

## STUDY REGARDING THE EVOLUTION OF TOURIST ACCOMMODATION FACILITIES – THE CASE OF ALBA COUNTY, ROMANIA

Conference paper

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### **Abstract**

One of the most historical counties in Romania, Alba has a very rich and diverse touristic potential, that, until now is insufficiently exploited from the touristic point of view. Tourism in this part of Romania has seen a great growth in recent years, especially the rural tourism and ecotourism, a growth that is demonstrated by the increasing number and capacity of the tourist accommodations facilities in this area.

*Purpose* – The major purpose of this article is to outline the evolution of tourist accommodation facilities indicators from Alba County, Romania.

*Design* – The present paper presents an analysis of the tourist accommodation facilities in Alba County, Romania. The types of the accommodation facilities from the studied county are presented, as well as the evolution of their capacity during 2010-2013, number of employees and their qualifications, other facilities offered to tourists.

*Methodology/ Approach* – In order to achieve the objectives, the survey selective research was used, offering the study recipients the opportunity to identify solutions for tourism development in the county of Alba and to improve the existing opportunities. The survey was conducted based on a questionnaire delivered by interviewers to a representative sample of respondents. The sampling frame – the survey base was determined by the research team through the analysis conducted on the existing accommodation, tourism products, tourism potential, tourism traffic and following the analysis of the secondary sources of information on tourism in Alba County.

*Findings* – During 2010 – 2013, there was an increase of the average accommodation capacity offered by units, from an average of 18 seats to an average of 21 seats; housing units' occupancy is higher in summer than in winter; there are relatively few accommodation units that offer additional services; less than half provide conference rooms, gyms or children playgrounds; the poor development of the general infrastructure is seen as the most important influencing factor; the main type of tourists staying in the analyzed accommodation units are mostly families on vacation, weekend vacationers or people in transit; the main form of tourism practiced by tourists is the recreation and rest tourism, followed by the weekend and the transit tourism

*Originality* – The paper presents the results of the first research of this kind on the accommodation facilities from Alba County

**Keywords** tourism infrastructure, tourist accommodation facilities, tourist accommodation capacity

### **INTRODUCTION**

As economic and social activity, tourism is, through its content and role, a distinct field of activity, a component of prime importance to economic and social life for an increasing number of countries, and for country as well.

Tourism is a phenomenon particular to modern civilization, rooted in society and, as such, influenced by its evolution. Thus, responsive to the contemporary civilization's dynamic changes, tourism evolves under their impact, being involved in the general development. It also acts as a stimulating factor for progress and development, through the vast human and material potential it involves in its conduct, and through the beneficial effects it has on the areas of interference.

Tourism and hospitality industry is one of the most important worldwide in the current period. Alba County fully enjoys favourable and adequate conditions for the development of different forms of tourism.

In this context, we also mention the efforts of specialists on rigorously defining the categorical system integrated to tourism, the interdependencies with other parts of economy, on quantifying its effects.

The importance of the tourism phenomenon derives from its complexity, from the scope of the activities necessary for its emergence, maintenance and development; tourism economically improves and exploits that unique treasure consisting of the wealth created by nature and climate, or left by history, folklore and civilization.

Out of tourist movement, a country's or an area's natural, cultural and historical wealth will never be subject to economic activities that can generate income.

Alba County's local government sees tourism as an opportunity for economic recovery and to make both Romanian and foreign tourists aware of the region's unique elements.

Knowing the tourist profile, the real and potential tourists' preferences, identifying ways to increase the quality of services starting from the existing situation, illustrating examples of best practices that are applicable to the area, the more attractive and fair presentation of the county, the opportunities and the needs to create a durable partnership between providers, authorities and investors, all these are important points that were included in designing the study on the Alba County tourism market.

Its many economic, social, cultural and political connections and implications, its active role in society, on the one hand, and its transformations as a phenomenon, on the other hand, argue the local concerns about knowing the tourism phenomenon's content and dimension, its sensibilities and incidents, but also about deciphering its operation mechanisms.

Along with society's evolution, tourism turns from a possibility to a necessity, depending on the available free time, on the financial resources and on the individual's lifestyle, on the services level and degree of development, thus becoming an integral part of the inter-relations system between different groups of values.

## 1. EVOLUTION OF THE MAIN STATISTIC INDICATORS ON TOURIST ACTIVITY IN ALBA COUNTY

The statistical indicators already mentioned could synthetically express the county tourism potential improvement through the tourism forms mentioned above: tourism accommodation capacity, arrivals and overnight stays. The table below renders the evolution of these indicators between 2000 and 2013.

Table 1: **Tourism accommodation capacity and activity in Alba County**

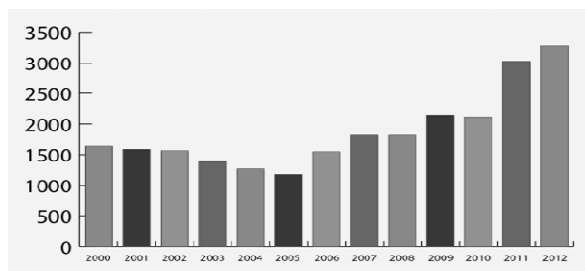
YEARS	Tourism accommodation capacity				Arrivals X 1000	%*	Overnight stays X 1000	%*
	Existing (beds)	%*	In service X 1000 beds	%*				
2000	1.641	100	484,9	100	49,3	100	86,2	100
2001	1.584	- 3,5 ↘	505,1	+ 4,2 ↗	59,9	+ 21,5 ↗	95,7	+ 11,0 ↗
2002	1.559	-5,0 ↘	418,9	- 13,6 ↘	48,6	- 1,4 ↘	95,3	+ 10,6 ↗
2003	1.397	-14,9 ↘	401,0	- 18,3 ↘	52,4	+ 6,3 ↗	98,5	+ 14,3 ↗
2004	1.276	-22,2 ↘	377,0	- 22,3 ↘	48,2	- 2,2 ↘	90,1	+ 4,5 ↗
2005	1.179	-28,2 ↘	362,0	- 25,3 ↘	49,0	- 0,6 ↘	94,6	+ 9,7 ↗
2006	1.544	- 5,9 ↘	489,4	+ 0,9 ↗	50,6	+ 2,6 ↗	103,2	+ 19,7 ↗
2007	1.830	+ 11,5 ↗	558,8	+ 15,2 ↗	54,1	+ 9,7 ↗	117,7	+ 36,5 ↗
2008	1.828	+ 11,4 ↗	588,6	+ 21,4 ↗	51,3	+ 4,1 ↗	111,1	+ 28,9 ↗
2009	2.137	+ 30,2 ↗	627,8	+ 29,5 ↗	44,3	- 10,1 ↘	100,8	+ 16,9 ↗
2010	2.109	+ 28,5 ↗	619,5	+ 27,8 ↗	47,8	- 3,0 ↘	101,1	+ 17,3 ↗
2011	3.027	+ 84,4 ↗	758,9	+ 56,5 ↗	78,4	+ 59 ↗	155,7	+ 80,6 ↗
2012	3.268	+ 99,1 ↗	1024,4	+ 111,1 ↗	95,19	+ 93 ↗	206,3	+ 139,3 ↗
2013	3.656	+ 122,7 ↗	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: <https://statistici.insse.ro/shop/>

\* These percentage figures represent the reduction (-) or increase (+) compared to the base year 2000

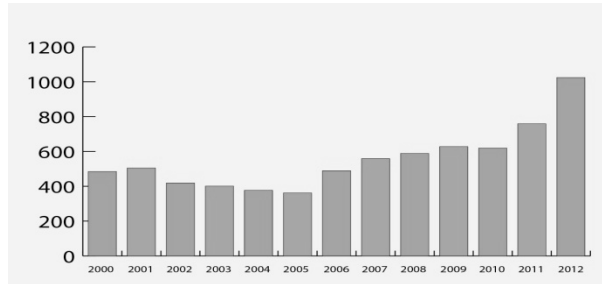
The indicator of “tourism accommodation capacity” (in number of seats) in Alba County recorded in 2005 the lowest value of the analysis period, representing only 71.8% of the 2000 level. After this involution recorded during 5 years, there has been a significant increase so that in 2013, the existing tourism accommodation capacity was 28.5% higher than in 2000 (Figure 1.).

Figure 1: **Evolution of the existing tourist accommodation capacity in Alba County**



The indicator of “operating tourism accommodation capacity” (in thousands of places - days) followed a pattern similar to that of the existing tourism accommodation capacity, increasing in 2012 by 27.8% compared to 2000.

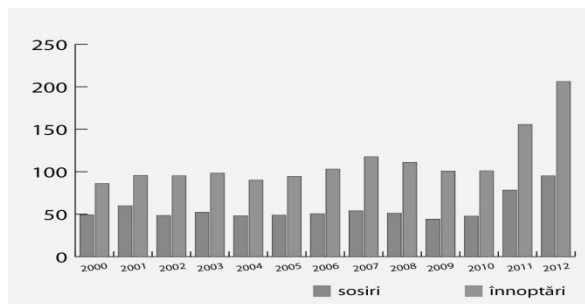
Figure 2: **The evolution of the in service tourist accommodation capacity in Alba County (in thousands of beds)**



Tourist arrivals in this county during 2000-2012 registered oscillations from one year to another. In 2009 and 2010, arrivals, as number of tourists, were lower than in 2000. During 2000-2010, the highest level of arrivals was reached in 2001. Since 2011, however, the number of tourist arrivals has increased compared to 2001, so at the end of 2012 was almost double compared to the base year (2000).

The indicator of “overnight stays” in 2004 registered the lowest values, while the highest were recorded in 2011 and 2012, representing an increase of 80.6% and 139.3% compared to the reference year 2000.

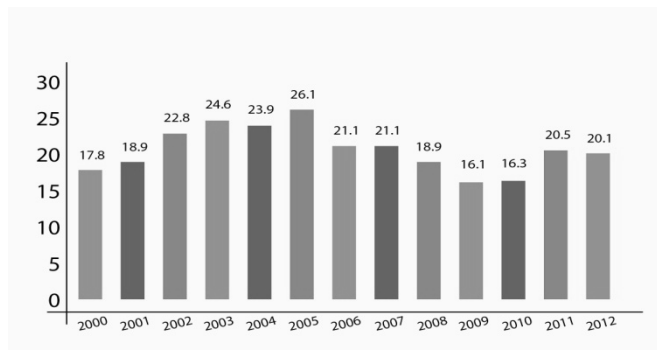
Figure 3: **The evolution of tourist activity – arrivals and overnight stays (thousands)**



In Alba County, between the indicators of existing and operating tourism accommodation capacity, a big difference can be seen in 2008. This leads us to the conclusion that there are no significant differences between the number of tourism places entered in the last act of reception of tourist accommodation structures, and the number of beds available to tourists by the tourism establishments. However, discrepancies between tourism movement indicators are more apparent, so arrivals and overnight stays have not evolved similarly.

The indicator of “the net use index of operating tourism accommodation capacity during 2000-2012 in Alba presented the following developments:

Figure 4: **The indices of the tourist accommodation capacity in service (%) – in Alba County**



Source: <https://statistici.insse.ro/shop/>

The chart above shows that the indices of net using the operating tourism accommodation capacity reached the maximum level in 2005 and the minimum in 2009. However, its levels are very low which suggests the existence of a large gap between supply and solvent demand. The attraction force of tourists in the county’s tourism destinations is low.

Based on the evolution expressed by the data and figures above we can conclude that there are severe limitations of the existing potential recovery process.

According to a survey conducted by econtext.ro, the number of tourists who visited Alba County increased from 2008 to 2012 by 83.20%. If in 2008, the heart of Transylvania County record 51,264 tourists, four years later there were 93,917, which positions Alba County as third most popular with Romanians.

In June 2013, 9,927 tourists were registered in accommodation establishments of Alba, 598 more compared to the previous month.

During the first six months of the year, the county sights attracted 42,141 tourists, most of which stayed in hotels (45.6%). The visitors’ number increased by 9.6% during the same period of the previous year.

The number of nights spent by tourists in the county tourism establishments (at least 10 bed places), recorded during the first six months of 2013 was 85,770, 7.3% more than during the corresponding period in 2012. The average length of the stay in the tourism accommodation establishments in this period was 2.0 days (2.1 days in the same period in 2012). In June 2013, there were 9,927 tourists, 1,225 (+14.1%) more than in the same month in 2012. The number of overnight stays in June 2013 was 19,603, an increase of 2,335 (+13.5%) compared to the corresponding month in 2012.

The index of net use of accommodation places in the county in June 2013 was 19.3% (compared to 19.7% in June 2012). The country recorded a rate of 27.8% (compared to 27.0% in June 2012). 22.8% of all tourists in the first six months were accommodated in hostels.

In May, there were registered 9,329 visitors, about 24% more than in April, when Alba received 7,012 guests. Most of them preferred lodging in hotels (47.1%) and rural locations (22.1%). According to the Alba Regional Directorate of Statistics, in August 2013, there were 15,317 tourists, 727 (+5.0%) more than in the same month in 2012. The number of overnight stays in August 2013 was 34,370, up by 4,053 (+13.4%) compared to the corresponding month in 2012. The average length of the stay in August 2013 was 2.2 days (2.1 days in August 2012).

The index of net use of accommodation places in the county in August 2013 was 31.1% (compared to 30.9% in August 2012). The country recorded a rate of 38.2% (compared to 38.6% in August 2012).

Since the beginning of the year until August, the Alba tourism facilities of minimum 10 seats, a number of 69,942 tourists were accommodated, most in hotels (41.4%), followed by rural locations (25.4% of total), recording an increase of 7.2% compared to the 1.01-31.08.2012. The number of nights spent by tourists in the county tourism establishments (at least 10 bed places), recorded in the first eight months of 2013 was 148,331, 8.3% higher than during the corresponding period in 2012. The average length of the stay in this period was 2.1 days (2.1 days in the same period in 2012).

According to statistics, in July, 12,484 tourists visited Alba County. By comparison, during the previous month, 9,927 visitors were registered, and in July last year, 12,227 guests. During the first seven months of 2013, Alba tourism facilities accommodated 54,625 tourists, most of them in hotels, 7.8% more than during the same period in 2012.

### **1.1. Research objectives**

Overall objectives:

- O1. Analysis of the Alba County tourism facilities' notoriety
- O2. Analysis of the accommodation units under investigated
- O3. Measurement and evaluation of the tourism facilities' promotion
- O4. Analysis of the tourism traffic
- O5. Shaping the socio-demographic profile of the surveyed tourism services customers

### **1.2. Specific objectives:**

O1:

O1.1 Study on the reputation of tourism facilities

O2:

O2.1 Analysis of the housing units on comfort

O2.2 Analysis of the use of the investigated accommodation

O2.3 Analysis of the staff structure

- O2.4 Analysis of the services/facilities provided to tourists
- O2.5 Identifying the factors influencing the tourism activities
- O3.
- O3.1 Analysis of the communication techniques used by the tourism facilities
- O3.2 Identifying the key media channels used
- O4.
- O4.1 Analysis of the average stay length
- O4.2 Analysis of the tourism traffic
- O5.
- O5.1 Shaping the tourists' socio-demographic profile
- O5.2 Analysis of the tourists' typology
- O5.3 Analysis of tourists regarding the main form of tourism they practice during their stay.

### **1.3. Research methodology**

In order to achieve the objectives, the survey selective research was used, offering the study recipients the opportunity to identify solutions for tourism development in the county of Alba and to improve the existing opportunities. In conducting this research, we also plan to offer a high degree of data accuracy, relevance and representativeness.

The survey was conducted based on a questionnaire delivered by interviewers to a representative sample of respondents.

The sampling frame – the survey base was determined by the research team through the analysis conducted on the existing accommodation, tourism products, tourism potential, tourism traffic and following the analysis of the secondary sources of information on tourism in Alba County.

The observation unit is made up of accommodation structures within the micro-tourism regions under investigation.

The persons who answered the questionnaire represented the survey unit, namely:

- People who manage the accommodation structure
- Accommodation structure's employees
- People holding the accommodation structure

The research conducted is a quantitative research.

Communication with the investigated unit: interviews based on a questionnaire administered by the operators, and the technique used was the structured interview. The questionnaire was presented to all subjects in the same order and with the same formulation. The type of survey used is probabilistic. The sampling is random, without restrictions.

The research was conducted in all the established tourism micro-regions, endeavouring an accurate representation of the sampling units. The sample included accommodation units of Alba County tourism micro-regions. Data were collected via survey questionnaire administered to representatives of these entities.

## **2. RESULTS**

Following the data analysis and interpretation, we can define:

### **2.1. Location**

Regarding the location of the housing units surveyed in this study, it can be stated that they are placed in Alba Iulia, Rimetea, Poarta Raiului, Luncile Prigoanei, Blaj, Sebeş, Aiud, Cugir, Arieşeni, Gârda de Sus, Albac.

### **2.2. Main competitors:**

Accommodation units' competitors are considered to be all the establishments offering accommodation regardless of their or the responding units' number of stars/daisies, and, as few of them mentioned, all "the entities that provide accommodation under the counter".

### **2.3. Sample structure by the type of accommodation establishments**

Out of the accommodation units surveyed: 39.5% are rural pensions, 23.7% are farmhouses, in equal rates of 13.2% are urban hotels and guesthouses, 5.3% villas and 2.6% cottages and motels.

The main legal form of the investigated units was Limited Liability Companies (LLC), followed by Self-Employed Persons (SEP). Regarding their distribution on the accommodation establishments, the SEP organizational form was predominant for pensions.

### **2.4. Sample structure by the accommodation units' level of comfort**

In terms of their comfort, nearly half of them (44.7%) fall into the category of two stars/daisies, 34.2% are three stars/daisies, 15.8% are four stars/daisies and 5.3% are currently being classified.

### **2.5. Aspects of accommodation activity**

After analyzing the data provided by the accommodation units on their accommodation capacity by years since 2010, and taking into account that in 2010, some accommodation units were not working yet, the following results were obtained:



**Table 2: Evolution of the accommodation capacity within the investigated accommodation units**

No.	Year	Valid percent	Minimum capacity	Maximum capacity	Average
1.	2010	78,9%	4 beds	42 beds	18,27 beds
2.	2011	84,2%	4 beds	45 beds	18,47 beds
3.	2012	84,2%	4 beds	45 beds	18,47 beds
4.	2013	97,4%	4 beds	90 beds	21,32 beds
5.	2014	94,7%	4 beds	96 beds	21,50 beds

From the above table it can be seen that in the sample studied, there is an upward trend of accommodations. Thus, although the minimum accommodation capacity remains unchanged during the four years studied, the units' maximum accommodation capacity registers an upward trend, including in 2014 when it is reported only as a prediction.

**Table 3: Types of rooms in the investigated accommodation units**

No.	Room type	% units	Minimum	Maximum	Average
1.	Single	26,3%	0	33	1,32
2.	Double/Single	13,2%	0	10	0,74
3.	Double	97,4%	0	25	7,84
4.	Apartment	34,2%	0	6	0,76
5.	Other	15,8%	0	3	0,34

In terms of room types and number of rooms owned by the accommodation establishments listed, as can be seen from the above table, we can mention the following:

- Almost all units have at least one double;
- 34.2% of the units have at least one apartment;
- 26.3% of the units have at least one single room;
- 15.6% of the units have at least one other room;
- 13.2% of the units offer double rooms for single use;
- The maximum number of rooms for single rooms is 33, the double occupied for single is 10, 25 for double rooms, 6 for apartments, and 3for other types of rooms.

Table 4: Occupation depending on season

Summer occupation			Winter occupation				
	%	Frequency	Percent		%	Frequency	Percent
Valid	10	1	2.6	Valid	0	6	15.8
	15	1	2.6		5	3	7.9
	20	1	2.6		10	6	15.8
	25	1	2.6		20	3	7.9
	30	3	7.9		30	4	10.5
	40	3	7.9		40	1	2.6
Valid	50	9	23.7	Valid	50	7	18.4
	60	7	18.4		60	4	10.5
	70	3	7.9		70	1	2.6
	80	3	7.9		80	1	2.6
	90	6	15.8		100	2	5.3
	<b>Total</b>		<b>38</b>		<b>100.0</b>	<b>Total</b>	

The above analysis and the histogram show that accommodation occupancy is higher during the hot season than in winter. This follows both from the percentages provided by the units, and from the fact that in summer, the minimum occupancy is 10%, while in winter it drops to 0%.

Only eight units have over 60% occupancy during winter. Most analyzed units operate more intensely mainly in the summer months.

While the average occupancy within the sample during summer is 56.32%, this winter is around 32.50%.

It can be seen that, in general, the use is much lower during the winter months. Only six accommodation units have over 60% occupancy in winter. Most of the units surveyed operate in the summer months.

## 2.6. Units' organization

The number of employees varies from one for pensions to 25 for hotels. These units' feature is the low number of staff especially in two-daisy hostels.

Analyzing the workers distribution by trades, one may observe the lack of staff mostly for pensions. Almost 60% of the analyzed units do not have a dedicated receptionist.

Over 26% of the investigated units have two employed waiters and 42% of the units do not have house cleaner staff.

**Table 5: Annual average number of employees in the investigated accommodation units**

No.	Year	Percent	Minimum	Maximum	Average
1.	2010	55,3%	1 employee	20 employees	7,10
2.	2011	55,3%	1 employee	20 employees	7,10
3.	2012	55,3%	1 employee	25 employees	7,35
4.	2013	55,3%	1 employee	25 employees	7,35
5.	2014	55,3%	1 employee	25 employees	7,35

From the above table, it can be seen that the sampled accommodation units have from at least one employee to a maximum of 25 employees. If drawing a parallel between the evolution of the units' accommodation capacity and the evolution of the number of employees, one can easily see a resemblance, except that the evolution of the number of employees is similar, but not commensurate with the evolution of the accommodation capacity.

As it can be seen, the evolution is upward, the number of employees increased from 152 in 2010 to 206 in 2013.

It can therefore be concluded that the tourism industry can be a welfare growth pole through its potential to create new jobs.

Regarding the number of employees according to job positions, it can be seen that the largest share within the accommodation units have the waiters, followed by house cleaners, managers, cooks, receptionists, cleaners and unskilled employees. The waiters and the cooks register the maximum number.

54% of the staff in the surveyed units speaks English and 18% French. All Rimetea accommodation establishments have staff speaking Hungarian (13%), Italian (9%), German (5%) and Spanish (1%).

When asked about the difficulties faced in finding qualified / specialized staff in the area, **18.4%** of the accommodation units stated that they meet difficulties in finding and hiring **cooks**. Areas where specialized personnel are lacking are mainly **RIMETEA, GARDA** and **CUGIR**.

## 2.7. Type of services provided

It can be seen that, in addition to accommodation services, accommodation units in Alba County also provide parking (84.2%), restaurant and internet (65.8%), playgrounds for children (44.7%), conference rooms (36.8%), sports, sauna (21.1%), fitness (18.4%), swimming pool (5.3%) and other (10.5%). For other types of services were mentioned rooms for table tennis and billiards.

Table 6: Services offered by the accommodation establishments

No.	Service type	Percent
1.	Accommodation	100%
2.	Restaurant	65,8%
3.	Conference rooms	36,8%
4.	Parking	84,2%
5.	Internet	65,8%
6.	Cure base	2,6%
7.	Fitness	18,4%
8.	Sports	21,1%
9.	Playground for children	44,7%
10.	Sauna	21,1%
11.	Pool	5,3%
12.	Other	10,5%

## 2.8. Business motivation

More than half of the representatives of the investigated housing units (52.6%) believe that tourism resources were the main reason for deciding to conduct this type of business. In the hostels in Rimetea and Gârda, 13.2% of the respondent units said that their main goal was to increase their income, while a similar percentage stated they wanted to conduct a similar business, invoking the existence of a long previous experience. The remaining 18.4% stated that they were motivated by the desire to develop the current business.

## 2.9. Factors influencing the accommodation establishment's activity

In terms of accommodation establishments, the factors **largely** affecting are: *poor recovery of tourism resources* 31.6%; *poor development of the general infrastructure* 44.7%; *laws and bureaucracy* 36.8%; *lack of financial resources* 34.2%; *insufficient promotion means* 23.7%.

It is noteworthy that *the lack of qualified personnel* is considered as influencing *very little* (39.5%) the pensions' business.

## 2.10. Aspects influencing the accommodation establishment's development

In terms of the issues that influence the development of a tourism unit, we can mention the following:

- Recreational opportunities for adults and children influence the development of a tourism unit to an **average extent** of 31.6%;
- Increasing cooperation between accommodation units, operators, specialized organizations, **largely** influences the development of the tourism unit 26.3%;
- Helping investors **greatly** influences the development of the tourism unit 36.8%;
- Cooperation for the promotion of tourism **heavily** influences the tourism unit's development 31.6%;

- Increasing the quality of local products and services **heavily** influences the development of the tourism unit 36.8%;
- Setting up business consulting and infrastructure centres **greatly** influences the development of tourism unit 26.3%;
- The introduction of modern technology **greatly** affects the development of the tourism unit 23.7%;
- Courses and trainings **greatly and heavily** influence the development of the tourism unit 26.3%;
- Souvenirs and traditional products offer **greatly and heavily** influence the development of tourism 23.7%;
- The existence of specific services such as financial and banking influences the development of the tourism unit to an **average and large extent** 26.3%;

### 2.11. Distribution channels used

Most of the analysed accommodation units use the direct negotiation with clients (52.6%), 23.7% of the units use the tourism agencies as their main means of services distribution, while 15.8% say they use both the services of travel agencies and direct negotiation and contracts with the unit's customers.

### 2.12. Popular products on the local market

Over 34.2% of the respondents believe that traditional products are the most popular among tourists, 23.7% claim that tourists prefer hotels and guesthouses' products, 10.5% support the traditional and handicraft products, while only 7.9 % think that souvenirs are valued on the local market.

Table 7: Products appreciated on the local market

Which do you think are the products popular in the local market?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Hotels and pensions products	9	23.7	25.7	25.7
	Traditional	13	34.2	37.1	62.9
	Souvenirs	3	7.9	8.6	71.4
	Handicraft products	2	5.3	5.7	77.1
	Traditional and handicraft	4	10.5	11.4	88.6
	Guesthouses' and the traditional products	2	5.3	5.7	94.3
	ALL	2	5.3	5.7	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>92.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

### 2.13. Information on tourists

Most Romanian tourists accommodated in the analyzed units come from BUCHAREST, CLUJ, TIMIȘ, BIHOR, ARAD, IAȘI, SIBIU. The information provided by the travel service providers lead to the conclusion that the foreign tourists staying in accommodation units in the county are mainly from HUNGARY, GERMANY, FRANCE, ITALY, AUSTRIA, ISRAEL, SPAIN, POLAND.

If in 2010, Romanian tourists' average stay was two days. From 2011, it increased to three days. The minimum stay decreased from two days to one day, but the maximum stay increased to four days from five, resulting in an average of 3 days. In 2013, the average is 3 days with a minimum of 2 days and a maximum of five.

For foreign tourists, the minimum stay reduced from two days to one, while the maximum remained the same. This is also why foreign tourists' average stay was reduced from three to 2 days since 2012.

### 2.14. Tourists' typology

Looking on the average in the sample studied, we may conclude that the main type of tourists staying in the analyzed accommodation units are mostly *families on vacation, weekend vacationers or people in transit*.

Table 8:Types of tourists

No.	Type	Min	Max	Average
1.	Businessmen	0	90	9,21
2.	People in transit	0	80	13,11
3.	Families spending vacation	0	100	21,16
4.	Tourists during weekend	0	100	18,87
5.	Organized groups	0	50	4,42
6.	Unorganized groups	0	30	3,95
7.	Other	0	10	0,26

### 2.15. Tourism practiced

No.	Category	Min	Max	Average
1.	Rest and leisure tourism	0	100	20,53
2.	Transit tourism	0	70	14,03
3.	Business tourism	0	90	8,95
4.	Week-end tourism	0	100	16,76
5.	Cultural / religious tourism	0	5	0,32
6.	Hydro phatic and medical tourism	0	100	3,55
7.	Rural tourism and agro-tourism	0	80	4,66
8.	Adventure tourism	0	30	1,97
9.	Gastronomic tourism	0	50	1,71

The main form of tourism practiced by tourists is recreation and rest tourism, followed by the weekend and transit tourism.

#### **2.16. County objectives recommended by housing units' representatives**

When asked "What sights would you recommend tourists who want to visit Alba County?", the accommodation units' representatives recalled (in order of appearance): Alba Carolina Fortress, Scărișoara Glacier, Transalpina, Ruginoasa Abyss, Avram Iancu Memorial House, Colțești Fortress, Rîmeț Gorge, Heaven's Gate, Rîmeț Monastery, Vîrtop Glacier, the Huda of Papara Cave, High and Low Curcubăta, Detunatele, Rapa Rosie, Roman Galleries, Oașa Monastery, Valisoara Gorge, Virciorog Waterfall,

#### **2.17. Collaboration with specialized associations and travel agencies**

Only 36% of the tourism units are part of specialized associations. All these are part of ANTREC, but the interviewees do not see this association as having a major benefit. Only 22% of the investigated units are included in tourism tours and 63% of units do not work with travel agents. Pensions in Rimetea work directly with agencies in Hungary.

### **3. CONCLUSIONS**

Conclusions drawn from the survey conducted in the accommodation units:

- during 2010 – 2013, there was an increase of the average accommodation capacity offered by units, from an average of 18 seats to an average of 21 seats
- housing units' occupancy is higher in summer than in winter
- the small number of employees, especially in hostels, the lack of receptionists or maids; there is a relatively small proportion of staff speaking another language than English; there have been mentioned difficulties in hiring qualified chefs
- there are relatively few accommodation units that offer additional services; less than half provide conference rooms, gyms or children playgrounds
- the poor development of the general infrastructure is seen as the most important influencing factor
- supporting investors and cooperation for tourism promotion are valued as the main factors affecting the development of the investigated housing units
- the main way of services distribution is the direct one, through direct negotiation with clients; only 23% of the investigated accommodation establishments relies on the intermediation of travel agencies
- tourists greatly appreciate the traditional products
- the average length of Romanian and foreign tourists' stay is 2 to 3 days
- the main type of tourists staying in the analyzed accommodation units are mostly families on vacation, weekend vacationers or people in transit
- the main form of tourism practiced by tourists is the recreation and rest tourism, followed by the weekend and the transit tourism

- only 22% of the investigated units are included in tourism tours and 63% of units do not work with travel agencies.

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