

Marin-Pantelescu, Andreea

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Kontakt/Contact

ZBW – Leibniz-Informationszentrum Wirtschaft/Leibniz Information Centre for Economics
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Romanian Tourism as a Part of the European Union: Changes and Adaptations

Andreea Marin-Pantelescu

The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Faculty of Business and Tourism,
Department Tourism and Geography, Bucharest, Romania, E-mail: marindeea@yahoo.com

Abstract *The demand and the supply for tourism increased tremendous during the last ten years as a result of enlargement of leisure and free time availability, a growth in paid tourists packages, an increase in bought holidays using dedicated websites, the development of transportation, and in particular the air transport and the expansion of inclusive tours offered by tour operators. After the transition to a modern economy and started with the integration into the European Union, Romanian tourism has suffered changes and adaptation important to consider and analyze in the following article. Governments and local authorities also play a very important role in tourism industry, often a co-ordinating role, as the industry is highly segmented (transport, accommodation, food and beverages, events, guiding tours, travel agents, souvenirs, and other tourists' ancillary services). The present paper will investigate the changes suffered by the Romanian tourism using the tourism indicators: the number of tourists' accommodation units (for the supply), international tourist arrivals and international tourism receipts (for the demand). At the end some conclusions are to be made in order to highlight the development of international tourism in Romania in the last years.*

Key words Tourism, tourists' arrivals, tourism incomes

JEL Codes: Z3, Z32

1. Introduction and literature review

The countries and their citizens being part of the European Union has benefited of funds and important growth strategies. The EU funding for Romania had a great impact and influenced domains like health, social services, education, public administration, hi-tech industry, transportation and tourism. European Union funds account for 25% of the public investment made in our country (European Commission, 2017).

In the period of time 2007 and 2013, our country received more than EUR 20 billion from the Cohesion Fund, the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund. Utilizing these funds, Romania could achieve a reliable growth on the back of unwavering industrial activity and remissive unemployment. Important reforms have been applied in health, education, transportation (regarding the infrastructure), and public administration (The EU in brief, 2017).

Romania became part of the world's biggest free trade area, which is home to 500 million consumers (potential travellers) and 20 million firms (potential principals of tourism). The principals in tourism are considerate accommodation suppliers, transport suppliers, tour operators, incentive travel organisers, travel agents and the tourist boards (Pender, 1999).

In Romania, between 2007 and 2017, due to the financial support of the EU, more than 35 000 new jobs were produced between 2007 and 2014, and over 1200 small and medium-sized enterprises were stimulated. It is assessed that these investments raised with 4% the GDP in the year 2015.

The tourism industry has been profoundly affected by developments in technology over the past decade (Holloway, 2009). A very important thing to mention is that Romanian hi-tech industry has boosted in these 10 years and became one of the most well paid domains in our country.

Other domain where EU investments were involved and achieved results was transportation. The infrastructure and the means of transportation are vital in the tourism activities and imply funds and resources, in order to improve the connectivity of Romania with the west of the Union the A1 highway was upgraded and the Suceava airport was opened connecting tourists with the beautiful monasteries like Sucevița, Moldovița, Voroneț, Arbore, Putna, ("real jewels" of the Romanian nation). This historical heritage enriches the potential of Romanian cultural and religious tourism.

Between 2014 and 2020, Romania will receive EUR 30 billion from the European Structural and Investment Funds for investments in urban development, waste management and energy efficiency. At the beginning, European funds accessing process was difficult and complicated, until all the procedures and rules for obtaining European funds had been harmonized and agreed. Important efforts for absorbing EU funds were made by our country authorities and local communities.

There is no doubt that Romanian tourism has huge potential, by rolling out a strategy for new forms of tourism activities and sustainable tourism. The economic growth impacted the tourism services sector and created new jobs in this field of work, increased GDP and balanced the tourism balance of payments.

3. Methodology of research and data analysis

First, the paper will analyze the supply of the Romanian tourism. An important statistic indicator “Establishments of touristic reception with functions of touristic accommodation in Romania” will help us to see the evolution of the tourism accommodation capacity in Romania.

Table 1. Establishments of touristic reception with functions of touristic accommodation in Romania number of units

Years	Number of units of tourist accommodation in Romania	Change (%)	
2010	5222		
2011	5003	11/10	–4%
2012	5821	12/11	+16
2013	6009	13/12	+3
2014	6130	14/13	+2
2015	6821	15/14	+11

Source: http://www.insse.ro/cms/sites/default/files/field/publicatii/anuar_statistic_al_romaniei_2016_format_carte.pdf

Regarding the evolution of the number of accommodation units in Romania, between 2010 and 2015, we can observe an increase with 11% in 2015. The consequences of this increase are supported by the demand, both domestic and international, at high levels in the period of time 2010-2015. People need to travel not for luxury reasons, but for relaxation and recreation, as tourism represents connection with other culture, creating new friends, maintain those relationships and learning something new.

On the Romanian market there are about 24,400 companies that have the main activity "Restaurants and other food service activities", having a cumulated turnover of 6.7 billion lei in 2012, according to data from the Trade Register. Figures include only companies that have declared their financial statements for 2013, the last year for which there is public data.

Bucharest, the capital of Romania, attracts the most foreign tourists, and hosts over 3,400 restaurants, cafes and bars, with annual business of nearly 560 million euro. There are currently 3,102 restaurants and 329 bars and cafes in Bucharest, according to data provided by the National Sanitary-Veterinary and Food Safety Authority (Rosca, 2015).

These are the first data on the number of restaurants in Bucharest in the context of the lack of market studies and in the context of the large number of spaces that close during the first months of operation.

Second, the study analyzes the demand for international tourism in Romania using the statistic indicator “International tourist arrivals”.

Table 2. The evolution of the International tourist arrivals in Romania between 2010 and 2015

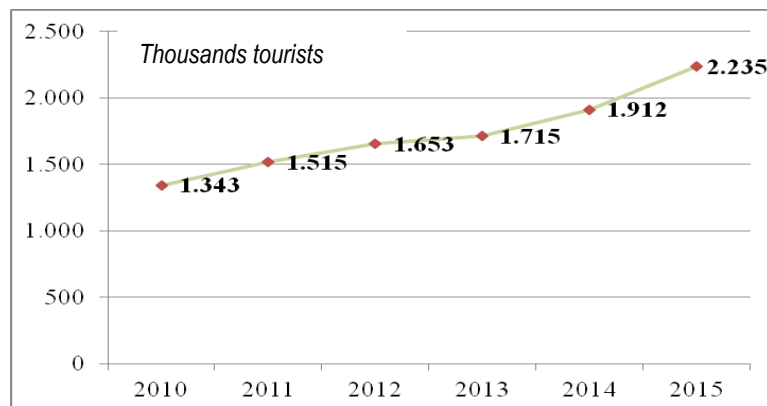
Years	International tourist arrivals (Thousands tourists)	Years	Change (%)
2010	1,343		
2011	1,515	11/10	+13
2012	1,653	12/11	+09
2013	1,715	13/12	+04
2014	1,912	14/13	+11
2015	2,235	15/14	+17

Source: Selected data from UNWTO Tourism Highlights, 2014, 2015 and 2016 Edition

International tourist arrival represents a very important indicator showing the evolution of international tourism in Romania. The foreigners tourists accommodated in Romanian tourist units are more than 2 millions in 2015, illustrating a growth of 17% from the last year. More and more international tourists choose our country for their holidays. The main reasons for foreigners to spend their holidays in Romania are: the leisure facilities and visitor attractions, medical treatment, visiting relative and friends, better quality for tourism services, easy access to the internet, opening borders, infrastructure development, the liberalization of air transport and the introduction of low cost flights.

Stating with 2010, the number of international tourist arrivals posted healthy growth, from 1,343 thousands tourists to 2,235 thousands tourists in 2015. Year after year, the international tourist arrivals grew with 13% in 2011, 11% in 2014 and 17% in 2015.

It was estimated that the number of international tourist arrivals in 2016 will reach 2,500 thousands tourists, a growth with 11% compared to the previous year and the forecasts were true.



Source: Selected data from UNWTO Tourism Highlights, 2014, 2015 and 2016 Edition

Figure 1. The evolution of the International tourist arrivals in Romania between 2010 and 2015

In recent years, the number of foreign tourists in Romania has risen rapidly to 1.71 million in 2013, 1.91 million in 2014 and 2.23 million in 2015. According to the data published by the National Institute of Statistics, in 2016 the number of foreign tourists in Romania increased last year by 11% compared to the previous year, up to 2.47 million, a record number of the last decades, as the country's attractiveness increased for tourists in Europe, Asia and America yes North, on Thursday.

From abroad, most foreign tourists - 1.85 million - came in 2016 from Europe, mainly from the other 27 states of the European Union (1.58 million). However, Asian tourists recorded the highest increase, 11.1% comparing with 2015, to 354,500 (Melenciuc, 2017). The most tourists came in Romania in 2016 from Germany (281,704), Israel (251,908), Italy (233,787) and France (145,584).

Regarding Romania international tourism receipts, there was an important increase in 2011 and 2014, 1,418 million US\$ (+24%) and 1,832 million US\$ (+15%).

Table 3. The evolution of the Romania International Tourism Receipts between 2010 and 2015

Years	International Tourism Receipts (US\$ million)	Years	Change (%)
2010	1,140		
2011	1,418	11/10	+24
2012	1,468	12/11	+4
2013	1,590	13/12	+8
2014	1,832	14/13	+15
2015	1,704	15/14	- 7

Source: Selected data from UNWTO Tourism Highlights, 2014, 2015 and 2016 Edition

It can be observed some important changes in international tourism for Romania, regarding international tourist arrivals, international tourism receipts, and international tourist visitors from UE countries. The changes are good, positive and essential for the economic country prosperity.

In just 5 years (2010-2015) the international tourism receipts for Romania increased two times from 1 billion US\$ to 2 billion US\$. The increasing numbers of tourists that have chosen Romania for their journeys include the next reasons: a multitude of holiday packages, more free time available, creating multinational companies using local labour force, expanding platforms able to purchase holiday packages, investment in tourism through European funds.

The adaptation consist in knowing the tourists preferences, needs and wants, interacting with the local community for better understanding of everyday lives. It is recognized that the growth in variety and type of accommodation has led to increased tourist choice.

4. Conclusions

Starting with 2010, the number of international tourist arrivals posted healthy growth, from 1.3 million tourists to 2.2 million tourists in 2015. Year after year, the international tourist arrivals grew with 13% in 2011, 11% in 2014 and 17% in 2015. In just 5 years the international tourism receipts for Romania increased two times from 1 billion US\$ in 2010 to 2 billion US\$ in 2015.

Romania EU membership has had a positive impact on our country's tourism performance. The last ten years have shown that being a member of European Union represents an opportunity due to the fact that services, goods, persons, and capital are moving freely on the EU market place. Romania became part of the world's biggest free trade area, which is home to 500 million consumers (potential travellers) and 20 million firms (potential principals of tourism).

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