

ROMANIAN TOURISTS ON BULGARIA'S BLACK SEA COAST - A TERRITORIAL ANALYSIS

TURISMUL ROMÂNESC PE COASTA MĂRII NEGRE DIN BULGARIA – ANALIZĂ TERITORIALĂ

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Abstract: In this material, it is made a territorial analysis of the Romanian tourists visiting the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, but the trends and preferences of the Romanian tourists, too. We have also ranged municipalities according to the number of visits by foreign tourists and gave specific conclusions and recommendations.

In order to accomplish the objectives of the paper, we have read the latest trends regarding the presence of Romanian tourists on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast and used the currently available statistics from the National Statistics Institute.

There have been outlined distinct territorial imbalances in the preferences of the Romanian tourists, but still, it is obvious that they found their place among all nationalities of the tourists visiting the coast.

Key-words: the Black Sea, tourism, Romanian tourist, trend

Cuvinte cheie: Marea Neagră, turism, turist român, tendință

Objective

World tourism has increasingly developed during the recent years. The upward trend in its development has ceased only in the last couple of years due to the financial crisis. The tourism sector in Bulgaria bears the same characteristics. The littoral tourism has witnessed the greatest pace of development among all branches of the tourism sector in the country. The preferences of the Romanian tourists are also manifested towards the resorts along the Black Sea coast.

The purpose of this report is to present a territorial analysis of the Romanian tourists' preferences for holiday stay along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast. It has been reported a significant growth in their visits to the country during the recent

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years. The analysis includes all Black Sea coast districts. The comparative analysis will help us outline the places, most preferred by the tourists from Romania.

Methodology and Results

It is used statistics and data from the National Statistical Institute, given by the Regional Center Varna. It encompasses all municipalities included in the Bulgaria Black Sea coast districts - Dobrich, Varna and Burgas. The latest available statistics, which refer to 2008, have been used as a base when preparing the report. Despite this, the conclusion drawn upon the data from 2008, are of even more valid for the next two years regarding the invasion of Romanian tourists in the Bulgarian sea resorts in 2009 and 2010.

The total number of foreign visitors that stayed overnight in the Bulgarian Black Sea coastline districts is 1,363,388, in 2008. Tourists from Germany hold the leading position, with 310,000 visitors (22.7 %). At the same year, Romanian tourists are on the third place in the list, right after the visitors from Russia. Romanians who stayed overnight in the Bulgarian Black Sea resorts accounted for 161,974 (11.9%). It is shown on Figure 1 that their number is almost equal to the number of Russian tourists.

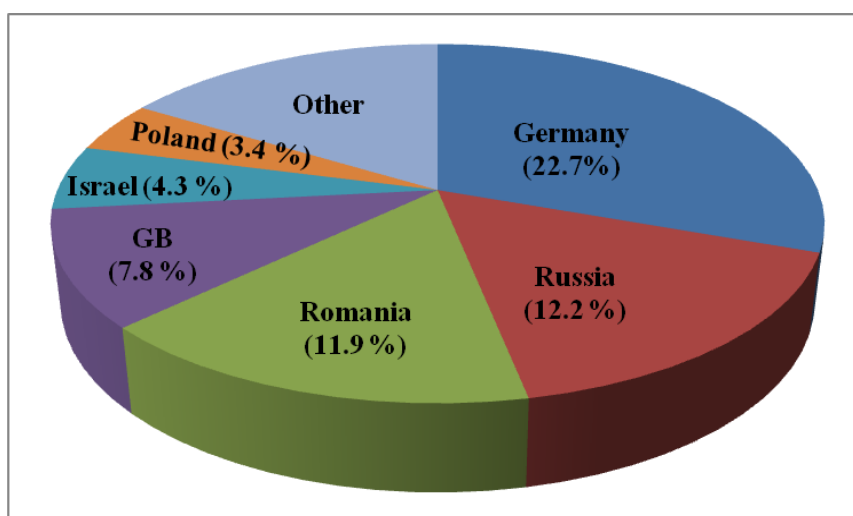


Figure 1. Number of foreign tourists who visited the Bulgarian Black Sea coast by country of origin (2008)²

The territorial analysis, in terms of districts distribution, shows that the Romanian tourists prefer the resorts in Varna district. 95,000 visitors have stayed overnight in this district, which accounts for 59% of the total number of Romanian guests – 162,000. Their preferences towards the other two Black Sea districts are equally distributed - Burgas (33,000 visitors) and Dobrich (33,500 tourists). The

² We used the latest available data from NSI (National Statistics Institute).

close distance between the resorts around Varna and the Romanian border explains why tourists from our north neighbour choose this district (Figure 2).

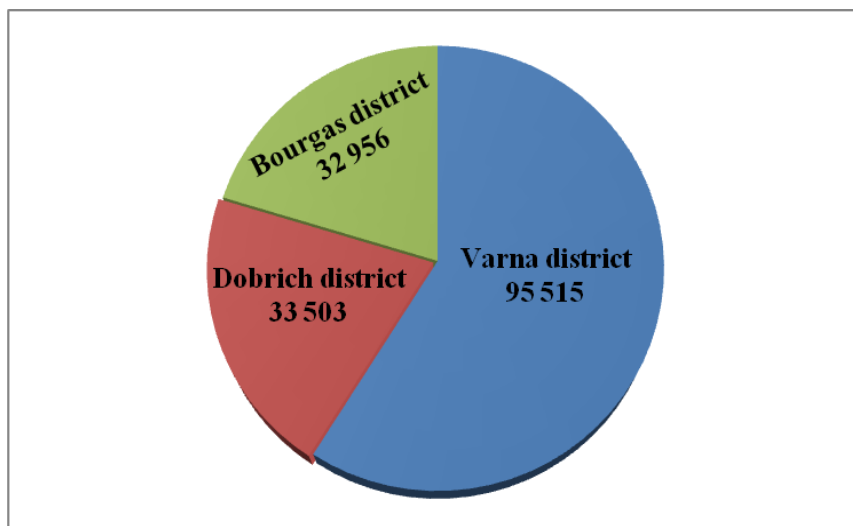


Figure 2. Distribution of the Romanian tourists by districts (Number of visitors, 2008)

The statistics about the intradistrict distribution shows the expected concentration of Romanian tourists in certain municipalities. In Varna district, nearly 100% of all visitors stayed overnight in Varna municipality (94,915 tourists). The sea resorts of Golden Sands, St. Constantine and Elena and Sunny Day, situated in close proximity to Varna, explain this trend (Fig. 3).

Nessebar is definitely the most preferred municipality in Bourgas district (29,317 visitors) as it has attracted 89% of all tourists, who visited the district, and 18.1 % of all Romanian visitors staying along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast. A bit more than 2,000 Romanian tourists have chosen Sozopol for their vacation.

The most preferred holiday site in Dobrich district is the municipality of Balchik with more than 30,000 tourists, which accounts for 90% of the total number of visitors in the district and 18.6% of all Romanian guests of Bulgarian Black Sea coast. Albena - one of the most splendid and best preserved Bulgarian resorts is in this region. This fact explains the large number of Romanian tourists in Balchik municipality. The other Black Sea resorts in this part of the country remain practically unknown for Romanian guests. Only had 2,000 stayed overnight in Kavarna.

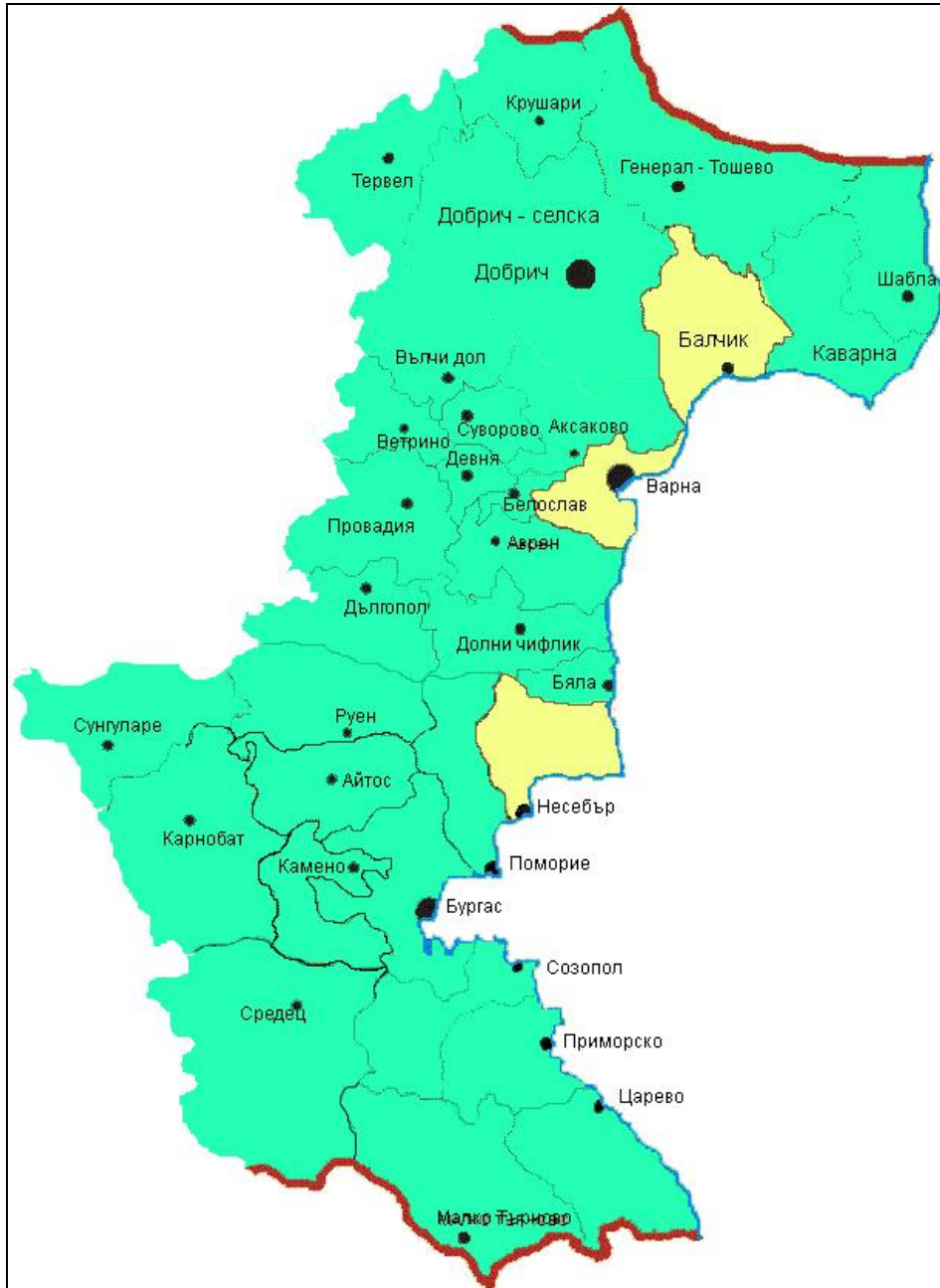


Figure 3. Most visited municipalities by the Romanian tourists

Conclusions

Following the above-presented statistical data and territorial analysis, several conclusions are to be drawn:

- Romanian guests are in the top 3 of the list of foreign tourists who visited the Bulgarian Black Sea coast in 2008;
- The majority of them preferred to stay in the resorts in the district of Varna;
- They prefer the resorts in the municipalities of Varna, Balchik and Nessebar;
- 154,000 or 95% out of all 162,000 Romanian tourists preferred the above-mentioned municipalities.

The following problems can be derived from these conclusions. Firstly, it is clear that Romanian tourists prefer to visit the Bulgarian tourist destinations with their own cars. The great number of tourists in a small number of municipalities and tourist complexes hinders parking. Bulgarian hotel chains have not planned welcoming tourists who arrive with their own transport means.

The high concentration of tourists (not only from Romania) on a small territory causes infrastructural problems. The small capacity of the road network, the drainage and sewerage system, the electricity system, health care is hampered by the increased number of tourists.

Profound analysis of the preferences of the Romanian tourist for food, culture and animation in the welcoming destinations has not been made. They have all been offered common animation program and hotel services.

The main conclusion is that the tourists from Romania prefer the Bulgarian Black Sea coast. It has been reported significant growth of visits during the last years. They have their own preferences, different from those of tourists from other countries. They are suggested to be studied and analyzed in the future in order to offer Romanian guests differentiated tourism products.

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