
Classification tourist reception structures in the rural areas in Romania

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Abstract: *This article highlights the Methodological Norms regarding the Classification of Rural Tourist Reception Structures in Romania. All this information has the role of make known to the general public the legislation in force regarding the classifications of the accommodation units in the rural area in our country. The classification of these units indicates the degree of comfort offered to the tourist as well as the endowments of the reception structures. The material presents generalities regarding the legislation of rural tourism in our country. This information has the role of bringing to the attention of the tourism entrepreneur, but also of the tourist the legislation in force according to which the rural tourism in Romania operates.*

Key Words: *rural tourism, reception structures*

JEL Classification: Z3.

The first legislative regulations targeting rural tourism were made in 1972, when by Order no. 297, elaborated by the Ministry of Tourism, 118 rural localities were selected, which were to be launched in tourism. In the following year, by the Order of the Ministry of Tourism no. 744, 14 rural localities were declared tourist villages. Then follows the prohibition of accommodation of foreign tourists in private homes. After 1990, a strategy for restructuring tourism was developed, at national level, according to which the state had tasks related to the implementation of the package of policies and economic mechanisms necessary to fulfil its functions of coordination, environmental protection, investor and legislator.

1. Brief legislative history

Romanian Federation of Montana and Rural Development (FRDMR) was founded in 1991. In order to develop and implement agro tourism in Romania, FRDMR developed an extensive program, thus creating its own policy and management. Also, FRDMR has undertaken actions and collaborations at the level of governmental and non-governmental bodies, at national and international level.

In 1992, the Romanian Mountain Area Commission and FRDMR made a ranking within the typology of the peasant household, from the point of view of the accommodation spaces and the services offered by them. Thus, 2000 households were evaluated, which were classified in classes I to IV, regarding the accommodation spaces and in comfort classes A, B, C regarding the services offered.

In the protocol of February 3, 1994, with the Ministry of Tourism, the bases of the cooperation were laid in order to jointly carry out some actions in the development of rural tourism, in the elaboration of the legislative framework adapted to the current realities. Within these actions, FRDMR promoted a draft law for the support of rural tourism, developed a PHARE program, and provided a database necessary for publishing in modern graphic conditions an agro tourism guide with the first 200 households certified during 1991-1994. In May 1994, a protocol was concluded between the Ministry of Youth and Sports and FRDMR.

In the chronological order follows the Government Ordinance no. 62/24.08.1994 and then Law no. 145/31.12.1994 for the approval of the above-mentioned Government Ordinance, which established a series of facilities for the development of the rural tourism system in the mountain area, the Danube Delta and the Black Sea coast^[8]. Law no. 145/1994 offers the exemption from the payment of the income tax for a period of 10 years of the pensions and agritourist farms. On this occasion, the notions of tourist pension and agro tourism farm are introduced. Considering the Government Ordinance no. 62/1994, the Order of the Minister of Tourism no. 20/04.04.1995, which includes the norms and minimum criteria for the star classification of tourist pensions and agritourist farms.

Also in 1994, the first national organizations in the field of rural tourism appeared.

In order to support the local population in the organization and functioning of the tourist village and in the development of agro tourism, it is proposed, on certain levels, the establishment of non-profit tourist associations, formed based on the adhesion of households offering tourist services, namely: ANTREC was founded in the

autumn of 1994, being a non-governmental, apolitical and non-profit organization, with an important role in the development of rural tourism, ANTREC is a nationally and internationally recognized association as a leader in the development of Romanian rural tourism. preserving the traditional Romanian culture. This association has as members rural people, companies, associations and 1900 homeowners.

The activities of the association are: promoting the rural tourist potential and organizing the rural tourism; identifying and informing homeowners; publishing tourist information and advertising materials by publishing a monthly newsletter ANTREC; training in the field of homeowners who want to start a rural tourism activity; development of the reservation system; marking tourist routes.

In addition to these activities, there are others: Approval of households that will meet the criteria for tourism; the establishment of the National Training and Specialization Centre based in Moeciu; the development in collaboration with the Ministry of Waters, Forests and Environmental Protection, of the nature presentation project, entitled "A tourist - a tree"; Organizing exhibitions with standard projects for the establishment of rural pensions, an action that can be materialized in collaboration with students from the Institute of Architecture and the Institute of Constructions; carrying out training and improvement actions for all participants in rural tourism, organized through courses on various specialties and forms of training. The training and formation mode is carried out through short and long duration courses, colloquia, seminars, training camps with thematic purpose; providing technical assistance and consulting to rural pensions in preparing the necessary documentation for their approval as tourist entities and their inclusion in the database in order to assemble a tourist network; promoting rural tourism using modern methods and techniques that allow the creation of its own tourism network and connection to European tourism. This will be done through leaflets, brochures, video recordings and catalogues to highlight the rural tourism potential in Romania. ANTREC organizes advertising campaigns for classified and approved units, included in the network, through mass media.

In 1995, ANTREC became a member of the European association, EUROGÎTES, based in Strasbourg. ANTREC gathered, at the end of 1995, over 2000 members, organized in 15 branches. In the EUROGÎTES catalogue from 1996, made under the patronage of the European Federation of Rural Tourism, Romania was represented by 20 households, being placed next to the tourist offer of some countries with a rich tradition in this field, countries such as Belgium, France, Ireland. In 1997, by Ordinance no. 63 regarding the establishment of

facilities for the development of rural tourism, the Romanian Government provided for the functioning of tourist pensions and agro tourism pensions. On the date of entry into force of this ordinance, the Government Ordinance no. 62/1994. Thus, in 1998, Law no. 187/14.10.1998, for the approval of the Government Ordinance no. 63/1997 regarding the establishment of facilities for the development of rural tourism.

In the fourth year of existence, 1997, of ANTREC Romania, the number of its members reached almost 3,000, and that of its branches to 28. This year the first CD-ROM was published, the first catalogue of rural pensions.

In 1998, the number of members reached 2,500, and that of branches to 30. Currently, ANTREC has 31 county branches almost throughout Romania, a number of 2,500 members and tourist and agritourist pensions in 770 Romanian villages.

Important events organized by ANTREC: marketing seminars in rural tourism; International Sarmale Festival, 2nd edition, Praid, September 1996; International Pie Festival, 1st edition, Bacau, October 1996; 2nd edition, Bacau, October 2001; Mos Nicolae la Bran, December 1996; Valentine's Weekend, Bran, February 1997; International Fair of Rural Tourism, 1st Edition, Brasov, April 1997; National Tourism Fair, 1999-2003; Romanian evenings at the French Club, Latin American House, World Trade Centre, etc. Harvest Festival 1997, 1998 - World Trade Centre; Bucharest; Romania's Week in Paris, November 1999; World Rural Women's Day; launch of the National Catalogue of Tourist and Agro tourism Pensions, editions 1997, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2003; launch of the ANTREC website, August 2000.

In 1999, Order no. 61/27.04.1999 by which the classification is individualized in the form of daisies. The last regulation promoted and issued, which targets rural tourism, is Order no. 510/28.06.2002, which brings amendments to Order no. 61/1999 regarding the classification of tourist reception structures. According to Order no. 510, the term agro tourism farm is no longer used, the structures of tourist reception in rural areas being rural tourist pensions.

These methodological norms are mandatory for all economic agents, owners and/or administrators of tourist reception structures. For the commissioning of a pension, it is necessary to request at least 60 days in

advance its classification procedure to the General Directorate of Authorization and Control. D.G.A.C. will draw up the control certificate, which will be accompanied by the file regarding the nominal framing of the rooms and, respectively, the file regarding the structure of the feeding spaces destined to serve the tourists, through which they establish the capacity and structure of the unit. The classification category of the rural tourist pension is determined by the full fulfilment of the obligatory criteria provided and by the achievement of the following minimum score resulting from the evaluation of the additional criteria.

The minimum score resulting from the evaluation of the additional criteria is as follows:

- 5 daisies 150 points
- 4 daisies 120 points
- 3 daisies 80 points
- 2 daisies 40 points

The classification certificates issued according to the legislation are endorsed by the D.G.A.C. every 3 years. The economic agent will request the endorsement of the certificate at least 60 days before the expiration of the term of 3 years from its issuance or from the last visa. It is also mandatory for the tourists accommodated in boarding houses to fill in a form Announcing the arrival and departure of tourists for each person hosted, in duplicate. Although there is a legal framework that mostly covers the activity of rural tourism, there are few businesses that fall into it.

In general, approved and classified pensions are part of larger organizations, such as ANTREC.

Most, however, are small family businesses, which do not meet some or none of the conditions presented here, the main reason being the lack of information of people. Therefore, there is a strong need for a program of media coverage of tourism legislation in the field, to attract these pensions in the organized tourism circuit, thus managing to maintain a statistical, qualitative and fiscal control of rural tourism in Romania. Among the forms of organization of rural tourism are foundations, associations and federations. They are created as non-governmental bodies that promote the development of rural economy and rural tourism activities, by supporting

the preparation and capitalization of the tourist potential of Romanian villages. These associative forms bring together all local and isolated initiatives to create entities capable of representing certain aspects of the segments of rural economic and social life. Through the founding statute, which represents, in fact, the organization and functioning regulation of the association, the association has its own strategies, its own management system, attestation systems of the participants, when creating its own networks, all this being done within the limits of the legislation existing. This form of representation of rural tourism, through associations, federations, etc., has the capacity and freedom that, whenever it is found that the legislation is inconsistent with reality, to formulate proposals to improve it and to promote actions support in order to complete the legislative framework in the field. Depending on the level of action, the associations are active at local, national or international level.

Starting with March 2020, as a result of the pandemic situation COVID 19, we can say that rural tourism was greatly affected, given the restrictions that were imposed during this period. The conditions that were imposed were aimed at the safety of the tourist which led to reduce the accommodation capacity as well as to ensure the hygienic conditions according to the COVID pandemic situation 19.

Under these conditions, the Government Emergency Ordinance appeared - No. 224/30.12.2020 published in the Official Gazette no. 1330/31.12.2020, which contains 11 articles. Articles 1 and 2 set out the support provided by the state for economic operators affected by the COVID 19 pandemic, but also specify how they will benefit from this financial aid provided by the state.

Articles 3 and 4 make public the beneficiaries of this financial support but also the concrete amounts they will benefit from.

Article 5 - specifies the obligation of the beneficiaries to maintain their activity

Article 6 sets out to the public what steps need to be taken towards this financial assistance.

Articles 7 and 8 inform economic operators of the need to develop a legal framework in order to be eligible for this type of financial support provided by the state, but also of monitoring and reporting on the activity of financial assistance measures.

Article 9 presents the eligibility conditions according to the Government Emergency Ordinance No. 224/30.12.2020. Article 10 specifies the scheme of the implementation guide from the Official Gazette of Romania Part I, and in article 11 is presented the method of calculating the tax specific to the activities performed according to Law 170/2016.

2. Evolution of accommodation structures according to classification criteria

According to INSSE data, we can say that if in 2016 the number of tourists staying in rural guesthouses in Maramureş was 188988, in the following year, 2017, their number increased by 28,000 tourists eager to visit Oaş, reaching 276064 tourists in 2019, which means that the number of people visiting this area is increasing.

Table 1: The situation of tourists arriving in tourist accommodation units:

Year	Types of structures for tourist reception- Maramures County, million persons	
	Touristic pensions	Agro tourism pensions
2016	11 mil	1,02 mil
2017	12.mil	1 mil
2018	12,9 mil	1,234 mil
2019	13,374 mil	1, 254 mil

Source: statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-ins/print

Comparing the number of tourists who stayed at agritourist pensions we notice that in the period 2016-2019 the number of people who chose to stay in such an accommodation unit is increasing, and in the period 2016-2019, according to data provided by INSSE we can say that the number of tourists has almost tripled which leads us to the hypothesis that tourists worship this area of the country but also that the services offered are quality, the staff is very hospitable and the conditions offered, we can say that it rises to the standards expected by tourists.

According to the table below of INSSE we notice that the index of utilization of the tourist accommodation capacity for both tourist pensions and agritourist pensions is constantly increasing regardless of the comfort category, which leads us to the conclusion that the degree of satisfaction of tourists is one compared to the services provided by the pension staff. Pensions that have comfort categories 4 or 5 flowers have very high accommodation rates which means that tourists are delighted with the services provided.

Conclusions

This article presents the legislative evolution from 1991 to 2020, which was a dynamic one because it underwent various changes, which largely led to the well-being of Romanian tourism. Also here we presented the evolution of tourist structures with accommodation function (tourist and agro tourism pensions with different comfort categories, starting from 5 flowers - to 1 flower) which shows how satisfied the tourists have been in the last 4 years, compared to the services they benefited.

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