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RESEARCH STUDY OF THE MARKET POTENTIAL OF ECOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL/CULTURAL TOURISM IN GALATI COUNTY



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1. INTRODUCTION. GENERAL FRAMEWORK AND THE POTENTIAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL/CULTURAL TOURISM

Tourism plays a key role in socio-economic development, especially in less developed regions, because of its considerable potential for contagion and job creation, especially among young people. Tourism has also shown a significant resilience, growing steadily during the recent crisis.

In this century, the tourism and travel industry is, worldwide, the most dynamic sector of activity and, at the same time, the most important producer of jobs. From the economic point of view, tourism is also a main source of recovery of the national economies of those countries that have important tourist resources and exploit them properly. The action is manifested on a different levels, from stimulating the economic development to improving the social structure, from the superior exploitation of resources to the improvement of living conditions.

The phenomenon of tourism itself (from fr. tour – walk, travel) speaks about the permanent tendency of man to travel, to move in space, which is not the purpose itself, but a necessary condition and a means to achieve certain objectives (trade, knowledge expansion, pilgrimage, etc.). Starting with the XIXth century, when revolutionary transformations took place in the field of means of transport, namely: with the appearance of ships, trains, the expansion of the road network, the quality and safety of transport increased, and as these means of transport became cheaper the passenger flows intensified. The need for businesses to receive and serve passengers emerged. The first tourist offices, created by the englishman T. Kuk, are also assigned to this period.

Tourism gained a mass character after World War II, when it transformed from a luxury item to a necessity for the majority of people in developed countries. As stated in the Manila Declaration on World Tourism, adopted in October 1980, *"contemporary tourism has emerged in connection with the promotion of social policy, which has led to the granting of paid annual leave for workers, which, at the same time, is the recognition of the human right to rest and recreation."*

Having a long evolution, tourism still does not have a clear definition, but the definition it is necessary to understand the processes that takes place in the tourism industry itself, as well as for

developing effective methods for managing and evaluating these processes in socio-economic sphere. Generalizing the most common definitions of the notion of tourism, we can say that: *tourism is a multifunctional socio-economic system composed of two interdependent subsystems, one of which represents a community of people, organized in separate groups or individuals, who realize the need to travel for purposes of knowledge, rest, entertainment, treatment, etc. , and the second subsystem ensures the achievement of the objectives and tasks of the first subsystem.*

According to the given definition, four main signs of tourism can be highlighted:

- a. *Going out of the ordinary environment;*
- b. *Temporary character of travel;*
- c. *The purpose of travel;*
- d. *All the events and socio-economic relations.*

According to the legislation, a tourist is the citizen who visits a country (a certain place) with temporary residence for the purposes of treatment, knowledge, business promotion, professional, sports, religious interests, etc., without practicing a paid activity in a period of 24 hours to 6 months in a row or staying for at least one night.

Tourism, in the contemporary world, manifests in different phenomena and relationships, which determines the need to classify it, in other words, to group its elements according to the separate homogeneous criteria, depending on certain practical objectives. The most widespread classification of tourism is its division into types, categories, modes and forms, a division based on tourism criteria.

According to the first criteria – going out of the ordinary environment – and the recommendations of the World Tourism Organization, regarding a certain country, the following types of tourism are delimited:

- i. **national tourism** – the journey of the inhabitants of a certain country through their own country;
- ii. **receiving tourism** – the journey to a certain country of persons who are not its inhabitants;
- iii. **international tourism** – the journey of the inhabitants of a certain country to another country.

Combined in different ways, these types form the categories of tourism. The category "tourism within the country" includes national and receiving tourism. National and international tourism includes the category "national tourism". The category "international tourism" consists of receiving and international tourism. For a separate region, the category "receiving tourism" will consist of regional tourism in the category "tourism within Romania" and "international tourism"

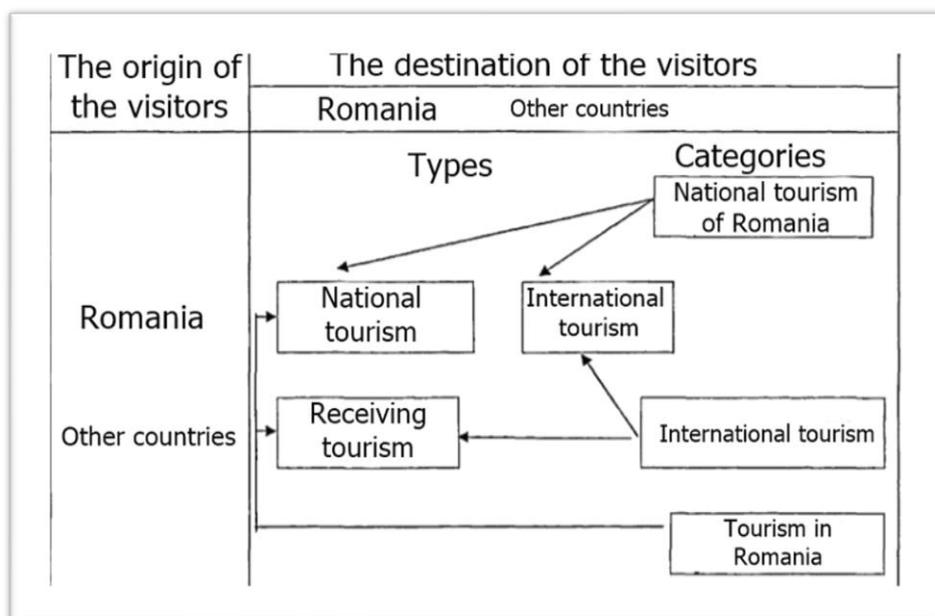


Figure 1 – Types and categories of tourism

Source: ESSENCE OF THE NOTION OF TOURISM AND RECEIVING TOURISM AS ITS VARIETY, Lucian-Gabriel PATRASCU

The classification of the tourism modes is determined by the third criteria – the purpose of travel, so the following modes are distinguished:

1. CULTURAL TOURISM for the acquaintance with the remarkable natural, historical and cultural values, museums, theaters, life and traditions of the peoples of the country (region) visited. At the base of this mode is an extensive hiking program, independently and in combination with recreation.

2. RECREATIONAL TOURISM it is the most widespread and is performed for rest and recovery of physical, psychological and emotional forces. This mode of tourism differs in a wide variety and can include fun programs (theater, movies, festivals), occupations by interests (hunting, music creation), etc.

3. BALNEARY TOURISM it is conditioned by the need to treat various diseases. It has several varieties, determined by natural means that influence the human body (treatment with the help of climate, mud, water, sanitary treatment, etc.).

4. BUSINESS TOURISM includes travel for business or professional purposes without obtaining any income at the temporary place of stay. This mode of tourism is attributed to travel for participation in congresses, scientific conferences, fairs, exhibitions, salons, as well as for holding negotiations and concluding contracts. The number of business tourists may include people who perform their duties outside their usual environment.

5. ECUMENICAL TOURISM is conditioned by the religious needs of people of different faiths. Travel for religious purposes (pilgrimage) is one of the oldest modes of tourism, with deep roots in history. The impact of religious tourism on the economy of some countries and regions of the world and, first of all, on the religious centers themselves is considerable.

6. ETHNIC TOURISM is the visit by tourists of their places of origin, residence of relatives and relatives. This mode of tourism occupies an important place in international tourism. Of particular importance is ethnic tourism for the countries, part of the population of which live abroad.

7. ECOTOURISM is oriented towards the familiarization with natural values, ecological and training education. The specificity of organizing such a type of tourism consists in ensuring a minimal impact

on the natural environment, creating a network of organic hotels, which supply tourists with organic food.

8. RURAL TOURISM includes tourists visiting rural areas, resting and relaxing in ecologically clean places.

9. ADVENTURE TOURISM is a special way of resting with visiting exotic places (volcanoes, waterfalls, places where catastrophes have taken place, etc.), practicing exotic activities (safaris, rafting), using unusual means of transport (dog sleds, riding elephants, balloons, etc.). Such tourism presents a certain degree of risk and serious physical pressures.

10. SPORTS TOURS depending on the purpose of the trip, there are two types: active and passive. In the first case, the tourist can practice his favorite sport (which requires the existence of the respective base: inventory, special routes, sports fields, tents, etc.). In the second case, the purpose of the trip is to visit sports competitions as a spectator

11. TRANSIT TOURIS according to the recommendations of the World Tourism Organization, it includes the category "travel for other purposes". Transit as a purpose of the visit can be classified only from the point of view of the receiving tourism. There are two types of transit. The first concerns passengers on planes, who in a legal sense do not enter the country where the means of transport change, but are traditionally considered to be visitors to it. The second type of transit applies to persons traveling through third countries to their place of destination or permanent place of residence. If such a trip is touristic, these people are classified as visitors to this country, even if they do not stop and do not spend money on its territory.¹

1.1. Ecological and historical/cultural tourism – definitions and concepts

➤ **ECOLOGICAL TOURISM**

The application of the theory of the sustainable development in tourism is a recent approach that has been unanimously accepted by most international and national organizations. Since 1991 the concept of sustainable tourism has been defined by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the World Wide Fund for Nature, the European Federation of National and National Parks: *“the development of all forms of tourism, management and marketing tourism that respects the natural, social and economic integrity of the environment, ensuring the exploitation of natural and cultural resources and for future generations ”*. According to the UNWTO, *“the development of sustainable tourism satisfies the needs of present tourists and host regions, while protecting and increasing the chances and opportunities for the future. It is seen as a way to manage all resources so that economic, social and aesthetic needs are fully met, while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological dimensions, biological diversity and the living system.*

¹ ESSENCE OF THE NOTION OF TOURISM AND RECEIVING TOURISM AS ITS VARIETY, Lucian-Gabriel PATRAȘCU, Scientific journal of the State University of Moldova, 2009, nr.2(22)

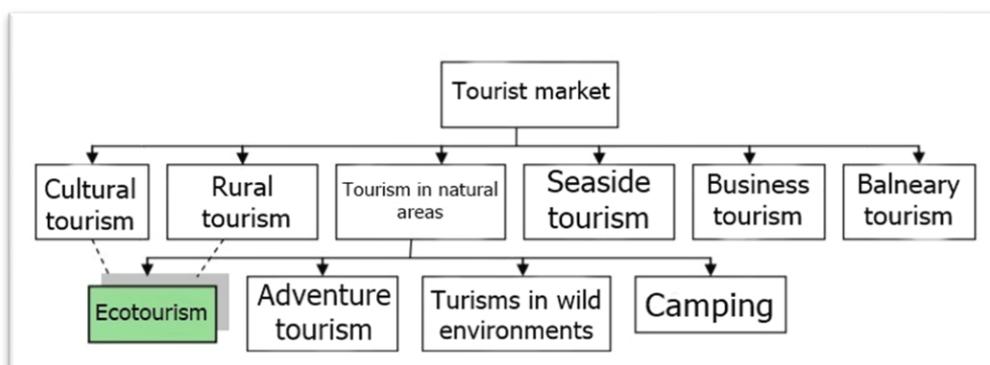


Figure 2 – Ecotourism as a market segment

Source: Megan Epler Wood, *Ecotourism: Principles, Practices and Policies for Sustainability* (2002); Eagles P., *International Ecotourism Management* (1997)

According to the same organization, the notion of sustainable tourism has 3 important aspects:

- **quality** – sustainable tourism requires a valuable experience for the visitors, improving the quality of life of the host community, its cultural identity, poverty reduction and environmental protection;
- **continuity** – sustainable tourism ensures the optimal exploitation, continuity of the natural resources on which it is based and the preservation of the culture of the host community with satisfactory experiences for visitors;
- **balance** – sustainable tourism ensures a balance between the needs of the tourism industry, partisans of the environment and the local community, with economic and social benefits, distributed correctly, to all actors involved.

Sustainable tourism covers all forms and activities in the hospitality industry, including conventional mass tourism, cultural, mountain, seaside, balneary, business, rural tourism, etc.

Sustainable development in tourism is a necessity, and the bond between tourism and the environment is much stronger than in other industries. Many times tourism has created negative economic, social or ecological effects, and their counteracting can be achieved only through a professional management, which will attract all the factors involved in the decision making process in the development of tourism.

Collaboration between authorities (who have legislative, economic, social instruments), economic agents (who initiate development projects and tourist services), those who militate for environmental protection and preservation of cultural heritage, local tourist service providers, tour operators and travel agencies and, last but not least, tourists, as beneficiaries, are absolutely necessary for the sustainable development of tourism.²

➤ HISTORICAL/CULTURAL TOURISM

The development of cultural tourism has taken place with the growing concern for the protection and preservation of the past. The intensification of the rhythm of life, of the mobility of the population, of the feeling of disorientation and loss associated with modernity (Richards, 2001) or with disorder (Bell, 2009) made people worry about keeping what belongs to the past (traditions, customs, objects, buildings, crafts, including certain dialects that are considered to be threatened, etc.).

² National strategy for ecotourism development in Romania - context, vision and objectives - 2017-2026, Annex no. 1

Nostalgia for the past comes from the need to keep one's roots in a well-known cultural setting in which people find their identity. So, in the context in which many traditions or traditional cultural practices have been threatened with extinction, the need to protect the cultural heritage has intensified, to protect it before it disappears.

Promoting creative activities and organizing cultural events are common measures within the revitalization strategies of certain areas that are in economic stagnation or decline, as well as to revitalize the cultural life of the area itself. In the age of information technology, rapid changes in technology generate a rapid change in the geography of the distribution of economic activities. Because of that, those cities or regions that have understood this dynamic have intensified their efforts to become visible internationally by organizing cultural and artistic events that revitalize them, promote their image, attract visitors and test their creativity and innovation.

Cultural attractions have an important role in tourism, and may include the following: *archeological sites, museums, castles, palaces, historic buildings, famous buildings, ruins, works of art, paintings, sculptures, crafts, art galleries, festivals, music, dance, events, theater, "primitive cultures", ethnic communities, churches, cathedrals, and other things that represent people and their cultures.* Cultural heritage assets serve a variety of target groups, including both community members: "traditional owners" (both those who own land associated with a cultural property, and community groups that own intellectual property over the assets), other residents of community, students from local schools, as well as people from outside the community, namely tourists.³

The main factors that differentiate the development of cultural tourism can be divided into the following three categories:

- **the specific characteristics of the tourist's needs** – defined as a set of requirements whose purpose is to restore and improve the human personality through the tourist journey;
- **cultural values** – represents a set of objects and events whose cognitive and emotional effects aim to satisfy the cultural needs of the tourist. Cultural values can be grouped into three categories: (1) cultural and historical monuments, archaeological sites, architectural monuments and complexes, monasteries and churches, ethnographic monuments and museums and others, (2) works of art – tangible cultural values: objects of art collections, paintings, sculpture, folk crafts, embroidery, costumes, objects of worship, masterpieces of cinema and literature, etc., (3) periodic and episodic events – festivals, shows, congresses, fairs, anniversaries and more;
- **tourist product** – cultural tourism is characterized as a specific tourist product defined in the form of a set (package) of material goods and services offered to culturally motivated tourists, as a total price from the moment they leave their home and until they return back home. It is designed to meet the needs of cultural tourists.

³ Transylvanian Journal of Administrative Sciences 2 (33)/2013, pp. 138-158, CULTURAL TOURISM AS A MEANS OF VALORIFICATION OF INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE IN VIEW OF THE ECONOMIC REGENERATION OF FORMER MINING AREAS, Bianca RADU

**THE MAIN THEMES OF CULTURAL TOURISM AND THE FORMS OF
TOURIST MANIFESTATION THEY GENERATE**

THEME	TOURIST FORMULA
Religious	Pilgrimage, charismatic meetings
Discovering cities, regions, countries	Circuit, stay with excursions
Historical	Circuit, site visit
Memory	Circuit and trip
Ethnic	Circuit, stay
Artistic	Circuit, stage
Crafts/Industry	Thematic circuit, trip to the industrial sites
Parks and gardens	Circuit, stay, trip
Festivals, cultural events	Stay
Gastronomical	Stay, circuit, culinary stage
Shopping	Stay in the city
Linguistics	Stay in school, in families
Pedagogy of culture	Hours outside school

Table 1 – The main themes of cultural tourism and the forms of manifestation they generate

1.2. Presentation of the framework of policies/strategies, european/national/regional/county plans relevant for the development of the ecological and historical/cultural tourism

1.2.1. The European framework

EUROPE 2020 STRATEGY⁴

Passed in March 2010, the Europe 2020 Strategy proposes three priorities, which are mutually supportive:

- *smart growth: developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation;*
- *sustainable growth: promoting a more efficient economy in terms of resource use, more ecological and more competitive;*
- *inclusive growth: promoting an economy with a high employment rate, ensuring social and territorial cohesion.*

The European Commission presents seven emblematic initiatives to stimulate progress on each priority theme:

1. "An innovation Union" for improving the framework conditions and access to funding for research and innovation, to guarantee the possibility of transforming innovative ideas into products and services that create growth and jobs;

2. "Youth on the move" for strengthening the performance of the education systems and to facilitate the entry of young people into the labor market;

3. "A digital agenda for Europe" for the acceleration of the development of high-speed internet services and to valorize the benefits of a digital single market for households and businesses;

⁴<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/TXT/>

4. "A efficient Europe in terms of resource use" for enabling the decoupling of economic growth from resource use, for supporting the transition to a low-carbon economy, for increasing the use of renewable energy sources, for modernizing the transport sector and for promoting energy efficiency;

5. "An industrial policy adapted to the era of globalization" for improving the business environment, especially for SME, and to support the development of a solid and sustainable industrial base capable to face the global competition;

6. "An agenda for new skills and new jobs" for modernizing labor markets and give citizens more autonomy by developing their skills throughout life in order to increase labor market participation and better correlation of labor supply and demand, including by professional mobility;

7. "European platform against poverty" for ensuring social and territorial cohesion, so that the benefits of growth and jobs are distributed equitably, and that those facing poverty and social exclusion are given the opportunity to lead a dignified life and play an active role in society.

In accordance with the Europe 2020 economic strategy, the framework for the development of tourism actions at EU level can be built around the following four priorities:

1. Stimulating the competitiveness of the tourism sector in Europe by:

- a) developing innovation in tourism, facilitating, for example, the adaptation of the sector and its enterprises to market developments in the field of information and communication technology and in the field of innovation;
- b) strengthening the professional skills in the sector by promoting the opportunities offered by various EU programs, such as Leonardo da Vinci or the Program – Framework for Innovation and Competitiveness, with the "Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs" and "E-Qualifications for Innovation" sub-programs ;
- c) trying to overcome the seasonal nature of demand, facilitating, for example, voluntary tourism exchanges between EU countries, especially outside the peak season and for certain target groups of society, as well as encouraging the development of a voluntary online information exchange mechanism in the view of better coordination of school holidays between EU countries;
- d) promoting the diversification of the tourism offer, in particular by focusing on and promoting Europe's common heritage, as well as by integrating the "natural" heritage into tourism strategies;
- e) contributing to a better coordination of the tourism related research activities and to the consolidation of socio-economic data on tourism at European level.

2. Promoting the development of a sustainable, responsible and quality tourism by:

- a) developing a system of indicators for sustainable destination management, which could contribute to the development of a brand for the promotion of sustainable tourism destinations;
- b) organizing awareness campaigns to inform European tourists about destinations, including information on transport and relations with the local population;
- c) developing an European brand for the quality of tourism, based on national experiences, in order to increase security and consumer trust;
- d) facilitating the identification of risks related to climate change in order to protect European tourism against unprofitable investments and to explore the possibilities of alternative tourism services;

- e) proposing a book on sustainable and responsible tourism;
- f) proposing a strategy for sustainable seaside and maritime tourism;
- g) establishing or strengthening cooperation between the EU and the emergent and Mediterranean countries in order to promote sustainable and responsible tourism development models and the exchange of best practices.

3. Strengthening the image and visibility of Europe as a whole of sustainable and quality tourist destinations by:

- a) supporting the creation of an "European brand", in close cooperation with EU countries and as a whole to support their promotional efforts, in order to enable European destinations, to better distinguish themselves from other international tourist destinations;
- b) promoting Europe as a sustainable and quality tourist destination through the "visiteurope.com" website and at major international events or at large tourist fairs and exhibitions; strengthening EU participation in international forums.

4. Maximize the potential of EU policies and financial instruments for tourism development by:

- a) a better integration and coordination of tourism with other EU policies, such as transport, competition, the internal market, taxation, consumer protection, environment protection, employment and training, regional and rural development, all of which have a direct or indirect impact on tourism;
- b) promoting and mobilizing community support instruments and programs for tourism, such as the European Regional Development Fund, the European Agricultural for Rural Development Fund and the European Fisheries Fund.

At the Europe 2020 Strategy level, the general development framework of the European Union is defined, implicitly for its member states, for the next programming period, 2014-2020. Tourism development is a topic debated at the Strategy level, the Commission proposing measures and guidelines to ensure a sustainable, responsible and quality tourism by 2020.

Documents that reflects EC commitments and guidelines in the field of tourism: Working together for the future of European tourism; Basic orientations for the sustainability of European tourism; A renewed tourism EU policy: towards a stronger partnership for European Tourism; Communication on an Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European Tourism ⁵

➤ **Working together for the future of European tourism (COM(2001) 665 final of 13.11.2001)**

In the report "Working together for the future of European tourism", the European Commission presented its ideas on how it is best to exploit the competitive potential of the European tourism sector. The report is the final cornerstone of the "tourism and employment" action, which started four years earlier.

➤ **Basic orientations for the sustainability of European tourism (COM(2003) 716 final of 21.11.2003)**

As a concrete consequence of one of the ten measures announced in its report, "Working together for the future of European tourism", adopted two years earlier, the European Commission called for coordinated information across the Union to increase economic, social and environmental

⁵<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/TXT>

sustainability development of European tourism through the report "Basic guidelines for the Sustainability of European Tourism", which emphasized the need to ensure the coherence of different community policies and measures which are affecting the sustainability of tourism and the competitiveness of the industry.

➤ **A renewed tourism EU policy: towards a stronger partnership for European Tourism (COM(2006) 134 final of 17.03.2006)**

In February 2005, the European Commission proposed a new start for the Lisbon Strategy, focusing the European Union's efforts on two main tasks – achieving a strong long-term growth and securing more and better jobs. In order to meet the existing challenges and, at the same time, to ensure the best use of available resources, taking advantage of the synergies created previously, the Commission has proposed a renewed European tourism policy in the report "A new EU tourism policy: towards a stronger partnership for tourism in Europe ". The main purpose of this policy is to improve the competitiveness of the European tourism industry and to create more and better jobs through the sustainable development of tourism at the Europe and globally level.

➤ **Communication on an Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European Tourism (COM(2007) 621 final of 19.10.2007)**

In October 2007, the European Commission launched a long-term environmental strategy to ensure a sustainable and competitive European tourism. This suggests that all stakeholders should take the necessary measures to strengthen the contribution of sustainable practices in order to create the conditions for a proper competitiveness of Europe as the most attractive tourist destination. The report contains a message of commitment from the Commission to carry out the activities set out in the Agenda. This creates the framework for the implementation of European policies and support actions in the field of tourism and in all other policy fields that have an impact on tourism and its sustainable character.

The documents mentioned above expresses clearly the position of the European Commission in relation to the topic discussed in this study, namely the development of tourism. The actions and measures taken by European Union influence the national and implicitly regional frameworks of each Member State in terms of tourism development, especially from the perspective of ensuring the sustainability and competitiveness of this sector in the Member States.

EU initiative in the tourism sector

Tourism is a key sector of the European economy. It includes a wide variety of products and destinations and involves many relevant actors in this field, both public and private, with highly decentralized areas of competence, often at regional and local level.

The tourism industry generates more than 5% of EU GDP, with around 1.8 million companies operating in the field and have an employed staff around 5.2% of the total workforce (approximately 9,7 million jobs). If we take into account the related sectors, the estimated contribution of tourism to GDP is much higher: tourism indirectly generates more than 10% of the European Union's GDP, providing jobs for about 12% of the workforce.

The Treaty of Lisbon recognizes the importance of tourism, with the European Union having a specific competence in this field, and ensures that decisions are taken by a qualified majority. A specific article on tourism states that "the Union shall complete the action of the Member States in the tourism sector, in particular by promoting the competitiveness of Union undertakings operating in this sector".

Following the 2010 report on tourism, the Commission has drawn up a circular implementation plan, outlining the major tourism-related initiatives that are to be implemented by the European Union in close cooperation with national, regional and local authorities, as well as with tourism associations and other relevant public/private actors in the field of tourism.

The most recent EU initiatives in the tourism sector development are:

1. Stimulating competitiveness in the European tourism sector

- a. Promoting the diversification of the tourist services offer*
- b. Development of innovation in the tourism industry*
- c. Improving the professional skills*
- d. Encouraging the extension of the tourist season*
- e. Strengthening the socio-economic knowledge base for tourism*

2. Promoting a sustainable, responsible and a quality tourism development

3. Strengthening Europe's image and vision as a whole of sustainable and high-quality tourist destinations

4. Maximizing the potential of EU policies and financial instruments for tourism development. ⁶

The European Union's initiatives in the field of tourism demonstrate its involvement not only at the declarative level, but also practically in ensuring the sustainable development of tourism. Also, an innovative aspect of these initiatives is the combination of measures applicable not only to a sector in need of development support, but to several complementary sectors whose parallel development ensures the sustainability of the measures applied (cultural tourism, ecotourism, etc.).

EU Strategy for the Danube region ⁷

The member countries of the region asked the Commission to propose a framework to provide effective solutions to the key problems concerning the areas in the Danube region. Through extensive consultations, a wide range of ideas and concerns were addressed. These consultations were supported by an online public consultation process, in order to ensure a transparent approach that identifies the problems, priorities and adopts the solutions proposed by and for those living in the region.

The four outlined priorities, "pillars", are:

- **connecting the Danube region;**
- **environmental protection of the Danube region;**
- **ensuring the prosperity of the Danube region;**
- **consolidation of the Danube region.**

Being a coherently structured framework, the strategy is a new form of cooperation for partners in the area and focuses on coordinating the existing policies and financial instruments, not on creating others or setting up new institutions or bureaucratic procedures.

The EU Strategy for the Danube Region confirms and supports the ongoing development of the river cruise tourism industry. The Danube Tourism Commission (DTC) knows from its own experience the practical problems that arise, such as the administrative procedures imposed on crews. Facilitating the dialogue between the many authorities and cruise companies involved can accelerate and facilitate initiatives to encourage both companies and tourists.

⁶http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/index_en.htm

⁷https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/communic/danube/com2010_715_danube_ro.pdf

This brings very concrete benefits for tourism – DTC ensures that visitors feel welcome and safe in this region. The strategy will play a vital role in promoting tourism along the river and is a welcome consolidation of the contacts maintained by the Danube Tourism Commission.⁸

Given that Galati County is directly connected to the Danube, the implementation of the strategy mentioned above for the development of Danube tourism is crucial in ensuring a sustainable growth of the tourism sector in the South-East Region, the measures applied contributing fundamentally to the progress pursued at the tourism level.

1.2.2. The national framework

The normative framework for the approval of the norms and criteria for attesting the tourist resorts⁹

GD no. 852/2008 regulates the norms and criteria for attestation of tourist resorts in order to protect, conserve and valorize the tourism resources.

The attestation of the tourist resorts is made by the Ministry of Economy, at the request of the local public administration authorities and is approved by government decision.

In addition to the strictly administrative elements related to the attestation procedure, the normative act includes provisions meant to increase the visibility of those localities for tourism and potential tourism ("Art. 7. In order to inform the tourists and improve the protection, conservation and valorification of the tourism resources, the localities or parts of them, certified as tourism resorts of national or local interest, will be signaled on the national and county roads with signposts, at the entrance to the tourist resort")

The document is relevant in this research study, given that, so far, none of the localities with tourist potential in Galati County have been certified in terms of regulating the status of the resort, respectively the conditions and criteria to be met for classification a locality as a tourist resort.

Knowing these criteria and conditions, one can identify a series of localities in Galati County with potential for tourism development and which can access the "List of localities certified as tourism resorts of national and local interest."

The normative framework for the approval of the Annual marketing and Promotion program and of the Annual Program for the development of tourist destinations and products¹⁰

GD no. 77/2010 regulates the content and the approval procedure of the Annual marketing and Promotion program and of the Annual Program for the development of tourist destinations and products, within the limits of the funds approved for this purpose.

The Annual marketing and Promotion program aims to promote the most important destinations and forms of tourism from Romania on the internal market and on the main tourist markets abroad through the following activities:

a) marketing studies;

b) internet marketing and other technological means, including the creation and administration of a tourist information site, on a competitive basis, with the full support of the

⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/ro/information/publications/panorama-magazine/2011/panorama-37-the-eu-strategy-for-the-danube-region-a-united-response-to-common-challenges

⁹ <https://lege5.ro/Gratuit/gevtgobxha/hotararea-nr-852-2008-pentru-aprobarea-normelor-si-criteriilor-de-atestare-a-statiunilor-turistice>

¹⁰ http://www.dreptonline.ro/legislatie/hg_program_anual_marketing_promovare_program_anual_dezvoltare_destinatii_turistice_77_2010.php

expenses, including those of administration, from budgetary funds, as well as other internet marketing and promotion activities and other electronic means;

c) participation in national and international tourism exhibition events;

d) organizing educational and information visits in the country for media representatives, tour operators, representatives of companies with national and international tourism activities, representatives of associations or non-governmental organizations with activity in tourism, central and local public administration, other opinion leaders, national and international tourism specialists, etc.;

e) organizing events and missions with a role in increasing the tourist circulation in Romania or with an impact in increasing the notoriety of Romania as a tourist destination, national and international, as well as participating as a co-organizer with professional associations, employers and non-governmental tourism organizations, local and central public administration authorities, other entities with activity with impact in tourism;

f) promotion and advertising activities through airlines operating flights to destinations in Romania and through the main airports in Romania and abroad, operating international flights to Romania consisting of advertising inserts in the promotional materials of airlines and airports, broadcasting promotional TV clips and tourist advertising films at airports and aircraft, as well as other types of promotional and advertising activities in collaboration with airlines or airports;

g) promotional activities through advertising in tourist catalogs made by tour operators, tourism companies, professional associations, employers and non-governmental organizations with activity in tourism, local and central public administration authorities, other entities with impact in tourism, which promotes on the target markets of interest the tourist destination Romania, tourist products and packages of tourist services in Romania;

h) purchase of promotional materials such as: guides about Romania, maps, albums, catalogs, photo reports, photographs, tourism books, etc.;

i) making promotional materials such as: catalogs, brochures, leaflets, posters, various prints, tourist guides and maps, panels, photos, albums, photo reports, slides, audio-video materials, movies with specific tourism, tourist CDs and DVDs, protocol objects, sending promotional and protocol materials in the country and abroad, etc.;

j) promotion activities through television and radio stations that make tourism shows or other shows with an impact in increasing the tourist traffic in Romania, increasing the notoriety of Romanian as a tourism destinations or awareness of the importance of Romanian tourism;

k) general actions of publicity and advertisement of the Romanian tourist destinations and of the Romanian tourism products.

The annual program for the development of tourism destinations and products aims to support national tourism in order to improve tourist traffic in parallel with the conservation of natural and cultural heritage.

The annual program for the development of tourist destinations and products aims to achieve the following objectives:

- i. improving the quality of tourist services in Romania;**
- ii. participation in joint projects initiated nationally and internationally in the tourism sector;**
- iii. making public investments in tourism infrastructure;**
- iv. development of important forms, products and tourism destinations in Romania;**
- v. modernization and extension of the information system of tourism;**

- vi. **improving the legal and institutional framework in the tourism sector according to the good practices at European Union level;**
- vii. **improving the quality of the training of employees in the tourism sector, especially those in tourist reception structures.**

The normative and methodological framework regarding the accreditation of the national tourist information and promotion centers¹¹

Order no. 1096/2008 regulates the accreditation procedure of the national tourist information and promotion centers. Once accredited, such a center will contribute to:

- a. general information of the tourism offer and local, regional or national tourist attractions;
- b. making local, regional or national promotional materials available to tourists;
- c. information on the local accommodation offer, as a free service;
- d. information on the possibilities of booking transport tickets, as well as on local, national and specialized tourist guides;
- e. organizing local and regional tourism exhibitions and internal and external marketing activities with a role in increasing local and regional tourist traffic;
- f. advising on the choice of various local, regional and national tourism products, as a free service;
- g. cooperation with local and regional institutions on tourism issues (local public administration authorities, commerce chambers, Regional Development Agencies, etc.);
- h. cooperation with the central public authority for tourism and the provision, upon request, of statistical data on local and regional tourist traffic, data on events with a role in increasing local and regional tourist traffic, and the provision of other information regarding the tourist activities and the tourist offer on local and regional level;
- i. conducting market research activities at local and regional level, analysis, planning, structuring and elaborating proposals for local and regional tourism development and tourism marketing, in collaboration with local public administration authorities and the central public authority for tourism;
- j. providing information on the competent authorities in resolving complaints that are registered locally regarding the quality of tourist services.

According to the "Methodological norm regarding the accreditation of national tourist information and promotion centers", section 1.3, in order to improve the activity of promoting the tourism potential, presenting all tourism offers and local, regional and national tourism attractions, local and county councils, by case, organizes national centers of tourist information and promotion.

The national tourist information and promotion centers are specialized services that operate under the subordination of local and county councils.

Currently, in the South-East development region, there are 2 tourist information and promotion centers, none of which can be found in Galați County.:

- 1) **Constanta Tourist Information Center**
 "INFO LITORAL" tourist information center
 8700 Constanta, St.Traian no.36, bl.C1, sc.C, ap.31
 Foundation for the promotion of small and medium private enterprises

¹¹http://www.dreptonline.ro/legislatie/ordin_norme_acreditare_centre_informare_promovare_turistica_1096_2008.php

Director: phone: 0241 – 555.000 | 0241 – 555.111 | info@infolitoral.ro | www.infolitoral.ro

2) **Tulcea Tourist Information Center**

Tulcea City Hall

St. Garii, No. 26, Tulcea (on the Danube Cliff)

Phone/fax: 0240 519 130 E-mail: tourisminfo_tulcea@yahoo.com

Website: www.primaria-tulcea.ro

Contact person: Andreea Sevastian

The development of tourism at the level of a region depends largely on the degree of information of potential tourists about the cultural, natural tourism attractions of the area, this awareness can be substantially supported by setting up and operating an adequate number of information centers and tourism promotion.

The normative framework for the approval of the lists comprising the programs and projects of investments in tourism and the sources of financing of the technical documentations and of the works of execution of the programs and objectives of investments in tourism¹²

Through GD no. 120/2010 was approved the List comprising the programs and projects of investments in tourism and of the sources of financing of the technical documentations and of the works of execution of the programs and objectives of investments in tourism.

According to Art. 2, the financing of the technical documentation and of the execution works of the programs and objectives of investments in tourism, whose beneficiaries are the local public administration authorities, is ensured from the state budget and from the local budgets, through the budgets of the administrative-territorial units.

GD no. 120/2010 highlights the localities with tourism development potential, respectively the tourist destinations that aimed to improve the infrastructure for receiving tourists through investment projects financed from budgetary funds. It was issued for the modification of the List comprising the programs and projects of investments in tourism and of the sources of financing of the technical documentations and of the works of execution of the programs and objectives of investments in tourism, annexed to GD no. 120/2010. GD no. 320/2011 completes and modifies GD no. 120/2010, introducing a new annex, Annex no. 2 on the eligibility criteria for tourism investment programs and projects.¹³

Master plan for the development of national tourism in the 2007-2026 period¹⁴

On the background of reducing the activity of most economic agents active in the field of tourism in Romania, the Romanian Government has established that a Master Plan of tourism development is urgently needed, in order to begin the implementation of a sustainable approach to tourism development in Romania.

This Master Plan covers a period of 20 years, until 2026 and includes a six-year action program (2007-2013) correlated with financial support through structural instruments.

¹² <http://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/116533>

¹³ http://www.mdrap.ro/userfiles/turism_dezvoltare_turistica_hg320_2011.pdf

¹⁴ <http://turism.gov.ro/web/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/masterplan>

The immediate objective is to formulate a general policy framework for the sustainable development and management of the tourism industry concerning the natural and cultural resources and to present this objective in the form of a long-term tourism development plan. This plan represents the umbrella policy that includes different plans and strategies, described in such a way as to optimize the sector's contribution to the national economy.

The information contained in the Master Plan for tourism development in the 2007-2026 period is extremely relevant for the development of tourism potential in the South-East Region, especially by creating the general framework for identifying the needs, priorities and measures to valorize the tourism potential, as part of a nationally designed whole unit.

National Development Plan (NDP) 2007-2013 and National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) 2007-2013¹⁵

In the context of Romania's adherence to the EU in 2007, the National Development Plan 2007-2013 plays a major role in aligning national development policy with community development priorities, by promoting measures considered as stimuli for sustainable socio-economic development at the European level.

NDP 2007-2013 is a document of strategic planning and multiannual financial programming, approved by the Government and developed in a large partnership, in order to guide the socio-economic development of Romania in accordance with the Cohesion Policy of the European Union.

In terms of cohesion policy, the NDP 2007-2013 is a tool for prioritizing public investment for development, focused mainly on priorities and objectives compatible with the areas of intervention of the Structural and Cohesion Funds. In this context, it is necessary to emphasize the specific character of the NDP 2007-2013, which does not replace a National Economic Development Strategy, but represents one of its major components.

Within the NDP 2007-2013, an extensive analysis of tourism is carried out, the subject being debated in **subchapter 2.6 "Tourism" and subchapter 9.6 "Infrastructure in the field of tourism"**. Through these sections, the relevant aspects for this field are approached in terms of potential, accommodation capacity, tourist traffic, employment, tourism specifications in Romania, regional and local tourism development. The theme of tourism is also interconnected with topics such as the impact of economic activities on the environment, non-agricultural economic activities, increasing economic competitiveness and developing an economy based on knowledge, increasing competitiveness by improving market access for enterprises, especially small and medium, increasing living standards in rural areas by diversifying rural activities, reducing development disparities between regions of the country, etc.

Each Member State draws up a National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) as a reference document for the programming of the Structural and Cohesion Funds. This document serves not only as a management tool, but also as a strategic document setting out the intervention priorities of the Structural and Cohesion Funds during the reference period. The NSRF links the national development priorities, set out in the National Development Plan 2007-2013, with the European priorities – the Community Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion 2007-2013 and the EU's Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs 2005-2008.

The basis for the elaboration of this strategic document for the medium-term planning of the Structural and Cohesion Funds was the National Development Plan 2007-2013, approved by the Romanian Government in December 2005.

¹⁵<http://old.fonduri-ue.ro/documente-programare/csnr>

At the level of NSRF 2007-2013, tourism is analyzed from the perspective of the competitiveness of the Romanian economy and the perspectives of its growth. Relevant aspects for tourism development are analyzed in the context of the sections dedicated to the territorial dimension, rural development and the promotion of a balanced territorial development.

At the level of the operational programs within the composition of NSRF 2007-2013, tourism was approached through a special axis dedicated within the Regional Operational Program, respectively **Priority Axis 5 – Sustainable development and promotion of tourism**, having as an objective the creation of additional sources of income at regional/local level and the creation of new jobs, by developing the historical, natural and cultural heritage of all regions (and within regions, in isolated areas, with tourist potential, which can contribute to their economic development and the reduction of isolation). The main areas of intervention are focused on:

- *Restoration and development of cultural and historical heritage;*
- *Development of natural tourism resources in the context of sustainable development;*
- *Increasing the quality of tourist services in terms of accommodation and recreation conditions.*

In the context of preparing the new programming period, the Romanian Government adopted on June 13, 2012 a memorandum prepared by the Ministry of European Affairs regarding the actions and documents on the preparation of accessing and implementing European funds in the between 2014-2020.

The document contains methodological guidelines for the programming of European funds for a smart, sustainable and inclusive development, as well as clarifications for the organization and functioning of the partnership consultation framework for the draw up of national programming 2014-2020 documents.

The Ministry of European Affairs (MEA) coordinates the draw up of programming documents for the period 2014-2020, starting from these methodological guidelines based on the initial EC proposal (October 2011) on the regulations for the period 2014-2020, which indicates the main features of the future process programming:

- *a thematic focus on the priorities of the Europe 2020 Strategy for a “smart, sustainable and inclusive growth”, transposed into the Common Strategic Framework (CSF) at European level;*
- *a single programming framework at the level of each Member State – Contract/Partnership Agreement (C/PA) 2014-2020 (to replace the current National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013) and which will cover the structural instruments and funds for rural development and fisheries, namely: the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF), the Cohesion Fund (CF), the EAFRD (European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development) and the EMFF (European Fisheries and Maritime Fund); these funds, programmed through the CCS, will contribute to the achievement of the Union's objectives of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth;*
- *the possibility to elaborate multifund programs in case of implementation of structural instruments;*
- *extensive opportunities for a territorial programming approach;*
- *an increased emphasis on performance and monitoring the results;*

- *a specific orientation of the expenses towards the achievement of the Union's priorities and the clear delimitation of the amounts allocated for this purpose;*
- *imposing macroeconomic, ex-ante and ex-post conditionalities for accessing/spending funds;*
- *simplification of the implementation process and better management of the funds.*

National strategy for ecotourism development in Romania¹⁶

The application of current principles of sustainable tourism development in natural areas has led to the emergence of ecotourism as a distinct form of tourism, designed to respect the integrity of natural landscapes, ecological biodiversity, in accordance with the requirements of certain segments of tourists who want to spend their holidays in nature.

The more varied and complex these resources are, but especially unaltered by anthropogenic activities, the greater the tourists interest for them, and the more valuable and attractive the tourism activities they generate, responding to many tourist motivations.

Despite the fact that our country has a special ecotourism heritage with great potential for exploitation, ecotourism is still a narrow segment of the tourism market, faced with many problems, such as: poor cooperation at the local level, modest promotion nationally and internationally, the existence of a limited offer, poorly diversified, poor development of the ecotourism-specific infrastructure in the protected areas, labor migration, low level of training of those employed in the field, etc

The national strategy for the development of ecotourism in Romania aims to present the current situation of protected natural areas and the stage of development of ecotourism activities within and around them and to come up with a set of strategic proposals to guide the efforts to valorize the ecotourism, in accordance with the requirements imposed by national legislation, as well as by the international conventions to which Romania has adhered.

The aim of the strategy is to promote ecotourism, as the main form of tourism in these destinations, at the detriment of the classic forms of tourism and to increase the role that ecotourism plays in the economic development of these areas and in the prosperity of the local population.

The main objective of the studied strategy is the analysis of the existing framework and of the possibilities of tourist development of Romania, the emphasis being placed on the development of a certain tourist typology, namely ecotourism.

So, the following aspects are analyzed:

- *Ecotourism resources in Romania;*
- *Tourism and technical infrastructure;*
- *Ecotourism programs;*
- *Tourist traffic;*
- *Factors with potential involvement in the development of ecotourism in Romania.*

In addition to the analysis, the financing possibilities of the projects aimed at the development of ecotourism are exposed at the level of the strategy.

Ecotourism is a niche for both tourism and economic development, with a potential not yet analyzed and unaware at the national level and at the level of the SE development region and including at the level of Galati county.

¹⁶<https://patrimoniul.gov.ro/images/turismcultural/Romania/Strategie-ecoturism.pdf>

1.2.3. The regional framework

South-East Regional Development Plan 2014-2020¹⁷

The elaboration of the RDP 2014-2020 was carried out in conjunction with the proposals for regulations of the European Commission, in particular with the investment priorities of the Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on specific provisions applicable to the European Regional Development Fund and the growth investment economic development and employment and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006:

- 1) *consolidation of research, technological development and innovation;*
- 2) *improving access, use and increasing the quality of ICT;*
- 3) *improving the competitiveness of SMEs;*
- 4) *supporting the transition to a low-carbon economy in all sectors;*
- 5) *promoting climate change adaptation, prevention and risk management;*
- 6) *environmental protection and promotion of efficient use of resources;*
- 7) *promoting sustainable transport systems and removing bottlenecks in major network infrastructures;*
- 8) *promoting employment and supporting labor mobility;*
- 9) *promoting social inclusion and the fight against poverty;*
- 10) *investments in education, skills and lifelong learning through the development of education and training infrastructures;*
- 11) *consolidation of institutional capacity and an efficient public administration.*

A peculiarity of the South-East Region is that it contains almost all forms of relief, some of them being specific only to this region, which imprints certain particularities of the economic, social, cultural, educational life of this area.

The South-East Region is the only one that has an opening to the sea, this aspect offering the opportunity to develop maritime and river-sea transport, including related activities and not only (storage, trade, etc.). In this region are found the seaports Constanta (the largest on the Black Sea), Mangalia and Midia, as well as the river-sea (Brăila, Galați, Tulcea and Sulina).

The strategic location of the Black Sea is an element of attracting foreign investment that can increase the competitiveness of the area. More than half of the fertile lands of the Baragan Plain, known as the "granary of the country", are located on the territory of the South-East Region. Large agricultural areas and fertile soils provide favorable conditions for an ecological agriculture.

The Danube Delta (one of the world's greatest nature reserves) and the Small Island of Braila, whose flora and fauna are considered unique in Europe, are natural areas with a special tourist attraction.

Another characteristic of the region is the high tourist potential. The tourism sector is relatively well developed. The Black Sea coast and the Danube Delta, the balneo-climatic resorts: Salt Lake, Techirghiol, Sarata Monteoru, some agrotourist pensions in the mountainous areas and in the Danube Delta, the monasteries in northern Dobrogea and the Buzau and Vrancea Mountains are tourist attractions.

Another peculiarity of the region is the presence of the most famous vineyards and wine production centers in Romania, which are found in all counties of the region. The South-East region

¹⁷http://www.adrse.ro/Documente/Planificare/PDR/2014/PDR.Sud_Est_2014.pdf

ranks first in the country in terms of fruit area. The Murfatlar, Odobesti, Panciu, Nicoresti, Peony Hills, Pietroasele vineyards produce famous wines both nationally and internationally.

Protected natural heritage

The South-East Region is first in Romania in terms of biodiversity conservation: it is the region with the largest surface of protected areas in Romania (43.8% of the total protected areas in Romania), as well as the region with the most large area occupied by protected natural areas (approx. 32% of the region's surface).¹⁸ There are 144 protected natural areas of national interest on its territory – approximately 680,463 ha – including a biosphere reserve, a national park and 3 natural parks – as well as 108 sites that are part of the Natura 2000 community network.

County	Surface of preserved areas (ha)
Braila	60.936,2
Buzau	49.524,1
Constanta	140.549,1
Galati	63.465,5
Tulcea	618.889,5
Vrancea	95.842,2

Table 2 – Surface of protected areas in 2011

Source: Report regarding the state of the environment 2011 – South-East Region

The total surface of these areas is about 1,029.206 ha, the protected areas being located in all counties. Due to the variety of existing geo-climatic conditions, each county has specific features in terms of habitats and species of flora and fauna. Protected areas include the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, a national park and 3 natural parks, some of which are only partially located in the region.

In the region there are numerous nature reserves, located in all counties, including the Muddy Volcanoes Reserve (30 ha), one of the most interesting mixed reserves (geological and botanical) in Romania, located in Buzau county. The only part of the sea coast existing in the country, the Romanian Black Sea coast, stretches between the Chilia, branch of the Danube, to the north, and the border with Bulgaria, to the south. It is divided into two large sectors: the northern, with characteristic delta relief, coastal cordons and lagoons (between Musura and Cape Midia) and the southern, with high shore, dominated by cliffs, bays and promontories (between Cape Midia and the town Vama Veche). The beaches stretch for more than 82 km and have a width of 120 m in Mangalia, 100 m in Techirghiol and 50-200 m in the other areas. The Romanian coast includes 13 resorts, with tourist accommodation, treatment and recreation units, and attracts a remarkable flow of tourists (1,044,043 arrivals in 2010, representing 17.2% of total arrivals in the country). In 2011 there is a significant decrease in the number of arrivals: 735,881 arrivals, representing 10.47% of total arrivals in Romania. The main natural lakes in Romania are located in a percentage of 93.66% in the South-East Region, according to an analysis conducted by the National Statistics Institute in 2011 (as seen in Annex 1 Natural lakes, Table no. 1), which emphasizes once again the high tourism potential of the region. Until now, these special natural landscapes have been very little arranged and very little promoted.

¹⁸"Report regarding the state of the environment 2011 – South-East Region"

Material cultural heritage

The tourist potential of the region is linked to the cultural heritage, which includes historical vestiges, religious and cultural edifices, monuments and museums.

The religious objectives include a significant number of monasteries, located in all counties. Founded for the most part in the past centuries, some of the monasteries in the South-East Region are valuable from a historical and/or artistic point of view: being an attraction for tourists and pilgrims, it sometimes offers accommodation facilities.

In the South-East Region there were 1.505 libraries in 2011 (13% of the national total), registering about 592 thousand active readers (14% of the national total), while at the performances held in the 16 institutions and companies of shows or concerts – registered about 468 thousand spectators, and the 75 museums and public collections in the region (10.6% of the national total) gathered over 836 thousand visitors (8.8% of the total nationwide).¹⁹

In municipalities with historic centers, public authorities often face the restitution of buildings of architectural and tourism interest, buildings on which renovation works financed from non-reimbursable funds can no longer be carried out.

Immaterial cultural heritage

Immaterial cultural heritage refers to concerts, festivals, competitions and other events.

The main events organized in Galati county²⁰ are:

- **National Comedy Festival;**
- **"La Elice" Concerts;**
- **"Galati Music Days" (annual cultural event);**
- **Linden Festival (organized in Buciumeni forest);**
- **Peony Festival (in May, in the forest near the village of Roscani, where the wild peony grows – a monument of nature);**
- **Acacia Festival (organized annually in the Conachi forest).**

Tourism infrastructure – the regional/national report

In 2011, the South-East Region registered less than a quarter of the country's tourist reception structures, the exact percentage being 19.47%. In 2010 the percentage was 26.52%. Until 2010, the South-East Region held the first place in the number of accommodation structures, but the decrease in 2011 led to a change in hierarchy, the Central Region becoming the leader (approximately 24%). The tourist reception structures in the region registered in 2011 an accommodation capacity of 95,587 places.²¹ In 2011, hotels and motels in the region accounted for 40.76% of all these existing categories in Romania.

Between 2001 and 2010, the number of structures in the region increased by 32%: the number of hotels and motels increased by 24%, while tourist pensions increased by 211% and hostels by 2,500%. The high values recorded for pensions and hostels are justified by changes in the classification and grouping of accommodation structures.

¹⁹ National Strategy for Regional Development 2014 - 2020

²⁰ Galati County Development Strategy 2010-2015

²¹ Statistical Yearbook of Romania, INS, Bucharest - 2012 edition. The data refer to the existing accommodation capacity, expressed as number of places.

Between 2008 and 2010, in the South-East Region, the effects of the economic crisis did not influence the evolution of the number of accommodation structures, these being in continuous increase, with very few exceptions. According to the publication of the National Institute of Statistics "Tourism of Romania – Statistical Brief – 2012 edition", there is a significant decrease in the number of tourist reception structures compared to the previous year: the difference is 29.68% (from 1,395 of structures, to 974 structures, in 2011). The same publication mentions that, although the number of tourist accommodation structures decreased compared to 2010, the number of arrivals increased by 8.7% and the number of overnight stays increased by 8.46%.

The largest reductions in the number of accommodation structures are found in the following categories: tourist villas and bungalows (-288 structures), tourist and agrotourism pensions (-58 structures), hotels and motels (-37 structures), campsites and cottage-type accommodation units (-30 structures).

The accommodation capacity in function decreased slightly during 2001-2008 (-5.04%) reaching 12.515.116 places-days. In 2009, the indicator registered a relatively small increase (12.764.600 places-days), and in 2010 the level decreased approximately to the level of 2008 (12.594.300 places-days). In 2011, the accommodation capacity increased by 13.83% compared to 2010, exceeding even the level of 2008 by 14.55%, the nominal value being 14.336.200 places-days. At the level of 2011, over 34% of the total accommodation was located in the South-East Region, followed by the Center Region (over 16%).

Following the access of European funds, modernization works were carried out at the tourist reception structures. However, the quality of the existing accommodations remains low: quality standards are insufficient to attract international tourism.

In 2011, hotels and motels accounted for 43.74% of the total accommodation structures in Constanta County, and the share of hotels in the county of the total number of hotels located in the South-East Region was about 74%.

In the Danube Delta, tourists checked mainly in hotels: 79.8% of the total arrivals in the accommodation structures in the area.

The index of net use of accommodation capacity in the region is above the national average: the average value in 2011 was 28.3%, compared to the national average of 26.3%. In 2011, the South-East Region had a total number of 1.134.800 tourists, representing 16.14% of total arrivals in Romania.

Unlike 2000-2008, when the trend was positive regarding the number of tourists, registering an increase of 33.42%, between 2008 and 2010 the number of tourists decreased by 20.22%. In 2011 the number of tourists increased by 8.7% compared to 2010.

There is a relatively constant value of accommodation capacity in function between 2008 and 2010, the increase in 2010 representing 0.63% of the value for 2008. In this context, the decrease in the number of tourists by 20.22% and the decrease in the number overnight stays by 29.78% is significant, especially since the number of accommodation structures increased in 2010 by 10.1% compared to 2008.

Approximately 21% of Romania's functioning tourist accommodation capacity is found in the region, most of which is concentrated on the Black Sea coast. In 2010, compared to 2008, the index of net utilization of net functioning capacity decreased from 42.5% to 29.7% in the South-East Region. In 2011 the net utilization index decreased to 28.3%. The general framework for 2011 compared to 2010 is very interesting: the number of accommodation structures decreased by about 30%, the accommodation capacity in operation increased by about 14%, the number of arrivals increased by about 9%, the number of overnight stays increased by about 9%. The comparison with the national

level shows that, in 2011, the region concentrates 22.53% of overnight stays at national level, 18.94% of the Romanian tourist arrivals. Foreign tourists arriving in the region in 2011 represent 5.96% of the total arrivals of foreign tourists in Romania.

The decrease of arrivals of Romanian tourists on the Romanian coast is influenced by the high level of the number of departures of Romanian tourists abroad: nationally, there were 10.905.164 departures in 2010 and 10.936.214 departures in 2011. Compared to these data, in the South-East Region arrived 1.044.043 people in 2010 and 1.134.824 people in 2011. The analysis of all the considered indicators highlights the position of excellence held by the South-East Region on the national tourist market: in 2011 the region is the first in the country in terms of accommodation capacity – both in terms of existing and operational. Until 2009, the South-East Region ranked first in the country in the number of overnight stays as well as in the number of arrivals. In 2011, the region is on the second place at national level in the number of accommodation structures (after the Center Region), on the third place at national level in the number of arrivals (after the Center Region and the Bucharest-Ilfov Region) and on the first place at number of nights.

In terms of capacity utilization index, the region ranks second after the South-West Oltenia Region.

Tourism infrastructure at the regional/county level report

The tourist activity is mostly concentrated in Constanța County. In 2011, over 87.62% of the existing tourist accommodation capacity (83,751 places) and 79% of the functioning tourist capacity (11,328,900 places-days) of the South-East Region is found in the county, being located in mostly in the resorts on the Black Sea coast (which is valorized only 2-3 months/year). 844,800 tourists arrived in the county, representing 74.44% of the total arrivals in the region, as well as 12.01% of the total arrivals in Romania.

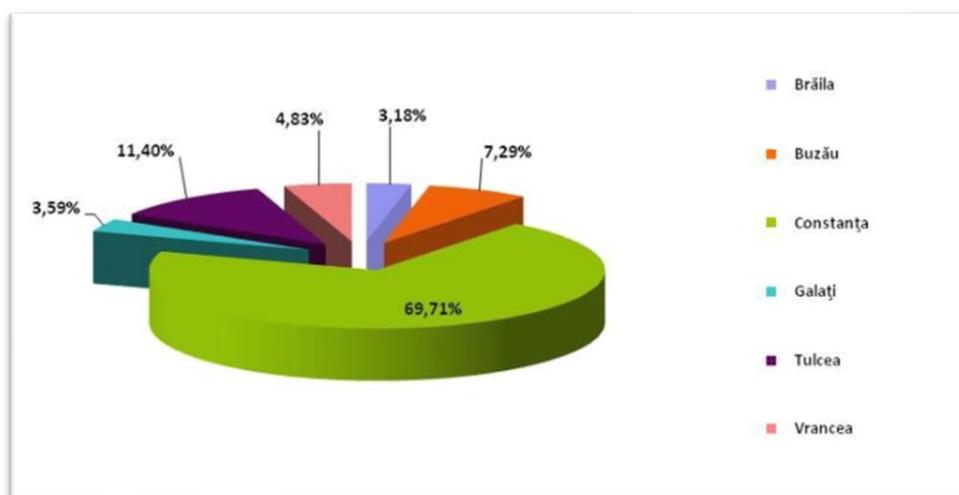


Figure 3 – Tourist reception structures by counties (2011)

Source: Calculations made on the basis of data provided by the Statistical Yearbook of Romania, INS, Bucharest - 2012 edition

The tourism sector plays a secondary role in the counties of Galati, Braila and Vrancea. In Braila, the occupancy rate exceeds 30% , and in Galati it is 28.6% (above the regional average of 28.3%), where, however, the number of tourist accommodation units is low. In Vrancea county, although the capacity in operation of 477.4 thousand places-days is higher than in Galati county (361.8 thousand places-days), it has the lowest employment index in the entire region, 15% in the year 2011. The 3

counties together attracted, in 2011, 14.13% of regional arrivals, increasing by about 4% compared to the previous year.

It should be noted that Braila is the only county that registers an increase in arrivals compared to 2008, and Vrancea registers an insignificant decrease compared to the level of 2008 (approximately -1%). The other 4 counties register decreases in the level of arrivals between 8% and 33%.

	2008	2009	2010	2011	%2011-2008
South-East Region	5.317.647	4.423.728	3.734.288	4.050.309	-23,83
Braila County	292.635	201.037	183.821	229.600	-21,54
Buzau County	199.428	181.488	148.591	153.900	-22,83
Constanta County	4.435.702	3.753.245	3.166.706	3.361.100	-24,23
Galati County	141.391	98.886	75.001	103.600	-26,73
Tulcea County	175.000	124.341	108.705	130.500	-25,43
Vrancea County	73.491	64.731	51.464	71.700	-2,44

Table 3 – Evolution of the number of overnight stays (2008-2011)

Source: Calculations made on the basis of data provided by the Statistical Yearbook of Romania, INS, Bucharest 2009-2012 editions

1.044.043 people arrived in the South-East Region in 2010, of which 78.552 were foreign tourists, and 1.134.824 people in 2011, of which 90.451 were foreign tourists. It is noted in 2011 the largest increase in foreign tourists recorded within a year in a county, in the evolution of arrivals of foreign tourists in the counties of the South-East Region since 2000 and until now: is in Tulcea county, arrivals have increased by 62%. On the second place is the county of Galați with an increase of 56.57%.

The marketing of tourist products needs improvements, the promotion of the tourist offer in the region nationally and internationally is weak. The offer of complete tourist packages, organized tourism itineraries and the development of related extra-hotel services is currently limited.

Tourist reception areas – the Danube Delta

The Danube Delta is a special attraction of great scientific value and with a high tourism potential, especially after its inclusion in 1990, together with other adjacent natural areas, in the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve.

From the national network of protected natural areas, the Danube Delta is distinguished both as an area (580.000 ha) and as being biological diversity, having a triple international status: Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve; Ramsar Site (wetland of international importance), World Natural and Cultural Heritage Site.

The tourist base, in the Danube Delta, consists of hotels, motels, villas, pensions, tourists are offered the possibility of cruises on canals and cannons.

The special nature of the Delta, requires a careful development of the tourism sector, is able to guarantee the diversification of the local economy and at the same time the preservation of the existing natural heritage: In this regard, the development of ecotourism is a specific priority for the Danube Delta, being characterized by small accommodation structures, special places for camping that comply with the requirements imposed by the conservation and protection of the environment.

Tourist reception areas – the Black Sea Coast

The third largest surface in Europe, after the Mediterranean and the North Sea, the Black Sea bathes with its waves the southeastern coast of Romania.²²

It is also the most isolated sea from the planet's ocean – the only connection to the rest of the world's ocean is through the Mediterranean Sea, through the Bosphorus, Dardanelles and Gibraltar straits and the Sea of Azov to the northeast, through the Kerch Strait. For this reason, the Black Sea is very vulnerable to pressure from human activities and its health depends on both coastal and non-coastal states.

The Romanian coast includes 13 resorts, with tourism accommodation, treatment and recreation units.

The differences between the tourism infrastructure specific to a hotel on the coast of Bulgaria, Greece or Turkey and the tourism infrastructure specific to a hotel on the Romanian coast, are noticeable in the tourist offers on the websites of travel agencies and hotels, which describe the facilities and services offered in tourist packages. Hotels located on the Romanian coast need major infrastructure improvements that support the services offered: indoor and outdoor pools, children's pools equipped with slides, children's clubs, playgrounds, green spaces for outdoor sports, facilities for balneary services and fitness rooms, etc.

Study regarding the urban development at regional level²³

Tourism, along with the primary sector, is a key for the development for a number of cities in the South East Region. This sector also enjoyed a major interest in the 2007-2013 programming period, where a number of important infrastructure creation or modernization projects were funded through the Regional Operational Program. The economy of the region has the opportunity to develop with the aid of this sector, especially due to the material base, natural resources and the history of the cities of the region of this sector. Constanta County and the Black Sea resorts, Tulcea County and its natural riches such as the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve or Macin Mountains, the thematic tourism infrastructure in Vrancea or Buzau, the resources offered by the Danube River in Braila and Galati as transport nodes, all are assets to develop this priority. In order for the region's tourism potential to be realized, the cities aim to develop those projects that value the resource.

Development priorities

6.5.1 Exploiting the tourism potential of the South-East Region

6.5.1.1. Creation of Tourism Information and Promotion Centers

6.5.1.2 Optimizing the promotion of tourism areas

6.5.1.3 Valorification of tourism routes

6.5.2 Development of recreation infrastructure

6.5.2.1 Establishment, rehabilitation, modernization and arrangement of parks

6.5.2.2 Arrangement of recreation bases

6.5.2.3 Arrangement of cycling routes

6.5.3 Rehabilitation of tourism attractions in the area

6.5.3.1 Rehabilitation of historical, religious and cultural monuments

6.5.4 Development of large tourism infrastructures (Harsova)

6.5.4.1. Arrangement of tourism ports

²² <http://www.mmediu.ro>

²³ http://www.adrse.ro/Documente/Planificare/PDR/2014/Studiu_Urban_ADR_Raport_final.pdf

1.2.4. The county framework

Galati County Development Strategy (2016-2020) ²⁴

The development strategy of the South-East Region promotes the concept of "bottom-up" development, the integrated projects being the main tool for achieving this model. The general objective of the Development Strategy of the South-East Region is to promote sustainable development and improve the quality of life of the population, so that it becomes a long-term competitive region and attractive for investments, with the valorification of the environment heritage, of the highly qualified human resource, creating new employment opportunities and significantly increasing regional GDP by 2020, to 90% of the national average.

Among the ten strategic objectives set by the strategy of Galati County, there are:

- **SO4: Increasing the attractiveness of the region as a tourist destination, by promoting integrated regional tourism, by developing and modernizing the tourism infrastructure and by increasing the quality of the tourist services offered;**

Development priorities and fields of intervention in the South-East Region for the period 2014-2020 also included:

- **Priority 4: Improving the quality of tourism at regional level**
 - Area of intervention 1: Promotion of an integrated regional tourism (recreational tourism, scientific and educational tourism, hunting and fishing tourism, balneary and treatment tourism, cultural tourism, oenological and gastronomic tourism, etc.);
 - Area of intervention 2: Establishment, development and modernization of the tourist infrastructure.

Tourism is an important sector of the economy of Galati County, having a major development potential in the medium and long term. At the level of Galati county, several types of tourism can be found, such as: recreational tourism, agrotourism, cultural tourism, business tourism, cruise tourism.

Historical/cultural tourism in Galati County

Administrative territorial unit	Cultural centers	Theaters and music institutions	Public libraries	Movie theaters	Monasteries	Churches	Houses of prayer	Chapels	Shrine
Galati municipality		3	3		3	70	13		
Tecuci municipality	1		1			19	2		
Targul Bujor city	1+2		1	1		4		1	8
Beresti city	1		1			3			3
TOTAL	5	3	6	1	3	96	15	1	11

Table 4 – Cultural and cult infrastructure in the urban environment of Galati county

Source: Study regarding the tourist potential of Galați County, 2013

²⁴<https://www.cjgalati.ro/images/stories/Comunicate10/strategia-2015.pdf>

Administrative territorial unit	Cultural centers	Public libraries	Movie theaters	Monasteries	Churches	Houses of prayer	Chapels	Shrine
Bălăbănești	2	1			4			14
Bălășești	1	1			5			
Băleni	1	1	1		1		1	4
Băneasa	2	1			3			10
Barcea	1	1			3	1		5
Berești Meria	3	1			11			14
Brăhășești	1	1		1	4		1	5
Braniștea	2	1			3			4
Buciumeni	2	1	1	1	5			6
Cavadinești	3	1			8			15
Cerțești	2	1		1	5			15
Corni	3	1			3		1	17
Corod	1	1			7			22
Cosmești	2	1			5			7
Costache-Negri	1	1			1	3		3
Cuca	1	1			3		1	5
Cudalbi	1	1	1	1	4	1		7
Cuza Vodă	1	1			1	1		2
Drăgănești	2	1	1		2			5
Drăgușeni		1		1	7	2		30
Fârțânești	2	1			2			10
Foltești	1	1			4			10
Frumușița	1	1			3	1	2	8
Fundeni	4	1	1		3			2
Ghidigeni	2	1			3	2		
Gohor	2	1			5	1		12
Grivița	2	2			2	2		4
Independența	1	1	1		1	1		3
Ivești	1	1			4	1		10
Jorăști	3	1			4			
Liești	2	1			4	1		6
Măstăcani	1	1			3			18
Matca	1	1			8			6
Movileni	1	1			2			7
Munteni	1	1			4	1		6
Nămoloasa	2	1			3	4		3
Negrilești	1				2			3
Nicorești	1	1			11			4

Oancea	1	1			3		1	1
Pechea	1	1	1		4	1		5
Piscu	2	1	1		3	1		5
Poiana	1				3			4
Priponești	1	1			4	1		9
Rădești	1	1			2			15
Rediu	1	1			2			3
Scânteiești	2	1			2			8
Schela	1	1	1		2	2		4
Șendreni	1	1		1	2			4
Slobozia- Conachi	1	1			2			6
Smârdan	1	1			2	2	1	4
Smulți	1	1			2			8
Suceveni	2	1			4			6
Suhurlui					2			4
Țepu	1	1			3		1	8
Tudor Vladimirescu	1	1		1	2			5
Tulucești	2	1			4		1	10
Umbrărești	2	1			7	1		10
Valea Mărului	2	1			2			
Vânători	1	1			3	1		4
Vârlezi	2	1			4			6
Vlădești	1	1			2			9
TOTAL	70	57	6	7	219	31	10	440

Table 5 – Cultural and cult infrastructure in the rural environment of Galați county

Source: Study on the tourist potential of Galați County, 2013

Cultural tourism in Galați County has a variety of attractions that must be promoted and exploited to increase the economy and notoriety of the territory.

The museum cultural institutions of Galați County reflect the degree of civilization on the Lower Danube, characterizing the area, highlighting the traditions, art, nature and history of the place. Each museum ensemble is addressed especially to young people, trying to bring them closer to cultural values and national history.²⁵

In general, tourism resources for the development of cultural tourism consists of historical monuments and religious art, usually made in the XIV – XIX centuries, in specific Moldovan style, located in Galați, from museums, memorial houses, theaters or folk events.

The development of cultural tourism requires solving the problems related to the access infrastructure to the tourism objectives (archeological sites, architectural monuments, etc.), outdated and sufficient, the lack of parking spaces, information points and promotion of the cultural tourist objective, the lack of the arrangements of the belvedere points, the lack of special camping spaces for the pilgrimage tourism.

²⁵<http://www.cjgalati.ro/index.php/component/content/article/147/3263-circuit-turistic-muzeal-in-judetul-galati>

➤ **Cultural elements of tourist attraction in Galati county**

NAME OF THE OBJECTIVE	LOCATION
❖ 1st CATEGORY – Historical and art monuments of a religious nature	
The fortified church "Sfânta Precista" – the oldest historical monument in Galati	Galati municipality
Greek Church	Galati municipality
Archbishop's Cathedral of Galati	Galati municipality
Mavromol Church	Galati municipality
Vovidenia Church	Galati municipality
St. Spiridon's Church	Galati municipality
Temple of the Craftsmen – the only remaining synagogue in Galati, out of the approximately 20 existing in 1941	Galati municipality
Vladimirești Monastery – has painting workshops, sculpture of frames and church furniture, framing icons, tailoring, embroidery, knitwear, artificial flowers and carpets	4km north of Tudor Vladimirescu village
Buciumeni Monastery	Buciumeni village
Cudalbi Monastery (Birth of the Mother of God)	Neighborhood of Cudalbi
Adam Monastery	Com. Draguseni, Adam Village
Cârlomănești Monastery	Between Certesti and Cârlomănești
Mănăstirea Sf. Mc. Trifon – the youngest monastery of the eparchy	Sendreni commune
Catholic Church	Galati municipality
❖ 2nd CATEGORY – Museums, theaters, memorial houses and heritage buildings	
"Rasvan Angheluta" Museum of Natural Sciences – owns the Botanical Garden, Aquarium, the Museum Complex which also includes the Zoo, the Astronomical Observatory and the Planetarium	Galati municipality
„Paul Paltanea” History Museum – The sections of the history museum are: “Casa Cuza Vodă” Museum, “Casa Coleciilor” Museum, “Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu” House from Ivesti commune, “Ioan Avram Dunăreanu” rural house from Suhurlui commune, Casa "Costache Negri" memorial, from Costache Negri commune	Galati municipality
Museum of Christian History, Culture and Spirituality on the Lower Danube – has a collection of almost 400 exhibits	Galati municipality
The Garboavele Forest Zoo	Tulucesti
County Library „V.A. Urechia ” – a complete range of library services is offered within the four branches: Costache Negri – at the Union Culture House, Grigore Vieru – at CFR Calatori Station, the one at the Software and Information Technology Park and the “ Grigore Vieru ”	Galati municipality
A. I. Cuza Memorial House	Galati municipality
Lambrinidi House	Galati municipality
Museum of Visual Art – the first Romanian museum of contemporary art in the country	Galati municipality
"Teodor Cincu" History Museum	Tecuci
Cultural Center "Lower Danube" – is part of the "Urban Ensemble Domneasca Street "	Galati municipality
"Lower Danube" Multicultural Center	Galati municipality

"Fani Tardini" Dramatic Theater	Galati municipality
„Nae Leonard” Musical Theater	Galati municipality
Administrative Palace	Galati municipality
The "Wolf Statue" copy	Galati municipality
Navigation Palace	Galati municipality
University Palace	Galati municipality
Robescu House	Galati municipality
Roman camp from Trighina Barboși	Tringhina Barboși
Trajan's Wall	With a length of 23 km, the western end being located near the village of Serbeștii Vechi (Sendreni commune), at approximately 200m from the meander of Siret, and the eastern one at the edge of Tulucesti, near the bank of the Prut
❖ 3rd CATEGORY – Cultural events and artistic groups	
Linden Festival – is held annually, with the blooming of linden	Buciumeni Forest
Peony Festivals – takes place on the first Sunday of May	The forest near Roșcani village
Acacia Festival– organized annually, with the blooming of acacia	Conachi Forest
"Doina Covurluiului" Folk Ensemble	
Folk group "Rapsozii Brateșului" from Tulucești – the first adult choral formation	Tulucesti
The "Colindița" group from Piscu	Piscu
The "Lozioara" group from Branistea	Branistea
The "Ștefanieni" group from Piscu	Piscu
The "Fluierașii" group from Branistea	Branistea
The "Tecucelu" group from Tecuci	Tecuci
The "Cuzanca" group from Cuza Voda	Cuza Vods
The "Alțița" group from Tecuci	Tecuci
The „Glasul Odăieșilor” group from Odaia Manolachi	Odaia Manolachi, Vânători
"Bujoreanca" folk ensemble	Cavadinesti
"Datina" Folk Group from Beresti	Beresti
❖ 4th CATEGORY – Festivals	
"Doina Covurluiului" International Folklore Festival	
"Axis Libri" Festival	
"Iosif Ivanovici" International Marching Band Festival	
Mackerel Festival	
Film Festival	
National Comedy Festival	
"Guliver" International Animation Festival	

Table 6 – Cultural elements of tourism attraction in Galati county

Source: <http://www.galati.djc.ro/>

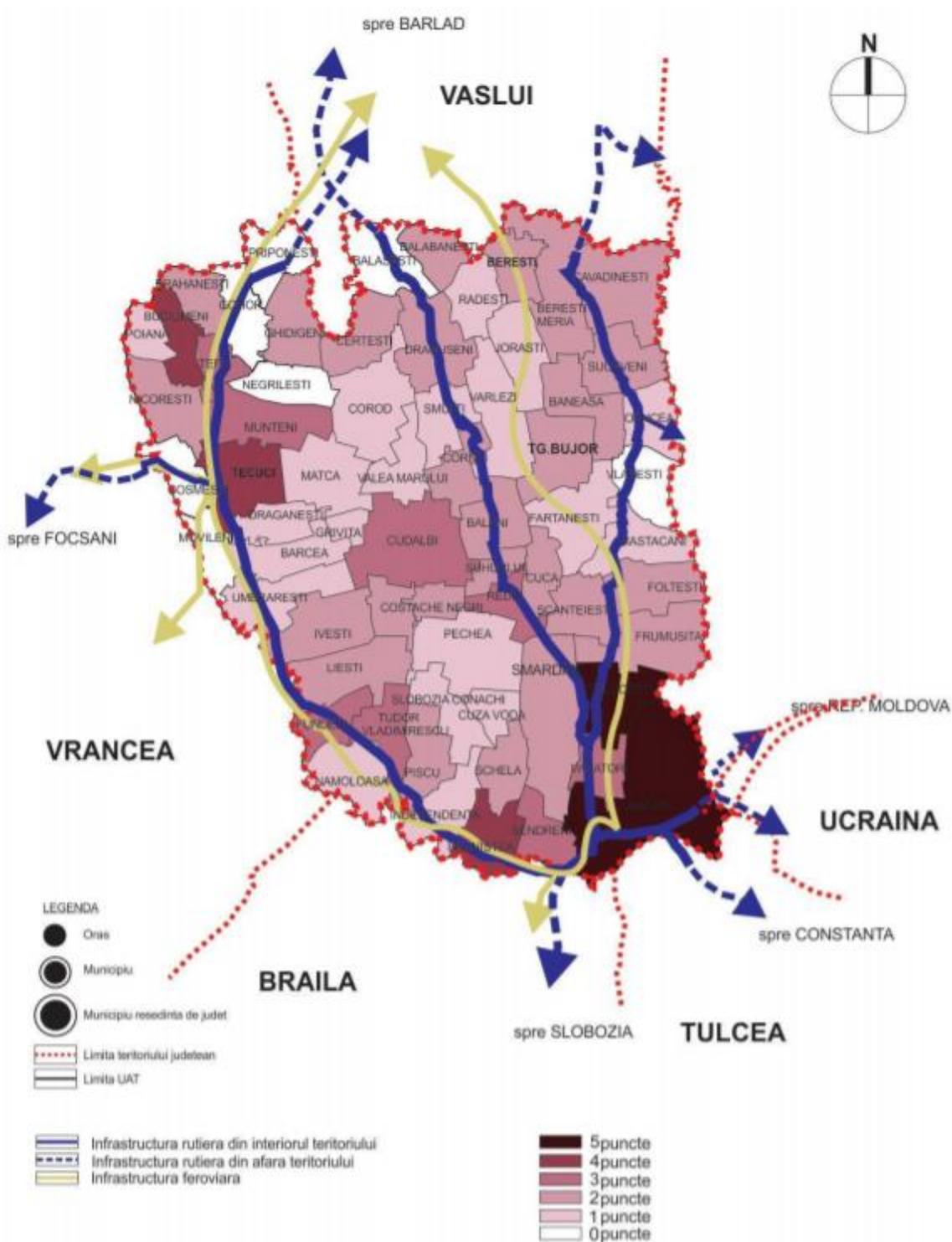


Figure 4 – Areas with potential in religious cultural tourism

Source: <http://www.cjgalati.ro/images/stories/formulare/potential-turistic.pdf>

Ecotourism in Galati County

An alternative to green tourism, marked by its practice in areas that are not altered by anthropogenic intervention is ecotourism, a form of tourism that currently involves a permanent struggle to preserve the integrity of the natural environment and especially the protection of tourism resources.

At the level of Galati county this form of tourism is an opportunity for the economic development as it has a great potential for exploitation due to the rich portfolio of reservations that exists in the county, and natural resources that can be valorized by traditional methods if a form of organization of this activity will be implemented.

The elements of the cultural heritage can also be valorized at international level through research programs, and the valorification of the cultural heritage through the development of sustainable tourism will generate better results regarding the protection of monuments and will increase the notoriety of the area.

➤ **List of protected areas in Galati county**

NAME OF THE OBJECTIVE	LOCATION	TYPE
Potcoava Pond	Branistea	Aquatic-bird
Talabasca Pond	Tudor Vladimirescu	Aquatic-bird
Sand dunes from Hanu Conachi	Hanu Conachi	Forest
Pochina Lake	Suceveni	Bird
Vlascuta Lake	Mastacani	Bird
Beresti fossil site	Beresti	Paleontological
Rates fossil site	Tecuci	Paleontological
Trighina – Barbosi fossil site	Galati	Paleontological
The lower meadow of the Prut	Cavadinesti	Bird
Prut Island	Galati	Forest
Breana – Roscani Forest	Roscani	Forest
Buciumeni Forest	Brahasesti, Buciumeni	Forest
Fundeanu Forest	Draguseni	Forest
Gârboavele Forest	Galati	Forest
Poganesti Forest	Baneasa	Forest
Talasmani Forest	Beresti	Forest
The lower meadow of the Inferior Prut Natural Park	Tecuci	Natural park

Table 7 – List of protected areas in Galati county

Source: [https:// ro.wikipedia.org](https://ro.wikipedia.org)

2. THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF TOURISM. ANALYSIS OF THE MAIN INDICATORS OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AT COUNTY LEVEL

2.1. Description of the existing situation of the reference territory, including socio-economic development

Analyzing the current European context and new trends for sustainable development, there is a growing interest in all that means and can become, in real time, a competitive knowledge-based economy. Taking into account the priority axes marked by the Lisbon Strategy (European Council Presidency, Lisbon European Council, March 2000), the Council of Nice (European Council Presidency, Nice European Council, March 2002), and the Gothenburg Council (European Council Presidency) , Gothenburg European Council, June 2001), Romania aims for a real integration in the European Union: the creation of a competitive and dynamic economy, a social integration focused primarily on reducing

economic development and poverty gaps, strengthening environmental protection and achieving a model of sustainable development.²⁶

In accordance with the Third Report regarding the Economic and Social Cohesion, adopted by the European Commission, the new partnership on cohesion in the enlarged Union considers the following priorities:

- **Convergence:** stimulating economic growth and creating jobs in Member States and in less developed regions;
- **Regional competitiveness and employment:** anticipating and encouraging change;
- **European territorial cooperation:** ensuring a harmonious and balanced development in the Union.

Among the fields that benefit our country in the competition on the European Union market, on the basis of which the country brand will be built, tourism stands out in particular. Along with other well-known destinations, the Danube could be part, in good conditions of promotion, one of the tourist and cultural component of the Romanian country brand.

A problem of national and local importance that Romania faces is represented by the different degree of valorification of the tourist potential, considering the role that must be given to the observance of the support capacity, but also to the elimination of the regional economic disparities. This situation is the result of a complex of inadequate operating conditions, respectively difficult accessibility, poor quality tourist services and general utilities, insufficient recreational programs, insufficient networks of tourist accommodation, food and recreational structures, labor force in the tourist occupational structure is inadequate to market demand and reduced in quantity.

To all of this is added the tourist promotion activity which is currently undersized, the amount of promotional materials published is insufficient in terms of quality and quantity. The situation is determined by the lack of a national network of county centers and local tourism promotion and information offices, of some brands in tourist areas, the deficiencies in covering with funds from the budget for the national and international promotion activity, by the lack of ensuring the continuity of institutional involvement in the field of promotion.

Currently, the aim is to transform Romania into a quality tourist destination based on its natural and cultural heritage, which should correspond to the standards of the European Union.

Achieving this goal involves identifying and evaluating the tourism potential of the Danube in the Galati area in accordance with Priority Axis No. 4 regarding Regional and Local Tourism Development of the National Strategy for Regional Development, which identified tourism as a development priority given the tourism potential existing in all regions.

Currently, it can be said that the activity of national tourism promotion is undersized and the amount of informative and promotional materials is insufficient.

The situation is determined by the lack of a national network of county centers and local offices of tourism information and promotion, of some brands in tourist areas, by the deficiencies in covering with funds from the budget for the national and international promotion activity, by the lack of ensuring institutional continuity for promotion.

Promoting the Galati area as a reference tourist destination for the Danube river-sea sector would bring many advantages to different categories of public (inhabitants, private organizations, state

²⁶ Article "THE NEED TO IDENTIFY AND PROMOTE THE GALATI TOURIST AREA IN ORDER TO ELIMINATE REGIONAL ECONOMIC DISPARITIES", Lect. univ. Dr. Nicoleta Cristache Lect. univ. dr. Irina Susanu "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați

organizations, etc.) involved in this issue, which is why we consider justified the priority of this objective for Romanian tourism.

At county level, a tourist spends on average less than two days in Galati, easily leading to the idea that the studied territory is mainly a transit point rather than a tourist destination. According to the Galati County Directorate of Statistics (CDS), the accommodation available in hotels, pensions and other accommodation units in the county remain largely unoccupied throughout the year.

Contributing significantly to the development of an organization's activity and implicitly of the space in which it operates, communication plays an important role in the economic development of society. At the same time, it should be noted that, no matter how well the communication is designed and organized at the level of a company, it cannot eliminate competition in terms of product quality and innovation. Regarding the Romanian companies that act in the field of tourism, they must take into account, when developing their communication, that the economic performances are no longer enough and in order to progress they must design integration programs in the life of society with the assumption of responsibilities in various fields: education, culture, health, sports, etc.

Basically, regional tourism must overcome the identity crisis it is currently facing. A wider involvement in promoting the local resources and values would generate advantages for various categories: for the inhabitants of Galati area: raising the standard of living by expanding and developing economic activities; opening to what means value system in tourism and sustainable tourism and for authorities and economic agents; attracting foreign investors, new business opportunities, increasing the confidence of the population in the local business environment; attracting international funds for ecological and cultural development projects, etc.

Of particular importance is the initiative to stimulate nautical tourism and ecotourism, especially the programs for the Danube and the Danube Delta, which are currently insufficiently developed areas and which have special development prospects, both in terms of facilities and conditions offered to tourists, as well as from the point of view of the development of nautical tourism possibilities, in correspondence with the possibilities offered by the Danube ports.

2.2. The position of tourism in the regional socio-economic context. Opportunities and constraints for the development of the tourism sector arising from the context of regional development

The South-East Region is characterized by a high tourist potential. The rich patrimony of natural resources, as well as the cultural patrimony represented by historical vestiges, monasteries – favored the development of the sector.

In 2011, the total contribution of tourism from the European Union to the world GDP was 1.080.84 billion euros.²⁷ Tourism in Romania represents 0.59% of this amount, ranking 18th among European Union countries. According to a study prepared by the World Travel and Tourism Council – the World Travel and Tourism Authority, Romania is considered to have competitive travel destinations with Italy, Austria, Greece, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Bulgaria and Slovakia.

At national level, as well as at the level of each development region, there is a decrease of approximately 5-6% of tourism and other activities within the same CANE category group, in the share of regional GDP compared to the weights related to 2009.

²⁷www.wttc.org

The position of the South-East Region among the first places in the national hierarchy in the number of accommodation structures implies a high level of tourism, representing a significant factor for obtaining the percentage of 12.22% of the regional GDP (2010).²⁸

Tourism in the region is characterized by the existence of specific natural resources, such as the Black Sea coast and the Danube Delta, **balneary resorts** famous nationally and internationally, agrotourist pensions (especially in the mountainous areas of Vrancea and Buzau and the Danube Delta). Ecumenical tourism is present in the region, especially through the monasteries in northern Dobrogea, Buzau and Vrancea mountains, Galati area, as well as through the cultural tourism, present through the existence of cultural remains (archaeological sites, memorial houses).

The South-East Region concentrated in 2011, about 1/5 of the total structures of tourist reception, the 974 structures having an accommodation capacity in operation of over 14.3 million places-days (21% of the total capacity at national level). In the same year, they registered over 1.13 million tourist arrivals (16.1% of the national total) and over 4.0 million overnight stays (22.5% of the national total).

The **Danube Delta**, the second largest delta in Europe (after that of the Volga River), is a special attraction of great scientific value and has a high tourism potential, especially after its inclusion in 1990, along with other adjacent natural areas, in the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve.

The natural and cultural values of the Danube Delta are resources that can be exploited by practicing the following types of tourism:

- Rest and recreational tourism – practiced through the services of tour operators);
- Knowledge tourism – practiced either individually or through organized excursions exploring the variety of wild landscape, combining boat trips manually propelled on picturesque canals with the hiking along the canals or on river and sea ridges, etc.;
- Specialized – scientific tourism (for specialists, researchers, students);
- Agrotourism (tourists are hosted and accompanied by locals to visit the Danube Delta);
- Water sports tourism (Crisan locality);
- Sport fishing tourism – is highly appreciated by visitors of all ages, in any season, for any species of fish, and sport hunting;
- Specific for the Danube Delta is niche tourism (eg bird watching, photo-safari).

In the counties of Braila and Galati there are two important areas in terms of protecting bird fauna and wetlands. The **lower meadow of the Inferior Prut Natural Park** in Galati County preserves an impressive diversity of habitats and species characteristic of wetlands of national and European interest, which led to its inclusion as an integral part of the European ecological network Natura 2000 in Romania.

The main forms of tourism that can be practiced in these protected areas are: bird watching in arranged observation towers, sport fishing, agrotourism, scientific tourism, educational tourism, nautical tourism, hiking, weekend tourism.

The tourism potential of the region is linked to the **cultural heritage**, which includes historical vestiges, religious and cultural edifices, monuments and museums. The religious objectives include a significant number of monasteries, located in all counties. Founded mostly in the past centuries, some

²⁸ PDR South-East Region 2014-2020

of the monasteries in the South-East Region are often very valuable from a historical and/or artistic point of view, some also offering accommodation facilities.

A series of historical vestiges, religious edifices, museums, monuments and tourist attractions attract tourists to Galati County every year:

- **The Danube Cliff in Braila and Galati is a promenade where modern constructions blend harmoniously with the architecture of the early twentieth century (river station in Braila), the river landscape being completed by a rich collection of art monuments (sculptures);**
- **The Botanical Garden from Galati is part of the Museum Complex of Natural Sciences Galati, here you can admire 260.846 specimens of trees, shrubs and flowers, of which 1.542 species, some very rare, endangered.**

The South-East Region is characterized by a high and diverse tourism potential, constituting a high opportunity in order to develop the cultural and ecological tourism sector at the level of Galati county.

The region has a diversified degree of business support structures, so in the city of Galati operates 1 of the 6 science and technology parks in the country. Business support structures are not found in all counties. So, in the region operates: in Galati, 1 of the 6 science parks accredited at national level, 2 industrial parks (Galati and Mangalia), 1 business incubator in Mangalia, 4 clusters (2 in Constanta in the field of wind and marine energy, 1 in Buzau in tourism and 1 in Vrancea for the textile field). During the 2007-2013 programming period, 8 projects received funding through the ROP, within the field of intervention aimed at developing business centers, as follows: 1 project in Buzau county, 1 project in Galati county and 6 projects in Constanta county.

2.3. Description of the current situation of the tourism field at county level

2.3.1. Analysis of tourist objectives at county level

Galati County has a privileged position in Romania, and the future development of tourism must be based on this good location. The county is part of the South-East Region of Romania, at a distance of 240 km from Bucharest, 190 km from Constanta, only 67 km from Cahul (Republic of Moldova) and 33 km from Giurgiulesti (Republic of Moldova) and 27 km to Reni (Ukraine). Due to the relatively short distances, the county is an attraction for tourists from all over the country and beyond. For Western Europe and tourists from distant destinations who arrive by plane, they can travel from both Bucharest and Constanta. As neighbors, the county is bordered on the north by Vaslui County, on the northwest by Vrancea County, on the south by Braila County and on the east by the Danube and Prut, natural barriers separating the county from the Republic of Moldova and Tulcea.

2.3.1.1. Description of localities with tourism potential

Viewed from the point of view of the tourist arrangement of the territory, the resort represents the nucleus of the effective development of the tourism activity. Through the activity carried out in resorts, tourism contributes to the systematization of the territory and to the economic growth, in a specific economic, legal, fiscal and urbanistic framework.

From an economic point of view, the tourist resort represents a territorial system of production and distribution of tourism goods and services, an organized spatial unit, with equipment

that offers a diversified set of services, assimilated to a locality or a service sales center, grouping different economical agents.

From a social and cultural point of view, the tourist resort offers a range of activities based on the exploitation of local natural and anthropic resources and which allow people belonging to different populations to meet and communicate.

Another definition of the tourism resort is the one according to which, it represents a locality, in which tourism represents a preponderant branch as volume of economic activity and degree of concentration of the active population. Having tourist potential, the tourist resort determines an influx of non-residential population, as a beneficiary of the tourist services it offers.

Without being given a proper definition, in GD no. 852/2008 for the approval of the norms and criteria for attestation of tourist resorts, it is specified that it can be attested as a tourist resort, of national or local interest, as the case may be, "the locality or part of a locality that has natural and anthropic resources, highlighted in the Register of the tourist patrimony and which cumulatively meets, for one of the categories, the criteria provided in Annex No. 1 "

In Galati county, according to GD no. 852/2008, until now, there are no certified tourist resorts of national or local interest; situation that describes the position of tourism in Galati at local and national level. Within Galati county, however, there are localities with tourism potential that could obtain in the future the title of tourist resort; of these, from the perspective of historical/cultural tourism and ecotourism, only the following have a high importance:

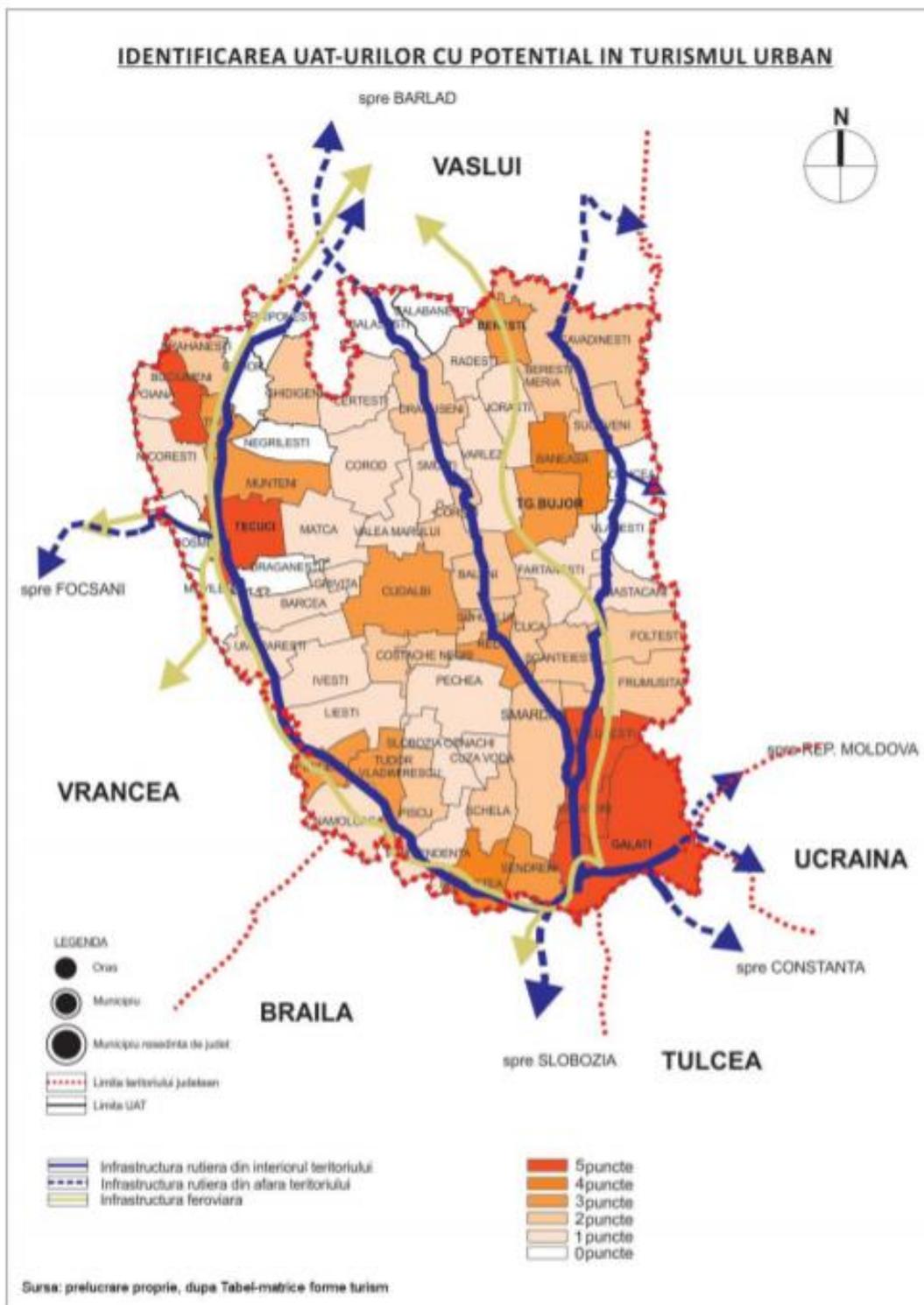


Figure 5 – Identifying ATUs with potential in urban tourism
 Source: <https://www.cjgalati.ro>

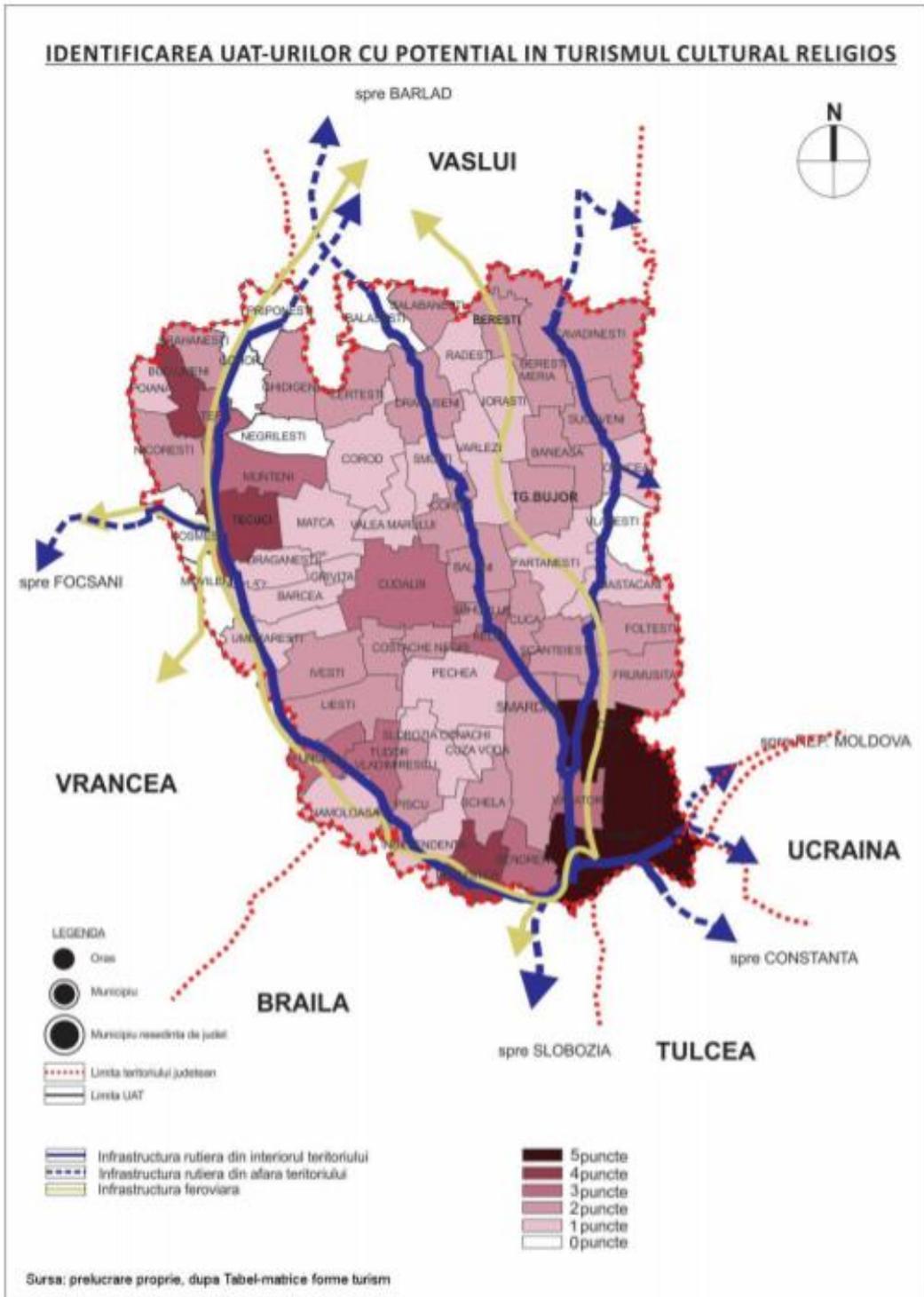


Figure 6 – Identifying ATUs with potential in cultural-religious tourism
 Source: <https://www.cjgalati.ro>

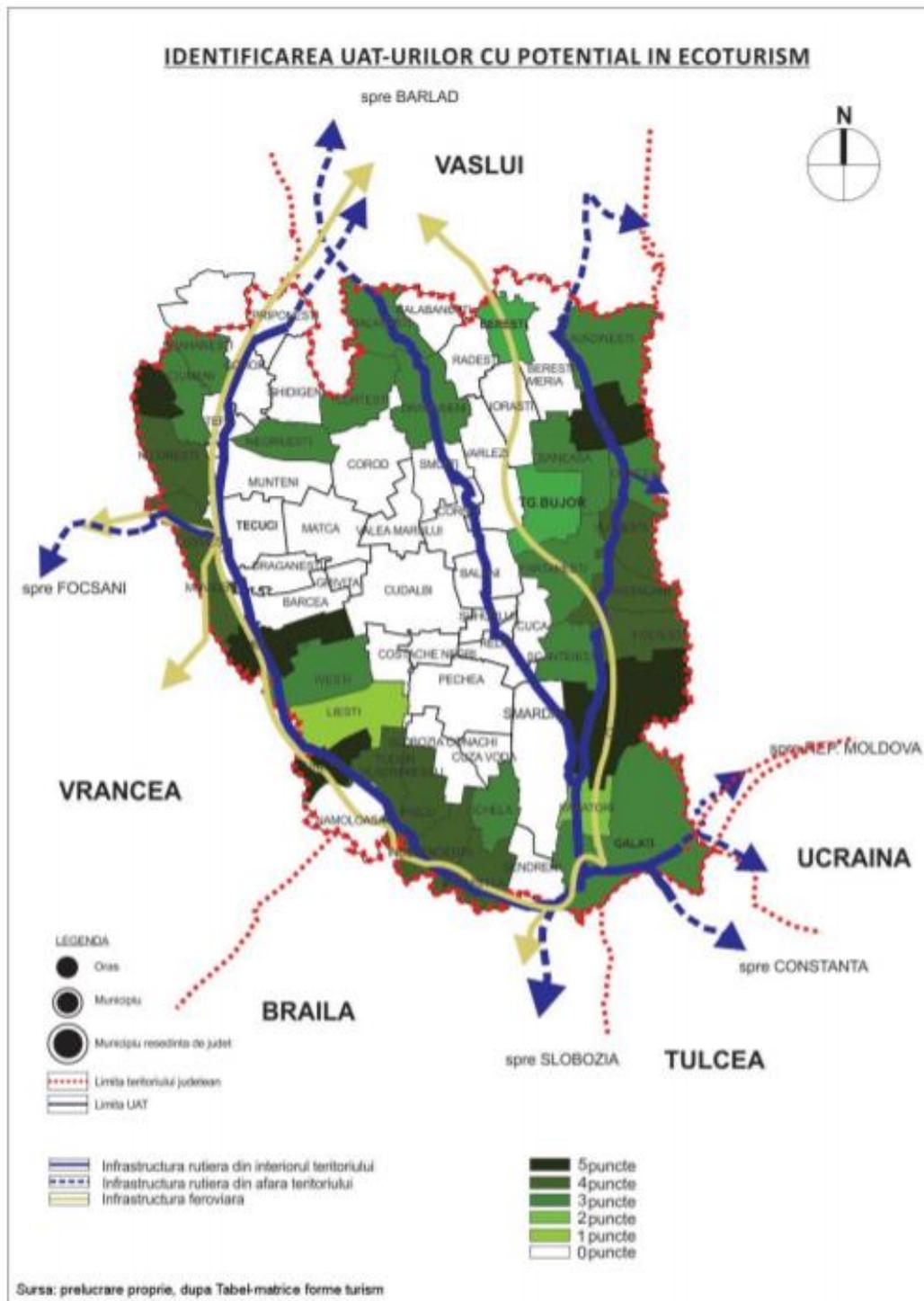


Figure 7 – Identification of ATUs with potential in ecotourism

Source: <https://www.cjgalati.ro>

2.3.1.2. Presentation of the natural heritage objectives in Galati county

The sustainable valorification of the natural patrimony from the administrative territorial units from Galati county is one of the priorities and will contribute to the realization of some attractive tourist products in this area. The adjacent areas of the Danube Delta should receive special attention, given that it has the financial mechanism ITI (Integrated Territorial Investments), to stimulate the integrated territorial development of this area. This mechanism is based on the Integrated Strategy for

Sustainable Development of the Danube Delta (GH no. 602/2016), where in Pillar II – Improving the economy, one of the components is Tourism.²⁹

According to this strategy, the Danube Delta should be developed and promoted as an integrated ecotourism destination, with a rich portfolio of sustainable products and services by valorification of the natural and cultural heritage.

In this regard, the priority is the development of the visiting infrastructure, in correlation with the Management Plan of the protected natural areas and through a partnership between the administration of the protected natural areas: the local public administrations and the central public administration.

RELIEF

Due to its position outside the Carpathian arc, Galati County is at the intersection of the edges of the physical geographical provinces of Eastern Europe, South Europe and, in part, Central Europe, which is faithfully reflected in both climatic conditions, vegetation and soils, as well as in the geological structure of the relief. The latter offers a view with calmed heights, between 310 m in the north and 5-10 m in the south. The region itself presents a gathering of forms of relief with a more accentuated fragmentation in the north and weaker in the south, distinguishing, by altitude, position and relief particularities, five geomorphological units: Covurluiului plateau, Tecuciului plain, Covurluiului plain, lower Siret meadow and lower Prut meadow.

CLIMATE

The territory of Galati County belongs entirely to the sector with continental climate (the southern and central part totaling more than 90% of the surface, falls in the plain climate, and the northern extremity representing 10% of the territory, in the hill climate). In both climates, the summers are very hot and dry, and the winters are frosty, marked by strong blizzards, but also by frequent interruptions caused by the advections of hot and humid air from the S and SW that determine intervals of heating and melting of the snow layer.

VEGETATION

In the mentioned climatic conditions, a typical grassy vegetation of steppe has been installed, which appears today only on the lands where agriculture is not practiced.

Overall, the forest steppe vegetation is found in the hills of Tutova, Covurlui and the Tecuci plain, and the steppe vegetation itself in the Covurluiului plain. On the lower valley of Barlad, there are acacia forests, and on the valleys of the Prut, Siret and Danube, the meadow vegetation predominates. Most of the Covurlui plateau, the Tutova hills and the Tecuci plain are covered by agricultural lands and heavily modified meadows, in an anthropic relationship with fescue, jisca, colily or bearded.

HYDROGRAPHY

The Danube River flows for a distance of 22 km and collects the waters of the Siret and Prut rivers. The Siret has an important tributary, the Barlad river, which in turn collects the Corozel. The Prut has as tributaries the Elan and the Horincea. The Chineja stream flows into Brates Lake.

²⁹<http://turism.gov.ro>

The hydrographic network of Galati county – constituted by the lower course of the Siret river (with main tributaries: Barlad, Geru and Suhu), Prut (with the main tributaries: lower basin of Elan, Liscov and Chineja), as well as by the Danube river basin (from km 155 – confluence with the river Siret and up to km 134 - confluence with the Prut river), is part, in its entirety, in a complex hydro-economic profile, which includes supplies for urban and rural centers, accumulations for irrigation, anti-erosion measures, flood protection works and drainage.

The main watercourses			
Name of watercourses	Length of watercourses (km)		
	Within the county	Within Romania	Total
Danube	22	1075	2860
Siret	150	559	726
Prut	103	742	925

Among the stagnant waters, the most important is Brates Lake – with a surface of 74 km²

The main natural lakes and ponds			
Name	Surface (ha)	Name	Surface (ha)
Brates lake	2096	Lozova pond	145
Masa Radeanu pond	605	Tudor Vladimirescu pond	101
Sovarca pond	274	Potcoava pond	49
Malina pond	154	Vlasca pond	42

Table 8 – Main watercourses, natural lakes and ponds in Galati County

Source: <https://www.cjgalati.ro>

NATURE 2000 PROTECTED AREAS

The establishment of the European Natura 2000 network in Romania meant the introduction of useful tools for the inclusion and management of protected areas, an important step in conserving the landscape and biodiversity, thus offering many opportunities in various fields of activity, including tourism because sustainable tourism can be achieved by combining different agricultural activities and nature conservation.

Among the advantages of this European network we mention:

- economic activities may continue in a Natura 2000 site, provided that the activities that could affect specific species or habitats are avoided;
- the interests of the locals are recognized and protected – Natura 2000 does not mean the decommissioning of land, but the preservation of traditional agro-pastoral and forestry practices that do not harm the existing heritage;
- tourism and agrotourism development;
- labeling of local natural products that can become recognized brands, that are preferred instead of the artificial preparations;
- landowners from Natura 2000 sites will be exempt from tax paying;
- an opportunity to attract European funds;
- employment;
- rest and recreation;
- promoting the natural and cultural treasure;

- Natura 2000 status means gaining European image and recognition, which is a source of pride for locals; a chain of places in Europe is created with a nature that deserves to be kept in good condition because it has a lot to offer to future generations.

On the territory of Galati county we find 14 Sites of Community Importance (SCI), 5 Sites of Bird Fauna Special Importance (SPA), 15 Nature Reserves and a National Natural Park.

PROTECTED AREAS IN GALATI COUNTY		SCI	SPA	NATURAL RESERVATIONS	NATURAL PARKS / BIOSPHERE RESERVATIONS
1	Mata – Carja – Radeanu		X		
2	Siret meadow – Vladesti – Frumusita		X		
3	Brates Lake		X		
4	Lower Siret meadow		X		
5	Lower Prut meadow	X		X	
6	Talmasani Forest	X		X	
7	Beresti fossil site			X	
8	Pochina Lake			X	
9	Pganesti Forest	X		X	
10	Vlascuta Lake			X	
11	Garboavele Forest	X		X	
12	Prut Island			X	
13	Potcoava Pond			X	
14	Talabasca Pond			X	
15	The forest and sand dunes of Hanu-Conachi			X	
16	Rates fossil site			X	
17	Fundeanu Forest			X	
18	Buciumeni Forest			X	
19	Barlada River between Zorleni and Gura Gârbovatului	X			
20	Buciumeni – Homocea Forest	X			
21	Balta Munteanu Forest	X			
22	Breana – Roscani Forest	X		X	
23	Chineja meadow	X			
24	Mogos – Matele Forest	X			
25	The lower meadow of the Inferior Prut Natural Park				X
26	Torcesti Forest	X			
27	Danube Delta (1%)		X		

Table 9 – Protected areas in Galati county

Source: Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, List of Natura 2000 sites

Most of these protected areas have a Management Plan, which indicates the possibility of developing a sustainable tourism, which will not endanger the natural elements, but will lead to the protection and conservation of environmental elements. The management plan of a protected area is the official document establishing its objectives and the management measures that must be taken to achieve an efficient, responsible management of the respective areas.

Another very useful tool in the tourist management of protected areas is the visitor management plan. It directs the right type of visitor to the right area of the park or its vicinity, creating the best opportunities to fulfill the experience imagined by the visitor, to spend free time in nature, producing a minimal negative impact on nature and local communities and creating the most good chances for the development of local ecological business in the field of tourism.

These protected areas represent an important element in the realization of tourism in Romania and the protection of nature is very well implemented, being able to achieve a more profitable tourism, due to the good natural conditions. The protected natural areas are part of the natural or morphotourism tourist background.

❖ Natural resources in Galati county – rural and urban environment

A.T.U. - rural environment-	NATURAL LANDSCAPE				NATURAL LANDSCAPE WITH ANTHROPIC INTERVENTIONS			
	Relief	Administrative Forestry Unit	Species Vegetation	Forest-Tourism	Agricultural	Mixed (Agricultural + Forest/Pasture / Water)	Eolian	Photo-Voltaice
Balbanesti	Plateau	Grivita	Acacia, sessile oak	Canton silv. Banciu		M		
Balasesti	Plateau	Grivita	Acacia, sessile oak			M		
Baieni	Plain + basin	Galati	Acacia, willow	Canton silv. Baieni	A		E	
Baneasa	Plateau	Galati	Acacia, willow			M		
Beresti Meria	Plateau	Grivita	Acacia, sessile oak			M		
Brahasesti	Hills		Acacia, oak			M		
Branistea	Plain	Hanu Conachi	Acacia, Euro-American poplar, willow		A		E	F
Buciumeni	Hills	Tecuci	Acacia, oak			M		
Cavadinesti	Piedmont + meadow		Acacia, sessile oak			M		
Cretesti	Plateau + basin	Grivita	Acacia, sessile oak			M		
Corni	Plateau + plain	Galati	Acacia, willow			M	E	
Corod	Basin + plain	Grivita	Acacia, sessile oak			M		
Cosmesti	Plain	Tecuci	Acacia, oak			M		
Costache Negri	Basin		Acacia, willow		A		E	15
Cuca	Basin	Galati	Acacia, willow			M	E	
Cudalbi	Basin		Acacia, willow		A		E	
Cuza Voda	Basin	Hanu Conachi	Acacia, poplar		A			
Draganesti	Plain	Tecuci	Acacia, oak			M		
Draguseni	Plateau	Grivita	Acacia, sessile oak	Cab. Van. Stroiu		M		
Fartanesti	Plateau + basin	Galati	Acacia, willow			M		
Foltesti	Meadow	Galati	Acacia, willow			M	E	
Frumusita	Meadow	Galati	Acacia, willow		A		E	
Fundeni	Plain	Hanu Conachi	Acacia, Euro-American poplar, willow	Canton silv. Hanu Conachi and Serbanesti	A			
Ghidigeni	Plain + basin	Grivita	Acacia, sessile oak			M		
Gohor	Hills + plain		Acacia, oak			M		

Grivita	Basin + plain		Acacia, willow	A		
Independenta	Plain	Hanu Conachi	Acacia, Euro-American poplar, willow	A		E
Ivesti	Plain + basin	Hanu Conachi	Acacia, Euro-American poplar, willow	A		
Joraști	Plateau	Galati	Acacia, willow			M
Liesti	Plain + basin	Hanu Conachi	Acacia, Euro-American poplar, willow	A		
Mastacani	Meadow plateau	+	Galati	Acacia, willow		M
Matca	Basin		Tecuci	Acacia, oak	A	
Movileni	Plain		Tecuci	Acacia, oak		M
Munteni	Basin + plain		Tecuci	Acacia, oak	A	
Namoloasa	Plain		Hanu Conachi	Acacia, Euro-American poplar, willow	A	
Negrilesti	Plain + basin			Acacia, oak		M
Nicoresti	Plain + hills		Tecuci	Acacia, oak	A	
Oancea	Meadow plateau	+	Galati	Acacia, willow		M
Pechea	Basin		Hanu Conachi	Acacia, Euro-American poplar, willow	A	E
Piscu	Plain			Acacia, Euro-American poplar, willow	A	E
Poiana	Hills + piedmont			Acacia, oak		M
Priponesti	Hills			Acacia, sessile oak		M
Radesti	Plateau		Grivita	Acacia, sessile oak		M
Rediu	Basin		Galati	Acacia, willow	M	E
Scanteiesti	Basin		Galati	Acacia, willow	M	E
Schela	Basin			Acacia, willow	A	E
Sendreni	Plain		Hanu Conachi	Acacia, Euro-American poplar, willow	A	
Slobozia-Conachi	Basin + plain		Hanu Conachi	Acacia, Euro-American poplar, willow	A	E F
Smsrdan	Basin + plain		Galati	Acacia, willow		M E
Smuti	Plateau		Galati	Acacia, willow	A	E
Suceveni	Plateau + basin		Galati	Acacia, willow		M
Suhurlui	Plain			Acacia, Euro-American poplar, willow		M
Tepu	Hills		Tecuci	Acacia, oak		M
T. Vladimirescu	Plain		Hanu Conachi	Acacia, Euro-American poplar, willow	A	
Tulucesti	Plain + basin		Galati	Acacia, willow	A	E
Umraresti	Plain + basin		Tecuci	Acacia, oak		M
Valea Mărului	Basin + plain			Acacia, willow		M
Vanatori	Plain		Galati	Acacia, willow	A	
Varlezi	Plateau + Plain		Galati	Acacia, willow		M E

Vladesti	Meadow plateau	+	Acacia, willow	M	
A.T.U. - urban environment-					
GALATI MUNICIPALITY	Plain		Galati	Acacia, willow	M
TECUCI MUNICIPALITY	Basin		Tecuci	Acacia, oak	M E
TG. BUJOR CITY	Plain		Galati	Acacia, willow	M
BERESTI CITI	Plateau		Grivita	Acacia, sessile oak	M

Table 10 – Natural resources at the level of ATUs in rural and urban environment in Galați County

Source: www.silvaGalați.ro, www.Galați.insse.ro, PATJ Galați

2.3.1.3. The objectives of material cultural heritage in Galati county

BUILT TOURIST FUND

The anthropic tourist fund in Galati county is represented by the 263 historical monuments comprising:

- archaeological remains;
- historical objectives (urban ensembles, buildings of architectural value, fortresses, fortified enclosures and defense towers, palaces, castles, mansions);
- religious objectives (ecclesiastical ensembles, churches and other ecclesiastical buildings, necropolises, funerary edifices);
- cultural and economic objectives (buildings with cultural destination (museums, memorial houses and art galleries) or for education, buildings with economic or administrative destination, hotels, restaurants and inns);
- monuments, statues, busts, crosses, gates, with architectural value.

IMMOBILE CULTURAL HERITAGE

It is the most valuable component of the cultural heritage, both in terms of direct material value, as well as in relation to the possibilities of inserting extra-cultural components. It should be mentioned that the immobile cultural heritage is a phrase that designates what, in generic terms, is called historical monuments, a category that includes not only monuments, but also historical ensembles and sites.

It should also be mentioned that, according to the provisions of Law no. 422/2001 on the protection of historical monuments, with subsequent amendments and completions, historical monuments are monuments, ensembles and historical sites (as each of these categories is defined in law) which are classified into two groups: **group A** – historical monuments of national value and universal and **group B** – monuments representative of the local cultural heritage.

The monuments can be divided into typological categories, as they are also mentioned in Law no. 5/2000 regarding the approval of the National Territory Planning Plan (Section III - Protected Areas), typology that does not exactly respect the categories established by Law no. 422/2001, but represents a pragmatic approach to the field: architectural monuments; archaeological monuments.

In Galati county there are 263 historical monuments classified and protected by law, of which about 43 monuments are classified in category A, with national value. The built cultural heritage of Galati county evaluated according to Law 422/2001 on the protection of historical monuments and the List of Historical Monuments approved by the Order of the Minister of Culture and Cults 2361/2010 includes:

HISTORICAL MONUMENTS	A CATEGORY -national value-	B CATEGORY -local cultural heritage-	TOTAL
Monuments and archeological sites	36	60	96
Monuments and architectural ensembles	7	136	143
Public monuments	-	20	20
Memorial/funerary monuments	-	4	4
TOTAL	43	220	263

Table 11 – Historical monuments from Galati county by categories of importance

Source: List of Historical Monuments approved by Order of the Minister of Culture and Cults 2361/2010

The inventory of historical monuments and their distribution within the county territory reveals an obvious concentration in the city of Galați and in the suburban area, as a consequence of its important territorial role over time.

❖ Anthropic resources in Galati county – rural and urban environment

A.T.U. -rural environment -	HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF NATIONAL/LOCAL INTEREST			MUSEUMS AND PUBLIC COLLECTIONS		PERFORMANCE AND CONCERT INSTITUTIONS
	Archaeological sites	ARCHITECTURE Historical sites/ ensembles	Memorial/ rural houses	Museums	Public collections	Philharmonic (F) Orchestra (O) Cultural Formations (CF)
Baleni	1					
Baneasa	5 settlements 1 archaeological site	1 church 1 statue		Rocsani church	The museum collection of the Rocsani Church	
Barcea	2 settlements 1 archaeological sites					
Beresti Meria	2 settlements 1 archaeological site			St. Nicolae church	The museum collection of the St. Nicolae church	
Brahasesti	1 citadel	1 mill				
Branistea	1 Trajan's Wall					CF: „Lozioara”, „Fluierasii”
Buciumeni	1 Atanaric's Wall	1 church		Buciumeni monastery	Buciumeni monastery collection	

Cavadinesti	2 settlements 1 archaeological site				CF: „Cavadinii”, „Bujoreanca”,
Certesti		1 church			
Corni	1 Atanaric's Wall				
Corod	1 Atanaric's Wall				
Costache-Negri		1 bust 1 memorial house	„Costachi Negri” Memorial house		
Cuca	1 Atanaric's Wall				
Cudalbi	1 Atanaric's Wall				
Cuza Voda					CF: „Cuzanca”
Draguşeni	1 fortification	1 church			
Fartanesti		1 school			
Foltesti	2 settlements 1 Atanaric's Wall 2 necropolis 1 archaeological site				
Frumusita	1 archaeological site 4 settlements 1 station ensembly	1 train station 1 station ensembly	1 train station 2 mag.		
Fundeni				Village Museum Library	
Ghidigeni	1 settlement	1 manor ensembly	1 manor 1 annex 1 tomb		
Grivita			1 manor 1 church		
Independenta			1 school		
Ivesti				„Hortensia Papadat – Bengescu” Memorial house	
Joraşti	1 necropolis		1 school		
Liesti					CF: „Cununita Satului”
Masacani	1 Atanaric's Wall				
Munteni	1 Atanaric's Wall 1 archaeological site 4 settlements	1 manor ensembly	1 manor gate 1 manor 1 pavilion 1 manor park 1 manor poet		
Nicoreati		2 church ensembles	2 church 1 belfry 1 enclosure wall		
Piscu					CF: „Stefanienii”, „Colindita”
Poiana	1 archaeological site				

	4 fortified settlements						
Radeati				CF: „Radasteanca”			
Rediu	1 Atanaric's Wall	Suhurlui Rural House					
Scanteiesti Schela	2 Atanaric's Wall			CF: „Florile Lozovei”			
Sendreni	3 settlements 1 archaeological site 1 Trajan's Wall						
Smardan	1 Trajan's Wall						
Suceveni	1 settlement			CF: „Florica”, „Cununita Prutului”			
Suhurlui	1 Atanaric's Wall	„Ion Avram-Dunăreanu” Rural House					
Tepu	1 Atanaric's Wall			CF: „Cununita Tepului”			
Tudor Vladimirescu			Vladimiresti monastery The museum collection of the Vladimiresti monastery				
Tulucesti	2 Trajan's Wall		„Vatra cu dor” museum				
Umbraresti	1 settlement						
Valea Marului	1 Atanaric's Wall						
Vântori	2 archaeological sites 5 settlements		Odaia Manolache village museum				
A.T.U. -urban environment -	HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF NATIONAL/LOCAL INTEREST				MUSEUMS	PERFORMANCE AND CONCERT INSTITUTIONS	
	Archaeological sites	ARCHITECTURE		Public monuments	Memorial Houses	Museums	Philharmonic (F) Orchestra (O) Cultural Formations (CF)
		Historical sites/ ensembles	Historical monuments				
Galati	3 archaeological sites 3 settlements 3 necropolis 1 cupt. Roman 1 earth fortification 1 earth castle 1 castellum roman 1 Roman tomb 1 Trajan's Wall 1 Atanaric's Wall	3 urban ensembles 2 church ensembles	1 tomb 6 schools 36 houses 7 churches 1 public garden 1 municipal park 1 garden 1 palace of justice 1 administrative palace 1 dramatic theater 1 cathedral	1 bas-relief 10 busts 2 statues 2 monuments 1 former school 1 Memorial house	„Nicolae Mantu” Memorial house	"Rasvan Angheluta" Museum of Natural Sciences "Casa Colectiilor" museum Museum of Visual Art (Episcopal Palace)	CF: „Doina Covurluiului”; O: Fanfara Valurile Dunarii; CF: Nadara; CF: Olympos

		1 faculty of medicine 1 art museum 1 gate 1 former consul 1 Tinc pharmacy 1 National Bank 1 silo 1 Post office palace 1 VA Urechia library 1 FLuv station 1 fishery 1 wall 1 high school 1 TB hospital 1 military hospital 1 municipal hospital		"Paul Paltanea" History Museum "Casa Cuza Voda" Museum Museum of Christian History, Culture and Spirituality on the Lower Danube "Petru Caraman" Village Museum in Garboavele forest	
Tecuci		1 school 23 houses 1 Goleri inn 1 villa 1 building 1 former tribunal 1 former prefecture 1 magistracy 1 mourt 1 municipal library 1 Post office	3 busts	Mixt Museum	„Tecuțelu”, „Altita”
Tg. Bujor				Museum of history and ethnography	
Beresti	6 settlements 2 archaeological sites			„Paul Bujor” Beresti Memorial house	„Datina”

Table 12 – Natural resources at the level of ATUs in rural and urban environment in Galati County

Source: www.silvaGalati.ro, www.Galati.insse.ro, PATJ Galati

2.3.1.4. Values of intangible cultural heritage in Galati county

Law 26/2008 presents the intangible cultural heritage as the totality of practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, abilities – together with the tools, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated with them – that the communities, groups or individuals recognize as an integral part of their cultural heritage.

Intangible cultural heritage is passed down from generation to generation, constantly recreated by communities and groups, interacting with their nature and history, giving them a sense

of identity and continuity, while helping to promote the respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.³⁰

The most relevant elements belonging to the intangible cultural heritage are: customs, traditions, traditional events, legends, gastronomy, traditional folk crafts, traditional processing workshops, ethnographic elements, objects on textile, paintings.

A.T.U. - rural environment -	ART AND TRADITION	
	FESTIVALS (F), FAIRS (FA), CUSTOMS (C), HOLIDAYS (HO), PILGRIMAGE (P)	FOLK CRAFTS
Balabanesti	P: The church in Zimbru hamlet	Wood carving
Brahasești	P: Toflea „St. Trei Ierarhi și St. Voievod Ștefan cel Mare” Monastery	
Braniatea	"The Enchanted Whistle"	Pottery
Buciumeni	P: Buciumeni „St. Treime” Monastery and the tradition of youth participation	
Cavadinesti	HO: The song and dance holiday	
Certesti	P: Carlomanesti „St. Martiri Brancoveni” Monastery	
Costache-Negri	HO: The meetings in Manjina	
Cuca	HO: Linden Sunday	
Cudalbi	P: Gologanu „Nasterea Maicii Domnului” Monastery	
Draganesti	P: „Adam Adormirea Maicii Domnului ” Monastery	
Fundeni		Woven-sew
Ivesti	Preserved traditions of the Roma	Winery
Liesti	Preserved traditions of the Roma	
Munteni	Preserved traditions of the Roma	
Nicoresti		Winery
Oancea		Winery
Rediu	Peony Festival (Plevna Forest) in May	
Sendreni	P: „St. Trifon” Monastery	
Smârdan	Folk dances	
Suceveni		Winery
Tepu	Mask games, folk dances	
T. Vladimirescu	P: Vladimiresti Monastery	
A.T.U. -urban environment –	FESTIVALS (F), FAIRS (FA), CUSTUMS (C), HOLIDAYS (HO), PILGRIMAGE (P)	FOLK CRAFTS
Galati	HO: „La Dunare de Sanziene” HO: „Ziua Dunarii” Crafts Fair C: The road of vineyards and wine of Galați F: Mackerel Festival P: „St. Arhangheli – Metoc” Monastery P: „Vasile cel Mare” Monastery P: „Ioan Gura de Aur” Monastery P: Lower Danube Archdiocese	Folk masks Craftsmanship Painting Sculpture

³⁰Legea 26/2008, Art. 2, Art. 3

Tecuci	HO: 1 st September – represents the first documentary attestation in 1 st September, 1435	
Tg. Bujor	Peony Festival Preserved traditions of the Roma	Obtaining high quality red wines (Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Black Feteasca)
Beresti	HO: Berestean autumn HO: Acacia Festival	

Table 13 – Art and tradition resources at the level of ATUs in rural and urban environment in Galați County

Source: www.silvaGalați.ro, www.Galați.insse.ro, PATJ Galați

2.3.2. Analysis of the current state of the tourism infrastructure

2.3.2.1. Elements of mobility and accessibility

From an administrative point of view, the territory of Galati County is made up of the following structures: **two municipalities (Galati and Tecuci), 2 cities (Beresti and Targu Bujor), 61 communes and 180 villages. The county seat is the municipality of the same name – Galati.**

The urban localities from Galati county fall into the following ranks established by Law no. 351/2001:

- Rank I: Galati municipality of national importance;
- Rank II: Tecuci municipality of county importance;
- Rank III: Targu Bujor and Beresti, cities of zonal importance;

Law no. 351/2001 establishes the hierarchy of rural localities on two ranks (successive to those in which urban localities fall), according to which, in the county are present:

- Rank IV: 61 commune residence villages with influence over the component villages;
- Rank V: 180 villages, of which 178 are component villages of the communes and 2 villages belonging to the city of Targu Bujor.

EUROPEAN TRANSPORT NETWORK FRAMEWORK

Galati County is crossed by **VII Pan European Corridor**, which corresponds to the route of the Danube River (Nuremberg – Vienna – Budapest – Bratislava – Belgrade – Drobeta Turnu Severin – Vidin/Calafat – Giurgiu/Ruse – Galați – Black Sea). This corridor is completed by the Rhine-Main Canal and is the main river infrastructure artery of the European Union.

The county is nearby the **IX Pan European Corridor**, which ensures the road and railway infrastructure of Europe on the North – South, starting from the Baltic Sea (Lithuania) and the Gulf of Finland, St. Petersburg, in the direction of Moscow – Kiev – Chisinau – Romania – Bulgaria – Varlezia. This corridor passes approximately 115 km away from the city of Galați, through the neighboring county – Vrancea.



Figure 8 – Pan European transport corridors
 Source: <http://www.dryport.ro>

The route of the European Roads that include the Galati area are:

- European Road Class B (branch/connection) E 577: Slobozia – Braila – Galați – (Republic of Moldova) Comrat – Chisinau – Dubasari – Ukraine) Odessa – Poltava;
- European road class A (intermediate north-south) E 87 – 2030 km: (Ukraine) Odessa – Izmail – Reni – (Moldova) Vulcanesti – (Romania) Galati – Braila – Macin - Isaccea – Tulcea – Babadag – Ovidiu – Constanta – Eforie - Mangalia – (Bulgaria) Sabla – Cavarna – Balchik – Varna – Nessebar – Burgas - Malko Tarnovo – (Turkey) Dereköy – Kırklareli – Eceabat – (ferry) – Çanakkale – Izmir – Antalya.

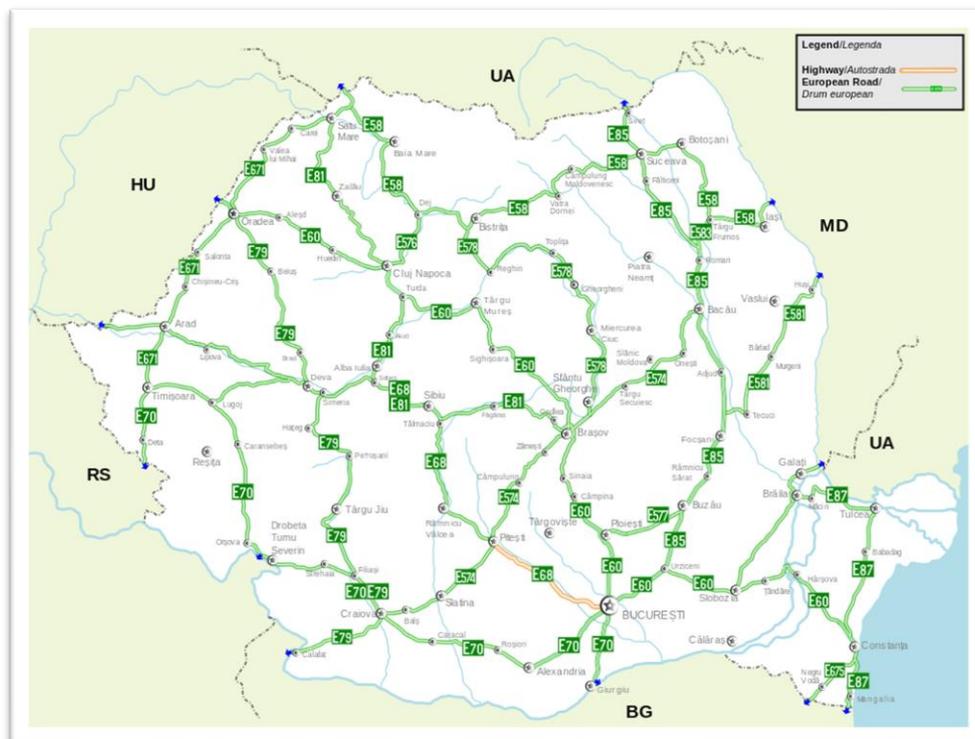


Figure 9 – European road network at national level
 Source: <https://ro.wikipedia.org>

2.3.2.2. Accommodation infrastructure

The tourism infrastructure includes all the goods and means created by man, meant to highlight the natural and anthropic tourism resources that a certain territory has. The development of the tourism phenomenon cannot be achieved without the existence of an adequate tourist infrastructure, known in some studies and under the name of material base of tourism or structures of tourist reception. The volume and the structure of the tourist circulation, from the issuing areas to the destination with tourist patrimony, are influenced by the technical-material base of the tourism.

Structurally, the tourist infrastructure includes: the accommodation base, the public catering base, the ways and means of tourist transport, the endowments for recreation and treatment, the auxiliary or complementary endowments.

The accommodation base represents the main component of the tourist infrastructure, which impels the overall development of tourism, the tourist circulation and conditions to stay in a territory with tourism resources. Accommodation capacities are the endowments that ensure the tourists to spend the night and rest for a certain period of time, and based on differentiated rates depending on their degree of comfort, season and other characteristic functions (food, recreation, etc.).

The classification of the accommodation spaces is done in the international tourism practice, including in Romania, according to several criteria:

- Depending on the structure of the accommodation network, they can be differentiated: tourist reception structures with basic accommodation function (hotels, motels, chalets, villas, tourism inns) and complementary tourist reception structures (campsites, pensions, shelters and shelters);
- Depending on the comfort category, there are five comfort categories, rated from 1 to 5 stars;
- Depending on the mode of functioning: accommodation units with permanent activity, with seasonal activity (mountain areas) and with pronounced seasonal activity (seaside area);
- Depending on the duration of stay: transit, stay or mixed accommodation units;
- Depending on the location and the touristic function, there can be mentioned tourist accommodation structures in: mountain resorts, seaside resorts, balneary resorts, tourist centers and urban localities, rural tourist pensions;
- Depending on the physical capacity of the accommodation units: small units (20-40 places), medium units (between 41 and 200-400 places), large units (tourist complexes, over 400 places, sometimes even 1000 places or more);
- Depending on the form of ownership: in full ownership, co-ownership or multiple ownership.

TYPE OF TOURIST RECEPTION STRUCTURES	2016	2017	2018
Hotels	16	15	16
Hostels	5	5	4
Motels	4	4	4
Tourist villas	5	6	6
Tourist stops	1	1	1
Tourist houses	1	1	1
Tourist pensions	8	7	8
Agrotourism pensions	0	3	3
TOTAL	40	42	43

Table 14 – Tourist reception units by types of structures in Galati County, in 2016, 2017, 2018

Source: INSSE Tempo Online

TYPE OF TOURIST RECEPTION STRUCTURES	2016	2017	2018
Hotels	1297	1264	1293
Hostels	314	314	269
Motels	95	95	95
Tourist villas	73	91	91
Tourist stops	62	62	62
Tourist houses	34	34	34
Tourist pensions	199	167	197
Agrotourism pensions	0	26	26
TOTAL	2074	2053	2067

Table 15 – Accommodation capacity by types of structures in Galati County, in 2016, 2017, 2018

Source: INSSE Tempo Online

At national level, the total number of accommodation units is 8453 at the end of 2018, increased compared to the last two years: 7905 in 2017 and 6946 in 2016.

The number of accommodation units in Galati occupies a percentage of 0.50% of the national total, registering in the last 3 years a slight increase, of approximately 8%.

Despite the fact that the number of accommodation units has increased, the number of accommodation places they provide had a variable evolution in the last 3 years. At the end of 2018 there is an increase of approximately 0.7%, while compared to 2016 there is a decrease of 0.33%. The variations cannot be classified as significant and are not considered to have major influences on tourism in Galati County.

The situation is worrying considering the ratio of only 0.50% of the total number of tourist reception units in Galati County and those at the national level, given the major tourist potential that this area has.

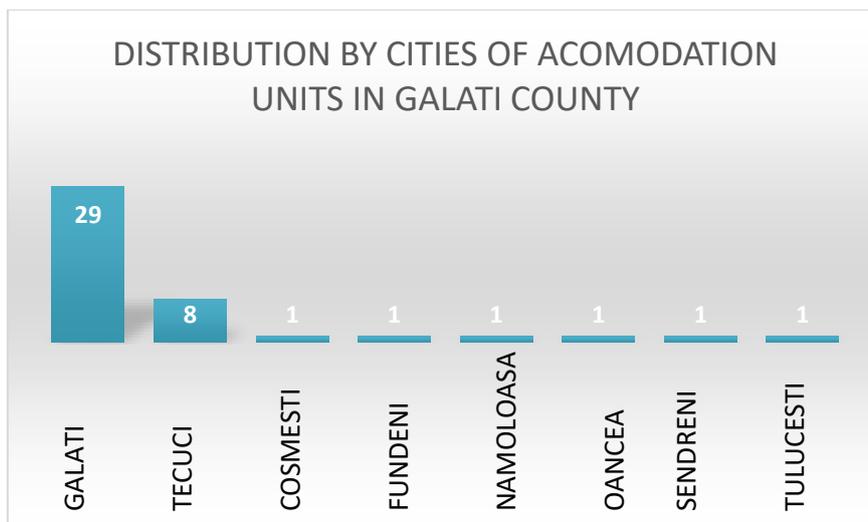


Figure 10 – Distribution by cities of accommodation units in Galati county

Source: INSSE Tempo Online

The distribution by cities of the accommodation units at county level highlights the high importance of Galați municipality (67.5% of the total), followed by Tecuci municipality (18.6% of the total). The current situation highlights the lack of the tourism concerns in most of the component localities of the county, their concentration in only two cities being a real problem in terms of tourism development.

2.3.2.3. Information and promotion

Information and promotion are key tools in tourism development. The territory that is the object of the present research work has a special historical/cultural and ecotourism patrimony and with great potential for valorification.

If in the case of historical/cultural tourism we can speak of a relatively high visibility, within ecotourism there is a fairly narrow segment of the tourist market, faced with many problems, such as: poor cooperation at local level, modest promotion nationally and internationally, the existence of a limited offer that are poorly diversified, poor development of ecotourism infrastructure in protected areas, labor migration, low level of training of the employed who are in the field.

At the level of Galati county we are talking about a high offer of objectives that can support both historical/cultural tourism and ecotourism, but their visibility is reduced at both international and national level.

Tourism development should begin with the decision to include in the tourist circuit a certain area and the construction of tourism facilities and continue with the actual development of the tourism activity. Each of these phases is carried out through its own agents, who also have the responsibility to protect the environment and respect the principles of sustainable tourism.

The legislative framework for informing and promoting historical/cultural tourism and ecotourism consists of:

- LAW no. 275 of November 23, 2018 regarding the approval of the Government Ordinance no. 15/2017 for the amendment and completion of the Government Ordinance no. 58/1998 on the organization and development of tourism in Romania;
- LAW no. 170 of October 7, 2016 on the tax specific to certain activities;

- GD no. 20/2012 on the approval of the Multiannual Program for tourism marketing and promotion and of the Multiannual Program for the development of tourism destinations, forms and products;
- GD no. 120/2008 and GD no. 314/2009 on the approval of the Annual Marketing and Promotion Program and the Annual Tourism Product Development Program;
- **Minister of Tourism Order no. 1014/19.07.2018** regarding the approval of the national **norms** for the organization and development of its own simplified procedure in order to award the contract having as objective the realization of an advertising film and 3 spots/cuts for tourist promotion;
- Order no. 1096/3 September 2008 for the approval of the Methodological Norms regarding the accreditation of the national tourism information and promotion centers.

In the period after 1990, the development of tourism in Romania was based mainly on the profit from businesses reinvested in tourism, because tourism faced the lack of government facilities and subsidies necessary to support development, as well as the undersizing the funds allocated for tourism promotion, which led to a tourism industry characterized by weaknesses. Tourism has seen an upward trend since 2000, with the establishment of national development programs ("Super skiing in the Carpathians", "Danube Cruises", "Wine Road", etc.), social programs ("Country Holidays", "Seaside for all", "A week of recovery in the balneary resorts", etc.), as well as training programs for the tourism workforce.

In general, the main indicators of tourism have increased, but not spectacularly, in contrast to the privatization index which has grown by increasing the percentage of private property in total accommodation units: from 35.3% in 1999 to 92% in 2003. In recent years, the number of accommodation units has increased, due to the emergence of new types of tourist accommodation structures (hotels, rural pensions, etc.).

MARKETING, INFORMATION AND PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

In the development of historical/cultural tourism and ecotourism products, it must be taken into account that, in general, potential tourists have a high level of education; therefore their expectations should also be much higher, and the realization of a product that meets these expectations is essential.

Information activities can have various directions: promoting tourism of ecological infrastructure (resource-efficiency buildings), informing the public about the natural heritage, education about the nature-friendly behavior and ecological activities. The ecological activities can also contribute to economic development by attracting tourism to areas that are neglected by tourists. Ecological Centers can, for example, promote the natural and historical heritage of an area and contributes to local development by influencing tourists, such as creating new jobs. Ecotourism diversifies the tourism offer in one region and offers an alternative to classic tourism. In addition, the demand for outdoor activities is currently high and the regions that respond to this demand, providing a high quality environment and appropriate infrastructure will benefit economically. Galati, as a regional area, can benefit due to ecotourism.

In order to promote tourism offers, the aim is to achieve a correct marketing, providing customers with complete and responsible information that leads to increased respect for the natural and cultural environment of the areas visited, but also the degree of satisfaction of tourists.

The development of the tourism potential, in order to increase the attractiveness of the area, can be achieved by promoting projects, partnerships and association structures that consolidates a future cooperation between the main factors in tourism, as a result of a future strategic program.

INFORMATION AND VISITATION INFRASTRUCTURE

In designing the infrastructure, the local context must be taken into account, rather than promoting general solutions. The solutions must include the following:

- Visiting centers;
- Information points in the main access points in the areas of interest;
- Establishing local tourism information and promotion centers;
- Creating special routes (thematic, equestrian, bicycle, photo-hunting, etc.) with resting places, information and interpretation panels, orientation arrows, etc.;
- Restoration of existing tourist routes and arrangement of other new routes;
- Camping places – with information and warning panels;
- Arranging/restoring shelters and tourist cabins;
- Parking lots near the access places in the park;
- Placement of signs, information, warning and promotion of parks.

Regarding the tourism development projects and programs, within the Regional Operational Program 2007-2013, in Galati county, 2 projects were ongoing, through Priority Axis 5/KAI 5.3 – **Promoting the tourist potential and creating the necessary infrastructure, in order to increase the attractiveness of Romania as a tourism destination:**

- Galati – art and architecture – old and new by the Administration for Social and Economic Development Galati;
- Ecotourism in lower meadow of the Inferior Prut, by the Frumusita Local Council.

Within the Regional Operational Program 2014-2020, tourism is treated through Priority Axis 7 – **Diversification of local economies through a sustainable development of tourism.**

In Galati county, the most important form of tourist information and promotion is Danube Information Center for the Promotion and Development of Danube Tourism, center established in 2017.

The Development Strategy of the Municipality of Galați aims at a series of measures in order to dynamize the tourist activity, among the Major Axis: “TOURISTIC GALATI” – Objective: tourist promotion on the national and international market – ACTIONS:

- *establishment of a tourism information and promotion center;*
- *creation of a network of tourism information points;*
- *creation and maintenance of a website of Galati municipality to increase its international visibility;*
- *participation in national and international events (fairs and exhibitions);*
- *creation of a unitary tourist information system at the level of accommodation units (printing of tourist maps, brochures containing specific types and forms of tourism, units with food, transport, etc.);*

- *ensuring the means of information, orientation, publicity, advertising and display for tourist purposes (eg: signposts, information panels, street plans).*³¹

2.3.3. Tourism demand and circulation

The tourism demand represents the set of persons who express their desire to move periodically and temporarily outside their residence for other reasons than that of performing a paid activity. The tourist demand is formed in the place of residence of the tourist that we call the demand center, characterized by different ethnic, economic, social and political features of the national territory.

In Europe, tourism is considered one of the sectors with the best growth potential, with positive effects on the number of new jobs, tourism being the subject of specific priority measures that provide for the modernization of infrastructure in all the complexity of the term and development and diversification of services related to tourism (new information and communication technologies, cultural networks, training of qualified staff, etc.). The optimism regarding the valorification of tourism through communities is seriously tempered by the reduced use of heritage (the most interesting local resources are often not available and equipped for tourism), poor integration of tourism actors – public authorities, private, associations – and the lack of synergy between the intervention sectors that could be connected to tourism.

The influx of tourists and visitors in different regions is, of course, determined by the attractiveness, value, number and quality of tourism attractions in those areas, but also by the level of knowledge and presentation, for example, the way the advertise is made and the ingenuity of its composition.

Aligning with the balanced regional development, there are counties in Romania that have already inventoried their entire natural and cultural dowry they have as tourism objectives, so that a patrimonial reevaluation of priorities for promotion is sufficient, in order to properly determine the necessary funds. In the regional policy regarding the valorification at European level of the tourism objectives of certain value, correctly ranked as attractiveness, intrinsic value, national importance, etc., funds must be provided for their protection.³²

Tourism is a constantly developing market, especially in Romania. The difference is no longer given by the hotel offered to the tourist, nor by the program. The tourist is more and more educated and experienced, knowing what to ask for and appreciating what is offered to him.³³

The latest Eurostat report on tourism recorded 1 billion trips made by European citizens in 2010. Of these, it seems that more than three quarters were national trips and only a quarter international. Romania ranks first in Europe in this regard, 94% of Romanian citizens' holidays being spent in the country. However, similar proportions are recorded in Spain (92%), Bulgaria and Greece (91%).

Regarding long-term travel (actual holidays), Romania has a percentage of 34% nationally and only 5% internationally. The rest are short trips, usually on weekends conditioned by affordable flights or other convenient means. Unlike Romanian citizens, Luxembourgers have an average of 62%

³¹ Galati Municipality Development Strategy 2016-2025

³² Mazilu Mirela Elena, Regional tourism from the perspective of the Danube strategy – Iron Gates Region, Cactus Tourism Journal Vol. 2, Issue 2/2011

³³ Mazilu Mirela Elena, Romania oscillating in the shaping of the Tourist destination profile at a World Level

of long-term trips abroad. They are also the most expensive tourists in the entire European community. In 2011, European tourists spent, on average, 234 euros for a trip in the country and 737 euros for one abroad. The largest amounts in national tourism were invested in France (77 billion euros) and the lowest in Estonia (38 million euros).³⁴

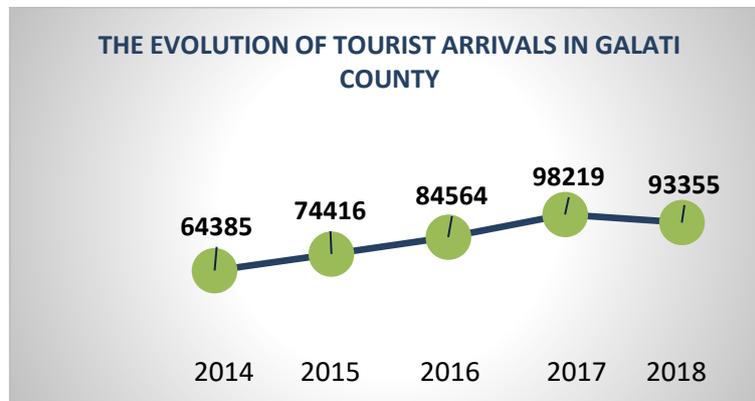


Figure 11 – The evolution of tourist arrivals in Galati County in the last 5 years
Source: INSSE Tempo Online

In Galati county, the existing accommodation base can successfully satisfy the ascending tourist demand of the last 5 years, the increase of the accommodation capacity and the degree of comfort (by the appearance of new accommodation units or the modernization of the existing ones) can also represent a strategic development direction for the private environment of Galati.

Referring to the last year on which we have complete information, in 2018, the tourist capacity for the 12 months amounts to a total of 754.455 accommodation places, while in the same year a number of 160.210 overnight stays were registered. Considering that in the same year the number of arrivals was 93.355, we deduce that the average stay was 1.7 days, from which we easily say that Galati County is mainly a transit tourist destination, for various reasons tourists spending on average a longer stay less than 2 nights.

Referring to the last 5 years, although there is an upward trend both in terms of arrivals in the county and overnight stays; the number of days that a tourist spends in Galati County tends to decrease. If last year we can talk about an average of 1.7 days, in 2014 and 2015 the average was 1.8 days, in 2016 1.7 days, and in 2017 1.6 days.

³⁴<https://www.adroltenia.ro/>

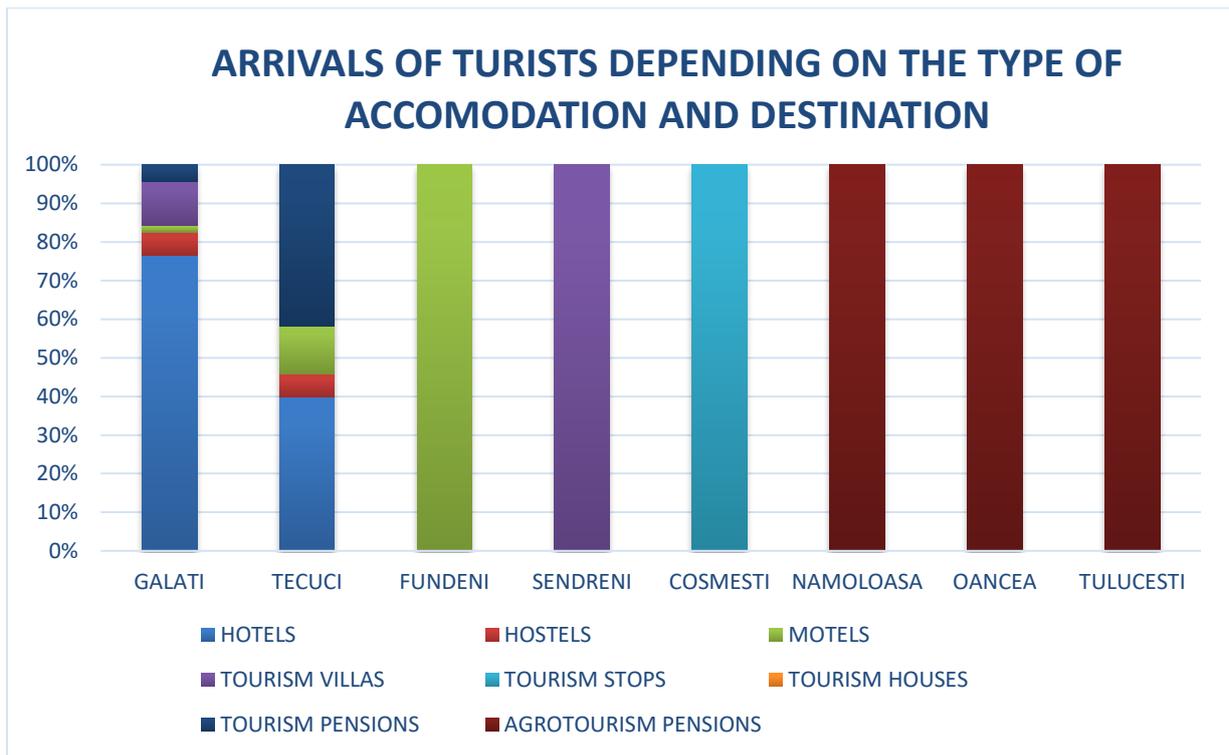


Figure 12 – Arrivals of tourists depending on the type of accommodation and destination town
Source: INSSE Tempo Online

The variety regarding the types of accommodation units and the preferences of tourists for some of them can be observed in the case of Galati and Tecuci Municipalities, cases where we can talk about accommodation units such as: hotels, hostels, motels, tourism villas, tourism stops, tourism houses and tourism pensions; of these, hotels are preferred.

Other forms of tourism can be found in only 6 other localities in the county, cases in which tourists opt for accommodation in motels, tourist villas, tourist stops or agrotourism pensions; each of these localities having in percentage of 100% one of the previously mentioned forms of accommodation.

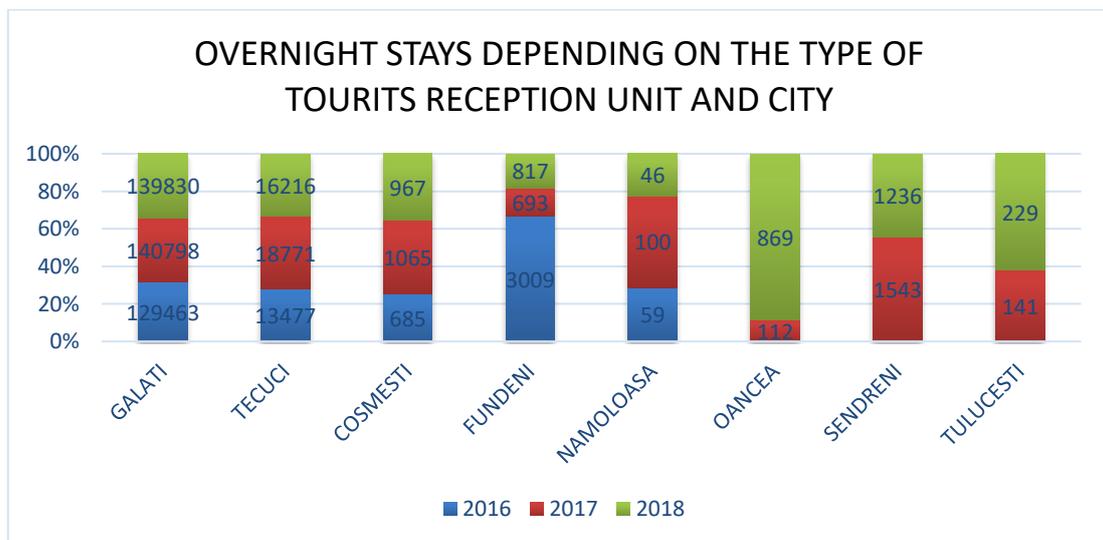


Figure 13 – Evolution of overnight stays depending on the type of tourist reception unit and city 2016, 2017, 2018
Source: INSSE Tempo Online

2.3.4. The level of national and international visibility of the existing county tourism

The share of foreign tourists in the last two years has remained relatively constant, registering in 2018 an increase of 1.37% compared to 2017 (13.186 foreign tourists in 2017 compared to 13.370 foreign tourists in 2018). It is expected that one of the future measures will be to focus on the international market of the forms of management of touristic units, especially given the potential to become a point of maximum interest on cruise on the Danube. Cruise ships bring 40,000 tourists to the Delta every year from France, Germany, Great Britain, Austria, etc., but they do not stop in Galați and Braila due to the lack of a convincing tourist offer. Nationally, there is an increased interest of foreign tourists for the Danube Delta area, Tulcea and other resorts in the balneary area.

In the trip of foreign tourists to the Danube Delta, Galati and Braila could be key points. While Braila can attract hundreds of visitors with buildings from the interwar period located in the old city center, Braila's ruins – a network of tunnels built by the turks or the Memorial House "Panait Istrati", which would attract especially french tourists, who consider Istrati a french writer. In Galati, tourists could consider as points of attraction: the Roman vestiges (the ruins of the Roman Camp and the Roman Cave, to which are added the "Roman Valley", a 25 km fortification, for the construction of which the Roman soldiers carried 1.5 million cubic meters of land a fortification that can be seen in the geography of the place and in space) and the vineyards (in Galați there are 5-6 famous vineyards, with gold medaled wines, the most famous being the wines from Nicoresti, which were sold by merchants in Vienna since 1620).

The previously mentioned attractions could be an attractive for foreign tourists, and Galati and Braila could create a common offer of tourist attractions, because the distance between the two cities is only 15 km.

Currently, the main attraction for foreign tourists arriving in the area is the village of Valeni (Republic of Moldova), located 25 km from Cahul. This is how a branch of cultural tourism is developed, thousands of foreign tourists being attracted by the local culture and the traditions of the locals.

In order to obtain a concrete image on the tourist activity regarding the access of foreign tourists in Galati county, in this study we will present comparisons between a series of aspects registered in August 2018 compared to August 2017, month considered to be the month of peak in tourism.

In August 2018, tourists preferred to stay in 3-star tourism reception structures (79.8%), followed by: 4-star (10.7%), 2-star (5.2%) and 1-star (4.3%). The arrivals of romanian tourists in tourism reception structures with accommodation functions in August 2018 was 83.6%, while the arrivals of foreign tourists represented 16.4% of the total number of arrivals. The number of foreign tourists arriving in Galati County in August 2018 decreased by 8.7% compared to August 2017, while the number of Romanian tourists decreased by 2.9%. Among the foreign tourists who stayed in the tourist reception structures in Galati County, 92.1% are from Europe, 4.0% are from Asia, 2.8% are from North America and 1.1% from other countries.

Galati County	August 2017	August 2018	August 2018 compared with August 2017
Romanian tourists	7928	7699	97,1%
Foreign tourists	1657	1513	91,3%
TOTAL	9585	9212	96,1%

Table 16 – Arrivals of tourists in tourist reception structures with tourist accommodation functions – Galati county – August 2017, August 2018

Source: INS, Press release No. 3115 /25.10.2018

Overnight stays in tourist reception structures with accommodation functions, in August 2018 totaled 14362, registering a decrease of 7.8% compared to the corresponding month of 2017. Overnight stays of Romanian tourists in tourist reception structures with accommodation functions in August 2018 accounted for 79.1%, while overnight stays of foreign tourists accounted for 20.9% of the total number of overnight stays.

By types of tourist reception structures, overnight stays in hotels have a share of 71.4% of the total overnight stays, those in tourist villas 10.0%, in tourist pensions 9.0%, and in motels 2.1%.

Galati County	August 2017	August 2018	August 2018 compared with August 2017
Romanian tourists	11642	11357	97,6%
Foreign tourists	3934	3005	76,4%
TOTAL	15576	14362	92,2%

Table 17 – Overnight stays in tourist reception structures – Galati County – August 2017, August 2018

Source: INS, Press release No. 3115 /25.10.2018

The average length of stay in August 2018 was 1.5 days for Romanian tourists, and for foreigners 2.0 days, less than the data recorded in the same month of 2017: 1.5 days for Romanian tourists and 2.4 days for foreigners.

2.4. SWOT analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Diversified offer of tourist objectives; – The existence of protected areas and unique natural landscapes in the country; – Existence of cultural and historical heritage objectives of national interest (places of worship, monumental buildings, vestiges, etc.); – Existence of a well-represented intangible heritage (traditions, customs, etc.); – Elaboration of a PUZ (Zonal Urban Plan) for a protected built area; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Low number of tourists and visitors; – The recreation infrastructure in the area is insufficient in relation to the large number of tourists that could benefit from the existing potential; – Most of the historical monuments in the county are in an advanced state of degradation and are not properly valorized for tourist purposes; – Lack of a local tourist brand; – Short duration of the tourist stay;

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Elaboration of a PUZ (Zonal Urban Plan) for the Danube Cliff; – Slight increase in the number of tourists lately; – Slight increase in the number of foreign tourists (potential for tourism development in the Danube Delta area); – Relatively long season: April - November; – Good natural conditions for outdoor tourism activities – fishing and hunting, hiking, water sports, wildlife and bird watching, equitation, cycling, rock climbing, etc .; – Reduced pollution in most rural areas; – The existence of cultural and historical vestiges on the territory of the region, which can represent points of major interest for thematic circuits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Lack of integrated, diversified tourist packages (historical/cultural and ecological tourism), including in cooperation with other tourist centers in the area (Danube Delta); – Lack of tourism information and promotion centers; – Lack of an airport; – Lack of promotion; – Access by public transport to most major protected areas is limited; public transport to tourist attractions is poorly organized and promoted; – Lack of informations about public transport, especially for railway, naval and road routes, both for Romanian and foreign tourists; – Lack of an integrated waste management system in tourist areas; – Insufficient valorification of historical monuments through specific architectural arrangements; – Insufficient cooperation between different tourism operators and professional associations; – Inadequate tourist infrastructure in most protected areas (visitor centers, information centers, tourist signs, ecotourism trails, animal observation points, camping facilities, shelters, cycling and equitation trails, rafting facilities, canoes, etc.); – Limited access for people with disabilities to many tourist attractions; – Incorrect assimilation of tourism development with a real estate business and perpetuation of this concept in local development policies; – Failure to respect the traditional architecture in the case of new constructions, leading to the degradation of the general image of the tourist areas; – Violation of visiting rules – the movement of tourists on unmarked routes and in illegal places; camping and arranging fireplaces in illegal places; deliberate destruction or picking up some species from the flora; cutting wood for fire; abandonment of large amounts of waste along roads or around objectives of interest.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The possibility of using European funds to support the development of tourism infrastructure; – Availability, interest and involvement of civil society (NGOs) in the promotion and revitalization of tourism; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Poor perception and involvement of the local business environment in the tourism development; – Negative online feedback on the quality of accommodation and food services;

- The touristic valorification of the historical vestiges from the Galati area, the architectural monuments, the memorial houses, the places of worship, the Roman vestiges;
- Valorizing of the folk traditions and customs, local gastronomy, organizing festivals (National Comedy Festival, Mackerel Festival, International Marching Band Festival, "Pearl of the Danube" Festival, etc.);
- Possibility to access European funds to make the necessary investments for the application of PUZ (Zonal Urban Plan) for the protected built area;
- The possibility of accessing European funds for the necessary investments for the application of the PUZ (Zonal Urban Plan) for the Danube Cliff;
- The possibility of accessing European funds for investments in tourist routes and rehabilitation of historical/cultural objectives;
- Creation of a tourist circuit for ship stops in the port of Galati;
- The possibility of accessing European funds for investments in tourist information points;
- Improving the infrastructure;
- Construction of an airport;
- Expanding and promoting the concept of ecotourism among the population;
- Co-opting the international tour operators to include in their offer trips on the Danube with stops in Galati – Braila;
- Granting fiscal facilities;
- Selective and planned construction of new accommodation;
- Reconstruction and improvement of the existing accommodation;
- Inclusion of the tourist offer of Galati County in the strategy for promoting the country brand;
- Participation in national and international tourism fairs;
- The existence of tour operators to provide tourists from the cruise ships on the Danube trips to the city;
- Itinerant type tourism with cultural values: archeological vestiges, historical monuments, art, religion;
- The existence of the Danube Tourism Exchange, a specialized tourism fair, which takes place every year in a different city within the member states of the Danube Tourism Commission;
- Inefficient use of funds for tourism development in the municipality and county;
- Degradation of heritage objectives in the absence of investments;
- Devalorification of the local tourist potential with negative repercussions on the economic activity;
- Failure to apply the PUZ (Zonal Urban Plan) for the protected built area due to particular local interests;
- Failure to apply the PUZ (Zonal Urban Plan) for the Danube Cliff, protected due to particular local interests;
- Decreased tourist traffic due to the evolution of the economy;
- Continuous decrease of the number of tourists;
- Lack of a development strategy and implementation of a quality tourism;
- Intense river traffic with dangerous merchandise and accidental pollution that can have repercussions, not only on water quality, but also on the biodiversity of certain areas;
- Reduction of the forest in the area, aspect that affects the quality of the environment;
- Decreasing number of tourists who purchase cruises on the Danube;
- The existence of anthropogenic pressure on the natural heritage.

- Increased international interest in ecotourism and biodiversity conservation.

2.5. Identifying development needs

CULTURAL/HISTORICAL TOURISM

The potential for development:

- results from the existence of a rich local history reflected and supported by a significant local historical and architectural heritage.

Possibilities to valorize the potential:

- highlighting the historical heritage and historical monuments through conservation and restoration;
- designing thematic circuits/routes to visit the county;
- mentioning, by means of plaques, the representative functions that some buildings have hosted (palaces, memorial houses, public offices, consulates);
- introduction of historical monuments in thematic tourist circuits;
- organization of cultural events, exhibitions, evenings, debates and meetings in restored heritage buildings and their promotion;
- identification and activation of local stories and legends (for example, underground network of pits, cellars, tunnels) with marking of visiting and access points.

ECOTOURISM

The potential for development:

- the presence of eco destinations in the county;
- the growing interest in environmental protection in various national and western environments;
- the existence of NGOs that can support ecotourism, bird watching, etc.

Possibilities to valorize the potential:

- combining ecotourism activities with recreation and leisure activities;
- involvement of NGOs and educational institutions in the promotion of ecotourism (bicycle excursions on arranged routes, tours for nature observation, visiting fish farms, fishing, excursions on established routes);
- increasing the number of ecotourism certified accommodation units.

3. TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



Photo source: Google Images

3.1. Vision. Mission. Directions of action

OVERVIEW

The development strategy of historical/cultural tourism and ecotourism in Galati County has as landmarks the opportunities and threats that are found in the region, which were identified in the analysis section of this study.

Taking advantage of opportunities is the ramp for relaunching and increasing the tourist activity in the county, and the prevention of threats ensures the proper functioning of the implementation process. The tourism development strategy focuses on a series of priority areas, at the level of which the strategic objectives and actions have been outlined.



Figure 14 – Challenges for the development of cultural/historical tourism and ecotourism at county level

Source: Interpretation Consultant

In 2020, Galati County is a favorite tourist destination of Romania, with an emerging international profile, attractive in at least 2-3 seasons, urban and natural alike, good destination for any category of traveler: young people, families, explorers, with a diversified offer of experiences and tourist products, gateway to multicultural Dobrogea.

The basis of the strategy for the development of cultural/historical tourism and ecotourism in Galati County is represented by the concept of sustainable development, a principle that underlies the entire economic and social growth provided in the development strategies at national level. This concept involves ensuring a balance between economic growth and conservation/reconstruction of the natural environment, designed to ensure a harmonious development, able to meet both current and future requirements, with the ultimate goal of harmonizing the short-term benefits of the business environment and the long-term benefits of the community and social indicators

Tourism in Galati County in 2039 is the framework element of local development, an essential factor for increasing the living standard of the population and a pole of attracting investments. Tourist destinations are internationally competitive in terms of the value of the tourist resources available, but also those that can be created. Galati County managed to establish itself as a tourist area in the national tourist system by identifying this area with tourist activities.

At county level we are also talking about the creation of a tourist brand, promoted through national tourism programs, but also within the regional marketing and promotion programs of the South-Eastern development Region.

Galati County has a growing reputation as an active, dynamic, inclusive tourist destination, with economic opportunities, with a growing cultural sector, which attracts significant investments.

Galati is in 2039 a county with a dynamic administration, with public services executed at high performance standards, with smart and synergistic investments that consolidate the tourist infrastructure.

2039 MISSION

The general mission is to generate tourism development for the benefit of the community, valorizing on differentiating local tourism resources in a creative, current and innovative way, transforming vulnerabilities into opportunities, in a holistic, integrative approach, supporting investments in all types of capital: human (education), physical (infrastructure), symbolic (promotion), economic (cogeneration, partnership), administrative (integrated management), cultural (events).

- Rethinking the logic of tourism focusing on experiences, connecting local opportunities with cogeneration agents (involved travelers);
- Cooperating for the management and development of the tourism sector as a strategic component of community development;
- Recovering the rural DNA and celebrate multiculturalis;
- Recovering the urban identity and consolidate the local pride as a unique destination in Romania;
- Investing in education – we attract talent, we grow professionals;
- Investing in the image of the county;
- Developinh the public infrastructure;
- Changing the way we communicate with our “guests”, facilitating the co-creation of local experiences;
- Communicating “proof of concept” – examples of good local practices (generates credibility, accelerates development);
- Consolidating the brand of Galati County at the tourist level;
- Capturing and channeling the local community and the business environment (cardinal partners of development), continuously strengthen the SME sector, encouraging innovation in tourism, financing creative entrepreneurship in tourism.

MAJOR DIRECTIONS OF ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Diversify the offer and generate new tourist products (citybreak, ecotourism, cultural tourism), we reduce the seasonality, we increase the average length of stay; ○ Investment in development – generates “flagship” investments in public equipment – which generates positive effects, synergies, including in private initiatives; ○ Developing the cultural sector and generate an intelligent policy of events, which favors the attenuation of seasonality; ○ Ecotourism promotion – providing complete and responsible information that leads to increased respect for the natural and cultural environment of the visited areas; ○ Reforming the development pivots, investing in education, public services – as priority directions, business environment – new performance standards (contribution of professional competition); ○ Generalize the use of technology as a pivot of development in tourism (in communication, experience, evaluation, feedback, etc.); ○ Increase the quality of public services (transport, sanitation, maintenance of public spaces); ○ Attract investments in tourism through partnership, seriousness and generation of opportunities.
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3.2. Strategic objectives

➤ GENERAL OBJECTIVE

G.O. 1 – Sustainable, integrated and quality public and private urban infrastructure, which ensures a representative tourist image and facilities oriented towards tourists and the local community

- SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

S.O. 1 – Green-blue infrastructure and a network of adaptable, high-quality urban public spaces that support a European level tourist experience

Investment priorities

- Improving the quality and connectivity of the existing system of urban public spaces for tourists and the community;
- Creating one's own identity and valorizing the public spaces to create a unique tourist experience and to support the development of the local economy;
- Using the strategic field resources in Galati County for the creation of new leisure facilities, attractive and representative from a tourist point of view;
- Landscape rearrangement of green public areas in the urban environment, with elements of coloristic, olfactory, textural and perennial diversity of planted fauna shown by the local species (native, adapted to specific climato-pedological conditions) to generate an attractive urban climate and to emphasize and perpetuate the presence of the natural element in the urban setting;
- Development of the tourist infrastructure on the Danube.

S.O. 2 – Safe, intelligent and accessible mobility, with an integrated and sustainable transport system, as a basis for a sustainable and competitive tourism development

Investment priorities

- Ensuring a good accessibility of Galati County at national and international level and an optimal connectivity in the territory, which would allow the development of a well-balanced, fair and diversified tourism;
- Increasing the efficiency and comfort of tourist travels by connecting the objectives in the county;
- Development of sustainable and non-polluting alternatives for tourist mobility by implementing solutions designed to balance modal quotas and serve the need to experience environmentally friendly mobility.

S.O. 3 – A quality tourism, related facilities and equipment, which consolidates the position of Galati County as a pole of historical/cultural tourism and ecotourism

Investment priorities

- Investments in the reconfiguration and rehabilitation of the existing cultural, sports and events facilities in order to satisfy a wider need to internationalize the offer of local events of Galati County in terms of tourism;
- Use of strategic field resources on the territory of the county for the development of polarizing tourist functions at county level.

S.O. 4 – Public and private built heritage valued for tourism to support the local economy

Investment priorities

- Rehabilitation and valorification of the cultural and tourist patrimony in public property;
- Supporting the rehabilitation and refurbishment for tourism and related purposes of valuable heritage or located in protected areas in private property.

S.O. 5 – Framework of territorial governance and regulation for a sustainable and quality tourism, oriented towards beneficiaries and community

Investment priorities

- Updating the planning documentation and developing new PUZ (Zonal Urban Plan) for areas of high complexity and tourist importance;
- Elaboration of regulations, guides and manuals of urban image to stimulate the creation of a unitary, coherent, contemporary and attractive image for tourists;
- Establishment of authorities and working groups to monitor and control the mechanisms regarding the compliance of new investments in areas of tourist importance with the guidelines, rules and regulations in force.

➤ **GENERAL OBJECTIVE**

G.O. 2 – Tourist products – memorable experiences that strengthen the attractiveness, ensure the success of the destination

• **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

S.O. 1 – Galați – important destination on the Danube cruise route

S.O. 2 – Valorification of cultural/historical tourism

S.O. 3 – Development of ecotourism

S.O. 4 – Integrating the sharing economy

S.O. 5 – Developing an Agenda of events – priority cultural program

S.O. 6 – Brand development and marketing and communication strategy

➤ **GENERAL OBJECTIVE**

G.O. 3 – Human capital specialized in fields of activity, qualified and sufficient

• **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

S.O. 1 – Increasing the quality of tourism services

S.O. 2 – Diversification of the occupational/educational offer in the tourism sector

S.O. 3 – Increasing the attractiveness of tourism occupations

Measures

- Establishment of a hotel/restaurant-school (with training services in various types of qualifications);
- Activation of the Galati – Constanta axis, Galati – Brasov – employer partnerships.

➤ **GENERAL OBJECTIVE**

G.O. 4 – Destination tourism management: professional, competitive, coordinated, representative integrator for all stakeholders

Measures

- Creation of a Management Organization of Galati County;
- Creation of a Dobrogea Destination Management Organization, at regional level;
- Recruitment of staff in the new Tourist Office organized in Galati County;
- Creation of a municipal cultural operator, as manager of the public cultural agenda, with a supporting role.

➤ **GENERAL OBJECTIVE**

G.O. 5 – Improving the degree of integrated valorification of the tourist potential at county level

• **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

S.O. 1 – Creating the county tourist brand

Investment priorities

- Elaboration of a study in order to identify a county brand;
- Development and implementation of a unitary marking system for tourist attractions throughout the region (signs, tourist maps on national and county roads, in stations, bus stations, etc.) in accordance with EU standards.

S.O. 2 – Promotion at national and international level

Investment priorities

- Elaboration of a tourism marketing plan at county level, containing a medium-term promotion strategy, nationally and internationally, taking into account the county tourism potential, demand structure and the cost/benefit ratio of possible promotion activities, with the involvement of economic agents in the region and public authorities, NGOs, regional and national professional associations – ANAT (Travel Agencies of Romania) (SE branch), ANTREC (National Association of Rural, Eco and Cultural Tourism in Romania), AER (Association of Ecotourism in Romania), AHR (Romanian Association of Hydrogeologists);
- The implementation of the activities specified in the tourist marketing plan, providing support for the initiation, at county level, of national and international promotion activities;
- Wide involvement of economic agents in the region and public authorities, in the annual organization of the Tourism Exchange (tourism fair "Oltenia Travel & Business"), increasing the number of participants from other regions, as well as those from other countries;
- Promoting the tourist offers in the county by including them in the catalogs of Romanian and foreign tour operators, increasing the number of participants (economic agents, town halls, prefectures) at the national and international tourism exchange (supporting their participation);
- Development of economic relations, knowledge transfer and exchange of experiences at national and international level.

S.O. 3 – Creating and updating a web portal dedicated to the county tourism

Investment priorities

- Creation of a tourism portal of Galati County, as a major tool for promoting, informing and making reservations;
- Creating an interactive map on the site dedicated to tourism in Galati county;
- Creating an interactive calendar of events.

S.O. 4 – Creating thematic tourist circuits at county level

Investment priorities

- Cultural and historical tourism could be developed by integrating the resources of the county in the tourist circuit that promotes the typical cultural and ethnographic tradition of the county;
- Initiation of cultural, religious thematic tourist programs (pilgrimages to monasteries, pilgrimages of followers of other religions, etc.), historical (related to rulers, etc., Daco-Roman, etc.), in addition to the development of appropriate tourist structures in places to visit;
- Integration in the tourist circuits of the events of the type of folk celebrations;
- Creation of materials for the promotion of tourist objectives/circuits (brochures, tourist guides, leaflets, tourist presentation on CDs/DVDs, banners, tourist maps, catalogs, posters, photos, albums, photo reports, slides, films tourism, protocol objects, a county tourism magazine, etc.) and supporting the development of actions

and promotion campaigns, sending promotional and protocol materials, national and international, etc.;

- Development of tourist cards that allow visiting the tourist attractions related to the circuits at promotional prices;
- Stimulating the research-development-innovation (RDI) activity by promoting the use of ICT in the production and marketing of tourist packages, the adoption of global distribution systems (GDS);
- Promoting tourism awareness along the Danube according to the recommendations of the Danube Tourism Commission, in line with the EU strategy for the Danube region.

S.O. 5 – Creation of inter-thematic tourist circuits in the county

Investment priorities

- Elaboration of a study to identify the best 2 or 3 inter-thematic circuits in the county and the appropriate tools for their implementation on the tourism market (single access cards to various tourist attractions in the county, common tickets for visiting various tourist attractions, etc.);
- Implementation of the identified integrated tools.

S.O. 6 – Creating a network of tourist information points in the county

Investment priorities

- Establishing common characteristics of the network (design, logo, standards of services offered, procedures, etc.);
- Supporting the development of a network of tourist information and promotion centers/offices with branches in big cities and localities with tourist potential, creation of tourist information points, including the technological ones, in areas of maximum transit (the establishment of information centers can be achieved by submission of projects by interested town halls and NGOs).

➤ **GENERAL OBJECTIVE**

G.O. 6 – Improving the accessibility and valorification of the historical/cultural heritage of the county

• **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

S.O. 1 – Restoration and tourist valorification of the historical/cultural heritage in order to increase the public access and the number of visitors

Investment priorities

- Restoration, protection and conservation of the national cultural heritage with important tourist potential (restoration of buildings with traditional architectural elements, monuments, ensembles and historical sites, cultural centers, museums, etc.) in order to introduce them in tourist circuits;
- Investments for the protection and tourist valorification of archeological sites;
- Realization of integrated plans for the protection of the cultural heritage;
- Responsibility in raising awareness of the role of real estate cultural heritage in preserving national and local cultural identity at national/regional/county/local level;
- Cooperation with international partners in joint programs and projects for the protection of the immovable cultural heritage;

- Supporting the establishment of new art museums, with priority for the structures of county importance, dedicated to the most important cultural aspects of interest in the area;
- Supporting the establishment of public galleries or museums of modern/contemporary art.

S.O. 2 – Increasing access, through public investments, to cultural and architectural heritage objectives

Investment priorities

- Arranging the access to the tourist objectives, of the area located near them and of the premises, by renovating the existing roads and improving their safety;
- Realization of rest and camping spaces, parking lots for visitors who want to visit the patrimony objectives in the county;
- Creation of a small public infrastructure, such as toilets, public gardens, leisure areas for children, all located near cultural attractions;
- Modernization of communal roads that connects the monastic ensembles, ethnographic villages, in order to make tourist circuits;
- Investments for night lighting of the pieces integrated in the historical/cultural heritage.

➤ **GENERAL OBJECTIVE**

G.O. 7 – Developing the potential of ecotourism in the county

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

S.O. 1 – Creation of sustainable, small accommodation structures (especially in rural areas)

Investment priorities

- State aid scheme to support the necessary investments in order to develop tourist reception structures with environmentally friendly accommodation functions. Renovations of buildings will be preferred to the construction of new ones, the use of local materials, the reflection of architectural traditions and the possibility of using unconventional energy. In general, these should be done from a private initiative – locals should be encouraged and supported to develop such businesses. Taking advantage of the existence of European funding instruments, certain models of good practices in ecotourism can be introduced (eco-label, ecotourism certification).

S.O. 2 – Support for the modernization and restructuring of existing accommodation structures in rural areas

Investment priorities

- State aid scheme for the approval of existing pensions and agrotourism farms in order to know the quality of the tourist services offered;
- State aid scheme to support investments in modernization and restructuring of the existing accommodation structures in rural areas.

S.O. 3 – Local public investment for transport infrastructure in rural areas

Investment priorities

- Improvement and modernization of county and communal roads;
- Realization of some transport regulations at destinations level and introduction of these regulations in the park management plans. These will include: specifying the type of vehicles/boats allowed, the speed limit, the control bodies and the sanctions applied;
- Offering alternative solutions of off-road routes;
- Offering public transport options at the destination level;
- Informing and encouraging the use of public transport;
- Development of the eco-friendly transport offer.

S.O. 4 – Investments to increase and valorize the degree of attractiveness for local points of interest (sheepfold, pottery workshop, etc.)

Investment priorities

- Study for the identification of villages with high craftsmanship production to provide assistance for the development of crafts, selection of folk craftsmen, identify the export market and supporting the creation, promotion and trade of traditional handicrafts;
- Support for the valorification of natural, ecological products;
- Support for the creation of centers for production, exhibition and marketing of craftsmanship, ceramics, glassware, etc.;
- Establishment and support of small local producer groups;
- Promoting nationally recognized centers of craftsmanship;
- Development of the offer of ecotourism products made by the local communities through the support for the maintenance and perpetuation of the traditional customs, specific to the destinations with ecotourism potential;
- Supporting the establishment of spaces for the use of craftsmanship and other specific products made within the local community.

S.O. 5 – Local public investment for basic infrastructure in areas with potential for active and nature oriented tourism

Investment priorities

- Construction/rehabilitation of roads that ensure access to cottages, basic navigation, etc., considering full compliance with environmental characteristics in these areas;
- Construction of the necessary infrastructure to ensure the safety of active tourists (landing platforms for helicopters, shelters, etc.);
- Creating a basic infrastructure (water, sewerage, waste, electricity) in villages/regions with a high presence of tourist attractions for active tourists;
- Arranging parking lots near attractions – with ecological toilets, waste management system, information and warning panels;
- Establishment of a communication and rapid intervention network (integrated alarm dispatcher and interactive communication between intervention units: police, ambulance, firefighters, civil protection, public guards, mountain rescuers, emergency hospital, etc.);

- Improving the signaling system of the main transit road routes, in terms of distances and safety, with signs in Romanian and English;
- Inclusion of the requirements for restoration and extension of hiking trails in the sustainable tourism development plans developed by the administrators of the protected areas;
- Development of a specific ecotourism infrastructure in national parks in the region that would allow the a wide range of services offered without a negative impact on the environment;
- Realization of the infrastructure and facilities for visiting and informing about the destinations with ecotourism potential.

S.O. 6 – Investments for the development of structures related to sports and leisure, related to the natural potential, in particular through the creation of routes, circuits and tourist guide infrastructure.

Investment priorities

- Arrangement of visitor centers provided with rooms for the presentation of films regarding the respective area;
- Restoration of existing tourist routes and arrangement of other new routes;
- Arrangement of observation points (pavilions) and belvedere points – with interpretation panels, observation infrastructure;
- Arrangement of camping places – with the delimitation of the areas, informative and warning panels, fireplaces, ecological toilets;
- Arranging/restoring shelters and tourist cabins – where the length of tourist routes requires such a thing;
- Creation of tourist markings and circuits for the development of cycling tourism in the region;
- Construction of small ports, pontoons and wharves on the main rivers and lakes in the region, together with their specific arrangement for the practice of sailing and water sports;
- Realization of special routes (thematic, equitation, bicycle, cross-country skiing, tracking, photohanting, suspension bridges, etc.) with resting places, information and interpretation panels, orientation arrows;
- Development of complementary tourist products in order to diversify and increase the attractiveness of the tourist offer (for example rafting, cycling, paragliding, speotourism);
- Possibilities for tourist valorification of the hydrographic potential of rivers through simple arrangements that become "alignments" of maximum polarization in the warm period of the year for tourists who love swimming, beach, sport fishing or water sports (rafting with small boats 1-2 people, riverboarding);
- Implementation of an action plan for making maps and advertising hiking trails.

3.3. Community engagement

The process of tourism development can only take place with the support of the inhabitants and the actors in the field. Residents can become tourist ambassadors at county level; outside the county, they become its promoters, participating in creating its image and tourist attractiveness. This is the main reason why the creation of awareness programs to explain the benefits of tourism development for the community and county and to involve the community in various actions (social, cultural) becomes vital for the development of county tourism.

Examples of actions:

❖ Annual realization of a communication action to the general public (inhabitants, economic actors). Raising the awareness of the inhabitants and the local economy can only give long-term results. The population, which today is not sensitive to the tourist argument, will become, only gradually, aware of the economic importance of tourism. A clear and coherent message must be conveyed through campaigns for the general public each year, preferably before a period of increased tourist attendance such as the summer season. These will be complemented by awareness raising actions with economic and social actors (businesses, traders, associations and local authorities).

❖ Offering privileged tourist products to residents and economic actors. On the same note, the inhabitants and economic actors of the county must be able to benefit from a privileged access to tourist attractions and events. A better knowledge of the local tourist offer will allow them to promote it more effectively at the microgroup level.

❖ Carrying out and publishing an opinion poll (barometer) among the inhabitants. The tourist barometer contains data on tourist activity, evaluated annually. This tool will be privileged in the sense of sensitizing as many inhabitants as possible to the economic effects and to the county image created by the way the visitors are received. Moreover, measuring the "public opinion" on the topic of tourism will allow the assessment of its strengths and weaknesses and better guide the following actions of awareness, information and training.

❖ Involvement of "temporary residents" such as students, diaspora members or expatriates, challenging them to become ambassadors of Galati County.

MEASURES FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Involvement of the community in strategic processes and in the implementation of its own projects: ambassadors, volunteer projects, civic and social interventions;
- Awareness of the sharing type economy possibilities;
- Innovation and identification of new lines that converge for the benefit of the community (such as the revitalization of traditional trades/occupations);
- Improving and optimizing communication at the level of stakeholders involved in continuing education and training;
- Encouraging creative activities in tourism.

EXAMPLES OF SPECIFIC ACTIONS

- Create "COUNTY AMBASSADORS" program;
- Initiation of a volunteer program for the tourism and hospitality industry;
- Celebration of World Tourism Day at the level of communities in tourist areas – on 27th September;

- Improving the quality of the reception and the services offered, through an awareness of all the economic actors that come in contact with the tourist clientele, through a “welcome campaign” type approach.

The action mainly aims at:

- Tourist accommodation units;
- Commercial companies;
- Restaurants;
- Taxi drivers;
- Cultural institutions (museums, theaters, cinemas, etc.).

Description:

- Mobilizing the actors around a “Welcome Attitude” approach – similar to the one implemented in Lyon;
- Organizing a campaign to raise awareness among professionals;
- Creating training sessions or allowing access to existing trainings.

3.4. Support guidelines

In order to attract smart investments in a time of need to increase the destination (such as the current one), increasing the competition in a healthy, organic way, professionalizing the entrepreneurial environment, given the opportunity generated by organizing an integrative management at county level, it is necessary to provide a **kit** of supporting materials to meet the initiatives of strategic investors and small investors.

This kit facilitates the understanding of investment opportunities, providing access to synthesized data on the destination profile, in the form of an executive summary. Another product to be included in the kit is the graphic summary (plan) of the available/free financial resources in the county, with additional information about the related investment possibilities (building regulations). The kit also has a guide with financing options, co-financing, including capital raising. Also included in the kit are match-making elements for sellers and buyers of business opportunities (**a tourism business exchange**) at the level of an online portal.

All components of the kit will be adequately illustrated and digitally available (online).

Any investor will be able to understand the following:

➤ **Why invest?**

Galati County has a privileged tourist position: its roads facilitate the passage of tourists to the Danube Delta, a tourist area of great attraction, and to the Black Sea coast. All the roads from the north, as well as some routes from the west of the country, which go to Dobrogea, pass through Galati. Access from Dobrogea and the southeast of the country to the balneary and tourist resorts of northern Moldova and the Eastern Carpathians is also made through Galati. The county has a valuable natural and cultural background that gives tourism national and international dimensions

Tourism is an important sector of the economy of Galati County, having a major development potential in the medium and long term. In Galati county, several types of tourism can be found, such as: recreational tourism, agrotourism, cultural tourism, business tourism, cruise tourism, etc.

➤ **Benefits**

- High value of ROI (return of investment) by investing in an emerging sector, with a stable industry, where there is a limited competition in high quality tourism infrastructure, but increased appetite and purchasing power;
- Business predictability by investing in an attractive, popular, accessible destination;
- Place of growth, considering the administration's plans to invest structural funds in large infrastructure projects, implementation of the destination development strategy, generation of new tourist products, measures to increase the length of stay;
- Low construction costs compared to the central European market;
- Access to the local pool of talents, at limited costs.

➤ **Types of investment opportunities that may arise**

- Development of new tourist complexes and rehabilitation of existing ones;
- Development of public facilities generating income and profit (in public private partnership), such as investments in equipment that cannot be covered by the structural funds;
- Developments of flagship tourist projects (high-rise);
- Theme park developments and other similar facilities.

➤ **Partnership and support**

Galati County, together with the local private sector, represented by partners such as the Chamber of Commerce, Navigation, Industry and Agriculture are dynamic, serious, eager dialogue partners, who will provide all the necessary support to attract investments.

4. EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

DEFINITION OF A TOURIST BRAND

1) The regional tourist brand "The Sunny Side of Germany – Baden – Wurttemberg"



Location: Germany, Baden – Wurttemberg

2) The national tourist brand 'I Feel Slovenia'



Location: Slovenia

ONLINE PROMOTION

1) Visit Malta – The Official Tourism Site for Malta, Gozo and Comino³⁵



Location: Malta

TOURIST CARD SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

1) Torino + Piemonte Card³⁶



Location: Italy

³⁵ <https://www.visitmalta.com/en/home>

³⁶ <http://www.turismotorino.org/card/EN/home>

TOURIST INFORMATION OFFICES NETWORK DEVELOPMENT

1) Tourist Info Network³⁷



Location: Spain, Valencia

³⁷ <http://en.comunitatvalenciana.com/tourist-info/2>