

FAVORABLE COMPLEMENTARITIES TO THE DURABLE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN THE PRUT TRANSFRONTIER AREA

1. Introduction

Approaching the title issue is both a useful, yet difficult and potentially tricky attempt, which can nevertheless provide a clear perspective on tourism-related activities in the Prut transfrontier area.

The usefulness of such an action is obvious since it meets the expectations of the communities living in this area, of the tourism industry, of the local and county authorities. This action could be of equal importance to the governments of the three concerned countries whose cooperation policies must be systematically formulated in order to be positively received by the local inhabitants and be in agreement with the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Cooperation between Territorial Communities or Authorities adopted in Madrid on 21 May 1980 and signed by Romania with the necessary amendments on 27 February 1996.

Thus the EU actively supports and is openly interested in the transfrontier cooperation among European states on the one hand to smooth and put an end to historical territorial disputes and on the other hand to promote economic and social progress in the transfrontier areas which, in almost every country, are less developed than the centre areas.

And last but not least, the purpose of such research is to collect detailed data on the tourist potential each party possesses, how it is distributed spatially and structurally.

Such information is meant to represent the basis of adequate development and cooperation policies in the Prut transfrontier zone.

The difficulties of such an action arise both from the field of tourism itself and especially from other political, legislative and economic aspects such as:

- a. as a result of historical injustices, this area of over 20,247 sq km belongs to three countries with different laws and different states of economic development;
- b. the scarcity of Ukrainian and Moldovan bibliographical sources providing an objective un-biased analysis of tourism sites and resources;
- c. limited opportunities of actual on-site investigation of the state and structure of tourism resources available in the area, which could lead to quantitative and qualitative analyses. This is due not only to the scarcity of funds allocated to such scientific research, but especially to the arbitrary and brutal actions taken against those wishing to travel to the north and east of the concerned area, namely in Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova.
- d. The substandard – if not appalling – state of the general and tourism-related infrastructure, the different development of the tourism industry in the three countries after the enforced creation of the border between Romania, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine which broke the natural links between them and halted the progress of tourism in the interwar period. Thus we have reached the radical yet expected stage when tourism cooperation can no longer be considered because of the interdiction to approach the border, not to mention crossing it. The brutal policies of the USSR and then of its successors in this area, Ukraine to the north and the Republic of Moldova to the east, respectively, have prevented the native Romanian inhabitants, sharing the same language, roots and history to visit each other and meet.

Despite these impediments, as the world is transforming, current policies take into account potential tourism cooperation in the transfrontier area, which is supported by EU bodies and called for by the local population, so that the governments of the three countries are bound to act accordingly.

2. The role of complementarity elements in the development of tourism in the Prut transfrontier zone

Life has demonstrated that a certain area, point, place cannot meet all the expectations and needs of the inhabitants. The tourism industry cannot neglect these demands as it needs to identify all the existing

complementarities in order to meet the needs of tourists and have an ever greater influence on them.

Derived from the French term *complémentaire*, the notion complementarities in the field of tourism means something that completes a travel attraction, activity or area, etc.

Starting from the meaning of the term one can deduct that in order to establish the complementarities that are favourable to the durable development of tourism in the Prut transfrontier area we have to take into account:

- a. the quantitative, qualitative and structural data related to the tourism resources in the area;
- b. the present level of exploitation of these resources and the typology of the used models;
- c. the demands and expectations of local and most importantly of foreign tourists related to the current travel offer;
- d. the modifications and transformations required for the better use of resources, and the investment sources that can be drawn into the sector;
- e. the state and quality of the components of the general and specific infrastructure and the existing complementarities.

International experience in the field reveals some essential aspects for the topic under research:

- local and particularly foreign tourists have become more selective and demanding about travel offers;
- tourism in general is active only in connection with special and highly original attractions;
- a certain point or area, regardless of its tourism potential, cannot objectively possess all the resources required to meet a great number of expectations;
- due to educational and psychological factors, tourists seek to find the richest travel offer to meet a rich array of expectations and motivations.

These realities need to be considered separately but altogether they contribute to enhancing the role of complementary factors in the development of tourism in a certain area. In tourism, input is represented by the natural resources (soil, water, air, forests, mineral springs), antropic resources (hotels, villas, museums, castles, fortresses, bridges and aqueducts, monasteries), people, material assets, etc.

These elements can be found in the Prut transfrontier area which boasts almost all forms of relief: mountains, hills, plains, lowlands, depressions etc., lacking only the sea coast, although this is partly compensated by the existence of over 20 lakes in the area along the river Prut and its 12 tributaries.

If we consider the geographical aspects only, we shall note that they influence the distribution of tourists on the territory, complementary factors being unavoidable.

Due to the wide distribution of these resources and their volume, structure, degree of development and utilisation, travel agents are almost compelled to cooperate in order to provide exciting and competitive services.

In such a transfrontier area the complementary elements must be understood as targets of research, means of approach and cooperation. This is why for elaborating travel programs and establishing the structure of travel products, the cooperation between tourism agents is vital to ensure the most advantageous use of the existing complementarities.

Complementarities in the field of tourism can be employed in cooperation through:

- a. development strategies;
- b. investments;
- c. conception and establishment of travel programmes;
- d. advertising and promotion.

Such cooperation requires strategy, agreements between the contracting parties, sincerity, clarity and will to act. Only this way can the role of the complementary elements be a positive one, with remarkable outcome.

As a matter of fact, making use of tourism complementarities in the Prut Transfrontier area will encourage closer cooperation in the industry. The cooperation has to occur and develop on a solid basis, being supported by the interests of the involved partners.

Cooperation aimed at highlighting the complementarities favourable to the development of tourism will revitalise the landscape, modernise and expand the infrastructure, will activate the range and organisation of public services, thus having a positive effect on the standard of living of the local communities.

The main role of the complementarity elements is to facilitate mutual knowledge, and closer cooperation in an area where, throughout history, the great powers have brutally intervened, by tracing borders which separated families, villages and properties.

By restoring cooperation infrastructure will be shared, tourism resources will be better organised and exploited through better management and more effective marketing. Cooperation will range from launching combined travel packages to common training of specialist staff, common market research and efforts to join efforts in advertising and investment.

A brief outline of the classification of tourism complementarities in the Prut transfrontier area will reveal some of the elements that need to be incorporated in our analysis.

When their nature is considered, complementarities can be determined by:

- a. natural factors involved in the tourism industry;
- b. antropoc factors that can support tourism;
- c. legislative factors stimulating tourism;
- d. the price policy;
- e. investment policy;
- f. psychological factors;
- g. economic development.

One should also consider the complementarities generated by the demographic, religious, ethnic, historic and social-cultural factors, etc.

Even without detailing the above-mentioned elements, one can note the wide range of complementarities favourable to the durable development of tourism in the Prut transfrontier area.

The combination of elements specific to each individual micro-area and the offering on the internal and external markets of exceptional tourism products will attract a great number of tourists.

3. Tourism-related features of the Prut transfrontier area

The territories which are part of Northern Bucovina and the Republic of Moldova are Romanian lands where an important branch of the Romanian nation was born, lived and created an individual culture.

The vicissitudes of history caused this territories to be occupied by two great European empires, in the 18th and 19th centuries and at the beginning of the last century, namely by the Habsburg Empire (Northern Bucovina, between 1774-1918) and the Tzarist Empire (Moldova, between 1812-1918). The national revival movement led to the great unification acts of 27 March 1918 at Chisinau and 15/28 November 1918 at Cernauti, with the unanimous and willful agreement of the inhabitants of these provinces.

The Molotov – Ribbentrop Pact of 23 August 1939, through article 3 of the secret additional protocol represented a serious encroachment of Romania's territory as the USSR invaded Moldavia for the second time and Northern Bucovina for the first time.

These territories were part of the cradle of the Romanian people and the Romanian spirit laid its mark on the social, economic and political organisation of the civilisation that developed there.

Moreover, the development of the various infrastructure elements integrated harmoniously within the Romanian territory.

This civilisation developed not only in the field of culture – with visible evidence to this day – but also in the social and economic field, becoming part of a powerful national conscience.

The beginning of the foreign occupation of Northern Bucovina, the Herta land and Moldavia brought about certain transformations (of mores, customs, laws, etc.), initiated by the invaders.

Thus, the occupying forces imposed their objectives over the millenary Romanian tradition, seeking to minimise and destroy the traditions, mores and customs of the local population.

Once an integral part of Romania, the area now belongs to the three countries bordering the river Prut: Romania (the right bank), the Republic of Moldova (left bank) and Ukraine (Northern Bucovina and Herța land and the land stretching from Giurgiulesti to the confluence of the rivers Prut and the Danube).

For this reason the identification of tourism-related complementarities existing in this area is ever more important for the development of tourism in line with the current demands.

If one was on a vantage point in space, looking down at the river Prut basin, one would observe that the river, originating in the Carpathians, crosses with difficulty the rocky land then smoothly flows till it flows, into the river Danube. On both sides there are successive hills, valleys and the fertile Jijia plain.

Tourists will find interesting attractions in this area which spreads over 967 km and North-West and South-East orientation and has a numerous urban and rural population living in over 390 localities: 6 cities, 19 towns and 365 communes.

Thus in the north-western area of the region the well-known massif Ceremus offers optimal conditions for mountain trek enthusiasts, the main starting points being: Gura Putilei, Răstoace, Văjnița, Ispas, Milie, Bănila, Ceremuș, Vășcăuți, etc.

Those seeking balnear tourism can go to Cosciuia (Northern Bucovina), Cahul and Ungheni in the Republic of Moldova, Iași and Drânceni in România.

There are adequate conditions for the climateric and leisure tourism in Vijița, Vijnicioara, Iablonița, Coniatin, and Cotul Vânători in Northern Bucovina, Agafton and Iași in România, Văleni and Costăști in the Republic of Moldova, etc.

Cultural tourism, in its many forms, related to museums, folklore or religion, boasts the most exciting tourist attractions which generate a high tourist influx.

The most fascinating cultural destinations are: Cernauti – dubbed the small Vienna, Iași – situated on seven hills, just like Rome, Botoșani – the city of poets, Huși – the town of vineyards, Galați – on the bank of the river Danube, Ungheni – on the bank of Prut, etc.

There are 62 museums and memorial houses in the area (36 in Romania, 14 in Moldova and 12 in Northern Bucovina) which allow tourists to discover the life and culture of the local population.

Folk art and architecture are ubiquitous in this area and tourists can find many interesting and original monuments of traditional art. Leisure tourism can be promoted thus ensuring the contact with famous folk craftsmen and the folklore that can truly capture the tourists' imagination.

Traditional art monuments can be found in Pășcăuți, Putna, Boian, etc. in Bucovina de Nord, Tețcani (the windmill) in the Republic of Moldova and Rădăuți - Prut, Deleni, Scobinți Costuleni, Vetrișoia, etc. in România.

The main attributes of folk art are its history, quality, colour, creativity and diversity which offer great excitement to tourists; combined with the other tourism attractions it creates a whole of great cultural value.

In the area being studied original folk art can be found at: Lucavița, Broscăuți, Poeni, Văleni, etc. in Northern Bucovina, Suruceni, Bardar, Căinari, Baurici, Moldoveni, Bălărești, Dumbrăvița and Ungheni in the Republic of Moldova and Flămânzi, Frumușica, Cucuteni, Ceplenița, Probota, Prisecani, Murgeni, Oarba, Cavadinești, etc. in Romania.

Tourists can attend folk reunions and festivals or they can simply watch the performances of dancers and folk music artists. These activities can be pursued in many places such as: Cuciurul Mare, Cotu Vânători, Veloca, Mahala, Molvița, Boian, etc. in Northern Bucovina, Ialoveni, Cărpineni, Căciulia, Chiselița, Vadu lui Isac, Cojusna, Zăicani, Glodeni, Nicoreni, etc. in the Republic of Moldova and Bivolari, Trifești, Dolhești, Cotnari, Costuleni, Răducănei, Drânceni, Fălciu, in România.

Those tourists who want to watch or learn particular folk crafts will meet many artisans in the area, especially in places like: Boian, Păscăuți, Putila, Stănești, etc. in Northern Bucovina, Suruceni, Căinari, Baurici Modoveni, Dumbrăvița, Ungheni, etc. in the Republic of Moldova, and Deleni, Scobinți, Comarna, in Romania.

The area under study can also offer tourists the opportunity of a closer contact with the culture and civilisation of the local population thanks to the many museums located all over the region: Cernăuți, Boian, Herța, etc. in Northern Bucovina: Edineț, Caracalia, Beșalma, Doina, Hâncești, Nicoreni, Râșcani, Văsieni, Viișoara, Vozneșeni, Vulcănești and Ungheni in the Republic of Moldova and: Botoșani, Galați, Huși, Hârlău, Iași, Ipotești, Livezile, Flămânzi, Cotnari, Târgu Frumos, Fălciu, Berești, Târgu Bujor, etc., in Romania.

There are memorial monuments in: Viznița, Cenăuți, Herța in Northern Bucovina, Cahul, Doina, Bălănești, Leușeni in the Republic of Moldova, Ipotești, Livezile, Botoșani, Flămânzi, Hârlău, Iași, Huși, Galați and Târgu Bujor in Romania.

The curiosity of tourists can be satisfied by visiting the many historical and architectural monuments of which there are over 136: 14 in Northern Bucovina, 26 in the Republic of Moldova and 96 in Romania.

There are also some sites that act as reminders of the ancient and turbulent history of these places. Thus it is worth visiting: Tetina, near Cernăuți and in the same area Cetatea Hotin in Northern Bucovina, Trinca (fortress of the ancient Dacians), Semeni - Cetatea Zanca in Republic of Moldova, the Dacian fortress of Catalina - Cotnari – the one providing the best facilities for visitors, Băiceni – the Kingly tombs of Cucuteni, Barboși (Galați) the ruins of a Roman citadel. Tourists may also be interested in Trajan's Wall which stretches from Cahul to the river Nistru.

A special place in the tourism activity in the area holds the pilgrimage to monasteries and sketes, places that are true oases of purity, peace and reflection. On the whole, there are 41 such sites in the area, 3 in Northern Bucovina, 4 in the Republic of Moldova and 34 in Romania, respectively.

The tourism attractions of the Prut transfrontier area are completed by the many natural monuments and various types of natural reserves, a total of 89 sites: in Northern Bucovina – 7, in the Republic of Moldova – 26 and Romania – 56.

This diversity is enhanced by the existence of over 40 lakes suitable for leisure and sporting activities in Northern Bucovina, 11 in the Republic of Moldova and 22 in Romania. Besides providing entertainment and leisure, these lakes are set in harmonious scenery that has positive effects on tourists.

A special feature of the researched area is the richness of natural monuments ranging from ancient trees and exotic plants to forest and floral reserves and interesting caves. On the whole there are over 86 such sites: 16 in Northern Bucovina, 28 in the Republic of Moldova and 42 in România.

The accommodation facilities are unevenly distributed on the territory of the Prut transfrontier area. For Northern Bucovina owing to the hotels Bucovina, Ceremuș, etc, the city of Cernăuți has the best potential, while in the Republic of Moldova there are hotels in Ungheni, Cărpășeni Noi, Cimișlia and accommodation and therapy facilities at Cahul, and students' camps at Gura Galbeni, Rădeni and Varatec.

The situation in Romania is much better as regards the volume, structure and territorial distribution. There are hotels in all the cities and even the small towns of the area: Dorohoi, Botoșani, Hârlău, Târgu Frumos, Iași, Huși, Galați.

The best facilities are provided by the hotels in Iasi (Moldova, Orizont, Traian, Astoria, Unirea, Sport, Ceramica, Conex, Basarabia, etc.) and Galați (Dunărea, Galați, Tiglina, etc.).

One should also take into account the students' camps of Agafton (Botoșani), Ciric (Iași), etc. with significant capacity and activities.

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