

Romania's Touristic Potential: The Differentiation of the Potential Units

MIHAI IELENICZ*, LAURA COMANESCU** and ALEXANDRU NEDELEA***

*Mihai Ielenicz, **Laura Comanescu and ***Alexandru Nedelea, Faculty of Geography, University of Bucharest, Romania

ABSTRACT

The present paper attempts to differentiate the various size units according to their touristic potential. In the Romanian literature, there are several such classifications, but the one we present here takes into account both natural and anthropogenic touristic potential, the infrastructure of each unit, as well as the complexity of touristic activities and of the relationships that develop on the basis of tourist flows. As such, the following taxonomic categories have been differentiated: touristic spots, touristic settlements, touristic centers, touristic axes, touristic areas, touristic regions and touristic provinces. The latter are the largest territorial units and they are characterized by an intense touristic activity, which relies on certain common elements. Thus, the following touristic provinces have been emphasized for the investigated area: the Carpathian – Pre-Carpathian province, Moldavian Hills, the Dobrudja province, the Danubian – Getic province, the Transsylvania Hills and the Western Hills and Plains. Each of these provinces has an outstanding personality and includes a bigger or a smaller number of lower rank subunits.

KEYWORDS: *Romania, Touristic Spots, Touristic Settlements, Touristic Axis, Touristic Area, Touristic Province*

INTRODUCTION

Romania has got objectives which are important for tourism, as well as a multitude of means which can facilitate the specific activities of this field. Their spreading in the territory is different, as there are, on the one hand, agglomerations of objectives which conditioned a concentration of means and resources in order to bring them into light them, and on the other hand large spaces in which all these are dissipated. In the first category, the local, regional evolution is more diversified, in the context of the imposing of some of them to certain types of touristic activities (some of them recognized at the national and international level), compared to others which dispose of equally important, but little known objectives, and where the capitalization means are reduced (Ielenicz, Comănescu, 2006). In the Romanian geographical literature, one can find several regionalizations of the Romanian territory, based on various criteria. The first attempt to accomplish a touristic regionalization of Romania dates back to 1946, when N. Al. Radulescu delimited 24 touristic regions. Later on, in 1969, M. Iancu analyzed the touristic resources and their utilization and came up with 23 zones, divided into three categories: zones of international touristic interest, zones of national interest and zones of local or regional interest (quoted by Candea

et al., 2003). In 2003, Candea et al. separated several taxonomic units on the basis of the location and spatial concentration of the touristic sights, as well as of touristic potential functionality and capitalization. These are touristic spot, touristic settlement (historical settlement), touristic complex, touristic area (touristic zone) and touristic region or province. Another issue widely discussed in the Romanian literature is that of defining, and especially of classifying, the touristic health and holiday resorts. Thus, Candea et al. (2003) classify the resorts according to several criteria, such as: the importance of the resort for the national economy (touristic resorts of national importance, touristic resorts of local interest and touristic settlements), the touristic function, the geographical location, the size, the value, the place where the resort has developed, the nature of touristic activities, the quality of landscape and environment and the attractively index of the resorts.

Depending on the facilities' degree and the tourists' dynamic, there are: *international rank resorts* (Poiana Braşov, Predeal, Sinaia, Buşteni), *national rank resorts* (Geoagiu, Eforie, Mangalia Nord, Călimăneşti, Govora), *regional rank resorts* (Ocna Şugatag, Covasna) (Glăvan, 2003). It is considered that approximately 39 resorts are of national and international rank (10 resorts are predominantly for resting and winter sports, 18 resorts of balneal character, 11 resorts by the seaside for resting and balneal activities) and 61 resorts of regional rank (with a varied profile) (Glăvan, 2003). The most recent work in this respect is *Resorts of National Interest in the Romanian Carpathians*, which presents analytically the classification of health and holiday resorts of Romania, using also the legal acts, namely HG 1307/2004, HG 2264/2004 and HG 867/2006. According to this work, Romania has 73 touristic resorts, of which 37 of national interest, 45 of local interest and 18 in the process of classification (Ielenicz, Matei, 2009)

METHODOLOGY

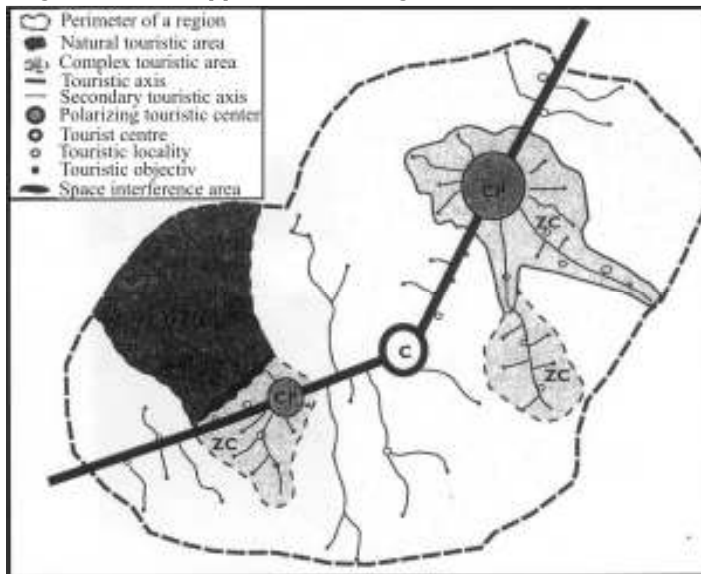
There must be started from the correct inventory of everything it exists and from the differentiation of units which could be comprised in a hierarchic system, in order to have a starting point in a complex program of organization and touristic development of the country and of every territory. The components of different degrees will have a certain composition and functionality, but also connections which ensure the interconditionality and, by means of that, the system's unity. For tourism, it is important to establish precise taxonomic units which, on the one hand, reflect a certain level of potential resources and, on the other hand, a minimum of possible means at a certain moment, for their capitalization. Whereas the first component can be regarded as relatively fixed (especially in the case of the elements which are specific to the natural environment), the latter has got a dynamic character, in the sense of an evolution or involution, depending on the economic politics which are applied. The process of touristic division is based on knowing the on-the-spot reality compared to some directions—the touristic potential and the level of its capitalization, the existent facilities (infrastructure, constructions etc) and the services that can be ensured, the type and degree of insurance of the forms of tourism and the evolution perspectives. For achieving this, the delimitations into zones for each of these problems are necessary, as preliminary actions. The comparison of these allows the delimitation of touristic areas which will be defined by means of coefficients of quality and quantity appreciation. Accordingly, the division of the touristic potential represents the result of a stage which is preliminary to the touristic division. It is based on the inventory of all elements offered by the natural

environment but also on the idea of some forms of the human activities which are important for tourism. The normal hierarchic scale, at least for the evaluation of the touristic potential is constituted by: the touristic point, the locality with touristic valences, touristic centre, touristic axis, touristic area, touristic region to which, in Romania's case, there can be added the touristic province (subjective criterion, but as a result of a certain natural and historical evolution) (Ielenicz, Comănescu, 2006) (Fig.1).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The touristic spots are places outside the settlements or comprised by these settlements, where there is one or more touristic objectives, grouped and thematically connected

Figure 1. -The rapport between region, area, axis and centers



(museum, monuments, Baia Baciului with Lacul Miresii – the Bride's Lake and Muntele de sare – the Salt Mountain) which can be visited or used for some touristic activities with limited duration (a few hours); some of them are visiting places which are introduced in some circuits or touristic tracks. In this category there are frequently introduced the churches and monasteries from the villages with different titular saints (the monasteries Dervent, St.

Andrei, Cocoș, Cilic Dere from Dobrogea) and the natural isolated touristic objectives (ex. Poiana Narciselor, the monuments from Călugăreni, Bobâlna, Podu Înalt).

The touristic settlement is a small village but also a small town - Vișeu de Sus, Lupeni, Cehu Silvaniei) where there is one or more touristic attraction but the basic components of the touristic equipment are missing or they are reduced (the facilities of good services are organized at an accessible level), thus permitting the development of lasting touristic activities. Many times, the settlements which already exist are favorable to a few hours' visits and seldom for resting and relaxing. There are uninstalled campsites or with accommodation at the local people and, besides that, medium level service points for meals and also services with limited offer. Within the touristic localities, there have imposed, in the last decade, two subtypes of facilities:

Agro touristic localities, which are villages with a relatively rich economic potential, with homesteads which can offer accommodation in good conditions and meal services in accordance with the solicitors' requests, for a many days journey; frequently, families of tourists and even groups organized by different tourism agencies (Agromec, ANTREC) opt in favor of agro touristic localities, the purpose being resting, relaxing, some balneal treatments which do not ask for strict medical assistance etc. (ex. – the villages from Rucăr-Bran

passage, as Șirnea, Peștera, Rucăr, Podu Dâmboviței, Moeciu, from the depressions of Vatra Dornei, Câmpulung Moldovenesc, Gura Humorului, Valea Putnei, Valea Sucevița, The Apuseni Mountains).

Resorts of local interest are connected to some villages or small towns which have got mineral, thermal springs, sapropel mud, mofetes whose knowing and capitalization is limited in time and especially from the territorial point of view. They dispose of reduced facilities and their functionality is connected especially to the summer season (Săcel, Siriu); the medical assistance is reduced (Plopiș, Săcel, Țintea, Telega, Cacica, Ocna Dej, Cojocna etc.).

The touristic centers are those urban and, more seldom, rural settlements (Bran) where there is a touristic offer which concentrates more touristic attractions, which have got a sufficient equipment (infrastructure, hotel or motel, camping, food units and units for different services, employees specialized in tourism); the importance of the centre is given by many factors: the value and number of the touristic objectives (ex. at Bran, the castle, the ethnographic museum, the old customs point, the little church etc.); the possibilities of capitalization by different forms of tourism of the potential within it, within the nearby areal or within the farther localities; the important weight which touristic activities have within the economy; the quality of the components of the touristic equipment and of the services; the degree of polarization for the touristic activities (those on the Moeciu Valley) of other localities, situated at different distances.

A distinct place in the category of touristic centers is held by the **resorts**. Resorts are different types of settlements as towns (Govora, Călimănești, Olănești, Băile Tușnad), big villages (Vața de Jos, Tinca) or districts situated outside towns or big villages and sometimes many kilometers far away (Poiana Brașov, Păltiniș, Semenice, Izvoarele, Mogoșă), where there are facilities for tourism, but facilities of a varied degree (for resting, relaxing, balneal treatment, sports activities). Most part of the revenues comes from the touristic activities. Depending on the dominant characteristics of the activities, they can be grouped into climatic resorts (relaxing, resting, sports activities) and balneal and health resorts (medical treatments are predominant) (Ciangă, 2007).

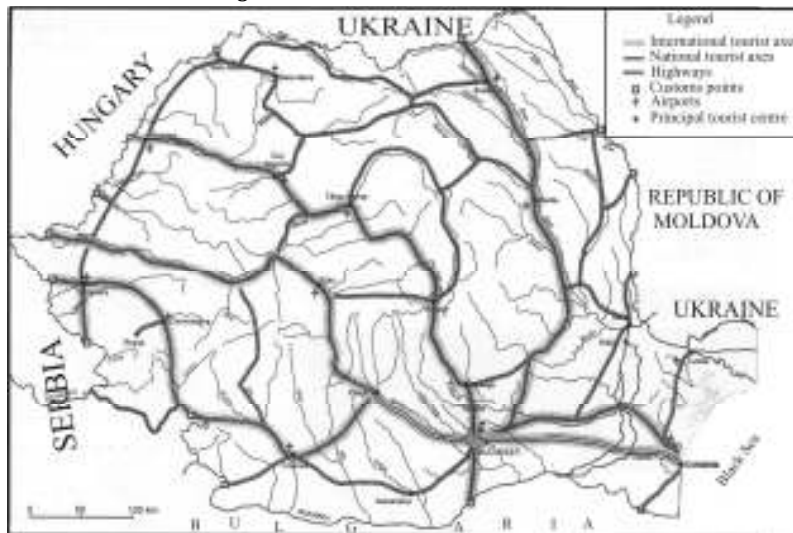
The resorts can be also grouped depending on their placement within the relief units: mountainous resorts, hilly resorts and plain resorts - the last ones being reduced as number and from the point of view of the time period of the specific activities (seasonal, permanent).

The touristic axis represents an area with touristic potential and with some facilities which facilitate rich touristic activities situated along a valley or within a depression or an important circulation route. It may represent the most important sector of an area or of a touristic region towards which touristic flows concentrate, on which there is usually an intense circulation but from where people usually leave for adjacent touristic objectives and localities. The most important are the corridors of the Carpathians valleys (Suceava, Moldova, Bistrița, Trotuș, Buzău, Prahova, Olt, Jiu, Timiș-Cerna, Crișul Repede, Iza) but also in the hilly units (Bârlad, Târnavele, Hârțibaciu, Mureș) (Fig. 2). Two factors led, in time, to their development: on the one hand, the natural potential, on the other hand the developing of the localities and the networks of communications routes from the corridors of valleys and elongated depressions. The existence of driveways and railways facilitated, firstly, the rapid access to the objectives from the settlements from this area (fortified cities, historical places, museums, churches, handmade products units, sales units) but also to the natural

ones (gorges, defiles, mineral springs, reservations, dendrologic parks) (Ciangă, 2007). The intense touristic circulation led, on the one hand, to the construction of units of touristic services not only in the localities, but also outside of them, and on the other hand to the identifying and popularization of other interesting points regarding relaxing, resting, sport, visiting (instruction). Thus, the communication arteries from the valleys and depressions corridors where there were a few points of touristic interest became real touristic axes.

However, the quality of the facilities and services classifies them into: axes of national and international interest (Moldova, Prahova), regional interest (the superior Mureș, the superior Olt, Bistrița, Iza, Teleajen) and local interest (Putna of Vrancea, Trotuș, the superior Dâmbovița,

Figure 2 - Romania- touristic axes



There can be also identified on becoming touristic axes – along which there are many objectives (some of them little known by tourists) but the infrastructure and the facilities are under the requests of ensuring a civilized tourism. This type of axes

frequently follow depressions lines with settlements separated from hills, but united by partly modernized driveways (Sovata-Odorheiul Secuiesc; Râmnicu Vâlcea-Curtea de Argeș, Reșița-Bozovici, Deva-Brad-Beiuș). A large part of these axes are found along the road network of importance for the internal and international circulation and, related to that, the development of many units which ensure services of a different degree of satisfying the modern requests for tourism. Prospectively, by the improvement of the quality of the infrastructure and of the services network (especially by constructing, in the near future period, some highways), it will lead to the imposing of some major touristic axes 300-600 km long which will cross Romania between the border points. They will connect national and international areas and touristic regions. The fluvial axis, as a component of the international Danube, will be added.

The touristic area is a territory well delimited as importance for tourism, due to the existence of a considerable number of objectives, points and localities connected by an appropriate infrastructure and where there is one or more touristic centers which polarize the activities of this type. As a result, the division of a territory follows the delimitation of some large but not equal geographic areas, which dispose of a considerable touristic potential, having important facilities which could ensure specific activities (Fig. 3). There are several delimitations into zones of the Romanian territory (especially from the point of view of the objective groups), more or less correct, in the Romanian geographic and touristic

literature. They were based either on the delimitation of the touristic areas at the level of some geographic or administrative units (frequently by districts), or on the localization and concentration of touristic objectives and of the tourists' flows. When territory is extended and the centers find themselves scattered within the areas, there can be distinguished *subarea with touristic vocation*, around each centre, the connections between them being generated by common elements like resources, services, infrastructure, possibilities of organizing touristic circuits (ex. Bucovina, Maramures). There are often distinguished two categories of natural-touristic regions and regions with a complex character, which are based on the specificity of the touristic objectives within them (Fig. 3).

The natural touristic area consists of one or more natural geographic units which are well distinguished (Fig.3). Within them, the most predominant are the objectives related to the relief, waters, vegetation, fauna, geological formation. The infrastructure is represented by driveways at the suburbs, roads with a varied degree of facilities along the main valleys and paths or trails on the valleys and peaks which lead to the touristic objectives; there can be added some

facilities for relaxing and services of chalets type (touristic, forestry, for hunting), shelters (in the alpine level of the peaks which exceed 2000 m), sheepfolds, dwellings in the mountains of medium altitude and, more recently, holiday houses on the main valleys, along the driveways

which cross the mountains totally or partially (Argeş, Putna, Suceviţa, Bistriţa Aurie) or in some covered depression basinets (Frumoasa-Sebeş). The main forms of tourism practice are: mountain hiking, resting for several days, winter sports, hunting, fishing and alpinism. The touristic centers are in the close neighborhood of the touristic regions, and they represent the main points from where tourists and the personnel in charge with the services come. The neighboring regions also represent the places from where alimentary products and other goods necessary for the touristic act come.

Many mountainous units represent well delimited natural areas (Rodnei, Rarău-Giumalău, Călimani, Ceahlău, Hăşmaş, Ciucaş, Bucegi, Piatra Craiului, Făgăraş, Parâng, Retezat, massifs from the Apuseni Mountains, etc.) (Tigu, 2001). The Danube Delta must be added, too. There are also well individualized mountain units, but here the objectives of touristic interest are few and they arouse the tourists' interest only at the regional level. Sometimes, they can be seen as possible extensions of a distinct area, where mountain hiking, hunting paths, fishing are continued, at present (ex. the Grohotiş Mountains and the Tătaru Mountains in

Figure 3- Romania-touristic areas



comparison with the Ciucaş Mountains, the Giurgeu Mountains in comparison with the Hăşmaş Mountains). Within the natural touristic areas, the most numerous and the most interesting touristic objectives are along some itineraries (touristic route). By their functionality, they belong to a few main categories. Accordingly, there are routes of access to the developed objectives along the valleys and on some secondary peaks and routes along which there are most of the touristic objectives, which are situated either along the main peaks (especially in the alpine and subalpine floors with peaks and a multitude of forms of relief (glacier, periglacier, structural or of landscapes); they represent real alpine and subalpine touristic axes) and circuit mountain routes on the peaks and plateaus with undiscovered landscapes (those from the karstic regions). There is also a fourth type of mountain routes, usually short routes, which are meant to make connections (over secondary peaks) between the main touristic objectives or chalets (Fig. 3).

The complex touristic areas are the most numerous, covering the most part of Romania's territory. They comprise one or more touristic centers, localities, and points with objectives of touristic interest, an adequate infrastructure, organized touristic services network etc. Sometimes, it interferes with parts from the natural areas, due to the connections established in time between the centers or the touristic localities and the complexes of natural touristic objectives (regarding the supplies and services, touristic flows). From the point of view of composition and structure, this type of zones seems, at the first sight, to be heterogeneous and hard to differentiate. However, groups may be made, following different criteria. Thus, by their framing into large territorial units, there can be mountain zones, hill zones, plain zones, seaside zones etc. Within the zones which are extended depending on the complexity of the touristic potential, on the distribution of the touristic objectives and touristic centers, there are less extended areas, within which two characteristics are predominant: the concentration of the objectives of a certain type and their close connection regarding the touristic activities and a touristic centre. This one appears as a polarizing locality of a touristic movement within the entire area (here is most part of the accommodation, resting, meals, information services, programs of visiting different objectives in and outside the locality, alimentary products, hand-made or other nature products, which are specific to the respective region). They can be named *touristic sub regions*. In this respect, in the Maramures county there can be separated as sub regions Sighet, Borşa and Valea Izei. The increasing of the touristic activities in the territory of the area leads to the expansion of the influence space of each polarizing centre, thereby leading to strips of interference of the subzones (some touristic objectives from the end of the subzones are included under the influence area of several centers; for example, the localities with monasteries from Bucovina, compared to the centres Suceava, Rădăuţi and Gura Humorului). The development of agro tourism led to the diminishing of the leading role of the centers situated at a large distance from the touristic objectives, but which, in exchange, dispose of an accommodation basis and relatively good alimentation. This is the case of Suceava town, compared to the monasteries Suceviţa, Moldoviţa, Humor, Voroneţ and the consolidation of the touristic objectives from the subzone and of the present one itself, by means of imposing several forms of tourism.

The touristic regions represent, in some papers, a territory with the same meaning as the zone's meaning, and the operation differentiating them is named touristic division (Fig.4). However, the two notions are not identical but they do not exclude one another either, and

there can be settled certain comparisons, depending on the extension of the meaning given to each other. The region usually refers to a territory which goes beyond the space of an area where the touristic potential consists of a multitude of objectives, most of them having a certain specificity which leads towards a certain orientation of the touristic activities. The smallest touristic regions include a touristic zone, but also nearby geographic units where there are objectives of touristic-small interest (the Danube Delta and the plain Razim-Sinoe, the seaside and the corridor Carasu, Bucharest – the town but also the large space which can spread from the Danube to the Ialomița) whereas the largest regions include many natural and complex zones (the Apuseni Mountains, the Banat Mountains, Bucovina, the mountain hilly curvature). Within the region there are centers, localities and touristic axes which impose close connections between what regards the purpose of the touristic act, the mass of tourists and the possibilities of ensuring different services.

In the touristic regions there are also included areas which at present do not belong to zones, but where there are more or less grouped objectives, with a low level of recognition; this is the reason

Figure 4- Romania- touristic region

why they are sporadically involved in the touristic activities. In the future, it will be possible to capitalize them at a superior level by creating facilities; consequently, they will be attached to the neighboring zone or will be



put together with other zones of the same type, forming a new zone. For example, in the Apuseni mountains, first imposed themselves the natural touristic zones from the limits of mountains massifs and those with a complex character, situated either within depressions (Beiuș, Zlatna, Brad-Hălmagiu), or within the important corridors of valley (Arieș). The implementation of a good infrastructure with a dense network of roads, many of them with a secular tradition, the increase and the diversification of the forms of ensuring accommodation and meals services, and especially the increase of the degree of attractiveness of the touristic objectives due to a considerable popularization led to the development of the relations between the touristic components of the zones, to the intensifying of the touristic actions in the contact spaces, to the increase of the tourists flows which enlarged more and more the operative space within the region (Fig.4). Consequently, at present one can speak about accomplishing an important touristic region where the entire assembly of objectives is comprised in different forms of touristic activities with implication both in social-economic development and in diversifying the forms of tourism.

The touristic province is a term used in Romania for the biggest unit consisting of regions, zones, centers, disparate touristic localities where offers and multiple touristic services are ensured (Fig.5). Specifically, in the conditions of the diversity of the touristic potential, there is the common natural, historical-cultural and economic evolution of these provinces which imprint onto the touristic province the main, defining characteristic. The infrastructure, mostly directed by the same evolution, allows the achieving of complex connections and the unity within the touristic system. There are well contoured the following provinces: Carpathian-Pericarpathian, Dobrogea, Transylvania Hills, the Hills of the Western Plain, the hilly Moldavia and the Danube-Getic Province (Fig. 5).

Figure 5- Romania- touristic province



The grouping, on Romania's territory, of the elements of potential, of the infrastructure and facilities, is the result of the connections established between humans and nature along the time, as a result of the historical and natural evolution, which led to the separation of touristic provinces (within these there are regions, zones, centers, localities and

touristic objectives, each of them reflecting a certain degree of complexity, regarding on the one hand the touristic potential and infrastructure, and on the other hand the way of developing the touristic activities) (Ielenicz, Dumbrăveanu, 1997). If there is strictly followed the repartition of the elements which define the touristic potential, then the first delimitation (into provinces) is eloquent (units of different orders province, regions, zones, centers etc. which reflect a certain spatial grouping of objectives with a certain level of interrelations) which ensures the touristic act. However, there are interferences, regarding the assembly of the relations settled between the natural and human components along the centuries, and also, especially in the last decades, the assertion of those imposed by the unfolding of the touristic activities. Consequently, the limits of the different subunits evolved, surpassing the strict space of the province. Therefore, functional units which reflect not so much the potential which remains basic, but more than that, the assembly of the touristic phenomenon detached. This is why, respecting the first hierarchic step – that of provinces – it was necessary that for the following ones, of subordinate rank, to make the spatial delimitation depending on the combination of the concentration of the objectives with the characteristics of the infrastructure, the type and level of the facilities and the unfolding of the touristic activities. This way, three mutations took place: expansions of some zones from a province to another, some sections of interference between zones from the same province and the delineation of touristic axes which cross many provinces, connecting zones, centres, localities and objectives, some of them making the connection to the touristic realities from the neighboring countries.

The Carpathian-Precarpathian touristic province

It is the most expanded, from the spatial point of view, and its characteristics are given by:

- *The predominance of the natural elements* (glacial, karstic, volcanic relief, summits, sharp peaks, masses of detritus, plateaus, gorges and defiles, numerous springs and lakes, alpine and sub-alpine meadows, broadleaf and pine forests, valuable hunting fauna etc) which concentrate *predominantly touristic objectives*;
- *The concentration of historical and cultural elements, as well as the most part of the infrastructure in depressions and along large valleys*, here we can also find touristic centers which polarize the touristic dynamic, but also some *small touristic localities*;
- *Specific touristic activities* – mountain hiking on trails, with different duration and difficulty degree, alpinism, hunting, karstic explorations, resting, winter sports, excursions in circuits which comprise the main localities etc.

Within this type of province, there are firstly two main categories of touristic zones. Natural touristic zones which are based on mountainous massifs (Gutâi, Rarău-Giumalău, Rodnei, Ceahlău, Hășmaș, Călimani, Harghita, Ciucaș, Pietra Craiului, Bucegi, Făgăraș, Iezer, Cozia, Căpățâni, Șureanu, Parâng, Retezat, Țarcu, Godeanu, M. Bihor etc.) where there are many touristic attractions, mainly with a natural character, included in systems of marked paths; here are chalets, facilities for the winter sports, areas for fishing or hunting; the mountain hiking represents the main form of tourism, to which winter sports, alpinism etc are added. Complex touristic zones are more expanded, and they include depressions, important valleys with numerous settlements, as well as sections of the neighboring mountains. Within them, there are different types of anthropic objectives (cultural, historical, social etc) concentrated in localities but also natural objectives (especially lakes, mineral springs, some natural reservations etc, situated nearby). We must mention here several touristic centers with varied facilities for tourism and which organize excursions. The important forms of tourism are: relaxing and resting, treatments in balneal and health resorts, excursions in a circuit etc. The most important zones of this type are: Oaș, Maramureș, Bistrița, Brașov, Ciuc, Gheorghieni, Beiuș etc. The traditional infrastructure, made up of driveways, sylvan roads, marked or unmarked paths, chalets or shelters was partially modernized lately, by the development of numerous settlements, especially in the centre of depressions and along the valleys corridors. These settlements are to be taken into account for the agro tourism (the Dornelor Depression, the Maramureș Depression, the Oașului County, the Apuseni Mountains, the Depression of Neamț, the Depression of Vrancea, and the Depression of Câmpulung etc.). They are included along some *touristic axes*. The territorial-structural evolution of the touristic zones and centres led to the delineation of some larger touristic units–regions, which suppose a certain specificity of the profile activities, inclusively to the assertion of relations of services, programs and orientation in the dynamic of the visitors' flows. In this respect, the regions Maramureș, Bucovina, Brașov, Banatului, Apuseni, Buzău-Vrancea in the Carpathians and the Curvature Subcarpathians, Argeș-Prahova, North Oltenia are representative. Within these regions, there are secondary zones, centers and touristic axes, included in a touristic system.

The touristic province hilly Moldavia

It is spread on the most part of the plateau, including a space with a relief with medium altitudes (summits and plateaus at 250-500 m, separated by large valleys with terraces at 50-200 m), with a high density of urban and rural settlements, where there are almost one

million inhabitants. The natural environment is suitable for touristic activities. The relief facilitates accessibility in all directions, but some specific forms, too. The climate, although continental with aridity touches, allows the normal unfolding of the forms of tourism along the entire year. The large number of lakes, most of them dam lakes, ensure the sporting fishing, whereas the vegetal formations – especially forests encourage optimum conditions for recreation. There can be added mineral springs, which made the individualization of some local balneal resorts possible. The long inhabitation of these lands, historic events rich in proofs, the popular culture from a few distinct ethno-folkloric areas, numerous churches, monasteries, from among which some originate in the XIVth–XVIth centuries, the constructions from the XIXth – XXth centuries, the museums and memorial houses ensure, at the same time, a potentially touristic complex with human objectives of first rank, which are generally capitalized.

There is a numerous touristic equipment, but with a different degree of modernization, thus leading - only for certain localities - to the unfolding of some forms of tourism of high level. In this respect, the major road arteries (along the Siret, Bârlad and a few driveways which ensure the connection between them), two railway arteries which go out to Ukraine and the Republic of Moldavia and three airports are relevant. From among these, many roads of regional and local level branch, allowing the access to any objective which is farther of the main touristic centers or between those. The basis regarding the hotels, the meals services and the entertainment is concentrated in big cities or close to them, but it is insufficient for ensuring tourism at European standard level. The grouping of the touristic objectives and, regarding them, the grouping of the services units and the unfolding of the infrastructure lead to the delimitation within the province of one touristic region (the Moldavia Plain with a zone, many centres and spread localities) and two touristic axes (on Bârlad and Siret).

The touristic province Dobrogea

The touristic province Dobrogea includes the entire space between the Danube and the Black Sea where there are, besides varied natural landscapes, numerous human objectives from which historical traces impose. Geographically, four subunits of plateau are separated (the North Dobrogea, the Plateau of Central Dobrogea or the Casimcea Plateau, the Plateau of South Dobrogea, the seaside), to which the Danube Delta is added, all of them imposing themselves by specific touristic characteristics, to which there are added adequate equipments for a multitude of forms of tourism. The touristic objectives are concentrated in cities and in several rural settlements ranging in the Danube Valley, on the islands from the Danube Delta, at the seaside or in those along the main roads which cross Dobrogea. Their grouping reflects in certain characteristics of potential and specificity in the unfolding of the forms of tourism. It emphasizes two distinct zones – the Danube Delta and the Seaside to which a touristic axis (Cernavoda-Constanța) and several centers of different touristic importance are added.

The Touristic Danubiano-Getic Province

It spreads in the south part of Romania, including the Getic Plateau and the Romanian Plain, having a large spreading but also some particularities referring to the distribution and nature of the objectives and, implicitly, to the activities related to them. In the hilly space there is a fragmented relief where the corridors of valley with settlements and a few elements which could interest the visitors have got a north-south orientation. This fact also led to the organizing of the road network, where the driveways on the main valleys (the Jiu,

the Olt) and more seldom the driveways on some tributaries impose. There are varied landscapes: recently, the grotesque landscape of the wood coal exploitation imposed, too, but also lakes as ponds around the localities and lakes of hydro-energetic dam (on the Olt), some mineral springs with local importance, churches and monasteries from the XVth-XVIIIth centuries, a varied ethno-folkloric fund. They are disposed separately, little known and the touristic activities are connected to large settlements, some monasteries and the corridors of the main valleys.

The touristic province Transylvanian Hills

The province of Transylvanian Hills includes the central part of Romania, spread between the Carpathians branches. The historic and cultural traditional objectives are predominant (fortified cities and vestiges of ancient and medieval fortified cities not only in towns, but also in villages, castles and palaces, churches in the gothic, baroque and Renaissance styles, rustic walled cities, wood churches, constructions from the XVIIIth – XIXth centuries). Elements of the natural environment are added (salty lakes resulted from the collapse of the exploitations of salt, as a result of which balneal resorts developed, floristic and geomorphologic natural reservations, original landscapes). The province of Transylvanian hills is characterized by proper facilities, especially in towns, but also by the entry of some touristic localities within the Sibiu and Făgăraș depressions or within the areal Bistrița-Cluj, where agro-tourism develops. Within this type of province, three touristic regions with a complex character distinguish. Within them, there are touristic axes and centers. Around some of them (Cluj-Napoca, Târgu Mureș, Sibiu, Alba Iulia) several zones individualized, not only from the point of view of the potential, but also as an assembly of specific activities which provides appropriate facilities and services.

The province of the hills and plains in the Western part of the country

It comprises the Western Plain and the Western Hills, but regionally there were also included areas from the nearby units (the Depressions Lăpuș-Copalnic) as a result of their including in the systems of touristic activities imposed by the big touristic centers and as a result of the economic, social traditional evolution. On the whole, the natural touristic potential is varied, but partially capitalized. In exchange, here is an anthropic potential (objectives and an important number of inhabitants who take part into the touristic activities by creation, services or as beneficiaries), diversified and enough capitalized. The touristic activities take place mainly in big cities (Timișoara, Arad, Oradea, Satu Mare, Lugoj, Zalău, Baia Mare), where the objectives are concentrated, especially social-cultural and historic objectives, there is a well represented infrastructure from the types point of view, but with a varied degree of modernization and with many facilities. At the same time, they are also main cities of crossing towards the states from the centre of Europe. This fact led to the transit tourism as an important form of activities' display. From these centers, tourists flows set forth the smaller localities from the neighborhood (for rest, entertainment, sporting fishing, ecclesiastic holidays) or the balneal and health resorts developed due to the thermal and mineral springs (Buziaș, Băile Felix, 1 Mai, Tinca, Boghiș). The simple repartition of the touristic objectives emphasizes their concentration in towns or a spreading in many of the rural settlements (especially old churches, manors, museum collections, lakes), this fact leading to the shaping of three zones, under the aspect of the potential (in Banat the main zone is represented by the towns Timișoara, Arad and Lugoj; in Crișana, another region, from Oradea to the east, in the basin of the Cris Repede; and another

zone at Baia Mare-Târgu Lăpuş). The dispersion is too large around Satu Mare town and on the axis of connection with Zălăul and Şimleul Silvaniei. The infrastructure, the repartition of the facilities and the specific of the touristic activities, including the system of relations between the centre and the localities which are included in the polarization space lead to two groups of distinct touristic units, one in the west, within the major axis (Banato-Şomeşan) and another in the north-east (Baia Mare-Lăpuş).

CONCLUSIONS

Romania is disposing of a rich and complex touristic potential. Firstly, it consists of a variety of forms of relief, springs with mineral thermal water, lakes used for entertaining, swimming and sports fishing, a valuable hunting fund concentrated in broadleaf and pine forests, varied landscapes, from that of the mountains peaks of over 2000 m to those from the plain, seaside and the Danube Delta. The history of our people reflects in numerous material and spiritual evidences which can be seen especially in localities (museums, monuments, churches, monasteries, ancient and medieval fortified cities, the popular clothes, weavings, pottery etc). They represent a valuable fund of elements which concentrate the attention of numerous visitors. The fund of the touristic objectives is connected by means of a diversified infrastructure (from driveways with a different degree of modernization, to paths and sylvan roads in the mountains on which there are touristic tracks), to which there is added a network of touristic facilities, varied as type and level of modernization (hotels, villas, camping sites, chalets, village houses etc, multiple possibilities of alimentation and providing services etc). There can be noticed an irregular repartition of those, with a degree of concentration in the big cities, along the important touristic arteries, at the seaside etc.

REFERENCES

- Cândea, M., Erdeli, G., Simon, T. and Peptenatu, D. (2003): *Potenţialul turistic al României şi amenajarea turistică a spaţiului*, Edit. Universităţii, Bucureşti
- Ciangă, N. (2007): *Geografia turismului*, Presa Universitară Clujană, Cluj-Napoca.
- Cocean, P. (1997): *Geografia turismului românesc*, Edit. Focul Viu., Cluj-Napoca.
- Glăvan, V. (2003): *Amenajarea turistică a teritoriului României*, Edit. Alma Mater, Bucureşti.
- Ielenicz, M. and Dumbrăveanu, D. (1997): The tourist potential, *The second Liverpool-Bucharest geography colloquium*, Bucureşti.
- Ielenicz, M. and Comănescu, L. (2006): *România-potenţial turistic*, Edit. Universitară, Bucureşti.
- Ielenicz, M. and Matei, E. (2009): *Resorts of national interest in the Romanian Carpathians*, Edit. Universitară, Bucureşti.
- Rădulescu, N. Al., (1946): Asupra geografiei turismului, *Rev. Geogr.*, Institutul de Cercetări Geografice al României, II, 1-4, Bucureşti.
- Ţigu G. (2001): *Turismul montan*, Edit. Uranus, Bucureşti.