

AGROTOURISM - SOURCE OF INCOME FOR THE RURAL POPULATION

Abstract

The article treats the rural environment of Romania, through developing the agro-tourism with its tourist villages. It highlights the features of agro-tourism in comparison with traditional tourism and the impact of it on local community and local economy as a source of revenues for its rural population. The Romania's socio-economic development, according to the European standards and requirements, depends largely on rural area development, which is so significant for our country's international recognition. The problem of the sustainable development of the rural areas constitutes a high priority for Romania in the quality of European Union's member state. This supposes adopting of a coherent strategy that can realize a balance between the preservation demand of the economic, ecologic and socio-cultural area on one hand, and the tendency of life country modernization, on the other side.

Keywords: agro-tourism, rural tourism, sustainable development, tourist potential, rural population, tourist revenues.

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AGROTOURISMUL - SURSĂ DE VENIT PENTRU POPULAȚIA RURALĂ

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Rezumat

Articolul tratează mediul rural din România, prin prisma dezvoltării agroturismului cu satele sale turistice. Acesta evidențiază caracteristicile agroturismului în comparație cu turismul tradițional și impactul acesteia asupra comunității locale și economia locală ca sursă de venituri pentru populația rurală. dezvoltarea socio-economică a României. Problema dezvoltării durabile a zonelor rurale constituie o prioritate pentru România în calitate de stat membru al Uniunii Europene. Aceasta presupune adoptarea de o strategie coerentă, care poate realiza un echilibru între cererea de conservare a zonei economice, ecologice și socio-culturale pe de o parte, și tendința de modernizare țării de viață, pe de altă parte

Cuvinte cheie: agroturism, turism rural, dezvoltare durabilă potențial turistic, populația rurală, veniturile turistice.



1. INTRODUCTION

In developing food safety and security strategy for the period 2016 -2035 Romania started from rural functions and rural economy, the agri-food sector, the need to accelerate their development, the new partnership between Europe and farmers under the CAP reform and European agricultural budget for the period 2014 - 2020, as follows:

- ensuring the safety and security of welfare alimentare- prerequisite Romania Project major objective of the country and society by providing full domestic food demand, improved quality, and a surplus to domestic food consumption, available for export
- conservation and protection of renewable natural resources (soil, water, air, biodiversity) and the sustainable use of natural resources, agriculture, 2 primarily soil, biodiversity conservation, implementation of policies to mitigate climate change (Constantin, 2000).
- balancing environmentally sustainable countryside by public investment, public-private and private infrastructure works protection, improvement and equipping of the territory (irrigations systems, water-reclamation of protection of agricultural land and forest of settlements, curtains protection, afforestation of degraded and deforested, increasing the green cover of the territory, etc.)
- consolidation of farms, upgrading technology and general improvement of farmers' activities; • stimulating the formation of private-commercial family farms European type by a gradual reduction in the subsistence farms
- balanced territorial development of rural economy agricoles social economy in rural areas by expanding rural SMEs food and non-agricultural thereby increasing employment of the rural population by engaging and stabilizing active population in rural areas, mainly to the young;
- Increase the absorption europenedestinate agriculture and rural development by improving the RDP and its financing and implementation of projects
- stabilize the trade balance Romanian food and food export growth of the country
- restriction disadvantaged rural areas and severe rural poverty

2. BIOAGRICULTURE CHARACTERISTICS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

In Europe Union, agro-tourism represents one of the main forms of tourism with the highest potential, and the development of this is, for the rural area, a means of sustainable development economically, socially and culturally. The period of the last years shows that by capitalizing in a touristic purpose of the natural, cultural and anthropic potential, from some rural areas, it represents an important chance of economic revival and a solution to create new workplaces, but also an opportunity to promote Republic of Moldova internationally.

Europe Union has a particular agro-touristic potential thanks to the favorable relief conditions, the beauty of scenery, of air and water purity, areas of valleys and hills, of traditions kept until present days, specific gastronomy and the hospitality of the locals. It represents the land of churches and monasteries left legacy by the rulers of Europe, at the same time, it favors several forms of tourism such as: religious tourism, wine tourism, equestrian tourism, balneary, cultural and agro-tourism. Although more and more locals from the tourist areas of the Republic of Moldova have understood to capitalize the resources existing in our country and to contribute to the development of the accommodation infrastructure by transforming their own dwellings into boarding houses or by building new hostels, the real potential of the Republic of Moldova is not intensely exploited. Most of the time, the main issues are related to quality and standards tourist services rendered, the involvement of the hosts in agro-touristic activities, the lack of collaboration between local authorities and pension managers, but, of course, infrastructure and sources of funding remain the most important issues.

One of the trends in agro-tourism development is the return to nature in one healthy, harmonious environment, in accordance with authenticity. It manifests itself in all the countries where the current post-industrial civilization has created the need to escape from the polluted and stressful urban environment. Especially the tourists from advanced economy countries who are looking to escape from the "unleashed world" from their home, of urban agglomerations and to find places where nature has remained unaltered by the "conquests" of modern civilization. The Republic of Moldova has great opportunities for the development of agro-tourism in rural areas. The geographical configuration of the country is a genuine natural potential and the wide variety of cultural and historical values (folk art, ethnography, folklore, traditions, historical vestiges) complements its anthropic potential, outlining the features of a rich rural tourist heritage, still insufficiently exploited.

The current agro-tourism phenomenon is steadily growing. This tourist move to the mountainous rural sector is carrying monetary flows from one medium to another, from a sector to another, the impact manifesting at both microeconomic and macroeconomic levels.

Agro-tourism allows the capitalization of the accommodations available of the traditional household prepared and well equipped for the reception of the guests, the provision of meals and for other complementary activities directly dependent on the economic characteristics of the farm, such as recreational activities, initiation in various traditional trades, equitation, fishing, therapeutics cures. As a result, agro-tourism is a tourist activity designed to bring farmers additional income by maximizing the personal resources of the household that come out of agricultural activity which remains the main source of income (Rusu and Imre, 2005).

Agro-tourism is a form of rural tourism that uses only tourist pensions and boarding houses for accommodation and dining, benefiting from an unpolluted and picturesque natural attractions and cultural values, traditions and habits present in the rural environment, the hospitality of the farmer (Ungureanu, 2007).

Agro-tourist pensions are tourist accommodation facilities, functioning in the homes of citizens or in a independent buildings which provide in specially arranged spaces, housing tourists and serving meals, as well as the possibility of taking part in household or craft activities. In boarding houses are offered meals prepared from natural products, mostly from their own household or local authorized producers, and the host deals directly with the reception of the tourists and their schedule throughout their stay at the house (Glăvan, 2005). At least one activity related to agro-touristic pensions is carried out: agriculture, taking care of animals, growing different types of plants or orchards, and craftsmanship with a workshop from which result various articles. The activities in question must be carried out continuously or, depending on their specificity or seasonality, have a repeatability character. The tourist accommodation should be done in places protected from sources of pollution and any other elements that would endanger the health of the tourists.

Agro-tourism has some different traits compared to traditional tourism:

- distinctive scenery, rich and various, depending on the season;
- tourist consumption happens in rural areas, where the quality of the pensions and of the services, knowledge of the natural, human and cultural environments, as well as the originality of the products are essential;
- the tourist offer is authentic, differentiated, multiple in its diversity, organized and led by farmers, so the people from the village;
- the quality of the natural products, not industrialized offer a special value of organic comfort;

- it is an economic activity complementary to agricultural exploit, and not an alternative or a substitution of this;
- it offers tourist population with low income the possibility of rest and comfort, of spending their free time during holiday or weekends in the picturesque scenery of the rural area, with cultural-educational values and a specific hospitality;
- it can be practiced even during winter, combined with seasonal sports;
- it doesn't need very large investments for infrastructure and tourist supra-structure or any other profile equipment;
- it avoids the crowds of tourists met at the seaside, spa or mountainous resorts
- it's a "diffuse" tourism through the specificity of its diversified offer and high disseminated space;
- it is not compatible with mass tourism;

3. THE MAIN DIRECTIONS FOR RURAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The principal directions for rural potential recovery are:

- restoring peasant farms and all agrarian policy
- The stimulation of complementary non-agricultural activities, in particular through the creation of new economic units, especially agro-productive and services and by harnessing tourism and agricultural potential;
- The selection of settlements specific for Romanian ethnographic areas to finance complex projects for rural tourism;
- The elaboration of studies and projects for the local development of rural space especially as a project for practicing sports, leisure and cultural entertainment, tourist programs in order to offer tourists a wide variety of attractions.

The capitalization of Moldovan village resources can be done through various fairs, festivals, contests that come to complete the favorable image of the village. However, the main way, and the most important remains agro-tourism (Brown, 2001).

If the classic definition of tourism is "a recreation and/ or sport activity, consisting of walking or using other means of transportation through picturesque regions or interesting from one point of view or

another”, agro-tourism is done near the peasant household, as an economic factor of local development, resulting from the services rendered to costumers in order to satisfy their needs (Danciu, 2006).

This activity has as a base three interdependent elements:

- The attraction to natural beauties, ethnography, to new, charm and events particular to country life;
- The accommodation and meals which, even if they are not of hotel standards, must be of high quality and offered with hospitality;
- Transport, access routes to the countryside are vital to ensure a continuous flow of tourists.

Traditional spirituality of the peasant must be accompanied by a particular training in offering accommodation, private initiative must integrate into a global development collective plan, and to contribute to the making of tourist products, offering the visitor- consumer the satisfaction of a civilized accommodation, accompanied by adequate restoration and, at the same time, the possibility of discovering new places and people.

The basic equation of the rural tourism product is: farm accommodation = holiday spent in the village + spending leisure time in rural areas. The farm, village, rural space are images so, they are the reason for which tourist come to spend their holidays in the country.

In contrast with concentration, anonymity, rapidity of change, absence of reference values which characterize big cities, the town people consider the rural area a reserve of space, rich of nature, of social reception structures. By using these goods they want to preserve the, to save them from pollution and the destruction that manifests more and more and that casts doubt on the integrity and sustainability of the planet.

The farm remains a strong symbol for the urban; it is the house of the peasant, of the farmer who knows the secrets of nature but also the best places for fishing, mushroom picking; it is the place where domestic animals live with which the town has lost contact, it is the place where fruit can be eaten fresh, where generation succeed without changing their way of life. This picture tends to move away from the economic reality, the mechanized exploitation of agriculture and mono-production.

However, the demand remains massive but there is a risk of depreciating quality. This is the problem of agro-tourism, which cannot be defined simply through a legal status, or a level of income, but which must result from a reception and a particular framework in rural areas.

The village also occupies an important place in the citizens' imagination. It means the human size, social intimacy, local animation, evokes the town hall, school, café, church, the places that have marked the lives of people over the centuries. The village groups merchants, entrepreneurs, those local actors who make the easier the life in the countryside. The village is where we find public services, indispensable to everyone, the place where the most beautiful holidays are held.

The space is the completion of farm accommodation and village life in the service of rural tourism; holidaymakers want to go through the space or act within it. Space represents the symbol of freedom, breath, pure water, greenery, flowers, colors, perfumes, songs; it invites to contemplate the landscapes, but also to activities along the road paths, on river banks, crossing the hills, the mountains, being on the heights of the slopes, on the lakes etc. These activities in nature are an important criterion in choosing a holiday in the country

CONCLUSIONS

The farm, the village and the space, together and separately, give rural tourism its attractiveness, economic, social and cultural dimensions. It is fundamentally integrated within reception areas, where it explores natural, cultural and human potential on which touristic products are promoted locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, motivation and identical objectives are found regarding a way of socio-economic developing through touristic capitalization of the natural and cultural potential of the rural area.

The tourist offer expresses itself as well, starting from a stay, from a leisure activity during free time, from a circuit on a particular theme or in a region, depending on the season chosen, potential customers, networks used, etc.

Thus, the motivation of tourist travels in rural areas is represented by unaltered natural environment, by customs and traditions, by activities practiced in these areas. As such, the progress tourism planning of rural area aims at creating conditions for the presence of tourists and to satisfy their needs, on the one hand, and for unhindered development, even for stimulating economic activities, on the other hand.

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