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SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT – AN APPLIED MODEL OF THE BUCEGI MOUNTAINS

DEZVOLTAREA TURISMULUI DURABIL – UN MODEL APLICAT AL MUNȚILOR BUCEGI

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Abstract: The planning and management of the Bucegi Mountains require tools which allow a broad and essential view in order to identify the tendencies and promotion of some balanced projects of development. Based on the connection between the development of tourism, specific activities and touristic destination, the Bucegi Mountains capitalize the presence of some touristic facilities and technical-utility features which may ease the capitalisation, mainly, of the natural potential – support for the practice of various forms of tourism: mountainous tourism, recreation tourism, adventure tourism, cave diving, etc. The most important principles of sustainable tourism can be applied to all forms of tourism, including the niche tourism. Consequently, the way some forms of tourism are practised in natural reserve areas must maintain the essential ecological process, so as the aesthetical values or the cultural authenticity of the host communities to promote the traditional values or the cultural-historical patrimony. Thus, sustainable tourism must contribute to the reduction of the risk of poverty in the local communities.

Keywords: *tourism, sustainable development, forms of tourism, natural environment, Bucegi Mountains*
Cuvinte cheie: *turism, dezvoltare durabilă, forme de turism, cadru natural, Munții Bucegi*

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper addresses the issue of sustainable tourism development, which is a topical area of real interest in the post COVID-19 period. The study focuses on the Bucegi Mountains, an area which presents a sustainable development in the tourism sector, through the set of characteristics and elements of the natural (relief, geomorphological elements, climate, vegetation, etc.) and social-economic framework.

The Bucegi Mountains meet all the necessary conditions for research on this issue: they are a tourism area of local and national interest, a large part of its

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surface being managed as a nature park; there are transport axes of national and international interest at its eastern extremity (road access: DN1/E60, rail access: route 200), along which there are important tourism resorts (Predeal, Azuga, Bușteni, Sinaia, Bran, Rucăr, etc.).

The specific objectives, with regard to the research topic "Sustainable tourism development – An Applied model of the Bucegi Mountains" are:

- Physical and geographical location of the area under research;
- Characterization of the study area (relief, climate, hydrography);
- Description of the concept of "sustainable development";
- Tourism analysis of the Bucegi Mountains;
- Analysis of tourist accommodation facilities.

According to the Polyglot Dictionary of Tourism Terms, sustainable tourism development is "that type of tourism development which focuses on the present exploitation of resources in such a way as to maintain the capacity to reproduce them in the future" (Stănciulescu et al., 1998).

Since 1972, when the first report of the Club of Rome, entitled "Limits to Growth", was published and when the Stockholm Conference on the Environment was held, a new concept of development was established, aiming to achieve the compatibility of four systems: economic, human, environmental and technological (Ciucur et al., 2001, cited by Ioncică et al., 2019).

The concept of sustainable development acquired its real meaning with "Our Common Future" report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, known as the "Brundtland Report", in 1987 (Nistoreanu, 2003). The Brundtland Report defines sustainable development as the "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the interests of future generations".

Sustainable tourism development can also be defined as "directing the management of all resources to meet economic, social and aesthetic needs while respecting cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems" (Theobald, 1998).

In the UNWTO publication "Tourism in 2010", it is stated that "Sustainable tourism develops the idea of meeting the needs of current tourists and the tourism industry while protecting the environment and the opportunities for the future. It is concerned with meeting all the economic, social, aesthetic, etc. needs of the "stakeholders" in tourism, while maintaining cultural and ecological integrity, biological diversity and all life support systems" (Stănciulescu, 2000).

In our opinion, the Bucegi Mountains have the following characteristics for sustainable tourism development:

- They ensure the social involvement of the communities in order to make the most of the tourism potential;
- They create new local jobs for local people;
- They involve local people in decision-making on tourism development;
- It is promoted the rational use of natural resources;
- It is aimed at minimizing the negative effects on the environment;
- It is aimed at raising public awareness of existing tourism resources.

The practice and exploitation of tourism resources existing in the Bucegi Mountains represent a viable alternative in the struggle that current and future generations will have to face with various and increasingly numerous actions of environmental over-degradation, with long-term negative effects.

The most important subjects to be discussed by the specialists from the touristic branch, the development of the sustainable tourism has been discussed by authors (Neacșu, 1999; Bâc, 2013; Matei, 2017; Florea, 2020).

Through the direct and indirect advantages an important part of the workforce, the foreign investments represent an important source of investments in the development of global tourism, representing an important part of the GDP (gross domestic product), at a local, regional and national level.

Therefore, the tourism has a contribution on the sustainable development of the natural reserves, the spreading areas from the Bucegi Mountains which are protected, owing to the raise of the income, of the traditional activities which are held in the study spreading area, the use of the agricultural lands, the development of local products trade.

2. DATA AND METHODS

The study is based on a very elaborate research of professional books and, especially, searching on web pages, concerning the Bucegi Mountains. This research technique is widely used in the analysis of all the studied phenomena.

In order to carry out the research study, we used statistical data at the level of the administrative and territorial units, the data being provided by the National Institute of Statistics, the data series from the TEMPO on-line database. The data refer to tourist accommodation facilities with tourist accommodation functions by type of facility (hotels, tourist cottages, agrotourism hostels, etc.). The analysis covered a period of 3 years, with 2018, 2019 and 2020 as reference years.

The research methodology used for the present study considered not only the traditional methods (observation and analysis of the phenomena, synthesis, description, data processing in excel), the bibliographical research, which consisted in the identification of the main professional works, but also the modern ones (the graphic methods – data processing in ArcGIS programme).

The observation method is often indicated as a procedure of geographical research when its action aspect is considered. It consists of the intentional pursuit and precise, systematic recording of the various phenomena to be researched, as well as the context in which they occur (Armaș, 2006).

Erdeli et al. (1999) defines a diagram as a method of representation belonging primarily to statistics, also widely used in human geography, which by means of lines, points or geometric figures, made according to precise rules, visualizes statistical data characterizing a phenomenon or process. There are: column charts, chronograms, histograms, polar diagrams, etc. Posea (1986) states that "a diagram is a graphical representation that schematically depicts an object, a phenomenon, a correlation between two or more quantities or the curve drawn by a graphic recording device".

The cartographic method refers to the graphical representation at a reduced scale of geographical elements, phenomena and processes on the earth's surface (Armaș, 2006).

"A geographic information system is a special case of an information system in which the database consists of observations of spatially distributed entities, activities, or events that are spatially definable as points, lines, or areas. A geographic information system manipulates data about these points, lines, and areas to obtain information from ad hoc queries and analyses" (Dueker, 1985). Also, geographical information or the location of the study area is not only made up of graphic data (maps, plans, etc.) or iconographic data (satellite images, photographs, etc.).

The term GIS is most often used to denote a software package, a true Geographic Information System that includes: trained personnel, a training programme, a budget, a marketing programme, physical components, data and logistical components (Bănică et al., 2008).

The Sustainable Tourism assumes the conservation of the natural landscape (relief, hydrographic network, fauna and flora, protected areas) and the cultural and historical resources, to be exploited by the future generations, but also the fact that the sustainable tourism does not have to make any degradation problems of the environment.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1. Study area characteristics

The Bucegi Mountains are situated in the eastern extremity of the Southern Carpathians (Fig. 1), where they can be noticed through their imposing aspect, induced by heights and their steep and rocky mountainsides. The surface of the mountain is of 395 km^2 and it represents 2.62% of the Southern Carpathians and 40.72% the Bucegi-Leaota Mountains. The maximum height, 2505 m, is reached in Omu' Peak (Badea et. al., 2001).

The Bucegi Mountains constitute a complex and representative mountain area of the Southern Carpathians, due to their geographical position, geological structure, high relief energy, with numerous specific shapes and microforms, as well as the rich biodiversity of the natural mountain ecosystems. The Bucegi Mountains were fully formalized as a protected area by Law no. 5/2000 (in the undifferentiated category of national parks, nature parks and biosphere reserves) and by Government Decision no. 230/2003 as a nature park, with a total area of 32,663 ha (National Forestry Authority - ROMSILVA, 2004).

In the past, various geographers and geologists (Papiu, 1963; De Martonne, 1981) argued about where the Bucegi Group (including the Bucegi Mountains) should be included, so that some had considered this group to be part of the Southern Carpathians and others part of the Eastern Carpathians or the Curved Carpathians.

Papiu (1963) states that the chain of mountains of the Eastern Carpathians "extends up to the Dâmbovița valley, thus including the Bucegi Mountains, and its last western echelon is the enormous rock of Piatra Craiului" (Papiu, 1963, p. 192).

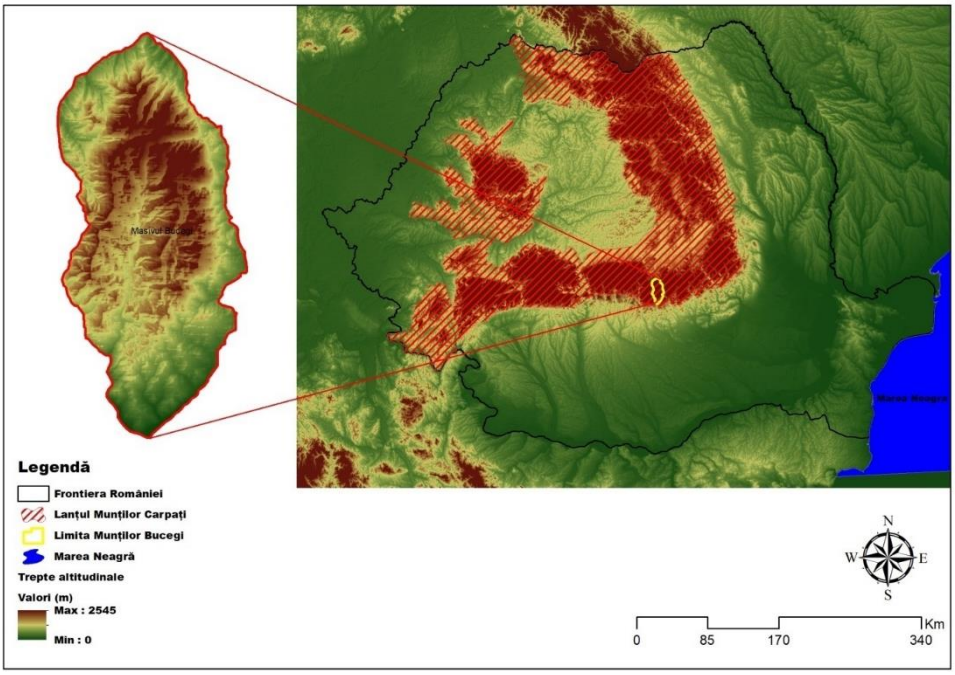

Fig. 1 Location of Bucegi Mountains on a national context
(Data source: http://www.geo-spatial.org/ - processing of the authors)

According to E. de Martonne: "There is no region as fragmented as the Bucegi Mountains in all the Southern Carpathians" (De Martonne, 1981, p. 251). It implies that these mountains are part of the Southern Carpathians.

Delimited by steep slopes, this massif is shaped like a semicircle arranged in an amphitheater, with a southern opening towards the Ialomița Valley. Situated between the Râșnoavei Valley in the north, the Prahova valley in the east, the Ialomița Subcarpathians in the south and Bran-Rucăr-Dragoslavele and Leaota corridor in the west, this massif bears the imprint of its structure and lithology in its landscape (Velcea & Savu, 1982).

The highest point is Omu Peak with an elevation of 2,505 m from which the quasi-geometric relief lines mark two alignments of peaks: in the east, the Prahova steepness of the Bucegi Mountains dominated by Coștila 2,480 m, Caraiman 2,284 m, Jepii Mici 2,143 m, Jepii Mari 2,072 m, Piatra Arsă 2,071 m, Furnica 2,103 m, Vârful cu Dor 2,030 m, Vânturișu 2,189 m, Tătaru 1,998 m, Lucăcilă 1,895 m, etc. We emphasize that only "the conglomerates in the northern part of the massif are part of a syncline, and its axis is traced southwards only as far as Mount Bătrâna" (Patrulius, 1969).

The Bucegi Mountains correspond to the southern extremity of the marginal syncline of the Crystalline-Mesozoic zone, which starts from the north of Rarău and continues in Hăghimaș-Perșani area. Morphologically, the Bucegi Mountains correspond to a suspended syncline that goes upward to the north (2,000-2,500 m) and downward to the south (1,300 m), and it is outwardly bordered by steep slopes corresponding to a ridge system. As a whole, these mountains have the appearance of

a high plateau, situated at about 2,000 m and pierced in its central part by the Ialomița Valley, which gave them a horseshoe shape open to the south (Roșu, 1973).

In the Bucegi Massif, the lithology has a particular influence on the landscape. The most representative is the karst relief along the Ialomita River, where the limestone gorges are located: Urșilor and Tătarul Mic, Tătarul Mare, Zănoaga Mică, Zănoaga Mare, Orzei and Dobrești caves and the basins are between them, on marly and clayey formations. The genesis of the gorges is the result of the gradual association of surface and deep drainage, as evidenced by the levels of shoulders, overhangs, pressure and dissolution tubes. We also note the presence of "Horoabe" valley types, with large slope breaks, overhangs and marls conditioned by subsurface drainage (Velcea & Savu, 1982).

In the official list of the Commission for the Protection of Natural Monuments and in the Law no. 5/2000, the following reserves are nominated: the Bucegi Abrupt of Prahova (mixed scientific reserve with an area of 3,740 ha), Colții lui Barbeș (mixed nature reserve, no area specified) in Prahova County, Horoabei Canyon (nature monument, no area), Cheile Urșilor (nature monument, no area) and Cheile Zănoagei Mari (nature monument, no area) in Dâmbovița County (J.C.M. no. 965/1943), (National Forestry Authority - ROMSILVA, 2004).

The horseshoe shape of the massif obviously determines the layout and direction of the rivers flow. The valleys start radially around Omu Peak and the main axis of water collection inside the massif is the Ialomița, which has a symmetrical basin. This valley, fed by snow and rain, springs high below Omu Peak and flows southwards along the axis of the syncline. In the calcareous sectors, the Ialomița is also fed underground, by karst drainage, by waters that are lost on the surface of the plateaus with karrens and flow towards the springs in the axis of the syncline according to the inclination of the strata. Numerous tributaries originating on/below the Bucegi bridge converge towards the above-mentioned basins, contributing to the size of the collector river flow. We mention among them: Doamnele, Horoaba, Tătaru, Mircea, Bolboci, Zănoaga on the right; Șugări, Cocora, Blana, Oboarele, Scropoasa and Orzea on the left. In general, the tributaries are dry in the middle and upper reaches, but during rain showers they have a torrential regime (https://parculnaturalbucegi.com/wp-content/uploads-/2015/11/Plan_de_management_PNB.pdf).

The springs outside the Bucegi Mountains belong to the Prahova and the Olt basins. The Moraru, Cerbu, Jepii, Urlătoarea, P. Babelor, Peleș and Zgarbura streams flow into the Prahova River. The northern slope is drained by the Glăjăriei, Mălăiești and Țigănești streams, which together form Ghimbavul. The Ciubotei stream, the Gaura stream - which penetrate far into the interior of the massif - and the Grohotiș stream converges towards Bârsa, their waters flowing towards the Olt. The streams draining the Bucegi steep slopes are dry most of the year due to the lack of springs. They are located much lower, at 1000-1300 m altitude, at the base of the conglomerates and are determined by the impermeable Barremian - Aptian formations (https://parculnaturalbucegi.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Plan-_de_management_PNB.pdf).

The characteristics of the main climatic elements are influenced by the general circulation of the atmosphere, the western circulation prevailing at altitudes above 1800-2000 m on the western and north-western slopes and the eastern and south-eastern circulation prevailing on the slopes exposed to the east and south-east, the exposure to the sun, the main valleys that delimit them, as well as the structure of the active surface at altitudes above 2500 m, varied shapes, diverse vegetation, lithological structure, hydrographic network, etc. As such, the average annual air temperature is 4.9˚C. The coldest month of the year is January, with temperatures ranging from -3.9˚C to -5.2˚C at lower altitudes. In the alpine region, January and February have almost similar values, about -10˚C, however, February being colder than January. Temperature inversions often occur on days during the cold half of the year, when temperatures are lower at the foot of the mountain and in adjacent mountain corridors than at higher altitudes, due to the accumulation and sedimentation of cold air in the respective negative forms. The warmest month is July, with temperatures between +14.4˚C and +15.7˚C at the foot of the mountains, while at higher altitudes it reaches about 6˚C, in August.
(https://parculnaturalbucegi.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Plan_de_management_PNB.pdf)

3.2. What does the sustainable development assume?

Analysing the professional literature, there are brought out many interpretations about the development of the sustainable tourism, the significance and approach of the concept. The three levels of the sustainable development (Fig. 2) must be mixed together, so that a balanced planning to be made, taking into account the opinions of the experts from different domains of tourism.

The concept of sustainable development has been enunciated by the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) as follows: "The sustainable development is a process that proceeds without producing or depleting resources, ensuring development. Tourism resources must be exploited at the same rate at which they are renewed, and exploitation must be abandoned when the resource is regenerating very slowly, in order to replace it with another, more regenerative resource."

We can distinguish the following stages in the development of sustainable tourism (Inskeep, 1998, cited by Mazilu, 2011):

1. the first stage consists of the decision to include a certain area in the tourism circuit and the construction of the tourism equipment necessary for the tourism facilities;
2. the second stage is the progressive development of tourism activity (in parallel with the responsibility for environmental protection and respect for sustainable tourism).

The defining of the sustainable development is difficult to establish into certain strict limits because the economical social development assumes the adjustment of the environment to the needs of the human in the area.

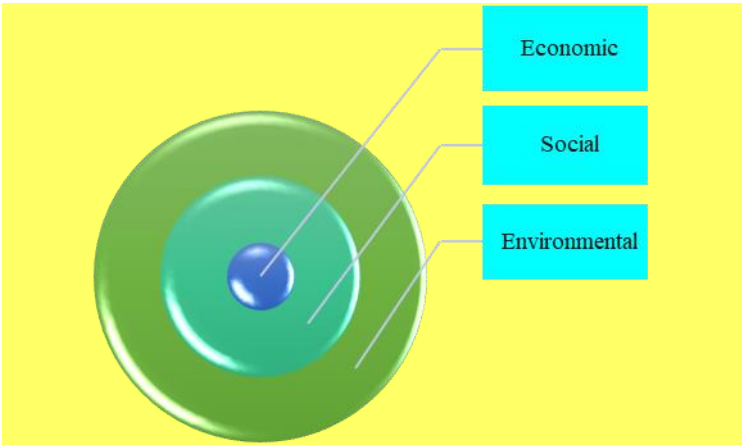

Fig. 2 Pillars of sustainable development
(Source: own processing of authors)

In our opinion, the sustainable development also promotes the idea of the balance between the sustainable increase of the economy, the national equity and the conservation where the tourism takes place.

The sustainable tourism assumes the conservation of the elements of the natural landscape (relief, hydrology, fauna and flora, protected areas) and the cultural and historical resources to be exploited by the future generations, but also the sustainable tourism doesn't have to generate degradation problems of the environment.

The Post-Covid Tourism is characterized on the following elements which describe the territory of the Bucegi Mountains through the revaluation of the touristic patrimony, the promotion of traditional Romanian products, the diversity of touristic potential, each of these elements being specifically defined, as follows:

1. The touristic patrimony – is defined as made of all the elements of touristic attraction which actions independently or together to develop the touristic activities (Cândea et al., 2012).

2. The touristic offer – most of the components of the touristic offer (natural touristic resources, touristic products, infrastructure, workforce, etc.) justifies the reason of the tourist's journey to a certain touristic destination (Mazilu, 2007).

3. The natural touristic potential – represents all the physical-geographical elements of a territory which have the capacity of exercising a certain attraction on potential tourists (Dinu, 2006).

3.3. The Touristic Analyse of Bucegi Mountains

Inside of Bucegi Mountains there is situated the largest National Park; in the 1990 through The Order of M.A.A.P.M no.7 it was declared The National Park Bucegi (9000 hectares of entire reservations) oficialized through The Law no.5/2000 and The Decision of Government (natural park with an entire area of 32.663 ha, Ielenicz & Oprea, 2011)

The main economic activities to take place inside the Bucegi Mountains are: the exploitation of the natural touristic potential and the natural resources

under the conditions imposed by the activities of protection of the natural environment, the pasture.

The accessibility inside Bucegi Mountains is given by a thick network of paths and forest roads, well- maintained, which allow connections with the farthest touristic sights. Among the most important roads there can be reminded the ones to go up from the south on the Valleys of Ialomita and Spring of Longing reaching on the Doamnelor Peak, and, also on Costila Peak or on The Ialomicioara Paduchiosului Valley (Ielenicz & Comănescu, 2006).

Bucegi Mountains are one of the most inning and searched regions by the lovers of beautiful and new, its paths being crossed many centuries ago; in the chain of our Carpathians, Bucegi Mountains introduce a special specific, given by the nature of the rocks, the relief and biogeographical complexes (Mohan & Ardelean, 2006).

The Visiting Center situated in Busteni (Fig. 3, Fig. 4), in the immediate vicinity of the touristic trail from the Prahovean Abrupt of the Bucegi Mountains and which is foreseen with specific interior and exterior utilities and accommodation, so that it can accomplish an informative and educational role for potential visitors of the Park. Inside the center, visitors will find information regarding the natural patrimony, the touristic and theme trails, but also information regarding the negative impact which an uninformed and irresponsible tourism can have on the species and the habitats from the park, assuring in the same time a high level of satisfaction concerning the touristic activity (https://www.bucegipark.ro).

Fig. 3 Visiting Center of Bucegi National Park

Fig. 4 Visiting Center of Bucegi National Park

(Source: https://www.bucegipark.ro/Imagini%20CV/DSC_0353.JPG; https://extravita.ro/2015/01/16/centrul-de-vizitare-al-parcului-natural-bucegi-un-centru-de-informare-turistica-modern-in-busteni/)

Through the projects ''The optimization of the management of the visitors with the completion of the infrastructure of visiting inside the Bucegi Natural Park-sit Natura 2000'', The Administration of the National Park Bucegi has planned Dâmboviţa (Fig. 5, Fig. 6), in the Administration Office (53 mp) by endowment with furniture and specific machineries of such an activity (https://www.bucegipark.ro/).

Fig. 5 Information point inside the Bucegi Natural Park

Fig. 6 Information point inside the Bucegi Natural Park

(Source: https://www.bucegipark.ro/obiective.php?show=puncte_informare)

From an administrative point of view, the studied area contains parts from Dâmbovița, Prahova and Brașov counties. The administrative-teritorial units, respectively the villages which unfold (partially) in the Bucegi Mountains are: Bușteni, Sinaia and Comarnic (in Prahova County), Moroeni (in Dâmbovița County) and Bran, Moieciu and Râsnov (in Brașov County).

The structure of the localities/villages cover the urban areas, touristic areas (in the localities on the Prahova Valley), agro-industrial areas and protection areas (The Natural Park Bucegi Mountains).

Table 1 Hotels and cottages from Bucegi Mountains

No.	Name of the hotel and cottage	Altitude (m)	No.	Name of the hotel and cottage	Altitude (m)
1	Peștera Hotel	1620	**12**	Gura Diham Cottage	987
2	Babele Cottage	2200	**13**	Mălăești Cottage	1720
3	Bolboci Cottage	1460	**14**	Padina Cottage	1525
4	Bușteni Alpine Hostel	925	**15**	Piatra Arsă Cottage	1950
5	Caraiman Cottage	2025	**16**	Poiana Izvoarelor Cottage	1455
6	Cheile Zănoagei Cottage	1400			
7	Cota 1300 Cottage	1300	**17**	Poiana Stanei Cottage	1270
8	Cota 1400 Hotel	1400	**18**	Scropoasa Cottage	1205
9	Cuibului Dorului Cottage	1160	**19**	Vârful cu Dor Cottage	1885
10	Diham Cottage	1320	**20**	Vârful Omul Cottage	2504
11	Furnica Cottage	930	**21**	Schiori Cottage	980

(Source: Ielenicz & Comănescu, 2006)

The Bucegi Mountains have a very complex and various touristic potential; the elements which form the natural setting determined a diversity of the touristic in different branches of the mountain, where we can add the objectives of the anthropogenic touristic potential. In the analysed study, the touristic activities are very various and a high frequency in the summer/winter season; therefore, in our point of view, the following forms of tourism can be practiced (Fig. 7).

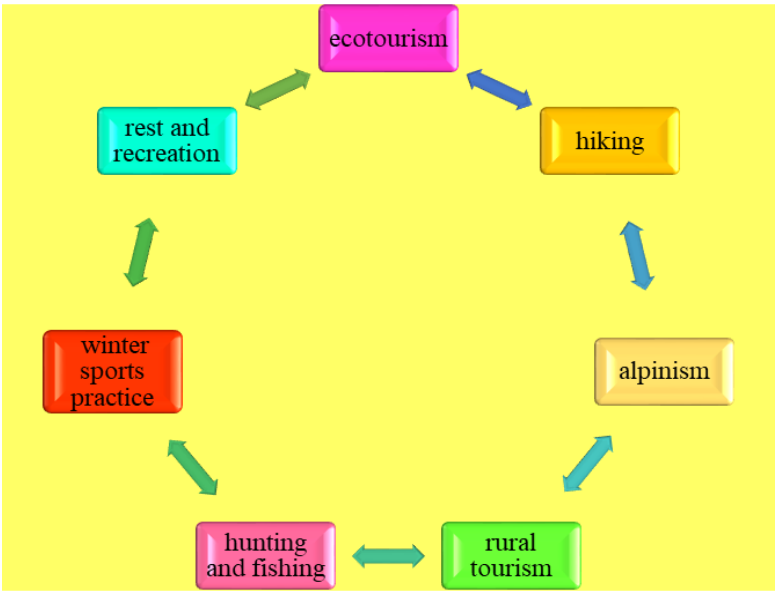

Fig. 7 Forms of sustainable tourism feasible in Bucegi Mountains
(Source: own processing of authors)

Rural tourism is a form of tourism focused on destinations in rural areas with a functional accommodation facility and other heterogeneous services. Rural tourism takes different forms of stay with a varied range of motivations: hiking, winter sports, traditions and customs (Mazilu & Drăguleasa, 2021).

The ecotourism can be defined, according to the International Ecotourism Society, as "the responsible travel to natural areas that aims to conserve the environment and improve the living standards of the host population" (https://ecotourism.org/).

Ecotourism is seen as a new form of tourism that should contribute to both nature conservation and local community development, as a form of alternative tourism, ecotourism emerged, like the others, as a consequence of widespread dissatisfaction with conventional forms of tourism (Mazilu & Drăguleasa, 2021).

Ecotourism activity, in addition to being anchored in the area of sustainability, works alongside the economic integration and generates development strategies necessary to support the transition. The real meaning of ecotourism includes the modernization of infrastructure, the forms and types of tourism that are practised, the degree and possibility of tourist development, the analysis of tourist facilities (accommodation, food, leisure, etc.), sustainable rural-urban tourism development (Mazilu & Drăguleasa, 2021).

Mountain hiking tourism and mountaineering are stimulated by the presence of spectacular geographical landscapes, the variety of ecosystems, the components of glacial and karst relief, flora and fauna of the region and the complexity of tourist accommodation facilities (Mazilu & Drăguleasa, 2021).

The success of a touristic destination from the point of view of the development of the sustainable tourism is determined by the way in which this manages to guarantee and, in the same time, to ensure a balance regarding the revaluation of the touristic potential of the area.

The touristic destination "Bucegi Mountains" must ensure the visitors, through the elements of the natural and anthropogenic setting, a novel experience which can equal or overcome multiple touristic destinations. Thus, it is about all that the Bucegi Mountains can offer from the first contact of a potential visitor with the area (from information, spectacular images, landscapes and various biodiversity to the moment of sharing the experience together with other people) the touristic destination must set off an interest, be able to be associated with the reality in the field.

The most representative elements of attraction that belong to the natural setting which is constituted in the main landmarks of the touristic offer of the Bucegi Mountains can be grouped as follows (PATZ, 2010):

- ✓ The Prahovean abrupt (eastern), with a difference of level of over 1200 m, delimited by the Prahova Valley, situated in the area of Sinaia and Bușteni touristic resorts (natural reserves), in which, because of erosion, a great variety of spectacular forms and microforms of relief formed (small gates, windows, towers, chimneys, shelves, etc.);
- ✓ The north-eastern abrupt or Bucșoiu Abrupt, with its homonymous peak, Mălăiești Abrupt, Gaura Abrupt (natural reserves) dominate the Râșnoavei Valley of over 1200-1400 m;
- ✓ Various forms of glacial relief: spectacular glacial valleys, with steep slopes, with a transversal profile in the shape of a ”U”, with numerous glacial thresholds and moraines (Cerbu, Mălăiești, Morarului, Țigănești, Urlătoarea, Gaura, Ialomița Valleys), glacial cirques (situated at the descent of Cerbul and Mălăiești Valleys), peaks and abrupts (ex. Coștila, Caraiman, Jepii Mici, Jepii Mari, Piatra Arsă, Furnica, Colții lui Barbeș, Bucșoiu), needles, chimneys and steep cliffs (Colții Morarului, Mălăiești, Franz Josef) with a powerful impact from an aesthetic landscape point of view.
- ✓ New geologic structures: Babele rocks and The Sphinx (natural reserves), solitary rocks with curious shapes, resulted from the erosion exerted by exogenic factors, situated on The Bucegi Plateau;
- ✓ Peaks/points of belvedere disposed on The Bucegi Plateau, at the limits of Prahovean Abrupt, towards east and north-east (at the Cruce, Omu Range, Vârful cu Dor, Caraiman Cottage, 2000 m altitude, Furnica Peak, Claia Mare, Claia Mică, Bucșoiu Peak, Babele Cottage, The Sphinx, Baba Mare Peak, etc.) and towards west (Obârșiei, Doamnele, Scara, Țigănești, Bătrâna, Strungile Mari and Strungile Mici).
- ✓ The presence of the karst relief: the components with the highest level of attraction are the caves (Bogdan’s cave, Ialomița Cave). There can be added a series of caves with no specific utility to be visited (the caves from the

Tătarului Valley, Ursului Cave, situated in the nearby of the Tătarul Mare Gorges);

- ✓ Skiing extended domain: The Bucegi Plateau (Furnica-Dorului Valley) with a wide surface, slightly leaned westward, which allows practicing skiing in winter, and in summer a facile accessibility for the practitioners of mountainous hiking: altitude 2000 - Valley of Carp - Altitude 1400; summer road between 1400-1000 m (the new ski slope); Kalinderu Area;
- ✓ A high number of touristic trails for mountainous hiking (out of which 48 have been approved by the Tourism Department, from the ministry of the profile);
- ✓ A very high number of trails for alpinism (about 280, with different degrees of difficulty), for which The Bucegi Mountains are considered as being among the most important areas for this sport in the Romanian Carpathians.

3.4. Structures of touristic reception with accommodation function

Taking into consideration the structures of touristic reception in the mentioned period (Fig. 8) we can notice the fact that, in the year 2020, in spite of the Covid-19 pandemic, the agrotourism pensions have registered the highest increase. The lowest values of the structures of touristic reception with an accommodation function are: camping, motels, hotel-apartments, etc.

Through these structures of touristic reception, there can be added social components (the need to relax, to recreate, etc.), an economic component (the incomes coming from tourists) what leads to the delineation of the touristic phenomenon, respectively to the sustainable development of tourism.

In the professional literature we can encounter various criteria which delineate more basic types of accommodation. The following parameters are most frequently taken into account - structure, comfort, size, functionality, form of tourism, period of utility (Gheorghilaș, 2014):

1. Depending on the structure of the accommodation network (Cocean et al., 2002), there can be mentioned: main accommodation (hotels, motels, villas, cottages, inns) and secondary accommodation (pensions, agrotourism farms, private accommodation spaces, shelters and mountain refuge, camping);
2. Depending on the capacity of reception (size) we can distinguish: large structures of accommodation, the type of touristic complexes (with a capacity that overcomes 1,000 places; middle (200-400 places); small (20-40 places) (Snak et al., 2001);
3. Depending on the period of use of the accommodation spaces, these can have a permanent activity (in case these function with no interruption all year long) or seasonal (in the case in which one of the seasons imposes the temporary interruption of the activity);
4. Depending on the time of the journey we can differentiate: transit units (usually encountered in the urban centers, near the railway stations, aerostations, harbours, etc.), resort units (for example, the units of accommodation from spa resorts); mixed units (which serve not only the resort tourism, but also the transit tourism).

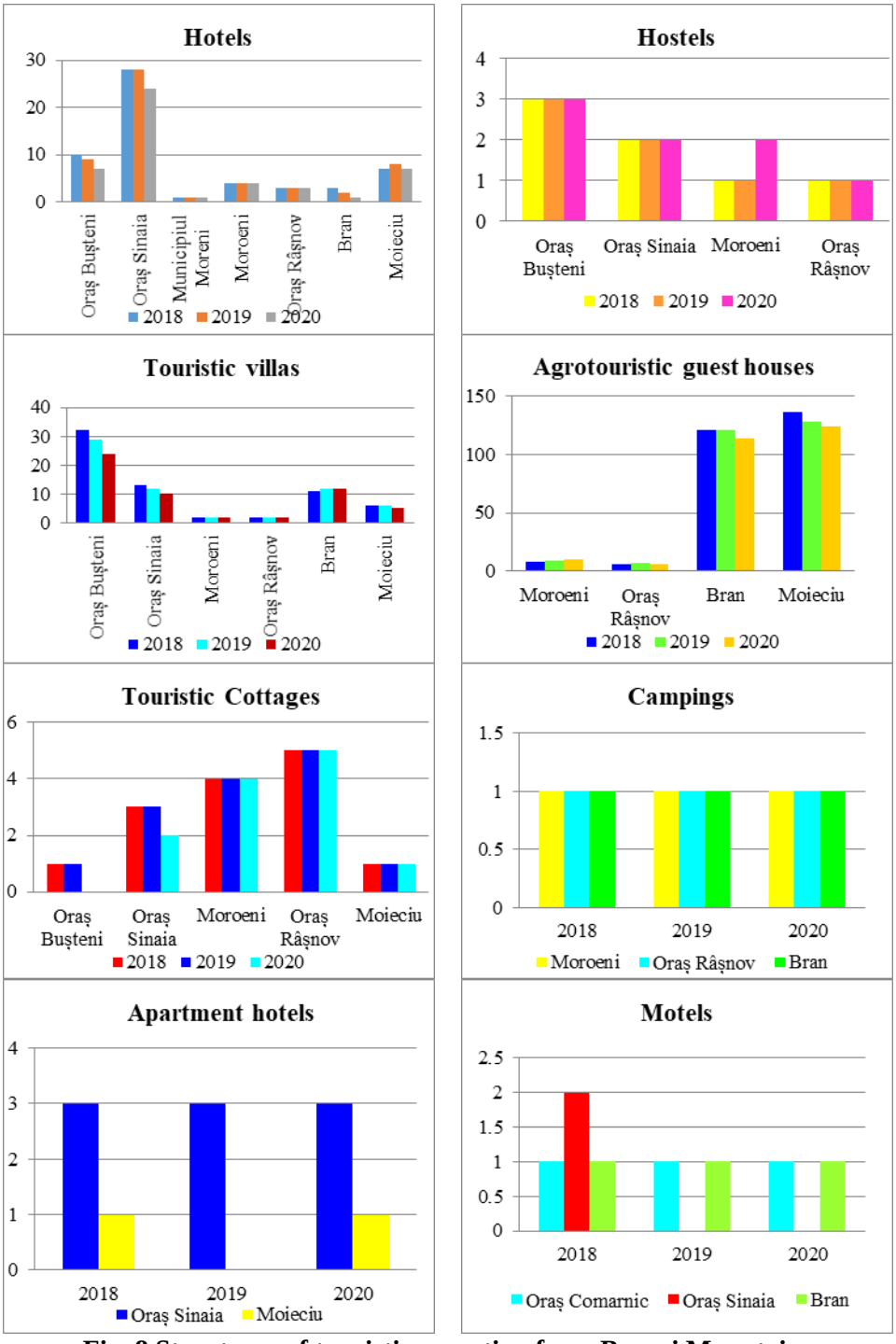

Fig. 8 Structures of touristic reception from Bucegi Mountains

(Source: processing data insse.ro)

Therefore, in Fig. 9, there are cartographically represented the structures of touristic reception (with an accommodation and public eating function); depending on the geographic location, the structures are scattered, specific to the mountainous area in the Bucegi Mountains.

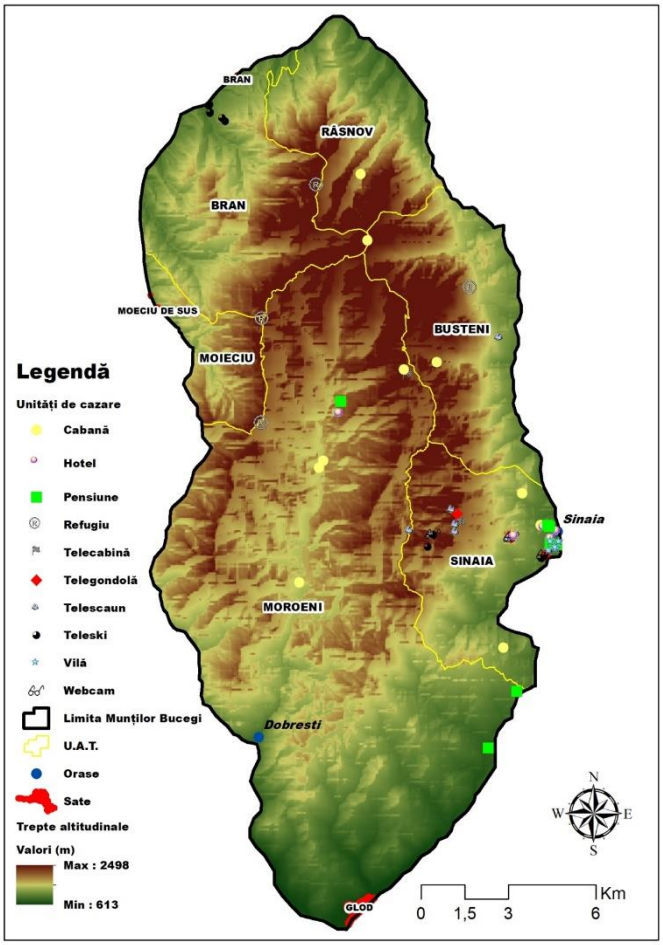

Fig. 9 Location of the main structures of touristic reception from the Bucegi Mountains

(Source: processing data http://www.geo-spatial.org/; Google Maps)

4. CONCLUSIONS

The development of the sustainable tourism is a very complex concept because it contains a multitude of aspects resulted from the complexity of the tourism resources (natural and anthropogenic), utilities and accommodation facilities existent in the domain of the study of the accessibility in certain areas less known, of the touristic traffic and the impact of the tourism on environment and society.

The fundamental notion of sustainable development has been an intensely used term in the latest years, being on the debate agenda of many national and international organizations.

In our opinion, sustainable tourism signifies the ingenuity of the tourism destination to remain competitive against all the irregularities that may appear, to attract tourists for the first time and make them faithful subsequently, to maintain incomparable from the social and cultural-historical viewpoints and to be in a continuous balance with the environment.

Consequently, the hotel and hospitality branch should associate the fulfillment of two categories of necessities, the economic development of the enterprises and the protection of the natural reserves.

For the analysed period of time (2018-2020), the reception structures with an accommodation function present significant ascending and descending tendencies, which means that, at present, most of the hotel branch had to suffer because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In conclusion, the accommodation base represents the main key element in the development of the tourism activities, being given their fundamental feature, respectively the efficiency on a social-economic plan.

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