



ROMANIAN TOURISM MARKETING RESEARCHES

Viorica JELEV

“Spiru Haret” University, Economic Sciences Faculty, Fabricii Str., no. 46G, 60825, Bucharest, Romania, Tel.: +400726986743, Email: jelevviorica@yahoo.com

Abstract

In sustainable development, tourism plays a vital role, with a high contribution in Romania's economic recovery and relaunching. Raising the touristic product from the established values to those corresponding to the standards and preferences of the foreign tourists involves initiating and promoting actions that include, on one hand, the progress of the processes of education and training of a mentality appropriate to the current type of development, and on the other hand, emphasizing sustainable development in regions of touristic reception.

Based on these considerations, this paper aims to determine how the touristic products must be designed, from the point of view of marketing, to comply with the sustainability principles. To this end, we analyzed a research on consumption of touristic services in Romania, realized by INSOMAR, but also an analysis of the Romanian tourism seen by foreigners.

Keywords: *sustainable development; country brand; touristic product; research; foreign tourist; touristic circuit.*

JEL Classification: M39, Z32

Introduction

The paper covers the theoretical and practical aspects of Romanian tourism issues; the importance of the study arising from the implications that market research study has in solving the problems of the Romanian tourism and in order to substantiate the marketing strategy of the Tourism Ministry.

Issue 3/2016

The paper analyzes a marketing research conducted by INSOMAR concerning the consumption of tourism services in Romania few years ago and examines the opinions of foreign tourists on the Romanian tourism potential.

For creating the article we have analyzed both Romanian and foreign literature, adding information from domestic and international scientific papers.

Literature Review

The works we have consulted on this subject are varied, from Romanian studies conducted by specialists in tourism, such as The National Strategy for Regional Development, edited by the National Centre for Sustainable Development, May 20th, 2008 and The Regional Operational Programme 2007-2013 (Regional Policy) developed by the Regional Development and Tourism Ministry, to foreign studies of the World Tourism Organization from speciality magazines – Tourism Vision 2020 Magazine. Then, we have consulted Romanian literature (Stănciulescu, G., “Sustainable Tourism Management in Urban Centres”, Economica Publishing, 2004; Ispas, A., “The Image of Romania as a Tourist Destination” in *Economic Talks Magazine*, no. 4/April 2007, pp. 48-53), foreign literature (Eagles, P.F.J., McCool, S.F., Haynes, C.D., “Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas Guidelines for Planning and Management”, World Commission on Protected Areas, IUCN, 2002; Sundseth Kerstin, “Using Natural and Cultural Heritage to Develop Sustainable Tourism in Non-Traditional Tourist’s Destinations”, European Commission studies, Ecosystems LTD) and a study conducted by INSOMAR on the use of touristic services in Romania in 2009.

Worldwide Tourism Vision – 2020

Long-term forecast of the World Tourism Organization spans from 1995 to 2020. In the chart below (figure no. 1) it can be observed the structural trends of the forecast for this period. Experience shows that, on short-term, rapid growth periods (1995, 1996, 2000) alternate with slow growth periods (2001-2003).

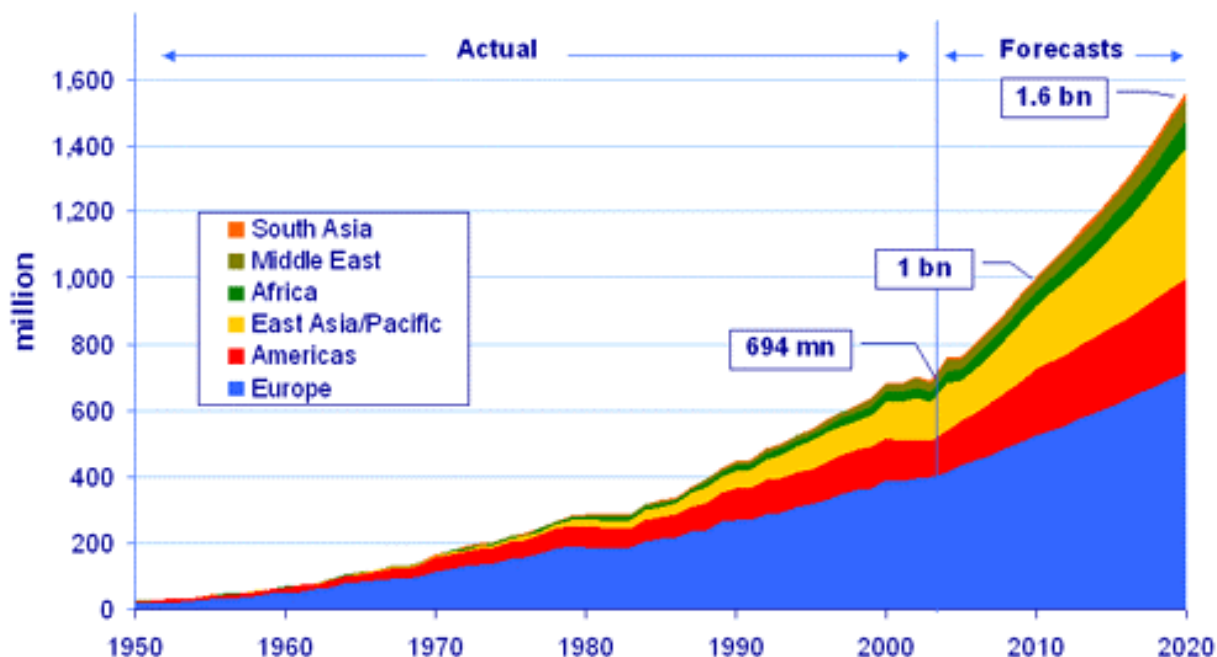


Figure no. 1. International tourism trends

Source: Tourism Vision 2020 – OMT Bulletin

Organization's projections show that the revenues from international arrivals are expected to reach about 1.6 billion Euros by the year 2020. Among these revenues, at worldwide level, in 2020, 1.2 billion Euros will come from intraregional travels and 378 million Euros will be from long distance travels. Of the total number of touristic arrivals by region it is shown that by 2020, the top three regions that receive tourists will be Europe (717 million tourists), East Asia and Pacific (397 million) and the two Americas (282 million) followed by Africa, the Middle East and South Asia. East Asia and Pacific, Asia, Middle East and Africa are forecasted to record growth rate of over 5% per year, compared to the world average of 4.1%. The more developed touristic regions in Europe and America are expected to achieve growth rates lower than the average. Europe will maintain the highest share of world arrivals, although there will be a decline from 60% in 1995 to 46% 2020.



Table no. 1. The situation of world tourism

	Base Year	Forecasts		Market share (%)		Average annual growth rate (%)
	1995	2010	2020	1995	2020	1995-2020
	(Million)					
World	565	1006	1561	100	100	4.1
Africa	20	47	77	3.6	5.0	5.5
Americas	110	190	282	19.3	18.1	3.8
East Asia and the Pacific	81	195	397	14.4	25.4	6.5
Europe	336	527	717	59.8	45.9	3.1
Middle East	14	36	69	2.2	4.4	6.7
South Asia	4	11	19	0.7	1.2	6.2

Source: <http://www.tourismnt.com.au/en/strategies/nt-tourism-vision-2020>

Long travels worldwide will grow faster (5.4%) per annum during 1995-2020, than intraregional travels (3.8%).

Conclusions of the SWOT analysis in the Romanian tourism

Tourism in Romania focuses on natural landscapes and its rich history, having an important contribution to country's economy. In 2008, domestic and international tourism has secured 4.8% of the GDP and about half a million jobs (5.8% of the total employment). After trade, tourism is the second important branch of the service industry. Of Romania's economic sectors, tourism is a dynamic one and undergoes rapid development, being also characterized by a high potential for expansion. After *World Travel and Tourism Council* estimates, Romania ranks the 4th amongst countries where tourism has grown rapidly, with an annual growth of the touristic potential of 8% from 2007 to 2016. The number of tourists rose from 4.8 million in 2002 to 6.6 million in 2004. Also in 2005, the Romanian tourism has attracted investments of 400 million Euros.

In 2010, the Romanian seaside has attracted about 1.8 million tourists, 15% fewer than in 2009.

In order to propose a strategy for the revival of Romania's international tourism it was necessary an analysis of the current situation of Romania as an international touristic destination in terms of marketing, to identify the action areas and intervention methods.

SWOT analysis is a summary of the marketing audit that presents the strengths and weaknesses of the organization, as well as the opportunities and threats of the external environment. Thus a list of positive and negative characteristics of the analyzed organization is made, characteristics which distinguish it from competing organizations. In conducting the SWOT analysis, Romania should be seen as a unified touristic destination, which owns both weaknesses and strengths, and is acting on a moving market, benefiting from opportunities, but also facing the inherent threats of an imperfect market.

Based on the SWOT analysis, the touristic organization may propose targets proper to the state of affairs, aiming, on the one hand, to eliminate the weaknesses and, where possible, to mitigate the impact of the external environment's threats. Furthermore, the development of the strengths and the exploitation and the fructification of the favourable opportunities are aimed.

After analysing the 4 components of the SWOT characterization, we can draw some conclusions that relate to the following issues:

In terms of natural resources and anthropic tourism resources, Romania is very well represented, the main touristic attractions being represented by the elements of ethnography, folklore, folk art and natural reservations. Regarding the reception facilities, Romania has a pretty good picture for the future, but still there would be room for more, so that the construction of new structures and the modernization of the existing ones are considered. Touristic structures of nutrition and treatment are well represented in comparison with the leisure and services ones, which are not sufficiently well-equipped in terms of technical-material basis. The latter require massive upgrades, but also the introduction of new forms of leisure and the extension of the services network. Tourism is very closely linked to culture and civilization, among them establishing an interdependent

relationship. By capitalizing the natural, human and financial resources at its disposal, tourism generates economic and social effects that increase economic efficiency, progress and civilization. The manifestation of the touristic demand and its dynamics in Romania are determined by a number of demographic, psychological, organizational factors, playing a decisive role in various segments of tourism. For complex development of tourism, potential customers should be better informed through mass media and internet.

Consumption of tourism services in Romania and customer's profile

If we want to have a quality tourism we should know our potential customers, the factors influencing their behaviour, how the decision making process of buying goes and we should study the patterns regarding the consumer's behaviour.

Any travel agency's questions related to the purchasing process of a travel package should be:

- whose necessity is it answering to?
- who buys and who uses the product?
- how strong is the buyer's involvement with the product?
- how the buying process occurs?

and the factors that influence tourists' behaviour and should be known are:

1. *Cultural factors*

- culture
- subculture
- social class

2. *Social factors*

- reference groups
- family
- roles
- statuses

3. *Personal factors*

- age and stage of life cycle
- occupation, lifestyle, economic circumstances
- personality



- opinion about the self

4. *Psychological factors*

- motivation
- perception
- learning
- beliefs
- attitudes

At the basis of the Romanian touristic services should be the golden rule “Treat others the way you want to be treated.” This however requires highly trained people in the services provided.

Purchase decision-making process of the potential tourists has several steps:

1. Perception / Need identification is the first step toward buying, influenced by internal and external stimuli and is motivated by a previous experience.

2. Search for information from domestic sources (memory, past experiences), or external sources: family, friends, public information, promotional messages.

In a marketing research realised by INSOMAR, that the most used methods of information by the Romanian tourist when he wants to purchase a touristic package are:

- friends and acquaintances recommendations – 27.3%;
- Internet – 13.3%;
- press – 7.9%.

3. Evaluation of offered alternatives is based on several criteria:

- objective (price, features, physical characteristics of the product);
- subjective (determined by intangible factors).

The evaluation process is more complex as the product or service is more important and has higher costs.

If there is also a set of alternatives (represents a small number of variants subjected to the evaluation), then one goes to:

- identifying the criteria used in the assessment (the location of the facility, degree of comfort, stay cost);



- determining the importance given by the consumer to each criterion;
- the values and beliefs that the consumer possesses. (figure2)

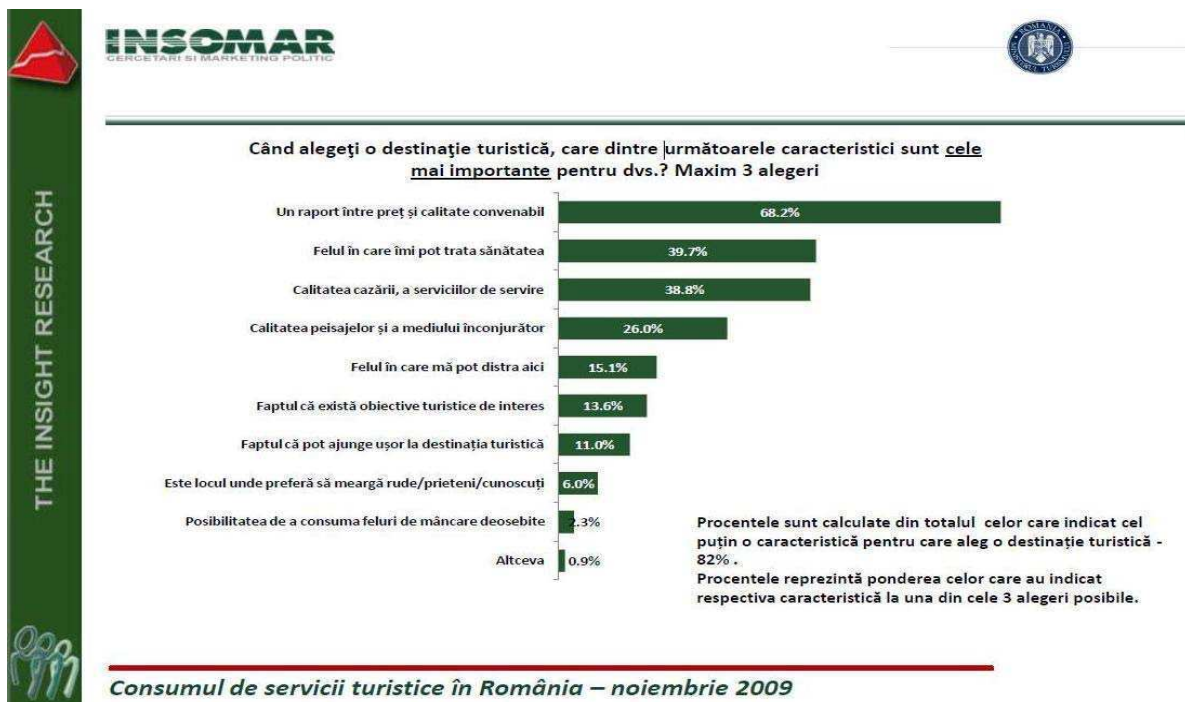


Figure no. 2. Features traced to a touristic destination

Source: INSOMAR research, 2009

4. The acquisition and payment of the touristic service must consider the place of the transaction, conditions of deployment, availability of the touristic service (figure no. 3).

5. Post-purchase evaluation, i.e. assessing the manner in which the product/service meets the expectations.

The models relating to the consumer's behaviour in tourism refer to:

➤ the rational approach, where the purchasing decision is the result of some rational and conscious economic evaluations;

➤ the behavioural approach, where the consumer's behaviour obeys the conditioning law;

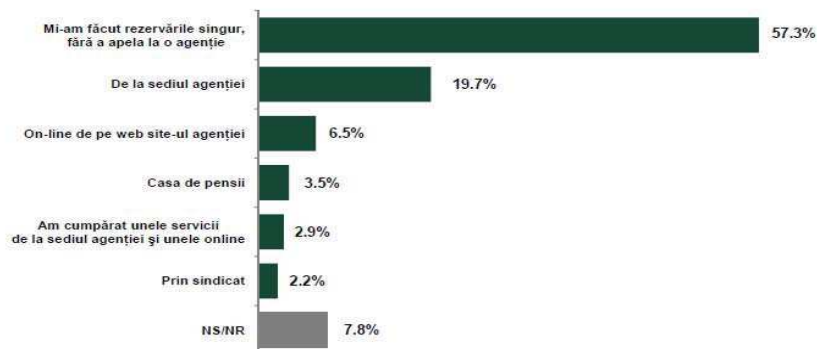


INSOMAR
CERCETARI SI MARKETING POLITIC



Care este modalitatea prin care ați achiziționat/intenționat să achiziționați în 2009 servicii turistice pentru vacanță?

Intrebare adresată celor care au răspuns că au mers și/sau intenționează să meargă în concediu în anul 2009 (40,3% din total populație)



Consumul de servicii turistice în România – august 2009

Figure no. 3. Acquisition methods

Source: INSOMAR

➤ the psychological approach, which is based on the transactional analysis in which personality knows three moods:

- 1) parent (thoughtful/authoritarian): the individual adopts a normative behaviour, reproduces previously learned schemes;
- 2) child (free/adapted/creative): the individual acts according to its own pleasures;
- 3) adult (positive/negative): the individual adopts a behaviour based on logic, analysis, reason.

➤ psychosocial approach is based on the theory of *conspicuous consumption* = the socio-cultural environment influences the behaviour, the individuals retrospectively to the group to which they belong or aspiring to (group membership).

Knowing the **typology of the tourist's personality helps us identify** the touristic activities in which they would participate (Figure no. 4).

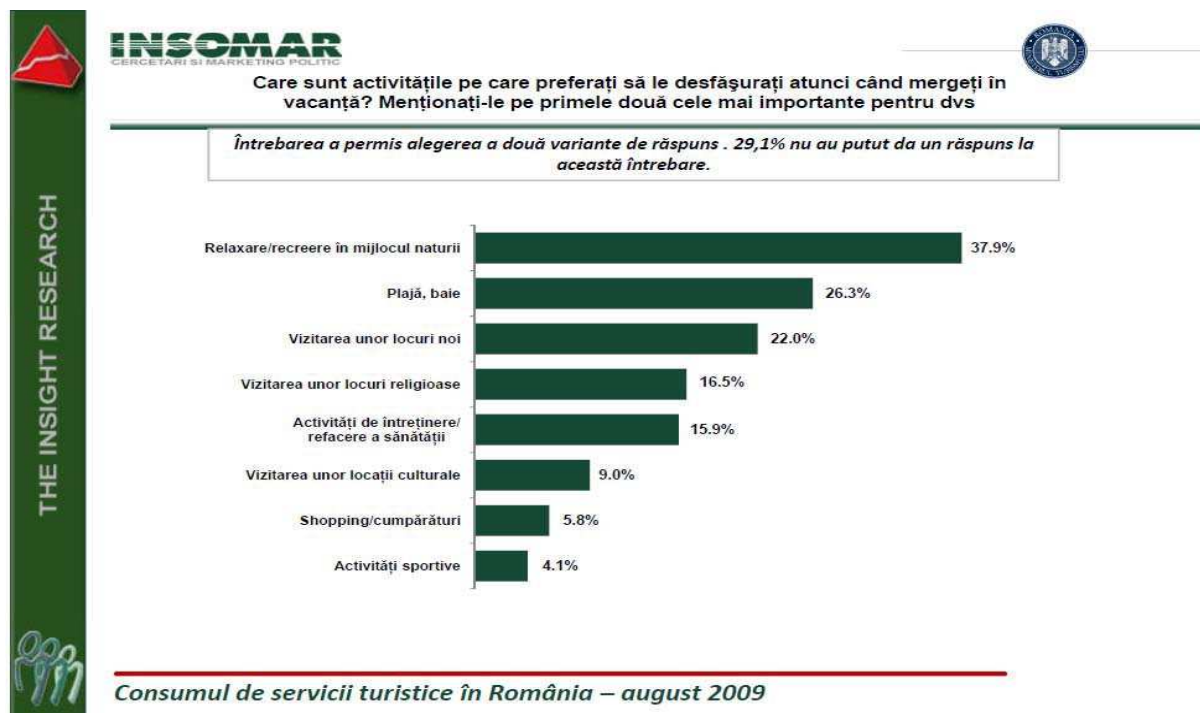


Figure no. 4. Ways to purchase the travel package

Source: INSOMAR research, 2009

Thus, in figure no. 4 stands out as a favourite for leisure, relaxation and recreation in the middle of the nature (37.9%), followed by beach and bath (26.3%), visiting some new places (22%).

From figure no. 5 of the INSOMAR survey, it results that the most agreed activities by the Romanian tourist in Romania are relaxation, recreation in the middle of the nature (37%) and visiting some new places (22.3%).

Romanian tourism seen by foreign tourists

On the official website of the National Tourism Authority of Romania (www.mturism.ro) have been presented studies realized by a number of specialized institutes from 11 countries in which Romania has Tourism Promotion Offices: Austria, Germany, Italy, Finland, Hungary, Norway, Sweden, UK, Spain, France and Denmark. The studies have been commissioned by Romanian offices and had as main objectives, for almost all countries: the manner in which is Romania perceived, as a potential touristic destination, by tourists from each of the 11 countries; which are the

strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the Romanian touristic products and which is the image of Romania as a touristic destination on the market of each country; which of the Romanian specific touristic products would be most interesting for travellers from those 11 countries; how is Romania perceived as a touristic destination compared to other Eastern European countries in terms of natural, provided services, quality-cost ratio potential etc.

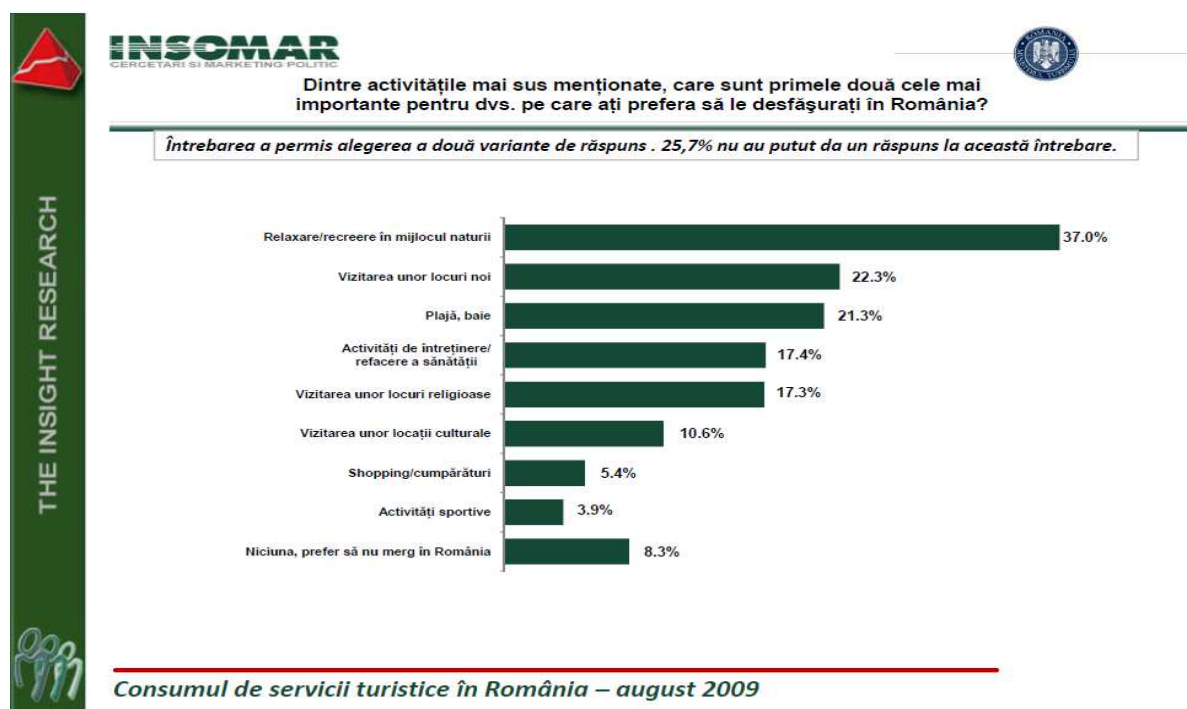


Figure no. 5. Consumption of touristic services in Romania

Source: INSOMAR research, 2009

From all the studies reviewed results the idea that Romania has considerable natural resources, with a great potential for tourism development.

Most examples mentioned by the **French** concern: the mineral water or thermal treatments from spas and the tourism in the seaside resorts. Romania benefits also from the diversity of the natural landscapes (a natural

Issue 3/2016

environment strongly contrasting) and the warm welcome given by the population to the foreigners, which is recognized by everyone.

From the study conducted by InterPress on the **Spanish** market it results that **the potential of the Romanian touristic market is big enough** to be known in Spain: diverse and complementary touristic resources (culture, nature, sports and ethnography); the “Latin” character, with a language with common origins and certain cultural traits that brings closer the two countries; relatively close to Spain geographically speaking (less than four hours by plane); the recent establishment of some air links that can promote touristic trips between the two countries; the increasingly higher presence of Romanians in Spain, a thing which determined the Spaniards to want to know a country of whose situation hardly knew anything before; a well preserved nature, in some cases original and highly appealing (especially the Carpathians and the Danube Delta); the enormous cultural riches, both architectural and artistic (“the biggest jewelleryes – monasteries, castles, churches and traditional villages from Maramures and Bukovina should be harnessed”, said the interviewees).

The **Danes** emphasize the fact that Romania has **the potential to provide many opportunities for a family holiday with children**. In addition to the adventure and family values, many former Danish tourists say it is cheaper to visit Romania.

Without intending to present Romania’s values, as they were perceived by tourists or tour operators from all 11 countries, the opinion expressed by the **British** drew our attention. According to the study “**Romania in the UK Travel Market – Image and Product Perception Analysis**” realized by TripVision in February 2006, **Romania’s strengths** are: undegraded nature; life in the countryside; heritage; multiculturalism; diversity; smaller or larger towns, beautiful and undiscovered (except Bucharest); lifestyle (outside the capital); children’s safety; deep orientation towards family; organic food in rural areas (good for vegetarians), etc.

There are also other British travellers, strongly motivated by the desire to see new things and discover new places. TripVision called these types of individuals “**Explorers**” and considered them **the consumers segment with the greatest potential for the Romanian touristic market potential**. The explorers travel more than tourists’ average, but what is more important is the fact that they are more open and independent and want to experience authenticity before thinking about comfort.

According to the study conducted on the UK market, Romania's main opportunities are: **differentiation** from other East European countries (by language, culture, nutrition) and **promoting** offers for specific holidays also through images which are known to be international. Romania has spontaneously been described by the British respondents as "romantic", based on the country life, moving to architecture and history of the destination. Romanticism is something that lacks in the other East European countries and this should form the basis message for Romania around which can be add a number of specific products offer. For example: skiing, sledding, pleasant evening with good food and drink for a lower price than other ski resorts. There are a sufficient number of themed holidays that can be connected to the same primary communication in order to give Romania a differentiating point, distinctive and positive in relation to other destinations, especially to those from Eastern Europe, which can be considered competing.

In **Norway**, articles found on Romania and especially the image of the holidays' producers focuses on the following issues:

- a new holiday destination, which may be developed;
- a convenient destination in terms of tourism product prices;
- an interesting destination for consolidating the Eastern European myth;
- some exotic touristic attractions.

Romania is a destination which surprises most visitors, especially because the modest initial expectations. Tour operators often face the positive surprise of tourists when they visit Romania, often due to the total lack or modest anticipated expectations. The feeling of safety is one of the aspects that positively surprise the many tourists who go to Romania.

The final conclusion of this study is that what for Romania the new inventions in the field of tourism are not absolutely necessary. Instead, Romania requires marketing and attention directed to the fact that this country has many opportunities to offer for those who are interested in trying something different.

There are many other tips that Romania has received by means of these studies about the country's image as a touristic destination. The lack

of space does not permit us to present them all. We invite, however, all those interested to study these materials and to act accordingly.

We also hope that all those who have ordered these studies will draw the necessary lessons and will take all necessary steps to improve Romania's image as a touristic destination.

Conclusions and Proposals

A well-designed touristic product based on research may influence the development of some deprived area by:

- attracting a large number of foreign tourists in the area;
- upgrading and expanding infrastructures: accommodation, food, transport so as not to affect the existing natural environment;
- creating new jobs and developing the local human resources by training employees;
- preserving continuity of spiritual traditions, customs and values of the area.

Touristic products created by national bidders must be based on foreign and national tourists preferences, discovered from the market research. This would lead to ensuring the touristic flow in the areas promoted by the respective products and a high degree of tourist satisfaction.

Romanian touristic product quality and competitiveness can contribute to the development and maintenance of a sustainable tourism, especially if one takes into account as well the global tourism trends which manifest towards:

1. **Search for the cultural roots**, the local authentic specificity, architecture, customs, art, traditions, etc.
2. **Search for personal balance**, physical and mental, by practicing physical activities that do not involve the competitive spirit.
3. The practice by a certain category of tourists of the **extreme sports**.
4. Return to nature in rural areas: agritourism, green, ecological tourism.
5. The desire to have a second residence.



6. Spending holidays in a natural unpolluted environment.

Among the proposals of this subject we will mention the following:

- informing and making aware the travel agencies and tour operators about the importance of creating some competitive touristic products that would determine the achievement of a sustainable tourism in the promoted touristic area;
- state's involvement by granting some facilities to travel agencies that promote such Romanian touristic products in the economically disadvantaged areas;
- employment by tour operators and travel agencies of specialized personnel, with higher education studies in the field.

References

1. Eagles, P.F.J., McCool, S.F. & Haynes, C.D., *Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas Guidelines for Planning and Management* (World Commission on Protected Areas, IUCN, 2002).
2. <http://www.tourismnt.com.au/en/strategies/nt-tourism-vision-2020>.
3. INSOMAR, *Study: consumption of tourist services in Romania 2009*.
4. Ispas, A., "The Image of Romania as a Tourist Destination" in *Economic Talks Magazine* (nr. 4/April, 2007), pp. 48-53.
5. Jelev, Ioan and Jelev, Viorica, "The role and priorities of the Romanian National Committee «Man and Biosphere of UNESCO application in Rodnei Mountains National Park, a biosphere reserve», *European Journalism* (Târgu Jiu, 2010)
6. Jelev, Viorica, "Tourism marketing in Romania. Constraints and prospects" (*Conference of the professors from USH*, 2009).
7. Jelev, Viorica, *Marketing turistic* (București: Editura Fundației România de Măine, 2013).
8. Jelev, Viorica, *Marketingul serviciilor, Note de curs*, volumul 2 (București: Editura Fundației România de Măine, 2008).
9. Jelev, Viorica, *Turism internațional* (București: Editura Fundației România de Măine, 2013).
10. National Centre for Sustainable Development, *National Strategy for Regional Development* (May 20th, 2008).