

**AGRITOURISM IN THE DANUBE GORGE**

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**ABSTRACT**

We may say, without mistake that tourist journeys occurred during antiquity, and tourism activities in the rural space have been empirically carried out since the same period. Anyway, it is well known, that students largely participated in: visiting sacred places - Dodona (Zeus) and Delphi (Apollo) – curative baths or festive games periodically organized. After the '60ies, mankind has started to be more and more preoccupied with holiday destinations, tourism becoming one of the most important economic activities in the world. Simultaneously with manifesting first tendencies in more and more frequent holiday spending in the middle of nature, more and more tourists wished to spend relaxing time in the rural environment (space). Rural tourism is based on most receiving (reception) types existing within equipment largely found on private estates of the rural space inhabitants, who practice (as service providers) tourism activities. The practice of rural tourism grew more and more during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. On almost the whole of the European continent, a weekend or a holiday in the country side has become a habit for fresh air, nature and pure ecological space lovers.

**Keywords:** agritourism, tourism, rural development, Danube

**INTRODUCTION**

The transition of the Romanian agriculture to a market economy, the process of agricultural restructuring, and finding the best property and exploitation forms, as well as rational relations between these, has turned out to be a more complex process than initially assumed. Difficulties arise on the one hand from the lack of a clear, coherent and complex legislation in the field, and from the lack of a strict application of the legislation in effect, as well as from the lack of a social practice regarding the denationalization process, which proved to be much more complex than its reverse, socialization.

The transition process generates implications of:

- economic order: the necessity of massive investment for economy restructuring, of forming of competitive market economy mechanisms;
- social-political order: instability, social and ethnic disturbances;

The purpose of transition is the national economy restructuring, for the formation of specific market economy mechanisms, the choice of a theoretical model and the establishment of a concrete Romanian market type. Transition means profound restructuring of the entire economic, social and political life. The transition to a market economy generates major radical changes, the general renewal of the Romanian society, transformations which cannot be efficiently carried out unless by active state intervention in the organization and leading of economic, social and political activities. The state's intervention in agriculture is also necessary for the limited private sector initiatives, the insufficiency of its own resources, as well as of the social ones, not only in agriculture, but in the entire national economy. In Romania, circa 3000 villages await their organizers.

## MATERIAL AND METHOD

The study was made based on field research and documentation. The Moldova Nouă town area is located inside the Occidental Carpathian Mountains area, the Banat Mountains with the Locvei Mountains subdivision.



**Figure 1. Moldova Nouă overview**

When thoroughly studying the area relief, we observe that a large surface is characteristic to the last Locvei Mountains ramifications, the rest of the surface displaying a very specific relief. In order to characterize it more easily, we have divided this relief in two areas: Moldova Nouă eastern part and Moldova Veche western part, north-west. Within the first area, the northern and eastern part include a relief which is an essential part of the Locvei Mountains, characterized by strongly declivitous versants, whose declines exceed 30-35%, with a western and south-western declivity. The maximum altitude is of 560 m and the minimum one of approximately 130 m. The northern and western part of this area generally includes a very special relief generated by its placement between the versant area and the Danube Meadow. This part may be considered a terrace of the Danube, but taking its stratigraphy into account, it can materialize as a very old dejection cone (proluvium), with coluvial layers of various thickness and skeleton quantity.

## RESULTS

The studied surface (10,673.07 ha) presents various usage ways. The current situation of usage categories is as follows:

- plough land: 673.08ha
- grass land: 2,410.07 ha
- meadow land: 820.81 ha

- vineyards: 473.19 ha
- orchards: 38.24 ha
- agricultural land total: 4,415.39 ha

#### Other land usage

- waters: 39.80 ha
- unproductive: 360.89 ha
- roads: 25.40 ha
- construction sites: 287.90 ha

On the town's administrative territory there are 5,543.69 ha of forest.

The Porțile de Fier (Iron Gates) area is largely spread, exceeding the county borders. Within the county, it is located alongside the Danube Gorge, occupying significant parts of the Locvei and Almăj Mountains, as well as alongside the Cernei Valley. The area's charm is given by the Danube Gorge itself - the greatest gorge in Europe, the Iron Gates, as well as the Cernei Valley, which has no equal in the Romanian Carpathians.

Along the Gorge, the Danube runs through alternative broadenings (accentuated by accumulation lakes) and strictures, with their own specific, attracting tourists, either passing through the gorge by ship, or following the modernized highway Moldova Veche—Cozla. Here one can find the Moldova Veche isle, which represents a miniature Danube Delta because of its fauna richness and variety.

In the proximity of the gorge (within the county area) there are other tourist attractions, among which we remember the picturesque Valea Mare, Orevița, Berzasca and Sirinia canyons, and more northern, the Boiștei, Șuşarei (with its beautiful waterfall), Budăriei (with numerous water mills) and Putnei canyons. These canyons neighbour carst highlands or mild hills which, together, come to complete the beauty of the landscape.

## 2. MOLDOVA NOUĂ (Bordering town)

### a) Localization

The town is situated at an altitude of ca. 300 m in the south-west of the Locvei Mountains.

### b) Accessibility

- ✓ For Bucharest, sideways 4 km from DN 57 and 118 km from Orșova (Bordering city)

### c) Tourist attraction elements

- ✓ the Moldova Veche isle
- ✓ the museum (history, archeology, ethnography, folk art, natural sciences sections);
- ✓ the natural reservation Valea Mare (400 ha);
- ✓ the Roman-Catholic church (1780);
- ✓ attractive landscape;
- ✓ fish fund.

### d) Tourism forms

- ✓ tourism for rest and relaxation;
- ✓ water sports and sports fishing;
- ✓ agritourism;
- ✓ Danube cruises (The only river which cuts through a chain of mountains parallel to the Equator)
- ✓ transit.

## 3. DUBOVA (Bordering village)

## a) Localization

The village is situated to the south of the Almăj Mountains (maximum altitude is noted at 1224 m - Svinicea Mare Peak), on the shore of the accumulation lake Iron Gates I, in a picturesque gulf flanked by The Small and Big Canyons where the marvellous union of the Balkan and Carpathian Mountains occurs – the river reaching ocean depths - ca. 1 quarter of a km!)

## b) Accessibility

- ✓ For Bucharest DN 57 - 25 km upstream from Orșova (Bordering city).

## c) Tourist attraction elements

- ✓ unique, picturesque landscapes
- ✓ the Gura Ponicevei cave
- ✓ important fish fund

## d) Tourism forms

- ✓ rest and relaxation;
- ✓ tourism for youngsters;
- ✓ water sports and sports fishing (in the Dubova Gulf);
- ✓ knowledge and scientific tourism;
- ✓ speotourism;
- ✓ agritourism;

## e) Tourism structure proposals, other developments and services

These will be varied and placed in relation to the touristic resources.

## I. In the Dubova Gulf area:

- ✓ Receiving structures:
  - holiday village, 3 stars, 200 places: bungalows 100, camping 100;
  - holiday houses
- ✓ Food structures:
  - restaurant + beer houses (120 places, category I);
- ✓ Nautical Club: pontoon, boats with oars and engine, surfing, jollies, hangar;
- ✓ Recreation Club:
- ✓ Disco (linked to the restaurant) & cyber-room
- ✓ Fish Market;
- ✓ Euro-way parking.

## II. In the civic centre area (at the exit, towards the cave):

- ✓ Receiving and Food structures (for transit and the Gura Ponicevei Cave):
  - camping (2 stars), 60-80 camping places;
  - buffet
  - parking
  - agritouristic farms and B&B's.

## III. Other developments

## A) Ciucarul Mare Mountain:

- ✓ access alley for the mountain;
- ✓ belvedere point oriented towards the Danube canyon and Veliki Strbać (Pintenui Gigant) canyon from Serbia-Montenegro (Miroć Mountains) signalling from DN 57 towards Ciucarul Mare;
- ✓ Euro-way parking (at DN 57);
- ✓ chairlift from DN 57 or cable tramway from the holiday village to the mountain plateau.

## CONCLUSIONS

The sustainable development of the rural economy and, implicitly, of the rural environment is a reflection of the economy development, under every aspect, including environment protection.

The sustainable development of tourism is a point of interest for everyone and it means confronting the fact that life quality improvement researches represent an inherent constant: there is a limit to which human population and our planet's activity can resist. This theory produces a few unique challenges and opportunities for the tourism industry:

- ✓ the touristic demand is proportional to the touristic destination environment quality;
- ✓ tourism is often the one activity which protect the rural environment more than consuming industries such as: mining, constructions etc.;
- ✓ tourism leads to an increase in number of the destination area population;
- ✓ managed in an optimal way, touristic activity can be a strong force regarding environmental and cultural heritage preservation;
- ✓ sustainable tourism has become a cult for tourists, especially when it is developed in the form of ecotourism.

Tourism may have a positive and a negative impact, direct or indirect, tangible or intangible, upon the environment. And, starting from here, the effort to define and measure that which limits the implication in further fields, of some scientific and professional disciplines.

To conclude, the agritourism activity represents a complex economic-social process, carried out by the agricultural producer from the mountain area, in his household, with the purpose of acquiring supplementary income necessary for his family. The carried out activity, which may include boarding, food, recreation etc, constitutes a whole and can be identified in the touristic product components. In this case, it is compulsory to ensure an optimal correlation between quality, equipment and general boarding space aspect with those for food and recreation.

From this point of view, one must analyze the elements constituting the overall rural space development components so that it can become an integration and economic-social activity pole in mountain areas, with touristic vocation, which should attract part of the urban population in the area, not only to spend their spare time in conditions as natural as possible, specific for the rural environment, but also with a comfort acceptable for a modern and civilized tourism.

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