Book review**NEW PERSPECTIVES AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES OF CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN TOURISM****Smaranda Cosma***Universitatea Babeş-Bolyai, Cluj-Napoca, România***Please cite this article as:**

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At present, world has become an open space. Tourism is a global industry, par excellence, with an expanding market where the players resize forces while considering new trends. Tourism industry is seen as one of the most profitable and dynamic industries at world level. A wide and heterogeneous range of stakeholders revolve around it. Tourism industry decisively puts its stamp on world economy, providing 319 million jobs (one out of ten) and generating 10.4% of the global GDP (WTTC, 2020). Subjected to both market laws demands and constraints, defined by deep complexity and dominated by competition, tourism industry undergoes a permanent, complex and intense process of extension, enrichment and diversification. The high-speed and synergic interaction between technology and tourism has brought fundamental changes in industry and in our perceptions regarding its nature.

In the context of an extremely dynamic and complex world, the book entitled *New Trends and Opportunities for Central and Eastern European Tourism* brings forward the opportunities set up by the new touristic markets. The field in question is not only very up-to-date, but it also induces the interest of both theorists and practitioners related to tourism industry. Starting from the belief the tourism science cannot be understood and even more, cannot be learnt otherwise than by being permanently concerned to know and adapt to the novelties of the field, the authors focus upon concepts and scientifically-based situations, upon good practice instances and representative case studies to study in-depth the theoretical and applicative side of tourism in Central and Eastern Europe.

The book is organized in **15 chapters**, each of these chapters representing recent research made by academic community members showing various images of tourism phenomenon as it occurs in Central and Eastern Europe. The structure of this work highlights the means through which tourism contributes to founding strategic decisions in a coherent, effective and final economic and social manner. Through the topic here chosen, the editor, Prof. dr Puiu Nistoreanu, together with the authors set up the tourism multidimensional character, the specificity and particularities of a wide range of methods, techniques and instruments validated by present-day economic practice. Of special importance is also the

diversity of the cases under investigation that can become a rich source of information able to provide ideas, to inspire and to incite students and practitioners in tourism to be creative and original, always focusing upon specific objectives according to the potential available in a special circumstance.

Chapter 1, named *Aspects of the Tourist Movement in Eastern European Countries* is written by Ana Mihaela Pădurean from the Faculty of Business and Tourism, Bucharest University of Economic Studies. The authors begins with a presentation of the most important characteristics of the countries from Central and Eastern Europe and then makes a critical analysis of the main touristic indices in various countries open to travellers after 1990, and underlines the role played by these indices to have a successful tourist destination. In order to increase tourist attraction, the author concludes with the idea that Romania and Moldova should develop their transport infrastructure, Slovakia should become more sustainable, while Moldova, Ukraine, Latvia and Lithuania should improve their natural and cultural resources.

Paweł Piotr Piotrowski, Małgorzata Kieźel and Joanna Wiechoczek, a group of authors working in the University of Economics in Katowice, Poland, wrote **the 2nd chapter** called *Socialist Architecture: Dissonant Heritage of CEE in the Concept of Sustainable Tourism Development* underlining the issue of socialist architecture, typical of Central and Eastern European countries. The architecture inherited from the Communist times represents both a common and important heritage. The minimalist architectural style, the buildings perceived today as ugly and unfitting for traditional centers should be kept and preserved and, through sustainable techniques, can be transformed into areas with distinct

faces. Such an example is Berlin (Germany). The cities and towns of former Communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe can be turned into destinations of interest due to their socialist architecture. The premises making socialist architecture go in agreement with the concept of dissonant inheritance as well as the relationships between socialist architecture and the concept of sustainable development are regarded as solutions for differently placing such destinations on the tourist map of the world.

Andreea Fortuna Șchiopu from the Bucharest University of Economic Studies presents in **the 3rd chapter**, *Tourism and Hospitality Young Workforce: The Challenge of Acquiring Foreign Language Skills*, the way in which the young professionals from the tourism and hospitality industry in Romania use foreign languages as an instrument to communicate, to stimulate the activities in this sector and to attract tourists. Using qualitative and quantitative research methods, the author concentrates the study on exotic languages. The author highlights the importance and value of possessing good foreign language skills, when working in tourism. The research performed in several travel agencies in Romania with the aim of analysing the desire of the young professionals to learn and acquire foreign languages in order to better their communication with tourists originating from countries where English is not spoken has pointed out that a proper development of the Romanian tourism cannot be made without young labour force which know several foreign languages.

In **Chapter 4**, *Sustainable Tourism Development in the Black Sea Coastal Areas: A Research on Romanian Tourists and Tourism Operators*, the authors are Daniel Bulin, Claudia-Elena Țuclea, from the Bucharest University of Economic Studies and Robert-Ionuț Dobre from the Romanian University they point out the dimensions of tourism sustainable development in the coastal areas of the Black Sea. The study considers both the viewpoint of the tourists and that of travel organizations, underlines the value of the institutional and technological component for both parties. Directions and potential strategies are offered for the sustainable development of tourism in the coastal areas of the Black Sea.

Mihail Ovidiu Tanase from the Bucharest University of Economic Studies together with Liliana Nicodim from the Ovidius University of Constanța make in the **Chapter 5** an analysis of the mountain related tourism in various destinations in Eastern Europe, from the Carpathian Mountains, The Dinaric Alps and the Balkan Mountains in the chapter called *Mountain Tourism at the Beginning of the 21st Century*. It is evident that setting up and developing specific strategies to increase visibility and international attractiveness in mountain areas is necessary as mountains represent more than a quarter of the earth's surface. The main ski resorts, varied sports and entertaining activities in the mountain destination of Central and Eastern Europe dedicated to mountain lovers are presented and examples of good practices for developing mountain tourism in Romania are included.

In **Chapter 6**, *The Chinese Incoming Segment: Opportunity for the Central and Eastern European Market*, Ana Maria Nica (Bucharest University of Economic Studies), underlines the more and more important role played by Chinese tourists who are willing to see sights and spend money in destinations including those in Central and Eastern Europe for the world travel organizations. While investigating touristic flows, tourists' expenses and the expectations of the Chinese tourists when they choose an emerging destination, the author comes to the conclusion that Romania could be included among the destinations visited by the Chinese tourists. Good practices already implemented in several countries in the region are identified and set forth. These practices were adapted to the local requirements and they

benefit from the successful implementation of a strategy aiming at attracting a larger flow of tourists.

Chapter 7 is allotted to the debate on and presentation of new trends and forms belonging to the current called *slow movement*. Gheorghe Georgica the Bucharest University of Economic Studies defines its main features, the impact upon tourism industry, advantages and disadvantages and the relationships with other derived notions and concepts such as: *slow food, slow tourism, slow money, slow city, slow parenting, slow media, slow travel etc.*, which more and more frequently occur in the vocabulary of the international tourist. New main directions in which *slow movement* can evolve are also suggested and specific strategies to be implemented by tourism organizations, local administration or NGO's are listed. All of these play a major role in tourism and hospitality as they became selection criteria for a travel destination.

In **Chapter 8** called *Economic and Social Features of MICE Industry Development and Business Tourism*, Manuela Liliana Mureșan from the Bucharest University of Economic Studies focuses on business tourism and MICE industry (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, Exhibitions/ Events), a segment in full swing in Eastern European countries and also bearing a contribution to increasing related-communities economies. The success examples from Europe and United States of America confirm this solution used for the regeneration of urban centers and quality improvement in services. The aim of this chapter lies in investigating upon the social and economic implications generated by business tourism and MICE industry, the potential to capitalize on it and the dynamics of the field and the economic impact upon the investments in tourism infrastructure. The careful and sophisticated analysis is added with suggestions and recommendations for the decision makers in the domain.

In the **Chapter 9**, *Romania: A Destination for Slow Seekers*, Liliana Nicodim from the Ovidius University of Constanța, together with the professor Puiu Nistoreanu bring once again arguments and proofs in favour of strengthening the benefits of the *slow movement* in Romania and the rest of the world for tourism development. The authors suggest that the focus upon the going-back-in-time philosophy and the encouragement of the interest of the parties involved to cooperate to improve touristic services are very significant. The offer of various organizations that supply travel services should be based upon on three piles: good, clean and correct. The chapter also includes examples of good practices that could be turned into action plans in a national strategy that aims to promoting this special kind of tourism to attract and maintain tourists in Romania.

Chapter 10, *Changes in Rural Tourism: What's New?* written by Daniel Avram from the Bucharest University of Economic Studies focuses on rural tourism. Its Romanian potential is reiterated, the numerous natural and anthropogenic resources are highlighted, the uniqueness of the cultural heritage is underlined, to conclude with the idea that Romania could hold an upmarket position among European countries which provide rural tourism venues. Being aware of the benefits of the multiplying effect of internal and international travel flows, one could encourage the occurrence of new rural venues in Romania by defining a national strategy that puts to work the positive potential development of rural tourism while also supporting an increase in life and civilization standard levels.

In the 11th chapter named *Innovative Solutions for Sustainable Development of Rural Tourism in Central and Eastern European Areas: Types of Innovation in Tourism and Hospitality*, the authors Adina Letitia Negrusa and Valentin Toader from the Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca debate the concepts of sustainable development, sustainable tourism and sustainability in the context of rural tourism. The emphasis is put on product and process innovation and the writers expertly identify pertinent answers to the question *How do companies innovate?*. Beginning with various successful approaches for the innovation in rural tourism (developing customized products, renovating properties, developing business competences, implementing IT solutions, involving in social responsibility actions, using networks and the cooperative behaviour of the participants to supply tourist services) as identified in specialist literature, the authors present then the best practices to be found in developed countries and in emerging markets as well, underlining the way in which the innovation process contributes to the sustainable development of rural tourism.

In **Chapter 12**, *Romanian Newly-Nominated WHS and Current Tourism Development in the Associated Rural Localities*, Cornelia Pop and Cristina Balint the Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca make an analysis of the role and value of naturally protected areas nominated as world heritage sites and as a major factor to increase the attractiveness, visibility and prestige of tourist destinations. There are identified the characteristics, advantages and importance of such world heritage sites for the development of Romanian tourism, with a special emphasis on those situated in the rural environment. These destinations become ever more important for the international tourists wishing to visit and explore them. In a manner in which the authors have taught the readers, they draw the attention in an objective and constructive critical spirit, of the long way to pass before turning destinations into sustainable and attractive, but also on the opportunity of converting rural areas into attractive rural venues, focused upon the natural patrimony they possess and a proper management applied to the venue, a management that should be related to the special status of the rural destinations in question.

In **Chapter 13** entitled *Rural Tourism and Its Dimension: A Case of Transylvania, Romania*, Monica Maria Coroş from the Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca identifies the role and perspectives of rural tourism in one of the most fascinating destinations from Romania, namely Transylvania. The chapter starts with the definition of the concepts typical for rural tourism and the identification of its elements, putting a stress on the rural offer and demand. Rural tourism continues to face many challenges related to infrastructure, not enough services and poorly coordinated promotion. However, there are rural communities which managed to find proper solutions to attract internal and international tourists. The recommendations sustain the going on developing of rural tourism in the multicultural places from Transylvania and the elaboration of promotion strategies that set forward from successful examples, such as Mărginimea Sibiului, Sâncraiu, Şirnea and the entire area of Bran-Fundata-Moieciu, Viscri and the Saxon heritage, the UNESCO patrimony sites, which intelligently valorised the diverse and picturesque landscapes, the nature and naturally preserved sites, with their tasty food and drinks and the facilities typical of responsible tourism as well.

Chapter 14, *Typical Aspects of the Traditional Food Behavior Within the Romanian Rural Environment*, prepared by a group of researchers from the Bucharest University of Economic Studies (Puiu Nistoreanu, Bogdan Gabriel Nistoreanu) and from the Ovidius

University of Constanța (Liliana Nicodim) awakens and maintains the interest related to traditional gastronomy, the particular characteristics of various geographical areas in Romania, mainly rural, concerning food behaviour. Considering the troubled history of the Romanian people, the varied geographical conditions and the resources available, the living manner and the food related habits in Romania are interesting identified for different periods in time. The presumption: *the culture of a people can be known through the open window of its kitchen* is explained, analysed and highlighted, emphasis being put on the roots of the Romanian cuisine and culinary art, on its connections with other cultures and the their major influences along the history.

In the **Chapter 15** entitled *The Impact of Rural Tourism on Wellbeing: Romania's Case*, Alina Cerasela Avram from the Bucharest University of Economic Studies aims at strengthening the impact of rural tourism upon wellbeing, as a new form of tourism, while defining its main features, advantages and disadvantages, as well as its present-day evolution in Romania and the European Union. Her approach considers the new profile of the tourists and the dynamics of tourist industry in Europe and encompasses means of valorising the rural tourism resources by integrating the impressive potential of SPA and health in the activities specific to rural wellness tourism. This model was developed and interpreted successfully in Northern Europe, Austria, Switzerland, Iceland and Canada, being seen as a competitive alternative for developing touristic products and repositioning Romania as a touristic destination.

Defined by current features, pragmatism, discernment and scientific accuracy, the volume *New Trends and Opportunities for Central and Eastern European Tourism*, elaborated under the careful guidance of university professor Puiu Nistoreanu, Ph.D., from the Faculty of Business and Tourism, Bucharest University of Economic Studies constitutes a contribution full of value and modernity to the literature dedicated to tourism in Europe. The work offers generously to all those interested, higher education students in economics or other specialties, to experts in tourist organizations a true and useful theoretical and practical guidebook, dedicated to orient and run high performance activities in tourism.

Through a well-documented and profound content, the book *New Trends and Opportunities for Central and Eastern European Tourism* comes to give answers to the present-day trends, to add to and update the literature dedicated to the phenomenon of European tourism. Even if European publication field in tourism is consistent, Professor Puiu Nistoreanu, helped by a team of Romanian and foreign researches, creates an exceptional material, objective and sometimes critical. The text incorporated new instances and topics of reflection for the readers. The book contributes to changing mentalities among readers, as at present, this is one of the most complete and current bibliographical source for this field.

We think this work is a landmark in specialist European offer and we recommend it to all those wishing to be informed and to activate in the domain of tourism. Through its topics and its content, the publication is addressed to a large group of readers, from theorists, B.Sc. and M.Sc. students learning tourism to practitioners in the sphere of tourism. As one of them, I end by congratulating the team of authors for their achievement and by inviting the public to the reading.

The Editor

Puiu Nistoreanu is a university professor, Ph.D, working in the Department of Tourism and Geography of the Faculty of Business and Tourism, Bucharest University of Economic Studies, and Ph.D. supervisor in the Doctoral school of Business Administration from the same university. High level specialist in business administration in tourism services, essay writer and journalist, professor Puiu Nistoreanu is the author of 40 books, over 200 specialist studies and articles, over 100 essays published in Romania and abroad and 20 research contracts.

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