

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF HISTORIC
CITY BRANDING IN ROMANIA. CASE
STUDY: BAIA MARE, ALBA IULIA AND
SIBIU

Abstract

The image that a city manages to create through its brand can be a major asset in the competitive struggle to attract investment, resources and tourists. Building a city brand is an extremely complex activity that requires expertise in a wide variety of fields: culture, sociology, management, psychology, economy, etc. This study focuses on analysing the tools used to create a city brand for the following historic cities: Baia Mare, Alba Iulia and Sibiu. Also, the accommodation structures, their capacity, the number of arrivals and overnight stays were analyzed and the entire tourist infrastructure has been analyzed in its dynamics, using the databases provided by the National Institute of Statistics. The results were synthesized in numerous tables in order to facilitate a comparative analysis. The last part of the study includes a series of viable recommendations based on the brand elements identified for the cities undergoing this analysis, which could represent some important means for capitalizing on the strategic potential of creating a city brand in Romania, in order for the Romanian historical cities to cope with the competition of other European historic cities.

Keywords: urban brand, urban strategy, Romanian city brand, brand analysis

JEL CODES: M31; Z32.

**ANALIZĂ COMPARATIVĂ
PRIVIND STRATEGIILE DE
BRANDING ALE ORAȘELOR
ISTORICE DIN ROMÂNIA.
STUDIU DE CAZ: BAI
MARE, ALBA IULIA ȘI SIBIU**

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Rezumat

Imaginea pe care orașele reușesc să o creeze prin intermediul brandului urban este un instrument valoros în competiția pentru atragerea de investiții, resurse, turiști. Acest studiu analizează comparativ instrumentele folosite pentru a crea un brand urban în orașele istorice Baia Mare, Alba Iulia și Sibiu. Folosind analiza de brand lucrarea identifică recomandări pentru ca orașele istorice din România să facă față competiției exercitate de orașe europene similare.

Cuvinte cheie: brand urban, strategie urbană, analiză de brand, brandul orașelor românești



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1. INTRODUCTION

The paper highlights the importance and complexity of the brand concept. This means much more than an image, it represents the consumer's confidence and his ability to assign the image to a specific fund of ideas. De Chernatony and McDonald (1992) identify eight different functions that can be attributed to the brand concept and which it can accomplish: a property symbol, a differentiation element, a symbol of a function or, as the case may be, an element that allows buyers to express something about themselves about the environment, risk reduction, a selective communication tool, a legal tool, a strategic tool.

Brand positioning defines its success by identifying the reason why a consumer chooses a particular brand to the detriment of others (Sevin, 2014). Therefore, all the brand activities have as a common goal the guiding, coordination and implementation of the brand to serve as main contribution to the brand's benefits and the reasons why it is bought (Kapferer, 2012, Molina et al., 2017).

Positioning the brand means also creating a special place on the market, namely the choice of a niche, a choice that needs to be supported by in-depth market studies, in order to put the foundations of launching a brand on that niche (Braun, 2012; Zenker et al., 2017).

Thus, in the minds of consumers will be defined the competitive advantage that was created and the difference that the brand produces.

Humans have the need to build their own idea of a city as the starting point and basis of the choice to visit, invest, live, or enroll in a university, and this idea is formed through three areas of contact.

The first contact is realized by the way the images are captured from the accumulated experiences and the small advantages that the person feels behind. The second contact is represented by a variety of ways to present a city or place; this variety can be made up of movies, successful novels, famous paintings, etc. And its third contact will impact the individual through the political choices that a city supports through public policies or urban amenities.

These messages are perceived as interactions with the city and are processed to understand the impact that is being felt by contact with the visited environment, sometimes representing a decisive factor for future decisions.

Building a city brand has the ultimate goal of influencing these processes to ensure a desired predicted outcome (Anttiroiko, 2015).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A first approach to the marketing mix in the context of city branding requires a set of tools and activities that are at the disposal of local government decision-makers and marketers involved in the city's branding strategy that can deliver the desired results and can be integrated into the promotion strategy.

The importance of marketing mix as "combining marketing methods to achieve the planned strategy" (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990) was defined in the literature of urban marketing and recognized as one essential step in the effort of promoting cities.

Over time, attempts have been made to translate well-known 4P into an equivalent for urban marketing and city and country branding, but this process proved to be difficult and problematic because of the particularities of places, cities or countries that are not similar to a product or service through the variety they have to offer. Another reason that needs to be mentioned in this issue is the clarity of the travel trend in defining the 4Ps suitable for urban marketing, because the clarity and the stability of some words define them as concepts.

In addition, some authors refer to the urban marketing mix as similar to the service mix (De Pelsmacker et al., 2007) and others use a more sophisticated approach that integrates aspects of the related and necessary areas for urban branding, as well as communication, political, economic, sociological, psychological, public administration, etc.

Thus, a geographic urban marketing mix requires a start with the way imaging is created, transmitted and communicated; these aspects are playing a crucial role in the success of an urban brand. In some situations, the importance attached to the image is expressed as summing up only the part of promoting a marketing mix and sometimes placing a great deal of emphasis on this, but at other times the possibility of promoting urbanism through art, to festivals and cultural attractions (Kearns and Philo, 1993; Kavartzis, 2007).

Although Keller and Kotler (2016) used and adopted the marketing mix that is applicable to general marketing, it does however distinguish between four distinct strategies for improving the image of a place and its appearance as a whole. They considered the following four strategies as the foundation of building a competitive advantage: Appearance; Infrastructure; Services offered; Tourist Attractions.

Hubbard and Hall (1998) described generically an entrepreneurial model of city governance. This model aims at identifying some localities with potential for rebranding and transforming them from former production cities into future cities for consumption. The same authors argue that the success of this approach consists of a set of specific policies, including: Promotion; Modernizing the city; Infrastructure

development; Public art exhibitions and good civic behavior; Large-scale media coverage and events; Cultural regeneration; Partnerships between public and private.

Some specialists have mentioned that urban marketing is a relatively unexplored area, partly as a result of recent approaches to it, although the promotion of cities is an old practice (Kavaratzis, 2004). Despite these issues, some geographers seem to find urban marketing unclear to them.

In other situations, the importance of the image is considered to be built not only through promotion but also with the help of the rest of the marketing mix tools. Ashworth and Voogd exemplify operational measures of spatial design, aesthetic features that effectively contribute to the urban image and thus support or contradict the methods of promotion (Ashworth and Voogd, 1994).

The above idea, the effect of communication resulting from the use of all marketing methods, is the emphasis on the need to coordinate and combine the mix of urban marketing and general marketing as they result in the implications of the effectiveness of the urban branding strategy.

Urban marketing and branding of a city implies a change in the perspective of all general marketing efforts. Urban marketing is the one that can fulfill a variety of objectives set by a city, going beyond their economic boundaries.

City branding involves both the acquisition of competitive advantage to attract and increase investment and the number of tourists but also to develop the community, improve visual identity and support citizens in identifying with their city and avoiding social exclusion. However, all of the above are not an exhaustive list, as urban marketing and city branding offer vast possibilities for creativity and discovery of new methods. Marketers, public administrations, decision-makers, or researchers can participate with their own innovations and imagination in creating a city branding strategy.

3. CASE STUDY

3.1. BAI MARE – *The gateway to Maramureș*

The tourist offer regarding the types of reception facilities for the Baia Mare historical town visitors are relatively varied but similar at national level. As in most cities of this size, the most common accommodation options are represented by tourist guesthouses but also by hotels, being also the most sought after accommodation units. We analyzed the evolution of types of tourist accommodation structures for a period of seven years, respectively from 2010 to 2016, using data provided by the National Institute of Statistics. Thus, a total increase of 30% can be observed in 2016 compared to

2010, meaning that the total number of accommodation units increased from 31, available in 2010 to 44 in 2016.

TABLE 1 - TYPES OF TOURIST ACCOMMODATION STRUCTURES EXISTING IN BAI MARE, 2010-2016

Categories of tourist accommodation structures	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Percent Increases or Decreases
	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	
Hotels	8	9	9	9	8	12	12	33%
Hostels	3	3	4	4	4	3	3	0%
Motels	1	3	1	0	1	2	2	50%
Tourist cottages	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	100%
Camps for pupils and preschoolers	3	2	2	2	2	2	1	-200%
Tourist guesthouses	16	20	22	23	22	26	23	30%
Agro touristic boarding houses	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	100%
Total	31	37	38	38	37	47	44	30%

Source: INS, 2017 (http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/publicatii/Statistica%20teritoriala/Turism_ind_JudLoc.htm).

As the supply is low and has maintained this trend over the seven years under review, it remains only the dynamics of hotels and boarding houses and in the case of hostels, tourist huts, student camps and preschoolers, as well as Agro touristic boarding houses we can say that they are not relevant to the analysis. They have seen a similar increase (see Table 1), 33% for hotels, increasing gradually until 2014, when the dynamics are slightly upward and reach a total of 12 hotel units available in Baia Mare. As far as tourist guesthouses are concerned, they have also registered a 30% increase since 2010 compared to 2016, but their size has not maintained an upward trend. In 2015, 26 available units can be observed, but their number has fallen by 13% in 2016, leaving 23 guesthouses available.

The capacity of the types of tourist structures in Baia Mare is logically in close correlation with the situation presented above, that of the number of accommodation units available. However, a slight variation in percentage growth is due to the structural and architectural diversity of the types of tourist accommodation structures or the space available for their construction.

Thus, over the analyzed period, from 2010 to 2016, there was an increase of 22% (see Table 2), according to data provided by the National Institute of Statistics. Most of the available accommodations are found within the hotel and tourist accommodation regimes.

TABLE 2 - EVOLUTION OF ACCOMMODATION CAPACITY BY TYPES OF TOURIST STRUCTURE IN 2010-2016, BAI MARE

Categories of tourist accommodation structures	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Percent Increases or Decreases
	Accommodation							
Hotels	845	992	933	933	877	1048	1093	23%
Hostels	152	152	180	180	180	174	264	42%
Motels	40	82	26	0	26	46	48	17%

Tourist cottages	0	0	0	0	0	20	62	100%
Camps for pupils and preschoolers	354	300	311	311	311	311	108	-228%
Tourist guesthouses	219	269	340	361	402	438	442	50%
Agro touristic boarding houses	0	0	0	0	0	59	59	100%
Total	1610	1795	1790	1785	1796	2096	2076	22%

Source: INS, 2017 (http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/publicatii/Statistica%20teritoriala/Turism_ind_JudLoc.htm).

The number of tourist accommodation places in hotels increased by 23% in 2016 compared to 2010, and in the case of tourist guesthouses, a significant 50% increase can be noticed. Observing the dynamics of the evolution of these tourist accommodation structures in Table 2, the trend is ascending and uniform over the seven years. Although the number of guesthouses has been decreasing since 2015, the number of accommodation places available in these accommodation units has remained similar, resulting in the disappearance of small tourist boarding houses.

A significant decrease is found in the situation of students and pre-school camps with a decrease of 228% caused by the low demand for this tourist offer, which is why the number of units of this type of reception structure has gradually diminished over the analyzed period.

In 2015 we could observe the onset of the type of tourist accommodation structure "agro-touristic boarding house", representing a single unit with a capacity of 59 accommodations. The agro-touristic boarding house is a rural-specific structure, where tourists can take part in agricultural, fruit growing, animal husbandry or traditional activities specific to the area. The meals served within it come from their own household of this type of structure.

The number of tourists in Baia Mare registered a total increase of 29% in 2016 by comparison with 2010, with a slight decrease in 2013, a period of economic hardship for most economic industries.

The largest increase in the number of arrivals is recorded among guesthouses with a percentage of 61% (see Table 3). As regards to the number of hotel arrivals, they have also maintained an upward trend in demand, increasing by 31% in 2016 compared to the incipient phase of this analysis, 2010.

TABLE 3 - NUMBER OF ARRIVALS OF TOURISTS IN BAI MARE DURING 2010-2016 BY TYPES OF TOURIST ACCOMMODATION STRUCTURES

Categories of tourist accommodation structures	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Percent Increases or Decreases
	Number of Tourists							
Hotels	40804	46855	44443	42625	40605	57581	59371	31%
Hostels	4027	4579	4573	4138	7496	2081	1718	-134%
Motels	292	2480	1121	174	258	653	735	60%
Tourist cottages	0	0	0	0	0	255	411	100%
Camps for pupils and preschoolers	4823	2538	2062	1846	2407	2072	1543	-213%
Tourist guesthouses	5497	6167	8537	10399	10352	12355	14213	61%
Agro touristic boarding houses	24	0	0	222	0	1091	8	-200%
Total	55467	62619	60736	59404	61118	76088	77999	29%

Source: INS, 2017 (http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/publicatii/Statistica%20teritoriale/Turism_ind_JudLoc.htm).

According to the National Institute of Statistics, arrivals of tourists at Baia Mare hotels have increased considerably since 2011 compared to 2010, followed by a decline, according to the data observed in Table 4. AN economic decline of hotel structures in Baia Mare took place in the years 2012-2014 but starting with 2015 the economic demand situation improved considerably, increasing by 35%.

Agro tourist pensions met a flourishing period in 2015, the year when more than 1,000 tourists arrived, but the trend of this type of structure cannot be considered as ascending or descending, considering that the situation of these units accommodation cannot be relevant compared to the surrounding area.

The tourist demand for motels in Baia Mare increased by 60% in 2016 compared to 2010, but this type of structure recorded the maximum in 2011, with a considerable increase compared to the previous year, but it decreased by approximately 50% in 2012, followed by a significant decline in 2013. Until now, this type of tourist accommodation unit seems to rectify the period of difficulty of its past.

According to the data provided by the National Statistics Institute, the number of overnight stays analyzed according to the types of tourist accommodation facilities available in Baia Mare registered a slight increase of 14% in 2016 compared to 2010.

TABLE 4 - NUMBER OF OVERNIGHTS PER TYPES OF TOURIST ACCOMMODATION STRUCTURES IN BAI MARE, 2010-2016

Categories of tourist accommodation structures	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Percent Increases or Decreases
	Number							
Hotels	67491	73070	71398	69190	63474	90326	96026	30%
Hostels	7777	11787	10339	10720	16687	3732	5362	-45%
Motels	344	3446	1760	206	351	1076	1258	73%
Tourist cottages	0	0	0	0	0	550	1002	100%
Camps for pupils and	36147	5952	5226	5970	8886	21496	14626	-147%

preschoolers								
Tourist guesthouses	9762	9733	13391	15188	15833	20257	22770	57%
Agro touristic boarding houses	44	0	0	398	0	1566	40	-10%
Total	121565	103988	102114	101672	105231	139003	141084	14%

Source: INS, 2017 (http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/publicatii/Statistica%20teritoriala/Turism_ind_JudLoc.htm).

The 2010-2014 period is represented by an unfavorable dynamics of the number of overnight stays, except for the tourist guesthouses that have maintained an upward trend, as they remain unaffected by the number of overnight stays of the tourists in the historical city of Baia Mare, having in 2016 an increase of 57% compared to 2010.

Contrary to the economic demand for hotels in Baia Mare, hostels, although having registered a 45% drop in 2016 (see Table 4), compared to the beginning of the analysis period, 2010, they had a glorious period between 2011-2014. Starting in 2015, there is a reversal in the figures for the number of overnight stays of tourists and hotels make a positive and significant dynamics, increasing by 42% in 2015 compared to 2014, to the detriment of the hostels, whose period of success in regards of demand decreased approximately 5.5 times.

Tourist hostels registered an increase of 57% of overnight stays in 2015 by comparison with 2010, maintaining, as mentioned above, a trend of uniform growth.

Baia Mare, the entrance gate to Maramureș, has announced and materialized its candidacy for the title of "European Capital of Culture" for 2021. The application file is extensive and full of aspects relevant to the tourism industry, includes multilateral development plans, events, a SWOT analysis, but more importantly, demonstrates the city's motivation for improvement, to support and protect the cultural and historical heritage, in order to highlight internationally.

The residence of Maramureș County has also outlined a visual identity manual describing the meaning of the logo represented by two hearts that stylized the initials of the city in the colors borrowed from the coat of arms of the town, which had the colors red and blue together with symbolic reference elements for the city, the secular edible chestnut, the Stephen Tower, the moss flower and a seven-tower mural crown.

The City Hall's website also offers a variety of information on all points of interest, including tourism. Details of the cultural, artistic and visiting offer can be found on the website www.discover-maramures.com.

Baia Mare Municipality also has a cultural development strategy covering the period 2015-2030, a proof of the desire to promote the city in this direction. It has strategic objectives: strengthening institutional capacity, cultural intervention and cultural infrastructure development. The objectives are: National Cultural Patrimony and Contemporary Creation. The strategic target groups of the planning document are young people, through the diversification of cultural resources.

Thus, the future of the Entrance Gate in Maramureș is predicted to be a successful one in urban marketing, leading to a sustainable and integrated development of the small historic city.

3.2. ALBA IULIA - The Union City

The tourist industry of Alba Iulia has been on the upward trend over the years, as it can be seen in Table 5. The number of tourists arriving in the accommodation facilities of the city increased gradually from 2010 until 2016.

TABLE 5 - NUMBER OF TOURIST ARRIVALS IN THE TOWN OF ALBA IULIA BY TYPES OF TOURIST ACCOMMODATION STRUCTURES

Categories of tourist accommodation structures	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Percent Increases or Decreases
	Number of Tourists							
Hotels	13003	17065	19373	23138	23284	41821	48602	73%
Hostels	0	0	0	0	0	55	669	100%
Motels	504	259	2609	2582	1315	1156	623	19%
Tourist villas	1774	2356	2938	3276	2710	2507	1524	-16%
Tourist guesthouses	1951	5325	7724	9763	13722	16468	16619	88%
Agro touristic boarding houses	0	59	161	162	361	627	531	100%
Total	17232	25064	32805	38921	41392	62634	68568	75%

Source: INS, 2017 (http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/publicatii/Statistica%20teritoriala/Turism_ind_JudLoc.htm).

According to the National Institute of Statistics, in the historic city of Alba Iulia, hotels are the most sought after tourist accommodation establishments, followed by tourist hostels, which keep increasing in dynamics compared to the other available structures, whose tendencies slightly varied.

In the period 2010-2016, the offer of accommodation establishments did not show a noticeable increase, only the number of guesthouses increased fourfold from 2010 in 2011, afterwards they increased by one unit, and in 2016 there was a decrease, compared to 2015.

TABLE 6 - NUMBER OF TYPES OF TOURIST STRUCTURES EXISTING IN ALBA IULIA, 2010-2016

Categories of tourist accommodation structures	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Percent Increases or Decreases
	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	
Hotels	5	5	6	7	6	8	8	38%
Hostels	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	100%
Motels	1	1	2	3	3	3	2	50%
Tourist villas	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0%
Tourist guesthouses	3	11	13	14	15	16	14	79%
Agro touristic boarding houses	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	100%
Total	10	19	23	26	26	30	27	63%

Source: INS, 2017 (http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/publicatii/Statistica%20teritoriala/Turism_ind_JudLoc.htm).

According to Table 7, the hotels represent the largest offer of accommodation for the tourists of Alba Iulia, with the largest share of about 76% of the total available.

TABLE 7 - EVOLUTION OF ACCOMMODATION CAPACITY OF ALBA IULIA TOURISM RECEPTION FACILITIES, 2010-2016

Categories of tourist accommodation structures	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Percent Increases or Decreases
	Accommodation							
Hotels	470	470	508	653	487	694	727	35%
Hostels	0	0	0	0	0	11	11	100%
Motels	16	16	53	75	78	78	51	69%
Tourist villas	44	44	44	44	44	44	44	0%
Tourist guesthouses	86	218	278	296	314	341	318	73%
Agro touristic boarding houses	0	18	18	18	18	18	18	100%
Total	616	766	901	1086	941	1186	1169	47%

Source: INS, 2017 (http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/publicatii/Statistica%20teritoriala/Turism_ind_JudLoc.htm).

Although hotels offer the largest number of available accommodation for Alba Iulia tourists, their accommodation capacity has increased by only 35% over the period under review, compared to hostels, motels and guesthouses, whose percentages are more than 50 % in 2016 compared to the beginning of the analysis period, 2010.

The tourist accommodation capacity also maintains this low dynamics given that none of the types of tourist structures have encountered a development during the analyzed period, and given that the number of hotels, the most accommodation facilities, increased by only 3 units from 2010 to 2016, the number of accommodation increased by about 47%.

The number of overnight stays in Alba Iulia has tripled from 2010 to 2016, a positive upward dynamics, and may help to support the fact that the number of tourist accommodation establishments has not seen

a noticeable increase because it is sufficient now to meet the demand for accommodation of tourists, Alba Iulia being a town visited for a short period of time.

TABLE 8 - NUMBER OF OVERNIGHT STAYS IN 2010-2016 IN ALBA IULIA

Categories of tourist accommodation structures	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Percent Increases or Decreases
	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	
Hotels	35243	44029	48071	49080	42833	74686	83545	58%
Hostels	0	0	0	0	0	65	797	100%
Motels	1432	662	4247	6815	3591	2323	1325	-8%
Tourist villas	2760	3677	3957	4202	4136	4237	2677	-3%
Tourist guesthouses	2721	10973	15518	21009	27219	29196	27380	90%
Agro touristic boarding houses	0	169	456	272	557	939	708	100%
Total	42156	59510	72249	81378	78336	111446	116432	64%

Source: INS, 2017 (http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/publicatii/Statistica%20teritoriale/Turism_ind_JudLoc.htm).

The most sought-after accommodation units are guesthouses (see Table 8), registering an increase of 90% in 2016 compared to the previous period. These are followed by hotels, whose demand grew by 58% last year, compared to the reference point of the table analyzed in 2010. The high percentages of hostels and boarding houses are due to their lack in 2010, but we cannot claim that the hostel-type tourist structure would be a popular one among customer preferences.

Alba Iulia owns an official website dedicated to promoting tourist activities, called "visit Alba Iulia" and divided into several categories. Potential tourists, but also those already on the territory where the Union Act was signed, can search according to the personal areas of interest, the events they can participate to, the tourist information, but also the opinions of others regarding the tourist resources of the city. In addition to all this information, the website also provides details about tourism investments or news related to its work in this industry. For the curious ones, there is the section "Did you know?". It provides details of interesting activities or actions that the "Other Capital" has hosted or witnessed.

Thanks to the visual identity manual that Alba Iulia created, making some out-door or in-door promotion is easy to accomplish because the manual details all the ways the logo can be used, thus excluding confusion in the collective interpretation of the population with regard to the image of the city.

In conclusion, on the side of the promotion, Alba Iulia shapes a well-defined direction, possibly due to the competition for the title of "European Cultural Capital" in 2020. This candidature comes along with the setting of important objectives for the tourism industry, namely the protection of cultural heritage, the most important competitive advantage of a historic city.

The visual identity manual describes the meaning and symbolism of its logo. A heptagonal star inspired by the architecture of Alba Iulia Fortress, later supplemented by intertwined smaller heptagon stars that symbolize the multitude of buildings within the majestic military fortress. Besides the symbol of the fortress, the tourist logo is accompanied by the name of the city in a bold font, followed by the slogan of the historic city "The Other Capital" and the promise "Welcome to the largest fortress city in Romania".

3.2. SIBIU - The South Gate of Transylvania

Sibiu is an important economic pole of tourism for Romania, being one of the most popular destinations in the country, joining areas such as the Romanian seaside, Prahova Valley, Maramureș, Bucovina or Bran. The main attraction is created by the cultural touristic circuits, highly popular among tourists. Sibiu is a tourist city that pays great attention to the quality of services in this industry, which explains some of its success, together with the title "European Capital of Culture in 2007", that served as a catalyst for the high demand it enjoys. Of course, all these aspects need to be sustained and further developed, that is why Sibiu County Council is launching a variety of projects in this sector.

Regarding the types of tourist accommodation facilities, in 2016 in Sibiu there were 128 units, categorized into nine types of tourist accommodation, ranging from hotels, hostels or motels to villas, cottages or boarding houses. Detailed Table 9 below shows the number of accommodation units for each type of tourist accommodation structure and their evolution for 2010-2016.

TABLE 9 - TOURIST ACCOMMODATION INFRASTRUCTURE OF SIBIU MUNICIPALITY, 2010-2016

Categories of tourist accommodation structures	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Percent Increases or Decreases
	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	
Hotels	20	23	23	22	25	25	25	20%
Hostels	1	3	2	2	5	8	7	86%
Motels	1	1	1	1	0	3	1	0%
Tourist villas	1	1	1	1	1	8	8	88%
Tourist cottages	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	100%
Campgrounds	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	100%
Camps for pupils and preschoolers	1	1	2	2	4	2	2	50%
Tourist guesthouses	24	16	15	16	15	67	63	62%
Agro touristic boarding houses	0	0	1	2	2	19	17	100%
Total	48	45	45	46	53	137	128	63%

Source: INS, 2017 (http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/publicatii/Statistica%20teritoriala/Turism_ind_JudLoc.htm).

During 2010 – 2016, the number of hotels increased by 20% (see Table 9), which might be considered satisfactory by taking into account that five new types of tourist accommodation structures were introduced and also because hotels are generally responsible for most of the accommodation capacity.

TABLE 10 - ACCOMMODATION CAPACITY BY TYPES OF TOURIST ACCOMMODATION STRUCTURES IN SIBIU, 2010-2016

Categories of tourist accommodation structures	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Percent Increases or Decreases
	Accommodation							
Hotels	2369	2572	2613	2585	2815	2915	2920	19%
Hostels	100	168	84	84	148	232	198	49%
Motels	58	58	58	58	0	86	43	-35%
Tourist villas	45	87	87	87	87	179	205	78%
Tourist cottages	0	0	0	0	0	132	138	100%
campgrounds	0	0	0	0	54	30	40	100%
Camps for pupils and preschoolers	60	60	160	160	305	160	160	63%
Tourist guesthouses	512	318	310	324	315	1446	1377	63%
Agro touristic boarding houses	0	0	8	28	28	382	372	100%
Total	3144	3263	3320	3326	3752	5562	5453	42%

Source: INS, 2017 (http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/publicatii/Statistica%20teritoriala/Turism_ind_JudLoc.htm).

Table 10 shows Sibiu Municipality tourist accommodation capacity, as well as the changes that have taken place every year. Thus, economic prosperity is also observed in accommodation capacity, meaning that the demand for the Southern Gate of Transylvania has gradually grown over time, and is also a positive trend for the future.

All types of accommodation units had a positive dynamics throughout the period under review from 2010 until 2016. In total, all nine types of structures increased by 42% in 2016 compared to 2010. All significant increases were registered by tourist hostels and villas, which are the most popular choices in most historic cities in Romania.

From the perspective of arrivals, Sibiu registered a total of 371,295 arrivals of tourists in 2016, and at the beginning of the analysis period, 2010, the number of arrivals registered per total were 155,244. Moreover, the number of tourists did not decrease during the period 2012-2014 by comparison to other historical Romanian cities analyzed in this paper. Thus, in 2016 Sibiu recorded 58% more arrivals than in 2010, with a growing popularity each year (see Table 11).

TABLE 11 - NUMBER OF ARRIVALS FOR 2010-2016 BY TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION

Categories of tourist accommodation structures	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Percent Increases or Decreases
	Tourist no.	Tourist no.	Tourist no.	Tourist no.	Tourist no.	Tourist no.	Tourist no.	
Hotels	146511	186364	191952	209569	241238	256612	280179	48%
Hostels	1711	3393	1807	377	3691	4405	5663	70%
Motels	1856	1857	0	2376	1609	0	0	0%
Inns	0	0	0	0	0	1213	1932	100%
Tourist villas	565	629	1126	1309	0	4597	4728	88%
Tourist cottages	0	0	0	0	0	6407	6578	100%
Campgrounds	0	0	0	0	85	0	731	100%
Touristic houses	0	0	0	0	0	839	0	0%
Camps for pupils and preschoolers	0	0	1412	2432	2432	2051	1959	100%
Tourist guesthouses	4601	2514	4207	6730	9650	39511	59018	92%
Agro touristic boarding houses	0	0	0	0	129	5029	10507	100%
Total	155244	194757	200504	222793	258834	320664	371295	58%

Source: INS, 2017 (http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/publicatii/Statistica%20teritoriale/Turism_ind_JudLoc.htm).

Touristic structures such as inns, chalets, campsites, cottages, camps or boarding houses have made their debut in Sibiu after 2010. Inns have begun to gain popularity in 2015; the same year that motels have registered no tourist arrival there. Also, tourist chalets and cottages feel their presence in the same year as the inns. The agro-touristic boarding houses experience an earlier start in 2014.

Thus, according to Table 12, hotels recorded 48% more arrivals in 2016 than in the previous period, followed by percentages of tourist villas, which grew by 88%, starting from 565 number of tourists arriving in 2010, at 4728, in 2016, an excellent development, but surpassed by tourist boarding houses, whose arrivals increased by 92% in 2016, a number that increased more than ten times over the seven-year period of this analysis.

We concluded that Sibiu has registered a number of arrivals closely correlated to its economic development in recent years. Moreover, the number of overnight stays in 2016 almost doubled compared to the number of arrivals of the same year. According to the table below, total overnight stays increased by 57% in 2016, compared to the reference period, 2010.

TABLE 12 - NUMBER OF OVERNIGHT STAYS BY TYPES OF TOURIST ACCOMMODATION STRUCTURES, 2010-2016, SIBIU

Categories of tourist accommodation structures	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Percent Increases or Decreases
	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	
Hotels	238685	310338	314303	336708	390384	420389	455019	48%
Hostels	5604	8294	3980	805	4981	8456	10253	45%
Motels	2046	2659	0	2379	1609	0	0	0%
inns	0	0	0	0	0	1998	2882	100%
Tourist villas	919	1266	2136	2746	0	7765	7040	87%

Tourist cottages	0	0	0	0	0	9276	12073	100%
Campgrounds	0	0	0	0	115	0	1075	100%
Touristic houses	0	0	0	0	0	1114	0	0%
Camps for pupils and preschoolers	0	0	4550	7154	13637	5096	5193	100%
Tourist guesthouses	9585	5866	7682	9810	13027	56617	91143	89%
Agro touristic boarding houses	0	0	0	0	161	9511	15572	100%
Total	256839	328423	332651	359602	423914	520222	600250	57%

Source: INS, 2017 (http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/publicatii/Statistica%20teritoriala/Turism_ind_JudLoc.htm).

The only structures that have lost their demand over the past two years were motels and tourist lodges, the latter registering overnight stays only in 2015 (see Table 12). Motels lost their demand in the same year, although before 2015 they recorded a small number of overnight stays each year. Hotels and hostels had 48% and 45% more overnight stays in 2016, and this growth demonstrates the quality of the services and owners' commitment to the tourism industry. A percentage of 100% is met in the case of inns, tourist chalets, campsites, pupils' and pre-school camps and agro tourism boarding houses. Tourist villas and boarding houses experienced an increase in the number of overnight stays of almost 90%, again demonstrating positive developments in the demand for them.

Sibiu, like Alba Iulia, has a visual identity manual. The historic city's logo represents even the architectural aspects previously presented, "the eyes of Sibiu", and the windows on the roofs of the houses that seem to watch over the South Gate of Transylvania. The symbolism of the chosen emblem is to ensure protection, safety, knowledge and sincerity, the reason being taken from the Saxon architecture of the area.

Sibiu also has very up-to-date and high-performing tourism websites with useful information of all kinds. On the www.sibiu-turism.ro website, you can find weekly, monthly or annually agenda of events. There is also information about the tourist offer detailed and categorized according to the area of interest of each tourist accompanied by information on the history of the place and the cultural patrimony.

For those passionate about history, the official website www.patrimoniu.sibiu.ro has been established, here tourists or potential tourists can get information from the smallest detail with any information they want concerning the cultural heritage of the South Gate of Transylvania.

In conclusion, being a former European Capital of Culture, Sibiu has to maintain and develop its reputation as it is in a great economic ascent in the tourism industry, but not only. We have summarized the subject of this chapter's analysis. The historical city shapes a beautiful future, inspiring culture in the souls and collective thinking of tourists.

CONCLUSION

Competitiveness of the tourism sector requires European-level incentives by promoting and developing high-quality, sustainable tourism that strengthens Europe's cultural image by offering high-quality, historic destinations.

The main weaknesses of the national tourism industry at the historical and cultural level are outlined in terms of insufficient promotion, both locally and internationally. As it has been observed in the paper, the analyzed cities do not carry out clearly defined urban marketing activities, although the advantages of using a variety of competitive advantages on a cultural and historical scale are present, they are generally summarized at a primary level of communication left to the will of collective perception in the imagination of the tourists.

The lack of promotion is followed by financing mechanisms, cultural heritage preservation often requiring rehabilitation or restoration work. The lack of budget funds in the tourism industry systematically affects the success of its development, impacting on all the elements that build a sustainable tourism area, ranging from accommodation infrastructure, quality of service, staff employed in this field to road signs contributing to the easy orientation to the main tourist attractions.

A first recommendation, though obvious, is the development of tourism infrastructure, the diversification of the accommodation offer in the reception facilities, the multiplication of the capacity of these structures by studying the market and demand. If the offer is higher or at the same level as the demand, it is advisable to investigate ways that would result in an increase in demand that will lead to the development of the factors that make up the tourist offer.

Regarding the lack of promotion, steps in this direction can be achieved by facilitating access to tourism information, by using online marketing tools, streamlining the browsing process on the websites of the historic tourism-related cities and providing more details, not stricter limitation to the historical description of the genres, mapping to them, displaying visitation programs, pricing, discounts, as the case may be. Of course, these issues are already being put into practice for some historic cities, but they are not a generally applicable issue for everyone.

Urban marketing activities should be carried out by field specialists by creating a specialized institutional body that has specific attributions to promote local tourism through the use and good knowledge of marketing tools. They can analyze the sociological impact of different ways of highlighting the local image and designing an urban branding strategy that integrates all the strengths of the historic city.

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