

## THE SPATIAL DYNAMIC OF THE ACCOMMODATION FACILITY IN MARAMUREȘ COUNTY IN THE LAST QUARTER OF A CENTURY

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**Abstract:** This study synthetically presents the current tendencies related to one of the most important elements of the tourism infrastructure (the tourism facility capacity) from Maramureș County, in the last quarter of a century, evolution characterized by different rates of growth of the accommodation categories. Starting from the main form of accommodation (*hotels*) that dominated the early 90s in Baia Mare, Sighetu Marmației and Ocna Șugatag balnear resort, continuing with the youth hotels (*hostels*), *motels*, *tourist villas*, *tourist chalets*, *school camps* and not least the newest forms of accommodation (*tourist pensions* and *agrotourist pensions* – that exist and function due to private initiatives), Maramureș County benefited over the years of all the forms of accommodation. These categories enforce the size and structure of the accommodation facility in Maramureș County.

**Key words:** accommodation, number of beds, tourist pensions, agrotourist pensions

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### INTRODUCTION

In the geographical literature, the evolution of the accommodation facility in Maramureș County was presented starting with the 80s, in several monographic studies approaching the geographic domain at county level (Pop, 1980; Posea et al., 1980; Surd, 2008), at national level<sup>1</sup>, as well as in the valuable work of Ciangă, 1997.

These studies are supplemented by a series of research studies that overlap the county region and that analyzed the concept of “the Land” [țară] (Dezsi, 2006; Ilieș, 2007; Pușcaș, 2007), or of some unpublished Ph.D. theses about the accommodation in the Maramureș Depression and Maramureș Mountains (Popa & Bota, 2003; Hotea,

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<sup>1</sup>Geografia României II, Geografia Umană și Economică, 1984

2008; Simion, 2011). The research would be incomplete without the analysis of some touristic guides that provides a consistent support in the knowledge of the investigated field<sup>2</sup> (Istvan et al., 2009).

### METHODOLOGY

To highlight the evolution and the problems of the tourism facility capacity in the Maramureș County we used datas offered by the Romanian National Institute of Statistics through TEMPO-Online database (<https://statistici.INSSE.ro/shop>) respectively the public database provided by the National Authority for Tourism (<http://turism.gov.ro/informatii-publice>).

The first step to processing the data was to make a series of representations in a tabular form, under which through extrapolation and interpretation we were able to develop the graphic and cartographic materials, elements that are helpful to track easily the analyzed issues.

The first source (TEMPO-Online) provides data regarding the number of accommodation units, the tourism facility capacity and the occupancy degree of all the existing accommodation units by accommodation categories. While the second source provides detailed information about the type, name, exact location, comfort degree, dimension, juridical statute, the registration number and the release and end data of the classification certificate of the accommodation units (Tofan & Niță, 2014).

### THE EVOLUTION OF THE TOURISM FACILITY CAPACITY AFTER 1990

The analysis for the extreme years taken into consideration (1990 and 2014) showed that the evolution of the tourism facility capacity oscilleted with different rates during the last quarter of a century, both as number of places and as repartition on accommodation categories (Ciangă, 2006).

In 1990 the accommodation facility in Maramureș County was insufficient represented to meet the demands of the intense and varied tourism circulation (Ciangă, 1997), summing only 35 accommodation units with a total of 3 281 beds, concentrated in *hotels* (15 units, 42,86%) with 1 718 beds (52,36%), *tourist chalets/lodges* (13 units, 37,15%) with 519 beds (15,81%), *villas* (5 units, 14,28%) with 444 beds (13,53%) and 2 *school camps* (5,71%) with 505 beds (15,40%) (Figure 1).

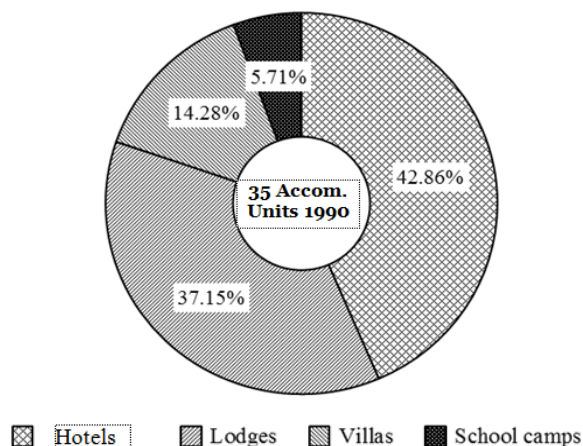
In the following years the number of accommodation units registred a fluctuating evolution, so that in 1999 we note a maxim of 114 accommodation units with a total capacity of 3 342 beds. The drastic decrease of the accommodation units (comparative with 1994 when there were registered a number of 44 units with 3 849 places) is due to the complet removal from the tourist circuit of the *school camps*. The reason for removing the school camps from the tourist circuit was the low comfort of some of this units.

The highest number of accommodation units was registered in 2010 (191) as a consequence of capital infusion in tourism activity through the EU financing programs, especially in the rural areas of the county (Niță et al., 2013) and the highest number of beds was registered in 2013 (4 805). Thus, in the last 24 years we witness an increase in all the categories of accommodation units, so that in 2014 there were registered 168 accommodation units (Figure 2) (which represents 24,85% of the existing accommodation units in the North-West Region and 16,00% of its total number of beds) characterized through a higher tourism facility increased by 1 355 beds compared to 1990, namely a positive dynamic of 41,30%.

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<sup>2</sup>Ghidul oficial „Cele mai frumoase sate din România”, 2014

Since 1990 until 2014 Baia Mare city remains the most complex accommodation facility in Maramureș County, registering 14 accommodation units (40.00% of the ones in the county) with 1 521 beds (46,35% of the ones in the county) in 1990 and 37 accommodation units (22,02% of the ones in the county) with 1 796 beds (38,74% of the ones in the county) in 2014.



**Figure 1.** The percentage of accommodation units in Maramureș County in 1990  
(Source: Romanian National Institute of Statistics through TEMPO-Online database)

In 2014 we notice the same trend as in the 90s regarding the distribution of the accommodation units in the territory:

- the northern part of Maramureș County is represented by Sighetu Marmăției city with 520 beds and Ocna Șugatag Balnear Resort with 292 beds;
- the western part is represented by Baia Sprie city with 221 beds;
- the central part, near Gutâi Mountains is represented by Căvnic city with 144 beds;
- the eastern part is represented by Borșa Climateric Resort with 346 beds and Vișeu de Sus city with 161 beds.

To all these, the accommodation units from Maramureș County are supplemented by other units with a smaller capacity, scattered along the major roads in: Botiza (102 beds), Bârsana (91 beds), Vadu Izei (87 beds), Recea (75 beds), Moisei (73 beds), Poienile Izei (69 beds), Șişești (68 beds), Săcălășeni (67 beds), Desești (58 beds), Șomcuta Mare (57 beds) etc., or by units with a capacity under 50 beds located in Târgu Lăpuș, Oncești, Săcel, Săliște de Sus, Valea Chioarului, Budești, etc.

According to 2014 statistical data, on accommodation categories, in Maramureș County the situation is as follows (Figure 3):

-the *agroturist pension* category represents 42,26% of the total of the accommodation units and 22,70% of the total of accommodation places;

- *tourist pension* category 34,52% and 22,06%;
- *hotel* category 12,50% and 37,27%;
- *motel* category 3,57% and 4,07%;
- *tourist hostel* category 2,97% and 4,14%;
- *tourist villa* category 1,78% and 2,13%;
- *school camps* category 1,20% and 6,70%;
- *tourist chalets* category 1,20% and 0,90%.

**Figure. 2.** The number of the accommodation units in Maramureş County in 2014 (Source: Romanian National Institute of Statistics through TEMPO-Online database)

## THE FEATURES OF THE MAIN ACCOMODATION CATEGORIES IN MARAMUREȘ COUNTY

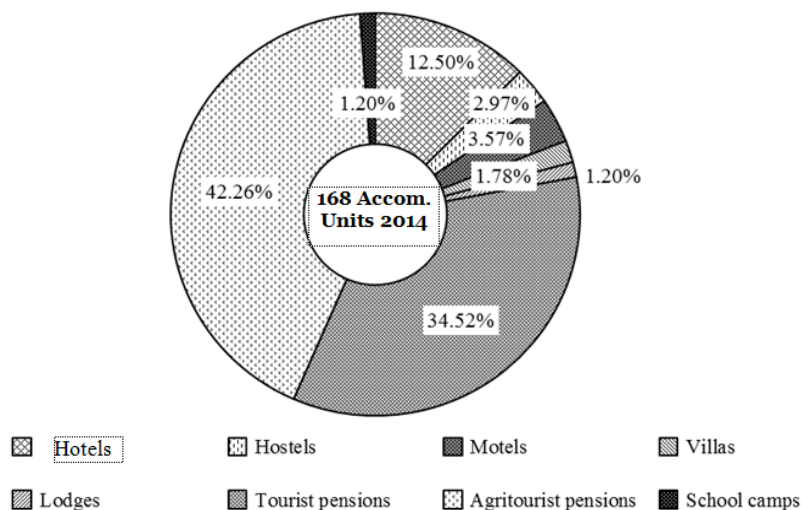
The accommodation facility in Maramureș County consists of various categories, which can be grouped in main accommodation categories such as: hotels, tourist hostels, motels, tourist villas, tourist chalets, school camps, tourist pensions and agrotourist pensions.

In Maramureș Country we can observe an increase of the number of **hotels** from 15 units in 1990 to 21 units in 2014, concomitant with a increase of the number of beds (from 1 718 beds in 1990 to 1 728 beds in 2014).

Nowadays most of the hotels from the studied region are included in the 3 stars category (15 units), 2 stars category (6 units), 4 stars category (2 units) and 1 star category (1 unit). As size more than half of the units (13) fall into the middle sized category (50-200 beds), followed by the smaller category (10 units) and the larger category (200-500 beds) represented by 1 unit.

As *territorial distribution*, the hotels are concentrated either in:

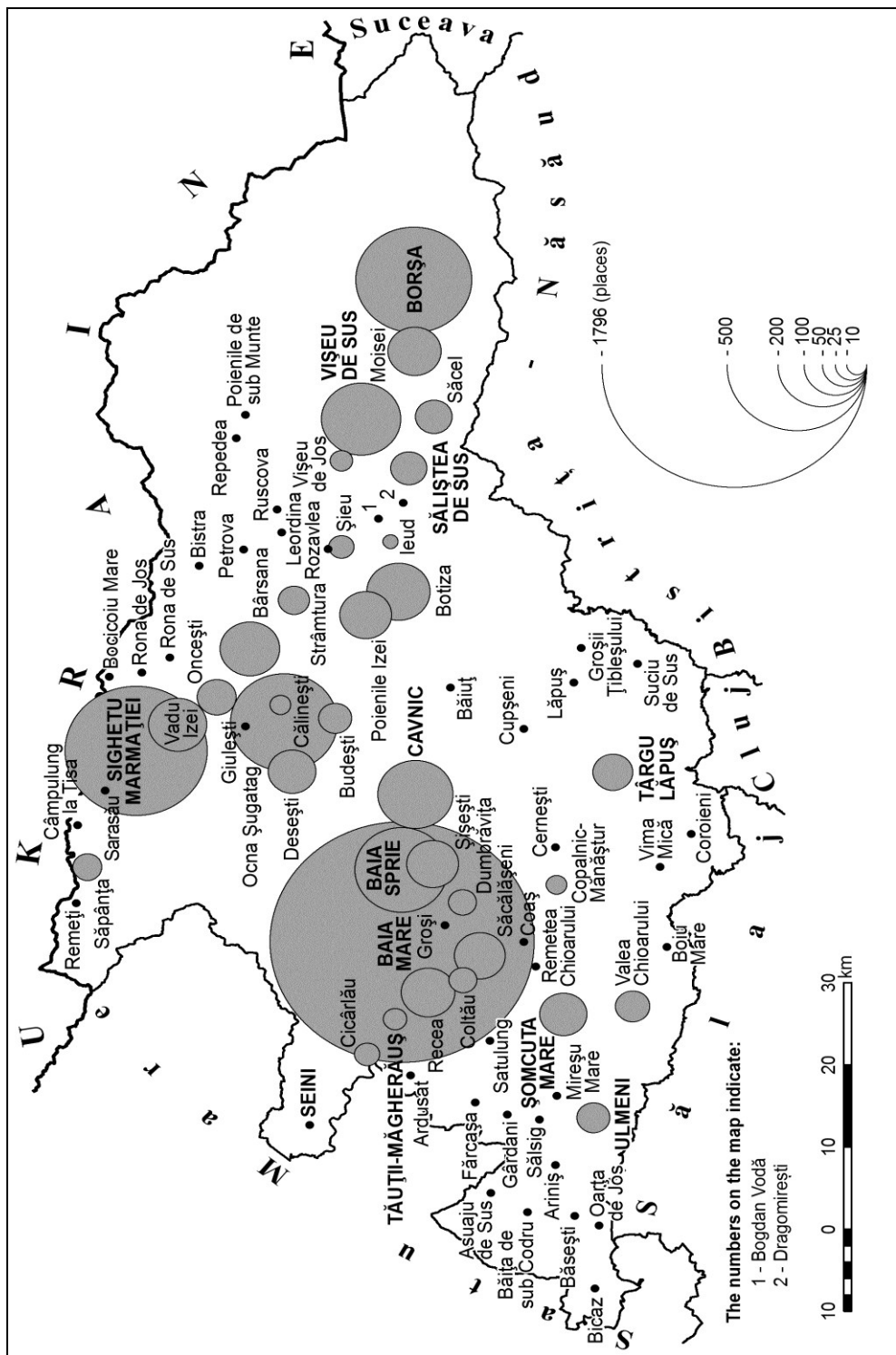
-municipalities such as Baia Mare (*Mara* 121 rooms and 230 beds; *Carpați* 96 rooms and 145 beds; *Rivulus* 60 rooms and 114 beds; *Europa* 37 rooms and 71 beds; *Maramureș* 33 rooms and 66 beds; *Lostrița* 24 rooms and 50 beds; *Ambasador* 22 rooms and 43 beds; *Diafan* 11 rooms and 21 beds etc.) or Sighetu Marmăției (*Grădina Morii* 49 rooms and 92 beds; *Coroana* 43 rooms and 90 beds etc.);



**Figure 3.** The percentage of accommodation units in Maramureș County in 2014  
(Source: Romanian National Institute of Statistics through TEMPO-Online database)

-tourist resorts like Baia Sprie (*Montana* 10 rooms and 18 beds), Borșa (*Cerbul* 27 rooms and 54 beds; *Victoria* 21 rooms and 42 beds; *Păltiniș* 19 rooms and 38 beds); Vișeu de Sus (*Brad* 11 rooms and 18 beds; *Gabriela* 28 rooms and 50 beds); Cavnic (*Roata* 28 rooms and 61 beds; *Superski* 23 rooms and 46 beds); Ocna Șugatag (*Crăiasa* 75 rooms and 173 beds; *Salina* 38 rooms and 76 beds; *Eurosind* 24 rooms and 48 beds; *Will's* 24 rooms and 36 beds);

-rural localities such as Recea (*Romanița* 31 rooms and 62 beds) și Șișești (*Secret Garden* 24 rooms și 48 beds) situated in the proximity of Baia Mare and Baia Sprie (Figure 4).



**Figure 4.** The number of beds in the accommodation units in Maramureş County in 2014  
(Source: Romanian National Institute of Statistics through TEMPO-Online database)

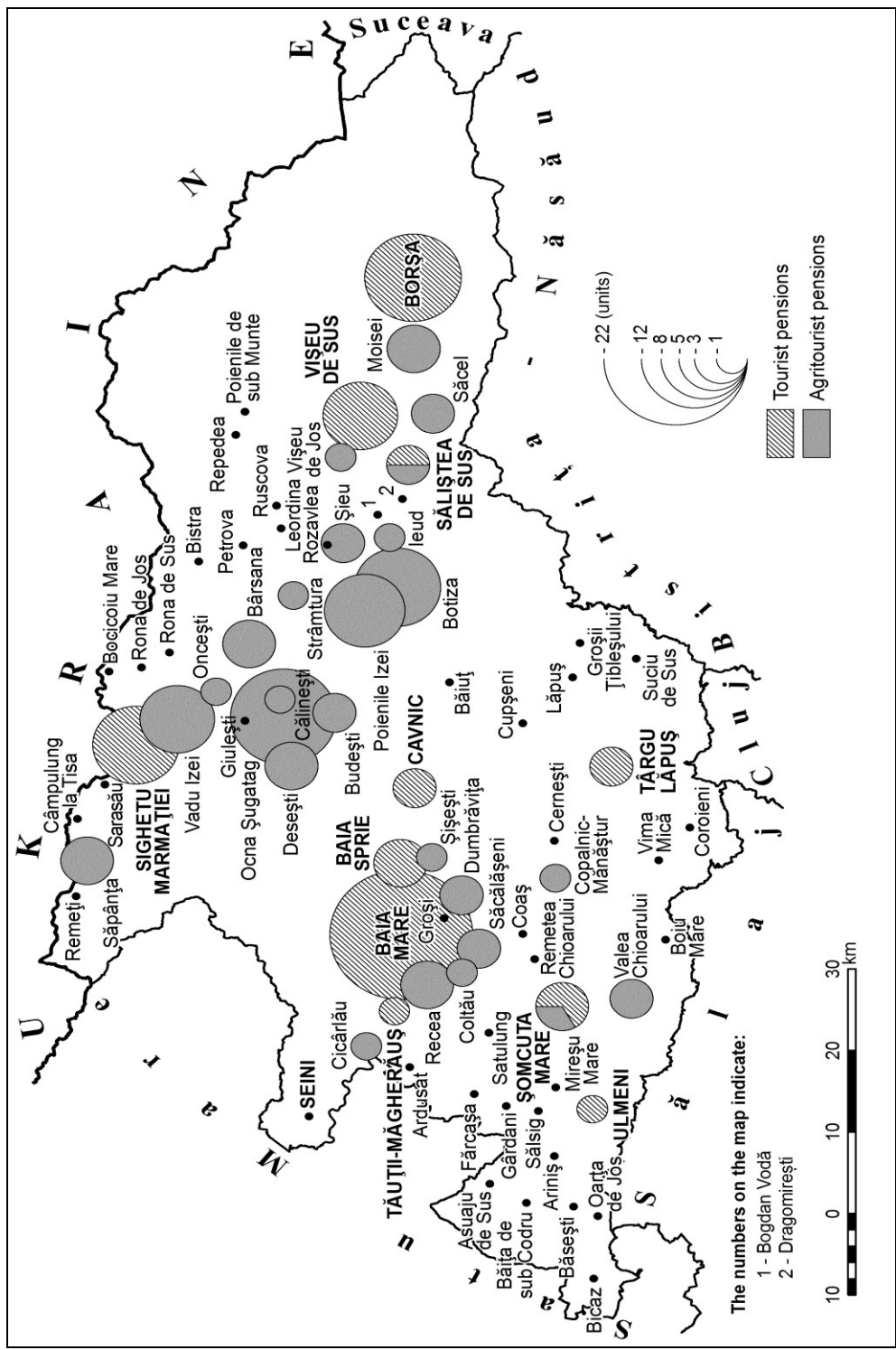
The **hostels** in Maramureș County are present since 2005, in that year they had a capacity of 25 beds, nowadays a capacity of 192 beds. All the units are located in urban areas: Baia Mare (*Casa Blanca* 8 rooms and 16 beds; *Centrul de agrement Mara* 38 rooms and 203 beds; *Crenguța* 16 rooms and 32 beds; *Gran Gala Il Padrino* 11 rooms and 23 beds; *Hora* 14 rooms and 18 beds), Sighetu Marmăției (*Ancuța* 13 rooms and 47 beds; *Iza* 6 rooms and 24 beds), Lăpuș (*Lăpușul* 11 room and 22 beds) and Mănău (component of Ulmeni) (*La Conac* 4 rooms and 31 beds). Regarding the confort category, 5 of them are included in the 2 star category, 1 in the 3 star category and 1 in the 1 star category.

The **motels** in Maramureș County are located along the main roads near the urban centers of Baia Mare (*Centru* 26 beds; *Crista'l* 16 beds), Sighetu Marmăției (*Buti* 44 beds; *Siesta* 28 beds; *Perla Sigheteană* 22 beds; *Casa Tiple* 20 beds), Baia Sprie (*Cerna* 16 beds), Borșa (*Rodna* 42 beds) etc. and Săcălășeni commune (*Moara Veche* 64 beds). The most motels are classified in the 3 stars category comfort and the others in the 2 stars category. The number of **villas** in the region has always been very low, for example in 1990 there were 5 units with 444 beds, and in 2014, 3 units with 99 beds (Romanian National Institute of Statistics through TEMPO-Online database). Regarding the last situation (the data from 2014) the National Authority for Tourism declares a number of 5 villas concentrated in the following localities: Bârsana (*Bârsana* 42 beds, 3 stars); Dumbrăvița, satul Cărbunari (*Roseta* 10 beds, 3 stars); Ocna Șugatag (*Dalia* 6 beds, 3 stars); Săpânța (*Perla Săpânțeană* 12 beds, 3 stars) and Sighetu Marmăției (*Ardealul* 28 beds, 2 stars).

Regarding the **tourist chalets**, in 1990 the accommodation facility was provided by 13 accommodation units with 444 beds, and in 2014 the number drastically decreased to 2 units with 42 beds. The same as in the previous case the datas provided by the National Authority for Tourism declares a number of 11 accommodation units with 216 beds. Included in the 3 stars category of confort the tourist can access the following units: *Gutâi* (10 beds) situated in Baia Mare; *Mogoșa* (65 beds), *Pietrosu* (10 beds) and *Țibleș* (10 beds) situated in Baia Sprie; *Ursu* (15 beds) situated in Borșa; *Filip* (27 beds), *Superski I și II* (4 and 3 beds) situated in Căvnic; *Iza* (12 beds) situated in Bârsana; *Brazi II* (32 beds) situated in Desești and *Stana* (28 beds) situated in Ocna Șugatag resort. Among the **forestry hunting chalets** built and arranged by the forestry district, according to [www.marasilva.ro](http://www.marasilva.ro) these are situated in *Roata*, *Poiana*, *Vâlcele*, *Baicu*, *Minghet*, *Țibleș*, *Fântâna*, *Făina*, *Coșnea*, *Asuaj*, *Ocna Șugatag*, *Apa Sărată*, etc. The **school camps** registered the same decreasing trend, their capacity diminished by 38,41%. The main reason was that some of them were not functional. Nowadays just *Stibina* and *Mara* school camps are functional, but the National Authority for Tourism classified them in the hostel category.

In Maramureș County the **tourist pensions** are recorded in data since 2000, when there were registered 7 units with 55 beds. In 2014 their number reached 58 units (representing 34,52% of the ones in the county) with 1 023 beds (representing 22,06% of the ones in the county). The most of the tourist pensions are classified as 2 and 3 stars confort units, and they are concentrated in Baia Mare, Borșa, Botiza and Ocna Șugatag resort (Figure 5).

According to the datas provided by the National Institute of Statistics, the **agrotourist pensions** has registered the biggest expansion, from 22 units (33,33% of the ones in the county) with 164 beds (4,82% of the ones in the county) in 2000, to 71 units (42,26% of the ones in the county) with 1 052 beds (22,70% of the ones in the county) in 2014. The most of them are concentrated in Ocna Șugatag resort, Botiza, Poienile Izei, Vadu Izei, Moisei, etc.



**Figure 5.** The number of tourist pensions and agrotourist pensions in Maramureş County in 2014  
(Source: Romanian National Institute of Statistics through TEMPO-Online database)



According to the same source cited above, we identify some complementary forms of accommodation units such as:

-*campings* are recorded in data just in the interval 1992-1998, when there were registered only a few dozen of beds (the maximum number being registered in 1994-1996 – 52 beds). According to the data provided by the National Authority for Tourism in 2014 this category of accommodation exists in Sighetu Marmăției (Iza, 44 beds), Ocna Șugatag (Babou Maramureș and Salzburg with 40 beds each) and Săpânța (Poieni, 60 beds);

-*cottages* that are found in Bârsana (Bradova, 10 beds), Borșa (Țiti, 20 beds), Moisei (Călina, 8 beds), Ocna Șugatag (Manolo, 12 beds), Poienile Izei (Domnița, 10 beds) and Săpânța (Poieni, 8 beds);

-*tourist stops* such of those found in Budești (Fogădău, 24 beds) and Groși (Poienița, 16 beds).

## CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the main accommodation facility in Maramureș County in the last quarter of a century leads to outline several conclusions:

- although we are witnessing the increase of the number of accommodation units (from 35 to 168), we observe the decrease of the number of beds (4 636 locuri), due to the rise of the small tourist categories of establishments such as tourist pensions and agrotourist pensions. In the county these categories are not evenly distributed among the rural areal and the urban area;

- both in 1990 and 2014 the most of the accommodation units were concentrated in urban localities such as Baia Mare, Sighetu Marmăției, Borșa and Vișeu de Sus. The most complex accommodation facility from the rural area is represented by Ocna Șugatag resort, with 13 units (7,73% of the ones in the county) and with 292 beds (6,30% of the ones in the county) in 2014;

- the complex of factors determine an estimated tourist circulation of 191 843 nights of accommodation made by 109 083 tourists, with an average stay of 1,7 nights and an occupancy rate of 1 713 831 beds-days. All this resulted of the mix of balnear tourism, mountain tourism, winter tourism and itinerant tourism (Ciangă, 1997);

- the other remark of a great importance is the one of the inconsistencies between the official datas regarding the exact number of accommodation units and the number of beds. This situation make the analysis harder and can become inaccurate with the reality from the territory.

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