

ORIGINAL SCIENTIFIC PAPER

Stimulation of border and inter-county cooperation by capitalization of agrotouristic resources from Dolj County - Romania

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Abstract

Dolj county location in the confining area with Bulgaria creates the possibility for development in cooperation of an active cross border area with the main centres in Calafat (Romania) and Vidin (Bulgaria) as well as the pairs of localities Rast – Low and Bechet – Orehovoo. The various touristic potential of Dolj county is not enough capitalized, while Vidin District is very important for the development of the region, as tourism has known maybe the most innovative and accelerated development. Danube presence provides opportunities for cruise tourism development, hunting and sportive fishing, water sports, rest and amusement.

Key words: cross border area, cooperation, rural tourism, resources

Introduction

For the countries in Central and Eastern Europe, cross border cooperation and spatial integrated development of border areas are relatively new concepts. The process of European enlargement has caused the use of these concepts from some initiatives referring to this space in the last few years.

Romania has been declared an eligible country within cross border cooperation programs after European Commission Regulation no. 2760/1998.

Dolj county is in the southern half of Romania, on Danube and Jiu lower course, in the great geographic unit the Romanian Plain. The location on the Danube shore along 150 km puts the county in the “Danube Region” along with territories from 8 states (Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Croatia, Hungary, Austria, Slovakia and Germany), and the fluvial axis Rhine-Main-Danube provides a connection between the Black Sea and the North Sea.

Material and methods

The research was mainly based on the way agrotouristic resources are capitalized through various forms of tourism and opportunities created by the future road and railway bridge, over the Danube Dunăre, between Calafat and Vidin which opens the 4th European corridor (Berlin / Nuremberg – Prague – Bratislava – Constanta / Thessaloniki / Istanbul) on Dolj county territory which is the most important economic development element, connected to rural tourism and transports, constructions, services.

At the same time, its location at the confining area with Bulgaria creates the possibility of development in cooperation of an active cross border area with the main centres in Calafat (Romania) and Vidin (Bulgaria) as well as the pairs of localities Rast – Low and Bechet – Orehovoo.

In order to know the forms of tourism practicable in Dolj county, the following research methods have been analysed:

- analysis of secondary resources – the main method, hence revealing aspects like: touristic environment, touristic resources, touristic infrastructure, touristic circulation;
- descriptive analysis – as a means to describe, present all the elements noticed;
- comparative analysis, as a means of explaining the connections established between the elements.

Results and discussion

County location in a transit area between the East and the West, between the North and the South of the country and of Europe is another important development element, determined both by the presence of a major sailing axis – the Danube (7th European corridor), as well as by the existence of major thoroughfares: European roads E 70, E79);: București – Craiova – Drobeta Turnu Severin – Lugoj – Timisoara –Moravia Highway; *Express roads*: Calafat – Craiova – Pitesti – Brasov – Bacau; Deva – Petroșani – Târgu Jiu – Craiova; Craiova – Bechet ; Calafat – Drobeta Turnu Severin; Double and simple highways with a main international line (Bucharest – Caracal – Craiova – Drobeta Turnu Severin – Caransebeș – Timisoara – Jimbolia ; *Harbours at* Calafat and Bechet; *Airport* in Craiova.

The agricultural field is over 79 % of the entire surface of the county, and the arable field has most of high quality soils (chernozem) over 83 % of the agricultural one. We also have to mention that on almost 64 % of the agricultural field there are irrigations appliances.

The natural touristic potential is various, Doljul having terraces relief going down from north to south, the broad meadow of the Danube with moors, rush-beds and sallow and poplar parks, drifts between Calafat and Desa, forests near urban areas, vineyards from Segarcea and Dăbuleni, lakes in the area of Danube and near Craiova used for recreation, belvedere points on Danube valley Calafat and Cetate, balneary resources at Gighera.

The analysis of current status of nature, the quality and quantity of natural patrimony has revealed the existence of 35 points with a total surface of 29.204 ha, as valuable sample territories of nature. National protected areas have a total surface of 545 ha and waters flow length of 116 km.

From the anthrop resources point of view, Dolj has national or local value historical monuments, most of them being located in the municipality of Craiova, but also in rural localities having monasteries and churches, boyars mansions, museums or museum related points, as well as villages with significant ethnographic background.

In accordance with the real estate cultural patrimony inventory made by the Ministry of Culture – Historic Monuments Directorate, in Dolj there are 626 national historic monuments.

Monuments are distributed on topologic categories, as follows:

- a) monuments and archaeological sites – 51 positions;
- b) monuments and architecture sites – 490 positions;
- c) memorial buildings – 5 positions;
- d) monuments and plastic art complexes – 67 positions;
- e) architecture and urbanism reservations – 3 positions.

These monuments are found in 219 localities all over the county

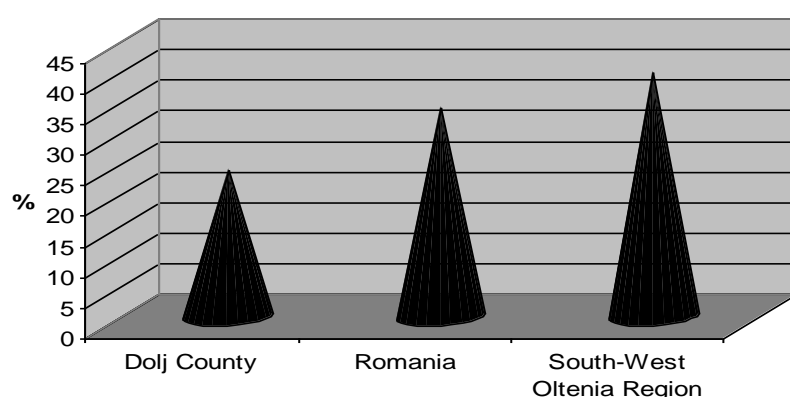
Through the Law no. 5/2000 regarding P.A.T.N. approval – 3rd Section – Protected areas, 11 exceptional national value documents have been identified: 2- towers; 4- civil urban buildings; 2- churches; 1- mansion; 2- Dacian citadels.

At present, this touristic potential is not enough capitalized. Accommodation possibilities (1450 places in 2007) are little diversified and located around Craiova (65 %), and the modernization degree is low (Table 1). Operation capacities (Graph.1) use index for a 3-

year average (2005-2007) is low, 24.13 % respectively, compared to 34.30% (country average) and 40.03 % (region average).

Table 1. Accommodation capacity and touristic circulation

Dolj County	Years	Accommodation capacity		Arrivals (thousand)	Overnights (thousand)
		Existing (places)	In operation (thousand places- days)		
	2005	1140	405,9	41,3	84,4
	2006	1297	468,9	44,4	93,5
	2007	1450	475.4	56.7	125.5
South-West Oltenia Region	2005	14672	3950	334	1602
	2006	14816	4226	371	1641
	2007	11913	4107	403	1674



Graph 1. Indices of net operation capacity (2005-2007)

From the analysis of touristic potential elements of the county, the following conditions for the next forms of tourism result:

a) Travelling tourism

The variety and beauty of touristic objectives and natural environment as well as location on the main connection roads on east-west direction, between the capital city and Banat, and north-south between Oltenia and Transylvania, provides the necessary conditions for travelling tourism under two forms:

- *transit tourism* – currently on existing national roads (DN 6, DN 56, DN 65, DN 55) generally corresponding to the future express roads itineraries. The main localities meant for transit tourism are Calafat, Craiova, Filiași, Băilești, Bechet, Brabova.
- *cultural itinerant tourism* – is determined by the value of cultural touristic objectives, by their density in the field and by access possibilities on existing roadways.

b) Rest and recreation tourism

The picturesque natural landscape with recreation possibilities provides conditions for practicing this type of tourism under several forms:

- *weekend tourism* – may develop in pre-urban areas rich in forests and lakes, namely: Bucovăț, Ciutura, Bratovoiești, Negaia Burgețelu forests, near the municipality of Băilești, Cilieni recreation area. Also Danube meadow and Jiu meadow are favourable for rest and recreation tourism. These areas shall be provided with modernization and development of their specific accommodation base (camping, bungalows) and public alimentation spaces.

• *balneary tourism* is not currently practiced although there are resources of sulphurous mineral waters in Gighera, ferruginous resources in Desa and bicarbonate in Ghercești.

• *viticultural tourism* favoured by the existence of so-called vineyards from Segarcea, Piscu Sadovei, Dăbuleni, Călărași. Wine tasting centres are proposed to be organized in Segarcea, Sadova, Dăbuleni and Coțofenii din Față through the arrangement of the former Coțofeni Mansion.

• *cruise tourism* – to be developed in the harbours located along the Danube – Calafat, Cetate, Bechet – and also by extension in the localities from Danube meadow (Ciupercenii Noi, Desa, Bistreț) that could be included in touristic programs that would offer the possibility to know the special natural environment and local flora and fauna. It is necessary that the material base be first of all developed by providing adequate means of transportation (touristic fleet), harbours modernization, river transport connection and synchronization with other forms of transport.

• *rural tourism* - for this type of tourism the following localities are proposed Cleanov, Plenița, Poiana Mare, Sadova, Cetate. The localities assessed as having agrotourism availability shall be given priority for the modernization of access roads, water supply in centralized system, sewerage system, telecommunications, possible common transport. It also provides initiation of certain processing and commercialization activities for local agricultural and animal products in order to stimulate touristic interest (Moinet, 2006).

c) Hunting and sport fishing tourism – small accommodation bases shall be established (chalets) in Ciupercenii Noi, Desa, Bistreț from the Danube meadow famous for the forests and lakes with a rich cynegetic and fish potential, as well as the creation of a technical assistance network for this type of tourism (Moinet, 2006).

d) Nautical sports tourism

The favourable conditions due to Jiu and Danube waters make it possible to practice nautical sports for which specific arrangements shall be made on the lakes in these areas.

e) Scientific tourism

The capitalization of the natural patrimony consisting of natural reservations in the county (ornithology reservation from Ciupercenii Noi, Ciurumele Forest, botanical reservation from Popoveni, fossil point from Bucovăț etc.) can be achieved through this type of tourism.

f) Small traffic tourism

The construction of the future Calafat – Vidin bridge as well as the two border crossing points from Calafat and Bechet allows small traffic in these localities.

In Vidin district, agriculture has a significant place, with 145 398 ha of agricultural field, mainly cultivating: wheat (31,17%); maize (30,42%); sunflower (30,36%); barley (8,05%).

Tourism in Vidin District is very important for the development of the region facing the most innovative and accelerated development. The main touristic objectives capitalized are:

- a) The National Park from the Danube shore, historical monument incorporating other significant monuments, like Veda theatre, a mosque, Kapiya telegraph, Turkish postal office, Baba Vida fortress, as well as archaeological sites;
- b) Orlyaka touristic area, located 4 km south-west from Vidin, offers tourists: camping zone, facilities for water sports, fishing;
- c) Bozhuritsa touristic area, located 18 km from Vidin, provides free time spending activities like hunting, hiking, swimming, fishing, etc.

Conclusions

1. Danube presence offers opportunities for the development of cruise tourism, hunting and sport fishing, nautical sports, rest and recreation, being necessary to modernize and develop the material base and touristic endowments at adequate standards.
2. Building the bridge over the Danube at Calafat – Vidin, opening new border crossing points at Calafat and Rast, creates the premises for cross border and inter-county cooperation by elaborating common touristic programs.
3. Dolj-Vidin cross border area holds favourable conditions for the development of agrotourism and cruise tourism on the Danube.
4. Identification of touristic objectives, cultural projects for traditions capitalization and promoting common touristic packages could contribute to the achievement of an active cross border area.

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