

Romania's Place and Competitiveness in International Tourism

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Abstract

International tourism plays an essential role in the global economy, contributing significantly to economic growth, developing local communities and stimulating infrastructure investment. In this context, the competitiveness of a destination becomes a determining factor in attracting international tourist flows, influenced by the quality of services, accessibility and marketing strategies. The paper examines the evolution of international tourism, focusing on Romania's position and competitiveness in this sector. The analysis includes statistics on tourist accommodation, arrivals and overnight stays, providing a detailed picture of global trends and how they have influenced tourism in Romania. Tourist expenditure and external factors that affected tourism such as threats and opportunities during the period are also presented. The paper evaluates the tourist offer and the activity in the tourism sector, comparing them with other international destinations. Through this analysis, both the strengths and the challenges facing Romania are highlighted, highlighting its growth potential and the strategic directions needed to improve its competitiveness on the international tourism market.

Keywords: competitiveness, Romania, international tourism, tourists.

JEL Classification: Z32, M31.

Introduction

Within the national economy, tourism acts as a dynamic element of the global economic system, creating its own demand for goods and services, which helps to increase their production. Having a large contribution to the creation of GDP, tourism has a specific contribution to the creation of added value, participating to a much greater extent than other branches close in terms of the level of development. Following some specialized studies, it was observed that the activity of certain branches is mostly influenced by the needs of tourism. At the same time, tourism is also a method of diversifying a country's economy. Thus, following the diversification of tourists' needs, the emergence of leisure activities, cable transport is necessary.

In a different vein, tourism is also considered "a way of superior exploitation of all categories of resources" [Ianus B, 2023], especially of natural resources: the beauty of landscapes, the qualities of mineral and thermal waters. It should be noted that tourism has the ability to ensure prosperity for disadvantaged areas, being a solution for less developed regions. This fact can be achieved by developing areas less rich in resources with high economic value, but rich in natural and anthropogenic tourism resources. After realizing this fact, tourism is considered "a lever for mitigating interregional imbalances." [Ianus B, 2023].

1. Analysis of international tourism in the period 2018-2021

1.1. Accommodation statistics

Worldwide, the most accommodation units were reported by: the Middle East with 12,769 accommodation units, Africa with 60,231 accommodation units, the Americas with 174,505 accommodation units and Asia and the Pacific with 291,854 accommodation units. Europe reported the most accommodation units in 2018, with a total of 195,745. Due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of accommodation units decreased significantly, thus the lowest values were recorded in 2021 (table 1.1).

Table 1.1.

The number of accommodation units in the period 2018-2021

No. accommodation units in the period 2018-2021	2018	2019	2020	2021
Middle east	12.411	12.769	9.469	2.244
Africa	59.962	60.231	57.428	39.267
America	163.447	174.505	161.817	73.063
Europe	195.745	193.718	188.672	152.189
Asia and the Pacific	282.236	291.854	193.765	152.901

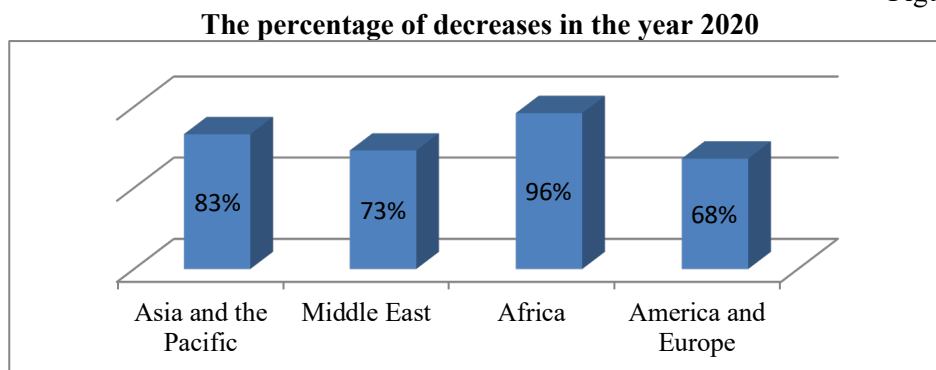
Source: adapted from [Global and regional tourism performance \(unwto.org\)](https://www.unwto.org/global-and-regional-tourism-performance)

1.2. Tourist arrivals

In 2020, the tourism sector is one of the most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, international tourist arrivals decreased by 72% from January to October 2020 compared to the same period in 2019. This decline was influenced by travel restrictions and a decrease in travel confidence [UNTWO, 2020 a]. The first ten months of 2020 saw a decrease in international tourist arrivals by 900 million compared to the first ten months of the previous year, which means a loss of US\$ 935 billion in operating income from international tourism [UNTWO, 2021].

The biggest drop in arrivals was recorded in Asia and the Pacific with a percentage of 82%. The Middle East followed this with a decrease of 71%, Asia with a percentage of 69%, and in Europe and America there were decreases of 68% (figure 1.1.).

Figure 1.1.



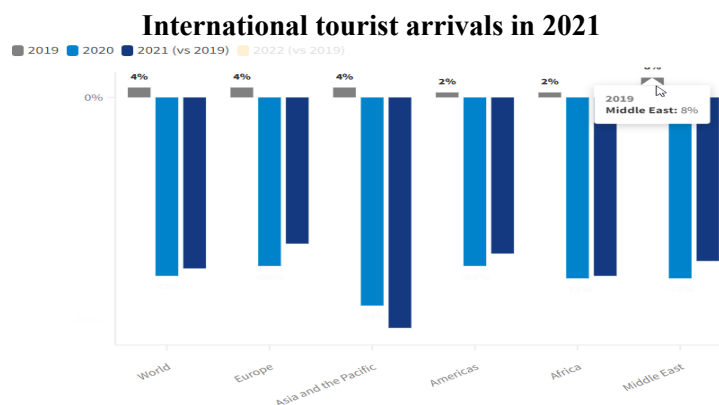
Source: adapted from [UNWTO World Tourism Barometer and Statistical Annex, December 2020: UNWTO World Tourism Barometer \(English version\): Vol 18, No 7 \(e-unwto.org\)](#)

The estimated decline in international tourism in 2020 is equivalent to a loss of 1 billion arrivals and 1.1 trillion US dollars in international tourism receipts [UNWTO, 2020 b.].

According to studies done by the UNWTO, in 2021 there was a 4% increase in arrivals compared to 2020, meaning 415 million arrivals in 2021 compared to 400 million arrivals in the previous year. International tourist arrivals were down 72%, being below the pre-pandemic level of 2019. In the second half of 2021, international tourism reached a slight balance, and the third and fourth quarters of 2021 saw a decrease with a percentage of 62% of international arrivals. In December, arrivals were still below 2019 levels, with the drop being 65% in 2021 [UNWTO, 2022].

Europe and the Americas have seen increases in arrivals in 2021 compared to the previous year, with percentages of 19% in Europe and 17% in the Americas. However, both regions remain below 2019 levels, which stood at 63%. Although Asia remains below pre-pandemic levels at 72%, it saw a 12% increase in arrivals in 2021 compared to 2020. The Middle East showed arrivals declines of 24% in 2021 compared to 2020 and 79% compared to 2019. Due to non-essential travel closures, Asia and the Pacific saw 65% declines in 2021 compared to 2020 and are 94% below 2019 levels (figure 1.2.).

Figure 1.2.



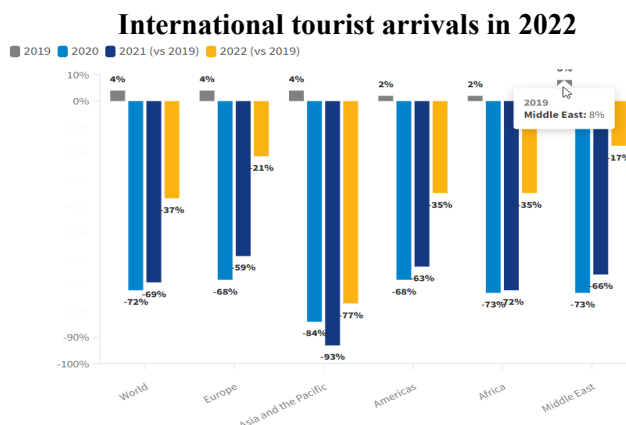
Source: [Tourism Grows 4% in 2021 but Remains Far Below Pre-Pandemic Levels \(unwto.org\)](#)

The latest studies in 2022 show that international tourism is starting to stabilize, with international arrivals reaching 57% of 2019 levels in the first seven months of 2022 [UNTWO, 2022]. The World Tourism Barometer indicates a tripling of international tourist arrivals between January and July 2022 compared to the same period of the previous year, the percentage being 172%. Following the lifting of travel restrictions there has been an increase in demand for international travel which has meant that the tourism sector has achieved 60% of pre-pandemic levels [OECD, 2023].

During 2022, an estimated 474 million tourists traveled internationally, representing a 299 million increase from 2021, when 175 million tourists were estimated. In the months of June-July 2022, a number of 207 million international arrivals were estimated, being twice as high as the same period of the previous year. The first seven months of 2022 represent 44% of all recorded arrivals [UNTWO, 2023].

From January to July 2022, Europe and the Middle East saw the highest percentages of arrivals, with Europe at 74%, the Middle East at 76% of pre-pandemic levels. Compared to the first seven months of 2021, Europe received approximately three times as many international arrivals with an increase of 190%. In the Middle East, international arrivals increased four times in the first seven months of 2022 compared to the same period in 2021, resulting in a 287% increase. In July 2022, arrivals exceeded pre-pandemic levels by 3%. Americas and Africa achieved growth of 103% and 171% in January-July 2022 compared to 2021, reaching 65% and 60% of their pre-pandemic levels, respectively. During the same period in 2022, Asia and the Pacific recorded arrivals of over 165%, even though they remained below 2019 levels of 86% (Figure 1.3.).

Figura 1.3.



Source: [International Tourism Back to 60% of Pre-Pandemic Levels in January-July 2022](https://www.unwto.org/en/press/news/2022/01/01-international-tourism-back-to-60-of-pre-pandemic-levels-in-january-july-2022) ([unwto.org](https://www.unwto.org))

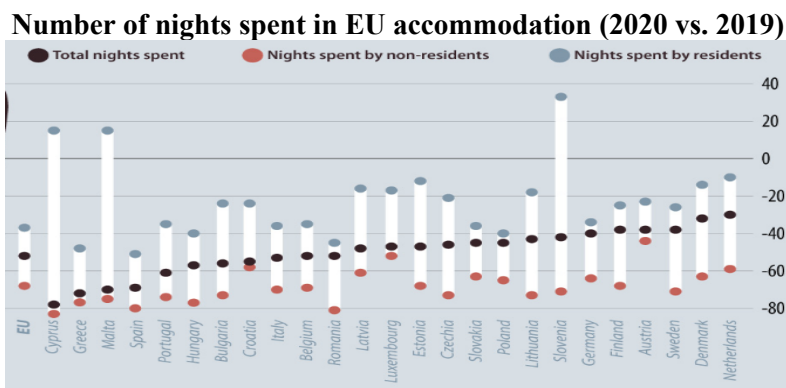
1.3. Overnight stays for tourists

Due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020 the number of nights spent in accommodation units was 1.4 billion, resulting in a 52% decrease compared to 2019. In the European Union, specifically in Greece, Cyprus, and Malta, the countries were the worst-hit, with declines of up to 70%. In contrast, the Netherlands and Denmark saw declines of less than 35%.

In 2020 compared to 2019, the share of nights spent by non-residents decreased by 68%, while the share of nights spent by residents decreased by 38%. During this year, only 3 EU member states reported increases in nights spent by residents, namely Slovenia with a

33% increase, followed by Malta and Cyprus, both of which saw a 15% increase. On the other hand, Romania, Greece and Spain recorded the biggest decreases of over 40% (figure 1.4.) [Country Reports, 2023].

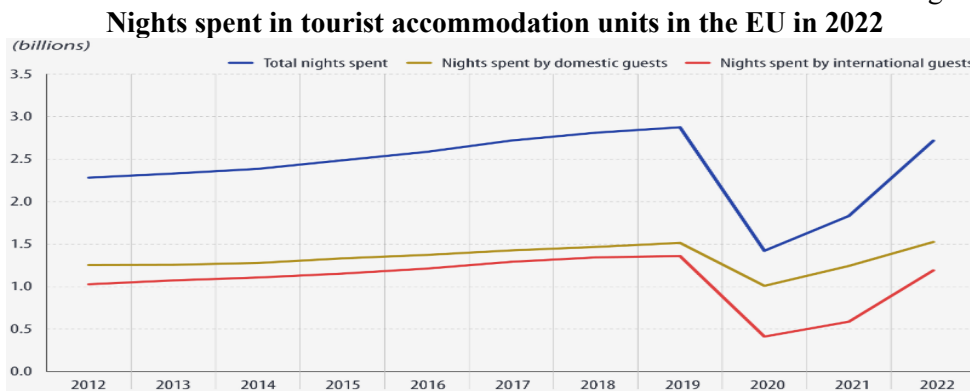
Figure 1.4.



Source: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/ddn-20210315-2>

In the year 2022, the European Union registers a total number of accommodation nights of 2.72 billion, which means that the year 2022 is approaching the levels of 2019, with the total number of nights being down by a percentage of 5.6%, and compared to 2021 it is increasing by 48.3% and compared to 2020 it is increasing by 91.1%. In the period January-June 2022, decreases in nights spent in accommodation units were reported by a percentage of 11% compared to the same period of 2019. The period July-December came very close to the same period of 2019, with a decrease reported of nights of 1.9% (figure 1.5) [European Commission, 2023].

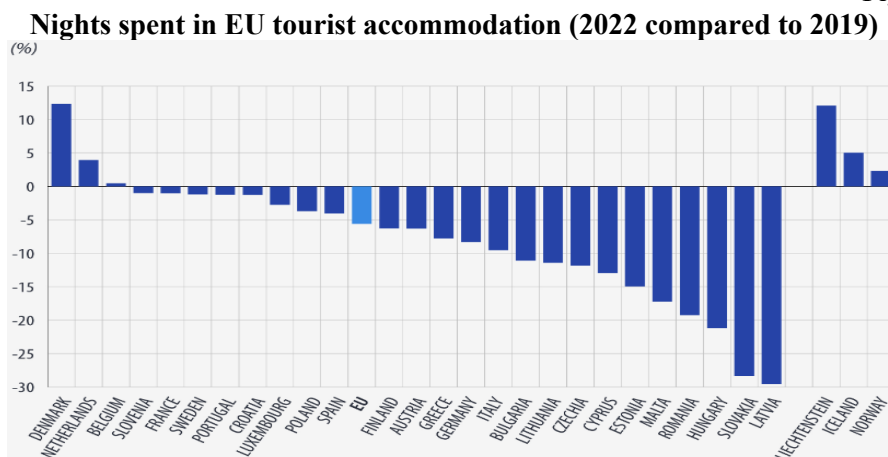
Figure 1.5.



Source: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/w/DDN-20230118-1>

The data presented in 2022 shows that the number of nights spent by international guests is close to the pre-pandemic level, namely in 2022 there were 1.19 billion compared to 1.36 billion in 2019. From the perspective of domestic travel, in 2022, it was reported that a number of 1.53 billion nights were spent, increasing by 10.9 million compared to 2019. The highest percentages of overnight stays were recorded in three EU Member States, namely Denmark with an increase of 12.3%, the Netherlands with a percentage of 3.9%, and Belgium with a percentage of 0.5% (Figure 1.6) [Country Reports, 2023].

Figure 1.6.



Source: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/w/DDN-20230118-1>

1.4. Ranking of expenses made by tourists

According to data published by the World Tourism Organization, spending on tourism decreased in 2020 by 67.2% compared to 2019, meaning a decrease from 1483 billion dollars in 2019 to 546 billion. In both 2019 and 2020, China was ranked as the biggest spender internationally, spending \$131.1 billion in 2020. The US reported the largest drop in actual spending in 2020 with a percentage of -73.1%. Germany rose from 3rd place in 2019 with a total expenditure of \$ 93.2 billion to 2nd place in 2020 with a total expenditure of \$ 38.9 billion. The biggest jump was made by Belgium which climbed from 20th position in 2019 to 8th position in 2020 (figure 1.7.).

Figure 1.7.

Top 10 source markets by spend in 2020 compared to 2019

2020 Position	2019 Position	Countries	USD\$ billion		Percent Change	
			2019	2020	*Local currencies, current prices (percentage change)	Actual Percentage calculated
1	1	China	254,6	131,1	-48,5%	-48,5%
2	3	Germany	93,2	38,9	-59,1%	-58,3%
3	2	United States	133,3	35,8	-73,1%	-73,1%
4	5	France	50,5	27,8	-46,1%	-45,0%
5	4	United Kingdom	70,6	21,7	-69,4%	-69,3%
6	10	Korea	32,7	16,1	-50,8%	-50,8%
7	9	UAE	33,4	15,1	-54,8%	-54,8%
8	20	Belgium	18,8	13	-32,0%	-30,9%
9	15	India	22,9	12,6	-42,4%	-45,0%
10	7	Canada	35,3	12,1	-65,4%	-65,7%
		World	1,483	546	Not available	-67,2%

Source: World Tourism Barometer, May 2022
*Provisional Data

Source: ([Country Reports, 2023](#)).

A study by the UNWTO shows that in 2021, tourism's economic contribution may reach \$1.9 trillion, up from \$1.6 trillion in 2020, but still below 2019 levels of \$3.5 trillion. Due to high travel spending, in 2021 export earnings from international tourism may exceed \$700 billion which would show an improvement over the previous year. Although it could exceed 700 billion dollars, these revenues would represent less than half of the 1.7 trillion dollars recorded in 2019. In Europe, the countries of France and Belgium saw lower tourism

spending by -37%, respectively - 28% compared to 2019. In the Middle East, specifically Saudi Arabia had spending decreases of -27%, and Qatar -2%, being considered better results in 2021.

An analysis carried out in 2022 shows an increase in spending in tourism. Spending by tourists in France, Italy, the United States and Germany increased from 70% to 85% of 2019 levels. Countries such as Romania, Serbia, the Republic of Moldova, North Macedonia, Albania, and many others have managed to reach back to pre-pandemic levels [European Commission, 2023].

2. Romania's place and role in international tourism

2.1. Romania's offer

Following the completion of the SWOT analysis of Romania's tourism potential, an evaluation can also be prepared by drawing up two matrices. One matrix presents the evaluation of the internal factors of the tourism potential in Romania, while the second matrix presents the evaluation of the external factors of the potential, giving each item an importance coefficient (ki) and a maturity level (Nn) on a scale from 1-4. These ratings will be presented below in table 2.1 and table 2.2.

Table 2.1.

Evaluation of the internal factors of Romania's tourism potential

EFI	Ki	Rating (1-4)	Scp
Romania's tourist potential is quite rich, offering a wide variety, and is internationally known, representing a key part of tourism.	0,07	3	0,21
The mountain tourism potential is a complex one comprising a great diversity of landscapes and tourism resources, and in addition to this feature, the mountain tourism potential includes about 14 types of tourism and recreational activities.	0,11	4	0,44
The spa tourism potential is recognized worldwide by the variety of resources it contains such as: mineral and thermal waters, therapeutic muds, etc.	0,09	4	0,36
Romania's natural floristic and faunal tourism potential is enriched in species that cause curiosity and interest to specialists and scientists, as well as to nature-loving and curious tourists.	0,04	3	0,12
The historical cultural potential of Romania's tourism is quite developed due to the entire history of the Romanian people, Romania owning over 6,000 monuments, almost 670 museums and over 680 values and cultural elements of great interest and national heritage.	0,2	4	0,8
The human resource is the factor that influences the efficiency of the tourist activity, Romanians being a welcoming people, and today's generation has highly developed language skills.	0,17	4	0,68
Romania has a National Center for Tourism Education which aims to pursue professional education in the tourism industry.	0,02	3	0,06
UNDER TOTAL	0,7	-	2,67
The technical endowments of the reception structures in the spa, mountain and seaside resorts are insufficient in certain situations.	0,09	2	0,18
Because of the unattractive ratio of pay to working conditions, the workforce is low-skilled and unmotivated.	0,07	2	0,14

Uncivilized tourists affect the environment, making it look messy and unkempt.	0,01	1	0,01
With the overcrowding of certain resorts, their potential begins to degrade.	0,02	1	0,02
Another disadvantage of Romanian tourism is the fact that only certain tourist resorts reach international levels.	0,05	1	0,05
Tour guides do not have a lot of training in the field.	0,06	2	0,12
UNDER TOTAL	0,3	-	0,52
TOTAL	1	-	3,19

Source:

Following the evaluation of the internal factors (EFI) of Romania's tourism potential, a weighted score of 3.19 resulted. This score is relatively high, this can be motivated by the rating that Romania's tourism potential obtained at: "mountain tourism potential"; "the spa tourism potential"; "cultural tourism potential" and "human resources, being the factor that influences the efficiency of tourism activity".

Table 2.2.

Evaluation of the external factors of Romania's tourism potential

EEF	Ki	Rating (1-4)	Scp
To support the growth of the tourism sector, the ministry will initiate programs such as: the tourism marketing and promotion program and the development of tourism products.	0,22	4	0,88
If the interest of the more developed countries in Romania increased, this fact would lead to the attraction of investments.	0,08	3	0,24
Taking advantage of the fact that today's generation spends a lot of time on the Internet, tourist objectives and offers should be promoted online as much as possible.	0,18	4	0,72
The existence of the Tourism Development Master Plan.	0,12	4	0,48
UNDER TOTAL	0,6	-	2,32
The tourist infrastructure is unfavorable.	0,19	2	0,38
Competition is very strong in the tourism market.	0,13	2	0,26
They were implemented very slowly. Modern managerial practices, however, are more attractive in other countries, such as Croatia, Hungary, or Bulgaria.	0,08	1	0,08
UNDER TOTAL	0,4	-	0,72
TOTAL	1	-	3,04

(Source:xxx)

According to the evaluation of the external factors of Romania's tourism potential, a weighted score of 3.04 was recorded, being a relatively high score, a result explained by the rating that Romania's tourism potential obtained for: "the development programs that the ministry will initiate "; "online promotion of tourist offers"; "the existence of the Tourism Development Master Plan". The table below shows the total number of tourist reception structures with accommodation functions, for each unit in the period 2018-2021 (table 2.3.).

Table 2.3.

The structure of accommodation during 2018-2021

The structure of accommodation during 2018-2021	2018	2019	2020	2021
Hotels	1.636	1.625	1.599	1.606
Motels	231	219	214	215
Tourist inns	4	3	3	3
Hostels	319	323	328	332
Tourist villas	695	709	752	752
Bungalows	533	557	458	503
Tourist cabins	231	222	226	222
Holiday villages	10	9	8	8
campgrounds	58	58	61	67
Camps for students and preschoolers	59	55	48	52
Tourist stops	47	47	43	44
Tourist guesthouses	1.709	1.669	1.729	1.745
Agritourism pensions	2821	2.800	3.022	3.460
Tourist cottages	73	82	92	112
Accommodation spaces at sea	27	24	27	25
TOTAL	8.453	8.402	8.610	9.146

(Source: National Institute of Statistics, 2024)

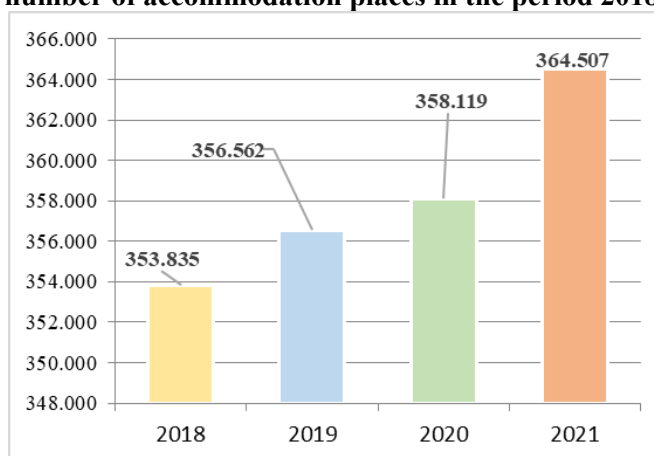
In 2018, the total number of accommodation units was 8,453, with agro-tourism guesthouses accounting for the largest part, numbering 2,821. They were followed by tourist guesthouses and hotels, being 1,709 and 1,636, respectively. The lowest number of accommodation units in 2018 is reported by holiday villages and tourist inns, with 10 and 4 respectively. After a total of 8,453 accommodation units were registered in 2018, their total decreased by 51 units in the following year, reaching 8,402. As can be seen in the table above, agro-tourism guesthouses are still the most numerous in 2019, but they are down by 21 guesthouses compared to the previous year. The fewest accommodation units are still holiday villages and tourist inns, their number being 9 and 3, respectively. Although the COVID-19 pandemic appears in 2020 and 2021, the total number of tourist reception structures with functions of accommodation is increasing compared to previous years, reaching a total of 9,146 in 2021. From the point of view of the highest values, agro-tourism guesthouses, tourist guesthouses and hotels remain on the first places, their total number being 3,460, 1,745, and 1,606, respectively. Looking at the lowest values, they are also recorded by holiday villages and tourist inns, and as can be seen their total number remains constant from 2019 to 2021.

2.2. Tourist activity in Romania

a) Number of accommodation places

In 2018, Romania had a total of 353,835 places to stay. The most places were registered by hotels, with 197,234 places to stay, and the fewest places were owned by tourists inns, with 101. In the following year, the number of accommodation places increases by 2,727, reaching a total of 356,562 in 2019. Just like in 2018, hotels have the most accommodation places and are constantly growing, with a total of 199,992 accommodation places. Tourist inns remain last, but decrease from 101 in 2018 to 80 in 2019.

Figure 2.1.

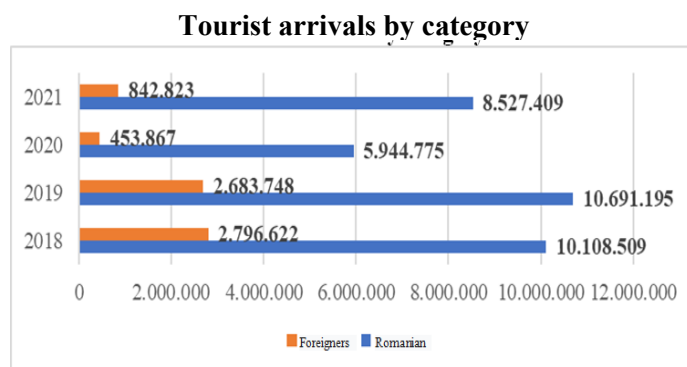
The number of accommodation places in the period 2018-2021

(Source: National Institute of Statistics, 2022, National Institute of Statistics, 2023)

Although the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on tourism, the number of accommodation places increased substantially in 2020 and 2021, reaching 356,562 and 358,119, respectively. The total number of accommodation places in tourist inns remains constant from 2019 to 2021, while the total number of accommodation places in hotels and other accommodation units changes from year to year (figure 2.1.) [National Institute of Statistics, 2022].

b) *Tourist arrivals by category (Romanians, foreigners)*

Figure 2.2.



(Source: National Institute of Statistics, 2022)

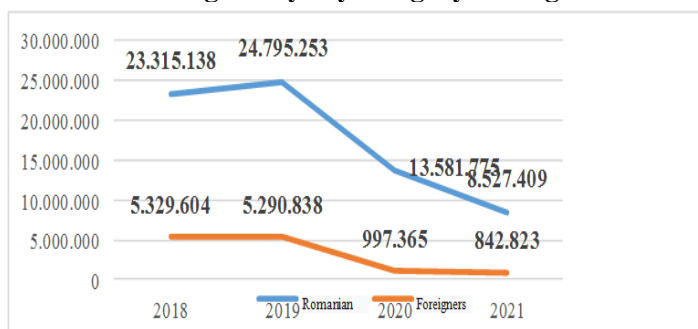
In 2018, the number of Romanian tourists staying in tourist reception units with accommodation functions was 10,108,509. Most of their arrivals were at hotels, tourist and agro-tourism guesthouses. Also this year, 2,796,622 foreigners stayed in tourist reception units with accommodation functions. In 2019, the number of Romanian tourists staying increased compared to the previous year, while the number of foreigners decreased in the same period from 2,796,622 to 2,683,748. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020 both the number of Romanian tourists and the number of foreign tourists decreased drastically. The number of Romanian tourists decreased from 10,691,195 in 2019 to 5,944,775 in 2020, and the number of foreign tourists decreased from 2,683,748 in 2019 to 453,867 in 2020.

After most of the restrictions from the pandemic period were lifted, in 2021, the number of Romanian tourists, as well as the number of foreign tourists, increased compared to 2020, but the values remain decreasing compared to 2019 (figure 2.2.)

c) *Overnight stays by category (Romanians, foreigners)*

Figure 2.3.

Tourist overnight stays by category during 2018-2021



(Source: National Institute of Statistics, 2023)

It can be seen in the table above, large increases in the overnight stays of both Romanian and foreign tourists in the period 2018-2019 compared to the period 2020-2021 where major decreases were reported due to the pandemic (figure 2.3.).

d) *Net usage indices*

Table 2.4.

Indices of net use in the period 2018-2021

Tourist accommodation units with accommodation functions	2018 %	2019 %	2020 %	2021 %
Hotels	41,1	42,8	26,7	32,1
Motels	15,9	16,4	12,9	14,3
Tourist inns	11,1	12,7	6,4	0,6
Hostels	23,7	25,2	16,6	17,7
Tourist villas	26	27,7	21,3	24,8
Bungalows	28,4	31,4	29	25,4
Tourist cabins	16,8	17,8	16,2	15,6
Holiday villages	12,7	14,3	10,8	15,5
campgrounds	14,4	23,1	24,3	20,4
Camps for students and preschoolers	17,1	17,8	4,4	8,6
Tourist stops	21,6	19,7	19,4	18,6
Tourist guesthouses	20,9	22,2	16,5	18,3
Agritourism pensions	18	20	16,5	17,1
Tourist cottages	17,2	19,3	22,1	20,1
Accommodation spaces at sea	23,3	27,3	29,3	24,3

(Source: National Institute of Statistics, 2022, National Institute of Statistics, 2023)

The highest net utilization index total was 33.9% reported in 2019, and the lowest was 22.8% reported in 2020. During 2018-2021, hotels recorded the highest indexes, while tourist inns had the lowest values of the net use index in 2018, 2019, and 2021, at 11.1%, 12.7%, and 6.6%, respectively. In 2020, the lowest value was recorded by student and preschool camps, respectively 4.4% (table 2.4.).

2.3. The position of Romania in relation to other countries

The World Tourism Organization has made a top 128 of the most visited countries globally in the year 2022. On the first place in this ranking is France with a total number of international tourists of approximately 117 million. This is followed by Mexico with 51 million international tourists, the USA with approximately 45 million tourists, Italy with almost 38 million tourists, and in 5th place Spain with approximately 36 million tourists. Romania is in 21st place, with a number of international tourists of approximately 5 million, followed by Bulgaria, Malaysia, Portugal, Japan and Indonesia, ranked 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th, and 26th respectively. The last 5 places are ranked Moldova in 124th place with 29,000 international tourists, Palau in 125th place with 18,400 international tourists, Chad in 126th place with 10,400 tourists, Comoros in 127th place with 7,000 tourists and Solomon Islands in 128th place with 4,400 international tourists (table 2.5.) [Travel & Tourism Development Index, 2021].

Table 2.5.

Top 128 countries that are the most visited

#	Country	Number of International Tourists *	#	Country	Number of International Tourists *
1	France	117,109,000	20	Andorra	5,207,000
2	Mexico	51,128,000	21	Romania	5,023,000
3	United States of America	45,037,000	22	Bulgaria	4,973,000
4	Italy	38,419,000	23	Malaysia	4,333,000
5	Spain	36,410,000	24	Portugal	4,208,000
6	Hungary	31,641,000	25	Japan	4,115,800
7	People's Republic of China	30,402,000	26	Indonesia	4,053,000
8	Croatia	21,608,000	27	South Africa	3,886,600
9	Turkey	15,971,000	28	Puerto Rico	3,882,000
119	Liechtenstein	58,400			
120	Bermuda	51,400			
121	Papua New Guinea	39,000			
122	New Caledonia	31,000			
123	Bhutan	29,800			
124	Moldova	29,000			
125	Palau	18,400			
126	Chad	10,400			
127	Comoros	7,000			
128	Solomon Islands	4,400			

(Source: Travel & Tourism Development Index, 2021)

A study carried out by Economica.net shows that the number of foreign tourists is approximately twice as high in 2022 compared to 2021, but with a percentage of 40% below the levels before the pandemic. Also this year, 1.57 million foreign tourists who traveled to Romania for leisure or business compared to 2021 where 857,000 traveled. To reach the number of foreign tourists from the pre-pandemic period in 2023, their number should approach or be equal to 2.6 million tourists. Following the three years of the pandemic, the number of tourists coming from other countries has dropped a lot. The biggest decreases were recorded in: New Zealand (-94%), China (-77%), Japan (-76%), South Korea and Australia (-67%) and Latvia (-60%). Due to the war in Ukraine, the number of tourists from Russia decreased by 76% and the number of tourists from Belarus by 93%, supporting the action of the Russians [Economica.net, 2023].

Economia.net made a ranking with the countries from which the most tourists came to Romania. As can be seen in the drawing below. In first place is Germany, where the number of Germans who arrived in Romania in 2022 is 177,000. Germany was followed by Israel where the number of tourists was over 153,000, Italy with over 125,000 tourists coming to Romania and the USA with over 105,000 tourists. The following 5 places were positioned: the United Kingdom with over 88,000, France with over 85,000 tourists, Hungary with over 82,000 tourists, the Republic of Moldova with over 69,000 tourists. Compared to the pre-pandemic period, the number of non-residents coming from Ukraine to Romania, apart from refugees, increased by 2%, which means 57,075 Ukrainians coming to Romania in 2022, thus ranking last in the ranking [Economica. net, 2023].

Conclusion

Following the analysis of tourism at the international level, we realized that it contributed positively and negatively to the countries' economies, the most significant influence in 2020 was the COVID-19 pandemic. Regarding the problems facing Romania for the development of the tourism industry, it can be seen that the infrastructure leaves a lot to be desired. Even though the transport infrastructure has started to improve, it still has many shortcomings and affects Romanian tourism a lot. The road infrastructure is of low quality, the transport systems are limited, some digital applications to help with travel planning are missing, and the railways are in a slow modernization process. Romania's tourism faces another problem, which is the lack of staff in accommodation units and restaurants. Many employees refuse to work in this field because they are not offered salaries that satisfy them and they are not very well trained. Romania has six tourist information centers and I think they are very few compared to the tourist areas of the country. Romania has many unexplored places, many wonderful landscapes, every area of this country has something special. Looking at the country from a tourism perspective, this country would have a lot to offer to foreign tourists, but we don't know how to show and promote them as much as we should.

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