

ANALYSIS OF RÂUȘOR RESORT'S TOURIST TRAFFIC, HUNEDOARA COUNTY, ROMANIA

CIPRIAN NIMARĂ *

ABSTRACT: *The Râușor tourist complex is the only area arranged for winter sports, especially skiing in Hațeg area and within the Retezat Mountains, which gives it a privileged status in the context of tourist development and a future transformation into a mountain resort of local interest. The aim of this paper is to analyse the infrastructure and tourist traffic of the resort and also to show the increase of tourist interest in this area as a result of financial investment in tourism.*

KEY WORDS: *tourism, Râușor resort, Hunedoara county, Romania*

JEL CLASSIFICATION: *R0, R1, Z3*

1. INTRODUCTION

Râușor resort is located in Râu de Mori commune, one of the most developed communes of Hațeg area, Hunedoara county. It is located at an altitude of 1250 m on the Northern slopes of the Retezat massif (figure 1), at the confluence between the valley of Valereasca Brook with Ștevia Brook, between the peaks of Valereasca and Custura Prelucii (Bran, 2001).

In terms of distances, Râușor resort is 71 km from the residence of the county Deva, 30 km from Hațeg and 60 km from Petroșani.

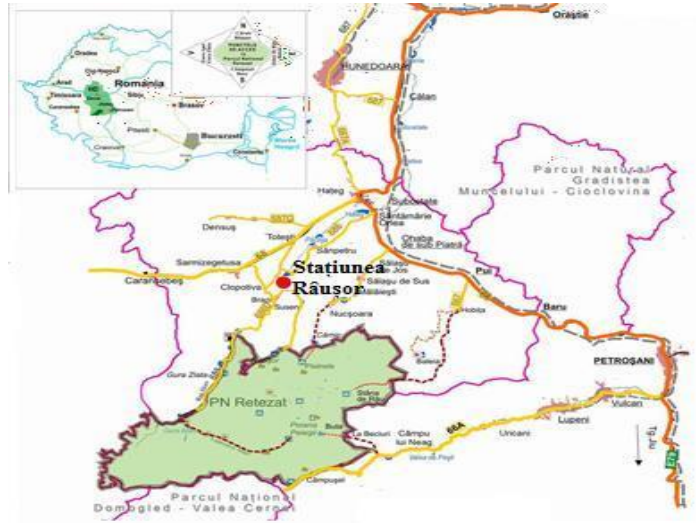
As can be seen in Figure 1, Râușor resort is located near Retezat National Park, the first national park in Romania, established and recognized since 1935. The resort is also one of the access roads from which tourist routes start.

Following the decision of the Râu de Mori commune City Hall, the administrative-territorial authority of the Râușor area, to lease the plots of land for the

* *Lecturer, Ph.D., University of Petroșani, Romania, ciprian.nimara@yahoo.com*

construction of holiday homes, has led to the construction, so far, of approximately 50 new and modern chalets.

In 2002, the ski slope was taken over by a private entrepreneur, currently being equipped with a ski lift, night skis and artificial snow.



Source: <http://retezat.ro/index.php/romana/turism/acces-parc.html>

Fig. 1. Location of the Râuşor Resort and Retezat Mountains

2. ANALYSIS OF THE TOURIST INFRASTRUCTURE

The Râuşor tourist complex is the only area arranged for winter sports, especially skiing in Haţeg area and within the Retezat Mountains, which gives it a privileged status in the context of tourist development and a future transformation into a mountain resort of local interest.

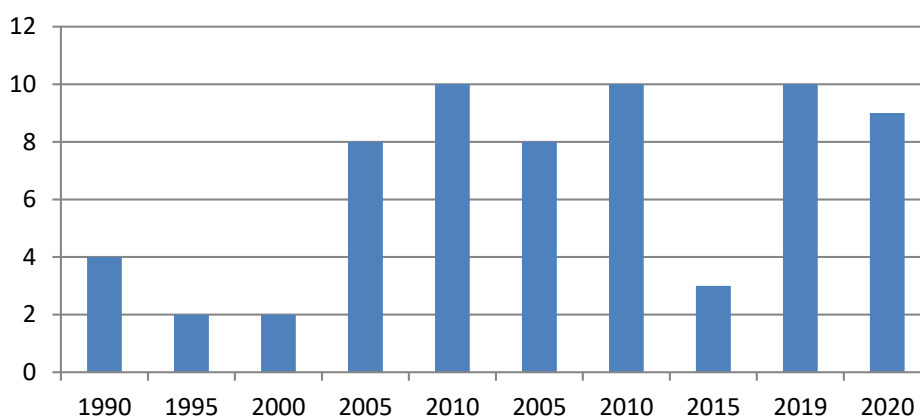
Also in this sense, its location in one of the most important areas from the historical, cultural and tourist point of view of Hunedoara County, with the most and diversified tourist objectives located in a relatively small space, is a premise for tourism development not only for mountain tourism, but also for cultural, historical, religious, scientific tourism and, why not, for relaxation and weekend tourism.

2.1. Accommodation and food infrastructure

The existing tourist accommodation capacity represents the number of tourist accommodation places registered in the last act of reception, homologation, classification of the tourist accommodation unit, excluding the extra beds that can be installed in case of need (Candea, et al., 2003).

The places related to the tourist reception structures with complementary tourist accommodation functions (holiday cottages, camping etc.) to a basic tourist accommodation structure (hotel, motel, campsite etc.) and the use of these places are included in the basic structure.

According to the data provided by the National Institute of Statistics, in 2020 there are 9 structures for tourist reception (figure 2). Regarding the accommodation capacity within the commune of Râu de Mori, there is a decrease in accommodation capacity starting with 1990, when a number of 799 accommodation places were registered, then after five years 47 accommodation places will be registered, and subsequently to increase to 146 accommodation places in 2020.



Source: INSSE, 2020

Fig. 2. The situation of the tourist reception structures, with tourist accommodation functions

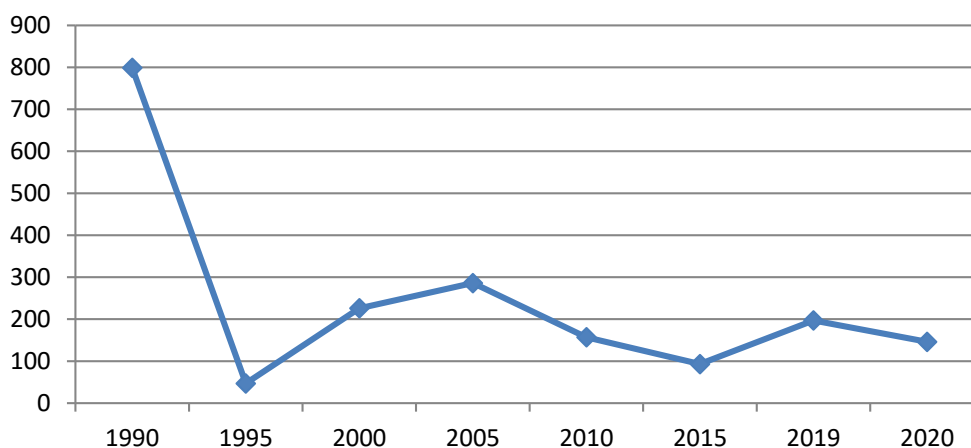
The situation has changed in recent years, so that following a research both in the field and on specialized sites in providing accommodation, I found that in Râușor resort there are several tourist reception units which are not listed in the data of NSI. These are presented in the following tables and figures (table 1, figure 3).

Table 1. Tourist accommodation capacity by types of tourist reception structures

ACCOMMODATION TYPE	YEAR / NUMBER						
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Hotels	50	50	50	50	50	50	-
Villas	-	-	-	-	10	10	10
Chalets	57	-	-	53	71	71	53
Agrotourism guesthouses	83	43	43	54	66	66	83

The tourist accommodation capacity in operation represents the number of accommodation places made available to tourists by the tourist accommodation units,

taking into account the number of days the units are open during the considered period. This is expressed in places-days. Places in rooms or temporarily closed units, due to lack of tourists, for repairs or for other reasons are excluded from the analysis.



Source: INSSE, 2020

Fig. 3. Existing tourist accommodation capacity, by types of tourist reception structures in Râu de Mori commune

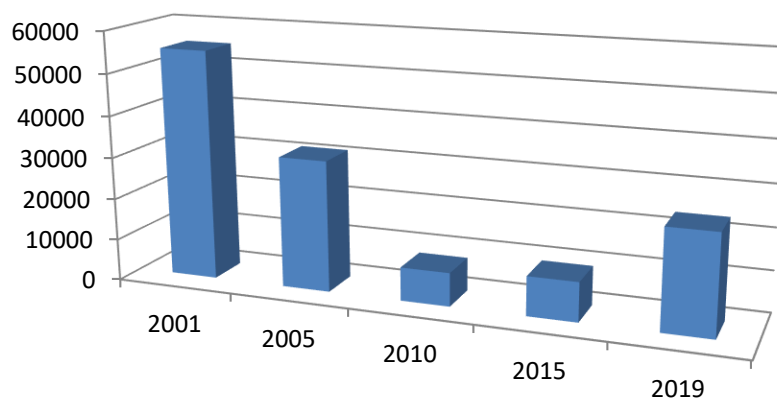
The tourist accommodation capacity in operation in the commune of Râu de Mori is presented in the following table:

Table 2. Tourist accommodation capacity

MONTH	YEAR					
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
January	682	682	1674	2046	2046	2046
February	616	638	1620	1652	1848	1914
March	682	682	1674	2046	1674	990
April	660	660	1620	1980	1980	-
May	682	682	1674	2046	2046	-
June	660	660	1620	1980	1980	1370
July	1333	682	1674	2046	2046	1722
August	1425	682	1674	2046	2046	2542
September	660	660	1620	1980	1980	2460
October	682	682	1674	2046	2046	2542
November	660	660	1620	1980	1980	-
December	682	992	1674	1710	2046	-

Starting with 2017, there is a doubling of the accommodation capacity in operation, from 682 places in 2016 to 1674 places in 2017, respectively 2046 places in 2018, 2019 and 2020 (table 2).

The tourist accommodation capacity in operation, by types of tourist reception structures registers a decrease from 55210 places in 2001, 31486 places in 2005, 8030 places in 2010, 9425 places in 2015, to 23966 accommodation places in 2019, according to the following graph (figure 4):



Source: INSSE, 2020

Fig. 4. The capacity of tourist accommodation in operation by types of tourist reception structures in Râu de Mori commune

The food service is present in association with the accommodation services in half board or full board. Most of the studied boarding houses have food structures, breakfast is often included in their offers.

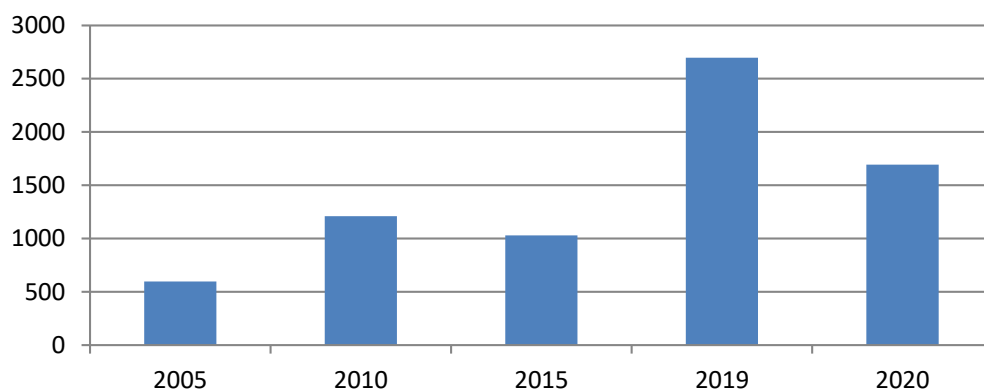
There are new, modern constructions, but they also it keeps some traditional elements such as building materials such as wood and river stone. Inside some guesthouses there are traditional elements, belonging to the rustic style, such as: oven, lamps, clay pots and braids.

3. ANALYSIS OF THE TOURIST TRAFFIC

3.1. The evolution of tourists number arrived in Râușor resort

Among the most representative indicators used to characterize the tourist traffic, there is also the indicator number of tourists. It is obtained from the accumulation of information contained in various statistical documents, effectively calculated at the end of the calendar year, but also for shorter periods, depending on the needs of the user. This indicator can be determined by total tourist traffic or by types of actions, tourist areas.

The number of arrivals in the accommodation units from Râu de Mori commune are presented in the following figure (figure 5):



Source: INSSE, 2020

Fig. 5. The evolution of tourists number arrived in Râu de Mori commune, in the 2005-2019 period

3.2. Evolution of the number of tourist overnight stays

The tourist overnight stay represents the interval of 24 hours, starting with the hotel hour, for which a person is registered in the tourist accommodation and benefits from accommodation on account of the tariff related to the occupied space, even if the actual stay is less than the mentioned interval. Overnight stays for extra beds, paid by customers, are also taken into account.

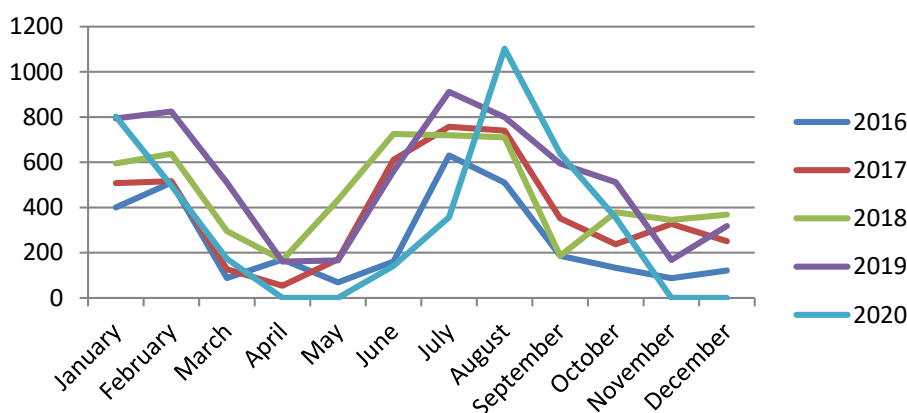
Table 3. Overnight stays in tourist accommodation units, Râu de Mori commune

Month	Year				
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
January	400	508	595	794	802
February	510	516	637	824	497
March	88	127	295	510	173
April	170	54	167	161	-
May	69	171	433	166	-
June	161	611	725	561	142
July	630	757	719	911	357
August	510	740	710	799	1102
September	186	352	186	594	638
October	133	237	379	512	355
November	87	327	345	168	-
December	121	251	368	318	-

The evolution of the number of overnight stays in the tourist reception structures is presented in table 3. according to the data provided by the National Institute of Statistics. As can be seen, the months with the highest number of overnight stays are those in winter (January and February), suitable for mountain tourism, through winter sports and those in summer (June, July and August), suitable hiking.

According to the analysis of the data contained in the attached figure, it can be seen that the highest number of overnight stays in the tourist accommodation structures is registered in two distinct periods of the year, namely (figure 6):

- the period January - February, when the number of overnight stays varies between 400 and 824;
- July to August, when the number of overnight stays varies between 630 and 799.



Source: INSSE, 2020

Fig. 6. Overnight stays in tourist accommodation units, Râu de Mori commune

The lowest number of overnight stays recorded in the analyzed period was recorded in April 2017 (54 overnight stays) and May 2016 (69 overnight stays), respectively. The exception to this analysis is the period March-May, when the national state of emergency was established and subsequently the state of alert, but with the elimination of some restrictions. This situation was caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The maximum number of overnight stays was recorded in July 2019 (911 overnight stays), February 2019 (824 overnight stays) and August 2020 (1102 overnight stays).

3.3. Evolution of the average duration of tourist stay

The average length of tourist stay is calculated as the ratio between the number of overnight stays (total tourist days) and the number of tourists arriving in the accommodation structure. The indicator represents the average time (days) of tourists to stay in the accommodation and reflects the probability of the tourist offer to retain the tourist in a certain area or region (Buia & Nimară, 2016).

The evolution of the average length of tourist stay is presented in the following figure:

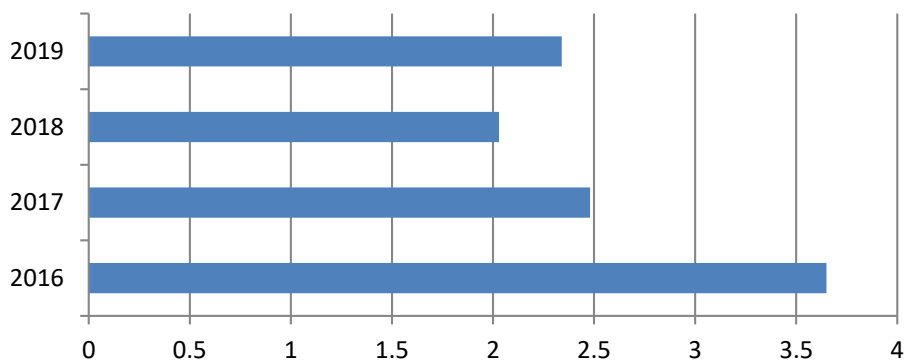


Fig. 7. Average duration of tourist stay in 2016-2019, Râu de Mori commune

According to the above figure, there is a slight decrease in the average length of tourist stay from 3.65 in 2016 to 2.34 in 2019.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Râuşor resort is located in Râu de Mori commune, Hunedoara county, one of the most developed communes of Haţeg area. The commune consists of 11 villages, the most important one is Râu de Mori, which is also its residence.

The existing tourist resources in the area of Râuşor resort and in its adjacent area have attracted over time numerous tourist with different motivations. Currently, a series of tourism forms with the most diverse motivations are taking place here. These include: winter sports tourism, recreational tourism, mountain hiking, adventure tourism, cultural-scientific tourism and weekend tourism.

According to the analysed data, the maximum number of overnight stays was recorded in August 2020 (1102 overnight stays), most probably because of the elimination of some restrictions, due to alert state caused by Covid-19 pandemic. At the same time, following the analysis, it could be observed that the most frequented periods are the months of January-February and July-August, these being also the peaks of the season in terms of tourist traffic.

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