

CONCERNS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECUMENICAL TOURISM IN BUCOVINA

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Abstract: *The purpose of the study was to investigate the possibilities of the ecumenical tourism in Northern Moldavian monasteries' area. The monasteries of Putna, Sucevita, Moldovita, Humor and Voronet are great touristic attractions of the beautiful Bucovina lands and being visited by a large number of foreign and Romanian tourists. Ecumenical tourism is a matter that already exists for centuries. It keeps some of the characteristics of pilgrimage, but it has greatly evolved over years. Today, ecumenical tourism asks for a higher level of culture and conditions for tourists. Thus, if in this context the tourists could assure their own necessities, they would be able to appreciate all the cultural objectives as well as the architecture, constructions, values, spiritual connotation and art. There are only two programs in Romania for this kind of tourism: “Know Bucovina” and “Easter in Bucovina”, both promoted by ANAT and by the Council of Suceava County. The accommodation facilities for the monasteries' visitors have been studied as well as transportation and advertising points of view in order to enlarge the sizes of the actual tourism which converge to a higher number of tourists. In order to improve the touristic activity it was developed a ten-question questionnaire which had been distributed to a sample of 200 tourists.*

Key words: *pilgrimage, “Know Bucovina”, “Easter in Bucovina”, questionnaire*

1. Introduction

Tourism is defined as “the word to describe the activity of traveling” (Mill, 1990) or “tourism includes any activity that concerns the temporary movement on short term of people towards destinations far from their daily places and habits, along with the activities developed during their staying” (Middleton, 1993). Tourism means hiking or organizing and developing pleasure and recreation trips. Starting from these definitions and from the ending of the word, “-ism”, we can conclude that it is “an action or process” (Theobald, 1994).

Bucovina is one of the most attractive and visited touristic regions from Romania. This area, well known nowadays worldwide, was awarded in 1975 with the international prize “Pomme d’Or”,

awarded by the International Federation of Journalists and Tourism Writers. The ancient architectural monuments with internal and external frescoes from this part of the country were listed by UNESCO as monuments of universal art. (<http://www.turisminbucovina.ro>)

Types of tourism:

a. Cultural and ecumenical tourism: If we talk about the main touristic motivation from Bucovina, the starting point is represented by the unique and wonderful monasteries, subscribed to UNESCO’s patrimony: Moldovita, Sucevita, Humor, Voronet, Putna, Arbore. The patrimony also enlists the museums, the ethnographic collection “Ion Gramada” and the black ceramic of Marginea (pottery: expo sales show). This type of tourism can be developed without considering the fact that

the region is on the land of Bucovina monasteries.

- Voronet Monastery

It is an historical architectural monument, the best representation of the Moldavian architectural style. It was built between 26.05 – 14.09.1488 by Stephen the Great. Voronet became famous all around the world for its exterior paintings: Doomsday, Ieseu's Tree, St. John the New's Prayer for the dead. Another peculiarity is the usage of a certain type of blue, so called "blue of Voronet". This color was made by locals including in the composition "lazurit" paint.

- Humor Monastery

It is a valuable medieval architectural monument, built in 1530 by the great chancellor Teodor Bubuiog. The first element that became famous was the open veranda with its unique exterior painting. These were made in 1536 by Toma from Suceava. The main piece that caught the eye was "Constantinople Siege". Red is the dominant color and the founder's portrait is settled inside the crypt.

- Moldovita Monastery

It was built in 1532 and painted in 1537. It is one of the most valuable medieval Romanian art monuments from Petru Rares reign. The monastery appears to be a fortress composed from the actual church, the wall surrounding it with three massive towers on each side and the royal residency. The painting is of a great artistic value, similar with the one from Voronet, being special through the figure humanization tendency and their presentation in movement. Green and blue are combined in a very original way, being similar with the grass green and the blue sky.

- Sucevita Monastery

Built at the end of the 16th century, it is the most fortified monastery complex from Moldavia. The inner yard was made to hide Movilesti family and their huge fortune. In the exterior painting, red and

green are the main colors. The monastery's museum shelters embroideries, silver pieces, popular paintings, manuscripts, ancient books. These treasures confirm the cultural role that this monastery had.

- Putna Monastery

The most important monument of Stephen the Great is situated at 80.5 km from Pojorata. Its construction started in 1466 but it was burnt in 1484. The renovation was made by the founder in 1498. The monastery's church shelters the graves of the prince, his two wives and his sons. The museum holds embroideries, fabrics, silver pieces, valuable manuscripts, authentic medieval manuscripts.

- Suceava Citadel

The central part, "Musatin Fort", belongs to Petru Musat the 1st. He was the one that gave up using Scheia. Alexander the Good over-fortified Scheia and the one who made it legendary was Stephen the Great. He built the exterior walls, the defensive ditch and the main entry. Well defended, it was able to withhold the ottoman siege from 1476, when Mahomed the Second had to admit himself defeated. (<http://www.romanianmonasteries.org/ro/bucovina>)

b. The hunting tourism

Its destination is for hunters and fishermen. There is a rich hunting fund: bears, boars, mountain and birch rooster, stags and dears, rabbits etc. Also, the fishing fund has its resources: trout, dace, barbell, boisten. The main species from the mountain area is the Carpathian stag.

c. Hiking – it has as an advantage: beautiful marked routes (Rarau – Giupalau, Calimani, Rodnei etc.). It reminds us of the old "Tartars' Way" that ends in Carlibaba. These routes can be run by foot or riding a local's horse.

d. Recreation tourism has all the means to be put in practice, considering the positive effects of the climate and the beautiful scenery.

e. Pleasure tourism: river rafting, paragliding, paintball, mountain biking and climbing, archery, riding classes, long walks through the mountains and practicing winter sports.

The purpose of the study was to investigate the possibilities of the ecumenical tourism in Northern Moldavian monasteries' area.

2. Materials and methods:

2.1. Materials

- Visiting Bucovina monasteries.
- Collecting data from the talks with the monks.
- Interviewing the tourists.
- A questionnaire regarding the infrastructure quality and the local ecumenical tourism. The questionnaire was made of 10 items, multiple choices.

The questionnaire

1. Which is the best known ecumenical area from Romania?

- a) Moldova b) Bucovina c) Dobrogea d) Muntenia

2. Would you be interested in the ecumenical tourism in Romania?

- a) Yes b) No c) May be d) I don't know

3. What do you think would be the main obstacles for a tourist not to visit Bucovina monasteries?

- a) The lack of transportation
b) The lack of accommodation place into the monasteries or in the neighborhood
c) The impossibility of ensuring a meal during the day

4. Would you like to receive a meal during the monasteries visiting?

- a) Yes b) No c) May be d) I don't know

5. Would you be excited that the offered meal to contain a specific monk menu?

- a) Yes b) No c) May be d) I don't know

6. Would you like to be accommodated to the monasteries?

- a) Yes b) No c) May be d) I don't know

7. What measures should ANAT take?

- a) The organization of a touristic tour of the monasteries
b) The assuring of the roads' infrastructure to the monasteries gates
c) The monasteries and the places of worship promotion

8. Which do you think is the efficient method to promote the monasteries?

- a) By mass-media
b) By churches
c) By authorities - from national and international information programs
d) By tourism agencies

9. How do you think Bucovina monasteries should improve their facilities?

- a) By EU funds
b) By the City Councils
c) By the monasteries own funds
d) From sponsorships

10. Would it be good for the monasteries to apply to European funds in order to improve their facilities?

- a) Yes b) No c) May be d) I don't know

2.2. Methods

- Graphical data interpretation – pie graphics.
- SWOT analysis based on the comparison between the data collected on the spot and the solutions adopted for improving ecumenical tourism.

SWOT analysis is the most important managerial technique used for comparing and solving the improvement strategies of a certain situation. The analysis starts with enumerating strong and weak points concerning the actual state of the objective. SWOT is an acronym, the letters coming from:

Strengths: strong points of the location, the resources it had, its advantages, distinctive components of the personnel, managerial activities.

Weaknesses: weak points, vulnerable areas, poor resources.

Opportunities: the ways to improve the purpose, ways to exploit the strengths and eliminate the weaknesses.

Threats: points of danger for achieving the goal, negative aspects coming from faulty resource management, generally, any type of risk.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Questionnaire interpretation:

graphic

We interviewed a number of 200 persons, 75% women and 25% men. From these, 45% were undergraduates, 40% graduates, 10% postgraduates and 5% had gymnasium studies.

The interview had been attained at Sucevita and Voronet monasteries and the assigned time for this purpose was 3 days.

The interpretation of the principal questions from the questionnaire is presented in the following graphics, as the area with the highest ecumenical potential is illustrated in Figure 1.

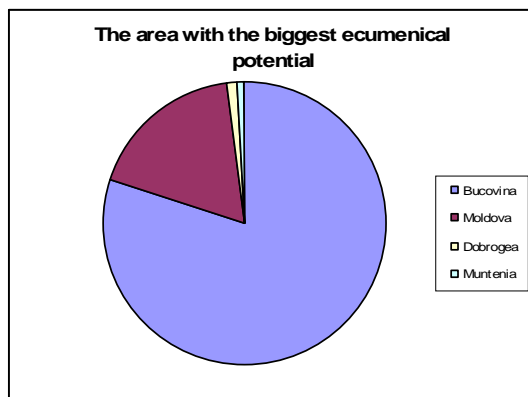


Figure 1 The area with the highest ecumenical potential

The conclusion was that 93,33% from the interviewed people indicated Bucovina as the area with the highest ecumenical potential, 21,11% Moldavia, 1,11% Dobrogea and 1,11% Muntenia.

The interest for the ecumenical tourism is remarked in Figure 2.

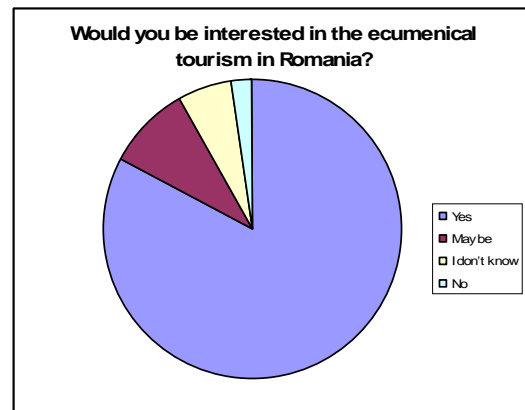


Figure 2 Interest for ecumenical tourism

Concerning the interest for ecumenical tourism, 80% answered “Yes”, 8,88% “Maybe”, 5,55% “I don’t know” and only 2,22% said “No”.

The Figure 3 presents the possible obstacles in monastery visiting.

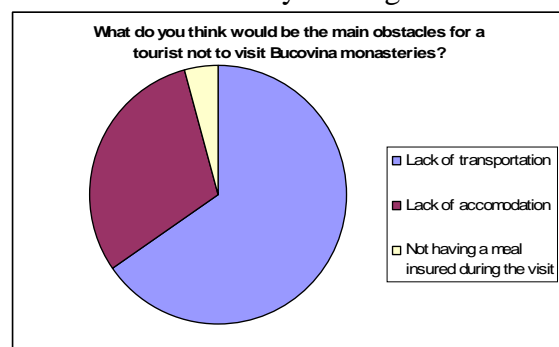


Figure 3 Possible obstacles in monastery visiting

At this question, 85.55% considered that the biggest problem for the ecumenical tourism in Bucovina is the lack of means of transportation. At present, the access is possible only by car. The second problem for 40% of the tourists is the lack of accommodation inside the monasteries (only Putna disposes of 120 places for accommodation). Only 5.55% considered that not insuring one meal per day when visiting a monastery is a problem.

When they had to choose between a meal during the visit and accommodation, 55.55% chose the meal and 63.33% chose the accommodation.

Figure 4 presents the possible measures

that have to be taken by ANAT for the development of Bucovina ecumenical tourism.

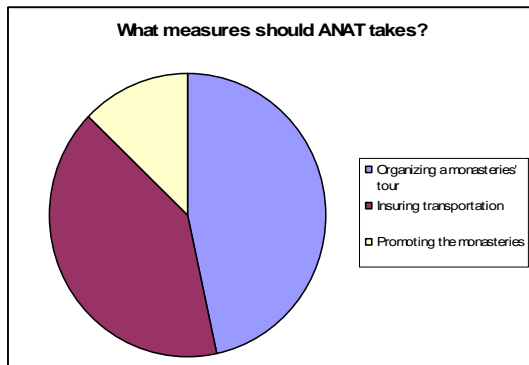


Figure 4 Measures that have to be taken by ANAT

Concerning the measures that ANAT has to take, 56,66% thought that there should be some funds allocated for the infrastructure, 48,88% considered that the promotion of the monasteries is necessary and 15,55% would organize a tour of the monasteries.

At the last question, 63,33% answered that mass-media advertising would be the most efficient, 38,88% chose promoting through national/international information programs, 31,11% would promote only inside the churches and 5,55% would use tourism agencies.

The funds related to the improving of the accommodation inside the monasteries are represented in Figure 5.

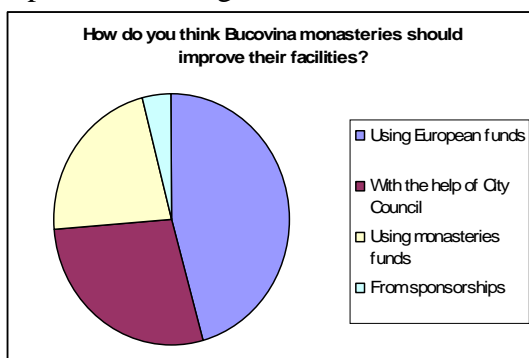


Figure 5 Improving accommodation inside monasteries

From the interviewed people 64,44% considered that the monasteries from Bucovina should insure themselves with funds for developing ecumenical tourism, European funds, 52,22% chose

sponsorships, 21,11% public money given by the authorities and only 3,33% chose monasteries' own funds.

The possibility of applying for European funds/ European grants is the subject of Figure 6.

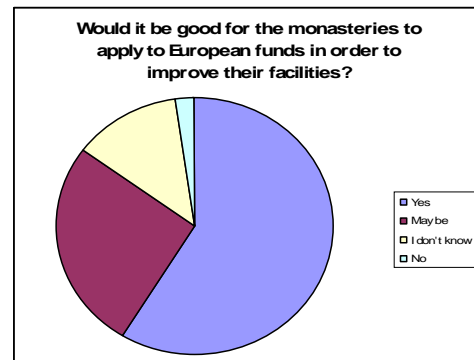


Figure 6 The possibility of applying for European funds/ European grants

When answering about Bucovina monasteries applying for European funds, the interviewed people 56,66% said "Yes", 25,55% "Maybe", 12,22% "I don't know" and 2,22% thought that there is no need of European funds.

4. Conclusions

Applying SWOT analysis demonstrated its efficiency in establishing the common interest of sustainable development regarding the ecumenical tourism in Bucovina. This analysis has conclusive results when having a significant number of subjects with different interests and different ways of achieving the final goal. The main criterion is that all of them have to participate at the follow up and implementing possible solutions.

From the visit and the talks with the monasteries' management, it has been concluded that their involvement in promoting and improving the conditions is minimal.

The monks consider that promoting the monasteries is not a task for them to do.

Table 1

SWOT analysis interpretation

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - receiving 'Pomme d'Or' international award in 1975, given by the International Federation of Journalists and Tourism Writers - having the possibility to visit unique places (Putna, Sucevita, Moldovita, Humor, Voronet) - practicing hunting, recreation and pleasure tourism as well as hiking - the possibility of visiting any time of the year - history and unique customs - the '1000 churches' - memorial houses and museums 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reduced number of national/international information programs - defective promotion of the monasteries - lack of transportation - lack of accommodation inside the monasteries (excepting Putna) - not having a meal included during the visit - limited possibilities of applying for European funds
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - restoring historical monuments, especially the monasteries - encouraging new forms of tourism (e.g.: scientific, adventure etc.) - PHARE funds - including agro-touristic mansions in the national network of tourism agencies - developing some resorts: Campulung Moldovenesc, Cacica, Botus (ethnographical resort) - expansions and renovation of infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no trademark for 'Bucovina' as a brand - defacement of art and architecture monuments - faulty collaboration between local councils

Analyzing the present situation, it has been discovered that Arbore Church and Voronet Monastery can not be the beneficiaries of a rehabilitation program from PHARE funds, because of the neglect of the City Council and Suceava and Radauti Archiepiscopate.

A PHARE program, started in 2003, worthing 1,5 € millions, having as main beneficiary Suceava City Council, should have already modernized 13 monasteries and churches so far, some of them belonging to UNESCO patrimony. This project was a failure because of the common neglect.

Although the solutions for reviving the ecumenical tourism are pretty complicated at first sight, they can be solved from a source of European funding, Regio Projects, Espon Projects etc.

(<http://www.afaceripublice.ro/investigatie>)

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