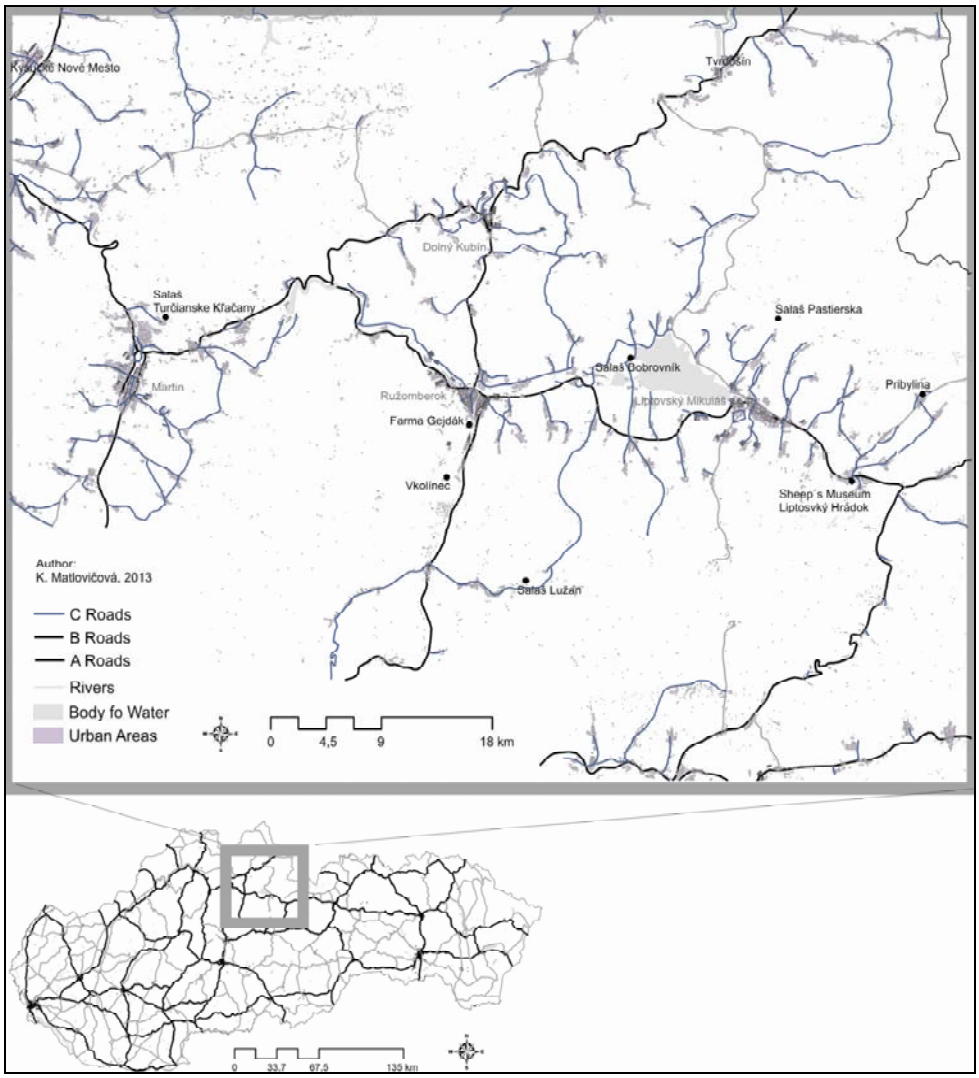

Figure 6. "*A Chief Shepherd´s Route*" (Bačova cesta)
(Source: adapted on the basis of a Chief Shepherd's route, 2010)

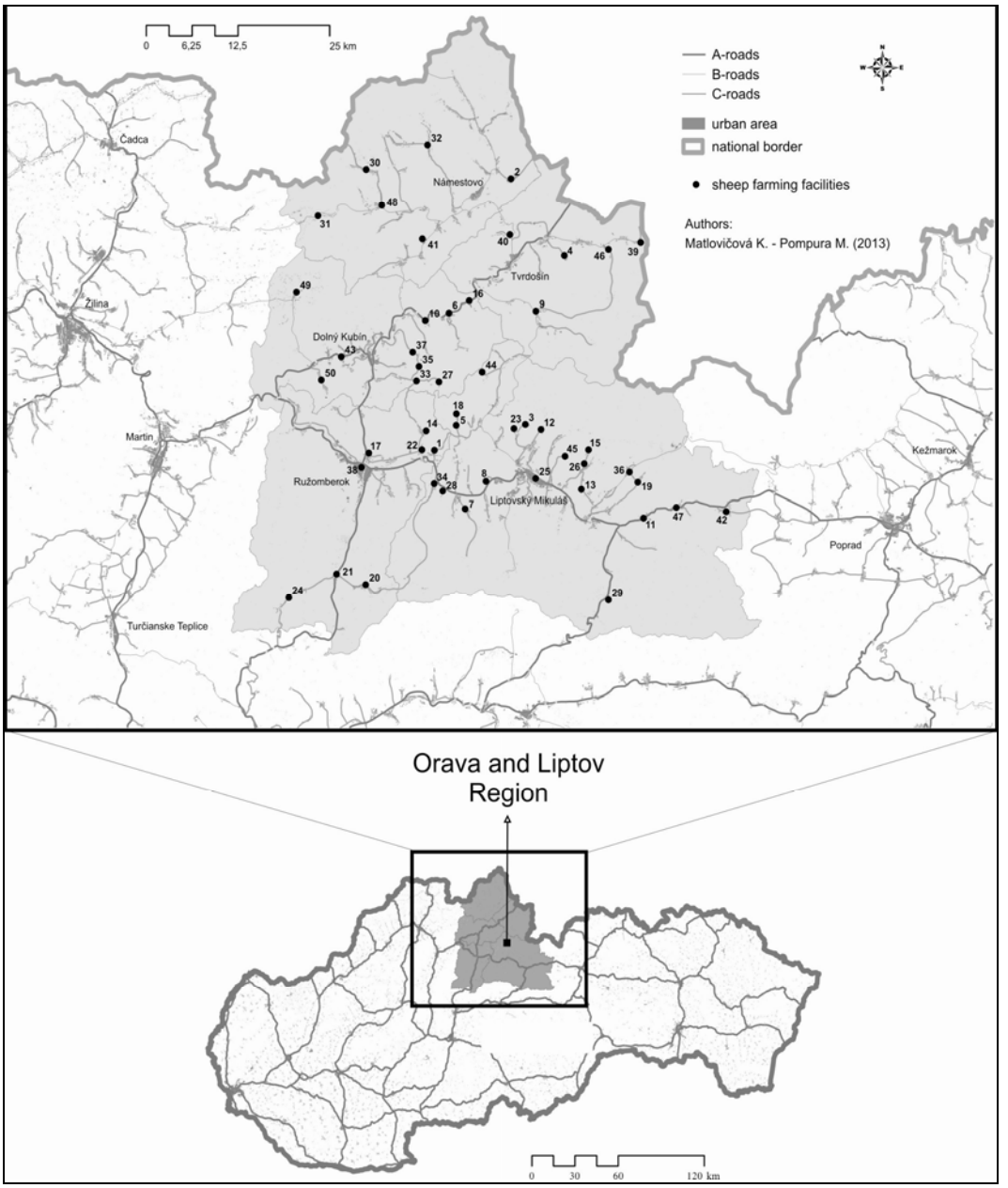

Figure 7. Location of the sheep breeding facilities in Liptov and Orava
(Source: adapted on the basis of Plemenárske služby SR, 2010, Legend for Figure 7 - see Table 1 below)

Another example of a culinary tourism product in Slovakia is so-called *Bačova cesta (A Chief Shepherd´s Route)*. In the association with the *salaš* businesses and the accommodation facilities in the area of Liptov and Turiec, it offers a programme for the visitors to the place from May to October (Figure 6). Apart from the presentation of the production process and possibilities to taste traditional dairy products, it is also possible to get to know some traditional folk crafts, architecture and folklore of this region. Every

year, *Slovak Championship in Sheep Shearing* and *National Sheep Festivities* are organised and are accompanied with additional events and competitions. Another interesting event is *Slovak Championship in Cheese Thread Pulling* or competitions for the best cheese, competitions in cooking *bryndzové halušky*, or in cooking mutton goulash accompanied with a music and cultural programme (Bačova cesta, 2010).

Table 1. The list of the sheep breeding facilities in the regions of Liptov and Orava
(Data source: Plemenárske služby SR, 2010)

Serial number in the Fig ure 7	Village	Name	Chalet in the forest	Milk Production	Cheese distribution
• 1	Bešeňová	Eurocomp a co	no	yes	no
• 2	Bobrov	Polák Anton	yes	yes	no
• 3	Bobrovček	SHR Anna Ruseková	no	yes	no
• 4	Brezovica	PD Trsteník Trstená	no	yes	yes
• 5	Bukovina	Agronova Liptov s.r.o.	no	yes	no
• 6	Dlhá nad Oravou	Vraštiak Ján	no	yes	no
• 7	Dúbrava	Agro-Racio s.r.o.	no	yes	no
• 8	Galovany	SHR Vladimír Feketík	no	yes	no
• 9	Habovka	RPD Zuberec	no	yes	no
• 10	Horná Lehota	Zenit Racibor	yes	yes	no
• 11	Hybe	RD Hybe	no	yes	no
• 12	Jalovec	PPS Bobrovec	yes	yes	yes
• 13	Jamník	SHR Dušan Španko	no	yes	no
• 14	Kalameny	Jánoš s.r.o.	no	yes	no
• 15	Konská	SHR Igor Uličný	no	yes	no
• 16	Krivá	Agrodružstvo Krivá	no	no	yes
• 17	Likavka	LOD Likavka	no	yes	no
• 18	Lipt. Anna	SHR Brezňan Milan	no	yes	yes
• 19	Lipt. Kokava	SHR Dušan Harnam	no	yes	no
• 20	Lipt. Lúžna	SPDP Lúžňan	yes	no	yes
• 21	Lipt. Osada	SHR Silván Longauer	yes	yes	yes
• 22	Lipt. Teplá	SHR Moravčík Peter	no	yes	no
• 23	Lipt. Behárovce	Agrochov Liptov s.r.o.	no	yes	no
• 24	Lipt. Revúce	PD Liptvské Revúce	yes	no	no
• 24	Lipt. Revúce	PD Liptvské Revúce	no	yes	no
• 25	Lipt. Mikuláš	PD Liptovský Mikuláš	no	yes	no
• 25	Lipt. Mikuláš	SHR Brunčiak Stanislav	no	yes	no
• 26	Lipt. Ondrej	SHR Šuchtár Ján	yes	no	no
• 27	Malatiná	PD Malatiná	no	no	yes
• 27	Malatiná	Ing Kluka Michal	yes	yes	no
• 28	Malatíny	SHR Toholt Ivan	no	yes	no
• 29	Nižná Boca	Agria Liptovský Ondrej	no	yes	no
• 30	Novoť	Agrokovex Novoť	no	no	yes
• 31	Oravská Lesná	PD Oravská Lesná	yes	yes	no
• 32	Oravské Veselé	DAKNA Námestovo	yes	yes	no
• 33	Osádka	SHR Halička Milan	no	yes	no
• 34	Partizánska Ľupča	SHR Mojš Ján	no	yes	no
• 35	Pokryvač	SHR Lupták Ján	no	yes	no
• 36	Pribylina	RD Pribylina	no	yes	no
• 37	Pucov	PPD Pucov	no	yes	no
• 38	Ružomberok	SHR Papúch Pavol	yes	yes	no
• 38	Ružomberok	Salaš Gejdák Ružomberok	yes	yes	yes
• 39	Suchá Hora	PD Suchá Hora	yes	yes	no
• 40	Štefanov nad Oravou	PD Žiarec Tvrdošín	no	yes	no
• 41	Vasiľov	Škombár František	yes	yes	no

•	42	Važec	PD Važec	no	yes	yes
•	43	Veličná	Ing Páltik Milan	no	yes	no
•	43	Veličná	PD Veličná	no	yes	no
•	43	Veličná	Jozef Čaplovič	yes	yes	no
•	44	Velké Borové	PD Kvačany	yes	yes	yes
•	45	Veterná Poruba	PD Smrečany	no	yes	no
•	46	Vitanová	Jančo Anton	yes	yes	no
•	46	Vitanová	Ing.Lieskovský Jozef	yes	yes	no
•	47	Východná	PD Východná	no	yes	yes
•	48	Zákamenné	RD Zákamenné	no	no	no
•	49	Zázrivá	PD Párnica	yes	yes	no
•	50	Žaškov	PD Žaškov	yes	no	no

The Potential of the Further Development of the Culinary Tourism

The area of Orava and Liptov regions has big potentials for the further development of the culinary tourism on the basis of the sheep´s milk products. Our field investigation has shown that there are in total 57 facilities which focus on the sheep breeding (Figure 7). Unfortunately, not all of the facilities are able to provide the services connected to tourism.

The reason for this is the insufficiently built tourist infrastructure, not favourable location, the lack of production technologies or existing outdated technologies, and last but not least, the lack of financial capital. By their characterisation, they are different facilities (see the list of them in Table 1). Some of them are focused on the production of sheep´s milk only and its subsequent sale for the processing into dairies or others facilities. The other facilities own technologies for its processing and sell finished products (mostly cheese and *bryndza*). The facilities which are located "*straight in the forest*" have a great potential. Manufactured products are sold at the same spot.

CONCLUSION

As it has emerged from this study, there is some kind of unused potential for the tourism development in Slovakia on the basis of the culinary products made of sheep´s milk. A strong argument is not only a long sheepherding tradition and production of the whole range of dairy products but mostly the possibility for the restoration of declining shepherding and the preservation or bringing new job opportunities in the areas which are considered to be peripheral within the national context.

Acknowlegments

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FROM GEOMORPHOSITE EVALUATION TO GEOTOURISM INTERPRETATION. CASE STUDY: THE SPHINX OF ROMANIA'S SOUTHERN CARPATHIANS

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Abstract: Geomorphosites are commonly regarded as landforms that are mainly defined by their scientific value. Prior to assuming the existence of a "*geomorphosite*", however, the scientific value of landforms must be determined. The study comprises three major steps. The first of them implies the identification and classification of the intrinsic geo(morpho)logical characteristics of landforms, some of which are readily identifiable and quantifiable by tourists and scientists alike, whereas others are noticeable and deducible only by scientists. The second step employs a numerical methodology for assessing the scientific value of landforms which, once ascertained, also acquires a significant educational importance for geotourism. The third step and final goal is the development of a logical scheme for the scientific interpretation of a geomorphosite's origin and evolution and its brief application on the most representative of the erosional landforms on the Bucegi plateau of Romania's Southern Carpathians – the Sphinx.

Key words: geomorphosites, landforms, intrinsic characteristics, geotourism, interpretation, the Sphinx, Southern Carpathians

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INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF GEOMORPHOSITES. A BRIEF HISTORY OF RESEARCH

Large-scale tourism practices around the world determine a progressive overflowing and degradation of natural areas. One of the early measures undertaken in order to limit the negative impact of mass tourism was the establishment of protected natural areas and natural monuments, and the foundation of national parks and reserves. However, most theoretical and operational frameworks were almost exclusively suited for the protection of biodiversity, and it is only recently that the importance of the main component of landscapes – geodiversity – has been acknowledged (Kiernan, 2001; Sharples, 2002; Gray, 2004). The evaluation of geodiversity in its many aspects in order to ensure its proper conservation, management and reasonable tourism exploitation proved itself to be a major subject of interest for researchers within the last decade.

In certain European countries – particularly Italy, Spain and Switzerland (Reynard, 2004) – concern about this issue started in the early 1990s. A new terminology emerged – hence a variety of specific terms generally regarded as synonyms, among which

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geomorphological geotope, geomorphological site and eventually *geomorphosite* (Reynard, 2005). A subsequent stage consisted of the drawing up and implementation of an assessment methodology based on several criteria according to different purposes such as environmental impact studies, land planning and lately geotourism practices (Reynard, 2008). Some of the methods have been proposed in the shape of either a numerical evaluation (Bruschi & Cendrero, 2005; Pralong, 2005; Zouros, 2007) or an inventory card (Reynard, 2006; Cocean, 2011a), while others comprise both stages within a single process (Serrano & González-Trueba, 2005; Pereira & Pereira, 2010).

In Romania, the first study dedicated to geomorphosites focused on the Apuseni Mountains in Romania's Western Carpathians – an area whose many instances of natural and cultural scenery, although remarkably rich and diverse, are still little explored (Ilieş & Josan, 2007).

THE NATURE OF GEOMORPHOSITES

According to M. Panizza, a geomorphosite represents "*a landform to which a value can be attributed*" (Panizza, 2001, p.4) – a very brief definition that allowed a wide range of values to be associated to geomorphosites, from scientific and ecological, to aesthetic, cultural and economical. The definition was later clarified by E. Reynard who separated the central – scientific – value from the additional ones (Reynard, 2005). Therefore if a landform does not acquire a scientific value it cannot become a geomorphosite since "[...] *les géomorphosites étant définis en premier lieu pour leur rôle visant à comprendre le fonctionnement et l'histoire de la Terre*" (Idem, p.187).

Geomorphosites may be regarded as complex units (Figure 1), yet a detailed research is compulsory prior to assuming a geomorphosite's existence and considering it as a geotourism resource. This process implies the identification and classification of the inherent characteristics of a particular landform – the ones existing regardless of human will and action – as well as their score-based evaluation. Together, these steps lead to the assessment of the scientific value – the essential criterion a landform must meet in order to become a "*geomorphosite*". This however is not a self-existing property since it emerges from the intrinsic characteristics of a landform. A close attempt in establishing the intrinsic characteristics was provided by Cocean G. who separated the structural values from the functional values of a geomorphosite (Cocean, 2011a, b).

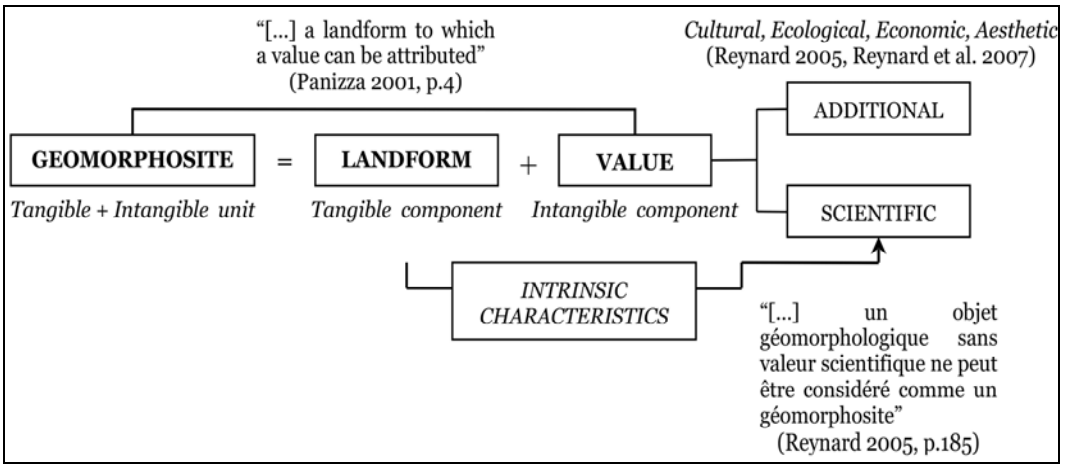


Figure 1. Geomorphosites are complex units consisting of two major components: a landform (as a tangible element) and a scientific value (as an intangible element)

Nevertheless, in more recent studies there is a growing tendency to associate geomorphosites with (geo)tourism (Panizza & Piacente, 2008; Reynard, 2008). Ielenicz M. notices that "*geomorphosites*" comprise only certain landforms or geomorphological processes, namely the ones displaying specific features that are exploitable for the purpose of tourism or that make them attractive as tourist destinations (Ielenicz, 2009).

OBJECTIVITY OF RESEARCH. QUESTIONING THE "*SCIENTIFIC VALUE*"

A paramount issue arising from the evaluation process and mentioned by many authors (Grandgirard, 1999; Bruschi & Cendrero, 2005; Pereira et al., 2007; Rodrigues & Fonseca, 2010) is the objectivity of research. Each of the three steps dealing with the intrinsic characteristics of landforms implies a certain degree of subjectivity (Figure 2). The lowest degree corresponds to the identification of these attributes (the first step) as human intervention is mainly reduced to observation. Higher degrees of subjectivity are gradually implied in the classification and evaluation (second and third steps) as these stages are purpose-directed and involve analysis and appreciation.

Regardless of its nature, an evaluation process is always prone to subjectivity as a researcher "*is intimately involved in scientific research*" (Ratner, 2002, chap.1). Bias is almost impossible to avoid as it often interferes with the analysis, yet full objectivity may not be achieved without implicitly withdrawing interest for the context and purpose of the research. Nevertheless the degree of subjectivity can be limited or even decreased at a general level by providing reasonable arguments or explanations (Grandgirard, 1999; Cocean, 2011a, b) and in particular circumstances, when a comparative analysis of genetically identical landforms is implied, by attaching charts or images in order to illustrate similarities and differences (Pralong, 2005). Reasoning – broadly regarded as evidence and arguments – eventually represents "*a move one party makes in a dialog to offer premises that may be acceptable to another party who doubts the conclusion of the argument*" (Walton, 2009, p.1).

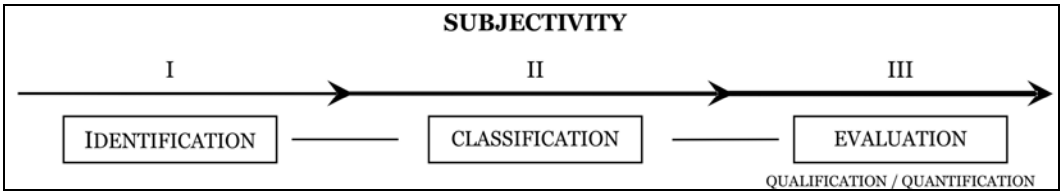


Figure 2. Degree of subjectivity involved in the different stages of the research dealing with the intrinsic characteristics of landforms

Although awareness has been raised regarding the important role of human perception in the assessment process, the very use of the word "*value*" is a first step towards subjectivity, since it implies an individual's perception rather than an objective reality. "*Values*" are inherently human attributes. However, in the different stages of geomorphosite assessment they are gradually detached from their original subjective meaning, being widely used either to determine or comprise random non-human attributes that belong to landforms, or to define their relevance. In a study that is not directly concerned with the human nature or perception but instead with the characteristics of abiotic nature, a phrase such as "*scientific value*" may prove to a certain extent questionable and premature. Landforms possess valuable information that, once decoded, provides them with a scientific importance in terms of understanding and reconstructing the geological and paleogeographical evolution of the regions they belong to (Henriques et al., 2011). This importance is a pre-existent global attribute which only becomes a "*value*" when it is acknowledged and appraised and when efforts are carried

out in order to ensure its proper interpretation, preservation and perpetuation.[1] Once the scientific importance becomes a "*value*", it becomes an implicit and equally important educational value for geotourism.

IDENTIFYING AND CLASSIFYING THE INTRINSIC CHARACTERISTICS OF LANDFORMS

Landforms have intrinsic characteristics which are self-evolving but may be irreversibly modified and even lost because of human actions. "*This architecture* (i.e. geodiversity as the variety of forms and processes within the abiotic nature) *has taken thousands of millions of years to evolve, yet can be destroyed or altered within days*" (Gray, 2004, p.68). The study consists of three major steps, the first of which implies the proper identification and classification of the intrinsic characteristics of landforms (Table 1). Three of them – degree of preservation, uniqueness and representativeness are recurring criteria in almost all stages dealing with the scientific assessment, while the others usually differ with the scope of the research. A wider yet similar classification may also consider the intrinsic ecological characteristics, referring to local flora and fauna encountered within or close to landforms.

Table 1. The intrinsic geo(morpho)logical characteristics of landforms

GEO(MORPHO)LOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS		
(1) ***PRIMARY*** *characteristics*	Surface	(1a) ***Outer*** *characteristics*
	Height/Depth/Breadth	
	Degree of preservation	
	Colour contrast	
	External agents and processes	(1b) ***Inner*** *characteristics*
	Dynamics	
	Auxiliary or integrated geomorphological elements	
	Auxiliary or integrated geological elements	
(2) ***DERIVED*** *characteristics*	Uniqueness	
	Representativeness	

The intrinsic characteristics of landforms are depicted by various authors and different methods (Grandgirard, 1999; Wimbledon et al., 2000; Coratza & Giusti, 2005; Serrano & González-Trueba, 2005; Pralong, 2005; Zouros, 2007; Reynard et al., 2007; Joyce, 2008; Pereira & Pereira, 2010; Cocean, 2011a, b; Coratza et al., 2012). They can be divided into two main categories: (1) Primary characteristics and (2) Derived characteristics. The first of them is further divided into two subcategories: (1a) Outer characteristics and (1b) Inner characteristics respectively, with the former subcategory reflecting the latter.

The Outer characteristics comprise the *surface*, *height/depth/breadth*, *degree of preservation/integrity* and *chromatic*.[2] They refer to the physiognomy and appearance of landforms and are easily observed and quantified by anyone, including laymen in the fields of Earth sciences like geology or geomorphology. They are not self-standing characteristics but generally reflect the Inner characteristics.

The Inner characteristics comprise the *external agents and processes*, *dynamics*, *auxiliary or integrated geomorphological elements* and *auxiliary or integrated*

[1] All geodiversity elements – from minerals and fossils to landforms and even geolandscapes – bear a theoretical scientific importance in re-creating stages of the geological evolution of the Earth. This importance may or may not be considered, emphasized and later capitalized on in different purposes, including geotourism.
[2] Details regarding this subcategory are displayed in Table 2

geological elements.[3] These properties, which are less obvious, refer mainly to the evolutionary changes in geological time and can only be observed and/or deduced by well-trained researchers in the fields of geology and geomorphology.

The presence of fossils or trace fossils especially of marine origin in mountain regions is a proof of the major climate modifications that occurred in geological time. Even though fossils are generally embedded in rocks or sediments, they may nevertheless be considered as a separate (palaeo) ecological feature.[4]

The derived characteristics comprise the *uniqueness* and *representativeness*.[5] They can hardly be considered self-standing characteristics, since a landform is neither unique nor representative *per se* but due to certain attributes it possesses. As a consequence, they fully depend on the Outer and Inner characteristics and become inherent attributes only when human reasoning – more than perception – is involved. *Uniqueness* refers to a landform's genesis, structure and evolution, whereas *representativeness* refers to a landform's physiognomy and attractiveness (Figure 3). Both of them are equally important since their meaning is to quantify the landforms' educational relevance for geotourism interpretation.

The *surface*, *height/depth/breadth* and *degree of preservation* are directly shaped by the *external agents and processes*. The *chromatic* reflects the nature of the geological materials that influence the force and intensity of action of the external agents. The *auxiliary or integrated geo(morpho)logical elements* often provide additional information regarding the formation of a geomorphosite while the presence of (trace) fossils provides clues regarding the paleoclimatic evolution of the environment. The *uniqueness* refers to the Inner characteristics while the *representativeness* refers to the Outer characteristics.

Some of the intrinsic characteristics, however, are sometimes referred to as determinants for establishing the additional values of geomorphosites, yet this may diminish or alter both their scientific and educational relevance.[6] Although designed for the purpose of geotourism, the present study dismisses any additional values since it is not a holistic approach that is assumed, but a restricted, scientific one.

ASSESSING THE SCIENTIFIC VALUE – FROM "*LANDFORMS*" TO "*GEOMORPHOSITES*"

The second step of the study comprises the assessment of the scientific value of landforms. In order to achieve this, the intrinsic characteristics must undergo an assessment process. Although it has been argued that not only the criteria but the methods themselves are invariably dependent on the scope of the research (Grandgirard, 1999; Reynard et al., 2007), the natural characteristics of the study area play an equally important role since they may require either the insertion of new criteria or the overall adaptation of an existing method, especially if the region is significantly different from the one the method has been originally developed for. Both the Alps and the (Southern) Carpathians share the same geological age, yet the general elevation and the climatic conditions are responsible for ascribing different geomorphological characteristics, the most important of which is related to the evidence of Pleistocene glaciers. While they are still well represented in the Alps, they did not persist in the Carpathians.

Nonetheless, two studies have been carried out so far in order to assess the geomorphosites within the Bucegi Mountains of Romania's Southern Carpathians by employing

[3] Details regarding this subcategory are displayed in Table 2

[4] Although paleontology lies on the border between geology and biology, the relation between fossils and rocks may have stood for its being commonly regarded as a field of geology.

[5] Details regarding this subcategory are displayed in Table 2

[6] In some assessment methods and studies, *surface* and *height* feature as criteria for determining the Scenic/Aesthetic value of a geomorphosite (Pralong, 2005, Cocean, 2011a).

J.-P. Pralong's assessment method. The first of them aims to provide a basis for further suggesting protection measurements and promoting tourism (Comănescu & Dobre, 2009). The second one engages both specialists and tourists in the evaluation process, with the final results revealing divergent opinions between the two categories (Comănescu & Nedelea, 2010).

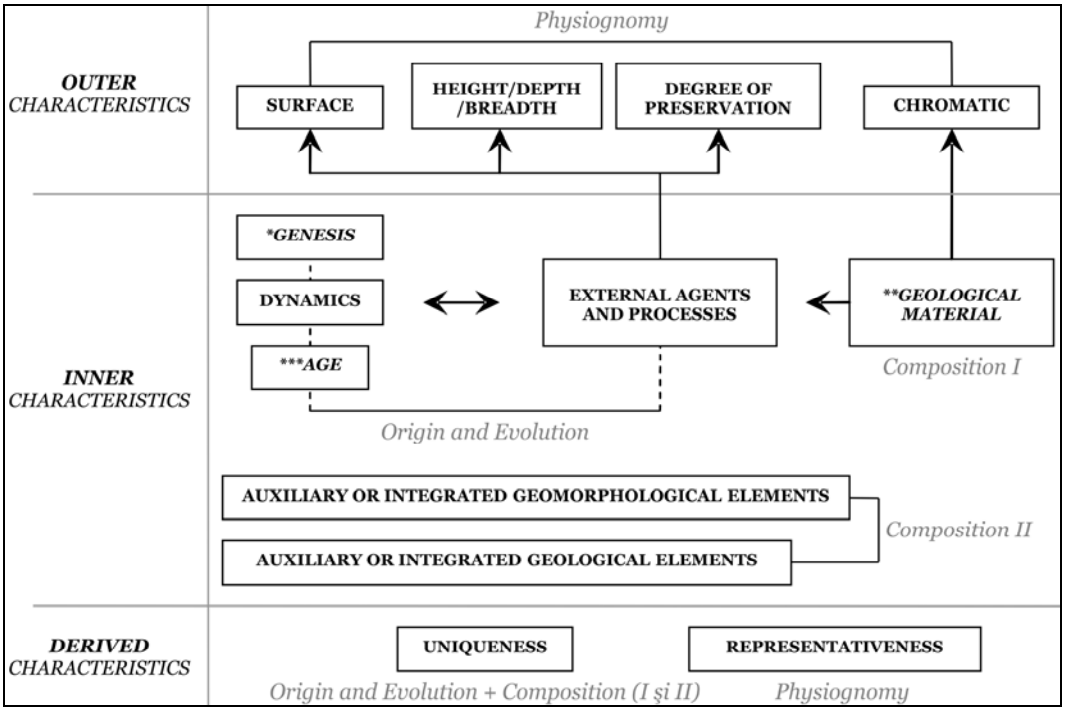


Figure 3. Scheme illustrating a model approach for the interpretation of the scientific value of a geomorphosite

As the scientific value is a prerequisite for the existence of a geomorphosite, all evaluation methods, regardless of their purpose, contain criteria for its assessment (e.g. Grandgirard, 1999 – in a study serving as a general framework for developing evaluation methods; Bruschi & Cendrero, 2005 – in a study aiming at the protection and sustainable development of geomorphosites; Coratza & Giusti, 2005 – in a study designed for territorial planning, environmental studies and protection of natural heritage; Pralong, 2005 – in a study that has as its main purpose the assessment of the tourist potential and use of geomorphosites; Serrano & González-Trueba, 2005 – in a study directed towards the proper use and management of geomorphosites encompassed within protected areas; Reynard et al., 2007 – in a study concerned with the assessment of the overall global value of geomorphosites; Cocean, 2011a, b – in a study focusing on a regional ranking of geomorphosites).

However, "*different national geomorphological contexts and objectives have not allowed the development of universal guidelines*" (Pereira & Pereira, 2010, pp.216-217). Since none of the existing methods consider all the intrinsic characteristics of landforms which would be relevant in creating a scheme for the scientific interpretation of the origin and evolution of a geomorphosite, the method employed in this study is a compilation.

The assessment criteria correspond to the ten intrinsic characteristics introduced in the previous chapter as a direct consequence of both the particular geographical character of the study area and the purpose of the research (Table 2).

Table 2. The intrinsic characteristics of landforms as assessment criteria in determining their scientific value and "*geomorphosite*" status

		0	0.25	0.50	0.75	1
OUTER (VISIBLE) **CHARACTERISTICS**						
Geo1	Surface	tiny	small	moderate	large	huge
Note: The overall surface of the landform is expressed either in m² or in km². As the case may be, for various genetically identical landforms (e.g. erosion-shaped rocks, caves, waterfalls), charts or comparative scales should be provided as arguments for the given score.						
References in literature: Pralong, 2005						
Geo2	Height (can also be Depth or Breadth)	tiny	small	moderate	large	huge
Note: The *height* is only considered for positive landforms (upstanding topographic forms) and it is not the absolute elevation that is evaluated, but the relative elevation (height above a ground reference level). The *depth* is considered for negative landforms (low-lying topographic forms, including lakes) and the *breadth* for underground hollows (caves). All three are expressed in m². As the case may be, for various genetically identical geomorphosites, charts or comparative scales should be provided as arguments for the given score.						
References in literature: Pralong, 2005; Cocean, 2011ab						
Geo3	Degree of preservation	deteriorated to a great extent	-	deteriorated to a small extent	-	intact
Note: It refers to the integrity of the landform as a result of only natural causes (the degree of exposure to the external agents). A relatively intact structure is more attractive and can be more successfully used for an educational purpose.						
References in literature: Grandgirard, 1999; Bruschi & Cendrero, 2005; Coratza & Giusti, 2005; Pralong, 2005; Reynard et al., 2007; Zouros, 2007; Cocean, 2011ab; Coratza et al., 2012						
Geo4	Chromatic	low contrast	-	medium contrast	-	high contrast
Note: It refers to the colour contrast between the landform and the surrounding environment, hence determining its visibility. A low contrast is generated by slightly different colours or hues (e.g. a mountain summit within a ridge, a torrential gully within a mountain face). A medium contrast is the result of the association of closely related though vivid colours (e.g. a vegetation-covered ledge within a bare mountain face, an erosion-shaped rock within a plateau area). A high contrast is given by the occurrence of a striking colour – usually white (e.g. a limestone cliff emerging from a biotic environment, a waterfall seen from afar).						
References in literature: Pralong, 2005; Cocean, 2011ab						
		0	**0.25**	**0.50**	**0.75**	**1**
INNER (LESS VISIBLE) **CHARACTERISTICS**						
Geo5	External agents and processes	1	-	2	-	≥3
Note: They continuously shape the landform. As the number of agents increases, the complexity and educational potential of landforms also increase.						
References in literature: Serrano & González-Trueba, 2005						
Geo6	Dynamics	fast-evolving	-	noticeable	-	deducible
Note: It is not only the landform's dynamics that is considered, but also the dynamics of its integrated geo(morpho)logical elements (if any). However, the latter are considered only if their dynamics reflects within the landform's general evolution and influences its overall configuration. A landslide or a torrential gully may be regarded as having a fast dynamics, if their annual evolution ascribes significant modifications. Noticeable dynamics implies major differences that can be revealed through comparisons between photos taken in the course of several years. The deducible dynamics occurs in geological time and is mostly a matter of deduction.						
References in literature: Serrano & González-Trueba, 2005; Cocean, 2011ab						
Geo7	Auxiliary or integrated geomorphological elements	nonexistent	-	hardly identifiable	-	readily identifiable
Note: They refer to both simple and complex geomorphosites and include a wide range of geomorphological elements (e.g. landslides, glacial moraines, erosional landforms) situated within or close to a geomorphosite, which could be successfully used with an educational purpose.						
References in literature: Bruschi & Cendrero, 2005; Cocean, 2011ab						
Geo8	Auxiliary or integrated geological elements	nonexistent or insignificant	-	hardly identifiable	-	readily identifiable
Note: They refer to occurences of alien rocks within a geomorphosite (e.g. limestone / conglomerate / granite, etc. comprised in a structure which is mainly composed of sandstone). Instances of fossilized plants and animals or traces of such organisms within a geomorphosite or its surrounding area should also be considered.						
References in literature: Cocean, 2011ab						

		0	0.25	0.50	0.75	1
DERIVED CHARACTERISTICS						
Geo9	Uniqueness	common occurrence	-	rare occurrence	-	unique occurrence
Note: It refers to the origin and composition (geological material) of a landform as relevant in reconstructing a particular stage in the evolution of the study area. Structure shall not be confused with shape(!)						
References in literature: Grandgirard, 1999; Bruschi & Cendrero, 2005; Coratza & Giusti, 2005; Pralong, 2005; Reynard et al., 2007; Zouros, 2007; Joyce, 2008; Cocean, 2011ab; Coratza et al., 2012						
Geo10	Representativeness	insignificant	low	moderate	high	very high
Note: It refers to the shape of a landform as a major source of attractiveness among tourists. As the case may be, for various genetically identical landforms, geographical location and accessibility may also be considered. A unique landform in terms of composition will always receive the highest score for representativeness.						
References in literature: Grandgirard, 1999; Wimbledon et al., 2000; Bruschi & Cendrero, 2005; Pralong, 2005; Reynard et al., 2007; Zouros, 2007; Joyce, 2008; Cocean, 2011ab; Coratza et al., 2012						

Each score is given by quarter points on a 0 to 1 scale (with 0 corresponding to the lowest variable and 1 to the highest) while the final scientific value is expressed as an overall sum score. Apart from criteria and scores, additional information is provided in order to minimize inaccuracy and inconsistency as a result of misinterpretation. References to other methods are also indicated, although in different contexts the meaning of the same criterion may vary.

The scientific value is calculated as the sum score of the ten criteria, according to the following formula:

ScV = Geo1+Geo2+Geo3+Geo4+Geo5+Geo6+Geo7+Geo8+Geo9+Geo10, with a maximum achievable score of 10.

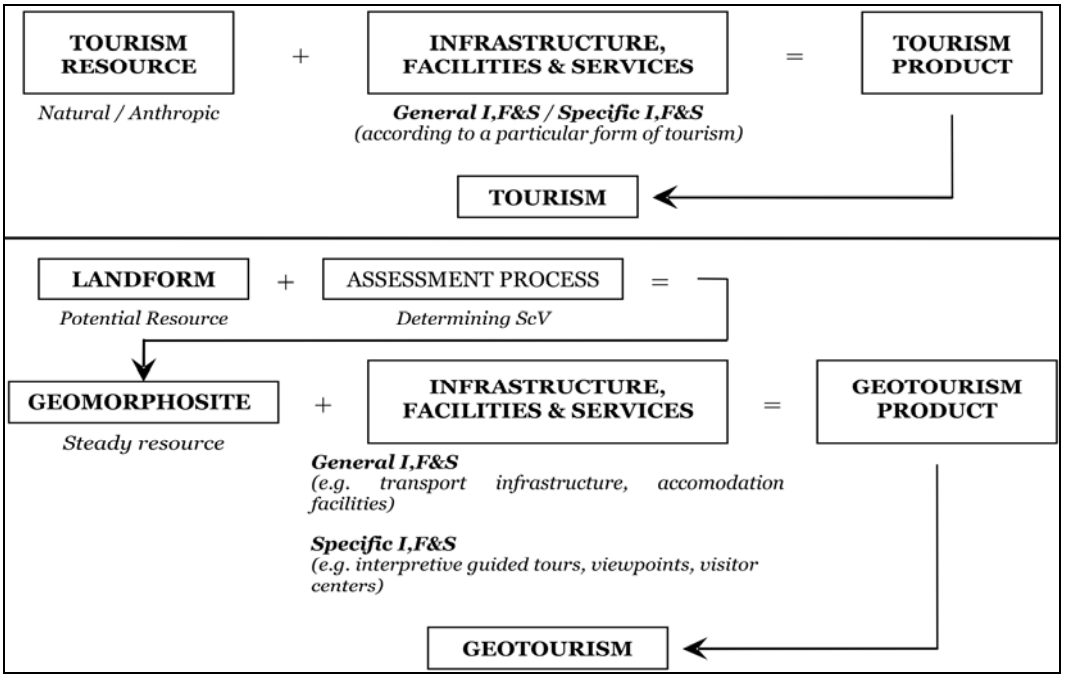


Figure 4. Tourism products are an inherent condition for the existence of any form of tourism

Far from being a goal in itself, the evaluation of the geomorphosites' scientific value is merely an intermediate step (Bruschi & Cendrero, 2005) in achieving the reasonable exploitation and conservation of geomorphosites as independent geotourism

products (Figure 4). Landforms are potential resources for geotourism which, following the assessment of their scientific value, become steady resources or "*geomorphosites*". As an adequate management framework is implemented (hereby including good quality infrastructure, general and specific services and facilities), geomorphosites become authentic geotourism products.

Of all nature-based forms of tourism, geotourism is the only one that is concerned with the protection of the abiotic nature while at the same time it equally seeks to involve tourists in leisure and educational activities. Geotourism "*involves visitation to geosites for the purposes of passive recreation, engaging a sense of wonder, appreciation and learning*" (Newsome & Dowling, 2006, pp.3-4). Consequently it promotes an open approach towards geodiversity conservation, in the sense that areas bearing a scientific importance are not preserved exclusively by means of isolation, but by encouraging constant yet controlled tourist access while providing tools for an interactive interpretation of the Earth's history. "*With appropriate interpretation, any landscape, rock outcrop or landform can be made as exciting as spectacular displays of wildflowers and concentrations of wild animals*" (Idem, p.14). Although geotourism itself may be regarded as a tool for "*geodiversity conservation*", its more restricted approach focusing on the scientific value of geo(morpho)sites can nevertheless be broadened when dealing with additional values (Reynard, 2005; Reynard et al., 2007) or with geoheritage elements of outstanding cultural value (see Hose, 2005 approach on geoheritage).

INTERPRETING GEOMORPHOSITES – DECODING THE LANGUAGE OF LANDFORMS

The last step of the study aims to create a logical scheme to provide a model approach for the interpretation of the evolution of geomorphosites. While engaging in geotourism activities, specially trained guides explain the formation of landscapes in general and of geomorphosites in particular. In order to facilitate and enhance the tourist experience, the interpretation process should start from what is commonly visible for both the guide and the tourists, namely the Outer characteristics (*surface*, *height/depth/breadth*, *degree of preservation* and *chromatic*). Based on their careful observation, the Inner characteristics as well as the relations that establish between the two categories will be gradually revealed and explained. In a complex interpretive process, the Derived characteristics are essential reference parameters that help the guide decide what aspects must be emphasized.

In order to properly understand and interpret the evolution of a geomorphosite, three additional attributes of landforms should be considered, namely the *genesis*, *geological material* and *age*. Although they do not feature as self-standing criteria within the assessment method, they are essential for the interpretation process. The *genesis* refers to a landform's origin (e.g. glacial, periglacial, erosional, karst) and represents the premise for further explaining its formation. The *geological material* refers to the landform's composition which ensures a certain degree of resistance to the external agents and the processes they generate. The *age* refers to the approximate geological period when a geomorphosite was formed and can sometimes be correlated with the age of other genetically identical geomorphosites.

The *genesis*, *geological material* and *age* of landforms vary in response to the complexity and evolution of both tectonics and environmental conditions that occurred in geological time and are of major importance in understanding the current structure and shape of landforms. However it may prove hard and unrealistic to argue that a landform is of greater importance than another simply because it dates from an earlier period or because it has a different origin or composition (Grandgirard, 1999). Consequently, these three inherent attributes, although essential for the interpretive process, are hardly quantifiable and were not integrated within the assessment method as valid individual criteria.

THE BUCEGI MOUNTAINS OF ROMANIA'S SOUTHERN CARPATHIANS – A SHORT INTRODUCTION

The Bucegi Mountains are located at the easternmost edge of Romania's Southern Carpathians and are almost entirely encompassed within an IUCN[7] category V protected area, namely the Bucegi Natural Park. Their overall geological configuration is influenced by the suspended syncline – a concave folded structure with both limbs dipping towards a central valley – thus creating a trough bordered to the west and east by steep escarpments. The eastern flank of this syncline displays a wide and relatively flat surface commonly referred to as "*the Bucegi plateau*". As a result of wind and water erosion as well as thermal variations, distinctive erosional micro-landforms lie scattered across it.

With ever-growing numbers of tourists especially during summer time, the area is currently regarded as Romania's top mountain destination. During the last years, however, tourism activities and intensive overgrazing concentrated particularly within the Bucegi plateau generated negative impacts on the environment; among them littering, intense soil erosion, deforestation and general landscape degradation (Werren, 2007, Mihai et al., 2009). Consequently it is necessary that awareness should be raised regarding landforms' vulnerability and interpretation should be adopted as an educational tool. Interpretation helps tourists "*gain a better understanding of the natural environment* [...] *thereby enhancing their experience*" (Chin et al., 2000, p.31), while education "*also has an important role in terms of communicating the reasons behind management actions* [...]" (Idem, p.31) within a natural protected area.

CASE STUDY: THE SPHINX

The method was applied on ten erosional micro-landforms scattered across a tiny area in the north-central sector of the Bucegi plateau, relatively close to Babele chalet (Figure 5.a.). Their comparative analysis played a key-role in testing the eligibility and relevance of the intrinsic characteristics as valid criteria in the assessment method.

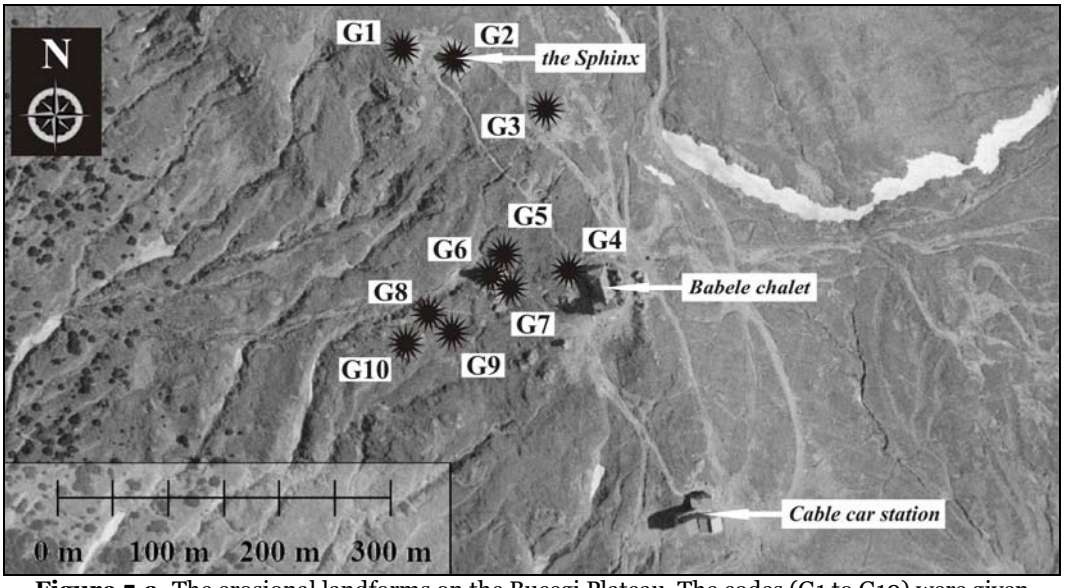


Figure 5.a. The erosional landforms on the Bucegi Plateau. The codes (G1 to G10) were given according to their local distribution from north to south and from east to west.
(Source: satellite image from Global Mapper v13.00, with subsequent annotations by the author)

[7] International Union for Conservation of Nature

Given the many instances of such landforms with common origin, in order to avoid a random selection, the geographical location on the one hand and the physiognomy on the other were considered.

The comparative analysis also confirmed the hypothesis according to which any of the micro-landforms possesses an equally important scientific value and can thus constitute the object of a scientific interpretation, regardless its degree of attractiveness among tourists. The ten micro-landforms can be divided in three major groups: G1-G4 comprises four individual geomorphosites, located north of Babele chalet. The unusual physiognomy of especially G2 (the Sphinx) and G4 ("*Babele*"="*The Old Ladies*") accounts for high numbers of tourists every day. G5-G7 comprises a group of three landforms scattered westward of the Babele chalet on the smooth slope descending towards Ialomiţa valley. Their less striking physiognomy determines a lower degree of attractiveness. G8-G10 comprises a group of three landforms located further away from the previous ones. They were especially selected because of their relative remoteness and ordinary shapes. Although tourists may regard them as unattractive they have the same scientific relevance as the others (Figure 5.b.).

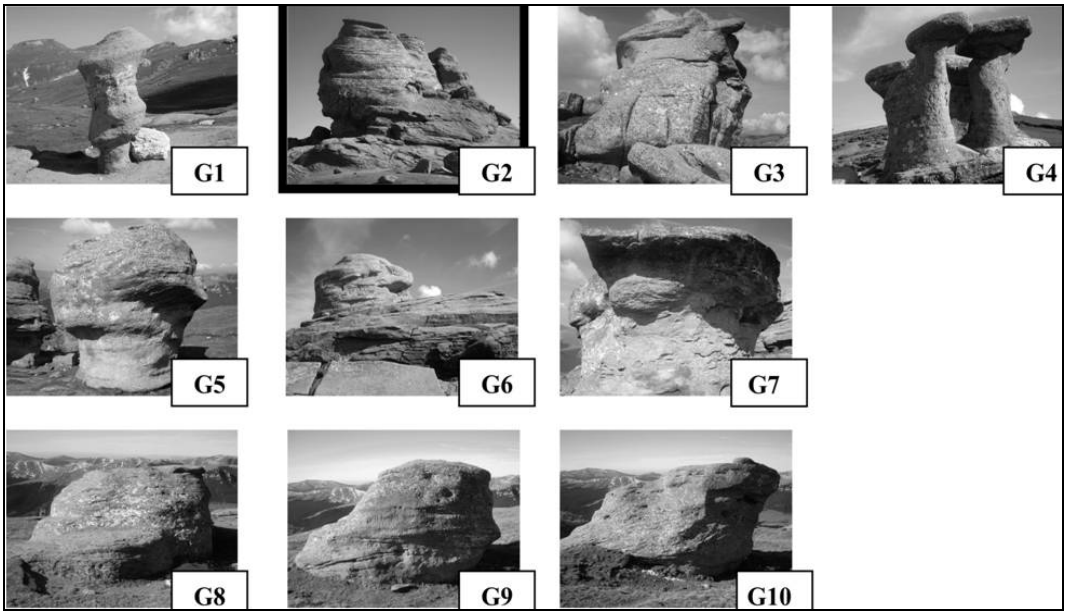


Figure 5.b. The ten micro-landforms can be divided in three major groups (G1-G4; G5-G7; G8-G10) according to their degree of attractiveness and proximity to the Babele chalet

The derived characteristics – *uniqueness* and *representativeness* – bear significant relevance in the evaluation since they provide a general overview on the results of the comparative analysis. On the one hand, as far as *uniqueness* is concerned, landforms acquired no score. Although this may decrease the overall scientific value, hence revealing their common origin and composition, it does not alter, in any way, the importance of any of the other characteristics. On the other hand, in terms of *representativeness*, the landforms acquired different values. In the first group (G1-G4), G2 and G4 both received the maximum score of 1, while G1 and G3, as well as the entire geomorphosites in the second group (G5-G7) received the average score of 0.5. The last group (G8-G10) earned no points. Following the comparative evaluation, the Sphinx – a geomorphological landmark of Romania's (Southern) Carpathians and a major tourist attraction in the Bucegi Mountains – proved to be the most representative. If two or more landforms in the study area share a common origin, a

comparative analysis should be performed not only to properly estimate the first two criteria (*Surface* and *Height/Depth/Breadth*) but also to obtain a deeper insight on the differences occurring among identical geomorphosites. This will allow further comparisons between larger areas comprising genetically distinct geomorphosites.

Table 3. Assessment of the scientific value of the Sphinx, based on the evaluation of its intrinsic geo(morpho)logical characteristics

		0	**0.25**	**0.50**	**0.75**	**1**
OUTER (VISIBLE) **CHARACTERISTICS**						
Geo1	Surface	tiny	small	moderate	large	**huge**
Note: Of all the erosional micro-landforms, the Sphinx has the greatest surface (100 m²). A comparative scale is attached in **APPENDICES Figure 1**						
Geo2	Height	tiny	small	moderate	large	**huge**
Note: Of all the erosional micro-landforms, the Sphinx has the greatest height (□10 m). The whole structure was considered, from bottom to top. A comparative scale is attached in **APPENDICES Figure 2**						
Geo3	Degree of preservation	deteriorated to a great extent	-	**deteriorated to a small extent**	-	intact
Note: The overall structure is slightly deteriorated due to the cumulated actions of the external agents.						
Geo4	Chromatic	low contrast	-	**medium contrast**	-	high contrast
Note: The Sphinx creates a moderate colour contrast with its surrounding environment. However, this may vary according to the time of day, the intensity or amount of sunlight and the season which also influence to a great extent the overall chromatic of the alpine vegetation. The general colour of the structure itself is the result of alternating layers of sandstone and conglomerate with hues that vary from light and dark brown to grey, white and black.						
		0	**0.25**	**0.50**	**0.75**	**1**
INNER (LESS VISIBLE) **CHARACTERISTICS**						
Geo5	External agents and processes	1	-	2	-	**≥3**
Note: The Sphinx is the result of three active external agents: *water* resulting from rain and snowmelt (determining the main processes of sheet and rill erosion), *wind* (generating processes of deflation and abrasion) and *thermal amplitudes* (determining successive freeze-thaw processes).						
Geo6	Dynamics	fast-evolving	-	noticeable	-	**deducible**
Note: Overall dynamics is slow and may only be deduced. However, repetitive freeze-thaw processes generate hollows and fissures whose constant evolution is noticeable.						
Geo7	Auxiliary or integrated geomorphological elements	nonexistent	-	hardly identifiable	-	**readily identifiable**
Note: A close examination of the structure reveals hollows and fissures especially concentrated along the natural stratification of sandstone layers. Around the base of the Sphinx permeable and cemented sand deposits are clearly visible.						
Geo8	Auxiliary or integrated geological elements	**nonexistent or insignificant**	-	hardly identifiable	-	readily identifiable
Note: -						
		0	**0.25**	**0.50**	**0.75**	**1**
DERIVED CHARACTERISTICS						
Geo9	Uniqueness	**common occurrence**	-	rare occurrence	-	unique occurrence
Note: In terms of origin (erosional landform) and geological material (sandstone and conglomerate), the Sphinx is a common presence within the north-central sector of the Bucegi plateau.						
Geo10	Representativeness	insignificant	low	moderate	high	**very high**
Note: The Sphinx stands out through its unusual anthropomorphized shape, greatly resembling a human profile. This provides it with a great educational relevance.						

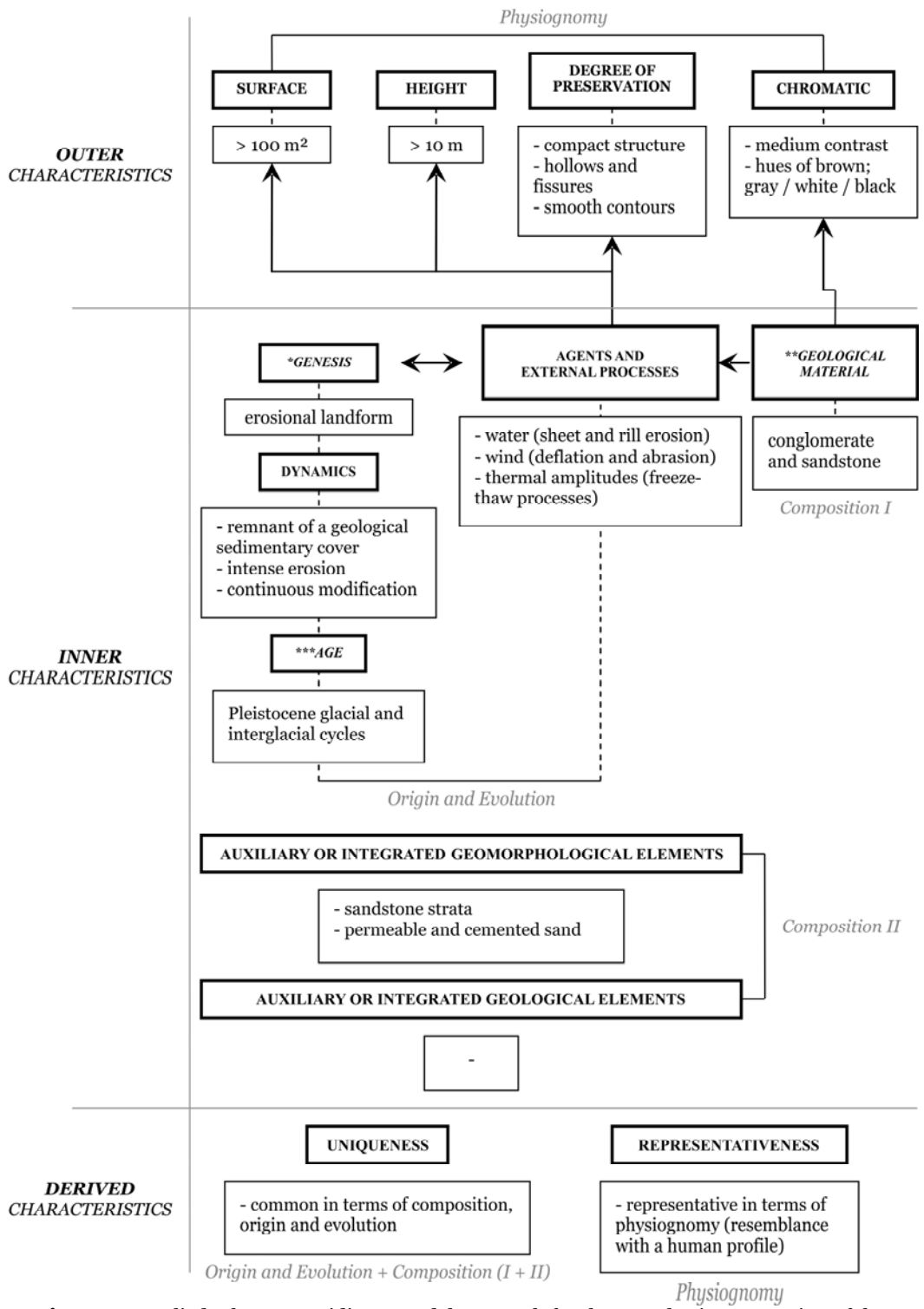


Figure 6. Applied scheme providing a model approach for the complex interpretation of the scientific value of an erosional micro-landform (the Sphinx)

ScV (Sphinx) = Geo1+Geo2+Geo3+Geo4+Geo5+Geo6+Geo7+Geo8+Geo9+Geo10 = 1+1+0.5+0.5+ 1+1+1+0+0+1 = **7**

Following the assessment of the scientific value of the Sphinx, an interpretation scheme was created (Figure 6).

INTERPRETING THE ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION OF THE SPHINX

GENESIS (Premise for the interpretation) The Sphinx is a remnant of an old and compact sedimentary layer that expanded across the north-central sector of the Bucegi plateau. This structure has been gradually eroded in geological time, resulting in isolated patches with different sizes and shapes.

Outer characteristics

SURFACE and HEIGHT The Sphinx is the largest (>100 m²) and the highest (>10 m) of all similar geomorphosites from the Bucegi plateau.

DEGREE OF PRESERVATION and CHROMATIC It appears as an overall compact and massive structure, with hues generally varying from yellow to brown, but also white and black. According to the season and the weather conditions the contrast with the surrounding environment is obvious yet not striking.

Inner characteristics

GEOLOGICAL MATERIAL The Sphinx is made of sandstone and conglomerate. While sandstone is the result of sand grains being cemented together into rock, conglomerate is created when gravel and other clasts larger than sand grains are cemented together into a solid mass. According to the amount of silica or calcite they contain, cements may be more or less resistant, thus increasing or limiting the action of the external agents. The chromatic of the geomorphosite reflects the natural colour of the geological materials.

Figure 7.a. (left) Fissures and hollows occur as rock particles are being carried away by wind and water erosion; Figure 7.b. (right) Freeze-thaw processes lead to their subsequent expansion.

EXTERNAL AGENTS AND PROCESSES The Sphinx is the result of the cumulated action of three main agents: water, wind and thermal amplitudes. During rainfalls, water and wind have the greatest impact on its surface. Rock fragments are ejected, then carried away and finally deposited. In time, heavy rainfall may cause severe damage on the structure since water flowing down the steep slopes sometimes concentrates along narrow gullies corresponding to layer stratifications, generating fissures and tiny hollows (Figure 7.a). When temperatures fall below 0°C, water filling these gaps turns into ice which expands putting huge pressures on the rock walls – approx. 2,000-6,000 kg/cm² (Posea et al., 1976, p.114). This process allows fissures to enlarge (Figure 7.b.). In the case of conglomerate, selective erosion loosens the cohesion of rock fragments according to their resistance and degree of cementation.

DYNAMICS and *AGE* The evolution of the Sphinx is a long and complex process that has been lasting for tens and hundreds of thousands of years. The Earth's climate suffered major changes with most of them occurring in the Pleistocene (cca 1,800,000 – 11,700 BC), a geological stage dominated by glacial and interglacial cycles, during which continental glaciers expanded and retreated. During the warmer interglacial periods, the processes generated by external agents reached their maximum intensity.[8]

SURFACE, HEIGHT and DEGREE OF PRESERVATION are determined by the evolution and intensity of the processes generated by the external agents. As time elapses, the Sphinx gradually decreases in surface and height. Although the overall dynamics of the structure goes unnoticed, at a component level, modifications are noticeable.

AUXILIARY OR INTEGRATED GEOMORPHOLOGICAL ELEMENTS Apart from gaps accounting for different erosion rates, cemented and permeable sands surrounding the Sphinx are mainly deposited at the base of its northern and western faces (Figure 8). The sandstone layers are predominantly horizontal. Unconsolidated sand in response to the long-lasting erosion of the Sphinx also reveals the cyclic process of sand grains. Once they are carried away by water and wind, they are laid at the base of the structure where in time they recement together into sandstone.

AUXILIARY OR INTEGRATED GEOLOGICAL ELEMENTS No significant alien rocks or traces of fossils are found.

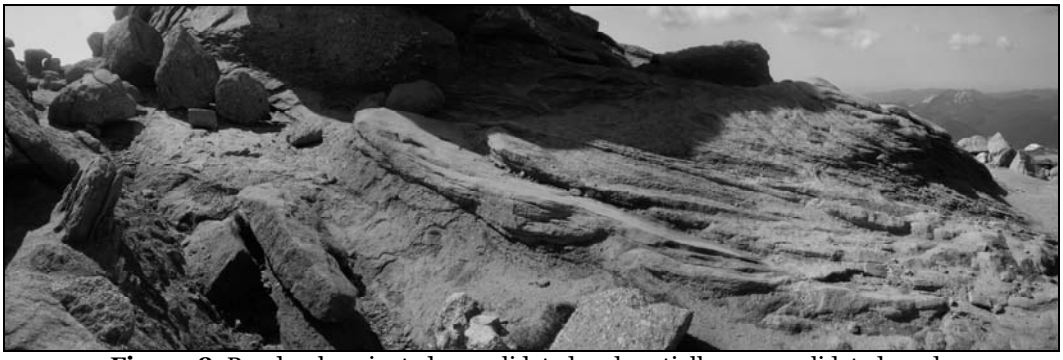


Figure 8. Randomly-oriented consolidated and partially unconsolidated sands at the base of the western face of the Sphinx

[8] According to V. Micalevich-Velcea, the Sphinx is a periglacial structure. Out of the two subsequent stages that occurred – the fossil and the present periglacial – the former, correlated with an interglacial stage, had a decisive role in the formation of the erosional landforms which are nowadays encountered throughout the Bucegi plateau (Micalevich-Velcea, 1961, pp.93-94)

Derived characteristics

UNIQUENESS In terms of genesis, composition and evolution, the Sphinx is definitely not a unique presence on the Bucegi plateau, but one of many leftovers of a compact layer that has been worn away by erosion.

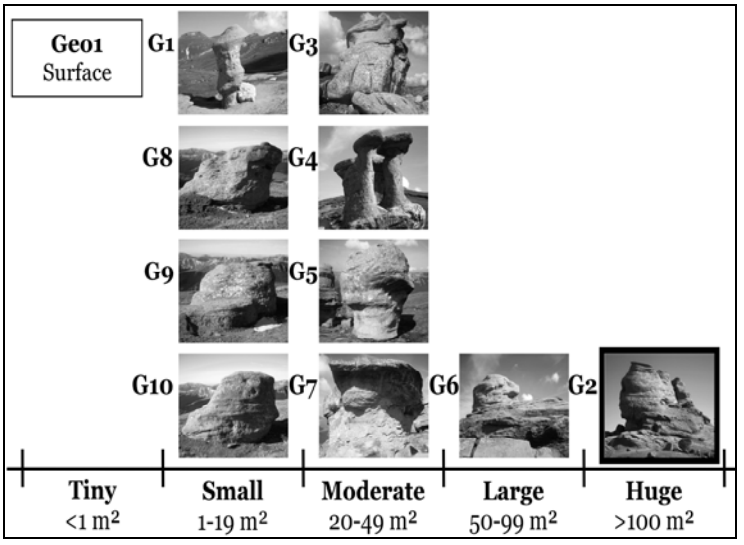
REPRESENTATIVENESS Located less than five minutes away from the Babele chalet, the Sphinx displays remarkable and well-individualized anthropomorphic features that influence to a great extent its attractiveness among tourists. This also increases its educational value for geotourism.

CONCLUSION

Geodiversity elements around the world are relevant to understanding and reconstructing specific stages in the geological evolution of the Earth. Among them, geomorphosites are complex entities consisting of two major components: a landform and a scientific value. They are, at the same time, an inherent condition for the practice of geotourism.

The assessment of a geomorphosite's scientific value and its further interpretation require a three-step research study. The first step implies the identification and classification of the intrinsic attributes of landforms, comprising both Outer and Inner characteristics which may be easily observed or only deduced. The second step consists of an evaluation process employing an assessment method, according to which the attributes of landforms acquire a score. Subjective bias is common during any assessment process, regardless of the object of the analysis, and may severely alter the final results. In order to minimize its impact, detailed arguments and explanations must be provided according to field observations. As the case may be, comparative analyses of genetically identical landforms should also be performed since they provide a deep perspective on the morphology and evolution of similar geomorphosites and also enable the possibility to expand and diversify further studies. Once ascertained, the scientific value of geomorphosites becomes an educational value. The last step, which also marks the transition from the geomorphosite evaluation to the geotourism interpretation, consists of the elaboration of a scheme providing a model approach for the interpretation of the scientific value. A proper management framework ensuring access, services and facilities is a major prerequisite in order to acquire a final geotourism product.

APPENDICES



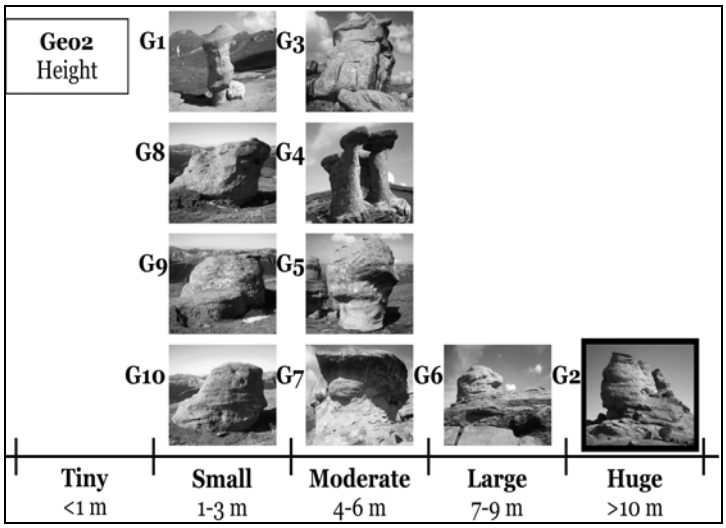


Figure 1. and **Figure 2.** Comparative scale for the surface / height evaluation of the Sphinx. Nine other genetically identical geomorphosites were considered

The erosional landforms scattered across the Bucegi plateau share a common origin, age and composition. Regardless of their attractiveness among tourists, they bear an equally important scientific relevance in reconstructing a recent stage of the geological history of the Bucegi Mountains and its environment conditions. The Sphinx, however, is the most representative of all similar geomorphosites. Due to both its complex morphology and anthropomorphic features, it acquired the highest scientific value (7) and was thus considered as the most appropriate example to support the interpretive process.

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TRANSYLVANIAN HOTELS AND THEIR ECONOMIC IMPACTS ON TOURISM

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Abstract: This paper aims to identify the economic impacts of the Transylvanian hotels on the tourism considering three important aspects: the implicit relationship between tourism and the hotel sector; tourism as a socio-economic phenomenon, expanding constantly and generated by the human need to know, to rest and recover physically and psychologically; and the tourism hotel infrastructure with its main role to assure the appropriate tourism development. The method of the longitudinal study will stress out the important changes in the hotel sector for 2008-2012 and also the importance of the hotels as tourist accommodation units within a tourist region.

Key words: tourism, hotels, impact, change, economy

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INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The degree of tourism development in a taxonomic unit influences the dynamics of the tourist flows. Concerning the hotels, it has to be highlighted their effects on the tourism phenomenon. Altough the hotel as tourist accommodation unit rarely represents the main motivation of the travel (excepting the destination-hotels) however the hotel sector has an important role as contributor to the revenues increasing of an area. Tourists choose those destinations which fulfill their needs and expectances in terms of the tourist offer of the visited destination including the accommodation tourist units offer; they evaluate this offer considering: quality, quantity and diversity. On the other hand, the hotel sector is impacted by the degree of tourist development (Snak et al., 2003). Therefore the relationship between the tourism and the hotel sector are in both directions. The tourism development is subject to the degree of development of a certain tourism area and of tourist services quality offered while the tourist demand it is determined by the tourist material base including the tourist accommodation units. Cities as main tourism destinations, "*should be evaluated according to their hotel industry capacity*" (Aksoz & Bâc, 2012, p.7). Tourism development depends on the existence of tourist natural and anthropic resources (Berbecaru & Botez, 1977). It is important to mention that tourism development represents an organizational process of the tourist space (Erdeli & Gheorghilaş, 2006). The dimensions of a hotel investment involve a special background (Falniţă, & Băbăiţă, 2003). The hotel sector evolves in interdependence with the tourist activity (Cosmescu, 1998) and the succes of a tourist destination it depends on the hotel sector development (Pop et al., 2007).

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From an economic perspective, tourism represents an attractive option for the development of an area because of its main advantages (Fletcher, 2012, p.175):

- *„apparently, a product easy to develop;*
- *prevail the small and medium-sized firms which imply the existence of a lower operating capital;*
- *compared to other areas, does not depend in such a great extent of the technoloy evolution;*
- *can rapidly attract foreign capital;*
- *greater capacity to generate jobs*".

In most cases, the economic impact studies in tourism, focuses on highlighting the positive aspects and less the negative aspects such as:

- consuming the capital of other sectors;
- the lack of experience an specialized knowledge can compromise the business development;
- seasonality of jobs;
- tourism and implicitly the hospitality industry cannot develop without the existence of general infrastructure.

It is also considered that the economic impacts are important *„for central and local governments and the private sector*" (Horvath, 2011, p. 76).

The economic impacts of the hotels on the tourism can be direct, for example the tourism expenditures; indirect and induced such as the reinvestment of the profits in the hotel development and purchase of goods and services from the part of the tourism employees. The economic impact studies performed in the hotel sector, is very often limited to highlight the differences between the national hotels and the international ones; the main conclusion being that the international hotels have a small contribution to the improvement of the economic situation of a region or country (Sharma, 2006). Also the multiplier effect of tourism, representing the sum of the direct, indirect and induced effects, is highlighting the monetary unit circuit obtained from tourism services and stressed out by the expenditure of tourists and tourism employees. The dimension of the multiplier effect of tourism depends on (Archer, 1982, p.123):

- "*dimension of the studied area;*
- *proportion of services and goods imported in order to be consumed by tourists;*
- *dimension of tourist flows;*
- *tourism expenditure typology;*
- *availability for local products and services;*
- *main characteristics of the consumer behavior from a certain region*".

The analyse of the economic impact follows the estimation of changes occurring in a region when it comes to expenditures, incomes, availability of jobs, tourism policies, events and hotels and their facilities (Tyrell & Johnston, 2006). Tyrell T.J. and Johnston R.J. (2006) stress out that seldom analysing the economic impact it is confused with analysing the cost-benefit when they represents two different concepts. The economic impact analyse has the role to quantify the economic activity or the incomes while the cost-benefit analyse is about estimating the net economic benefits. Hushak L.J. (1987) and Edwards S.F.(1990) think that analysing the economic impact it is not about the identification of those policies and situations hich generates social benefits, but to identify those situations which can generate a significant increase in the tourism market activity, in this study the hotel market.

Therefore it is important to make the difference between the economic impact of the tourists expenditures and the economic impact of the tourism through different facilities development (Page, 1995).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present study aims to identify the economic impacts of the hotels on the tourism of Transylvania through the investments made in the hotel sector, the Gross Domestic Product, turnovers created and the earnings of the employees in this sector. The longitudinal study represents the main method approached. Given that tourism as a specific branch of the economy it is not found in the System of National Accounts as a different branch and the hotel sector as a NACE (Classification of Economic Activities in the European Community) section it exists only under the name of „*Hotels and Restaurants*", in order to identify the economic impact of the hotels on tourism, there will be analysed the macroeconomic indicators of the NACE section "*Hotels and restaurants*" from Transylvania implying its 10 counties: Alba, Bistriţa-Năsăud, Braşov, Cluj, Covasna, Harghita, Hunedoara, Mureş, Sălaj and Sibiu.

The data for this study was collected from the National Institute of Statistics and the Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism (2012). Due to the lack of available data for the whole analyzed period for the choosen indicators, in this study it was approached the method of estimation through extrapolation in order to create an image about the evolution of the hotel sector in terms of economy.

All the estimated data are marked in the charts with the "*" sign. Through the analyse of the positive dimension (Hall & Page, 2000, p.122; Getz, 1977; Mathieson & Wall, 1982; Ritchie, 1984; Hall, 1992;) (Figure 1) and negative dimension (Hall & Page, 2000, p.122 after Getz, 1977; Mathieson & Wall, 1982; Ritchie, 1984; Hall, 1992), (Figure 2) of the economic impacts of hotels on the tourism, it is applied a case study on a 5 stars hotel from Cluj-Napoca in order to identify the changes occurred at regional, but also at local level.

It is necessary to mention that the case study has the role of a model of identification the economic impact of hotels on tourism. It has to be mentioned that concerning these impacts, they occur in both directions: the development of hotels influences the tourism development and vice versa.

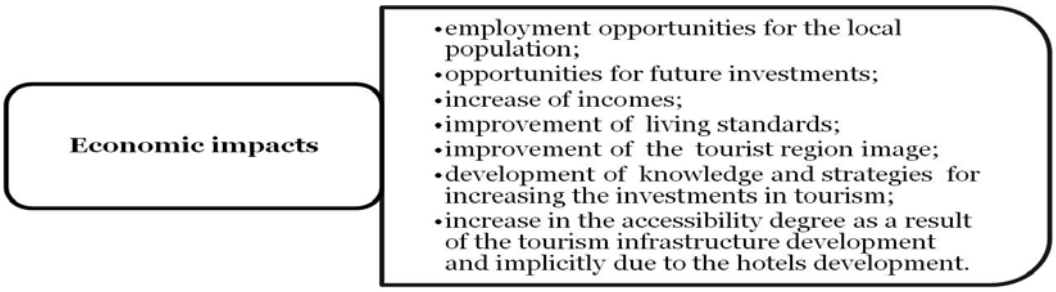

Figure 1. Positive dimensions of the hotels economic impacts on tourism
(Source: Hall & Page, 2000, p.122; Getz, 1977; Mathieson & Wall, 1982; Ritchie, 1984; Hall, 1992)

Figure 2. Negative dimensions of the hotels economic impacts on tourism
(Source: Hall & Page, 2000, p.122; Getz, 1977; Mathieson & Wall, 1982; Ritchie, 1984; Hall, 1992)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In Transylvania, in 2012, the hotel sector dimension (Table 1) consisted in 354 hotels with 16994 rooms, representing 27% of the total amount of hotels from Romania.

Table 1. Dimension of the hotel sector from Transylvania
(Source: NIS and MDRT, 2012)

Total no. of hotels in Romania	Total no. of hotels in Transylvania	% from the total no. of hotels from Romania	Total no. of rooms in the hotels of Transylvania
1308	354	27%	16994

Tourism industry includes those tourism units with tourism as its main function and includes the following sectors (Frenţ, 2009): accommodation, food&beverage, transport, travel organizers, leisure attractions, destination management organisations (national, regional and local tourism offices). Highlighting the economic effects of the hotels on tourism, the first analized indicator will be the investements made in this sector. This consists in purchase of goods in order to generate greater investments than the amount invested. Figure 3 shows that in the 2008-2012 period, the largest *Gross Investments* in the "*Hotels and restaurants*" NACE section were made in the Center development region which implies the counties of: Alba, Braşov, Covasna, Harghita, Mureş and Sibiu) in 2008 (aproximately 600 millions RON); after this year the involution beginns due mainly to the global economic recession.

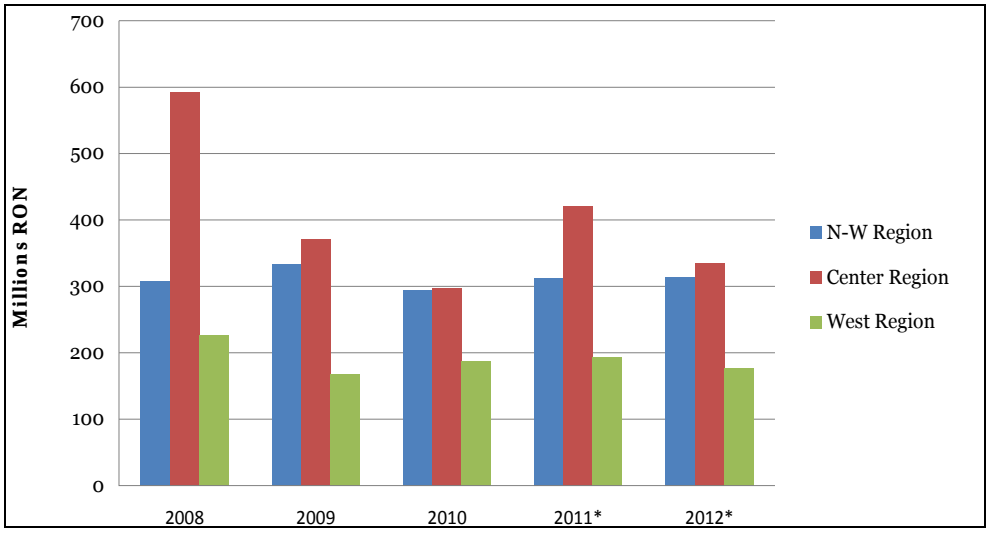

Figure 3. Gross Investments in the "*Hotels and restaurants*" NACE section in 2008-2012
(Source: National Institute of Statistics, 2013, for the period: 2008-2010)

Gross Domestic Product (GDP), as a macroeconomic indicator which express the economic performance of a certain country, region, county or city, for the "*Hotels and restaurants*" (Figure 4) NACE section, the GDP registered for the 2008-2012 period shows continuous changes, the highest values being registered for the CENTER development region, followed by the NW development region and West development region. The economic performance of a county attract new investments and determines the development of the existing businesses. The Gross Domestic Product registered in the studied section regresses in 2009. The situation will improve in 2010, but in 2012 presents values below the year of 2008. The GDP registered by the „*Hotels and restaurants*" NACE section contributes with 1,8 to 2,2% to the regional GDP.

The *Turnover* represents a macroeconomic indicator which express the economic performance of a company through its incomes. Figure 5 shows that the highest value of *Turnover* for the „*Hotels and restaurants*" NACE section was registered in 2008 from the 0-9 employees cathegory, followed by the hotels with 10-49 employees. The *Turnover* regresses starting with 2009, except with 2010 when the tourist units from the cathegory of 10-49 employees progresses easily. In 2012, the tourist unit from the 0-9 employees and 10-49 employees cathegory counts a *Turnover* of over 1200 millions RON, but remains below the values of the year 2008 while the tourist units with 50-249 employees and those with more than 250 employees regresses. The lowest value of the turnover from the studied region and section, it is registered by the tourist units with 250 employees and over 250 employees. In this respect, an explanation can be the highest expenditures which a bigger tourist unit can imply.

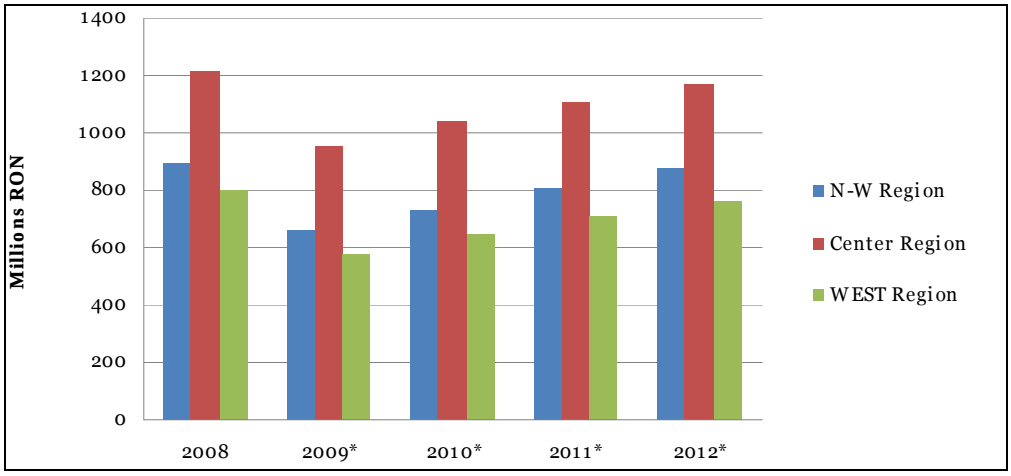

Figure 4. Gross Domestic Product registered by the "*Hotels and restaurants*" NACE section from the Center, NW and West development region in 2008-2012
(Source: for the year of 2008: National Institute of Statistics, 2013)

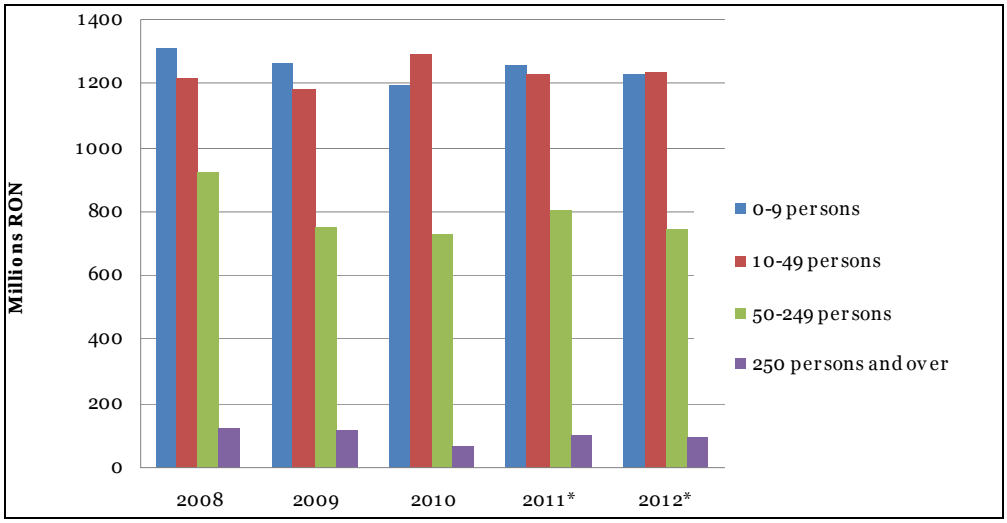

Figure 5. Turnover registered by the "*Hotels and restaurants*" NACE section for the Center, NW and W development region in 2008-2012
(Source: 2008-2010: National Institute of Statistics, 2013)

Concerning the evolution of the tourist units depending on the number of employees (Figure 6), it is remarquable that the cathegory with 0-9 employees prevails.

The *Average Gross Nominal Monthly Wage* for the „*Hotels and restaurants*" NACE section employees for the 2001-2012 period, shows a progress until 2008, mainly in the following counties (Figure 7): Mureş, Sibiu, Cluj, Hunedoara, Bistriţa-Năsăud, Covasna and Braşov with a wage of 800-1000 RON while in Harghita, Alba and Sălaj this value is under 800 RON. In 2009 a strong decrease with over 200 RON is registered. Situation will improve in the next 3 years, but in 2012 the value of the *Average Gross Nominal Monthly Wage* remains under the value of the year of 2008.

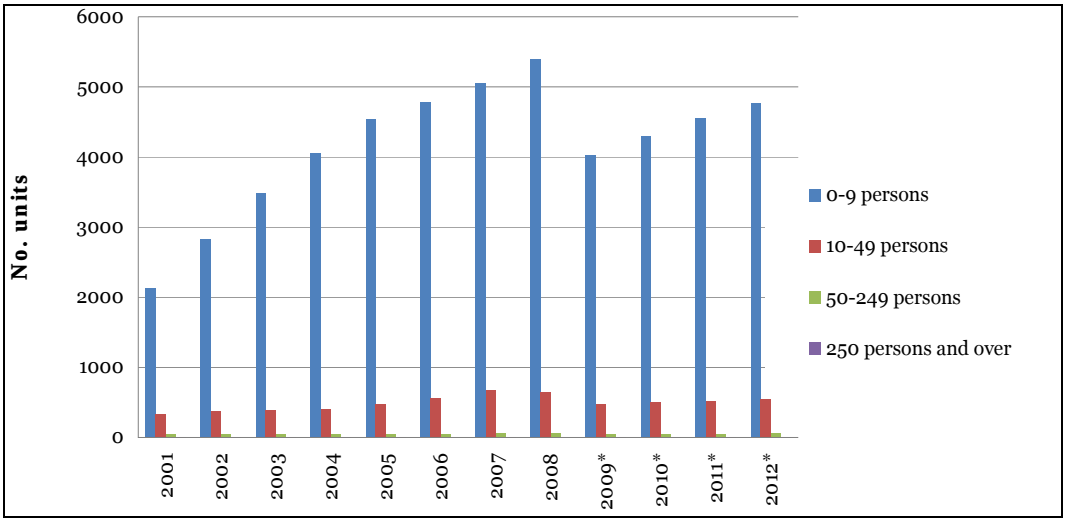

Figure 6. Evolution of the companies depending on the employees number from the „*Hotels and restaurants*" NACE section from Transylvania in 2001-2012
(Source: National Institute of Statistics, 2013, for 2001-2008)

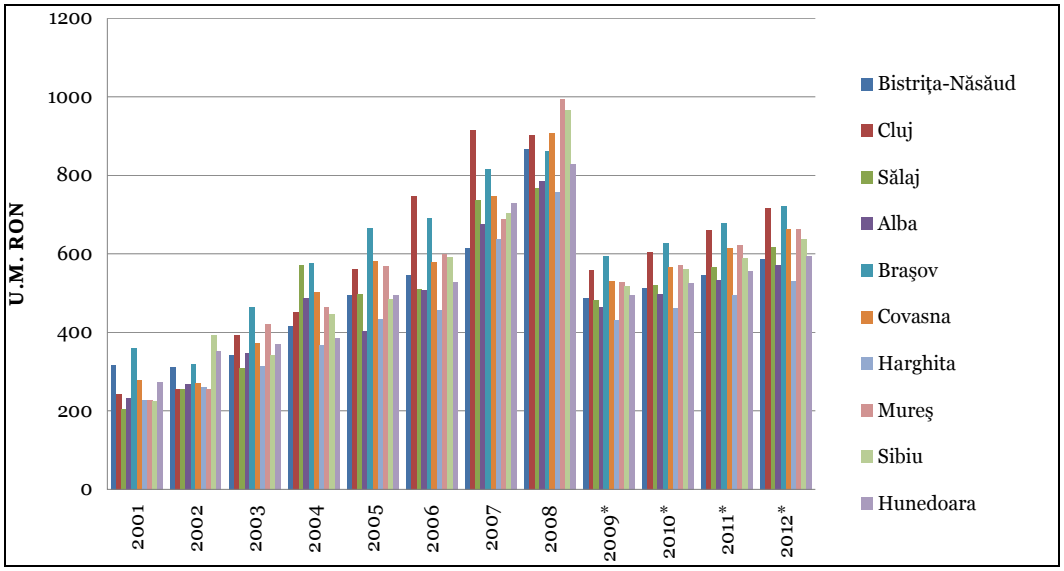

Figure 7. Average Gross Nominal Monthly Wage registered in the "*Hotels and restaurants*" NACE section from Transylvania in 2001-2012
(Source: National Institute of Statistics, 2013)

The *Average Number of Employees* of the „*Hotels and restaurants*" NACE section in 2001-2012 shows the highest values in the county of Brasov (Figure 8). In 2001, the county holds a number of under 3000 employees and in 2012, over 5000 employees. The peak is registered in 2008 when the county of Brasov count over 6000 employees in the studied section. After this year the situation will regress until 2011. The global economic recession will determine layoffs, wage cuts with efects on the situation of *Average number of employees*. Besides these factors, the population migration and especially the work force migration have negative effects on the situation of the employees in the „*Hotels and restaurants*" NACE section from Transylvania. In 2012 a slow improvement it can be observed with values situated under the year of 2008.

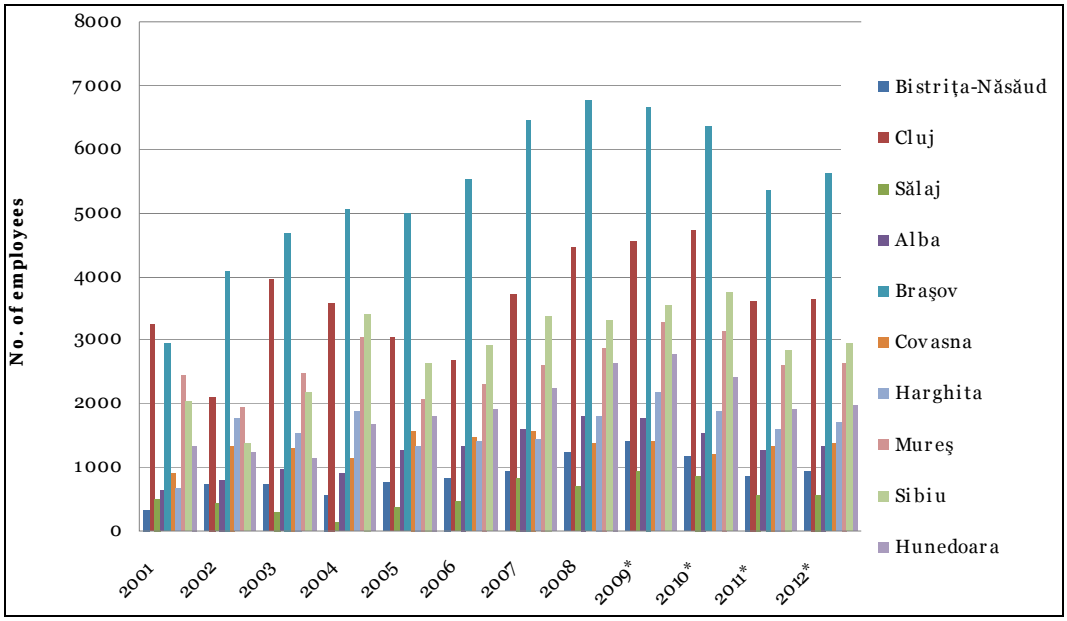

Figure 8. Evolution of the average number of employees from the „*Hotels and restaurants*" NACE section from Transylvania in 2001-2012
(Source: National Institute of Statistics, 2013, for 2001-2008)

Highlighting the economic impact of the hotels on the tourism of a certain area can be done analysing the indicators of the incomes generated by the hotels, the tourist expenditures and also the distribution of these expenditures, the evolution of occupancy rate, average rate per room, seasonality and their implications on the incomes. Analysing the activity of a 5 stars hotel from the city of Cluj-Napoca and corelating these indicators with those at regional level, contributes to identify the positive and negative economic effects which the hotels have on the tourism of Transylvania. First, the analyse of *overnights* in the accommodation units of Transylvania, then the analyse of *overnights* registered in the hotels of Transylvania and also for the 5 stars hotel from Cluj-Napoca for the 2008-2012 (Figure 9) period stress out that the evolution trend is the same excepting the 2009-2010 period when the number of *overnights* in the hotels of Transylvania regress despite the increase registered at the 5 stars hotel.

The overnights in the accommodation units of Transylvania regress, a slow improvement being registered in 2011. Therefore beginning with 2008, the *overnights* in Transylvania decrease with -18,5% while the overnights registered in the 5 stars hotel decrease with -18% until 2009. In 2009-2010 the decrease at the level of Transylvania is -1,73% while an increasing of 70,78% is registered at the level of the 5 stars hotel.

In 2010-2011 at both levels it is about an icreasing of 19,34% in case of Transylvania and 22,30% in case of the 5 stars studied hotel. Starting with 2011 and until 2012, the overnights registered regress with -6,56% in Transylvania and with -27,99% in the 5 stars studied hotel. At regional level, it is remarquable that in the year of 2008 when the global recession begins, the number of *overnights* decrease with -10,73% while at the 5 stars hotel level increase with 23,32%.

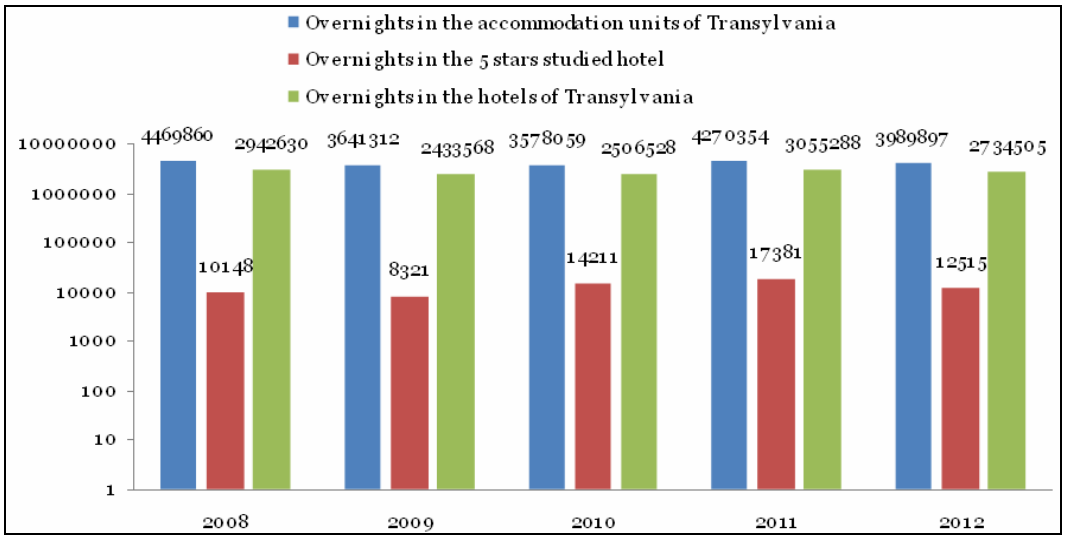

Figure 9. Evolution of the overnights registered in the accommodation units of Transylvanya, in the hotels of Transylvania and in the 5 stars hotel from Cluj-Napoca in 2008-2012
(Source: National Institute of Statistics; Internal data from the 5 stars hotel from Transylvania, 2013)

Concerning the *overnights* registered in the hotels of Transylvania, in the period of 2008-2009, there were progresses with an increasing of 2,9% and for the years of 2010-2011 an increase with 21,89%. In 2008-2009, respectively 2011-2012 there were regressions, the number of *overnights* decrease with -17,29% and -10,49%. It is evident that the trends of evolution, respectively those of involution in the case of *overnights* registered in the hotels of Transylvania and in the case of the 5 stars studied hotel are more closely related than the situation of the 5 stars hotel with the situation of the *overnights* registered in the accommodation units from Transylvania.

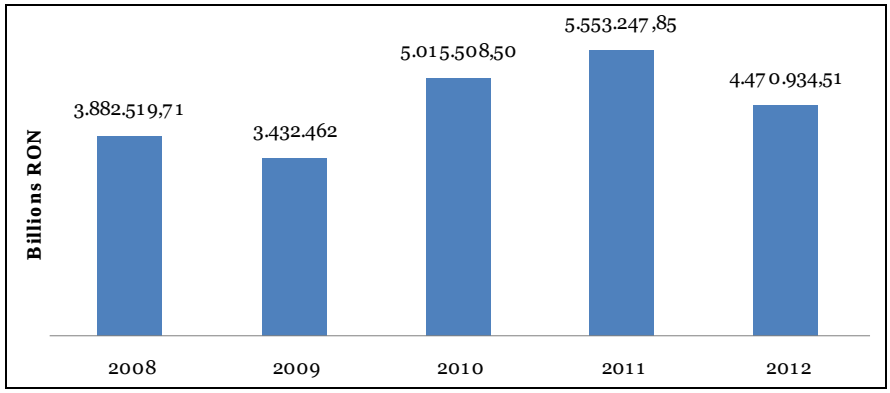

Figure 10. Annual income from the accommodation services of a 5 stars hotel from Transylvania (Source: internal data of the 5 stars studied hotel, 2013)

The evolution of this indicator, at both levels, shows differences due mainly to the different dimensions, but also because of the different tourist typologies specific to every hotel type. While the overnights in the hotels of Transylvania were made by both the leisure and the business tourists, in the 5 stars hotel situation, the overnights were made especially by the business tourists (according to the Room Divison Mnaager of the hotel) who come because they have to come in business interest, therefore the effects of the economiv recession on this type of consumer behavior it was less impacted. While the leisure tourist chose to go in holliday only if the budget allows it.

As figure 10 shows, at the regional level, as a result of the global economic recession, in the period of 2008-2009 it is registered a strong decrease, as well as in the case of the studied 5 stars hotel. In contrast with the situation which exists at regional level, at the 5 stars hotel unit level, it was registered a regress in 2011-2012, but the *annual incomes from the accommodation services* in 2012 are higher than in 2008.

The *Average rate per room* express the ratio of the accommodation income and the total number of sold rooms. *The Average rate per customer* represents a lower value comparing to the rack rate due to the discounts applied depending on the customer loyalty, the period of year or the contractual rates. It is well known that in the accommodation units and especially in the hotels the rack rate can be negotiated at the reception. At the end of a hotelier day, the customer/tourist has more chances to benefit from a discount because the hotel operators wish to have a higher degree of occupancy rate and due to the perishability of the hotel product, it is likely to apply a discount and sell the room than to leave it unoccupied.

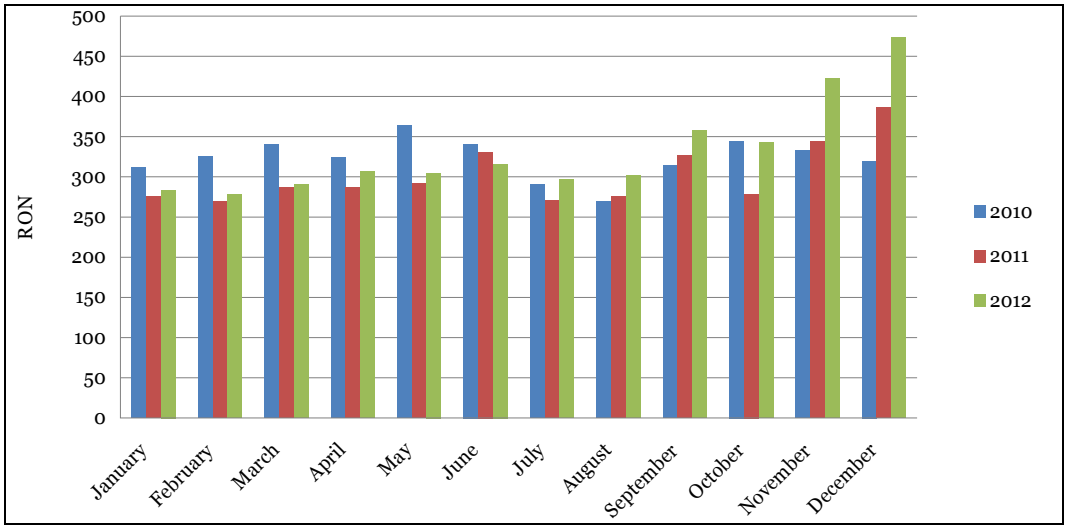

Figure 11. Average rate per room registered in a 5 stars hotel
from Transylvania from January 2010 to December 2012
(Source: Internal Data of the 5 stars studied hotel from Transylvania, 2013)

Concerning the studied hotel figure 11 shows that in the period 2010-2011, the *Average rate per customer* fluctuated. In 2010, the highest value of the average rate per ustomer was registrated in the month of May (over 350 RON/customer) and the lowest in the month of August. According to the statements of the Room Division Manager, the hotel is a business hotel, therefore it is explained why the highest *Average rate per customer* is registered in May when a lot of conferences take place in the city and also some important festivals and cultural events. The month of August has the lowest *Average rate per customer* due to the fact that this month it is considered the month of

hollidays for business tourists. The year of 2011 registers the lowest *Average rates per tourists*. The *Average rate per room* in 2010-2012 (Figure 11) varies from month to month and from one year to another. In 2010, the average rate per room was the highest in the month of May (over 300 RON), and the lowest in August (under 300 RON). In 2001, the month of July registered the highest *Average rate per room* while the month of December shows the highest rate. The year of 2012 shows important increases in the second half of the year when the *Average rate per room* registers the highest value for the studied period, this means a rate of over 450 RON.

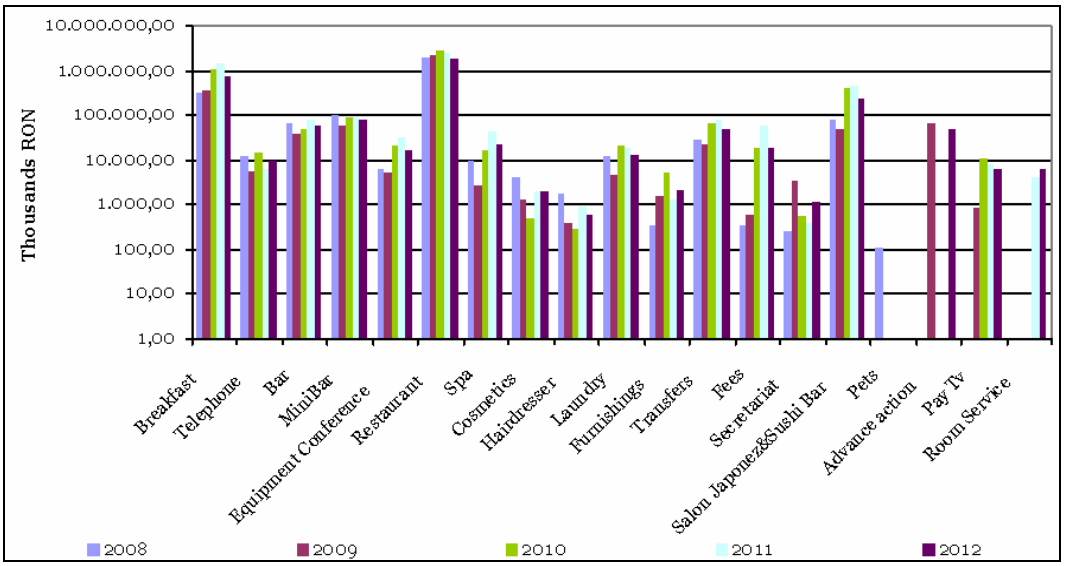

Figure 12. Incomes registreted from the hotel services (others than accommodation) of a 5 stars hotel from Transylvania (Source: Internal data of a 5 stars studied hotel, 2013)

Figure 12 highlights the *Incomes from the hotel services*. Therefore, there are remarquables the restaurant services, followed by the Breakfast services, Bar and MiniBar, Transfers, Spa as representing important sources of income for the hotel. PayTv services and Phone are also important income sources.

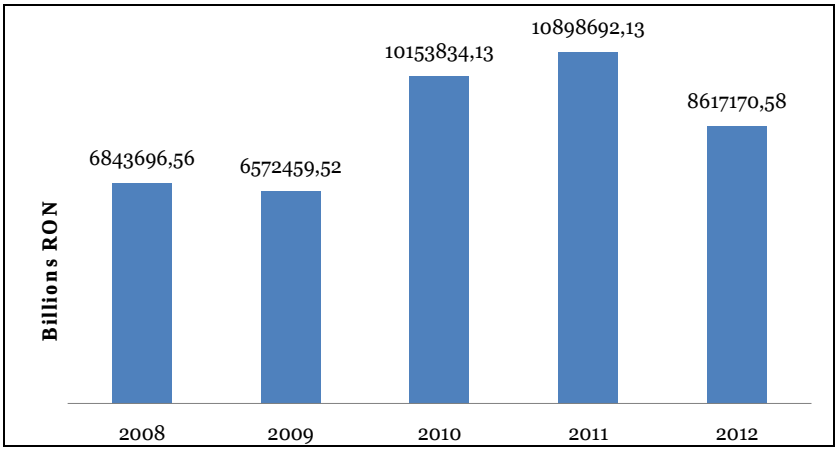

Figure 13. Total incomes of a 5 stars hotel from Transylvania (Source: Internal data of the 5 stars studied hotel, 2013)

The total incomes of the studied hotel keep the same trend as the evolution of deducted incomes. There are evident two phases of involution: the first one in the 2008-2009 period, and the second in the 2011-2012 period (Figure 13).

CONCLUSIONS

The studied period (2008-2012) in order to identify the impacts of the hotels on the tourism of Transylvania stress out important changes at all levels due to the global economic recession which affected the whole world business environment starting with the year of 2008. At regional level, the most important macroeconomic indicator, the *Gross Domestic Product* which express the economy development degree in a certain area, highlights an involution process in Transylvania concerning the hotel sector. As a consequence of this decreasing, the *Gross investments* in the "*Hotels and restaurants*" CAEN section from Transylvania decrease and also does the *Number of the hotel companies*.

The *Turnover* shows some increases starting with the year of 2009 but the values registrated in 2012 are below the year of 2008. This decrease influenced negatively the earnings, therefore the *Average Nominal Monthly Wage* in 2012 is below 600 RON and the *Number of employees* in this sector regress from 2009. Stressing out the evolution of the *overnights* at all the three levels (regional, local and at the individual hotel unit), it was identified that the trend in evolution and also in involution occurs approximately in the same time and keeps the same direction. Transylvania has a diversified hotel offer where the small companies (0-9 employees) prevail.

This type of company register the highest value of turnover. Of course that the economic effects of the hotels on the tourism of Transylvania are relevant in terms of GDP contribution to the regional tourism development, in the study's case, it is about a contribution of 1,8-2,2%. The involutions highlighted in this study, demonstrates that the hotel economic situation of the hotel sector from Transylvania needs a revitalization through new strategies to attract tourists in order to improve the existing situation. The hotels can positively impact the tourism through the investments made in this facilities which will attract tourists, implicitly the arrivals, overnights and occupancy rate will increase and therefore the incomes from this sector.

The lack of a good cooperation between the hoteliers of Transylvania and the predominance of the small hotel units determines a high degree of sensibility to the economic fluctuations and in the same time stops the investments in the development of hotels due to financial insufficiency. In this respect, it is necessary to encourage the hoteliers to affiliate their hotel unit to national and international hotel chains not only to benefit from consistent financial resources, but to benefit of professional management assistance from the head company and to improve the resitance to economic fluctuations in conditions of an insecure business environment.

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ASPECTS REGARDING THE SKI AREAS OF THE CENTRAL DEVELOPMENT REGION

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Abstract: The study at hand will try to create a pertinent analysis regarding the current state of the ski areas from the six counties that make up the Central Region, taking into account basic morphometric indicators (height difference, slope, slope exposition), climatic parameters that influence winter sports (temperature, precipitations, number of snow days, number of days with snow cover, snow cover thickness, nebulosity and number of days with clear skies in winter, and climate types, characteristic for the areas taken into account), vegetation and land usage. We can also add the favourabilities and restrictions of the man-made environment, represented by access infrastructure, ski infrastructure (artificial snow, night illumination, sport equipment rental shops, ski safety and mountain rescue centers, ski schools and sport clubs, food serving establishments and aprés-ski), lodging etc. All these parameters combined and their actions are extremely important for the existence and viability of ski areas.

Key words: mountain resorts, ski area, Poiana Braşov, cable transport.

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INTRODUCTION

Mountain areas have diverse natural conditions, creating multiple possibilities for the capitalization, of touristic potential, as well as of the arrangement, and creation of communication routes and transport means necessary for touristic resorts.

Thus, the references contained a series of concepts, solutions and models regarding the specificity of natural and economic conditions, touristic features, and with the changes that emerge in touristic demand.

Within the Central Region there are three types of localisations: *peripheral localisation* (at city outskirts), close to mountain areas, with favourable conditions for winter sports (Borsec, Topliţa, Miercurea Ciuc, Tuşnad, Covasna, Braşov, Sovata); *linear localisation*, following natural passageways that penetrate the mountains, creating resorts on road axes (Predeal, Izvorul Mureş, Harghita Băi, Mădăraş, Valea Rece, Sânmartin, Homorod, Bucin, Comandău, Şugaş Băi, Păltiniş, Gârda de Sus, Arieşeni); *terminal localisation*, found in alpine regions (Şureanu, Bâlea Lac) (Erdeli & Gheorghilaş, 2006).

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Some mountains, thorugh slope configuration, elevation (800-1 000 m), offer the possibility of establishing ski slopes and cable transport systems, from the 900-1 000 m lower level to the higher level, over 2 000 m, which enables a capitalisation of the ski area from the summit to the valley (in winter) and the other way around in spring.

For slope building, only mountain sides that face north, are stripped of forests, have altitudes of around 1 000- 2 000 m, are avalanche free, with lengths of 1-3 km and elevation difference of 500-1 000 m are used. The northern exposure of ski slopes is mandatory up to 1 600-1 800 m, the alpine emptiness being the least favourable as it is affcted by blizzards and fogs, which means that ski areas must be situated between 800-1 800 m.

These slopes, with a more or less winding path, going over sectors with variable declivity must be 20-30 m wide. Besides the favourability of the morphodynamic parameters, climate also plays a special role, through snow cover and air temperature, which means that winter sports tourism is limited by short time under climatic conditions with solid precipitations (Ciangă, 1997).

In the Central Region, winter sports season lasts three to four months (especially from January till March), which may be extended at over peste 2 000 m to four-five months (December-April), proving that this region has the most favourable conditions for such sports.

Slope homologation must comply with ISF requirements (*International Ski Federation*), and with the national bodies responsible for such processes (Ministry of Tourism).

Likewise, it is imperative for these slopes to be marked with special bilboards, to insure a correct tourist information. In normal conditions, a ski domain is "*coupled*" with a *winter sports resort*, with accomodations units and sports facilities for winter, while those locations without such complex facilities are just ski and winter tourism centres de (Erdeli & Gheorghilaş, 2006).

The lenght of homologated slopes is proportional to the rank of the winter sports resort, ranging from a couple hundred meters to several kilometers (Drumul Roşu - 5 km).

Romania does not have major complex facilities, like in the cases of Italy, France, Switzerland, where ski domains exceed 1 000 km (Cortina d' Ampezzo with 1 260 km, Alta Badia with 1 348 km, thus making it the largest in the world, Chamonix with 1 022 km, Courcevel with 1 247 km, and Verbier with 1 046 km).

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study is to synthetically present the ski areas of the Central Region, detailing each of the six counties that make up the region (Harghita, Covasna, Mureş, Braşov, Sibiu, Alba). The presentation is based on several bibliographical references (Epuran, 1958, Matei, 1982, Barabaş & Ganea, 1995, Bâră, 1983, Ciangă, 1997, 2006, 2007, Cârstocea, 1998, Grigoraş, 2002, Ţigu, 2001, Ionescu, 2004, Gingulescu, 2010, Szabó, Popescu, 2011, Tofan, 2012, 2013), as well as on the authors' field research and on several websites (www.romaniaturistica.ro, www.skivirus.com, www.skiresorts.com, www.schiuri.ro, www.arenaplatos.ro).

This research led to a series of interpretations and interpolations, which emphasize the advantages and disadvantages of these ski areas, on one hand, and the opportunities and threats they might come across on the other.

In addition to the text, a series of tables were created, which punctuate the main characteristics of a ski slope (difficulty level, length, starting and final altitude, average slope, level difference, average width, surface area, transport capacity of ski lift, degree of endowment, etc).

THE HISTORY OF SKIING IN THE CENTRAL REGION

The emergence of skiing in Romania is described in a document edited by the Italian Alexander Gawina in the *„Sarmatiae Europae description"* (Sarmatic Europe

Chronicles), printed in 1578 in Krakow, where the author mentions skiing in the chapter dedicated to the description of the Wooded Carpathians and in the chapter about the inhabitants of Ceremeşului, a region that encompasses the northern part of our country.

In Bihorului Mountains, the locals used *„primitive skis"* to use in winter, when the snow cover was too deep.

The next documents that mention skiing date back to 1837, when the *„Societatea Karpatică Transilvană"* (*S.K.V*) was established, promoted by Nicolae Grigorescu, Altfed Bernth and Dimitrie Grecescu, a society that created, in the last decade of the 19th century, the resort of Păltiniş (Szabó, 2010).

In 1893, the first Romanian touristic association with known activity was created (*„Societatea Carpatică Sinaia"*), dealing among others with skiing. The most numerous documents regarding skiing are from magazines edited in Transilvania, where associations and societies had winter sports among their activities.

In „*Hercules*" magazine, in 1893, there was an article on *„feet sled"* exercised in many places in Transilvania (especially around Cluj, Bihor and Sibiu), due to higher living standards and numerous associations, which led to the creation of several ski slopes, that held yearly skiing competitions.

Since 1900, we have had reliable information from centers like Braşov, Cluj, Sibiu or the ones in Prahova valley. Quite interesting is the fact that this sport first emerged in Transilvania, as skiing penetrated more directly from Austria and Germany, while in Sinaia, skiing penetrated from Bucharest, whose elite frequently visited Swiss ski resorts (Matei, 1982).

On 3rd November 1905, the Braşov ski association was born, set up by the Germans *„Kronstadter ski-vereinigung"* (K.S.V), which, in its first year, had 54 members.

With the help of this society, the first lodge was built in 1907 in Poiana Postăvarului, with crude facilities, while in 1913, the first ski jumping hill was constructed, and the first ski jump competition was organised.

In 1921, a large trampoline was inaugurated in Poiana Braşov. In 1939 the first international competition was organised on Carp Valley - *„The International Downhill Competition"*, with skiers from Germany, Austria, France, Poland, Yugoslavia and England.

Poiana Braşov sees the organisation in 1951 of the *„World University Games"*, when the first modern sports hotel was established and the first aerial tramway in the country, with a length of 2150 m.

After the Second World War, new ski areas begin to emerge and develop, in different parts of the country like Maramureş, Harghita, Cindrel, Parâng, Muntele Mare, where alpine ski slopes, bob sled and sled tracks, skating rings and cable transport systems were constructed, with the aim of mountain tourism development and increase of competitvity on the international market.

Since 2003, winter sports in Romania have been under the tutelage of the *„Super-ski in Carpathians"* national programme, approved by Government's Decision no. 526/2003, which eventually changed its name in 2006 to *„Ski in Romania"* (according to Law no. 418/2006, art. 5).

AREAS WITH SKIING POTENTIAL

In order to set up slopes, a wide range of possibilities are available, but a major role is played by the terrain's configuration and also by the investor's financial capacity, or the social-economic potential of the region.

In Romania, most ski areas have not been properly set up, which leads to congestion in terms of lodging and cable transport, while ski lifts are not sufficient thus affecting the quality of the touristic act. Ski areas and their infrastructure are the main concerns in the cration of a touristic product in that involves the creation of ski, sled, bobsled slopes, cable transport systems and ski school organisation.

Table 1. The ski areas of Harghita County
(Data source: http://www.romaniaturistica.ro, 2013)

No.	Slope features											
	Name	Difficulty level	Length (m)	Altitude at departure	Altitude at arrival	Average slope%	Level differenvce/m	Average width/m	Surface area/ha	Load capacity/hour	Ski canons	Night illumination
1.	**"Speranţa" Borsec Ski Complex**											
	Prichindel	E	814	1072	936	17	139	30	2.4	720	No	No
	Speranţa	A	680	1072	936	21	142	30	3.4	720	Yes	Yes
	Verofeny	D	726	1072	936	31	141	30	2.1	720	No	No
	TOTAL		**2220**						**7.9**			
2.	**Topliţa Ski Complex**											
	Măgheruş	A	460	-	-	23	125	60	-	670	Yes	Yes
	Bradul	E	1200	-	-	11	125	60	-	670	Yes	Yes
	TOTAL		**1660**						-			
3.	**Izvorul Mureşului**											
	Gréces	E	620	900	800	17	100	55	3.4	450	No	No
4.	**Harghita Băi Complex**											
	Miklós	D	450	1375	1300	32	75	50	2.2	600	No	Yes
	Kossuth	D	630	1423	1248	32	175	80	5	600	No	No
	Kossuth 2	A	800	1350	1255	21	95	50	4	600	No	No
	Kossuth 3	E	1000	1350	1255	17	95	45	4.5	650	No	No
	Csipike	A	380	1322	1275	18	47	60	2.3	120	No	Yes
	Ózon	E	300	1300	1200	17	100	70	2.1	600	No	Yes
	Tofalvi	E	200	1300	1280	16	20	40	0.8	65	No	No
	TOTAL		**3760**						**20.9**			
5.	**Mădăraş Complex**											
	Kicsi Mihály	U	160	1624	1564	16	60	30	0.5	160	No	No
	Nagy Mihály	R	800	1679	1473	39	206	40	3.2	160	No	No
	Sugó	U	140	1624	1564	15	60	50	0.7	160	No	No
	Zarug	M	600	-	-	-	-	-	-	160	No	No
	Vargyas	M	1500	-	-	-	-	-	-	160	No	No
	TOTAL		**3200**						**-**			
6.	**Valea Rece**											
	Csángó	E	450	1152	1100	18	52	60	2.7	360	No	Yes
7.	**Sânmartin**											
	Elöd	E	310	-	-	22	66	-	-	-	No	No
8.	**Mereşti**											
	Berci	E	400	-	-	10	273	-	-	-	No	No
9.	**Homorod**											
	Lobogó	E	400	800	740	18	60	40	1.6	1200	Yes	Yes
10.	**Praid**											
	Ski Bogdan	E	800	1250	1107	18	143	20	1.5	720	No	No
11.	**Bucin**											
	Havas-Bucsin	E	1149	1360	1200	14	160	40	4.5	720	No	No
12.	**Complexul Miercurea-Ciuc**											
	Şumuleu	A	350	870	790	28	143	-	-	-	No	No
	Tolvajos	E	500	-	-	10	81	-	-	-	No	No
	TOTAL	**850**										
	Băile Tuşnad											
	Băile Tuşnad	A	500	750	670	22	100	40	2	600	Yes	Yes
	Ciumani											
	Veresvirag	E	1447	1129	838	19	291	150	21.7	650	Yes	Yes
	TOTAL HARGHITA	**17776**							**-**			

E= easy; A = average difficulty; D = difficult – lack of data

The 79 slopes have cable transport systems such as: ski lift with monopost traction devices, ski lift with two or four seats, baby ski lifts, dual-post ski lifts, aerial tramways and ski gondolas.

As elevation gap, ski slopes are found between 661 m (Covasna) and 2 200 m (Bâlea Lac), departure altitude, and 590 m (Şugaş Băi) and 1750 m (Şureanu), arrival altitude. In order to present a real picture of ski areas, a series of mathematical relations were created and used, such as: *slope optimal capacity*, reflecting the skier load of a slope at a given time; *ski slope flow related to the declivity that determines the skiers' speed* (*people/hour/m slope width); the simultaneity index (number of skiers at a given time on a ski slope); climbing time by rope way/cable car/ski lift /babyskilift; time of descent (on skis), and so on* (Ciangă & Dezsi, 2007).

The ski areas of Harghita County

Harghita County has an impressive number of ski slopes (28), in 12 localities (Borsec, Topliţa, Izvorul Mureşului, Mădăraş, Lunca de Jos (Valea Rece), Sânmartin, Mereşti, Vlăhiţa (Homorod), Praid, Miercurea Ciuc, Tuşnad and Ciumani), placing it at number three in the top of counties with the most ski slope kilometers, 17.7 km to be more precise, out of which only 21 slopes are certified (16.6% of the total number of slopes).

According to the data found in table 1, the situation regarding difficulty level is the following: 16 slopes are easy, eight are of average difficulty and only four are difficult. Most ski slopes are under 1 km in length, with the exception of those from Bradul (Topliţa), Kossuth 3 (Harghita Băi), Vargyas (Mădăraş), Havas-Bucsin (Bucin) and Veresvirag (Ciumani).

Ski touring can be exercised between Harghita Băi and Harghita Mădăraş, while in Miercurea Ciuc such a slope has been constructed.

Before 1990, Sovata also had two ski touring tracks, where competions were being held, but they were gradually abandoned. In order to correctly vizualize the share and the degree of involvement of winter sports, a correlation is employed - *slope length* (*meters*) *for every accommodation in the resort*. The area at hand registers a low average, only 2.1 m/bed, the highest value being found at Harghita Băi Ski Complex (3.3 m/bed).

The ski areas of Braşov County

Braşov County is one of the most diverse areas in terms of touristic offer, which, in the last two decades, has continously adapted and developed, in order to meet market expectations.

The existence of a favourable natural environment enabled winter sports to develop, the county being first in terms of ski slope length (29.4 km), with 23 slopes situated in Poiana Braşov, Predeal, Bran, Moieciu de Jos and Drăguş.

In 2011, in Poiana Braşov, the largest ski area in the country was inaugurated, with a total length of 15.7 km, covering 41 ha, and offering eight ski slopes of different difficulty levels (three easy slopes, two average slopes and two for advanced skiers). The longest ski slope is also found here (Drumul Roşu, 5330 m), plus the most difficult (Kazel, 800 m).

Slope difficulty level has been preserved, but suffered some slight alterations through slope corrections, by creating detours of more difficult areas, which will enable the skiers to cross from one slope to another, and by increasing the number of connection slopes between the main tracks.

In Poiana Braşov, there is also a famous ski and snowboard school under the name *„Ana Hotels"*, with vast experience, employing only qualified trainers.

Alongside Poiana Braşov, Predeal is also a true ski area, with 12 slopes (12 km) of all difficulty levels, the best known being the slopes Cocoşul (2 250 m) and Clăbucet (2 100 m).

2 km from the resort, on Râşnoavei Valley there is a biathlon and ski center, which is also used for national competitions of such sort.

Table 2. The ski areas of Brasov County
(Data source: http://www.romaniaturistica.ro, 2013)

No.	Slope features											
	Name	**Difficulty level**	**Length (m)**	**Altitude at departure**	**Altitude at arrival**	**Average slope%**	**Level differenvce/m**	**Average width/m**	**Surface area/ha**	**Load capacity/hour**	**Ski canons**	**Night illumination**
1.	**Poiana Braşov Complex**											
	Bradul	E	500	1115	1035	17	80	60	3	900	Yes	Yes
	Lupului	D	2620	1710	945	21	775	45	7.3	1800	No	No
	Sulinar	A	2820	1690	1050	22	640	45	8.2	1800	No	No
	Kanzel	D	800	1765	1655	17	110	20	1	900	No	No
	Ruia	E	540	1690	1495	20	195	45	2.4	2400	No	No
	Drumul Roşu	A	5330	1690	1050	22	640	20	10.5	1800	No	No
	Stadion	E	325	1040	1005	18	32	35	1.1	900	No	No
	Subteleferic	D	2860	1690	1050	22	640	25	7.5	720	No	No
	TOTAL		**15795**						**41**			
2.	**Bran**											
	Zănoaga	A	650	1160	1000	23	160	30	1.9	400	Yes	Yes
3.	**Moieciu**											
	Cheile Grădiştei	E	470	860	800	16	60	40	1.8	300	No	Yes
4.	**Drăguş**											
	Moţul Drăguşului	VE	500	850	800	9.5	200	40	2	170	Yes	Yes
5.	**Predeal Complex**											
	Clăbucet Plecare	A	2100	1490	1100	20	390	55	11.5	2300	Yes	No
	Clăbucet Sosire	E	800	1200	1040	18	160	50	4	2000	Yes	Yes
	Clăbucet Şcoală	VE	200	1080	1050	7	30	45	0.9	150	No	No
	Clăbucet Variant	A	790	1200	1040	20	160	60	4.7	2000	Yes	No
	Cioplea	E	200				20				No	No
	Cocoşul	A	2250	1016	850	21	166	150	7.8	200	Yes	Yes
	Gârbova	E	900	-	-	-	180	-	-	-	No	No
	Orizont	E	100	-	-	-	30	-	-	-	No	No
	Polistoaca	E	2500	-	-	-	90	-	-	-	No	No
	Subteleferic	D	1200	1450	1100	31	350	80	9.6	2000	Yes	No
	Subteleferic Variantă (lower station)	VE	670	1190	1145	7	45	50	3.3	2000	Yes	No
	Trei Brazi	E	300	-	-	-	50	-	-	-	No	No
	TOTAL		**12010**									
	TOTAL BRAŞOV		**29425**									

E= easy; A = average difficulty; D = difficult; VE= very easy; – lack of data

This area has a very good cable transport network, with two aerial tramways that connect the bottom of Tâmpa with its peak, in the City of Braşov, and two other tramways, one in Poiana Braşov - Kanzel and one in Capra Neagră, which ascends Postăvarul Mountain. Additionally, there are gondola lifts and six ski lifts in Poiana Braşov and Predeal.

Less expansive and less known are the ski areas of Bran, Moieciu de Jos and Drăguş, acting as alternatives for the congestion found in the better known resorts.

The ski areas of Sibiu County

Sibiu County has nine ski slopes, with a total length of 18.8 km, managed by local town halls as well as by private companies. In Făgăraş Massif, in the Bâlea-Capra-Doamnei Area, plans have been made for a very large ski area, roughly 32 km (Popescu, 2011).

Bâlea Lac resort, set in an unique environment for our country, is the ideal place for those that love extreme skiing.

Table 3. The ski areas of Sibiu County
(Data source: http://www.romaniaturistica.ro, 2013)

No.	Slope features											
	Name	**Difficulty level**	**Length (m)**	**Altitude at departure**	**Altitude at arrival**	**Average slope%**	**Level differenvce/m**	**Average width/m**	**Surface area/ha**	**Load capacity/hour**	**Ski canons**	**Night illumination**
1.	**Gura Râului**											
	Trecătoarea Lupului	E	512	700	615	14	85	40	2.5	450	Yes	Yes
2.	**Bâlea Lac**											
	Curba de nivel-Pilon 2	A	14000	2200	1700	28	500	150	21	70	No	Yes
3.	**Arena Păltiniş**											
	Platos	A	520	1380	1305	17	75	30	1.5	1200	Yes	Yes
	Panorama Sibiului	E	700	1390	1290	14	100	40	3	1200	No	Yes
	Poiana Poplăcii	E	600	1390	1290	16	100	50	3	1200	Yes	Yes
	Arena	E	240	1340	1305	14	35	30	0.7	500	Yes	Yes
	Soarelui	E	640	1380	1305	12	75	50	3.2	1200	Yes	No
	Onceşti I	A	1150	1450	1209	22	241	50	5.7	360	No	Yes
	Onceşti II	VE	450	1450	1250	9	200	60	2.7	360	No	No
	TOTAL		**4300**						**19.8**			
	TOTAL SIBIU		**18812**						**43.3**			

E= easy; A = average difficulty; D = difficult; VE= very easy; – lack of data

This area only has natural slopes, enabling descents on tracks more than 10 km long, cable transport being made by aerial tramways, connecting it with Bâlea Cascadă (Gingulescu, 2011).

30 km from Sibiu, on Poiana Poplăcii Plateau, at an altitude of 1400 m, in Cindrel Mountains, we find Arena Plateau ski and recreational area, which offers five slopes to winter sport enthusiasts (length of 2700 m), with four ski lifts, with a capacity of 500-1 200 people/hour, ski canons, illumination system, rental shop, snowboard and ski school.

The ski areas of Alba, Covasna and Mureş counties

In Alba County, the ski slopes have a combined length of 16.3 km, with slopes situated in the Arieşeni and Gârda de Sus area, in Apuseni Mountains, and in Şureanu area from Sebeşului Mountains, the latter being the most complex, situated at altitudes between 1 650-1 900 m.

The plan is to make this investment a springboard for a touristic resort, that would rival similar destinations from Western Europe.

The total slope length from this complex is 10 km, with an average to low difficulty.

Table 4.The ski areas of Alba County
(Data source: http://www.romaniaturistica.ro, 2013)

No.	Slope features											
	Name	**Difficulty level**	**Length (m)**	**Altitude at departure**	**Altitude at arrival**	**Average slope%**	**Level differenvce/m**	**Average width/m**	**Surface area/ha**	**Load capacity/hour**	**Ski canons**	**Night illumination**
1.	**„*Sureanu*" ski area**											
	Auşel 1	E	1650	2010	1650	15	360	30	4.9	1200	No	No
	Auşel 2	E	1430	2010	1650	13	360	30	4.3	1200	No	No
	Curmătura 1	VE	1700	1825	1650	8	175	55	9.3	700	No	No
	Curmătura 2	A	650	1825	1650	21	175	50	3.2	700	No	No
	Curmătura 3	A	650	1825	1650	21	175	50	3.2	700	No	No
	Curmătura 4	E	830	1825	1650	15	175	55	4.4	700	No	No
	Şureanu 1	E	600	1825	1750	15	75	50	3	700	No	No
	Şureanu 2	A	1200	1900	1650	23	250	60	7.2	700	No	No
	Şureanu 3	D	1350	1900	1750	33	150	50	6	700	No	No
	TOTAL		**10060**						**45.5**			
2.	**„*Ghetarul*" ski area (Gârda de Sus)**											
	Gheţarul 1	D	1100	1050	700	31,8	350	54	5.9	1202	Yes	Yes
	Gheţarul 2	A	1600	1050	700	21,8	350	20	3.2	1202	Yes	Yes
	Gheţarul 3	E	2200	1050	700	15,9	350	15	3.3	1202	Yes	Yes
	TOTAL		**4900**						**12.4**			
3.	**Arieşeni**											
	Vârtop 1	A	1000	1380	1150	30	230	120	12	800	No	Yes
	Vârtop 2	A	430	1250	1150	24	100	40	1.7	640	No	Yes
	TOTAL		**1430**						**13.7**			
	TOTAL ALBA		**16390**						**71.6**			

E= easy; A = average difficulty; D = difficult; VE= very easy; – lack of data

The main problem that plagues this area is the lack of accommodation units, the closest lodges being situated 5 km from the ski area, in Luncile Prigoanei, and in Oaşa area, 20 km away.

We also mention the „*Gheţarul*" ski area from Gârda de Sus, considered as an alternative, to decrease tourist „*pressure*" on the Arieşeni area.

The fewest ski areas can be found in Covasna County (four ski slopes 1.5 km long) and in Mureş County (two ski slopes, with a length of just 1.3 km). Even though these areas are more modest, such as the one in Sovata and Covasna, they contribute to the spatial expasion of winter tourism and to the satisfaction of an ever increasing demand.

Table 5. The ski areas of Covasna and Mureş counties
(Data source: http://www.romaniaturistica.ro, 2013)

No.	Slope features											
	Name	Difficulty level	Length (m)	Altitude at departure	Altitude at arrival	Average slope%	Level differenvce/m	Average width/m	Surface area/ha	Load capacity/hour	Ski canons	Night illumination
1.	**Covasna**											
	Covasna	E	400	661	624	13	37	35	1	900	Yes	Yes
2.	**Comandău**											
	Comandău	E	300	1100	700	18	400	100	3	600	No	No
3.	**Şugaş Băi**											
	Şugaş Băi Veche	A	560	740	590	30	150	75	4.2	360	No	Yes
	Şugaş Băi Nouă	A	250	750	685	23	65	60	1.5	360	No	Yes
	TOTAL	**1510**	**810**						**5.4**			
	TOTAL COVASNA	**1510**							**19.4**			
4.	**Sovata**											
	Aluniş	A	1100	1200	900	28	300	40	4.4	400	No	No
	Aluniş beginners	VE	200	1250	1210	10	40	50	1	360	No	No
TOTAL MUREŞ		**1300**							**5.4**			

E= easy; A = average difficulty; D = difficult; VE= very easy; – lack of data

CONCLUSIONS

By adding the total length of the existing ski slopes from the Central Region, we ended up with a total of 85.2 km (55.8% of the country's total ski slopes length), in 2012, the surface of the ski areas being 319.4 ha.

Comparing this length to the total number of existing slopes, which is 79 (51.3% of the total number of slopes at national level), out of which only 54 are certified (41.5% of the total number of certified slopes), we observe the same trend found at national level, that the average slope length is under one kilometer, a very modest indicator when compared to resorts from Austria or France. Another major problem is the very low number of artificial snow machines, only 22 slopes being equipped with such machines, due to lack of water.

In the analysed area, there are six slopes that appear in the top ten longest ski slopes in Romania (Drumul Roşu 5 330 m, Lupului 2 620 m, Sulinar 2 820 m, Subteleferic 2 860 m, all found in Poiana Braşov, the only resort of international renown, and Cocoşul 2 250 m, and Clăbucet 2 100 m, in Predeal).

Among the counties that make up the Central Region, Harghita County stands out with 28 ski slopes and Brasov with 23 slopes, while the least endowed being Covasna (four slopes) and Mureş (two slopes). With the help of the tables above, we can also create a slope hierarchy, using the difficulty level criterium: five ski slopes with very low difficulty, 38 slopes with low difficulty, 26 of average difficulty, and 10 with high difficulty.

In regards to the length of the ski slopes from the 29 resorts situated in the Central Region, out of 85.2 km, each resort has an average of 3 km, a modest value compared to

the ski areas from the Alps, with an average of 398.6 km slopes / resort. Italy and France excel in this matter, having higher averages that normal (732 km/resort in Italy, and 504.8 km ski slopes for the French Alpine resorts).

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POSSIBILITIES OF IMPROVING INTERNATIONAL CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION THROUGH CYCLING THE *"SZEKELYS ROUTE"*

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Abstract : International cycling the "*Szekelys route*" could become the backbone of cycling as part of sports and recreational tourism in Serbia. Within it there are two EU member states (Romania and Hungary), both bordering Serbia, therefore with the help of the IPA pre-accession funds, cross-border cooperation would be facilitated for Serbia in the future. The "*Szekelys route*" participants-cyclists for years start their cycling from Radauci in Romania and in the length of about 1,200 km they are cycling through the unique landscapes of Romania, Hungary and Serbia, thus approaching natural, cultural and spiritual values of the area they are passing. With that in mind, one of the fundamental aims of this research was to indicate the potential of networking the region through which the route passes by. It would be possible with various sport and recreational and cultural events, and natural and cultural values, aimed at becoming an official cycle route, which would consequently generate many other facilities. Also, the aim was the promotion of Romania, Hungary and Serbia (Vojvodina). The field research resulted in mapping of the area and interviews with professionals from the Bicycle Alliance of Vojvodina, the organizer of the "*Szekelys route*" and participants in the cycling, helped in SWOT analyzing.

Key words: Cycling, Networking, Serbian-Hungarian-Romanian cooperation, The "*Szekelys route*"

* * * * * *

INTRODUCTION

One of the major opportunities for the development of sports and recreational tourism in Serbia lies in participation in various EU programmes, initiated to help increase regional development. In order to simplify the system of external assistance, as well as to achieve maximum results using the allocated financial resources, the

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European Commission has decided that all pre-accession funds (PHARE, ISPA, SAPARD and CARDS), be replaced by a new pre-accession instrument IPA. The basic components of IPA, and therefore the chances of developing sports and recreational tourism in Serbia, are diverse. One of them is cross-border cooperation. In the future, this component would finance various cross-border projects of institutions from border regions of one country with the institutions in the border regions of neighbouring countries (regardless EU membership of the neighbouring country), within all the areas of the two countries defined as top priority. Priorities are defined multi-annual planning documents called Operational Programmes (www.europa.rs). The European Cyclists' Federation has prepared preliminary project designs for all European routes and route details are worked out based on common criteria and standards. The task of Serbia is to clearly define cycle routes throughout the municipalities with precise planning and project documentation.

The Ministry of Construction considers the initiative to commence drafting the Master Plan of transport infrastructure and spatial plan network transport infrastructure. It was suggested that all municipalities make recommendations on the inclusion of these routes in the local regional and urban planning (Vujko & Plavša, 2010; www.europa.rs). Therefore, it could be said that it is of particular importance precisely the territory that could achieve cross-border cooperation through the system of bicycle paths, which the "*Szekelys route*" could. In fact, its result would be the Romanian-Hungarian-Serbian cycle transversal which would consequently generate many other sports and recreational facilities. In this sense, the aim of this research is that the observed connectivity of Romania, Hungary and Serbia, used for making actual innovative projects (Cutumisu & Cottrels, 2004) that developed the system of internal and cross-border partnerships that would contribute to sustainable and regional development, encouraging entrepreneurship and a number of consumers in cycling tourism in this region and all over Europe and connecting the "*Szekelys route*" with the "*Danube cycle route*". Also, the aim is to promote *Romania, Hungary and Serbia (Vojvodina)* through a system of 10 cycle paths connected into the system and to use this as a basis for setting a SWOT analysis of cycling tourism of the "*Szekelys route*" obtained by the current opinions of decision makers in Tourism in Vojvodina as well as participants in the "*Szekelys route*".

METHODOLOGY

The research was a combination of quantitative methods (statistics and web analysis) and qualitative methods (surveys, interviews, interview and written documents). Bibliographic speculative method was used in the stage of defining the theoretical framework, and descriptive method for data processing and results interpretation. The sample consisted of 30 cyclist participants. The participants were of different nationalities from the regions of Romania, Hungary and Serbia. Starting point, from which the study started there was a group of variables concerned the feasibility and importance of the "*Szekelys route*" for cycling tourism. The data were analyzed using statistical methods and comparative descriptive character, which enabled the explication of research results and perform specific conclusions. Bearing in mind that the resulting data confirmed the initial assumption that one of the main advantages of "*Szekelys route*" are future international cross-border cooperation, it was necessary to move to another step in the implementation of the mapping cycling area. The proposal paths given on the map were the result of field research (cycling the "*Szekelys route*", organized by the Youth Club "*Tinet*" from Skorenovac (Vojvodina), which wanted to examine the feasibility of a route which is the result of mapping the field provided). The maps were drawn with web software Google map. In order to obtain the best results possible, SWOT analysis of planning cycle paths on the territory of Romania, Hungary

and Serbia. Also the interviews were conducted with everyone directly or indirectly involved in functioning of sports and recreational tourism in the area of the "*Szekelys route*", and everyone who could contribute to its development.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

During the analysis the data obtained from former participants of the "*Szekelys route*" there is some information of "*subjective nature*" bearing in mind the number of participants (30 participants, cyclists). However, it is important to emphasize that it is the number of organized participants in the annual "*Szekelys route*" organized by the club "*Tinet*" from Skorenovac (Vojvodina) not representing the real demand for the cycling on the Route. Such a small number of participants reflects the club's capacity for taking people on the route and providing good care of them. The organizers of the "*Szekelys route*" informed us that there are a number of cyclists from three countries through which the route passes (Romania, Hungary and Serbia) who could not be taken (Table 1).

Table 1. Age of participants-cyclists in the "*Szekelys route*"

		Frequency	%
Valid	16-25	9	30
	26-35	7	23,3
	36-45	7	23,3
	46-55	7	23,3
	Total:	30	100

Regarding the gender of the participants, the number of male participants is significantly higher (22 male participants). Interestingly enough, when the age of the participants is in question, then almost all categories ranging from 16-25 and category to the category 46-55 years are represented. This information is very important because it indicates the possibility of the Route being used by a large number of cyclists, which may be a good indicator of the profitability of marking the "*Szekelys route*" in the future.
The feasibility variables of the "*Szekelys route*" initiated the participants' assessment of the feasibility (ranging from 1 to 5) considering all the paths (10 cycle paths). The table 2 (Figure 1) indicates that most participants rated it four (4) which leads to a positive conclusion about feasibility (material base of tourism or the state of transport and road infrastructure and accommodation facilities along the Route).

Table 2. Assessing the feasibility "*Szekelys route*" by the participants

		Which grade would you assess the feasibility of "*Szekelys route*"?				Total
		2	3	4	5	
Age of examinee	16-25	0	0	9	0	9
	26-35	0	3	2	2	7
	36-45	0	1	4	2	7
	46-55	1	1	2	3	7
Total:		1	5	17	7	30

Data obtained from the dependent variables were cross analyzed with one independent variable (age of the participants as the most distinguishing indicator) to detect differences in responses measured on the basis of statistically significant differences in the distribution of the dependent variable in relation to an independent, whereas statistically significant differences are those for which $p < 0.05$.

Taking into account that $p = 0.066$, statistically significant difference is perceived in the responses of participants of different age groups on the very border of statistical significance, yet not significant (Table 3).

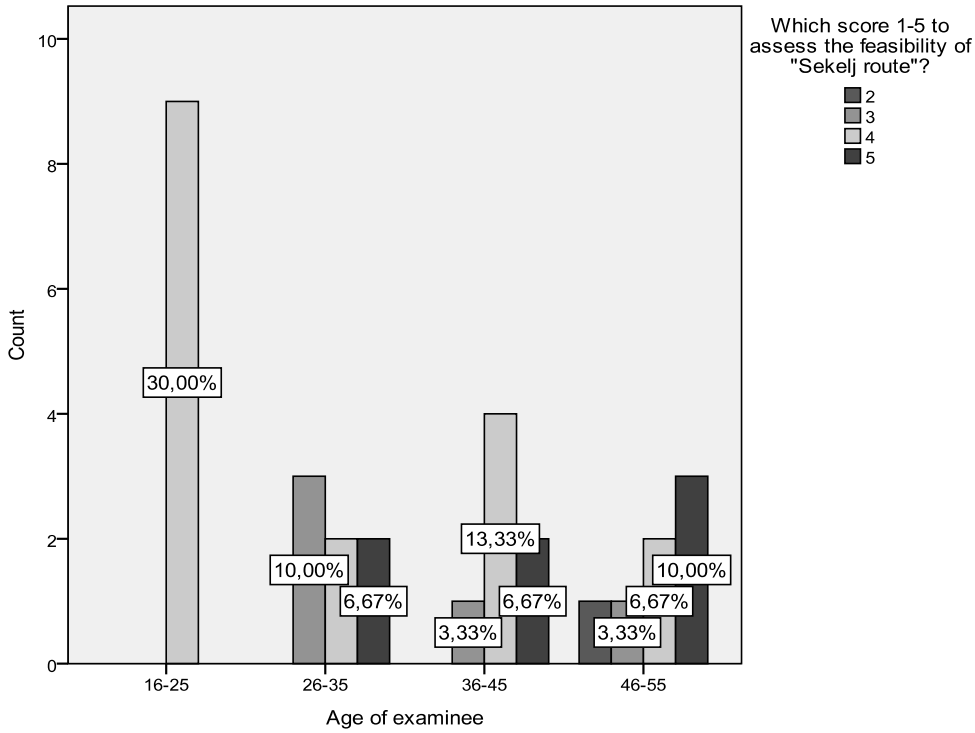

Figure 1. Assessing the feasibility "*Szekelys route*" by the participants

Table 3. Pearson Chi-Square Test

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig (p)
Pearson Chi-Square	16.055	9	0.066

The second group of variables relates to the evaluation of the route. Among very interesting data we find those indicating that most participants believe that one of the greatest values of the "*Szekelys route*" was the international cross-border co-operation between Romania, Hungary and Serbia. This group of responses was ahead of training and acquiring new skills, socializing and meeting new people and even in front of the cycling (Figure 2).

Table 4. Pearson Chi-Square Test

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig (p)
Pearson Chi-Square	10.323	9	0.325

As p = 0.325, it shows that there is no statistically significant difference in the responses of participants of different ages (Table 4).

Through its function of connecting and overlapping the natural, cultural, historical and spatial elements, tourism easily lifted the boundaries between nations and opens the way for various forms of regional networking. Territories in the border regions, due to its natural geographic features, have always been the subject of interest for many civilizations that have left behind permanent traces of their culture. Every nation left its specific ethno-sociological, folklore and other features, and this kind of "*ancestral land*", with its turbulent historical past, represents a significant tourism potential.

International cycling the "*Szekelys route*" was first organized in 2003 at the 125th anniversary of the founding of the village Skorenovac located in southern Banat near Kovin (Vojvodina, Serbia), which was founded by former residents of the village Ciumani.

Ciumani is the homeland of "*Szekelys*" (east of Transylvania in Romania) who, after leaving that area, founded five villages in Vojvodina, including Skorenovac whose name means "*Székelykeve*" "*Szekely village*" in Hungarian. The Székelys or Szeklers (Hungarian: Székely, Romanian: Secui, German: Szekler, Latin: Siculi) are a subgroup of the Hungarian people living mostly in the "*Székely Land*", an ethno-cultural region in eastern Transylvania, Romania.

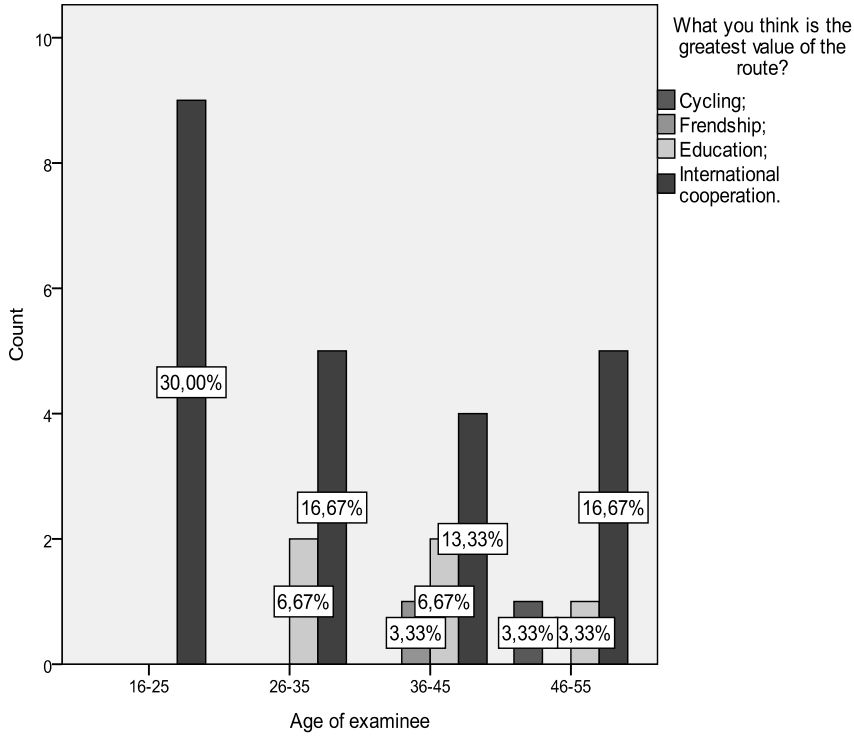

Figure 2. Evaluation of "*Szekelys route*" by the participants

A significant population descending from the Székelys of Bukovina lives in Tolna and Baranya counties in Hungary and in certain districts of Vojvodina, Serbia. The population of Szekelys comes from the territory in the nation, known as "*Szekely Land*", which is in the former Kingdom of Hungary including the historic area Csikszék, Marosszék, Aranyosszék, Udvarhelyszék and Háromszék. Today, these territories are located on the east and southeast of the Transylvanian basin, within the Carpathian arc and partly in the eastern Carpathian Mountains in central Romania (Baron, 2002; www.wikipedia.org). Szekelys present their ethnic autochthonous features through cultural heritage, customs and traditions. The most famous examples of this are ornamental embroidery, handicrafts, ornamental boxes for keeping family valuables etc. The importance of "*Szekelys route*" lies in the fact that last year (2010) the team of 26 cyclists was met, welcomed and escorted by the Mayor of Ciumani, Laszlo Marton Szilárd.

When first organized, "*Szekelys route*" had 16 cyclists, and the current number of those participating in the event is only about 30 cyclists, and this number varies slightly from year to year. The fact is that the formalization of the route and marking its reach in the number of user routes, and that would, among other things should also be a priority task of marking and the formalization of the route. Formalization and marking the route would not in itself mean a larger number of participants but would also open

possibilities for better promotion, various sponsorships, additional content and more. The "*Szekelys route*" boasts multiculturalism and spreads the "*good mood*". Socializing and meeting the local people contributes to a better understanding of the differences that sometimes might cause intolerance.

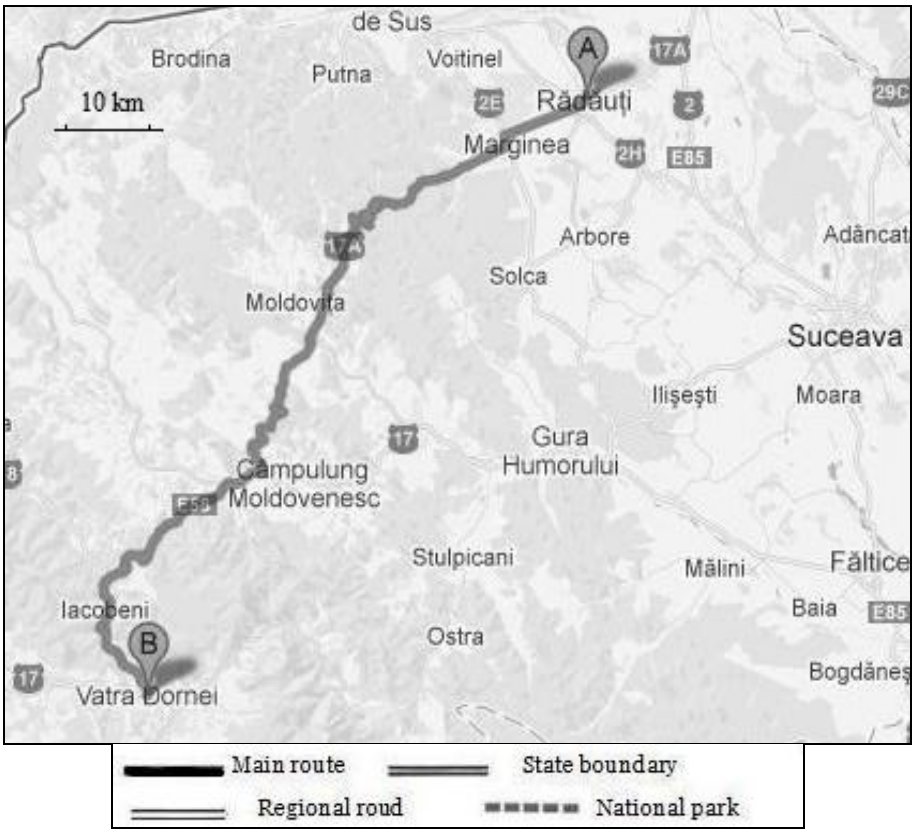

Figure 3. The first stage of the path to "*Szekelys route*"
(Source: base Google map – modified by Vujko; Scale: 1 cm = 10 km)

The starting point of the first stage is Rădăuți in Romania, and the length is about 110 km (Figure 3). Rădăuți is a town in the far northern part of Romania (10 km from the border with Ukraine), the historical province of Bucovina, and the third most important city in the county of Județul Suceava. Rădăuți is situated on a plain between the Suceava and Sucevița rivers, 37 km (23 miles) north from Suceava, at 375 m (410 yards) altitude. It is one of the oldest settlements in Moldavia, known since the 15th century (Davidović, 1999; Baron, 2002; www.wikipedia.org).

The second stage, a distance of about 83 km would commence from Vatra Dornei and would lead to Bistrita. The present town of Vatra Dornei developed around the former settlement of Dorna pe Giumalau mentioned in documents of the end of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th centuries. Vatra Dornei, also known as the "*Pearl of Bucovina*", is located at the confluence of the Dorna River, the Neagra Sarului and the Bistrita River. The town is well known for its natural mineral water resources. Spa's healing properties that have made it famous across the world include mineral springs, mud and strongly negative ionized air. Tourists come to Vatra Dornei to treat their cardiovascular diseases and rheumatism, to rest, practice winter sports or just to have a good time (Figure 4). The spectacular landscape also allows for numerous leisure

activities – walking, horse-riding, river-rafting, and visits to monasteries in Bucovina and Maramures. Vatra Dornei is also known as a winter sports resort with its many slopes and ski lifts. Black Hill (Dealul Negru altitude 1,300 m) and Runc Hill have tracks and slopes for winter sports. From Vatra Dornei there are routes to Giumalau Mountain and to Suhard Mountain.

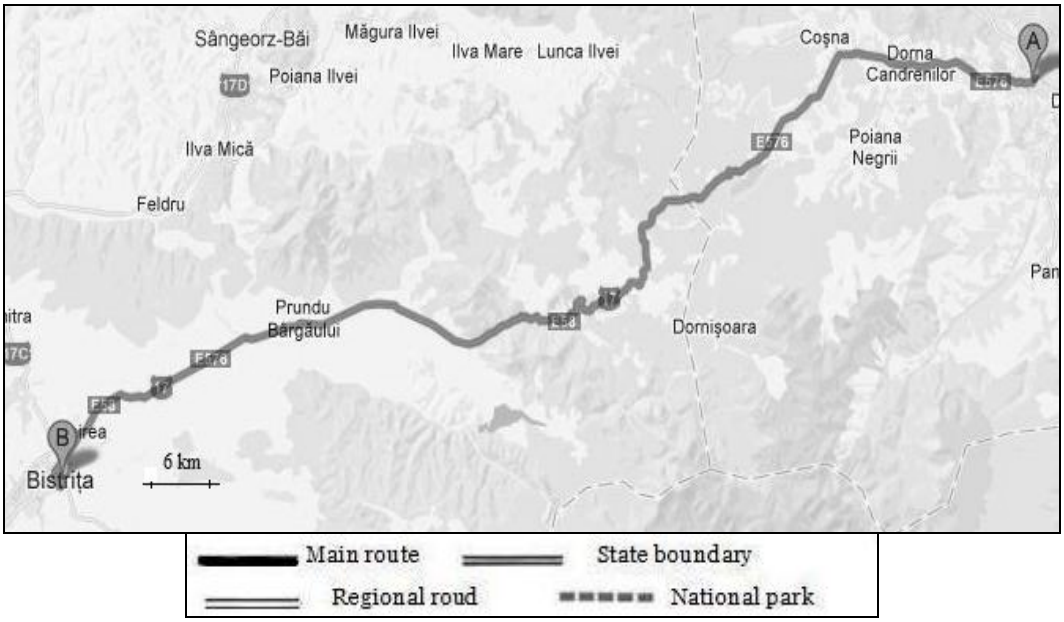

Figure 4. The second stage of the path to "*Szekelys route*"
*(*Source: base Google map – modified by Vujko; Scale: 1 cm = 6 km)

Historical Bucovina was about twice its present size, but its northern part now belongs to Ukraine as a result of the Soviet-German Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact of August 1940 Bucovina is a synthesis of the variety, harmony and beauty of Romanian landscape, its richness of relief with mountains, plateaus, gorges, hills, fields, and valleys, its rivers, streams and lakes, its forests, flora and fauna. The Eastern Carpathians extend from the Ukrainian frontier in the north to the Prahova River Valley in the far south. Together with the sub-Carpathians they occupy the western two-thirds of Bucovina, whereas in the east the Suceava plateau lies. The mountain region is made up of a series of parallel ranges (named "*obcini*"), oriented in a roughly north-south direction. Forest reserve of Slătioara, near the Rarău peak, encompasses one of the oldest woods in Romania, some of the trees being over 400 years old (Figure 5). One of the natural reserves, on the terraces of Poiana Stampei, is the habitat of rare flowering plants. This is a paradise for bees and apiculture, one of the oldest occupations in Romania that is widely practised. The impressive number of churches are to be found in Bucovina, Romania, with their fine exterior and interior frescoes, have been preserved from medieval times, and because of their uniqueness and artistic value, were added to UNESCO's World Cultural Heritage List in 1993. There is, indeed, no other place in the world where such a group of churches, with such high quality exterior frescoes, are to be found. The churches were founded, in most cases, as family burial places of princes and noble people. Each painter, although following the canonical iconographic programme, interpreted the scenes in a slightly different way. Using colours like the famous Voronet blue, the green-red of Sucevita, the yellow of Moldovita, the red of Humor and the green of Arbore, the painters (most of them unknown) described the biblical stories of the earth and heaven, scenes from the lives of

the Holly Virgin and Jesus Christ, stories of man's beginnings and of his life after death. The scenes were first painted on the interior walls, and then extended to the exterior ones. The reasons for such vast scenes were both religious and didactic: to promote Orthodoxy and to educate the illiterate (Davidović, 1999; Baron, 2002; www.wikipedia.org).

Figure 5. Detail from the Carpathians to the *"Székely route"*
(Photo: D. Stanković, 2010)

Bistriţa is located in the north-east of the Transylvanian plateau, in the Bistriţa basin which is crossed by the river bearing the same name. Bistriţa was founded in the early 13th century by German settlers and (due to its location on the main trading route with Moldavia), became one of Transylvania's major medieval cities. The city is the administrative centre of the district Bistita – Nasaud (Cianga & Surd, 2003, 2005).

The third stage will take from Bistrita to Cluj Napoca, about 115 km (Figure 6). Cluj-Napoca, commonly known as Cluj, is the fourth most populous city in Romania and the seat of Cluj County in the north-western part of the country. Geographically, it is roughly equidistant from Bucharest (441 km / 276 mi), Budapest (409 km / 256 mi) and Belgrade (465 km / 291 mi). Located in the Someşul Mic River valley, the city is considered the unofficial capital to the historical province of Transylvania (Davidović, 1999; Baron, 2002; www.wikipedia.org)

Transylvania is the largest region of Romania and probably the best known one. Transylvania is a unitary region, but diverse at the same time: it is worth trying to observe the differences between the region, both culturally and naturally. This region is a place with abundant history and multicultural convergence. All over Transylvania the cohabitation of Romanians, Hungarians, Saxons and Romas is the leading theme. Transylvania is rich in myth and misty medieval sites: there about 100 castles and fortresses and about 70 fortified churches. Romania's greatest and best preserved castles and fortresses are to be found here. But for the more curious traveller, there are many small villages with old houses and fortified churches. As Transylvania is circled by the Carpathian Mountains there are a lot of mountain forests and hiking or climbing possibilities. All over the Carpathians there are great national parks. In the centre of Transylvania there are green hills and rivers. Most big cities are very Western Europe like, and the infrastructure is generally good quality and appropriate for travellers. At the border between Transylvania and Valachia there is the famous Bran Castle, known as the

Castle of Dracula and medieval Brasov and Sighisoara. Iasi is home to the oldest Romanian university, founded in 1860 (Macura, 2006).

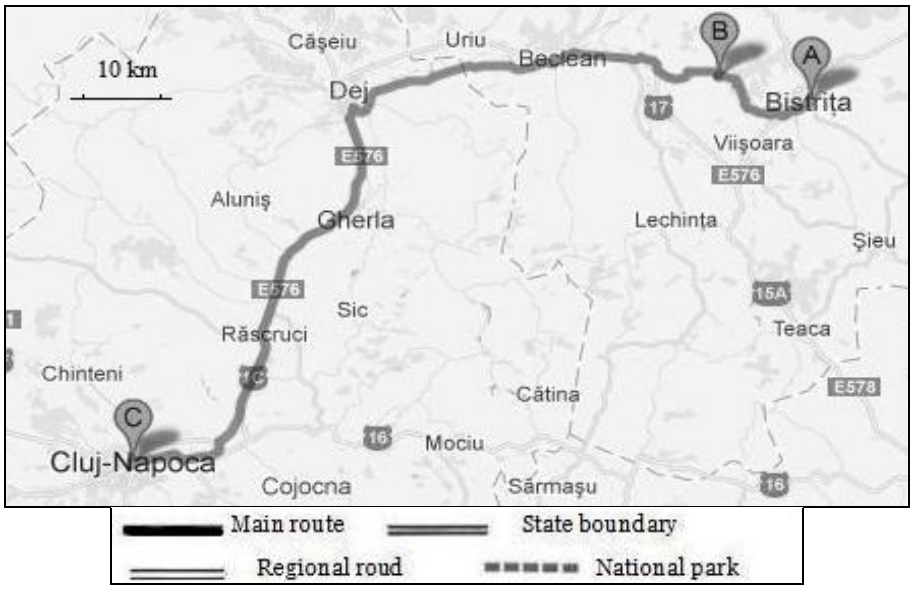

Figure 6. The third stage of the path to *"Szekelys route"*
(Source: base Google map – modified by Vujko; Scale: 1 cm = 10 km)

Figure 7 shows that the fourth stage on the "*Szekelys route*" goes from Cluj Napoca to Ciucea, about 73 km. Ciucea is the region of the municipality of Cluj, located 20 km northwest of places Huedin on the right bank of the river Crisul Repede. Ciucea is famous for the memorial museum of Octavian Goga, which was founded in the castle of the family Bonci 1986/7 and the Hungarian poet, Ady Endre. The fourth stage is, like the previous ones, very specific (Figure 8). Especially interesting are the Romanian villages. People from Romania are proud, kind, social; they love their land and eagerly introduce the visitors to its features.

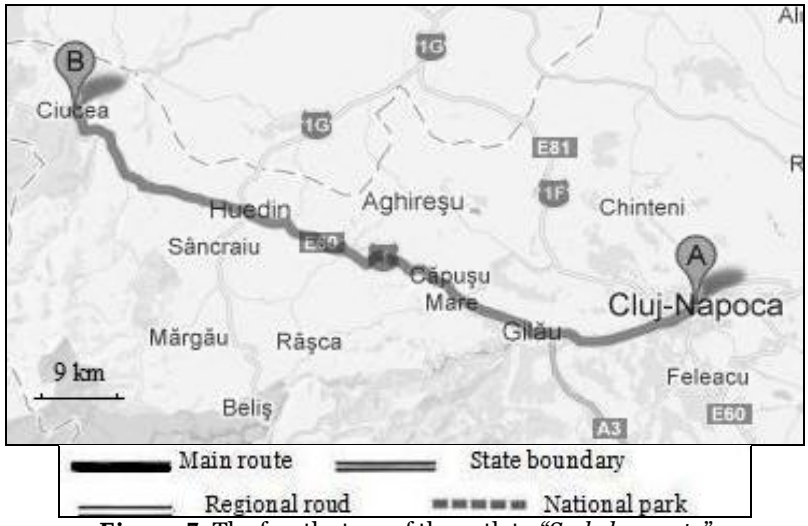

Figure 7. The fourth stage of the path to *"Szekelys route"*
(Source: base Google map - modified by Vujko; Scale: 1 cm = 9 km)

Figure 8. Detail from the road to Ciucei on the *"Székely route"*
(Photo: D. Stanković, 2010)

The fifth stage goes from Ciucea to Oradea, about 80 km (Figure 9). Oradea is the capital city of Bihor County, in Crişana region, in north-western Romania. City lies at the meeting point of the Crişana plain and the Crişul Repede's basin. It is situated 126 meters above sea-level, surrounded on the north-eastern part by the hills of Oradea belonging to the Ses hills. The main part of the settlement is situated on the floodplain and on the terraces situated down the river Crişul Repede. Oradea is famous for its thermal springs. The river Crişul Repede flows right through the city centre, providing it with a picturesque beauty. From the Hungarian border Oradea is only 13 km away (Davidović, 1999; Baron, 2002; www.wikipedia.org).

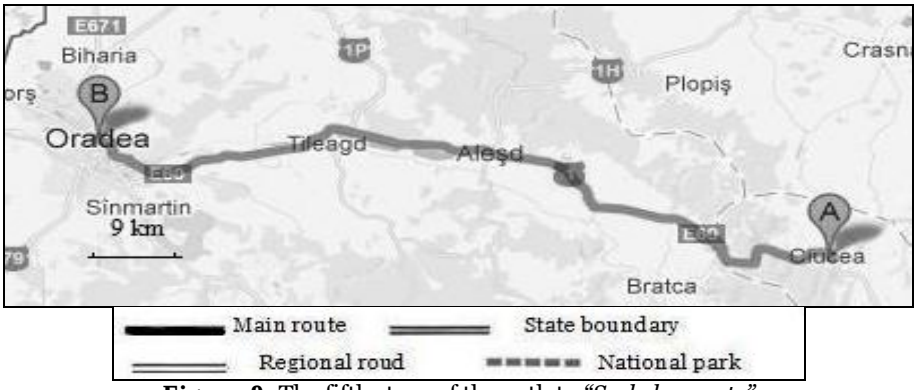

Figure 9. The fifth stage of the path to *"Szekelys route"*
(Source: base Google map - modified by Vujko; Scale: 1 cm = 9 km)

The term "*Crişana*" originated from Romanian "*Crişul*" for the Körös River and its three tributaries: the Crişul Alb, the Crişul Negru and the Crişul Repede which downstream flows into the river Tisza. Other, more Hungarian name for this area is Districts Bihor because of Bihor Mountain. Crişana is the most distant part of the Romanian state from the capital Bucharest. Romanian Crişana is bounded in Romania by Maramureş to the north, Transylvania proper to the east, the Banat to the south, and the Hungarian Pannonian Plain to the west. The western border with Hungary's political background was created in 1918 (Davidović, 1999; Baron, 2002; www.wikipedia.org).

Figure 10. Detail on the way to a restaurant 1201 Cota on the "*Székely route*" – the Carpathians
(Photo: D. Stanković, 2010)

Figure 11. Detail of Oradea on the "*Székely route*"
(Photo: D. Stanković, 2010)

The sixth stage (Figure 12) goes from Oradea to spa Dorobanti, about 104 km. Dorobanţi commune lies in the Aradului Plateauand the commune centre is situated 25 km from the city of Arad. Spa is an excellent place for rest and relaxation, according to Zoltan Dani, and one of the favourite places along the "*Szekelys route*". The spa offers several thermal water pools with water temperature reaching 60°C.

Figure 12. The sixth stage of the path to *"Szekelys route"*
(Source: Google base map – modified by Vujko; Scale: 1 cm = 9 km)

It is known that cyclists use all types of accommodation along the cycling route, from the camp sites to 5 star accommodations, and they gladly visit cafes and restaurants along the cycle route. Therefore, another benefit of marking cycle "*Szekelys route*" would certainly be the development of local entrepreneurship in the context of job creation in the newly opened facilities for providing food and beverages as well as the accommodation facilities. Cycling tourism in this sense would initiate the development of

the area through which the cycle routes go, the improvement of infrastructure and development of bicycle paths, raise the level of supporting facilities, rental equipment, services in the field and also cooperation with the local authorities. Moreover, the food offer should meet the specific needs of cyclists, including light food with an emphasis on "*packages to go*", produced by the local community. The peasants from Romania are famous for their delicious dishes. A feature of this way of cooking is the preparing the food in earthen pots. Together with these delicious dishes, people from Romania make a toast; they usually drink red wine, plum brandy or "*palinca*" (traditional drink), (Simonsen et al., 1998; Koorey, 2001; www.romanianmonasteries.org).

The seventh (Figure 13) stage of the path leads from the spa Dorobanti to Mórahalom, a small town in Hungary, about 98 km. The cycle "*Szekelys route*" through Hungary would be 250 km long, divided into two stages. Mórahalom is a town in Csongrád county in the Southern Great Plain region of southern Hungary, a place which Hungarians call "*South Gate*". The town is just 12 km from the Serbian border and the Romanian border is within 45 km. Despite the fact that Mórahalom is not a large town, it offers significant cultural and recreation programmes. Everyone can find the most suitable activity or relaxation according to individual specific demands. Those wishing to spend their leisure time in nature are offered several possibilities from riding to hiking in the surroundings. In the local nature conservation area around Madarász-tó (Bird Catcher Lake), there is an opportunity for camping. Within the town, the Erzsébet Thermal Spa stands at the service of those who are desirous of complete rest. The "*Aranyszöm*" Community House also provides cultural programmes and performances for those who are interested in Hungarian traditions.

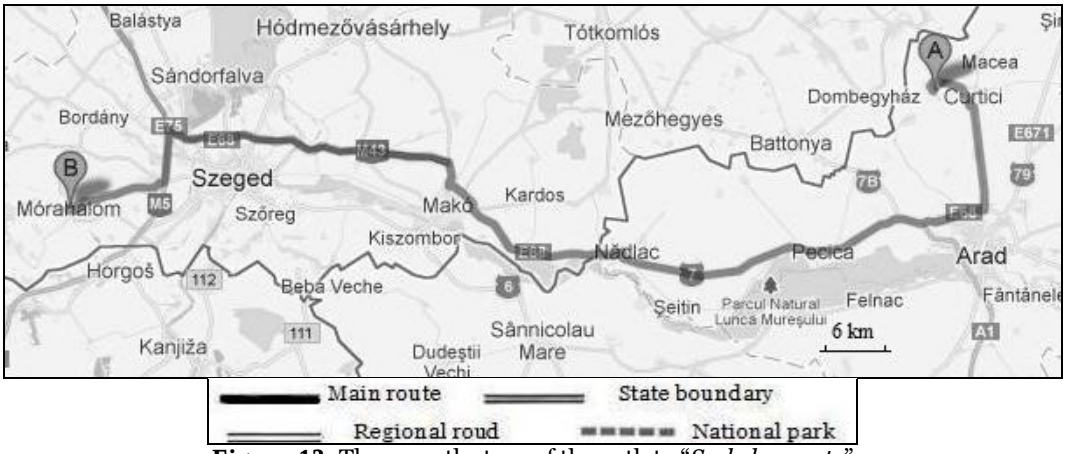

Figure 13. The seventh stage of the path to "*Szekelys route*"
(Source: Google base map – modified by Vujko; Scale: 1 cm = 6 km*)*

The eighth (Figure 14) stage of the path goes from Mórahalom to Bonyhád, about 132 km. Bonyhád is a town in Tolna County in South-western Hungary (Davidović, 1999; Moldavai, 2006; www.wikipedia.org). In 2010, Bonyhád was final stage for several cyclists. This specifically organized "*Szekelys route*" emphasises as its advantage the fact that the cyclists are escorted by the van equipped to offer necessary service and medical help in case of accidents. This means that cyclists are able to stop cycling at any time of day or night and continue the route in a vehicle. The advantages of organized tours, as well as marked trails are reflected in cyclists "*feeling safe*" because they always can seek for and obtain helping case of emergency.

The ninth (Figure 15) and tenth stage (Figure 16) of the "*Szekelys route*" go through Vojvodina, Serbia. Bearing in mind that cycling tourism in Serbia is insufficiently

developed, it should be noted that the availability of cycle paths is determined, primarily by their geographical and traffic position. However, the availability for cyclists is determined also by the easy access to accurate information. The routes on which it is difficult to obtain accurate information typically remain unvisited. The organizers have demonstrated that Serbia has the potential in cycling tourism development and attempted to introduce cyclists on the "*Szekelys route*" to the beauties of Serbia.

Figure 14. The eighth stage of the road "*Szekelys route*"
(Source: Google base map – modified by Vujko, Scale: 1 cm = 10 km)

The ninth stage of the route goes from Bonyhád to Apatin in Serbia, about 118 km. The Municipality of Apatin is located on the left bank of the Danube river (natural border with Croatia), between the Municipality of Sombor (in the north) and Municipality of Odžaci (in the south-east). Apatin is situated in the north-western part of the spacious plain in Bačka. It is considered one of Vojvodina's pristine gems. Such favourable geographic position, proximity to the Danube, and natural wealth of this area (fruitful ground, woods next to the river, abundance of fish in swampy regions and backwaters, and game in woods) attracted people to settle there during all ages. For the same reasons, in pre-historic times, the cultures of Sarmatians, Celts, Goths and many others were being replaced by each other respectively within this region. Near the city of Apatin there is Junaković Spa, a modern and well-equipped rehabilitation and recreation centre with sports fields, outdoor pools, indoor therapy and saunas (Jovičić, 2009; www.wikipedia.org).

The mere cycle paths, although being one of the most important preconditions for cycle tourism development, remain insufficient for successful in promotion of this tourism type. It is necessary to develop the appropriate supportive infrastructure and services for potential tourists - cyclists, the users of the cycle "*Szekelys route*" in order to enable them the accomplishment of their cycle tours without difficulties. Such capital investments include opportunities for rental, service and repair bikes, accommodation tailored to the needs of cyclists (for clothes drying, designated areas for secure bicycle parking, adequate food and beverages supply, etc.). Moreover, the investments should include the possibility to transport bicycle by public transport, to provide recreation facilities and shelter from bad weather in remote places far from villages, signage for tourist attractions situated outside cycle paths, etc.

In order to connect Romania, Hungary and Serbia into a specific cycling "*Szekelys route*" complex, it is necessary to provide excellent orientation facilities for the cyclists. The first step to be introduced would be the signage and marking of the "*Szekelys route*", i.e. accurate information for all traffic participants. The proper signage for cultural,

historical and natural sights would also inform cyclists about the possibilities in sports and recreational activities, and also the distances on the "*Szekelys route*", such as places for rest and relaxation, public toilettes, service stations, rental agencies, etc. It is necessary to mention the importance of supporting tourism infrastructure, such as shops, post offices, ATM machines, police, health service, etc. The aforementioned has an indirect impact on the organization of all tourism types, including cycle tourism, but often remains unjustly neglected (Matei & Vert, 2007).

Figure 15. The ninth stage of the path to "*Szekelys route*"
(Source: Google base map - modified by Vujko; Scale: 1 cm = 10 km;)

The tenth (Figure 16) stage of the route from Apatin to Skorenovac is divided into two separate stages during which the cyclists can stay overnight in Petrovaradin, near Novi Sad. The length of the two, connected stages is about 250 km. Petrovaradin is the part of the agglomeration of Novi Sad in Serbia, which lies lying opposite the main part of Novi Sad on the river Danube, around Petrovaradin Fortress and it is well-known as the "*Gibraltar on the Danube*". Much of land outside of urban area is part of National Park of Fruška gora. The northern part of Fruška Gora consists of massive landslide zones, but they are not active, except in Ribnjak area (between Sremska Kamenica and Petrovaradin Fortress), (Jovičić, 2009; www.wikipedia.org).

Taking into account that "*Szekelys route*" can become a basis for development of cycling tourism in the framework of interregional cooperation among the countries through which it passes, it was necessary to move to the second step, which is the SWOT analysis. The interviewees were: MSc Dragiša Savić, PhD Aleksandar Marić and PhD Goran Matić from Fruška Gora National park, Gvozden Perković from Tourism organisation of Vojvodina (TOV), Tamara Stojanović, person in charge for Fruška gora mountain from Provincial Secretariat for the Environment, Nebojša

Subić, President of Cycling Association of Vojvodina, and Zoltan Dani, President of the Youth Club "*Tinet*" from Skorenovac (Vojvodina) and Organizer of "*Szekelys route*" and cyclists in the "*Szekelys route*".

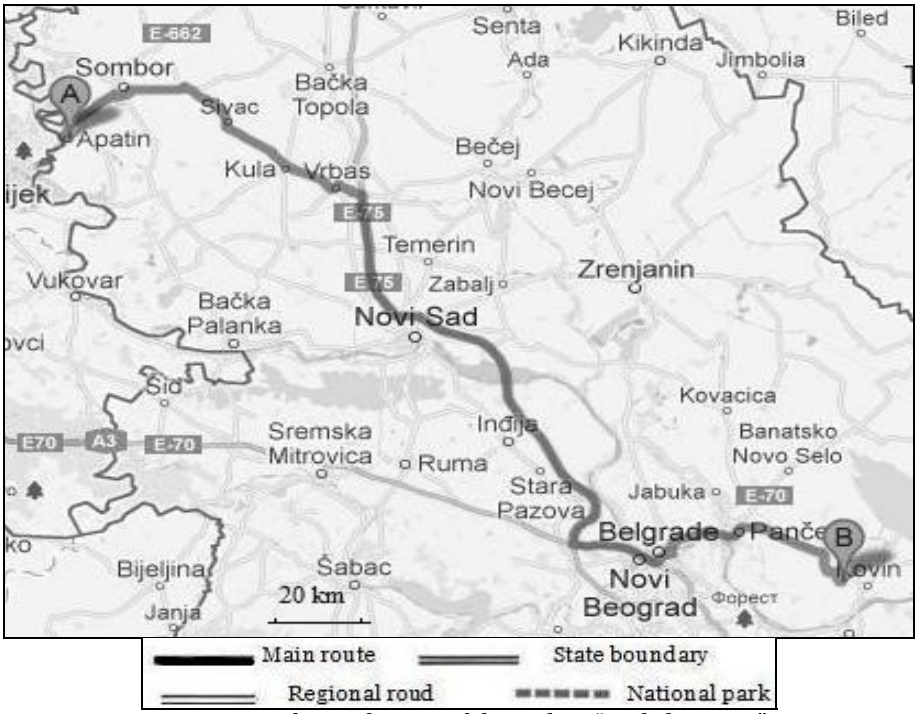

Figure 16. The tenth stage of the path to "*Szekelys route*"
(Source: Google base map – modified by Vujko; Scale: 1 cm = 20 km)

The data obtained from Opportunities (Table 5) in this analysis leads to the conclusion that the advantage of potential "*Szekelys route*" is the cross-border cooperation and establishing contacts with cross border entrepreneurship and joint projects. These projects facilitate cross-border business partners and the institutions to find partners, including fairs, databases, web pages, which means that projects should contribute significantly to the development of cross-border business contacts.

Therefore, networking and cross-border cooperation would mean continuous development of the entire territory. Experts suggest the following as the key priorities for developing and promoting the "*Szekelys route*" as cycle tourism product: the development of an infrastructure of safe, convenient, and attractive cycle routes for day/holiday cycling, centre-based cycling short breaks and cycle touring holidays, with an emphasis on traffic-free routes and circular routes; safer and easier cycle access into, around and out of towns and cities; coherent and visible route signing, without which cyclists will lose the route; improved arrangements for cycle carriage by public transport and promotion of cycle access by train or bus; easy-to-book cycle friendly accommodation; better co-ordinated and targeted marketing of cycle routes, cycle hire and cycling holidays. In this sense the development of the Network: will improve cycle access into and out of towns and cities, making them more marketable as cycling short break or touring holiday destinations, and increasing the potential for encouraging cycling tourism day visits, and local leisure cycling trips from home by city and town dwellers; will provide new opportunities for tourism businesses located along the Network to promote themselves to cycling tourist markets, e.g. attractions will be able to promote access by bike, while accommodation establishments

may be able to attract cycle tours; will create new commercial opportunities for the development of cycle hire and cycling holiday businesses, and the development of other businesses, such as refreshment stops, campsites, other forms of tourist accommodation, and other support services, such as luggage transfer or cycle repair/rescue; will provide opportunities for sections of the Network to be incorporated into linked circuits and loops for circular day cycle rides and cycle touring holidays and will provide opportunities for strategic routes ("*Szekelys route*") to be promoted as cycle tour 'pilgrimage' or 'challenge' routes for all three markets holidaymakers (Simonsen & Jorgenson, 1998, Ritchie & Hall, 1999; Hayward, 2001; Hudson, 2003; Weed & Bull, 2004; Torkildsen, 2005; Weed, 2008; Matthew, 2009; www.sustrans.org.uk).

Table 5. The SWOT analysis of "*Szekelys route*" between Radauci (Romania) and Skorenovac (Vojvodina, Serbia)

Strengths
- The existence of major tourism resources (protected areas, constructed sports facilities, the possibility of cycling tourism as a complementary forms of rural, event based tourism, cultural tourism, wine and other forms of tourism; Multiethnic and tolerant mentality; The existence of network sports facilities in all residential areas; Existence of unique historic structures, and geographic characteristics; The existence of diverse events; Fostering tradition; A solid structure and good road position to the "*Danube-bike route*" and Sustainable form of tourism.
Weaknesses
- Lack of integrated tourism; Weak analytical and statistical bases; Lack of resource utilization; Lack of internal communication; Lack of information centre; Lack of camping space; Lack of public toilets; Lack of accommodation specialized for cyclists - small market; Insufficient number of experts and other services; Lack of integrated tourism; Poor marketing; Lack of Web portals in foreign languages on bicycle tourism to "*Szekelys route*"; Lack of signage;
Opportunities
- Networking, Provincial and central government funds; EU funds; Participation in cross-border projects; IPA funds; Close to "*Danube cycle route*"; Trade and tourism portals sports and recreation facilities-good image (cycling, hiking, horseback riding). Specialized catering and tourism; Increase in the number of events; Standardization and Quality Improvement of facilities; Improvement of promotion and marketing activities;
Threats
- Devastation of natural resources by increasing traffic of tourists; Not understanding the importance of joint bids; Poor Coordination with neighbouring regions and countries; Unfavourable economic situation; Small market; Neglecting of sports and recreational tourism by decision makers.

Special importance would be the connection between cyclists from the "*Szekelys route*" with cyclists from the "*Danube cycle route*". It would consequently result in the Serbian-Hungarian-Romanian cycling transversal, which would generate many other tourist products (Barnett, 2004; Cutumisu & Cottrels, 2004).

CONCLUSION

Benefits that cycling offers compared to other means of transportation are reflected primarily in direct contact with the space through which it passes. This means that cycling has more advantages in its attempt to return a man to nature. Recreational cycling enables cyclists to stop at any time and enjoy the environment. It should be noted that the "*Szekelys route*" is abundant in beautiful landscape. Cycling has many positive effects on physical and biochemical mechanisms in human body. Experts claim responsibly that physical activity is the best medicine (Hayward, 2001; Hudson, 2003, Buckley, 2006; Vujko, 2008). On the other hand, cyclists are among the highly desirable tourists, because they are using the means of transportation that does not pollute the environment. With regard to the fact that the cycling market in Europe is the market on the rise, it is clear that marking of as many

routes as possible is a must. Cycle tourism is an environmentally sustainable form of tourism with minimal impact on the environment and host communities.

One of the main priorities in future development will be expanding the network of cycling paths EuroVelo and striving to create a network that would offer visits to all the countries of the European Union. Bicycle Trip, where cycling is the main motive and the basic form of transport, participated with 2-4% of total travels in some European countries in 2010 and targets to double or triple it in the upcoming decades (Cope & Doxford, 1998; www.sustrans.co.uk). Hence, cycling tourism and the "*Szekelys route*" is an opportunity for development of cycling tourism in Serbia because it is undisputable that the cyclists look for new and exciting destinations and European bicycle traverses EuroVelo, the new spaces that can be networked. Also, cycle tourism makes good use of existing, often under-utilised resources, e.g. country lanes and by-roads and can provide an alternative use for redundant or derelict resources, e.g. disused railway lines. Cycle tourism can help introduce rural traffic-calming which will further benefit both local people and tourists. Cycle tourism can provide new incentives for people to visit an area and can help to attract new types of visitor (Simonsen & Jorgenson, 1998, Ritchie & Hall, 1999; Hayward, 2001; Hudson, 2003; Weed & Bull, 2004; Torkildsen, 2005; Weed, 2008; Matthew, 2009; Vujko & Plavša, 2010; Vujko, 2011). Cycle tourism also offers opportunities for the development of cycle hire and cycling holiday operations in rural areas (the "*Danube cycle route*" has supported the establishment of a successful cycle tour operation and has generated significant additional trade from tourism along the route), (Vujko & Plavša, 2010; www.gtz.de; www.dunavskastrategija.rs; www. ciklonaut.com). The "*Szekelys route*" was founded in 2003 and since then has been the conveyor of the message of peace, tolerance and international cooperation. Natural predisposition, cultural and historical heritage, material base and a position that allows cross-border cooperation are the factors which could affect the marking of the "*Szekelys route*" in the future. That would certainly mean the specific steps in the construction and reconstruction of essential infrastructure network and signage as important preconditions for linking these areas. According to the fact, that every marked destination on the route is also the place for cyclists to stay overnight, it is necessary to emphasise that within the route there are planned sightseeing of destinations. This contributes to better understanding of local ways of life and cultural heritage of the people, and stimulates the motivation of returning to the destination (Macura, 2006). Moreover, visits to places of interest, museums and other cultural objects are pre-organized within the marking of "*Szekelys route*" they should be found in the maps and brochures as places to be visited. In the future, the "*Szekelys route*" would bring several benefits and changes in the region. First of all, it would mean the development of not only cycling but also other forms of sports and recreational activities (Surd & Moldovan, 2005; Turnock, 2006; Plavša, 2007).

Serbia has a strategic decision to become a candidate country for accession to European Union in the near future. The status of candidate country would open possibility to a range of specific funds, constituted just to support urban development, in order to improve and coordinate existing and potential spatial structure with the European ones. Regarding the time spent and missed opportunities over the past ten years, it is necessary to think about strategic projects and apply for support from these funds. The fundamental objectives of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) in respect of which have been formulated by appropriate policy development must meet several requirements. The first requirement refers to the overcoming of geographical differences in terms of prosperity and welfare, the other to optimize the business climate, while the third focuses on defining the spatial framework in which to reflect the spatial consequences of European sector policies to fulfil these three functions are defined in three main policy domains. These are: a polycentric spatial development and new relationships between urban and rural areas, equity in access to infrastructure and knowledge and careful management of natural

and cultural heritage (Bjeljac & Ćurčić, 2006; Turnock, 2006). Finally, the opportunities for development of the "*Szekelys route*" are tangible and clearly defined and the potentials for its formalization are realistic and feasible. The first steps of implementation have been taken, but it depends on us to recognise and utilise all the possibilities offered.

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LISBON EXPERIENCE. MOBILITY, QUALITY OF LIFE AND TOURIST IMAGE: A SURVEY

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Abstract: Tourists recently awarded Lisbon as the best city break destination in Europe. This article analyses the various types of tourist experience in the city of Lisbon. The research method is the questionnaire, aimed at investigating the choices of tourists in the area of mobility, their perception of the quality of life and their level of appreciation of neighbourhoods, landmarks and infrastructures. There is an obvious link between the quality of life and the quality of the tourist experience but it is difficult to measure it. Through this questionnaire, we hope to have made a small contribution to the understanding of the perceptive sphere of the individual and his choices in terms of behaviour, which are an essential element of any strategy for tourism marketing.

Key words: Lisbon, questionnaire, mobility, quality of life, perception

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GENERAL FRAMEWORK

The region of Lisbon has always played an important role as a tourist destination in Portugal. Tourism in the city of Lisbon, in particular, is now of paramount importance for Portuguese and international cultural tourism, with global revenues amounting to 562 million euros in 2011 (Turismo de Portugal, 2012). This article analyses the various types of tourist experience in the city, with special regard to the behavioural and perception spheres, which emerged from the results of a questionnaire. Lisbon was once again distinguished internationally, this time as the "*Second Best European Destination*" for 2013 by the Association of European Consumers, beating cities like Vienna, Barcelona, Amsterdam, Madrid, La Valletta, Nice, Milan and Stockholm. Only Istanbul, in Turkey, topped Lisbon in a list of 20 cities, and yet, by a mere 439 votes (Machado, 2013, p.4). Lisbon also secured the distinction of ideal destination for urban getaways.

Most tourists arrive in Lisbon by air. The total number of passengers landed at Lisbon airport increased by more than two million between 2004 and 2011. This increase is concentrated on international flights, since there was a decrease in the number of passengers on domestic flights. The low-cost carriers accounted for a large part of this increase, almost a million passengers, while there was also a decrease to less than half the number of passengers on charter flights (Table 1).

* Corresponding author

Table 1. Lisbon. Passengers disembarking, by type of flight (thousands)
(Source: Turismo de Portugal, 2012)

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total	*5.244*	*5.512*	*6.064*	*6.611*	*6.753*	*6.598*	*7.020*	*7.384*
Traditional	4.713	4.880	5.119	5.411	5.401	5.450	5.785	6.223
International	3.666	3.837	4.085	4.410	4.463	4.468	4.828	5.305
Domestic	1.047	1.043	1.034	1.001	938	982	957	918
Low cost	195	303	649	929	1.104	948	1.012	1.017
Charters	336	328	295	271	247	201	223	143

As to the origin, the majority of passengers transported by air are of Spanish nationality (13%), a market that has not stopped growing in the last decade. The other important markets for Lisbon are French (11%), Brazilian (9%), German and British, the latter two both with about 8% of the total (Table 2).

Table 2. Lisbon. Passengers disembarking by markets - TOP 5 in 2011 (thousands)
(Source: Turismo de Portugal , 2012)

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total	*4.188*	*4.463*	*5.025*	*5.603*	*5.794*	*6.598*	*7.020*	*7.384*
Spain	590	717	833	983	937	895	979	1.026
France	552	548	612	637	691	721	753	811
Brazil	459	526	490	516	575	547	677	724
Germany	446	430	501	528	591	530	548	620
United Kingdom	444	429	461	549	584	538	560	608
Others	1.698	1.812	2.128	2.390	2.416	3.367	3.503	3.594

The steady increase of international tourism in Lisbon metropolitan area is also made clear by the number of bednights, which went from 7 million in 2004 to 8.6 million in 2011 (Turismo de Portugal, 2012). More than a half of this amount (4.8 million) relates to the city of Lisbon, which confirms its role of main attraction pole for the wider Lisbon region and the entire country.

Regarding cruise lines, about 560 million passengers are expected in Lisbon in 2013, confirming the growth rate of about 7% from 2007 to 2011 (Figure 3). This increase is connected with two factors: a rise in the number of operators who choose Lisbon as scale, and the increasing number and capacity of cruises that sail both the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. Machado (2013) states that "*Lisbon emerges as one of the ten destinations to visit, recommended by individuals who responded to the International Passengers Cruise Survey of 2012, prepared by the Tourism Observatory of Lisbon, in partnership with the Port Authority of Lisbon*".

„*For these cruise passengers, mostly British (215 645 or 43%), the climate, the local population and the quick access to the city are among the factors that differentiate and justify the placement of Lisbon among the best ports of call*" (Machado, 2013, p. 4). The number of passengers of German and Italian nationality has been increasing, representing respectively 16% (81 455 passengers) and 12% (60 578 passengers) of the market share. In the top 5 also Americans (46,922 or 9%) and Spaniards (20,816 or 4%) are to be found[1] .

Table 3. Lisbon. Evolution of cruise lines activity
(Source: Porto de Lisboa, 2013)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Evolution of the scales	256	308	294	299	330	314
Evolution of the scales in transit	193	240	188	211	232	244

[1] Source of statistical data: Porto de Lisboa (2013).

The seafront position and city life seem to define the supply of Portuguese tourism in general, with particular emphasis on the capital's metropolitan area, which includes the most favourable conditions for the practice of tourism, and stand out clearly on the map of Portugal. The natural beauty of Lisbon, together with a set of capital gains, such as accessibility and the potential of low-cost flights, makes it unique and a must visit.

Lisbon is also favoured by the variety of tourism supply, the nature of the urban environment and the diversification and qualification of its structures that altogether become a positive influence in the demand (the hotels of 4 and 5 star represent 40% of the supply[2]). In Lisbon there is indeed an increased demand of the city during the summer months, followed by a secondary "*peak*" in spring, around Easter holidays, when the Spanish market prevails in the city.

According to Ashworth and Tunbridge (1990) urban tourism resources can be divided into primary attractions that attract tourists directly (museums, monuments, places of historical interest, events and urban landscape) and secondary attractions that would not justify the trip alone but globally contribute for the formation of a positive image of the city (cafés, restaurants, hotel service standards, a good business network, entertainment, etc.). The combination of the two types of resources will probably be the main factor of attraction of urban tourist destinations. In the city converge individuals with different tastes and interests attracted by the image of a place of grandeur and abundance of wholeness and freedom, luxury and permissiveness.

On the other hand, tourism tends to focus today on the imagery, ornamental and scenic dimensions of the city, which defines a new reading of the urban space as a place and object of consumption, leisure and recreation, therefore fading the conception of a business and labour site (Rodrigues, 1992). The appreciation of tourism, as well as the recreational and cultural functions of the city, is ultimately a response to the new economic landscape of the Western world, due to de-industrialization and increased consumption needs, corresponding to the progressive globalization. It is the consolidation of a postmodern "*culture of pleasure*", which is founded in the appreciation of urban environments and aesthetics, fun and culture. Hence, many cities, including Lisbon, have invested in museum facilities and cultural rehabilitation, in the improvement of the urban landscape, in the conversion of riverfronts and in the creation of theme parks or recreational and cultural parks.

The growth in the number of urban tourists will probably continue, both in the professional and scientific tourism field and in the cultural tourism field. This growth is related to the democratization of education and higher levels of education, with the decrease in the number of farmers and industrial proletariat, with the expansion of a new bourgeoisie of intellectuals, scientific and technical free lancers related to the tertiary sector. The intellectual formation of these classes provides greater respect for heritage, historic, artistic and cultural values whose concentration is predominantly urban.

In Lisbon has always existed an individuality of its own, related to its Manueline and Baroque monuments, its original means of transport[3], its cafés and its mysterious atmosphere. But also the neighbourhoods contribute to build the image of the city, shaping its popular and historic character. The neighbourhoods symbolize the capital, together with other elements that give it a peculiar touch of cinematic and intense luminosity, such as its topography, the riverside location, and the fact it has always been the birthplace of famous singers and writers.

[2] According to data from the Turismo de Portugal (2012) there were, in 2011, 54,912 beds for over 4 million guests annually. The bed occupancy rate was 49.3% while the occupancy rate per room stood at 62.1%.

[3] Besides those who have become "classics" in the landscape of Lisbon, as the *cacilheiro* (riverboat), the *electrico 28* (tram nr. 28), the Santa Justa lift and the Bica, the Gloria and the Lavra funiculars, new means of transport emerged lately with much success among tourists, as the Eco tuk tours, the Segway and the Go-Car. The latest is the "amphibious tourist bus", which runs the city partly on land and partly on the river.

Another image of great tourist interest is connected with the geographical position of the city, as well as with its scenic effect due to the numerous hills and their proximity to the river. This is actually an extremely valued item by written guides (Henriques, 1996).

On the other hand, the areas linked to the past and memory are described in detail at the expense of the capital outskirts, currently devalued under the tourist point of view. Thus Alfama quarter emerges as a genuine and somewhat exotic and archaic place. It gives the image of a unique and welcoming neighbourhood, which denotes the contemporary interest in tradition, the specificity and the appreciation of the physical and cultural heritage[4].

We cannot fail to mention the most modern section of Lisbon of about 250 acres currently occupied by the Parque das Nações (Park of Nations), where the Expo 98 was held. This is a paradigmatic case of conversion of a degraded urban space, with functions once assigned to the harbour activities, industrial purposes and warehousing, which now constitute a new tourist attraction with museums and monuments (Oceanario or Lisbon aquarium, Living science hall, gardens, Vasco da Gama tower and the homonymous bridge), buildings of great beauty and architectural value and well framed in the surrounding area (examples of which are the Oriente interface station and former Pavilion of Portugal), good commercial spaces (shopping mall Vasco da Gama), hotels and restaurants, promenades, marinas and large terraces of great scenic effect.

The conversion and renovation of the riverfront is directly linked to the development of economic activities, as well as recreational and cultural attractions. The emphasis is given to the diversity and combination of different elements with different purposes and uses: offices, residential and commercial areas, monuments, recreational venues and exhibitions, hotels and restaurants, enhancing the landscape.

In Lisbon the most scenic tourist spots are therefore aligned along the Tagus. There are three cores in the riverfront, two more traditional (Baixa and Belém quarters) and one more contemporary (Park of Nations). However, there is also an axis perpendicular to the river, set by the historic centre of the city, which extends from Praça do Comércio (Black horse square) to Praça de Espanha, through Avenida da Liberdade (Liberty Avenue) and Eduardo VII Park.

The decentralisation of areas with several points of interest is a result of the cultural and tourism development policy of the city – improvement of Belém area, creation of the Calouste Gulbenkian foundation, inauguration of the Tile Museum and realisation of the Expo 98 among others.

Which are the predominant markets in Lisbon? How is the structure of the demand? And how is the supply organised? Which are the tourists interests and the most visited attractions in the city? What forms does the mobility of tourists assume? What are the most requested experiences? And which of them are more experienced?

These are some of the questions we will try to answer in this study. The research method is the questionnaire. Over 300 questionnaires were carried out to tourists of different nationalities visiting Lisbon during the months of February and June 2013.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Introductory remarks

Some of the questions listed above relate to the subjective dimension of the tourist experience and can hardly find an answer in the database, although extensive and accurate information is made available by the state bodies for statistics on tourism. In particular, the choices and behaviours of tourists in the area of mobility, their perception of the urban reality and their level of knowledge and appreciation of neighbourhoods, landmarks and infrastructures could not be known except through

[4] The most emerging neighbourhood is now the Mouraria quarter, located on the northwest slope of the hill of S. Jorge castle, which is currently undergoing successive restoration of residential buildings, palaces, churches and ancient monasteries. Its cultural promotion is strongly connected to the concept of "neighbourhood of the Fado", a song that was born here and has become globally famous, since it was considered world Heritage by UNESCO.

the administration of a questionnaire, which involved a sample of 300 foreign tourists visiting the city of Lisbon. Such administration was performed by a team of 10 interviewers and took place in two phases: 240 interviews were conducted in the month of February 2013, another 60 in June 2013.

The questionnaire consists of 4 sections:

1. General Information – individual characteristics of the respondent, such as age, gender, nationality, number of visits already carried out, means of transport, type and level of accommodation, purchase of tourist card and / or packages, excursions.

2. Mobility – use of various forms of public transportation, purchase of the daily integrated urban transport ticket, hire of means of transport such as car, bike or scooter.

3. Quality of tourism and quality of life – level of appreciation, on a scale from 1 to 5, of the characteristics which define the quality of urban life, such as cleanness, traffic, cultural life, together with those of closer importance to tourism, such as tourist services and crafts.

4. Tourist experience – level of knowledge and appreciation, on a scale from 1 to 5, of (a) already established and potential tourist areas, (b) public services and infrastructure frequently used by tourists, or those that can be seen as urban landmarks of tourist interest, thanks to their visibility and / or to their aesthetic characteristics.

Preliminary results of the survey

It should first be noted that here are presented only those who could be called the preliminary results of the survey, i.e. those that emerged from the mere aggregation of the total number of answers for each question. However, this has allowed the identification of some important individual characteristics of the tourist experience, along with a gradient of appreciation and knowledge of individual aspects and elements that contribute to its definition. Only at a later stage of the research statistical correlations between significant elements will be carried out, such as individual characteristics of the respondents on the one hand and the type of accommodation, forms of mobility, appreciation and knowledge of the most important aspects of the tourist experience on the other.

General Information

The interviewed sample is fairly representative of the universe of international tourism in Lisbon regarding age, means of transport and type of accommodation, although it dissociates in some respects from the statistics. This especially for what concerns the average length of stay, which is more than twice (5.2) than the one that emerges from the official figures (2.3).

In detail, it appeared that about 90% of the respondents are between 20 and 60 years old. This is the typical age of tourists who engage in independent touring, while a significant proportion of tourists aged over 60 years opts for the organized tour, to feel more safe and protect by the guide. The majority share of tourists is from EU countries (66.7% overall, especially Germany, France, Spain, Italy, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands), besides those from the United States (6.3%), Brazil (5.3%) and China (4.7%). In fact, the weight of the Brazilians is lower than expected, while that of the Chinese is decidedly higher: in this second case, however, it is likely that the coincidence of the first phase of interviews with the Chinese New Year (February 10, 2013) has played an important role. It is also possible that the questionnaire has made obvious an emerging phenomenon, i.e. the steady increase of Chinese tourism, an actual trend for some years in several European countries, including Portugal.

Nearly a quarter of the respondents had already carried out an average of 1.5 visits in the Portuguese capital, which suggests that there is a certain degree of

reliability, perhaps due to the variety of resources available to tourists (culture, congresses, events, but also swimming and sports, such as golf and surfing), which justify and explain the desire to repeat the experience. The plane is by far the most widely used means of transport (90.3%), given the peripheral location of the country. The hotel, especially of 3 stars (30.2% of total hotels) and 4 stars (45.4% of total hotels) is the most commonly used accommodation (69.7% of the total). However, the share of 5 stars hotels is not irrelevant (15.8% of total hotels). The share of rental apartments is interesting (10.7% of the total), a typology of accommodation that sees Lisbon well positioned in Europe in terms of supply.

As for the integration of tourism supply, the percentage of purchase of the "*Lisboa Card*"[5] is low (16%), while far more significant is the purchase of the integrated public transport day ticket (43%), in confirmation of what will be said later about urban mobility. A small percentage (26.7%) of the respondents participated in excursions, mostly to Sintra, but also to Cascais and Estoril[6].

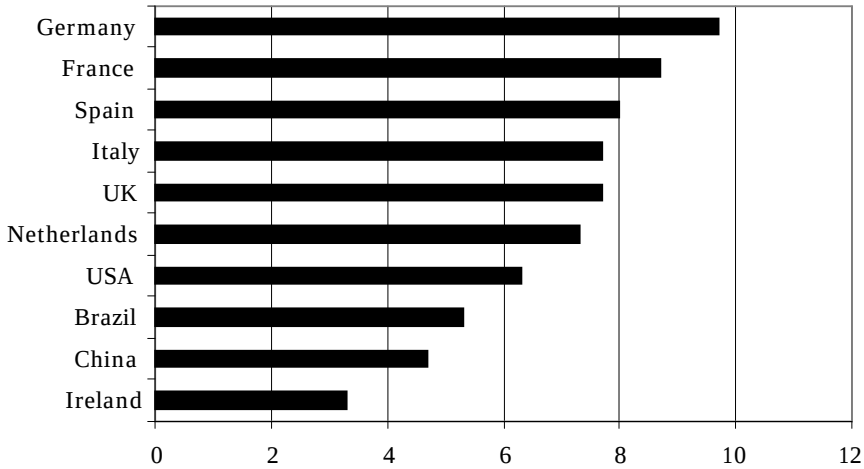

Figure 1. First 10 nationalities of the interviewees (% on the total)
(Source: authors, 2013)

Mobility

As regards public transport, it is necessary to make a distinction between the means which perform a function mainly or solely of transport (bus, subway, train) and those that also perform the role of tourist use (tram, funicular, riverboat), if not a tourist attraction per se (Santa Justa lift). Given the above, we can say that the whole public transport has been frequently used by tourists most of the times just to satisfy mobility needs (subway - 64%, bus - 51%, train - 29%, the latter used, presumably, to reach suburban towns like Sintra, Cascais, Estoril as an alternative to renting a car, as well as to move to more distant locations such as Fatima and Porto). In the case of the tram, also used quite often (43.7%), the transportation function (to take the tram 15 is the easiest way to reach Belém), is as important as the pure tourist use: through the Alfama and Bairro Alto, i.e. two of the most characteristic neighbourhoods of Lisbon, on board of tram 28 is one of the most specific experiences of Lisbon[7].

[5] By purchasing the Lisboa Card you have free access to public transport and the main museums and a discount, which varies from 5 to 50%, in services and products of interest.

[6] Curiously, answering this question, some interviewees (not included in 26.7% of the excursionists) indicated urban places, though peripheral, such as Belém and Parque das Nações, and some people even mentioned the central Castle of São Jorge.

Still concerning the means of transport that are configured primarily as a tourist attraction, the Santa Justa lift (28%) was preferred to the funiculars (12.3%).

The use of taxi is quite frequent in Lisbon (58.3 %), where this mean of transport is available in a capillary way at reasonable prices. Lastly, worth noting is the bus "*hop on - hop off*", typically for the tourists, that shows a statistically significant although not high use (18.7%). Among the means of transport for hire, only the car reaches an appreciable percentage (12.7%), while others (scooter, bike, Segway, Go Car) are quite marginal. Finally, the variety of means of transport available to tourists should be emphasised (in this regard see also footnote 3), which allow a friendly use by the tourists, in different scales, from the neighbourhood scale (think of the Alfama quarter toured on tram 28 or on Segway), to the urban scale (such as the subway, which crosses the whole urban area in less than 30 minutes), to the regional scale (for instance fast and frequent trains to Sintra and Cascais).

Quality of tourism and quality of life

This section of the questionnaire seeks to understand to what extent the tourist experience in Lisbon has gained the appreciation of tourists, not only regarding the aspects more or less explicitly aimed for tourism in the city (accommodation, tourism services, tourist information, handicrafts), but also – and perhaps especially – with reference to the elements which define the quality of life in the city of Lisbon (traffic, cleanliness, safety, public transport, climate, etc.). These aspects of life are experienced daily by the residents of Lisbon and will certainly influence and even determine the perception of the tourist experience either in a positive or negative way.

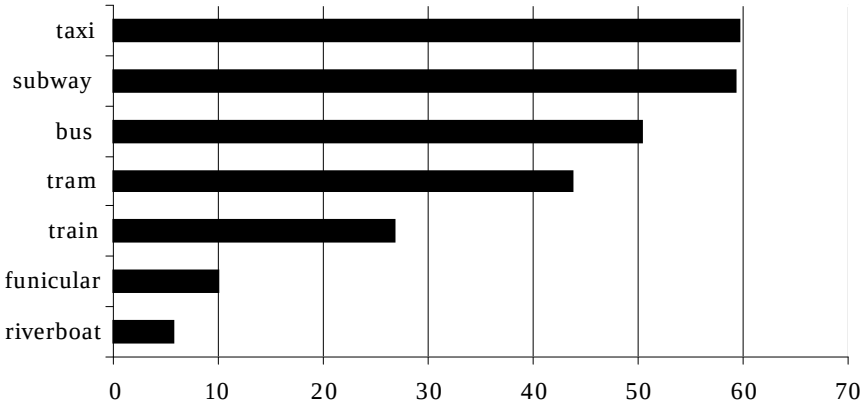

Figure 2. Use of urban transportation (%)
(Source: authors, 2013)

Overall, the satisfaction of tourists is very high: no feature falls below a value of 3.4 (on a scale, it is recalled, from 1 to 5). The highest values (> 4) are achieved by local people, food and wine, architecture, accommodation, urban landscape, atmosphere, location, nightlife, safety, tourist services. Immediately below (3.9 to 4) are placed public transport, tourist information, gardens, and cultural life. Almost all of the aforementioned features have much to do with the authenticity, the everyday life, the city as it is, not necessarily for the consumption of tourists (although accommodation, services and tourist information, characteristics typically linked to tourism, still reach

[7] In fact, the experience of tram 28 receives a relatively lesser degree of satisfaction against all the expectations, ranking with a score of 3.98, in the second place from bottom of the sub-section "public services and infrastructures," and this perhaps due to the considerable crowding of the tram – which is literally sieged by the tourists themselves – as well as because of the risk of pick-pocketing.

values between 4.26 and 3.96). The other features of the same type, however, are placed in the bottom of the list: prices, traffic and cleanliness (this last one is the only feature to record a value lower than 3.5). Therefore, the result is a perception framework with many lights and some shadows: the authenticity of Lisbon is much appreciated but with some exceptions, at least as regards traffic and cleanliness.

The warm appreciation of the price level is probably explained by the fact that the reality of Lisbon does not match, if not for minor aspects, the idea – consolidated in tourist imaginary – of a rather cheap destination. The meteorological conditions should not be considered (3.7, one of the lowest on the list), since the first phase of the questionnaire, that is numerically more consistent, took place on a day of adverse weather conditions, which has certainly affected the perception of this aspect (and perhaps others) in a very negative way.

With regard to the frequency of the response, the higher numbers (299 responses out of 300) are totalled from the characteristics perceived as less positive (prices, cleanness). The following features are weather conditions, geographical location, atmosphere, architecture, local population, and safety, with more than 290 answers. Curiously, traditions and crafts characteristics are relatively less present in the tourist imaginary (respectively 225 and 220 responses). More understandably, the feature that records the lowest number of responses (184) is the nightlife, normally little used by tourists who choose Lisbon as a destination. Anyway it must be pointed out that as many as 17 characteristics out of 20 receive at least 250 responses out of 300, which is perhaps a sign of the tourists desire to express themselves – generally somewhat or very favourably – about the city, in spite of a knowledge and an experience in many cases limited and partial.

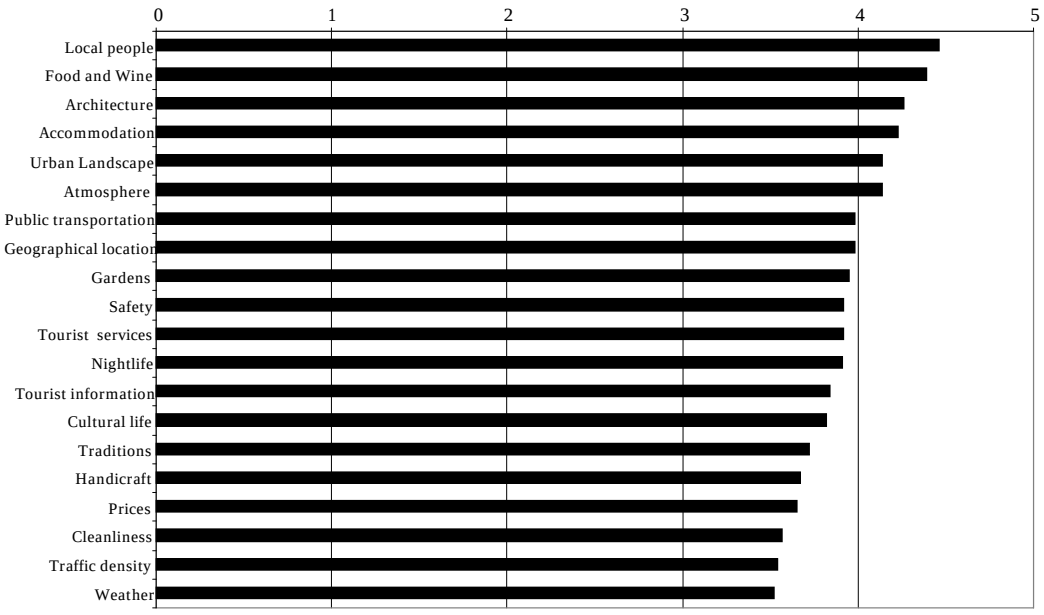

Figure 3. Quality of tourism and quality of life
(Source: authors, 2013)

Tourist experience

With regard to the knowledge and satisfaction – after a first impression – about the different areas of the city, there must be a premise: the tourists may have been surveyed at the beginning of their stay, thus not having yet had the opportunity to

visit some areas of Lisbon, on which therefore they do not provide any answers, but perhaps they will still visit these areas in the remainder of their holiday. The fact that they had visited or not a given district at the time of the interview may indicate at least an order of priority: the more a district appears to have been visited (as evidenced by the number of responses), the more likely that it was perceived as relevant (a must-see, so to speak) right from the beginning of the stay.

Given the above, in this case it yields also a framework characterized by a generally high rating (6 out of 9 districts have a score higher than 4, while the other 3 are between 3.5 and 3.9), which is accompanied by a variable degree of knowledge. The favourite zones seem to be those that possess highly specific characteristics, in terms of landmark (Belém, Baixa) or atmosphere (Alfama, Bairro Alto, Chiado). These are also the most visited – or at least most popular – areas of Lisbon (the number of responses ranging from 252 of the Baixa section to 157 of the Alfama district), since they are better placed in the information system available to tourists as traditional itineraries prepared for their use and consumption. In fact, they together accounted for the number of responses that is superior to half of the sample.

The less "*typical*" or newer areas (Marquês de Pombal, Parque das Nações, Alcântara), despite being in possession of their own character, landmark and tourist infrastructures[8], do not appear at the top of the list neither from the point of view of satisfaction nor from that of knowledge. This perhaps due to a lower perception of authenticity associated with lower centrality (Parque das Nações) or visibility (Alcântara). Finally, the Mouraria, in spite of the very authentic atmosphere and the very central location, and excepted as noted in footnote 4, is unknown to most of the respondents (65 responses) and relatively less appreciated (3.94), probably because not yet completely restored and made fully suitable to the needs of tourists.

Visibility, authenticity and tourist enjoyment appear to be the winning features, while centrality and remoteness seem to play a role not defined a priori: if on one side the Belém district is absolutely the favourite one (4.48) and the second most well-known[9] although in a peripheral location, the Parque das Nações, in spite of the considerable attractiveness (and easy access by subway), is less visited by the present sample (133 replies) perhaps exactly because of its peripheral position. The Mouraria, due to a still weak image, appears little known even if central. The conclusion is perhaps that the centrality becomes really significant only when combined with other features such as visibility, authenticity and tourist enjoyment, which become thus strengthened. Remoteness, however, as evidenced by the reputation of Belém district, is not an obstacle to the tourist experience, thanks to a rather efficient public transport system[10].

With regard to public services and infrastructure – the above premise also applies to this item – the data regarding Rossio station strike the eye. This spot is fairly appreciated (4.21) and well known (134 responses), probably because of a combination of factors: centrality, visibility, architectural specificity, and function[11]. For the rest of the features, the average level of satisfaction is still high – between the Águas Livres aqueduct (4.12) and the Oriente Station (3.85) – compared with a number of responses,

[8] Centrality and monumentality to the Marquês de Pombal Square; Vasco da Gama Tower and Bridge, Oceanarium and Hall of Living Science to the Parque das Nações section; 25th of April Bridge, Docas de Santo Amaro and LX Factory to the Alcântara district.

[9] Centrality and monumentality to the Marquês de Pombal Square; Vasco da Gama Tower and Bridge, Oceanarium and Hall of Living Science to the Parque das Nações section; 25th of April Bridge, Docas de Santo Amaro and LX Factory to the Alcântara district.

[10] Moreover perceived as such also by tourists: a score of 3.97 on a scale of 1 to 5, although only eleventh in the ranking, is nevertheless high.

[11] From the station of Rossio, characterized by architecture certainly worthy of note, leave the trains to the renowned town of Sintra, UNESCO World Heritage Site.

ranging from 124 to the 25th of April Bridge to 20 of Prazeres Cemetery. It is rather strange the relatively modest degree of knowledge of the 25th of April Bridge, although it is regarded as the quintessential landmark of the city of Lisbon, not tied to a specific neighbourhood (although physically located in Alcântara) and visible from a number of perspectives and belvederes, besides being well evident both from Belém and along the way to reach this quarter, that probably all of the 250 respondents sightsaw[12].

CONCLUSIONS*

The theoretical part of this paper clearly shows how Lisbon is becoming increasingly important among the most well known cities for international tourism. In fact, the city recently received several awards. Furthermore, it plays a vital role in Portuguese tourism as an interface for cultural touring in the city and in the whole country with passengers coming mostly by air but also by sea. In spite of an increase in Chinese tourism, the European markets prevail, with tourists aged between 20 and 60 years, who stay longer in Lisbon, in 3 or 4 star hotels, attracted by the diversity of supply, the natural beauty of the city, the atmosphere, its people, the opposition between old and new neighbourhoods, and the quality of service in the tourism sector.

On the occasion of Expo 98, the Portuguese capital has managed to show the world the image of a dynamic city, at the same time characterized by tradition and modernity, culture and leisure, historical memory and projection into the future, in a pleasant context strongly characterized by its mild climate and landscape values and identity, so much so that the wishes of a further significant tourist development, formulated by analysts at the time (see Henriques, 1996, p. 173), appear to have largely come true.

The preliminary results from the questionnaire are certainly in line with the positive scenario outlined above. The satisfaction of tourists – about two-thirds coming from European Union countries – is generally high, both for what concerns the characteristics which define the quality of urban life, and as regards those services more specifically aimed at the tourist market.

The highest values are achieved by "*local people*", "*gastronomy*", "*architecture*", "*accommodation*", "*cityscape*", "*atmosphere*", "*location*", "*nightlife*", "*safety*", "*tourist services*". Immediately after, but still with a very high level of appreciation, are "*public transport*", "*tourist information*", "*gardens*", "*cultural life*". "*Price level*", "*traffic*" and "*cleanness*" are placed in the bottom of the list, but on levels of satisfaction still more than acceptable. It should be noted that those aspects that have to do with the authenticity and every day life are particularly appreciated, although with the above mentioned exceptions, which do not affect – or affect only marginally – an overall very good judgment.

As noted above, even the public transport in the city of Lisbon is enjoying quite high consensus among the respondents. It is an aspect closely linked to the quality of life for residents, which we believe will improve significantly and will enrich the tourist experience, deserving a specific section of the questionnaire. It was found that a high percentage of respondents – more than 60% in the case of the subway – has used public transportation to meet their needs for urban mobility in a friendly way, but also to live a tourist experience tout court, as in the case of the funiculars, tram 28 and Santa Justa lift. The purchase of daily-integrated tickets was also significant, to optimize the cost of public transport.

It should also be pointed out that an efficient transport network also fulfils the function of making accessible peripheral urban areas of tourist interest, and expands the sphere of action of the tourist. It may therefore play a role in respect of the tourist experience, becoming, more than a mere logistical support, a structural and strategic

[12] In this case, there is a doubt that a majority of respondents interpreted the question in a literal sense (visit / use), i.e. whether they had actually crossed the bridge or not.

* Miguel Brito has written the "General Framework"; Luca Zarrilli has written "The Questionnaire"; the "Conclusions" have been written by both authors.

element. That is the case of Belém, the historical and monumental quarter, far removed from the congestion of the city, which is the most visited by tourists (almost on a par with the central Baixa), as well as the most appreciated, thanks to the fact of being easily reached with tram 15. Besides Belém and Baixa, the favourite neighbourhoods seem to be the most authentic ones, i.e. Alfama, Bairro Alto and Chiado. That is not the case of the very modern Parque das Nações district, which today represents an important, attractive and new opportunity of leisure for tourists. Nevertheless, it is not the top priority of visit for respondents, who seem to just focus on historic districts, characterized by atmospheres perceived as genuine. Therefore, centrality is only important if combined with visibility, authenticity and commodification.

In essence, it is reasonable to assume that the tourist range of action – that in the mid-nineties appeared to be limited to the central core of the riverfront (Baixa, Bairro Alto, Alfama), its internal extension (Marquês de Pombal, Parque Eduardo VII, Praça de Espanha) and the area of Belém (see the interesting cartogram in Henriques, 1996, 145) – is to be extended, from the time of the Expo 98, to a third area, that of the Parque das Nações, which became accessible thanks to the creation of a new subway line.

There is an obvious link between the quality of urban life and the quality of the tourist experience but it is difficult to measure it. Through this questionnaire on the case of Lisbon, we hope to have made a small methodological and empirical contribution to the understanding of the perceptive sphere of the individual and his choices in terms of actual behaviour, which are a central and essential element of any strategy for tourism marketing.

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