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Silk Road Local Culture – SILC

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**Activity A.T1.1: Study on the cultural and tourism value of the
Silk Road**

**Deliverable D.T1.1.1: GROWTH POTENTIAL OF THE
LOCAL SILK ROAD CULTURES**

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D.T1.1.3. GROWTH POTENTIAL OF THE SILK ROAD CULTURES

1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND – REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1.1. Interregional cooperation and tourism development

1.1.1. Interregional cooperation

After the collapse of the Eastern Bloc and the Soviet Union, the unification of the structural formation of the Eurasian states due to globalization processes and developments in transport and communication technologies has led to the fact that states have started to create a closer relationship¹. In this case, such a trend is not a fashion statement but a critical need in the development of bilateral and multilateral relations in all areas, with the goal of enhancing the welfare of the regional states and their citizens. So, one of the priorities of these states, for the development of their economies and the welfare of their populations, is to expand cooperation within the regions in question and also between them. This being so, an important component in this type of cooperation is transport and communication corridors. Developed infrastructure can increase economic ties between the countries and have positive effects on trade between them, thereby increasing the revenues of states due to the export of goods and services, and also from transit fees for their transportation.

What is important for the Central Asian, South Caucasus and Black Sea region countries is their desire and intention to actively participate in transportation activities in the Eurasian region. The favorable geographical location of these states, given good co-ordination and the participation of all stakeholders, may contribute to success in attracting a certain flow of transportation of goods and services through their territories.

¹ Shirin Akiner, Rovshan Ibrahimov, Ariz Huseynov, "INTERREGIONAL COOPERATION IN EURASIA. TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS PROJECTS AS AN ACCELERATOR OF INTEGRATION WITHIN AND BETWEEN THE BLACK SEA REGION, THE SOUTH CAUCASUS AND THE CENTRAL ASIA", *Center for Strategic Studies*, Special Double Issue / Volume 9-10, Baku, 2013, p. 9-10, Source: https://www.academia.edu/8005685/Interregional_Cooperation_in_Eurasia_Transport_and_Logistics_Projects_as_an_Accelerator_of_Integration_Within_and_Between_the_Black_Sea_Region_the_South_Caucasus_and_the_Central_Asia

In consequence of this, there is a process in order to create the necessary transport infrastructure in all three regions. This process is ongoing and carries on intensifying and evolving as demanded by practical needs. This process is more or less parallel across all three regions, as is the saturation and the diversification of transport infrastructure in the region to create a corridor connecting these regions with each other and with the rest of the Eurasian space. Within this, there are projects that are inter-regional and cover all of this geographical area and its individual units.

The last decades of the 20th century were a time of rapid and dramatic change². The sudden collapse of the Soviet Union and the almost equally unexpected rise of China as an economic power house created a new strategic landscape. Long-standing partnerships and alliances disintegrated almost overnight. This was disorienting, and in some cases caused real anxiety and distress. However, it also opened the way for innovative approaches, innovative thinking. The conceptual as well as the practical challenge was to devise a new framework within which to create channels and mechanisms for interaction and cooperation that would accelerate economic development, and widen the sphere of international relations. It was against this background of flux that an idea from the distant past began to resonate with present concerns.

Within the central Eurasian region – the Black Sea, the Caspian basin and Central Asia – as well as in the encircling outer rim of countries in the Far East, South Asia, Middle East and Europe, there was a wave of enthusiasm for a revival of the ancient ‘Silk Roads’.

The idea was first articulated by the UNESCO project ‘Integral Study of the Silk Roads: Routes of Dialogue’ (1988-1997). It was later adopted as a label for diplomatic initiatives, as for example, Japanese Prime Minister Hashimoto’s ‘Silk Road Diplomacy’ (1997), and the ‘Silk Road Strategy Act of 1999’ of the United States. Soon, there was a veritable explosion of ‘Silk Road’ ventures, including the series of ‘International Silk Road Conferences’, (launched by the International Road Federation in Ashgabat in 1998), the ‘Silk Road Businessmen’s Summit’ (first meeting in Trabzon, October 2008) and the ‘Silk Road Ministers’ Summit’, under the auspices of the UN World Tourism Organization (first meeting in Berlin, March 2011). The use (and over-

² Ibidem, pp. 11-12.

use) of the term might have robbed it of content, reducing it to a mere marketing tag. Yet there was, and still is, a serious rationale. The 'Silk Roads' offers an alternative geographic configuration, countering the conventional geo-political divisions of the modern world with an older set of linkages.

The mesh of trade routes that for centuries crisscrossed the Eurasian continent yielded commercial benefits, but they also fostered a lively cross-cultural fertilization. These exchanges – the dialogue between different peoples – had stimulated economic growth, encouraged technical and artistic innovation and provided a channel for diplomatic exchanges. Today, the idea of a re-vitalized 'Silk Roads' is seductive, suggesting that 'all' that is needed is to reconnect distant parts of the world is merely to retrace old pathways. This is based on a fundamental misconception of the nature of the ancient trade routes. Unlike today's transport corridors, these routes functioned with a minimum of infrastructure. Thus, merchants and caravans were swiftly able to change course in response to local conditions – to avoid trouble spots (obstructions such as storms, bandits or epidemics), or to hasten to destinations where markets were reportedly flush with the proceeds of rich harvests or recent cargoes of exotic wares. These shifts in itinerary were sometimes brief, but in other cases they became entrenched and superseded previous routes.

In our world, trade, and the transport that makes it possible, is underpinned by sophisticated technology and a monumental network of infrastructure. This in turn is the product of long-term planning and investment. In these conditions, to envisage a literal re-creation of the past is indeed a fantasy. However, the concept of the 'Silk Roads' does have relevance as a metaphor for a new phase of trans-Eurasian connectivity – a twenty-first century web of multi-layered connections and intersections. It is not 'the property' of any particular state, ideological bloc or organization. Equally, it cannot be constrained to operate within tightly defined economic-geographic boundaries.

In 2004, UNWTO inaugurated the Silk Road Initiative (SRI), an inter-regional project, funded by UNDP, to promote regional cooperation in tourism, trade and investment. Within the framework of the SRI, several international events have been organized

devoted to local issues, as well as to inter-regional challenges and opportunities for developing responsible tourism³.

Financial assistance for the construction and rehabilitation of transport infrastructure in the Central Asian region has been provided by a number of multilateral institutions, including the Eurasian Development Bank (EDB)⁴, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), European Union, Islamic Development Bank (IDB), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the World Bank. The lead institution is the Asian Development Bank, largely through the vehicle of the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Program. Launched by the ADB in 1997, CAREC focuses on financing and coordinating infrastructure projects, and on improving the legal and policy environment in such areas as transport, trade facilitation and energy. In March 2000, the CAREC Unit (CARECU) was selected as the Program Secretariat for an alliance of multilateral development partners (e.g. World Bank, IDB and JICA) that were engaged in schemes to promote economic cooperation in Central Asia. In consultation with national governments, CAREC produced a comprehensive Transport and Trade Facilitation Strategy for Central Asia for the period 2008-2017. By this time, CAREC membership comprised the five Central Asian states, also Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, China and Pakistan⁵. The strategic goal is to 'accelerate economic growth, poverty reduction, and efficient movement of people and goods' across the CAREC region by upgrading transport corridors and simplifying and harmonizing the regulations governing cross-border trade. Six key routes were selected, based on criteria such as current traffic volumes and future prospects for growth; also, economic and financial sustainability of infrastructure, management, and technology. This provides a useful template for development, highlighting the vital arterial connections.

³ Ibidem, p. 26.

⁴ The Eurasian Development Bank (EDB) was established by the Russian Federation and the Republic of Kazakhstan in January 2006 to promote economic development and to facilitate integration in Eurasia. Its head office is based in Almaty. The EBD currently has six member states (the founders, plus Armenia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan). It was accorded observer status at the UN General Assembly in 2007 and in January 2013 was recognized as a multilateral financial institution by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

⁵ Initially there were eight members; Turkmenistan and Pakistan joined in 2010. It was open to other regional states to join in due course.

Important technical assistance and support is also provided by regional organizations and by international trade associations. The modernization, expansion and optimization of regional trade and transport networks is of major importance for organizations such as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC), Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Most of the activities that these bodies have undertaken have been focused on their members, but there is also some multilateral cooperation, notably with UN agencies and with the CAREC program⁶. The geographic reach of the Economic Cooperation Organization⁷ straddles the intersections of the north south/east-west transport corridors and thus, not surprisingly, this body is one of the most active participants in the EATL project. An additional layer of cooperation and assistance is provided by trade associations such as the International Road Federation (IRF) and the International Road Transport Union (IRU), which organize regional conferences, seminars and workshops in the Central Asian states. Bodies such as these contribute a wide range of practical experience in the planning and execution of transport development policy. The IRU in particular has implemented a number of regional activities, among them the New Eurasian Land Transport Initiative, launched in September 2008 to run regular commercial freight deliveries from Central Asian countries to Europe.

Cross-cutting the broad-based transport corridors that have been proposed by international organizations (i.e. EATL and CAREC), there are also schemes that have been promoted by powerful political actors. Most of these projects purport to be 'recreating the ancient Silk Roads', though the historical association is little more than a hook for the geo-political aspirations of the sponsors. The first example of this

⁶ M. M. Bekmagambetov, Using Transit Transportation Potential of Central Asian Countries: Challenges and Opportunities, presentation for the 18th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum, Part 1: Vienna, February 2010, Online Source: http://www.osce.org/eea/64304?view=conference_documents&display=page_5&arg=64304&author=851

⁷ The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) developed out of a series of regional alliances (dating back to 1955) between Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey. In 1985 it was re-launched, on the initiative of Iran, under its present designation. The principal policy and decision-making organs are based in Tehran. In November 1992, the five Central Asian states, also Azerbaijan and Afghanistan, were admitted, bringing the total membership of the organization to ten. One of the priority areas is the development of transport and communication networks.

approach was the Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA) program. Inaugurated by the European Union and partner states in Central Asia and the Caucasus in May 1993, it aimed to create a transport network that stretched from Europe to the borders of China – but circumvented Iran and Russia⁸. It was a formidable undertaking, encompassing the development of physical infrastructure as well as regulatory and organizational policies. There were numerous high-level meetings and impressive declarations, yet results on the ground were for the most part modest. The emphasis was mainly on the European sector of the corridor. Important work has been conducted on the refurbishment of Kazakh and Turkmen ports (Aktau and Turkmenbashi respectively) on the Caspian Sea, but elsewhere in Central Asia there has been little sign of activity⁹. A second, and related, EU initiative is INOGATE (acronym derived from ‘Interstate Oil and Gas Transport to Europe’), a program designed to strengthen energy co-operation between the EU, Central Asia, Caucasus and the Black Sea¹⁰. As with TRACECA, the formal presentation is admirable, but the actual achievements are limited; again, too, attention has been largely directed towards the Caucasus and Black Sea regions, with scant involvement in Central Asia.

Another scheme for transport corridors which has political undertones is promoted by the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC). This body, part of a process of economic integration within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), was established in 2000 by Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan. In 2010, a trilateral Customs Union was formed between Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia; this was transformed into the Single Economic Space in 2012, with the aim of facilitating the free movement of goods, services, people and capital. The next stage, planned for 2015, is to be the creation of Eurasian Economic Union between these countries. The EurAsEC transport corridors are the physical arteries that run across

⁸ Iran was admitted to TRACECA in 2009, bringing the number of member states to thirteen; however, owing to the imposition of sanctions by the UN Security Council and the EU, technical assistance was not provided to Iran from 2010. In 2013, Afghanistan was being considered for membership.

⁹ See TRACECA website: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/asia/regional-cooperation-centralasia/transport/traceca_en.htm. A possible shift in emphasis was suggested at the Seventh Annual Meeting of the TRACECA Intergovernmental Commission, held in Kyrgyzstan in June 2009, where the agenda included a discussion of the extension of transport networks to the Central Asian countries.

¹⁰ In November 2004 the Energy Ministerial Conference was held in Baku (the ‘Baku Initiative’); this was followed by a meeting in Astana in November 2006, which resulted in the Astana Energy Ministerial Declaration on scope and principles. See http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/energy/policies/eastern_neighbourhood/inogate_en.htm.

these states, linking them together but also giving access to networks within the wider space of the CIS and beyond that, to international corridors. The basic infrastructure is mostly in place, so the chief task is not to construct new routes, but to ensure better utilization of existing networks. This includes the Trans-Siberian Railway, also the railroads and motorways across Kazakhstan and the neighboring Central Asian states. These routes could serve as major corridors for the transcontinental trade between India, the Middle East, China and Europe. The distances are considerably shorter than maritime routes through the Suez Canal; consequently, transit times and related costs could be reduced, making the EurAsEC corridors a commercially more attractive option. The drawback is that they are plagued by inefficiencies, technical problems, and innumerable other obstacles (discussed further below). Thus, although in theory they are a viable choice, in practice they are difficult to use and to date have been under exploited¹¹. Nevertheless, with more investment in equipment and services, better management of facilities and greater intra-regional harmonization, these corridors do have the potential to become important channels of trans-Eurasian trade and transport.

Yet another contender for the title of the 'New Silk Road' is the 'NEW' (i.e. Northern East- West) Eurasian Land Bridge. The purpose of this Chinese-backed project is to create a second overland transport link between the Chinese and Russian ports on the Pacific seaboard, and the European ports on the Atlantic seaboard. The first Eurasian Land Bridge was the Trans-Siberian Railway. Built in 1916, this line, together with its numerous branches (including the Turkestan-Siberian line, completed in 1930), has spanned the northern tier of the Eurasian landmass for almost a century. It is still one of the key east-west corridors. However, in the 21st century, the increased volume of east-west/west-east trade requires additional transit facilities.

The immediate objective of the 'NEW Eurasian Land Bridge', also known as the 'Second Eurasian Continental Bridge', is to develop a rail service between China and the Caspian Sea. It is envisaged that this will eventually form the basis of a much larger network that will extend westwards, but also southwards through Iran to the Persian Gulf and thence to India and other parts of South Asia; it will also embrace the Korean peninsula, Japan, and the countries of South-East Asia. This is not conceived as a

¹¹ E. Vinokurov, M. Jadriliyev and Y. Shcherbanin, The EurAsEC Transport Corridors: Sector Report March 2009, Eurasian Development Bank, Almaty, esp. pp. 21-23.

plan that will be completed within a specific timeframe, but rather as a long-term vision of strategic goals, to be implemented in incremental stages.

In Central Asia, China's first priority has been to develop transport links with Kazakhstan. The idea was originally mooted in 1954, when Sino-Soviet relations were flourishing and the construction of a cross-border railway between Kazakhstan and Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Province (hereafter 'Xinjiang') was regarded as desirable. The political climate changed before the project was completed and it was abandoned. It was revived some thirty years later, however, and a few months before the demise of the Soviet Union the first freight train made a trial run across the border. The line was officially opened in September 1992. On the Chinese side it linked into the transport artery that connected the western provinces with the port of Lianyungang, while on the Kazakh side it gave access to major rail lines to Russia, as well as to Uzbekistan and the other Central Asian states¹². In December 2012, a second China-Kazakhstan rail link was inaugurated. Meanwhile, the 'Western Europe-Western China' highway was being developed across Kazakhstan. Other projects, including a rail link from China to Kyrgyzstan (mentioned above), were also under consideration. Thus, the 'NEW Eurasian Land Bridge' was steadily moving from the drawing board to take shape on the ground.

Two more 'Silk Road-type' projects have been proposed, one by India, the other by Pakistan. As with the other schemes discussed above, they have been presented as 'neutral' economic ventures to aid the recovery and development of the Central Asian states. There is certainly the potential for mutually beneficial cooperation in these enterprises. However, they also reflect the quest by both countries to secure their own 'strategic depth' and at the same time, to deny that 'depth' to the other – and, by extension, to the other's allies¹³.

The Pakistani project, backed by China, is designed to create a freight corridor from Xinjiang through Baluchistan to the strategically critical port of Gwadar. Located close to the Strait of Hormuz, passageway for much of the world's oil supplies, Gwadar could

¹² Shigeru Otsuka, 'Central Asia's Rail Network and the Eurasian Land Bridge', Japan Railway & Transport Review 28 September 2001, pp. 42-49; available online: www.jrtr.net/jrtr28/pdf/f42_ots.pdf.

¹³ Cf. two different analyses : <http://www.defence.pk/forums/afghanistan-defence/226280-india-wants-deny-pakistan-strategicdepth-afghanistan.html> and <http://csis.org/blog/central-asia-indias-real-strategic-depth>

become the port of entry for crucial supplies of energy and other raw materials to China. Moreover, it would mean that China was no longer wholly reliant on the hazardous sea route via the Strait of Malacca, which is liable to disruption by piracy and worse still, to the danger that it might be blockaded by enemy action¹⁴. For Central Asia, the route also has advantages, since it would provide access to the Persian Gulf, particularly for the more isolated eastern parts of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. In 2002, a massive Chinese-funded program was launched to develop the Gwadar complex, including the port's cargo handling facilities and transport infrastructure, and the construction of connecting road, rail and aviation networks. In the words of the then President of Pakistan, Pervez Musharraf, Gwadar would act as a 'the economic funnel of this whole region'¹⁵. However, it also had significance from a security and defense perspective, as it would provide an additional base for the Pakistan navy and (very possibly) for Chinese naval vessels.

India did not articulate a specific policy toward Central Asia until 2012, when it launched the 'Connect Central Asia' initiative¹⁶. This delay was somewhat surprising, since during the Soviet period India had had good relations with the region and Indian products had enjoyed great popularity. However, in the 1990s it was unable (or unwilling) to build on this legacy. Trade with the Central Asian states fell to a very low level. The focus of India's policy during this period was to build ties in such spheres as culture, education, political dialogue and regional security. Its principal relationship was with Kazakhstan and in 2009 the two countries formed a Strategic Partnership¹⁷. A priority area for cooperation was the development of civil nuclear energy. Within this framework Kazakhstan provided India with uranium to fuel its nuclear power plants, while India undertook to construct nuclear reactors in Kazakhstan. In the hydrocarbons sector, India was involved in a few exploration and development projects in Kazakhstan, likewise in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, but its main venture was participation in the TAPI natural gas pipeline project.

¹⁴ Ian Storey, 'China's Malacca Dilemma', China Brief, vol. 6/8, 12 April 2006; available online: http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=31575&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=196&no_cache=1.

¹⁵ H. Y. Malik, 'Strategic Importance of Gwadar Port', Journal of Political Studies, vol. 19/ 2, 2012, esp. p. 57.

¹⁶ <http://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2012/10/29/indias-connect-central-asia-policy/>

¹⁷ http://www.akorda.kz/en/page/joint-declaration-on-strategic-partnershipbetween-the-republic-of-kazakhstanand-the-republic-of-india_1342007569

It was against this background of relatively modest engagement that India announced its intention to pursue a more proactive involvement in the region. In part this was no doubt prompted by the perceived threat posed by the growing ties between China and Pakistan. However, it was probably also a response to the imminent draw down of NATO-ISAF forces from Afghanistan, which was re-igniting competition for regional influence. The cornerstone of the 'Connect Central Asia' policy was the development of a functional transport network between India and the region. This was not a wholly new idea, but an extension of an earlier scheme to create an Indian North-South Transport Corridor. This had been officially launched in 2001, with the objective of opening a route from India to Europe via Iran and Russia. The first stage was to improve the maritime leg between the Indian port of Mumbai and the Iranian ports of Bandar Abbas and Chabahar. An important element of this phase was the comprehensive refurbishment of these ports, particularly the trans-shipment facilities. The preferred inter-connection was Chabahar. This later became the starting point for the route from India to Afghanistan, used as a conduit for the delivery of economic and humanitarian aid¹⁸. In 2012, however, attention began to shift back to the Caspian region, to 'Connect with Central Asia' via Iran to Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan. The idea of a link across the Caspian from Iran to Russia had never been fully developed; this was now revisited and seemed likely to be revived. It neatly dovetailed with the schemes that were being developed in the Central Asian states to strengthen trade and transport ties with the South.

The vision of the **Black Sea Silk Road Corridor project (BSSRC)**¹⁹ is an EU-funded cross-border cooperation project that brings together four countries – Greece, Turkey, Georgia and Armenia – in a common initiative to promote tourism, travel and shared culture²⁰.

¹⁸ Presentation by Ambassador Asoke Mukerji, Special Secretary, Indian Ministry of External Affairs, at the International Institute of Strategic Studies, London, 10 July 2012; transcript available online: <http://www.iiss.org/en/events/events/archive/2012-4a49/july-70c4/india-central-asia-and-the-new-silk-road-e4d1>.

¹⁹ <http://www.blackseasilkroad.com/en/about>

²⁰ Davit Alaverdyan, The Black Sea Silk Road: working together to break down borders, *EU NEIGHBOURS*, Source: <https://www.euneighbours.eu/en/east/eu-in-action/stories/black-sea-silk-road-working-together-break-down-borders>



The project objective is twofold. Firstly, to expand an already under implementation project under the name 'Black Sea Silk Road Corridor,' which is re-tracing the route of the western Silk Road through four countries: Armenia, Georgia, Turkey and Greece; it includes a smartphone virtual / tourist 'Silk Road' trail and a business directory which will allow 21st century travelers to follow on the footsteps of ancient traders. The trajectory of the 'Black Sea Silk Road Corridor' will extend eastwards from Armenia to China, and westwards to the ports of Mediterranean Europe and North Africa.

Secondly, this is a project of cooperative development. The fabled Silk Road of lore was more than a trade route, it was a road of ideas, a thoroughway of culture. History's first transcontinental "super highway" enabled commerce, science, arts, culture and ideas to course the empires and nation states that hugged its spine. Perhaps its greatest gift was not any of these, as important as they are. Still, it was a conduit of peace, for trade cannot travel across closed borders nor can it prosper in times of conflict. At its greatest, the Silk Road promoted tolerance and peaceful co-existence.

The project kicked off on 16 July 2013 at Noravank monastery in Vayots Dzor marz, Armenia. It is financed by the EU Black Sea Basin Joint Operational Programme, with an EU input of almost €680 000. Along the 3,000km route from Thessaloniki to Meghri, the initiative supports the development of 173 communities along the way, 43 of them in Armenia. As well as concrete support and development on the ground, the project has also created a virtual tourist route and a business inquiry line, available on smartphones and tablets, and helping tourists in their quest to follow the road of the ancient merchants.

As part of the project, 192 historic-cultural sites were marked with information panels, and support was given and expertise shared with local tourist operators; a web portal and 5 smart phone apps were also created, highlighting sites on the trail, with GPS navigation, interactive maps, multi-language, and multi-media presentations of each site on the trail, all fully integrated with the most popular social networks.

Fully integrated into the portal and apps is the Business Directory, a comprehensive listing of tourism service providers at each site. The Directory contributes to the sustainable development of rural communities by putting visitors in touch with locals, improving income and empowering local communities to develop attractions and venues for future visitors, including sustainable, eco-friendly activities and improvements.

The ancient Silk Road was a path for ideas and cultures, as much as a trade route. The first intercontinental road in history facilitated the exchange of trade, science, art, cultures and ideas between the empires and kingdoms along its way. The Silk Road facilitates peace, as trade relations can't exist and develop in the face of closed borders or conflicts. Therefore, its most important role is to promote tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

The trail starts with Greece, famous for its sea and beaches, a country with an abundance of hidden treasures and wildlife reserves. Next is Turkey, the link between Europe and Asia with sites from ancient cities to natural springs and mud baths, from mountain hiking trails to craggy beaches. Then comes Georgia, rich with deep valleys, sunny plateaus, teeming forests, sparkling mineral springs, caves and waterfalls. Finally, the trail ends in Armenia, one of the oldest civilizations in the region. Armenia's trails course through deep woods and grassy plains, over fields of wild flowers and along bubbling springs and rivers.

Within the project, 43 tourist sites in Armenia have installed signposts, information posters, pedestrian traffic and hiking signs, and tour plaques, which provide multilingual information for tourists.

The project coordinator in Armenia is the Armenian Monuments Awareness Project (AMAP) Human Development NGO. AMAP Vice-President and Associate Executive Director Bella Karapetyan believes the project's greatest achievement is the creation of a different vision that fosters the development of tourism in the region.

1.1.2. Interregional tourism

Acclaimed as the 'greatest route in the history of mankind'²¹, the ancient Silk Road formed the first bridge between the East and the West and was an important vehicle for trade between the ancient empires of China, Central and Western Asia, the Indian sub-continent and Rome. As routes of integration, exchange and dialogue, the Silk Road contributed greatly to the common prosperity and development of humankind for almost two millennia. With its richly diverse cultural heritage and its wealth of natural tourism attractions spanning across thousands of kilometers of ancient routes, the Silk

²¹ UNWTO, Silk Road Action Plan 2016/2017, p. 8, online source:
<http://cf.cdn.unwto.org/sites/all/files/docpdf/sr2016web.pdf>

Road today offers visitors the opportunity to experience a unique network of destinations linked by a shared history. By venturing along the ancient Silk Road, tourists can walk in the footsteps of famed explorers such as Alexander the Great and Marco Polo.

In 1993, World Tourism Organization decided to create a long term tourism project that would promote a special Silk Road tourism concept. As a part of it UNWTO established the Silk Road Programme, with the aim of sustainable tourism development in countries along the Silk Road, collaboration and fostering growth and development through tourism. It will facilitate transnational travels, ease the information transfer and increase the duration of travels due to the promotion of Silk Road tours²².

“Silk Road” was first used by German geographer Ferdinand van Richthofen in 1870 as “Seidenstrasse” (Silk Road). The Silk Road is not a single road but it is rather a complex network of land routes and sea routes (UNWTO). In 1991 when Five Great Asian Republics that separated from The Soviets gained their independence, cultural, commercial and touristic exchange revitalized the attention to the Silk Road²³. With its unique landscape and various destinations, Silk Route has a potential of being most popular tourism destination in the world. If it is managed consciously, it might be a significant tool for sustainable development and protection of natural and cultural heritage (UNWTO). For more than a decade, the revival efforts on Silk Road have been ongoing for touristic purposes²⁴. Nowadays, tourists who travel to international routes have started to prefer different far and exotic destinations for relaxing and adventure. Developing countries that want to take advantage of the situation are working through these demands of the tourist²⁵. These countries have the opportunity to contribute to the development of the Silk Road and turn it into a different tourism destination.

²² Gizem Capar, The Silk Route Tourism and Silk Road Guiding: An Evaluation on Practices in Turkey, 2017, p. 1469, online source: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320243651_The_Silk_Route_Tourism_and_Silk_Road_Guiding_An_Evaluation_on_Practices_in_Turkey

²³ UNWTO, A Strategic Approach to Visa Facilitation in The Silk Road Countries Silk Road Regional Programme: Capacity Building for Regional Cooperation and Development. World Tourism Organization, 2012, p. 5.

²⁴ UNWTO, Tourism Pearls of the Silk Road. World Tourism Organization, 2005.

²⁵ C. Werner, The New Silk Road: Mediators and Tourism Development in Central Asia. *Ethnology*, 42(2), 141-159, 2003, p. 141.

With the cooperation of UNESCO and UNWTO, The Silk Road Heritage Corridors Tourism Strategy aims to guarantee a balanced approach between tourism promotion and heritage management throughout this corridor²⁶. In line with this purpose, it enables training courses (Enhancing Silk Road Interpretation and Quality Guides Training) by tour guides who have Silk Road Guiding Certificate and raise specialized guides on Silk Road around the world. One of this training hosted by UNESCO Tashkent Office and the Republic of Uzbekistan, and jointly organized by, UNESCO and the World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations (WFTGA). These trainings aim at providing heritage guides operating throughout the Silk Road with a unified set of guiding skills and specialized know-how on site interpretation, presentation and management (UNWTO). Another training course was held in the city of Almaty in Kazakhstan. To create awareness at an international level depends mostly on a quality interpretation and a quality guiding. Herein, one of the most effective persons who will take part in revival the Silk Road of World Tourism Organization is the tour guide. As a whole, tour guides first of all need to specialize in this area to transfer the historical significance of destinations along the Silk Road.

UNESCO experts and state parties have dedicated years of research to identifying and analyzing the routes and corridors of the Silk Road. Through their findings, a vast array of ancient cities, caravanserais, mountain passes, forts and watchtowers, religious sites and archeological sites have come to light. While there is significant potential for tourism development and local economic growth along the Silk Road, many of the route's cultural and natural sites are under threat, and significant investment and attention is required to ensure that they are safeguarded for the enjoyment of future generations²⁷.

The Silk Road Action Plan 2016/2017 works as a collaborative platform for marketing and capacity building, raising the profile of Silk Road tourism while driving development that is sustainable, responsible and internationally competitive. The Silk Road Action

²⁶ Gizem Capar, The Silk Route Tourism and Silk Road Guiding: An Evaluation on Practices in Turkey, 2017, p. 1470, online source: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320243651_The_Silk_Route_Tourism_and_Silk_Road_Guiding_An_Evaluation_on_Practices_in_Turkey

²⁷ UNWTO, Silk Road Action Plan 2016/2017, p. 8, online source: <http://cf.cdn.unwto.org/sites/all/files/docpdf/sr2016web.pdf>

Plan works towards implementing the following multi-faceted vision, showcased in the Table 1²⁸.

Table 1. The UNESCO Silk Road Action Plan 2016/2017 vision

The Silk Road will be an internationally renowned, seamless travel experience	<p>The Silk Road will be an established brand, supported by extensive cooperative marketing campaigns</p> <p>High quality infrastructure will facilitate smooth travel across international borders</p>
The tourism sector will be prosperous across all Silk Road destinations, stimulating ongoing investment	<p>Governments will value and support the tourism sector and gain significant return for their investment</p> <p>The Silk Road will offer high quality tourism infrastructure</p> <p>Tourism will generate significant direct and indirect employment</p>
Silk Road stakeholders will work closely together for mutual benefit	<p>Strong co-operation between Silk Road countries</p> <p>Profitable partnerships between public and private sectors</p> <p>Increased visitor length of stay and yield across all regions</p>
Tourism will drive improved cultural and environmental management	<p>Advanced cultural management systems in place</p> <p>Environmental sustainability will underpin every aspect of tourism development</p>
Silk Road tourism will act as a vehicle for fostering peace and cultural understanding	<p>Promotion of cultural pluralism and intercultural dialogue</p> <p>Intercultural cooperation as a key instrument to strengthen social cohesion, solidarity and peace</p>

Why people travel to different destinations have always been a key question of understanding the tourism phenomenon²⁹. Tourist origins, tourist flows and tourist destinations are the three key research domains. The former researched from demand

²⁸ Ibidem, p. 10.

²⁹ S. Zhong, J. hang, G. Han, L. Wang and H. Zhang, "Spatial patterns of tourist flow: problems and prospects," Human Geography, vol. 25. 2010, pp. 31-36.

perspectives while the latter mostly focus on supply perspectives. Tourist flows accordingly are studied from linkage perspective³⁰.

Various geographical phenomena interweave and concentrate intra-regionally and inter-regionally³¹. But region as a concept applied to tourism spaces is somehow ambiguous and imprecise³². With the above in mind, we argue that regions provide living space for tourist flows characterized by actions of social groups. Definitions of tourist origin and tourist destination hence require a new regional perspective. As mentioned above, conventional definitions of tourist origins and tourist destinations can be misleading, while a new regional perspective may help identify the tourism function of different regions systematically. In most cases, regions integrate twofold functions — emitting tourist flow and attracting tourist flow. Intra-regional and inter-regional tourist flows interweave comprehensively in a regional tourist flow system. Many scholars have considered this phenomenon and noted complicated interactions between regions³³.

Admittedly, differentiation emerges where some regions' emitting ability outweighs their attracting ability and vice versa. Present literatures are full of confusion for government departments, destination administrations, tourism operators and new researchers. So, a new concept 'functional tourism region' is coined. Then, a new geographical and systematic research framework is proposed.

Traditional research focus on three key tourism concepts: tourist origins, tourist flows and tourist destinations (Leiper 1979). Tourist origins can be classified from different dimensions: city areas-rural areas, center-periphery, developed countries-developing countries, etc. Tourist destinations can be classified to six main categories: urban destinations, seaside destinations, rural destinations, Alpine destinations, authentic

³⁰ Shien Zhong, Jie Zhang, "Why People Travel to Different Regions: a New Tourism Research Framework from Geographical Perspective", *Procedia Environmental Sciences* 12 (2012) 408 – 412, 2012, p. 408, online source: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1878029612002988/pdf?md5=2e95f0884fcdecc5896053e969230177&pid=1-s2.0-S1878029612002988-main.pdf>.

³¹ J. Fan, "Comprehensiveness of geography and integrated research on regional development," *Acta Geographica Sinica*, vol. 59(supplement). 2004, pp. 33-40.

³² J. A. I. Baidal, "Tourism planning in Spain: evolution and perspectives," *Annals of Tourism Research*, vol. 31. 2004, pp. 313- 333.

³³ D. G. Pearce, "Spatial patterns of package tourism in Europe," *Annals of Tourism Research*, vol. 14. 1987b, pp. 183-201.

third world, unique-exotic-exclusive destinations³⁴. So, in this case, different spatial relationships form between tourist origins, tourist flows and tourist destinations. At least there are six main types: (1) from developed countries to less-developed countries; (2) from high latitudes to low; (3) from core areas to peripheral areas; (4) from metropolises to small cities, rural areas or tourism enclaves; (5) from populous areas to climatically comfortable areas; (6) from rural areas to cities was also noted.

Accordingly, the traditional research framework can be classified to four dimensions, i.e. tourist dimensions, destination dimensions, interactional dimension between tourists and destinations and barrier dimension, which all can be incorporated into Table 2³⁵.

Table 2. The traditional geographical tourism framework

	Characteristics Decomposition	Measured Value or Approaches
Tourist dimension	Demographic characteristics	Gender, Marital status, Age, Education, Health status, Occupation
	Tripographic characteristics	Purpose (or motivation)
	Consumer preference	Marginal rate of substitution, in-depth interview
Destination dimension	Product characteristics	Quality, Price, Monopoly
	Agglomeration or Complement	Diversification index
	Alternative or Substitution	Characteristics of other (or new) destination
Interactional Dimension between Tourist and Destination	Destination image or perception	First time or repeat, in-depth interview
	Medium (i.e. advertising, internet, magazine, newspaper)	Medium type
Barrier Dimension	Available time	Disposable time
	Available expenditure	Disposable expenditure (or income)

³⁴ D. D. Buhalis, "Marketing the competitive destination of the future," *Tourism Management*, vol. 21. 2000, pp. 97-116.

³⁵ Shien Zhong, Jie Zhang, "Why People Travel to Different Regions: a New Tourism Research Framework from Geographical Perspective", *Procedia Environmental Sciences* 12 (2012) 408 – 412, 2012, p. 410, online source: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1878029612002988/pdf?md5=2e95f0884fcdecc5896053e969230177&pid=1-s2.0-S1878029612002988-main.pdf>.

	Accessibility	Distance, or in-depth interview
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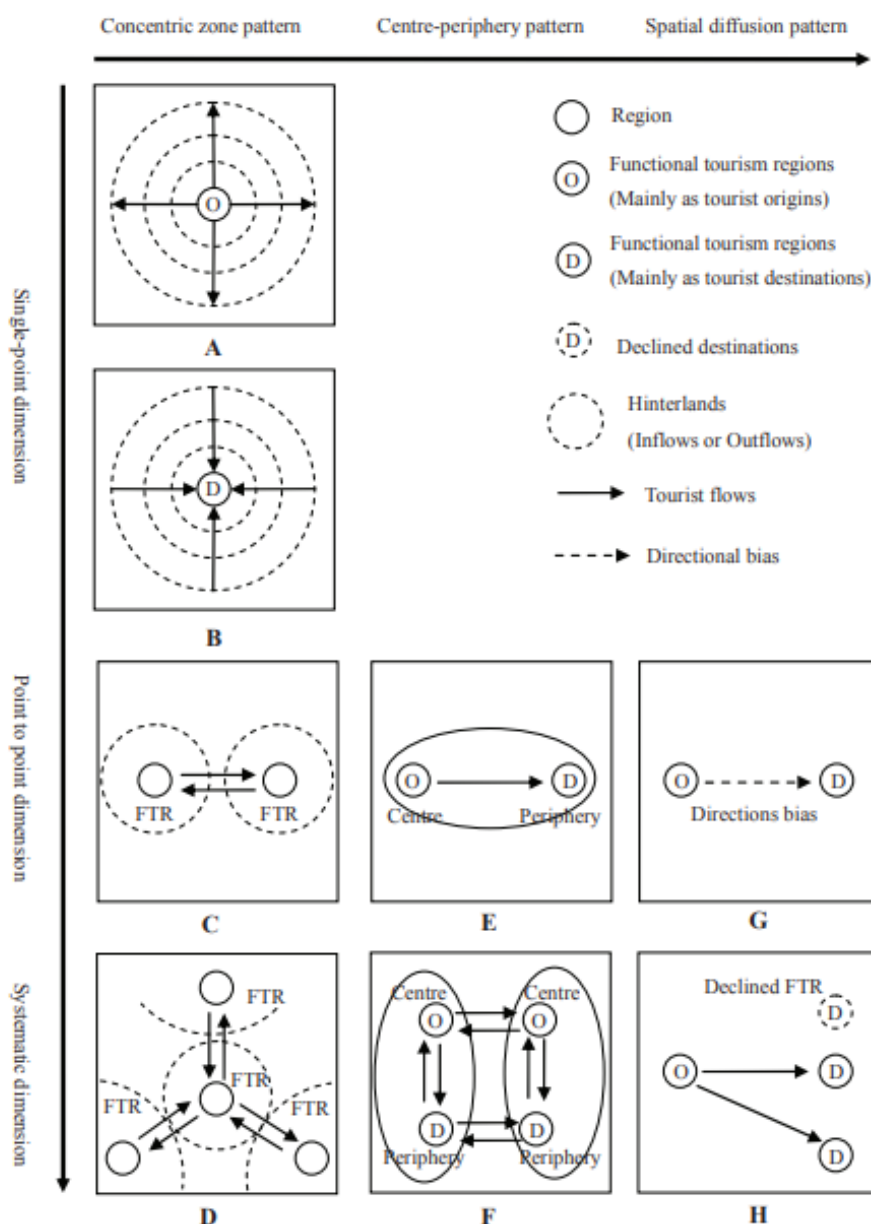
Thus, in their paper, “Why People Travel to Different Regions: a New Tourism Research Framework from Geographical Perspective”, Shien Zhong and Jie Zhang propose a new concept called an ‘Functional Tourism Region’ (FTR)³⁶. In a regional tourist flow system, an FTR refers to a tourism region attracting inter-regional tourist flows depending on its tourism resources functioning as a role of tourist destination, while emitting inter-regional tourist flows functioning as a role of tourist origin. An FTR can be a country, a state, a province or a city according to administrative boundaries. Jansen-Verbeke (1995) even once defined a tourism region or a geographical area from economic or cultural aggregation levels. From an FTR perspective, the traditional tourist origins and tourist destinations are special cases of FTRs, as they are FTRs functioning solely as a tourist origin or solely as a tourist destination. Accordingly, measurement of directional bias should shift from the traditional unilateral relationship to the actual bilateral relationship which usually remains asymmetrical.

With new coined concept of FTR, this article paints a sketch map from two-dimensional scale to visualize the basic spatial patterns of the relationships between tourist flows and FTRs. One dimensional scale covers a hierarchical ordering which are “single point dimension, point to point dimension, systematic dimension”. The other dimensional scale spans a spectrum, from the left to the right are the three basic spatial patterns of the relationships between tourist flows and FTRs, i.e. concentric zone pattern, center-periphery pattern, spatial diffusion pattern. Concentric zone pattern stresses on the regular, centripetal and hierarchical structure from the inner zone to the outlying zone, see A, B, C and D in Figure 1.

Figure 1. A proposed geographical framework (Cited from Zhong etc. 2010)³⁷

³⁶ Ibidem, p. 409.

³⁷ Ibidem, p. 412.



A and B symbolize single point dimension, C for point to point dimension while C symbolizes systematic dimension³⁸. Centre-periphery pattern reflects the relationship between the core areas and the peripheral areas from dependence perspective. E reflects the tourism phenomenon that tourist flows move from center to periphery, while F reflects the mutual movements between center-center, center-periphery, periphery to periphery. Spatial diffusion pattern researches the spatial pattern, flowing process of tourist flow from dynamic angle. G in Figure 1 visualizes the directional bias of tourist

³⁸ Ibidem, p. 410.

from FTR mainly as tourist origins to FTR mainly as tourist destinations. H incorporates two categories of TTR mainly as tourist destinations, the declined FTR and the new FTR.

As a conclusion, the article proposes a new geographical framework to understand tourism phenomenon based on traditional framework. Two points need to address for Figure 1. First, the horizontal axis incorporate three basic spatial patterns between tourist flows and FTRs, i.e. concentric zone pattern, center-periphery pattern and spatial diffusion pattern. The three patterns have no distinct borderlines between good or bad. Different study cases can present different patterns. The vertical axis symbolizes a hierarchical structure. Compared to the single point dimension and point to point dimension, the systematic dimension seems that it can give us more detailed understanding about the components and the interweaving interaction between tourist flows and FTRs³⁹.

The process of regionalization⁴⁰ in Europe has attracted little attention in tourist studies, which tend to focus on the comparison between national statistics. By analyzing the inter-regional tourist flows within Europe, the geographical pattern of tourist-destination and tourist generating areas becomes clear and this allows for a realistic assessment of the position and potentials of particular destination areas within the European tourism market, where competition is no longer between countries but between regions.

A strong argument⁴¹ for studying tourist flows in Europe not at the level of countries but in smaller geographical areas is the current competition in the tourism market between regions and regional product-market combinations, even between destination areas of the same country. In fact, this revival of regional identity and the current development of regional marketing policies within Europe is manifest in many different areas. The process of developing a regional identity has to some extent also become a marketing strategy in tourism, of even greater importance than the former national promotion. However, this option to look at tourist flows at a regional aggregation level

³⁹ Id.

⁴⁰ M Jansen-Verbeke, "Reports: A regional analysis of tourist flows within Europe", *Radboud Repository: Tourism Management*, Vol. 16, No, 1, pp. 73- 82, 1995, p. 73, online source: https://repository.ubn.ru.nl/bitstream/handle/2066/29640/29640_.PDF?sequence=1

⁴¹ Ibidem, p. 74.

faces the problem of defining regions. There is no consensus yet on the concept or the definition of European regions. Focusing on inter-regional tourism flows makes sense in view of the growing market of short-haul tourism travel in combination with the expanding volume of short breaks and short holidays⁴². This trend is most relevant for the development of regional tourism, especially in regions which are within a day's travelling distance from the most important tourist-generating areas.

In order to determine the actual contribution of tourism to regional development, it is necessary to make a distinction between the different categories of tourist flows⁴³:

- Inter-regional tourism: tourist flows between regions. This can be domestic or international tourism, depending on the crossing of a national boundary.
- Intra-regional tourism: tourist flows within a region, by definition domestic tourism.

Inter-regional tourism increases the seasonality of regions and the development process within the regions. It has direct impact on the development of social, political and economic environment in the less developed regions. Furthermore, inter-regional tourism concentrates on integrated development and equitable distribution of income.

The general increase of interregional travel within Europe is closely related to a process of scale enlargement in the tourist action space and of a growing interaction between regions. The extent to which these inter-regional flows are in fact domestic or international is yet another aspect of the current process of integration in Europe and not unimportant from the point of view of marketing and promotion of regional tourism⁴⁴.

⁴² E. Devas, *The European Tourist: A Market Profile* TPR, London, 1992, p. 55.

⁴³ M Jansen-Verbeke, "Reports: A regional analysis of tourist flows within Europe", *Radboud Repository: Tourism Management*, Vol. 16, No, 1, pp. 73- 82, 1995, p. 76, online source: https://repository.ubn.ru.nl/bitstream/handle/2066/29640/29640_.PDF?sequence=1

⁴⁴ Ibidem, pp. 77-78.

1.2. Culture and experiential tourism

1.2.1. Culture and experiential tourism in Romania

The lifetime experiences and the long-lasting memories they create, are what make travelling priceless and unique. The modern traveler is looking for experiences rather than the luxury properties and amenities, the sandy beaches, the famous attractions, the intense entertainment and all those "must see" mentioned in touristic guides. Nowadays, real life experiences are what drive people to travel. Through unique, authentic experiences, through contact with the history, culture, geology, gastronomy and folklore, the visitor is getting involved via effective participation with all the senses, rather than within the detached observation of a new place. This search, pursuit and desire is defined as Experiential Tourism and it is a wide and very modern field that includes various forms of tourism such as outdoor activities, cultural tourism, culinary tourism, ecotourism, educational travel, heritage tourism, experimental tourism etc. The common feature of all mentioned above is to include activities beyond the ordinary, environmentally friendly, with respect for the culture of a place⁴⁵.

According to Nature and Outdoor Tourism Ontario, "Experiential tourism is an outgrowth of a global movement toward experiential learning, whereby people create meaning through direct experience"⁴⁶.

The experiential tourism is a form of tourism in which the visitor is searching for contact with the natural and cultural environment by developing interactive relationship with the identification of areas - tourist destinations. This concept, raises issues such as the predictability of the tourist experience, the redefinition of the experiential experience, the environmental impact of the existing tourism models as well as the development opportunities that are offered⁴⁷.

The experiential tourism not only does it appear as a necessary condition for addressing the negative impacts of the multiannual implementation of mass tourism

⁴⁵ Petros M. Nomikos Conference Center, 1st International Conference on Experiential Tourism, 9-11 October 2015, Santorini island, Greece, p. 1, online source: <http://imic2015.conferences.gr/en/>

⁴⁶ Nature and Outdoor Tourism Ontario, online source: https://noto.ca/info_for_your_business/experiential_tourism

⁴⁷ Maria-Anna Kolliopoulou, Dimitra Papadami, Successful models of experiential tourism. Suggestions for application in the Greek islands. The case of Milos, 2015, p. 1, online source: http://imic2015.conferences.gr/wp-content/uploads/KOLIOPOULOU_PAPADAMI.pdf

on both the environment and the society, but also to serve the economic positive aspects of tourism. Its primary principles are environmental awareness, interaction of tourists with the local people and the environment, active participation of the visitor in activities, dominant special motive (nature worship, adventurous travels, sports, touring, environment, acquaintance with the local tradition), rest and recreation, through the search of more complex ways of satisfaction and new experiences and the respect to the protection and enhancement of local identity of each place⁴⁸.

As tourism destinations become more substitutable due to increasing competition in global tourism markets, destination personality is seen as a viable metaphor for building destination brands and crafting a unique identity for tourism places⁴⁹. In the age of postmodernity, the experiences of consumers play an increasingly important role in economic and social life. It is claimed that we are witnessing the emergence of the experience economy. Tourism is surely one of the pioneer examples of the experience economy⁵⁰. Prebensen indicates that experiences are subjective and personalized processes, and are related to social cultures and varied systems. Therefore, studies of tourist experiences should be based on flexible and diverse multidiscipline perspectives, such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, or marketing, and could even be interdisciplinary⁵¹.

Thus, experiential tourism has become the current term that encompasses a variety of tourism and traveler categories, including the following: cultural tourism, ecotourism, educational travel, experimental tourism, heritage tourism and nature tourism, where activities are environmentally sensitive, displaying respect for the culture of the host area and looking to experience and learn rather than merely stand back and gaze. Experiential tourism involves active participation, involvement, even immersion.

In conclusion, several key points in planning experiential tourism are⁵²:

⁴⁸ Ibidem, p. 2.

⁴⁹ Ekinci, Y., Hosany, S., 'Destination Personality: An Application of Brand Personality to Tourism Destinations', Journal of Travel Research, vol 45, 2006, p 127-139.

⁵⁰ Dimitrios KYRIAKOU, Dimitrios BELIAS, Kalliopi DALLA, Konstantinos VARSANIS, Alexandra RAPI, Experiential Tourism and social entrepreneurship in Greece: A new thinking In Crisis Time?, 2015, p. 3, online source: <http://imic2015.conferences.gr/wp-content/uploads/KYRIAKOU.pdf>

⁵¹ Prebensen, K., N., "Value Determinants of Tourist Experiences" In Advances in Hospitality and Leisure, 2015, pp. 189-214.

⁵² Nature and Outdoor Tourism Ontario, online source: https://noto.ca/info_for_your_business/experiential_tourism

- Focus on your strengths - base your product on what natural and cultural resources you have that others don't have.
- Plan all stages of the project in detail before commencing, including marketing, product evaluation and redevelopment. Plan for and monitor budgets tightly.
- Be very clear about what you want to achieve - profit, local employment, community pride and involvement, and conservation of the resource.
- Consult and involve the local community.
- Take the time to do the project well. Do not rush the stages of consultation and product development. Innovation does not happen overnight.
- Know your target audience. Plan and tailor the product from the consumer's needs and perspectives. Undertake market research.
- Interpretation should be fun, encourage involvement, stimulate the senses, and pose a challenge. Plan all activities to reflect a strong theme.
- Choose methods that involve and engage the senses. Face to face interpretation is the most effective.
- Be cautious with technology. Can you afford it and do you need it?
- Collaborate with experts. Expertise may be found within your local community.
- Train the interpretative team to ensure consistency of product and messages.

Hence, the standards for Experiential Tourism for further research, according to NOTO, are⁵³:

1. People create meaning through direct experience.
2. The experience includes the people met, the places visited, the activities participated in and the memories created.
3. The experience includes pre-departure trip planning and post-trip follow-up.
4. Experiential tourism draws people into local nature, culture and history.
5. Experiential tourism is low impact, low volume, and high yield.
6. Experiential tourism is very personal, unique and individual for each visitor.
7. Quality, memorable visitor experiences are a shared outcome between the visitor and the experience provider.

⁵³ Id.

8. Experiential tourism opportunities allow for personal growth and reflect the values and interests of the individual visitor.
9. Experiential tourism provides diverse experiences that match the visitor's interests and provide a sense of personal accomplishment, thereby creating their own unique memories.
10. The desired outcome of experiential tourism is to achieve a complete participatory experience that provides new knowledge and authentic experiences.
11. Experiential tourism opportunities encourage the meeting and coming together of different cultures, their problems and potential.
12. Cultural elements are shared in an atmosphere of traditional ways of life.
13. Experiential tourism shows rather than describes.
14. Experiential tourism opportunities expand personal horizons.
15. Experiential tourism opportunities should provide personal enrichment, enlightenment, stimulation, and engagement as motivators.
16. Experiential tourism attracts people to places.
17. Experiential tourism attracts markets to merchandise.
18. Experiential tourism engages all five senses.
19. Experiential tourism opportunities include learning a new skill or engaging in a new activity.
20. Experiential tourism includes “the story of the place.”

Cultural tourism

Cultural tourism represents one of the oldest forms of tourism and the demand for this type of tourism has recorded a significant increase during the past years. In order to understand this concept more, we could start from a short classification of the tourism forms in order to observe their evolution in time. According to Greg Richard, tourism can be classified in heritage tourism, cultural tourism and creative tourism which have the following characteristics:

Form of tourism	Primary time focus	Primary cultural focus	Primary form of consumption
Heritage tourism	Past	High culture, folk	Heritage tourism
Cultural tourism	Past, present	High culture, popular culture	Products and processes
Creative tourism	Past, present, future	High, popular and mass culture	Experiences and transformations

Source: Richards, G. (ed.) (2001): Cultural Attractions and European Tourism, CAB International, Wallingford, UK

The above classification shows the continuous development of tourism and how much tourists want to experience the everyday customs of the people from the places visited. European Association for Tourism and Leisure Education (ATLAS) defines cultural tourism as: “persons’ traveling towards cultural attractions for from the usual living place, with the intention of getting new information and experiences which should satisfy their cultural needs”⁵⁴. Cultural tourism is based on the cultural patrimony and the specific characteristics of the place to be visited. The main reasons for practicing this type of tourism include curiosity and the desire for a higher level of education. The progress of the human society and civilization highlights the originality and the artistic value of the cultural patrimony. Although the concept of cultural tourism may seem that it has only positive implications (development of the regional and national culture and the season tourism, protection of the natural habitat and local traditions), it implies also

⁵⁴ Richards, G. (ed.) (2001): Cultural Attractions and European Tourism, CAB International, Wallingford, UK, online source:
https://www.academia.edu/2020787/Cultural_Attractions_and_European_Tourism

some negative ones. The negative effects of the cultural tourism include the commercialization of the culture and the local customs and the deterioration of the environment and architecture specific to the visited region. The cultural tourism is promoted at international level by UNESCO. The organization's goal is to contribute to world's peace and security collaborating between nations in education, science, culture, and communications in order to succeed a respect's stabilization up against universal justice, for the justice's rightness and the laws and the concepts of the free human being, irrespective of race, sex, language or religion.

During the years, the concept of cultural tourism has evolved a lot due to the changes of the needs of tourists, the expansion of the international tourism and the increase in the cultural travels. Cultural tourism is a complex term and the literature offers various classification structures, one of them includes the following⁵⁵:

- Heritage tourism: largely concerned with the interpretation and representation of the past;
- Arts tourism: art gets to tourists in the sense that theatre, dance, music and the visual arts travel well in the form shows, performances and exhibitions;
- Urban cultural tourism: the majority of the cities offer various cultural attractions;
- Rural cultural tourism: includes the agricultural tourism, eco –tourism, farm tourism;
- Indigenous cultural tourism: the indigenous people involved in all the activities;
- Contemporary cultural tourism: the type of tourism where the cultural activities are influenced by the latest trends

In order to create a sustainable cultural tourism, one has to understand the tourism and cultural management. Also, an important role to achieve this goal is held by the connection between the culture capital and the socioeconomic development of the area in question.

Another classification of the cultural tourism includes⁵⁶:

- Creative tourism: concerns learning indigenous skills distinctive of the destination visited and developing individual creativity while on holiday

⁵⁵ Smith K.M., Issues in cultural tourism studies, Routledge, London, 2003

⁵⁶ Ivanovic M., Cultural tourism, Juta and Company Ltd, Cape Town, 2008

- Ethical tourism: emerged from the conscious movement of European tourists who became aware of the fact that tourist expenditure does not benefit host communities as it is expected to do
- Life-seeing tourism: personalized experience facilitated by a travel agency for every visitor individually to cater for his or her professional interests.

Tourists characterizing the cultural tourism consist of visitors of cultural attraction with a high level of education which travel far from their residence, spend higher than the average and have different goals. Tourists that practice cultural tourism evolve a lot as they understand the culture of the place visited at a higher level. The majority of the destinations selected are based on the cultural characteristics of them. Women usually prefer plastic arts and architecture while men have a predilection for technical and scientific sites⁵⁷:

- The serendipitous cultural tourist is the type of tourist who obtains cultural experience without having the intention of travelling for cultural purpose
- The purposeful cultural tourist has as main motivation in choosing a destination the cultural part and obtain deep experience
- The incidental cultural tourist is not interested at all in cultural tourism;
- The casual cultural tourist is the type of person with a relatively small interest in culture and a shallow experience
- The sightseeing cultural tourist is motivated mainly by the cultural purposes.

The analysis of the main characteristics of cultural tourism shows the fact that this concept has an important role in the development and modernization of the economy and society and that culture represents one of the most important resource of the international tourism. In order for it to become a sustainable tourism it has to respect the natural and cultural values of the area. We observe that despite the fact that cultural tourism has grown more complex recently it may have the potential to develop and rejuvenate historic areas. We notice that a higher number of visitors choose to place

⁵⁷ Hilary du Cros and Bob McKercher, Cultural Tourism, Routledge, NY, 2015.

the cultural activities as their main reason for travelling in order to explore different ways of living and to get new information on different cultural attractions⁵⁸.

The exceptional tourism potential of Romania has two main components:

- a) the natural component, represented by spectacular landscapes, varied configuration of the relief, favorable climatic conditions and lots of natural therapeutic spas;
- b) the historical component, the cultural heritage, represented by traces of succeeding civilizations that lived on Romanian territory since ancient times, monuments and lay or religious art objects, museums and museum collections, beautiful and original ethnographical and folklore elements and actual prestigious achievements.

Cultural heritage is, according to McKercher and Cros., a “broad concept that includes tangible assets, such as natural and cultural environments, encompassing of landscapes, historic places, sites and built environments as well as intangible assets such as collections, past and continuing cultural practices, knowledge and living experiences.” The main cultural and historical tourism resources are the following: archaeological artefacts; historical, architecture and art monuments of unique value; museums and memorial houses; folklore and traditions; tourist villages⁵⁹.

The tourism is, above all, an element that favors communication, the change of information and ideas, stimulating the enlargement of cultural horizons and, at the same time, having a considerable impact on the intellectual development. In order to highlight the place of tourism in the economic development one must emphasize not only its economic role, but also the impact it has upon the environment and the local cultures⁶⁰.

According to World Tourism Organization specialists, cultural tourism includes⁶¹:

- tourism for youth people, where the cultural and educational aspects are predominant e.g. study trips, trips for learning a foreign language, international camps;

⁵⁸ Sanda, Gheorghe Gabriel, Introduction in the cultural tourism in Romania, Annals of the „Constantin Brâncuși” University of Târgu Jiu, Economy Series, Special Issue, volume I/2016, p. 139.

⁵⁹ McKercher, B., & Cros, H. (2003). Testing a Cultural Tourism Typology. The International Journal of Tourism Research, 5, 45-58.

⁶⁰ Tigău Gabriela et al, Analysis of the cultural tourism trends and perspectives in Romania, ESSACHESS. Journal for Communication Studies, vol. 7, no. 1(13) / 2014, p. 193.

⁶¹ UNWTO (2013). World Tourism Barometer, volume 11, January 2013. Statistical Annex, World Tourism Organization.

- exchanges of artists, writers and the events celebrating these exchanges;
- rural tourism, holidays to the families of the visited region/country;
- holidays in the villages integrated in the cultural local environment;
- attendance at religious festivals, national and international festivals;
- cultural circuits, which includes visits to museums, historical sites and attending various cultural events;
- pilgrimages to historical and religious places and monuments.

Compared with the other forms of tourism, cultural tourism has a number of features arising from its specific content, its manifestation manner and its evolutions and involutions in this area. Moreover, cultural tourism is positioned at the intersection between tourism and culture, borrowing some of the characteristics from both of the two phenomena. According to this, the particularities of cultural tourism are: cultural tourism has a complex content, due to the special services that are included e.g. special services offered by cultural institutes (museums, churches and monasteries, festivals, shows, various cultural events); cultural tourism targets a clientele with a certain level of culture and education or which is being educated; cultural tourism is generally a more expensive product, but not a luxury one; compared with other forms of tourism, cultural tourism seasonality is less accentuated⁶².

Romanian people culture is an exceptional mixture of Byzantine influences on an ancient Latin foundation, a cultural mix that is unparalleled in the world. You can see, hear and you can enjoy it in almost every city, town, monastery or historic site on the Southeastern Region territory.

Romania's unique cultural heritage is reflected in the UNESCO World Heritage Sites, throughout the whole territory. Starting from Dacia and Roman influences from antiquity, Byzantine and Slavic influences to the Middle Ages - Romania is an exceptional amalgam of fascinating ingredients. Extraordinary scenic testimonies of our uniqueness are, for example, the painted monasteries that can only be found in Southeastern Region of Romania.

⁶² Tigu Gabriela et al, Analysis of the cultural tourism trends and perspectives in Romania, ESSACHESS. Journal for Communication Studies, vol. 7, no. 1(13) / 2014, p. 196.

The Ministry of Culture and National Identity is responsible for the support and encouragement of cultural life and cultural institutions throughout the country. In the early years of the communist period, Romania's cultural institutions were generously supported by the government as it sought to gain prestige and to maintain control of the arts. For example, the Museum of Natural History and Archaeology in Constanța has an important collection of Greek and Roman artifacts from the ancient city of Tomis (7th century BCE). In addition to subsidizing cultural institutions, the Romanian government awards scholarships and other grants to artists, composers, and writers⁶³. Also, the National Museum of Romanian History, with a surface of over 8,000 square meters, the museum has approx. 60 valuable exhibition rooms. The permanent displays include a plaster cast of the entirety of Trajan's Column, the Romanian Crown Jewels, and the Pietroasele treasure. As of 2012, the museum is undergoing extensive restoration work and it is only partially open; a late medieval archaeological site was discovered under the building⁶⁴.



The Ministry of Culture and National Identity, Online source:

<https://www.agerpres.ro/cultura/2020/02/14/ministerul-culturii-anunta-lansarea-sesiunii-2020-a-programului-tezaure-umane-vii--449136>

⁶³ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Romania/Cultural-institutions>

⁶⁴ (in Romanian) <http://www.mnir.ro/index.php/muzeul-national-de-istorie-a-romaniei/>



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The National Museum of Romanian History, Online source:

<https://bucurestiulmeudrag.ro/fotografii/575f06a3-cc90-4d51-99c8-5afd592b13d5>

The Southeastern Region of Romanian rural area also disposes of reach tourist potential to be found in the Black Sea Cost and Danube Delta zone. Each area presents interest from the ethnographic point of view and folklore heritage, having particularity in the traditional customs. The National Association of Rural Ecological and Environmental Tourism founded in 1994 and a member of the European Federation of Rural Tourism - EUROGITES, is the national organization for tapping the potential of rural tourism. Now in Romania there are approximately 13 000 of rural communities which could offer settlement for accommodation. The main purpose of the ANTREC organization is to identify, develop and promote the Romanian hospitality and rural tourism. The lodging structure for rural tourism has two main specific forms: rural pensions, with a maxim of 10 rooms and 30 places; and agro-tourism pensions, being part of the inhabitants' farm and having the production capacity to provide 30% of the ingredients for meal and food⁶⁵.

⁶⁵ Negrusa Adina, Cosma Smaranda, Gica Oana, Analysis of the Main Romanian Cultural Tourism Products, Babes-Bolyai University from Cluj-Napoca, Proceedings of the 2nd WSEAS International Conference on CULTURAL HERITAGE and TOURISM, p. 55.



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Online source: <http://www.antrec.ro/>

The tourism potential of the Southeastern Region is related to the cultural heritage, which includes historical vestiges, religious and cultural buildings, monuments and museums. The religious objectives include a significant number of monasteries, located in all counties. Established for the most part in the past centuries, some of the monasteries in the South-East Region are often very valuable historically and / or artistically, some also offering accommodation facilities. Numerous historical vestiges, religious buildings, museums, monuments and tourist attractions attract tourists every year:

- The Pietroasele Treasure in Buzău;
 - Dacian settlement - Monteoru Culture (in the "Cetățuia" point), Dumbrăveni Commune, Căndesti village, Vrancea county;
 - The Histria Fortress (Constanța), the oldest Greek settlement on the territory of Romania, founded in 657 BC by Greek colonists, who came from Asia Minor. Now, it is called the "Romanian Pompeii";
 - Tomis Fortress in Constanța (6th century BC), which preserves valuable vestiges from the ancient port city; Constanța Aquarium, the first section of the Natural Science Museum Complex, located on the seafront on the Casino's cliff, in its immediate vicinity, is also the first public aquarium in Romania and was inaugurated on May 1, 1958. It is the largest institution of this kind in the country, although later other museums of natural sciences have set up sections with the same profile;
 - The Dolphinarium in Constanța, which started its activity on June 1, 1972, constituting the first museum-type of its kind in the country and the first in southeastern Europe at that time. In the amphitheater with swimming pool and in the covered basin, demonstrations with dolphins and sea lions are organized;
 - The Danube cliffs in the municipalities of Brăila and Galați is a promenade place where the modern constructions blend harmoniously with the architecture of the beginning of the 20th century (Brăila river station), the river landscape being completed by a rich collection of art monuments (sculptures);
 - The Botanical Garden in the municipality of Galați is part of the Museum Complex of the Natural Sciences of Galați, where 260,846 specimens of trees, shrubs and flowers can be admired, of 1,542 species, some very rare, which are on the way to extinction⁶⁶.
- Concerts, national and international festivals, competitions and other traditional events that take place in the South-East Development Region are another tourist attraction.

Ecotourism: An electric solar hybrid catamaran

The ecotourism sector, along with allied concepts such as sustainable tourism and alternative tourism, has emerged and matured since the mid-1980s as part of a broader response to the perceived environmental, economic and sociocultural costs of

⁶⁶ (in Romanian) http://www.adrse.ro/Regiunea/Turism_Patrimoniu.aspx

conventional laissez-faire mass tourism. Following some 15 years of theoretical and practical development, it is now widely acknowledged that ecotourism, a purportedly more benign alternative to laissez-faire mass tourism, entails three core criteria, namely, an emphasis on nature-based attractions, learning opportunities, and management practices that adhere to the principles of ecological, sociocultural and economic sustainability. First, ecotourism is primarily nature-based in terms of its attractions and products, with associated cultural influences – contemporary, historic and archaeological – constituting a significant ancillary component. Ecotourism products can range in scope from a ‘holistic’ emphasis on an entire ecosystem (with its associated cultural influences) to an ‘elemental’ focus on specific charismatic megafauna, megaf flora or megaliths (e.g. caves, volcanoes, mountains) that is largely driven by popular consumer image and demand. Ecotourism fosters learning opportunities, partly through the provision of formal product interpretation, but also through the maintenance of conditions (e.g. tranquility, trails designed to minimize visual contact with other walkers, etc.) that facilitate informal personal interactions with, and appreciation of, the natural environment and associated cultural influences. At a more profound level, effective interpretation may have a ‘transformative’ effect – that is, it may induce deeper understanding of the attraction and adherence to a more ethical and environmentalist ethos in the attitude and/or lifestyle of tourists⁶⁷.

To enable the comprehensive model of ecotourism that reflects this complexity, four main themes and objectives are proposed as cornerstones of the ecotourism concept. These are research and education, ecological health, community participation and development, and partnerships. A concept based on these distinct but interrelated themes will provide decision makers with the ability to generate and use information that is central to the planning and management of the protected area as well as the ecotourism network more generally⁶⁸.

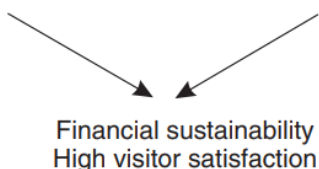
Research (benchmarking and monitoring) and education are essential aspects of a fully established ecotourism project, along with the involvement of several key players that may range from community individuals to international non-governmental

⁶⁷ David Fennell, David Weaver, The Ecotourism Concept and Tourism-Conservation Symbiosis, Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 2008, p. 374, online source: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/40618365_The_Ecotourism_Concept_and_Tourism-Conservation_Symbiosis

⁶⁸ Ibidem, p. 382.

agencies, the latter of which is deemed essential for administrative, promotional, and lobbying-based assistance. Ecotourists and stakeholders within the ecotourism as well as the conventional tourism industry, are counted as key players in this equation, rather than agents of negative impacts that hinder the goals of conservation⁶⁹.

Ecotourism Concept

Criteria	Comprehensive	Minimalist
Attractions:	Holistic (nature-based, cultural)	Elemental (nature-based)
Learning:	Deep understanding Transformational	Superficial understanding Non-transformational
Sustainability:	Enhancement Global Environmental, sociocultural	Status quo Site-specific Environmental
		
Financial sustainability High visitor satisfaction		

Comprehensive and minimalist ecotourism ideal types, online source:
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/40618365_The_Ecotourism_Concept_and_Tourism-Conservation_Symbiosis

Amongst the foci to be considered under ecological health that aim to address many of the most important ecological issues within protected areas are biodiversity conservation, and its various components, as well as rehabilitation of land and water. These foci may be park-specific (i.e. small-scale) or indicative of broader regional or global trends⁷⁰.

Protected areas, and hence ecotourisms cannot exist in isolation from the human systems that share the same space, and this has led to the belief that protected areas must, in some cases, engender a culture of balanced profitability. In this regard, the oft-quoted notion that 'wildlife stays because wildlife pays' is important because it suggests, in a more broadly based context, that resources must continue to be made available for those who make their livelihood in and around protected areas – spaces which remain as living, working landscapes for the support of populations in a sustainable fashion. This tactic has been recognized by international NGOs that have broadened their mandate beyond a focus on the establishment of reserves and the

⁶⁹ Id.

⁷⁰ Ibidem, p. 383.

protection of plants and animals contained within those reserves, to push for the necessity of local communities to become partners in the protection and viability of the area. By promoting economic incentives through jobs in and around the park, local communities are more likely to develop a stronger and vested interest in the long-term viability of the protected area, which may be further enhanced through collective interests in building capacity via shared knowledge, training, and technology transfer. The ecotourism concept supports the related belief that protected areas in the less developed world are not established primarily for the welfare of international tourists, but foremost for those who stand to be displaced from traditional economic enterprises because of tourism⁷¹.

For example, in Danube Delta, a boat tour agency Verada Tour built an electric solar hybrid catamaran out of respect for tourism and nature. This touristic boat prototype uses solar energy achieving a slow-paced route, with ecological efficiency, activating the electric propulsion inside the Delta, on quiet canals and lakes. Instead, in order to make the most of the precious time of tourists, on the great canals and on the Danube, the classic engine is used.

⁷¹ Ibidem, pp. 384-385.



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Online source: <http://www.antrectulcea.org/proiecte/catamaran-electric-hybrid-solar-un-prototip-de-nava-turistica-creata-de-verada-tour-din-respect-pentru-natura-si-turism/>

Cultural heritage tourism: archeological sites

Cultural heritage tourism is the fastest growing segment of the tourism industry because there is a trend toward an increase specialization among tourists. This trend is evident in the rise in the volume of tourists who seek adventure, culture, history, archaeology and interaction with local people. Cultural heritage tourism is important for various reasons; it has a positive economic and social impact, it establishes and reinforces identity, it helps preserve the cultural heritage, with culture as an instrument it facilitates harmony and understanding among people, it supports culture and helps renew tourism. The conservation of cultural resources, accurate interpretation of resources, authentic visitors' experience, and the stimulation of the earned revenues of cultural resources are all objectives that can be kept in mind. Heritage tourism involves visiting historical or industrial sites that may include old canals, railways, battlegrounds, river markings and so forth. The overall purpose is to gain an appreciation of the past. Heritage Tourism can also be attributed to historical events that have been dramatized to make them more entertaining. Heritage tourism focuses

on certain historical events, rather than presenting a balanced view of that historical period. Its aim may not always be the presentation of accurate historical facts, as opposed to economically developing the site and surrounding area. As a result, heritage tourism can be seen as a blend of education, entertainment, and preservation⁷².

The Southeastern Region of Romania has a rich cultural heritage tourism, especially through its archeological sites. These are The archaeological site Roman Castrum from Pietroasele, The archaeological site Dacian Fortress from Gruia Dăriei, The archaeological site Durostorum Fortress, The archaeological site Histria Fortress, The archaeological site Capidava Fortress, The archaeological site Turkish Gate from Galați, The archaeological site Aegyssus Fortress, The archaeological site Dinogetia Fortress, The archaeological site Argamum Fortress, The archaeological site Enisala Fortress, The archaeological site Noviodunum Fortress, The archaeological site Halmyris Fortress.

The archaeological site Roman Castrum from Pietroasele

The Roman Camp from Pietroasele is located in Pietroasele village from Buzău county. It is a historical monument that was not dated with certainty. Specialists believe it was built by the Emperor Constantin the Great in 332. The Castrum was occupied by the Roman Legion No. XI Claudia, brought from Durostorum (an area that today is close to Ostrov, Constanța county). The Roman Castrum from Pietroasele, discovered in the '90s, is an important archaeological and historic site. Archaeologists found a necropolis, coins dated during the reign of the emperor Constantin the IInd and other objects which formed the famous Pietroasa Culture⁷³.

⁷² Nature and Outdoor Tourism Ontario, online source:

https://noto.ca/info_for_your_business/experiential_tourism

⁷³ <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/castrul-roman-de-la-pietroasele/>



Online source: <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/castrul-roman-de-la-pietroasele/>

The archaeological site Dacian Fortress from Gruiu Dării

The Dacian Fortress from Gruiu Dării is located on the way to Pietroasa Mica, Buzău county. After they lived here for a period of time, the Dacians transformed this fortress into a religious center. The archaeological research revealed a 4th century a. Ch. tomb and, in the northern side of the fortress, a Neolithic settlement, which confirms the theory that underneath this fortress there was a Neolithic settlement which disappeared after a fire or a war⁷⁴.



Online source: <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/cetatea-dacica-de-la-gruiul-darii/>

The archaeological site Durostorum Fortress

⁷⁴ <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/cetatea-dacica-de-la-gruiul-darii/>

Durostorum Fortress was both a fortress and a Roman city, located on the right bank of the Danube, in Silistra which today belongs to Bulgaria. It can be easily reached from Ostrov commune, Constanța county. The Fortress was built between the ancient cities Sucidava and Axiopolis and was part of the Roman fortress complex that defended the Lower Danube from north-eastern European invasions⁷⁵.



Online source: <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/cetatea-durostorum/>

The archaeological site Histria Fortress

The antique city of Histria or Istria was a Greek colony in today's Constanța county. Histria Fortress is considered the oldest urban settlement from Romania. Specialists say it was founded around 630 b. Ch. The entire complex is a whole of layers that "talk" about various cultures that lived here. The city of Histria had a continuous development of 1,300 years, from the Greek period to the Byzantine period. Today, tourists can visit the defensive wall with towers and bastions and ruins of some basilicas, Roman thermae and a few settlements. In 1982 was created The Histria Archaeologic Museum, which is subordinated to The Museum of National History and Archaeology from Constanța. The museum from Histria exhibits objects found across time by archaeologists in the site of Histria⁷⁶.

⁷⁵ <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/cetatea-durostorum/>

⁷⁶ <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/cetatea-histria/>



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Online source: <https://www.romanian-journeys.com/en/attraction/histria-fortress>

The archaeological site Capidava Fortress

The Capidava Fortress is located near the village with the same name, in Constanța county. Originally, the fortress was an important Dacian center, located on the right bank of the river Danube. After the Roman conquest, however, it became a castrum and part of Moesia Inferior. The name means old settlement in the Goth language. The fortress was destroyed by the Goths in the 3rd century and rebuilt in the next. In the 10th century, the fortress was modernized by the Byzantines, but the 1306 fire caused by nomads led to its permanent abandonment⁷⁷.

⁷⁷ <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/cetatea-capidava/>



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Online source: <https://elements.envato.com/capidava-fortress-romania-CPBJAWN>

The archaeological site Turkish Gate from Galați

The history of the Turkish Gate is close related to the history of Galați. It is a historic monument and dates from the end of the 18th century – the beginning of the 19th century. Made of bricks, the Gate was the entry point to an old inn from the city. Unfortunately, today, only the Gate exists⁷⁸.



Online source: <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/poarta-turceasca-din-Galați/>

The archaeological site Aegyssus Fortress

⁷⁸ <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/poarta-turceasca-din-Galați/>



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Located on the Monument Hill in the North-Eastern section of Tulcea, the fortress was built at the end of the 4th century B.C. Its name, of Celtic origin, derived from a legendary founder, Caspius Aegyssos. Reporting the events of the year 12 A.D., when the town was attacked by the Getae, Ovidius called it the attribute uetus urbs (old town). At the beginning of 2nd century, the town was included in the Danubian limes (boundary). Then, starting with the 3rd century, it became an important military headquarters. The 6th century finds it as an episcopal residence. Urban life knows an end in the first quarter of the 7th century and a revival in the 10th and 11th centuries. Currently, on the Monument Hill, several archaeological complexes from the late Roman epoch can be visited. Many archaeological materials, discovered during the research organized in the second half of the 20th century, can be found in the permanent exhibition of the Museum of History and Archaeology found nearby⁷⁹.



Online source: <https://planiada.ro/destinatii/tulcea/cetatea-aegyssus-25>

The archaeological site Dinogetia Fortress

Dinogetia was a Geto – Dacian settlement and then a Roman fortress situated on the southern bank of the Danube river. It is situated 11 kilometers from Galați. Its military structure was formed by thick stone walls, 14 towers, grain cellars, Roman baths, one

⁷⁹ <https://www.icemtl.ro/aegyssus-en/>

church and a praetorium. Specialists say that this Fortress was often attacked by barbaric populations. Across time, the archaeological research revealed various objects from that time, which have a great scientific value. The archaeological site is situated in Jijila village, Tulcea county⁸⁰.



Online source: <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/cetatea-dinogetia/>

The archaeological site Argamum Fortress

The Argamum Fortress (its Latin name) or Orgame (its Byzantin name) is an archaeological site in the eastern part of Tulcea county, Jurilovca commune. Most part of the archaeological site, of almost 100 hectares, is still covered, but discoveries and archaeological research are being made constantly. The Argamum Fortress is the oldest settlement from Romania because it dates from the beginning of the 6th century B. C⁸¹.

⁸⁰ <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/cetatea-dinogetia/>

⁸¹ <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/cetatea-argamum/>



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Online source: <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/cetatea-argamum/>

The archaeological site Enisala Fortress

The name of Enisala comes from the Turkish “yeni” (which means “new”) and the regional word “settlement” or “village”, meaning “new settlement”. The purpose of the medieval fortress was defensive, military and to supervise the area. It was built under the Byzantin Empire between the 13 – 14th centuries. Then, The Fortress entered into the defensive system of Valachia and after that it became an Ottoman Empire garrison. However, it was abandoned by the Turks, but it was the only medieval fortress which resisted the Russian-Turkish wars throughout Dobrodja⁸².



⁸² <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/cetatea-enisala/>

Online source: <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/cetatea-enisala/>

The archaeological site Noviodunum Fortress

The Noviodunum Fortress is situated 2 kilometers from Isaccea, Tulcea county. It is a Roman castrum and is considered one of the oldest fortresses in the region. Nowadays, the castrum is almost entirely covered, but archaeological research is regularly done in order to reveal this important monument. Due to research, archeologists found important objects with great scientific value⁸³.



Online source: <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/cetatea-noviodunum/>

The archaeological site Halmyris Fortress

Halmyris Fortress is located in the area of Murighiol village in the village with the same name. It was under the occupation of both the Romans and the Byzantines. It is assumed that here the first Roman fortification was built, most probably by two detachments of the Roman legions "Italica" and "Claudia", around the period 101-106 AD. The name of the fortress is of Greek origin and would be it translates as "brine", which refers to the salt water of the water on which it was raised. It was the easternmost point of the Ottoman Empire on the Danube border. It had 15 defense towers, three gates and covered 2 hectares. On August 15, 2001, Romanian researcher and archaeologist Mihail Zahariade, who dedicated his entire career to studying the fortress, discovered a crypt with the oldest remains of Christian martyrs on Romanian soil (Saints Epictetus and Astion), which gives it a unique apart from the fortress⁸⁴.

⁸³ <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/cetatea-noviodunum/>

⁸⁴ <https://planiada.ro/destinatii/tulcea/cetatea-halmyris-34>



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Online source: <https://planiada.ro/destinatii/tulcea/cetatea-halmyris-34>

Nature tourism: Danube Delta and Black Sea

The Danube Delta, the second largest delta in Europe (after that of the Volga River), is a special attraction of great scientific value and high tourist potential, especially after its inclusion in 1990, together with other adjacent natural areas, in the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve. The natural and cultural values of the Danube Delta are valuable resources by practicing the following types of tourism:

- Tourism for rest and recreation (practiced through the services of tour operators);
- Knowledge tourism (itinerant), practiced either individually or through organized excursions exploring the variety of the wild landscape, combining rides with manually propelled boats on picturesque canals with hiking along canals or on river and marine ridges, etc;
- Specialized - scientific tourism (for specialists, researchers, students);
- Agrotourism (tourists are hosted and accompanied by locals to visit the Danube Delta);
- Tourism for water sports (Crișan locality);
- Tourism for practicing sport fishing highly appreciated by visitors of all ages, in any season, for any species of fish, and sport hunting.

- Specific for the Danube Delta is niche tourism (eg bird watching, photo-safari). In the Danube Delta there are rare species that are missing from other areas of the continent: 30 types of ecosystems and 5,429 species - of which 1,839 species of flora and 3,590 species of fauna, considering that in the Danube Delta 331 species of water birds live which include most of the European population of common pelican (*Pelecanus onocrotalus*) and crested pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*), 60% of the world population of small cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pygmaeus*) as well as 50% of the world population of red-tailed goose (*Branta ruficollis*) (during winter)⁸⁵.

The Danube Delta has become increasingly popular, because of the growing worldwide interest in ecology and conservation. Special features of interest to tourists include the lakes and underground cave systems and the fine churches and monasteries, with frescoes dating from the 14th to the 16th century, that are found in Southeastern region. More generally, the folk costumes and the ancient folklore of Romanians, notably in the Southeastern Region, provide a reminder of the country's long traditions⁸⁶.

The tourist landscape of the Black Sea coast is rarely found along the coast of the European continent, being of a specific uniqueness. The Black Sea coast is also famous for practicing balneoclimatic tourism. The complex consisting of water, sand, air and sun has therapeutic effects, doing miracles for people who are looking for a beneficial place for health. The air is well ionized with marine aerosols which, together with the influence of the waves, generate special thalassotherapy treatments; moreover, some resorts such as Eforie Nord, Mangalia, Costinesti, Neptun, Techirghiol are both recreational and balneoclimatic resorts. The numerous services offered on the coast (children's clubs, indoor and outdoor pools, children's pools equipped with slides, playgrounds, green spaces set up for outdoor sports activities, facilities for SPA services and fitness rooms, etc.) have led to the development of leisure tourism. With a low salinity compared to other continental seas (only 17%), tourists can practice underwater and nautical sports⁸⁷.

The Romanian coastline of the Black Sea is between Midia head at the north and Old Vama at the south, having a length of 245 km. The northern part is the Danube Delta

⁸⁵ (in Romanian) http://www.adrse.ro/Regiunea/Turism_Patrimoniu.aspx

⁸⁶ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Romania/Trade#ref276015>

⁸⁷ (in Romanian) http://www.adrse.ro/Regiunea/Turism_Patrimoniu.aspx

Biosphere Reserve, Europe's largest nature reserve. The southern part consists of an almost uninterrupted chain of tourist resorts, alternating with towns and harbours⁸⁸. The Black Sea coast is inherently connected to the region of Tulcea and Constanța counties that had a strategic location on the ancient map of Europe. It was on the route of main commercial roads that linked the Northern Sea and the Black Sea, but also the Mediterranean ports with the Eastern world of the continent. The Greeks were the first to seize the opportunity and colonize this land, sometime in the 7th century BC, followed in a few centuries by the Roman Empire. Visiting the ancient ruins from Histria and Jurilovca is, in fact, a great half-day trip away from the noisy beaches. If you have more time take a detour to Adamclisi to admire the monument built in the honor of victorious Traian, the Roman Emperor who defeated the Dacians almost two thousand years ago⁸⁹.

On the Romanian coastline there are more than 150.000 of seats for hosting in hotels, boarding houses and country houses. placed on the length of the european road E 87, the stations of the Romanian coast line are: Navodari, Mamaia, North Eforie, South Eforie, Neptun-Olimp, Venus, Saturn, Vama Veche, 2 Mai, Mangalia, Techirghiol, Costinesti. In this moment, the Romanian Coastline is in a competition with the Mediteranean coastline, being famous for his high quality, soft dust. The Black Sea has a low saltness compared to other continental seas, and , allows the tourists to swim under the water in good conditions.

The southic zone of the coastline is frecventated by tourists even in the ending of the XIX century. Starting with 1959 the stations of the coastline have been permanent modernized: Mamaia, Eforie North, Eforie South, Teghirghiol, Costinesti, neptun, Olimp, Aurora head, Venus, Saturn, Mangalia are the favorite destinations of the tourists from everywhere.

⁸⁸ Stănică, A., Panin, N. and G. Caraivan, 2013. Romania. In: Pranzini and Williams (eds), Coastal erosion and protection in Europe, Routledge, Oxon, pp. 396-412.

⁸⁹ <https://www.uncover-romania.com/attractions/nature/black-sea/>



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Online source: <https://www.thehotelspecialist.it/the-romanian-summer-in-Constanța/#.XoM71ogzaUk>

In this moment, the capacity of hosting of the coastline is of aprox 150.000 seats. Famous for a vacation festivals dedicater to the teenagers, Costinesti is situated at 31km south from Constanța, near the Costinesti and Schitu villages. Those had been created at the end of XIX century by the german colonists. The watering place has been conctructed in 1949, when it was arranged for the first camping vacation for kids. Arheologic obiectives to visit in the coastline are: Histria Stronghold situated on the seaside of the Sinoie lake, the ruins of cetatea Tomis and Callatis, the Arheologic museum from Mangalia, the history museum from Constanța, Moscheia from Constanța and from Mangalia, the church Saint Petru and Pavel from the hystoric zone of the Constanța City.

Mangalia Tourist Port is the only tourist port in the Black Sea arranged with non-reimbursable European funds destined for pleasure boats, at European technical and quality standards that will allow it to be included in the most prestigious networks of Mediterranean tourist ports and the Black Sea. The final result of the project is a modern marine, designed according to a design that combines the particularities of the area with all the specific advantages, in the lines of the general prescriptions regarding a port arrangement, the prescriptions respected by all the major tourist ports in the area⁹⁰.

⁹⁰ (in Romanian) <http://mangalia.ro/index.php/2012/10/04/portul-turistic-2/>



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Online source: <http://mangalia.ro/index.php/2012/10/04/portul-turistic-2/>

One of the major projects implemented in Mangalia was the realization of the tourist and leisure port. Direct access from the docks, direct connection to the city, positioning in a space protected from strong winds and storms, the wide area suitable for water sports, all these features make Mangalia a second Monte Carlo and one of the largest tourist ports from the Black Sea area. The nautical tourism acquires an internal character, but also international, including the Mangalia Tourist Port in a circuit of the Black Sea. For example, the route Istanbul-Varna-Mangalia-Odessa-Yalta is considered, which can be done by coastal navigation. This kind of circuit can be extended, including other localities - tourist ports - on the Black Sea shore. From Mangalia Port there are 2 days of sailing to Odessa, 1 day to the Bulgarian port of Varna and a few hours to Constanța or the Danube Delta, which will surely attract many tourists of this type of travel. Increasing the port's mooring capacity will certainly allow Mangalia to be included in the Black Sea water tourism circuit by organizing a wider range of sports and larger activities. For example, in August 2008 the Mangalia Tourist Port successfully hosted the first edition of the Bavaria Yachting Expo, for small and large vessels, for sale. Another event organized by Mangalia City Hall in collaboration with the Romanian Yachting Federation took place on September 3-8, 2008 under the name of the Balkan Yachting Games, which was attended by 21 participants from 9 countries, with over 150 boats. Between 13 and 14 September 2008, the National Offshore Sailing Championship was also held, an event organized

by the Royal Romanian Yacht Club. At the same time, the Mangalia Tourist Port can be a base for the coastal tourist ships that will sail along the Romanian coast, with stops at Neptune, Costinesti, Eforie, Constanța, Mamaia or Midia. The membership of Mangalia Municipality in the Union of Old Greek Ports in the Mediterranean and Black Sea basins since 1998 will facilitate the inclusion of the Tourist Port in the line of such offers in Europe.

The seaside of the Black Sea offers very good conditions of the tourism festival in order of the mineral waters, therapeutic muds offered from the lakes from the neighbourhood of the coastline: Techirghiol, Tatlageac, Neptun, Belona, Siutghiol, Corbu, Sinoe, Navodari and Tasaul⁹¹. The towns of Năvodari, Mamaia, and Eforie were erected after World War II, and the older settlements of Mangalia and Techirghiol have undergone extensive redevelopment. Lakes—among which Lakes Tașaul, Siutghiol, Agigea, Techirghiol, and Mangalia are the most significant—further enhance the attractions of the region. Several of them contain deposits of mud and sulfurous hot springs believed to have therapeutic properties.

Siriu Lake is considered an important tourist attraction in the region, as the lake with its clear waters is surrounded by hills covered by forests offering tourists arriving in the area a breathtaking landscape. Moreover, travelers can practice various water sports here; they can ride the raft or sunbathe on the beach. The lake is also appreciated by those who love fishing, because the waters here are full of goldfish, trout, carp and chub. Near the lake there is a small resort appreciated for its thermal springs: Baile Siriu and a lesser-known attraction, the Vultures' Lake, a rare beauty, located at 1,420 meters altitude, filled with trout. The thermal waters have very weakly mineralized springs based on three ferrous mineral – low bicarbonate, chlorine, sulfur⁹².

⁹¹ <https://www.infoghidromania.com/coastline.html>

⁹² <https://www.romaniajournal.ro/travel/siriu-barrier-lake-a-picturesque-scenery/>



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Siriu Hot Spring, online source: <https://turismBuzău.ro/baile-siriu/>

Hidden in the heart of a forest on the Danube Delta's shore, in the Hârșova area, Constanța county, the sulphurous thermal springs "Puturoasa" are a unique place of relaxation. They were accidentally discovered more than 50 years ago and have been attracting tourists ever since. The asphalt splits into two deep valleys between the hills at the entrance to Hârșova. In the distance, the forest that hides in its heart the sulphurous springs, named by the locals "Puturoasa" because of the strong odor of brimstone that emanates, resembles the mouth of a mythological giant⁹³. The water has a natural thermality of up to 40 degrees Celsius. It is a mesothermal oligomineral water. Substances such as calcium, sulfur and magnesium are included in the water composition. It is very good for rheumatic problems.

⁹³ https://adevarul.ro/locale/slobozia/izvoarele-termale-puturoase-capatul-dobrogei-atrag-mii-oameni-turistii-vin-relaxeze-inima-padurii-1_5722fdaa5ab6550cb8711d69/index.html



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Sulphurous Thermal Springs "Puturoasa", online source:

https://adevarul.ro/locale/slobozia/izvoarele-termale-puturoase-capatul-dobrogei-atrag-mii-oameni-turistii-vin-relaxeze-inima-padurii-1_5722fdaa5ab6550cb8711d69/index.html

The Salt Lake (in Romanian: Lacul Sărat), known worldwide as a source of health, is located in the Chișcani rural town, only 5 km from the Brăila municipality. It's said that the miraculous therapeutic properties of the lake's water were discovered centuries ago by Prince Vlad the Impaler (Vlad Tepes)⁹⁴. This place is appreciated from a tourist point of view for its good positioning in nature and for the healing properties that have the sapropelic sludge and the hypertonic mineral water, the source being the Salt Lake itself. There is also a spa complex that operates throughout the year and offers accommodation, meals served in the restaurant, soccer field, tennis⁹⁵. The lake, formed on an old Danube river course, which is now completely isolated, is surrounded by 70 forest hectares that mitigate the steppe climate. The water depth varies between 0.6 and 1.80 meters, and the bottom of the lake is entirely covered by healing sludge highly mineralized⁹⁶. The lake contains significant reserves of sapropelic mud and hypertonic mineral water, with sulfur, chlorine, magnesium and bromine compounds, mineralization of 70-84 grams per liter. The main natural curing factors of the resort

⁹⁴ <https://www.agerpres.ro/engleza-destinatie-romania/2014/09/23/destination-romania-salt-lake-near-Brăila-miraculous-place-where-tepes-used-to-cure-his-troops-12-59-33>

⁹⁵ <http://www.romanianresorts.ro/statiunea-lacu-sarat>

⁹⁶ <https://www.agerpres.ro/engleza-destinatie-romania/2014/09/23/destination-romania-salt-lake-near-Brăila-miraculous-place-where-tepes-used-to-cure-his-troops-12-59-33>

are: the lake's water with high contents of sulfate, chloride, sodium, magnesium, a mineralization of 83.955 mg/liter, sapropelic mud that contains 41 percent mineral substances and 39 percent organic substances rich in hydrogen sulfide⁹⁷.



The Salt Lake of Brăila, online source: <http://walkthiswayBrăila.ro/salt-lake-of-Brăila/>

Gastronomy

The connection between tourism and gastronomy is very strong. Food is a crucial factor not only because it covers the biological needs of the tourists' but also because it contributes to the quality of their experience, and thus it can mark the overall travel experience. The classic definition of gastronomy referred to the study of 'good eating'⁹⁸. The term gastronomy tourism was first proposed in 1998 by Long to express that tourists can experience other cultures via food⁹⁹. According to Wolf, gastronomy tourism defined as "travel in order to search for, and enjoy prepared food and drink.... unique and memorable gastronomic experiences"¹⁰⁰. Until recently, food as a tourist attraction was considered as a secondary resource but nowadays, food tourism has been identified as a primary activity and form a concrete segment of the tourism industry. As a result, many tourist destinations have begun to focus on their local food

⁹⁷ Id.

⁹⁸ R. Scarpato, "Gastronomy as a tourist product: the perspective of gastronomy studies", in *Tourism and Gastronomy*, Edited by A. M. Hjalager and G. Richards. Routledge, London, 2002.

⁹⁹ M. L. Long, *Culinary Tourism*, University Press of Kentucky, USA, 2004.

¹⁰⁰ E. Wolf, "Culinary tourism: Tasty economic proposition", 2002, <https://worldfoodtravel.org/>

and cuisine as an important element and pull factor in the promotion of their destination¹⁰¹.

In the Southeastern Region of Romania, there are several places where gastronomy is diversified and covers both Romanian traditional dishes and other cultural gastronomy.

Matthew's fishery (in Romanian: Pescaria lui Matei)

After the second bridge from Agigea was built over the Danube-Black Sea Canal, it became more accessible, and "Matei's Fishery" became in just four years one of the most popular fishing restaurants on the coast, with constant customers regardless of season or season. The restaurant is not in the tourist area, but on a more commercial route, which can be confused with a truck parking, but its location on the rocks and the sea view have quickly gained its popularity. As well as its own source of fresh fish, which made those who passed the threshold recommend the fishery in Agigea¹⁰².



Online source: <http://pink-blog.ro/pareri-despre-pescaria-lui-matei-agigea/>

¹⁰¹ Nikolaos TRIHAS, Anna KYRIAKAKI, Smaragda ZAGKOTS, Local cuisine and agricultural products as a means of enhancing tourists' gastronomic experiences in Greece, 1st International Conference on Experiential Tourism, 9-11 October 2015, online source: <http://imic2015.conferences.gr/wp-content/uploads/TRIHAS.pdf>

¹⁰² (in Romanian) <https://www.pescarialuimatei.ro/>

Serbian Tavern (in Romanian: Taverna Sârbului)

Serbian gastronomy is the strongest example that the tastes of a nation can cross the ages not by altering themselves, but by enriching themselves from those who have been along the way. In the crucible of this national cuisine, with a thousand unmistakable flavors, history has thrown the tastes of other recipes. The Ottoman one - in turn a mixture of culinary cultures. The Greek - old since the world and always renewed. The Austrian or the Hungarian - because while men were fighting their wars, women shared recipes. The Italian - gentle delights. But especially those of the Slavic nations from the southwest of the ripple water of the Danube. The restaurant is perhaps one of the richest gastronomies of the Eastern half of Europe, having for each client a dish to be savored, sweeter or spicier, but always tasty! Among the delicacies, we find a strong Slivovitz, the drink of the ancient heroes of Serbia, the traditional preparations of Serbia and of the Slavic world of the Balkans: ćevapčići - Serbian correspondent of the Romanian "mititei", the pljeskavica (to which some call it The Serbian hamburger) sausages, Sarma and moussaka, in Serbian style¹⁰³.



¹⁰³ (in Romanian) <https://Constanta.tavernasarbului.ro/despre-taverna-sarbului/>

Online source: <https://Constanța.tavernasarbului.ro/despre-taverna-sarbului/>

Life Harbour Restaurant

The restaurant consists of two areas, the first one includes a club and terrace located near the checkpoints and with a capacity of 50 people, inside, and 60 outside, and the second, a floating restaurant, with a capacity of 70 people. The spectacular location, between yachts, of the two areas of the restaurant, offers a unique setting and makes this location a trend-setter in the tourist field. Life Harbor Restaurant offers international-specific menus and cuisine, including freshly caught Black Sea fish. During the warm season, room-service also works, both for accommodation spaces and for those who want to dine on their own boats¹⁰⁴.



Online source: <http://lifeharbour.ro/club-restaurant>

Ovid Island Restaurant

Nature created Ovidiu Island thousands of years ago, and people created legends around it. This is a modern and traditional place at the same time. Ovidiu island located on Lake Siutghiol at 5000m from the shore of Mamaia resort and 500m from Ovidiu city, is one of the most unique places of the Romanian coast, being the only tourist objective that operates on an island. Currently, the tourist complex has 20 accommodation places for tourists, in 10 3-star cottages, each equipped with double bed, own bathroom, air conditioning, television, cable, minibar.

The rustic restaurant also satisfies the most demanding tastes through the ambiance and the traditional Romanian dishes and the fish specialties. It is the ideal place for business dinners, different special family or professional events. In addition to the 400-

¹⁰⁴ (in Romanian) <http://lifeharbour.ro/club-restaurant>

seat restaurant, the complex also includes a Country Terrace with 150 seats that complement the island's enchanting environment. The "Ovidius" ship is a novelty for the Romanian coastline, with 3-star facilities that transport tourists to the island, but at the same time offers unique walks on the lake. The steam being functional throughout the year, festive or mundane events can be organized within the restaurant, which holds 50 seats, but also on the terrace, which has 80 seats¹⁰⁵.



Online source: Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/pg/insulaovidiumamaia/>

Nikos Greek Taverna

All those who walked along the shore of the great Aegean fell in love with the preparations of the Greek taverns. That is why Nikos Greek Taverna tried their best to bring the flavor of these dishes to the Black Sea shore. After countless beautiful and unique experiences of the chain of taverns opened in Constanța, Nikos Greek Taverna want to take the story of the tavern further. The smell of authentic spices and the multitude of preparations made after Greek recipes will convince you that you are truly on Greek lands. At Nikos Greek Tavern you will be greeted with the fusion of flavors of a diversified menu, which will guarantee an authentic Greek culinary experience¹⁰⁶.

¹⁰⁵ (in Romanian) <https://www.facebook.com/pg/insulaovidiumamaia/about/>

¹⁰⁶ (in Romanian) http://Constanta.nikosgreektaverna.ro/#about_nikos



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Nikos Greek Taverna on the Bd. Tomis Boulevard no. 44, online source:

<http://Constanța.nikosgreektaverna.ro/>



Nikos Greek Taverna on Mamaia Nord, online source: <http://Constanța.nikosgreektaverna.ro/>

The Fishermen's Stop (in Romanian: Popasul pescarilor)

The Fishermen's Stop is one of the oldest fishery restaurants on the south of the Romanian coast, being opened in 1996. The fish served is fished in the early hours of the Black Sea in the morning by our fishermen or in the lake behind the restaurant¹⁰⁷.

¹⁰⁷ <http://www.popasul-pescarilor.ro/restaurant/>



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Online source: <http://www.popasul-pescarilor.ro/restaurant/>

Babel - Mediterranean Fish and Lebanese Restaurant

Babel is a Lebanese restaurant, located in a picturesque place in Năvodari, secluded, discreet, right by the sea. The magnificent view accompanies the Lebanese dishes, prepared with great care according to the original recipes. It is the place where you can discover Lebanese cuisine from A to Z. Fish is always fresh, and vegetables, eggs, rams and poultry come from their own Bioferma¹⁰⁸.



Online source: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/BabelRestaurantLibanez/photos/>

Mediterranean Seafood Restaurant - Caru' cu Scoici

A place of story, a destination for gourmets, a magical land for children and a garden with a great fragrance, this is what best describes the relaxed universe within the Caru' cu Scoici, a Mediterranean fishing restaurant. Located on the seafront, in the Venus

¹⁰⁸ (in Romanian) <https://www.facebook.com/pg/BabelRestaurantLibanez/about/>



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resort, at the exit towards Cap Aurora, the restaurant offers a varied menu inspired by the famous cuisines in the Mediterranean area. Preparations of fish and seafood, but also other delicacies are prepared with great skill by the chefs of the restaurant. The fishing restaurant is arranged in the form of an airy terrace, lined with flowers and greenery, which descend smoothly towards the beach. At every visit, the sea keeps you company with its smooth breeze and the waves you can admire in the area. Even for children, the visit to this restaurant is delicious! For them, the restaurant created tasty menus and set up a colorful playground where time is measured by laughter, fun and appetite¹⁰⁹.



Online source: <https://carucuscoici.ro/galerie.html>

Island Restaurant from Neptun

The Island Restaurant, opened in 1968, is located on the island of a lake from Neptune. It is one of the few places where fish from Delta, seafood, but also classic dishes of beef, pork, chicken, pasta and many other Romanian dishes can be served. But what it is special about this restaurant is the unique location on the coast. Once you arrive on the island you can choose to serve a meal on the little ships, on one of the pontoons on the water, near the waterfall, under a willow tree, in a booth or a verandah. The coolness of the lake and the sea breeze are felt all over the island¹¹⁰.

¹⁰⁹ (in Romanian) <https://carucuscoici.ro/despre.html>

¹¹⁰ (in Romanian) <https://www.insulaneptun.ro/restaurant/>



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Online source: <https://www.insulaneptun.ro/restaurant/>

The Gulf Fishermen's Restaurant

The Gulf Fishermen's Restaurant was born from the need to enjoy the beauty of nature and from a great desire to express the culinary art through tasty dishes of fresh fish and seafood. Located on Agigea beach, far from the bustle of urban civilization, the restaurant has a Mediterranean style and it keeps its tradition¹¹¹.



Online source: <https://www.golfulpescarilor.ro/>

Water Gate – A Fish Restaurant near the Black Sea

The Water Gate (in Romanian: Poarta Apelor) is a restaurant with a fishery specific, located in Eforie Sud, near the Black Sea. The varied fish products are lovingly prepared by the chefs for all tastes. You will find in the menu a variety of fishery products that will delight the taste buds, prepared on the plate or fried, tasty brine, fish

¹¹¹ (in Romanian) <https://www.golfulpescarilor.ro/>



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salads, fish soups and soups, in aromatic herb crust or salt crust. The seafood is prepared with great care to conquer you from the first bite, but also the tagliatelle with seafood that can delight your senses. You can also delight in preparations of chicken, beef, pork or rat. Water Gate is a restaurant ready to delight you with fresh fish products and a pleasant atmosphere near the Black Sea!¹¹²



Online source: <https://www.facebook.com/PoartaApelor/>

Blue Aqua Restaurant

The organic architecture of the restaurants in Galați represents a combination of the natural elements with the service areas, in a perfect symbiosis that are mutually enhancing. Asymmetrical groups in the open plan, is a feature of the design applied by one of the owners, Sorin Dragan being in love with the organic shapes and nature, continuously developing a concept in which they filter light and punctuate the colors, creating a coherent and seductive ensemble for tasting. The central terrace offers

¹¹² <https://www.eforieonline.ro/restaurantul-pescaresc-poarta-apelor-eforie-sud.html>

intimacy to those who cross our threshold, eliminates the separation of the interior and exterior space, thus achieving the maximum freedom of expression of those who taste our preparations, while maintaining harmony with the environment. With the passage of time and the evolution of the culinary techniques of preparing fish products, from smoking the products until their marination (the process of soaking foods in a seasoned, often acidic, liquid before cooking), the owners thought to transport the wild fish to the more remote areas, to satisfy even the most demanding gourmets. The owners took the initiative to take advantage of the rich freshwater fish and opened the first restaurants, where they gathered classic or traditional recipes, original and innovative. Later, they combined them with other bio-certified products, in a tasteful explosion with seafood and other wonders on the shores of the Mediterranean. Because there is plenty, taken directly from the fishermen on the banks of the Danube, we can delight the taste buds with the most refined dishes or the most common recipes, using exclusively extra virgin olive oil, olives harvested from the hills of Tuscany or vegetables grown in a bio environment by the Romanian villagers¹¹³.



Online source: <https://www.blueacqua.ro/Galați/galerie-foto-Galați>

¹¹³ (in Romanian) <https://www.blueacqua.ro/Galați/povestea-blue-acqua>



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Kingfisher Bar (in Romanian: Ivan Pescar Fish Bar)

Ivan Pescar Fish Bar from Tulcea offers fresh fish dishes from Danube Delta and Black Sea, cooked by Lipovans chefs. Ivan Pescar is a small bird of an almost electric blue, a kind of Delta hummingbird, known internationally as Kingfisher. The owner borrowed his name because Ivan Pescar is not only an exclusive fish restaurant, but a declaration of love for Danube Delta. The restaurant is a project born from friendship and shared passion for delta tastes and scents, local gastronomy and the delta's intangible heritage. Ivan Pescar offers a sincere experience, based on the quality and freshness of the fish. The dishes are cooked respecting the recipes of the place and the prohibition periods, from fresh, local and seasonal fish, from responsible catches, because we protect our future fish sources¹¹⁴.



¹¹⁴ (in Romanian) <https://www.ivanpescar.ro/povesteanoastra>



Online source: <https://www.facebook.com/IvanPescar/photos>

2. ASSESSING THE TOURISM GROWTH POTENTIAL OF LOCAL SILK ROAD CULTURES

2.1. Assessment of the tourism growth potential of local Silk Road Cultures: Situation Analysis

2.1.1. SILC Situation Analysis

2.1.1.1. Survey Area in Romania: Situation Analysis - Description of local tourism supply linked to the Silk Road

The first step in assessing tourism supply is the situation analysis, so as to collect and assess information on a wide range of aspects related to tourism supply (heritage sites, business structure, infrastructure, etc.). The situation analysis also gathers the views of all those likely to be implicated in tourism development and provides a mechanism for reaching a consensus on how to proceed.

An extensive socioeconomic analysis of the study areas, following by an in-depth assessment of the Silk Road Cultural footprint comprise the main tools toward this objective. Their identification will be based on the delineation of the main categories of tangible and intangible Silk Road cultural heritage, according to the definition of UNESCO and the categorization of the WTO. On the above basis the main Silk Road cultural assets identified that are related to local tourism potential aspects are assessed and described, leading to the elaboration of tourism potential assessment inventories for SILC Project study area – the Southeastern Region of Romania.

Natural features

Characteristic and attractive landscapes

The Romanian coastline of the Black Sea is between Midia head at the north and Old Vama at the south, having a length of 245 km. The northern part is the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, Europe's largest nature reserve. The southern part consists of an almost uninterrupted chain of tourist resorts, alternating with towns and harbours¹¹⁵. The Black Sea coast is inherently connected to the region of Tulcea and

¹¹⁵ Stănică, A., Panin, N. and G. Caraivan, 2013. Romania. In: Pranzini and Williams (eds), Coastal erosion and protection in Europe, Routledge, Oxon, pp. 396-412.



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Constanța counties that had a strategic location on the ancient map of Europe. It was on the route of main commercial roads that linked the Northern Sea and the Black Sea, but also the Mediterranean ports with the Eastern world of the continent. The Greeks were the first to seize the opportunity and colonize this land, sometime in the 7th century BC, followed in a few centuries by the Roman Empire. Visiting the ancient ruins from Histria and Jurilovca is, in fact, a great half-day trip away from the noisy beaches. If you have more time take a detour to Adamclisi to admire the monument built in the honor of victorious Traian, the Roman Emperor who defeated the Dacians almost two thousand years ago¹¹⁶.

On the Romanian coastline there are more than 150.000 of seats for hosting in hotels, boarding houses and country houses. placed on the length of the european road E 87, the stations of the Romanian coast line are: Navodari, Mamaia, North Eforie, South Eforie, Neptun-Olimp, Venus, Saturn, Vama Veche, 2 Mai, Mangalia, Techirghiol, Costinesti. In this moment, the Romanian Coastline is in a competition with the Mediteranean coastline, being famous for his high quality, soft dust. The Black Sea has a low saltness compared to other continental seas, and , allows the tourists to swim under the water in good conditions.



Online source: <https://www.thehotelspecialist.it/the-romanian-summer-in-Constanța/#.XoM71ogzaUk>

The southic zone of the coastline is frecventated by tourists even in the ending of the XIX century. Starting with 1959 the stations of the coastline have been permanent

¹¹⁶ <https://www.uncover-romania.com/attractions/nature/black-sea/>

modernized: Mamaia, Eforie North, Eforie South, Teghirghiol, Costinesti, Neptun, Olimp, Aurora head, Venus, Saturn, Mangalia are the favorite destinations of the tourists from everywhere. In this moment, the capacity of hosting of the coastline is of aprox 150.000 seats. Famous for a vacation festivals dedicated to the teenagers, Costinesti is situated at 31km south from Constanța, near the Costinesti and Schitu villages. Those had been created at the end of XIX century by the German colonists. The watering place has been constructed in 1949, when it was arranged for the first camping vacation for kids. Archeologic objectives to visit in the coastline are: Histria Stronghold situated on the seaside of the Sinoie lake, the ruins of Cetatea Tomis and Callatis, the Archeologic museum from Mangalia, the history museum from Constanța, Moscheia from Constanța and from Mangalia, the church Saint Petru and Pavel from the historic zone of the Constanța City. The seaside of the Black Sea offers very good conditions of the tourism festival in order of the mineral waters, therapeutic muds offered from the lakes from the neighbourhood of the coastline: Techirghiol, Tatlageac, Neptun, Belona, Siutghiol, Corbu, Sinoe, Navodari and Tasaul¹¹⁷.

Mangalia Tourist Port is the only tourist port in the Black Sea arranged with non-reimbursable European funds destined for pleasure boats, at European technical and quality standards that will allow it to be included in the most prestigious networks of Mediterranean tourist ports and the Black Sea. The final result of the project is a modern marine, designed according to a design that combines the particularities of the area with all the specific advantages, in the lines of the general prescriptions regarding a port arrangement, the prescriptions respected by all the major tourist ports in the area¹¹⁸.

¹¹⁷ <https://www.infoghidromania.com/coastline.html>

¹¹⁸ (in Romanian) <http://mangalia.ro/index.php/2012/10/04/portul-turistic-2/>



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Online source: <http://mangalia.ro/index.php/2012/10/04/portul-turistic-2/>

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participants from 9 countries, with over 150 boats. Between 13 and 14 September 2008, the National Offshore Sailing Championship was also held, an event organized by the Royal Romanian Yacht Club. At the same time, the Mangalia Tourist Port can be a base for the coastal tourist ships that will sail along the Romanian coast, with stops at Neptune, Costinesti, Eforie, Constanța, Mamaia or Midia. The membership of Mangalia Municipality in the Union of Old Greek Ports in the Mediterranean and Black Sea basins since 1998 will facilitate the inclusion of the Tourist Port in the line of such offers in Europe. Due to its location, the Mangalia Tourist Port offers ideal conditions for stationing and maintaining boats in winter and even using them on Lake Mangalia during periods when the Black Sea is impractical due to weather conditions¹¹⁹.

The Great Brăila Island (Romanian: Insula Mare a Brăilei) is an island on the Danube river in the Brăila County, Romania. It has on average 57.9 km length and 18.6 km width, with a total area of 710 km². The two river branches which separate it from the mainland are Măcin Branch and Vâlcium Branch¹²⁰. Adjacent to the West across the Vâlcium branch is the Small Brăila Island (Romanian: Insula Mică a Brăilei, actually a chain of several islands within swampy area), separated from the mainland by Vâlcium and Cremenea Branch.

¹¹⁹ Id.

¹²⁰ <https://web.archive.org/web/20051202042012/http://www.jurnalul.ro/articol.php?id=3391>



The Great Brăila Island, online source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/8628950@N06>

Ceaplace Island (in Romanian: Insula Ceaplace) is located in the north of Lake Sinoe, near the boundary of the The Wolves Spit protection area. With an area of 0.6 ha and a length of 4,514m, the island in the form of an atoll delimits in the northwest of the lake a small bay. As territorial-administrative classification belongs to the commune Mihai Viteazu, Constanța county¹²¹. Since 2010, a scientific reserve has been established around the island, consisting of the gloss of water of Lake Sinoe, up to a distance of about 1km from its center. The total area of the reserve is 117 ha, including the water slide. The scientific reserve is one of the three places in Romania that shelter colonies of pelicans (*Pelecanus crispus*) and the third largest colony of pelicans in Europe, a species in danger of extinction worldwide. The island is an important stopping place for the common pelican (*Pelecanus onocrotalus*), but also for other species, especially aquatic birds. Access by unauthorized persons is prohibited on the island and in the reservation area¹²².

¹²¹ Insula Ceaplace - info-delta.ro, online source: <http://www.info-delta.ro/delta-dunarii-17/insula-ceaplace-409.html>

¹²² Official Record for Insula Ceaplace - protectedplanet.net, online source:



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Ceaplace Island, online source: <https://www.info-delta.ro/delta-dunarii-17/insula-ceaplace-409.html>

The Prundu Islands with birds (in Romanian: Insulele Prundu cu păsări) are two nearby islands located in the southwestern part of Lake Sinoe, near the shore. With an area of approximately 1.4 ha and a length of 5,468m, the islands are shaped like atolls. As territorial-administrative classification belong to the commune Mihai Viteazu, Constanța county¹²³.

¹²³ Insulele Prundu cu păsări - info-delta.ro, online source: <http://www.info-delta.ro/delta-dunarii-17/insulele-prundu-cu-pasari-408.html>



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The Prundu Islands with birds, online source: <https://greatnews.ro/7-locuri-spectaculoase-din-romania-in-care-nu-ai-voie-sa-intri/insulele-prundu-cu-pasari/>

Popina Island (in Romanian: Insula Popina) is a Romanian island in the northern part of the Razelm Lake (Razim). The island spans 98 hectares and it is a protected reserve, hosting an important nesting area for shelducks. Razelm Lake is the largest natural lake in Romania¹²⁴, and the largest permanent water expanse in the Danube Delta, separated from the Black Sea by two long grinds, and flows into Lake Golovița through a 1.9 miles (3.1 km) channel to the south. Geologically speaking, Popina Island consists of Triassic limestones which crop out over the island. Some parts are covered by loess.

¹²⁴ 2017 Romanian Statistical Yearbook, online source: http://www.insse.ro/cms/sites/default/files/field/publicatii/anuarul_statistic_al_romaniei_carte_en.pdf



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Popina Island, online source: <https://www.info-delta.ro/delta-dunarii-17/insula-popina--107.html>

Sacalin Island (in Romanian: Insula Sacalin) is a newly formed island in the Black Sea, right off the coast of the Romanian Danube Delta, off the Sfântu Gheorghe branch¹²⁵. Initially Sacalin was made up of two smaller islands, Sacalinu Mare (Greater Sacalin) and Sacalinu Mic (Lesser Sacalin). In time, however, the two merged into one continuous landmass. The Romanian government has declared the area an ecological reserve and no settlement is permitted on the island.

¹²⁵ Carp, Erik (1980). Directory of wetlands of international importance in the Western Palearctic. International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources. p. 342



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Sacalin Island, online source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T2puGk2w0mw>

Ovid Island is located in the center of Siutghiol Lake, at 500 meters distance from the city of Ovidius and 5 kilometers away from Mamaia Spa Resort. It has a surface of 26,000 square meters. Half of it was set up as a tourist resort. The Island has a limestone origin and was formed thousands of years ago. It is said that, Ovid – the famous Roman poet – during his exile in Tomis came here often to write. This is why the island has his name¹²⁶.

¹²⁶ <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/insula-ovidiu/>



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Online source: <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/insula-ovidiu/>

Flagship species or habitats

Romania is the ideal habitat for several species of animals due to the diversity of ecosystems and extensive forests, but illegal hunting and deforestation continue to cause havoc among wildlife¹²⁷.

Saiga antelope (in Romanian: Antilopa Saiga)

The only species of antelope that populated the territory of Romania is now in critical condition of extinction. Some specimens live in the Lower Prut Floodplain Natural Park (in Romanian: Parcul Natural Lunca Joasă a Prutului Inferior), but they can no longer be found in the wild¹²⁸.

¹²⁷ (in Romanian) <https://www.digi-animalworld.tv/stiri/biodiversitate/specii-pe-cale-de-disparitie-in-romania-unele-mai-au-doar-cateva-exemplare-in-salbaticie-4318>

¹²⁸ Id.



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Online source: <https://www.digi-animalworld.tv/stiri/biodiversitate/specii-pe-cale-de-disparitie-in-romania-unele-mai-au-doar-cateva-exemplare-in-salbaticie-4318>

The Dalmatian pelican (in Romanian: Pelican creț)

The Dalmatian pelican is an endangered species that is protected by law. The disturbance and poaching, associated with the degradation of wetlands and the loss of nesting areas are the main threats. For the Dalmatian pelican, a national Action Plan has been developed which regulates the measures necessary for the conservation of the species (Danube Delta Biosphere Administration together with SOR / BirdLife Romania). Also, the artificial platforms installed in the lagoon complex Razim-Sinoe have proved their efficiency by their occupation by the pelicans¹²⁹.

¹²⁹ (in Romanian) <http://pasaridinromania.sor.ro/Pelican-cret>



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Online source: <https://destepti.ro/pelicanul-cret-pelecanus-crispus>

Egyptian vulture (in Romanian: Hoitar)

Egyptian vulture (Hoitar) is a noble bird that does not nest in Romania anymore and is in danger in the rest of Europe. 1-2 more specimens are observed annually in the Dobrogea area¹³⁰.



Online source: <https://www.digi-animalworld.tv/stiri/biodiversitate/specii-pe-cale-de-disparitie-in-romania-unele-mai-au-doar-cateva-exemplare-in-salbaticie-4318>

Red-breasted goose (in Romanian: Gâscă cu gât roșu)

¹³⁰ (in Romanian) <https://www.digi-animalworld.tv/stiri/biodiversitate/specii-pe-cale-de-disparitie-in-romania-unele-mai-au-doar-cateva-exemplare-in-salbaticie-4318>

The red-breasted goose (*Branta ruficollis*) is a brightly marked species of goose in the genus *Branta* from Eurosiberia. Their habitat has changed since the 1950s, which has altered their migration habits. Most of the population of 55,000 copies from all over the world in the coastal area of Romania and Bulgaria¹³¹.



Online source: <https://www.digi-animalworld.tv/stiri/biodiversitate/specii-pe-cale-de-disparitie-in-romania-unele-mai-au-doar-cateva-exemplare-in-salbatcie-4318>

Danube Delta Sturgeons

Originating 200 million years ago, sturgeons are an ancient migratory fish which is today teetering on the brink of extinction. Currently, 27 sturgeon and paddlefish species inhabit the coastal waters, rivers and lakes of the northern hemisphere and the Danube River basin preserves some of the most important sturgeon populations in the world today. Danube sturgeons play an important role as indicators of healthy ecosystems. They live mostly in the Black Sea, migrating up the Danube and other major rivers to spawn. In the past, they grew up to 4.5 meters long and lived up to 100 years. Due to their long life cycles and late maturity, sturgeons are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and to other threats, including pollution and habitat fragmentation, with stocks taking many years to recover¹³².

Beluga (in Romanian: Morun)

¹³¹ Id.

¹³² LIFE FOR DANUBE STURGEONS | A project of DDBRA, IZW and WWF. WWF Danube Carpathian Programme, online source: <https://danube-sturgeons.org/danube-sturgeons/>



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The population of the largest water fish in Europe decreased by 93% in just 15 years, which led to the species being included on the list of some of the most endangered animals in Romania. The species is now in danger due to overfishing and pollution¹³³. The Beluga migrates further upstream to spawn than any other sturgeon. However, this migration has been interrupted – as for all other sturgeons – by the Iron Gates dams.



Online source: <https://www.digi-animalworld.tv/stiri/biodiversitate/specii-pe-cale-de-disparitie-in-romania-unele-mai-au-doar-cateva-exemplare-in-salbaticie-4318>

Russian Sturgeon (in Romanian: Nisetru)

Russian Sturgeon (*Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*) was formerly the most widely distributed sturgeon species in the Danube river. Today Russian Sturgeons are listed as Critically Endangered. More than 200,000 individuals were feeding in the north-western part of the Black Sea in the period 1966-1974. The current stock size is unknown but regarded as very low¹³⁴.

¹³³ (in Romanian) <https://www.digi-animalworld.tv/stiri/biodiversitate/specii-pe-cale-de-disparitie-in-romania-unele-mai-au-doar-cateva-exemplare-in-salbaticie-4318>

¹³⁴ <https://danube-sturgeons.org/sturgeon/russian-sturgeon/>



Online source: <https://www.britannica.com/animal/sturgeon-fish>

Stellate Sturgeon (in Romanian: Păstrugă)

The Stellate Sturgeon (*Acipenser stellatus*) has always been rare on the Middle and Upper Danube, but has also reached some tributaries such as the Prut, Tisa, Drava, Sava and Morava rivers. Migrates in spring and autumn. Males stay in breeding places for up to six weeks, and females only 10-12 days. Stellate Sturgeons are listed as Critically Endangered¹³⁵.



Online source: <https://www.novarainvest.ro/pastruga-acipenser-stellatus>

Sterlet (In Romanian: Cegă)

The Sterlet (*Acipenser ruthenus*) lives exclusively in freshwater and, unlike other sturgeons, does not migrate from the Black Sea. Tagging has revealed a maximum

¹³⁵ <https://danube-sturgeons.org/sturgeon/stellate-sturgeon/>

migration distance in the Danube of just over 300 km. Nowadays it is the most widely distributed sturgeon species in the Danube River basin. The average reproductive age of this species is comparably low, about 8 years. In the Danube it is even lower – about 7 years. It is listed as a Vulnerable species¹³⁶.



Online source: <https://www.britannica.com/animal/sterlet>

European Sturgeon (in Romanian: Șip)

European Sturgeon (*Acipenser sturio*) was always the rarest sturgeon species in the Black Sea basin and its presence was only documented until the beginning of the 20th century. We know that this species spawned in the Lower Danube because hybrids with other Danube sturgeon species were described in the 1930s. Today it is listed as Critically Endangered¹³⁷.

¹³⁶ <https://danube-sturgeons.org/sturgeon/sterlet/>

¹³⁷ <https://danube-sturgeons.org/sturgeon/european-sturgeon/>



Online source : https://sco.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_sea_sturgeon

Romanichthys (in Romanian: Aspretele)

Romanichthys valsanicola, known as the sculpin-perch, asprete, or Romanian darter, was scientifically discovered and described in 1957 by the Romanian scientists M. Dumitrescu, P. Bănărescu and N. Stoica. Endemic to a very restricted area in southern Romania, it was found in the upper reach of the Argeş river and in two of its tributaries: Râul Doamnei and Vâlsan. Due to hydrotechnical constructions and deterioration of its habitat, it survived only in the tributary Vâlsan¹³⁸.



Online source: <https://jurnaluldearges.ro/valea-valsanului-singurul-loc-din-lume-unde-supravietuieste-aspretele/>

Lynxes (in Romanian: Râs)

Once widespread throughout Europe, the feline almost disappeared in the last century from the west and center of the continent, being reduced to a few isolated populations, with a small number of individuals. In the last hundred years, the lynxes population in

¹³⁸ "Romanichthys valsanicola Dumitrescu, Bănărescu & Stoica, 1957: Asprete". FishBase, online source: <http://www.fishbase.org/summary/Romanichthys-valsanicola.html>

Romania has undergone a positive evolution (from about 150 copies in the period 1930-1940, to over 1,500 copies at present). In 2005, a study was conducted on lynxes in Vrancea county and infrared video cameras and motion sensors were used for monitoring. In the last years, in this county an number of about 80 copies was evaluated (5.5% of the population of Romania and 3.5% of the population of Europe). At the end of the projects for large carnivores in Vrancea, in 2010, after long studies, in order to conserve the lynxes in the county, large enough surfaces must be protected to ensure the perpetuation of the species, paths of movement between the different habitats must be ensured and buffer zones must be delimited, where large carnivores could coexist with anthropogenic activities. All these are currently being done in the local ecological protection network, in which the Putna-Vrancea Natural Park plays a key role¹³⁹.

Although it has been declared a monument of nature, the largest European feline is still hunted in Romania, by derogations¹⁴⁰.



Online source: <https://www.digi-animalworld.tv/stiri/biodiversitate/specii-pe-cale-de-disparitie-in-romania-unele-mai-au-doar-cateva-exemplare-in-salbaticie-4318>

Marbled polecat (in Romanian: Dihor pătat)

¹³⁹ (in Romanian) National Geographic, *Râsul, vânătorul invizibil*, August 3, 2010, online source: <https://www.natgeo.ro/articole/natura/9151-rasul-vanatorul-invizibil>

¹⁴⁰ (in Romanian) <https://www.digi-animalworld.tv/stiri/biodiversitate/specii-pe-cale-de-disparitie-in-romania-unele-mai-au-doar-cateva-exemplare-in-salbaticie-4318>

The marbled polecat (*Vormela peregusna*) is a small mustelid, very thin and agile, with a sharp nose, thick fur, with thin, soft and glossy hair. With only 500 specimens in the wild and protected since 1993, the sparrow lives in arid and steppe areas in the Dobrogea area. The only populations in the European Union of this species are in the territory of our country and it is a conservation objective in ROSCI0201 Northern Dobrogean Plateau and a strictly protected species¹⁴¹.



Online source: <https://www.digi-animalworld.tv/stiri/biodiversitate/specii-pe-cale-de-disparitie-in-romania-unele-mai-au-doar-cateva-exemplare-in-salbaticie-4318>

The Romanian hamster (in Romanian: Hamster dobrogean)

It is a unique and endemic species for a small area in Dobrogea and the northern part of Bulgaria. The Romanian hamster is very little known, and the intensification of agriculture and the destruction of habitats in Dobrogea are the most serious threat. In Romania, there are probably about 2,000 individuals¹⁴².

¹⁴¹ (in Romanian) <https://apnd.ro/biodiversitate/mamifere/vormela-peregusna-dihor-patat-samsar-dihor-pestrit-dihor-marmorat/>

¹⁴² (in Romanian) http://elearning.masterprof.ro/lectiile/biologie/lectie_19/specii_periclitare_din_romnia.html



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Online source: <https://apnd.ro/biodiversitate/mamifere/mesocricetus-newtoni-grivanul-hamsterul-dobrogean-grivanul-mic-grivanul-de-dobrogea/>

Saker falcon – The Danube falcon (In Romanian: Șoim dunărean)

The Danube falcon is not only the rarest bird species in Romania, but also one of the most impressive birds of prey, and certainly one of the most imposing and interesting falcons in the world¹⁴³. It is a rare summer bird, widespread in Dobrogea and in the Măcin Mountains where it nests. The silhouette gives the impression of solidity, with a rather short tail and wide wings at the base and very narrow at the tip. The back feather is brownish-rusty, with blue gloss, each with a reddish edge. The crest is reddish-rust and the chin and whitish whiteness. The tail feathers are gray-brown. Abdominal is whitish with dark brown, longitudinal stripes. The beak is blue with a black tip. The young specimens have a brown back¹⁴⁴.

¹⁴³ (in Romanian) <https://www.descopera.ro/natura/13399434-soimul-dunarean-ce-se-va-intampla-cu-cea-mai-rara-pasare-din-romania>

¹⁴⁴ (in Romanian) <http://archive.is/20121210181528/ecomuntiimacinului.wordpress.com/fauna/pasari/>



Online source:

http://elearning.masterprof.ro/lectiile/biologie/lectie_19/specii_periclitare_din_romania.html

European mink (in Romanian: Nurdă europeană)

The European mink (*Mustela lutreola* L.) is one of the rarest and most endangered mammal species on our continent, currently surviving only in Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve (DDBR), one of the last refuges of this species at the area level. In the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, the European mink is widespread. Basically, except for the large aquatics, the localities, the agricultural and forest polders, the presence of the species has been confirmed in most areas of the DDBR. The European mink population in the RBDD was evaluated to a minimum of 1,130 copies, respectively a maximum of 2,280 copies¹⁴⁵.



¹⁴⁵ (in Romanian) <https://stiintasitehnica.com/nurca-europeana-din-rezervatia-biosferei-delta-dunarii/>

Online source: <https://www.acdb.ro/specii-cheie/nurca-europeana-mustela-lutreola>

Other interesting, unusual or representative wildlife **European bison (in Romanian: Zimbru)**

The largest terrestrial animal in Europe has been hunted to extinction in our country. After the introduction of 5 copies in 2012, their number has increased to a few tens, living in reserves, according to National Geographic¹⁴⁶.



Online source: <https://www.digi-animalworld.tv/stiri/biodiversitate/specii-pe-cale-de-disparitie-in-romania-unele-mai-au-doar-cateva-exemplare-in-salbaticie-4318>

The gray wolf (in Romanian: Lupul)

Naturally, the wolf (*Canis lupus*) is found in Romania in the Danube Delta, in the alpine gulf, presenting a great ecological amplitude, due to its special intelligence, as is the case with the crow. The area for the spread of wolves was in the past in the Danube Delta. Although they preferred the wooded areas more, the wolves were also found in the delta conditions of survival in the reefs. Unfortunately, the excessive hunting caused this noble animal to disappear from the Danube Delta. Older people remember the wolves passing the frozen Danube. There are only toponyms as the Wolves Spit that reminds of this animal in the parts of the Delta. In 2011, three wolf families were introduced to the Măcin Mountains in order to repopulate this protected area¹⁴⁷.

¹⁴⁶ (in Romanian), <https://www.natgeo.ro/articole/natura/9659-topul-celor-mai-periclitare-animale-din-romania>

¹⁴⁷ (in Romanian) <https://www.tulceanoastra.ro/delta/disparitia-lupilor-din-delta-dunarii/>



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Online source: <https://www.tulceanoastra.ro/delta/disparitia-lupilor-din-delta-dunarii/>

The brown bear (in Romanian: Ursul brun)

Romania has the largest population of brown bears in the European Union, but nonetheless the species is increasingly rare in us in the country. According to official data, in the country there are 6,000 brown bears, about 40% of the total in the EU, but despite the large number, the animals are in danger due to habitat destruction, illegal deforestation, construction or destruction of the ecosystem. Until the first half of the century XIX was found throughout the country, from the Danube Delta to the Carpathians. Unfortunately, it was exterminated from the plains, so as not to hinder extensive farming and extensive livestock breeding, extensive fishing and other similar practices from the 19th century¹⁴⁸.



¹⁴⁸ (in Romanian) <http://www.ziare.com/social/administratia/ursul-brun-o-specie-in-mare-pericol-in-romania-1061053>

Online source: <https://romaniasalbatica.ro/ro/articole/ursii-din-romania>

Eurasian otter (in Romanian: Vidra)

The Eurasian otter always lives in the vicinity of the waters, especially in the Danube Delta ponds, feeding on fish, frogs, colds and aquatic mammals, which they skillfully hunt especially during the night and rarely during the day. The Eurasian otter swims with ability and withstands underwater 6-7 minutes and it moves with the weight on the ground, jumping. Because of the food mainly composed of fish, the Eurasian otter represents a real danger for ponds. Vidra moves easily from one aquatic basin to another, exclusively for the search of food¹⁴⁹.



Online source: <http://dindeltadunarii.blogspot.com/2016/02/vidra.html>

The Wildcat (in Romanian: Pisică sălbatică)

Also known as the little tiger in the forests of our country, the wildcat is very similar to the house cat, especially the gray-tiger specimens of the Norwegian forest cat breed. It is a predator endowed with excellent senses, and the hearing and sight are truly remarkable. Attack like any classic feline, after a long chase, or after a clever sneak, followed by an explosive leap. If it fails, it no longer pursues its prey, but retains its

¹⁴⁹(in Romanian) <http://dindeltadunarii.blogspot.com/2016/02/vidra.html>

energy for a new hunting attempt. In Romania, it lives mainly in the plains and hills, having a great ecological amplitude, being spread from the Danube Delta to the mountain¹⁵⁰.



Online source: <https://www.descopera.ro/natura/12086115-pisica-salbatICA-o-umbra-prin-padurile-romaniei>

The wild horses (in Romanian: Caii sălbatici)

In the Danube Delta live about 4,000 semi-wild horses. They are the descendants of horses released in the 1980s from a livestock farm in Sfântu Gheorghe, which exported animals to Italy. The Letea Forest Nature Reserve from Danube Delta is an important spot due to its rich fauna and flora, in recent years, there have been concerns that the growing population may overgraze and cause imbalances in biodiversity¹⁵¹. Abandoned by masters in a natural environment, the wild horses from Letea Forest are monitored by local and national sanitary-veterinary authorities, together with the animal protection NGO, Vier Pfoten. It is estimated that between 1000 and 2000 wild horses live in that area, and these populations must be kept under control, to limit abusive grazing. Obviously, the biosphere from that perimeter must also be maintained and protected, especially since Letea Forest is the oldest nature reserve in our country¹⁵².

¹⁵⁰ (in Romanian) <https://www.descopera.ro/natura/12086115-pisica-salbatICA-o-umbra-prin-padurile-romaniei>

¹⁵¹ (in Romanian) <https://www.natgeo.ro/articole/natura/9166-caii-semi-salbatICI-din-delta-dunarii>

¹⁵² (in Romanian) <https://publimix.ro/blog/eco/Letea-padurea-cailor-salbatICI>



Online source: <https://publimix.ro/blog/eco/Letea-padurea-cailor-salbatici>

Diversity of ecosystems

Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve biodiversity and ecosystems¹⁵³

The Danube Delta maintains its enormous biodiversity in a better state than most other deltas in Europe, even in the world. It contains a greater range of habitat types, lower and higher plants, invertebrates and vertebrates than all other deltas in Europe. Many of the species that live within the delta are unique to it, these include plants and animals. The static freshwater ecosystems provide the base for the food chain in much of the delta. The contribution they make „spills over” in canals, rivers and other moving waters. Protozoa, micro-algae, algae and macrophytes are the primary producers, on which zooplankton, oligochaetes, mollusks, insects, fish, amphibia, reptiles, birds and mammals feed in ascending order within the food chain. Terrestrial ecosystems have suffered less than aquatic ones, because they are less easy to pollute and over fish. Exploitation by grazing, arable cropping, forestry, reed cutting is limited to areas where this is possible and in much of the delta these potentially damaging activities are impossible. The Dobrogea region that adjoins the Danube Delta provides habitats for 50 % of the 3,800 plant species recorded in Romania. Compared with this, the delta itself and the Razim-Sinoie lake complex supports 1839 species. Their distribution is as follows: euroasiatic (30 %), continental asiatic (15 %), cosmopolitan (10 %). Euroasiatic and cosmopolitan plants dominate the aquatic, swamp and marsh

¹⁵³ Petre Gastescu, THE DANUBE DELTA BIOSPHERE RESERVE. GEOGRAPHY, BIODIVERSITY, PROTECTION, MANAGEMENT, Papers / Études et communications, Rom. Journ. Geogr., 53, (2), p. 139–152, 2009, Bucureşti, p. 145.

communities. Among these is the reed (*Phragmites australis*), which has a worldwide distribution. From an ecological standpoint, the most interesting and valuable plant communities occur within the larger dune systems, like Grindul Letea and Grindul Caraorman. There are areas of steppe grassland associated with the sandy soils of Letea and Caraorman and these support a range of interesting grasses more often encountered in the Mediterranean. Many of the plants that survive on these hot and dry soils are xerophilous and therefore drought resistant. The woodland associated with dune slacks are particularly important in that species of oak, ash and poplar provide the canopy above rich shrub and field layers. Whilst some of the trees and shrubs are commonplace elsewhere in Europe, the fluffy ash and the grey oak are special within this area. A climber with a Mediterranean distribution, Greek liana (*Periploca graeca*) grows within Letea Forest. Also unique to this forest is the rare steppe viper (*Vipera ursinii*). The final plant assemblage is great interest and value, are the salt rich depressions that occur in association with the larger dune systems. Most of the species found in the delta are typical of salt marshes across Europe. An enormous diversity of species – 3586 – is found within the delta. Over 190 species of copepod and cladoceran crustaceans have been recorded; 418 species of freshwater rotifer, nematode worms and oligochaete worms have been identified, along with 90 species of molluscs (some of these are marine); 18 species of mollusc are endangered¹⁵⁴.

Insects are represented by an enormous diversity (2,244 species), though 196 are listed as endangered.

Fish represent the fauna of the delta, more than any other type of animal, 135 species have been recorded within the Biosphere Reserve. The sturgeons are the most primitive type of fish caught in the delta and three species run into the river to spawn. There are 31 species of fish that are able to live in both seawater and freshwater. They come into the rivers and canals to spawn and they include the Danube mackerel (*Alosa pontica*), Black Sea salmon (*Salmo trutta labrax*). Some of the carp, perch, zander and Danube catfish are able to withstand small dilutions of salt water. There are 44 fish species that live exclusively in the freshwaters of the delta. These include pike, tench, rudd, orfe, barbel and bream. Many of these fish are very important commercially and they provide the main source of income for people who live in the delta.

¹⁵⁴ Ibidem, p. 146.

Amphibia there are two species of newts, seven species of frogs and four species of toad¹⁵⁵.

Reptiles are well represented in the delta – 11 species – with terrapins (*Emys orbicularis*) and tortoise (*Testudo graeca iberica*). The latter is more common in the south-western sector of the Biosphere Reserve. Four species of lizard are found, as are five species of snake.

Birds. There is no other place in Europe where such a great diversity of land and water birds can be found. 375 bird species are recorded in Romania and, of these, 320 live in the delta or migrate to it in the summer or the winter. 166 species nest in the Biosphere Reserve and most of these are summer migrants, which spend the winter in Africa or the Mediterranean. Among these are the common and Dalmatian pelicans, white storks, herons, egrets, spoonbill, ibis, swallows, house martins, sand martins, swift, bee-eater, roller, golden oriole and numerous warblers.

A large number of passage migrants pass through the delta in the autumn, en route from breeding to their winter feeding grounds. Five migration routes from the south cross the DDBR, in the spring, while six migration routes from the north-east pass over the delta in the autumn. These, together with resident and nesting populations of birds, make this a very important area within Europe.

A number of bird species have been declared strictly protected in Romania as „monuments of nature”. These are the common and Dalmatian pelicans, raven, spoonbill, great white egret, little egret, black-winged stilt, shelduck, ruddy shelduck, little bustard, red-breasted goose. The delta provides a habitat for around 60 % of the world population of pygmy cormorant and a significant proportion of the world's population of red-breasted geese overwinter in the Dobrogea. Of the 325 species recorded within the DDBR, 224 species are currently given strictly protected status.

Mammals, 44 species have been recorded within the DDBR. There are large numbers of native rodents, rabbits are commonplace in Letea and Caraorman forests, the otter and European mink are both protected, due to over trapping for their pelts. Amongst the larger predators the wolf is now extinct as a breeding species within the delta, though individuals have been known to move into the territory from Ukraine in particularly cold winters when they are able to cross the ice – this is not a usual event.

¹⁵⁵ Ibidem, p. 147.

Three species of dolphin are recorded in the Black Sea and of these, the common dolphin is the most frequent.

Geological features such as lakes, rivers, cliffs

The Salt Lake

The Salt Lake (in Romanian: Lacul Sărat), known worldwide as a source of health, is located in the Chișcani rural town, only 5 km from the Brăila municipality. It's said that the miraculous therapeutic properties of the lake's water were discovered centuries ago by Prince Vlad the Impaler (Vlad Tepes)¹⁵⁶. This place is appreciated from a tourist point of view for its good positioning in nature and for the healing properties that have the sapropelic sludge and the hypertonic mineral water, the source being the Salt Lake itself. There is also a spa complex that operates throughout the year and offers accommodation, meals served in the restaurant, soccer field, tennis¹⁵⁷. The lake, formed on an old Danube river course, which is now completely isolated, is surrounded by 70 forest hectares that mitigate the steppe climate. The water depth varies between 0.6 and 1.80 meters, and the bottom of the lake is entirely covered by healing sludge highly mineralized¹⁵⁸. The lake contains significant reserves of sapropelic mud and hypertonic mineral water, with sulfur, chlorine, magnesium and bromine compounds, mineralization of 70-84 grams per liter. The main natural curing factors of the resort are: the lake's water with high contents of sulfate, chloride, sodium, magnesium, a mineralization of 83.955 mg/liter, sapropelic mud that contains 41 percent mineral substances and 39 percent organic substances rich in hydrogen sulfide¹⁵⁹.

¹⁵⁶ <https://www.agerpres.ro/engleza-destinatie-romania/2014/09/23/destination-romania-salt-lake-near-Brăila-miraculous-place-where-tepes-used-to-cure-his-troops-12-59-33>

¹⁵⁷ <http://www.romanianresorts.ro/statiunea-lacu-sarat>

¹⁵⁸ <https://www.agerpres.ro/engleza-destinatie-romania/2014/09/23/destination-romania-salt-lake-near-Brăila-miraculous-place-where-tepes-used-to-cure-his-troops-12-59-33>

¹⁵⁹ Id.



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The Salt Lake of Brăila, online source: <http://walkthiswayBrăila.ro/salt-lake-of-Brăila/>

The Vulture Lake

The Vulture Lake (in Romanian: Lacul Vulturilor) in the Siriu Massif is one of the main natural tourist attractions of Buzău County. Vultures Lake is not only the only glacial lake in the Carpathian Mountains, but the only glacial lake in the Carpathians, between the Călimani Mountains and the Făgăraș Massif, that is on a distance of 500 km from the ridge¹⁶⁰.



The Vulture Lake, online source: [https://turismBuzău.ro/lacul-vulturilor/#iLightbox\[gallery_image_1\]/1](https://turismBuzău.ro/lacul-vulturilor/#iLightbox[gallery_image_1]/1)

Meledic Lake

¹⁶⁰ <https://turismBuzău.ro/lacul-vulturilor/>

It is also known as "The Great Lake" or "Bottomless Lake" and represents a unique phenomenon in Europe in that it is a freshwater gloss on a mass of salt. Legend has it that there is a treasure at the bottom of the lake, but no one has been able to find it until now. During summer, Lake Meledic is the perfect destination for the beach and for fishing, but not for swimming. It is not the only lake on the Meledic plateau, there are still 5 lakes, but none larger than this one¹⁶¹.



The Meledic Lake, Source: <http://www.descoperalocuri.ro/descopera-romania/frumusetea-de-sub-ochii-nostri-platoul-meledic.html>

The Black Lake

The Black Lake (in Romanian: Lacul Negru), a name taken due to the color of the water given by the abnormal eutrophication, is located 200 m from The Clear Lake, is covered by vegetation in over 70%¹⁶². From the initial locations of freshwater lakes, formed in dolines developed on sandstone with sedimentary sludge bottom - today, as a negative effect of surface erosion, only Black Lake and The Clear Lake remained. The dolines, which are in the early stages of development, have slopes and shallow slopes. Lake Limpede is the only one that survived the clogging.



¹⁶¹ <https://blog.hotelguru.ro/descopera-platoul-carstic-salin-meledic/>

¹⁶² Informații publice Buzău, online source : <http://www.informatiipublice.ro/turism/Buzău-Buzău>

The Black Lake, online source: <http://www.montaniarzi.ro/lacul-negru-coltul-de-rai-din-muntii-vrancei/>

The Bucur's Table

Bucur's Table (in Romanian: Masa lui Bucur) is a huge rock that has an altitude of 1,000 m and has 150 tons. The legend says that from here the shepherd Bucur left, the one who founded the city of Bucharest, today the capital of Romania. Bucur's table is located on a mountain plateau and sits on three smaller boulders, like a traditional Romanian table. It is said that Bucur sat on this plateau from the top of the mountain and watched over the pastures where the sheep grazed.¹⁶³



The Bucur's Table, online source: <https://www.ziaruldevrancea.ro/actualitatea/stiri-locale/galerie-foto-obiective-turistice-naturale-din-muntii-vrancei>

The Giants' Wall

The Giants' Wall (in Romanian: Zidul Urișilor) is a layer of hard rocks which includes shells from 11 million years ago beach (from the prehistoric sea Paratethys), in the form of a wall of 6-7m located to the springs of Călnău river, in Valea Salciei commune in Buzău county¹⁶⁴.

¹⁶³ <https://turismBuzău.ro/masa-lui-bucur/>

¹⁶⁴ Ghid turistic Buzău, online source: <https://turismBuzău.ro/zidul-uriasilor/>



The Giants' Wall, online source: [https://turismBuzău.ro/zidul-uriasilor/#iLightbox\[gallery_image_1\]/2](https://turismBuzău.ro/zidul-uriasilor/#iLightbox[gallery_image_1]/2)

Prunceea Waterfall

Prunceea Waterfall (in Romanian: Cascada Prunceea – Cașoca) the most beautiful waterfall in Buzău county, is located in the Massif of Podul Calului, about 10 km from the Siriu Dam¹⁶⁵.



Prunceea Waterfall, online source: [https://turismBuzău.ro/cascada-casoca/#iLightbox\[gallery_image_1\]/1](https://turismBuzău.ro/cascada-casoca/#iLightbox[gallery_image_1]/1)

Camp Măgura

Camp Măgura (in Romanian: Tabăra Măgura) represented the homage to the 16 centuries since the first documentary attestation of Buzău, as well as the ancient local tradition of stone carving. According to the archives, over 160 sculptors worked here,

¹⁶⁵ <https://cronicaromana.net/2018/12/12/cascada-prunceea-casoca-una-dintre-comorile-Buzăului/>

with countless stone carvers in the area. As a raw material the cochiliferous limestone extracted from the quarries from Năeni, Ciuta and Pietroasele was used¹⁶⁶.



Camp Măgura, online source: https://turismBuzău.ro/tabara-de-sculptura-magura/#iLightbox/gallery_image_11/2

The Old Ladies from Ulmet

The Old Ladies from Ulmet are found in Buzău Mountains and represent a few trovants with strange forms. They are located in Bozioru commune from Buzău county. Trovants are also known to be "alive stones", people considering they have magic properties because of their rare shapes. They are generally round, sometimes with a sphere shape, and were formed on the bed of the ancient sea Paratethys, which existed thousands of years ago in this area. Trovants grow 4 – 5 centimeters every 1,200 years and due to this they are also called "the stones which grow"¹⁶⁷.



¹⁶⁶ <https://turismBuzău.ro/tabara-de-sculptura-magura/>

¹⁶⁷ <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/babele-de-la-ulmet/>

Online source: <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/babele-de-la-ulmet/>

Lake Techirghiol

Lake Techirghiol (in Romanian: Lacul Techirghiol) The name of the lake comes from the Turkish Tekirgöl, meaning "Tekir's lake". The name also means (in Turkish) "Striped Lake" (tekir - striped, and göl - lake). This is because of the salinity of the lake; when the wind blows, white salt stripes appear on the surface of the lake. The legend says that once upon a time a crippled and blind old man named Tekir, riding on the back of his donkey, reached the shore of this lake by mistake. The old man tried to get out of that smelly mud for hours on end, but his stubborn donkey didn't want to move at all, as if a mysterious force was not letting him out of the lake. It was with great wonder and joy that the old man realized, when getting out of the lake, that his eyes could see light again, and that his feet, which had stopped working a long time ago, began to obey him. As for his wise donkey - its bad wounds on the back had healed, and his body was younger than ever. When they found out about this, lots of people rushed to the shore of the lake, bathing and putting mud all over their bodies so that they'd be cured. Tekir and his donkey are featured in a statue located in the center of the town of Techirghiol.¹⁶⁸



Lake Techirghiol, online source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bOO3Df1XsCE>

Lake Agigea

Agigea Lake (in Romanian: Lacul Agigea) is located northeast of the Black Sea Danube Canal and southwest of Agigea commune. The surface of the lake is 35 ha and is part of Lake Agigea Nature Reserve, a zoological reservation, a valuable

¹⁶⁸ "Lake Techirghiol". Ramsar Sites Information Service, online source: <https://rsis Ramsar.org/ris/1610>

national monument. An important lake of fluvio-maritime liman, Lake Agigea, together with its surroundings, houses between 5,000 - 10,000 birds, many of them considered very valuable. In 1985, the lake was transformed into a fishing arrangement, which greatly reduced the number of birds in the area. The access to the lake is on DN 39 Constanța - Vama Veche¹⁶⁹.



Lake Agigea, online source: <http://turism-agigea.ro/obiective/agigea/>

The Tălăbasca Pond Nature Reserve

The Tălăbasca Pond Nature Reserve (in Romanian: Balta Tălăbasca) was designated by Law 5/2000 on the approval of the national territory planning plan (Section III - protected areas - Mon. Of. 152 / 12.IV.2000). The code of the protected area is 2412, belongs to the commune of Tudor Vladimirescu, Galați County and the surface of the reservation is 139 ha¹⁷⁰. Geomorphologically, the region is a lake and geologically is from a sedimentary domain. The geomorphology is characteristic of lakes in areas with low humidity. The geology is characterized by fine alluvial deposits, predominating sands and loess - Holocene (Quaternary) deposits. Pedologically, the soils are alluvial glazed. Hydrologically, Tălăbasca Lake is a meadow lake in the lower Siret Plain. In its northwest part is the outlet of the intermittent valley of Călmățui. Genetically, it is a freshwater meadow lake, naturally fed from Călmățui stream¹⁷¹.

¹⁶⁹ https://www.infopeniuni.ro/cazare-agigea/obiective-turistice-agigea/lacul-agigea_4621

¹⁷⁰ (in Romanian) Rezervatia Balta Talabasca, online source: <http://luncasiretului.biodiversitate.ro/rezervatia-balta-talabasca/>

¹⁷¹ Id.



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The Tălăbasca Pond Nature Reserve, online source:
<http://romanianturism.com/2013/08/10/balta-talabasca/>

The Horseshoe Pond Nature Reserve

The Horseshoe Pond (in Romanian: Balta Potcoavă) is situated in Brănișteța locality, at about 25 kilometers away from the city of Galați. It is 4 meters deep and its name comes from its shape – a horseshoe. The Pond is filled with all species of fish, making it an attraction for people who love fishing.



The Horseshoe Pond, online source: <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/listing/balta-potcoava/>



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Nebunu Lake

Nebunu Lake (in Romanian: Lacul Nebunu) is a protected area of national interest that corresponds to the IUCN (mixed nature reserve) category, located in Tulcea county on the administrative territory of Pardina commune¹⁷².



Lake Nebunu, online source: <https://www.povestilemariinegre.ro/legende-din-delta-lacul-nebunu/>

”Black Lake” Natural Reservation

”Black Lake” Natural Reservation (in Romanian: Lacu Negru) is located in Vrancea Mountains, on the upper basin of Naruja river. It is a natural protected area of mixed type, which has a surface of 20 hectares. The reservation comprises valleys, gorges, grass lands, etc. The Black Lake is the most important sight of the protected area. It is situated at an altitude of 1,250 meters and its maximum depth is 7.50 meters¹⁷³.



¹⁷² Info-delta.ro - Zone strict protejate în Delta Dunării - Lacul Nebunu, online source: <http://www.info-delta.ro/delta-dunarii-17/lacul-nebunu--115.html>

¹⁷³ <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/rezervatia-naturala-lacul-negru/>

Online source: <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/rezervatia-naturala-lacul-negru/>

Protected areas: nature reserves, national parks

The Brăila Small Puddle Natural Park (in Romanian: *Parcul Natural Balta Mică a Brăilei*) is a protected area in Brăila County, on the administrative territory of communes Bertești de Jos, Chiscani, Gropeni, Mărașu and Stăncuța¹⁷⁴. The Natural Park is located in the inferior course of the Danube, between the Brăila Plain (Wallachian Plain) and Great Brăila Island, based on the Small Brăila Island, in the south-eastern part of country.

The Brăila Small Puddle Natural Park, an area of 17.529 ha, was declared protected area by the Law Number 5 of March 6, 2000 (published in Romanian Official Paper Number 152 of March 12, 2000)¹⁷⁵ and is a wetland of international importance especially a waterfowl habitat (aquatic ecosystem) and terrestrial species. The species of fish are: Black Sea shad (*Alosa pontica*), northern pike (*Esox lucius*), zander (*Stizostedion lucioperca*), wels catfish (*Silurus glanis*) or common carp (*Cyprinus carpio*). The species of birds are: red-breasted goose (*Branta ruficollis*), Dalmatian pelican (*Pelecanus criptus*), purple heron (*Ardea purpurea*), pygmy cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pygmeus*), squacco heron (*Ardeola ralloides*), black stork (*Ciconia nigra*), ferruginous duck (*Aythya nyroca*), whooper swan (*Cygnus cygnus*)¹⁷⁶.

The access for The Brăila Small Puddle Natural Park is: European route E60 București - Movilița - Urziceni - National road DN2A Slobozia - Țândărei - Giurgeni - bridge Giurgeni-Vadu Oii. Also, the access to the park can be done by ferry or small boats, through the Danube branches.

From June 15, 2001, this area is protected by The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands as a wetland of international importance¹⁷⁷.

¹⁷⁴ protectedplanet.net - Balta Mică a Brăilei Natural Park, <http://protectedplanet.net/sites/63626>

¹⁷⁵ (in Romanian) cdep.ro - Legea Nr.5 din 6 martie 2000,
http://cdep.ro/pls/legis/legis_pck.http_act_text?id=22636

¹⁷⁶ visitdanubedelta.com - Species of birds, <http://www.visitdanubedelta.com/ro/fauna/birds/>

¹⁷⁷ The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (All sites in Romania - Small Island of Brăila,
<http://www.ramsar.org/wetland/romania>



Danube at Brăila. Măcin mountains in the background.

Source: <https://www.flickr.com/people/8628950@N06>



Source: <https://bmb.ro/#>



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Camnița Forest (in Romanian: Pădurea Camnița) is a protected area of national interest that corresponds to the 4th category IUCN (nature reserve, forest type), located in Brăila county, on the administrative territory of Șuțești commune¹⁷⁸.

The nature reserve located in the northern part of the village of Țuțești, has a surface of 1.30 ha, and represents a forest area, covered with vegetation in the category of deciduous forests. It is populated with white and black poplar trees, acacia, willow, ash, etc.



Source: <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/listing/padurea-camnita/>

The Amara Pond (in Romanian: Balta Amara) is a natural lake in the Râmnicului Plain, located near the town of the same name. It is important both by the fact that:

- it hosts important herds of protected bird species
- it serves as a wintering place for pond birds and a resting place during the migration period

¹⁷⁸ ProtectedPlanet.net - Pădurea Camnița - delimitarea ariei protejate, online source: http://www.protectedplanet.net/sites/Padurea_Camenita_Nature_Reserve

It is part of the group of rivers of the Buzău River, the category of mesoeutrophic, with fish use, with a hydrographic basin of about 115kmp. Its saline and brackish waters, with hydrophilic and marsh species, are highly conservative¹⁷⁹.

Amara Pond has been designated as a protected natural area for the purpose of protecting and conserving the habitat of continental salt meadows and restoring a favorable conservation status to the specific habitats designated for the protection of the species of wild migratory birds¹⁸⁰.

The reservation corresponds to the category of IUNC IV, being located on the huge main avenue of bird migration, which starts from the wetlands of the 1000 lakes and reaches, after about 5000 km, to the heart of Africa, near Lake Tanganyika. On this corridor, the Danube Delta is one of the two refueling and restoration bases¹⁸¹.



Source: <https://paradisul-pasarilor.ro/rezervatia-naturala-protejata-balta-amara/>

The Forest with English Yew (in Romanian: Pădurea cu tisă) is a protected area of national interest that corresponds to the 4th category IUCN (forest type nature reserve) located in Buzău county, on the administrative territory of Chiojdu

¹⁷⁹ Sit Natura 2000 Balta Albă – Amara – Jirlău – Lacul Sărat Căineni, online source: <http://natura2000.mmediu.ro/site/33/rosci005.html>

¹⁸⁰ <https://paradisul-pasarilor.ro/rezervatia-naturala-protejata-balta-amara/>

¹⁸¹ Id.

commune¹⁸². The forest is a protected natural reserve of forest type which can be found at the foot of the Monteoru Mountains. It has 197 hectares and the natural area represents a forested area with a protective role for the arboreal species of *Taxus Baccata*, known under the popular name of the English Yew (*Tisă*)¹⁸³.



Source: <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/listing/padurea-cu-tisa/>

Meledic Plateau is a protected area of national interest that corresponds to the 4th category IUCN (mixed geological, speleological, botanical and zoological nature reserve) located in Buzău county, on the administrative territory of Lopătari and Mânzălești communes. The declared area is 136 ha¹⁸⁴.

¹⁸² (in Romanian) Legea Nr. 5 din 6 martie 2000, Publicat în Monitorul Oficial al României, Nr. 152 din 12 aprilie 2000, online source: http://www.cdep.ro/pls/legis/legis_pck.http_act_text?id=22636

¹⁸³ <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/listing/padurea-cu-tisa/>

¹⁸⁴ (in Romanian) ProtectedPlanet.net Platoul Meledic - delimitarea ariei protejate, online source: http://www.protectedplanet.net/sites/Platoul_Meledic_Nature_Reserve



View towards Meledic Plateau, Source: <http://www.descoperalocuri.ro/descopera-romania/frumusetea-de-sub-ochii-nostri-platoul-meledic.html>

On the surface of the Meledic plateau are small conglomerates of salt resembling pips. The spectacular karst relief is due to the dissolution of the salt at shallow depth or surface, thus giving rise to the most interesting phenomenon of saline karst relief in Romania, which strikingly resembles the relief formed on limestone¹⁸⁵.



Meledic salt karst plateau, Source: <http://www.descoperalocuri.ro/descopera-romania/frumusetea-de-sub-ochii-nostri-platoul-meledic.html>

The Berca Mud Volcanoes (in Romanian: Vulcanii Noroioși de la Pâclele Mici) is a geological and botanical protected area of national interest that corresponds to the 4th IUCN category¹⁸⁶, located in Scorțoasa commune close to Berca in Buzău

¹⁸⁵ <http://www.descoperalocuri.ro/descopera-romania/frumusetea-de-sub-ochii-nostri-platoul-meledic.html>

¹⁸⁶ Protected Planet - Vulcanii Noroioși de la Pâclele Mici - delimitarea ariei protejate, online source: <https://www.protectedplanet.net/555531432>

County¹⁸⁷. This reservation is unique in Romania. The Berca Mud Volcanoes are at an altitude of 341 m and have an area of 16.5 ha.



General view of the Berca Mud Volcanoes

Its most spectacular feature is the mud volcanoes, small volcano-shaped structures typically a few metres high caused by the eruption of mud and natural gases. As the gases erupt from 3000 metres deep towards the surface, through the underground layers of clay and water, they push up underground salty water and mud, so that they overflow through the mouths of the volcanoes, while the gas emerges as bubbles. The mud dries off at the surface, creating a relatively solid conical structure resembling a real volcano. The mud expelled by them is cold, as it comes from inside the Earth's continental crust layers, and not from the mantle. There are several sites (the main tourist sites being Pâclele Mari and Pâclele Mici), and gas analysis shows that the composition varies from site to site, but is mainly methane, with 10-25% Helium, and 2-15% nitrogen. Some carbon dioxide was also detected.

¹⁸⁷ (in Romanian) "Harta senzitivă Valea Buzăului- Vulcanii Noroiosi- Barajul Siriu", online source: <http://www.itinerar.ro/Harta/VIBz.htm>



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A bubble of gas bursting through the mouth of a Mud Volcano

The mud volcanoes create a strange lunar landscape, due to the absence of vegetation around the cones. Vegetation is scarce because the soil is very salty, an environmental condition in which few plants can survive. However, this kind of environment is good for some rare species of plants, such as *Nitraria schoberi* and *Obione verrucifera*.

The Mud Volcanoes from Pâclele Mari (in Romanian: Vulcanii Noroioși de la Pâclele Mari) are a protected area of national interest that corresponds to the 4th category IUCN (natural fauna and floristic geological type reserve), located in Muntenia, on the territory of Buzău county¹⁸⁸. The natural area is in the central part of Buzău county (at an altitude of 322 m.), on the administrative territory of Scorțoasa commune, near the county road DJ108 that connects the village Policiori and the village Pâclele. The muddy volcanoes grow on a barren circular plateau (162 ha), being occupied by many active devices of 2-3m and fossils of 6-8m, developed on an area of 22ha. Here prevails the volcanoes that produces viscous mud with traces of oil. The reservation represents an area of geological interest (due to the two craters of mud volcanoes on the plateau), floristic (plants that develop in salted environment) and faunistic (mammals, reptiles and amphibians). At the base of the reservation designation are several wildlife species (mammals, reptiles and amphibians) that are on the IUCN Red List and listed in Annex I of EC Directive 92/43 / EC of 21 May 1992

¹⁸⁸ ProtectedPlanet.net - Vulcanii Noroioși de la Pâclele Mari - delimitarea ariei protejate, online source : http://www.protectedplanet.net/sites/Vulcanii_Noroioși_Paclele_Mari_Nature_Reserve

(on the conservation of natural habitats and of wildlife species and wild flora)¹⁸⁹. The natural area harbors a natural habitat of community interest of type: Meadows and salt marshes of the Pannonian and Ponto-Sarmatic salt marshes. Protected wildlife species reported in the natural reserve area: European poppy (*Spermophilus citellus*), pond turtle (*Emys orbicularis*)¹⁹⁰, yellow-bellied ivy (*Bombina variegata*)¹⁹¹, forest lizard (*Lacerta praticola*) and *Elaphe sauromates*, a popular reptile known in the folklore as the big dragon.



Ravines in the Mud Volcanoes from Pâclele Mari

¹⁸⁹ (in Romanian) Directiva Consiliului European 92/43/CE din 21 mai 1992, privind conservarea habitatelor naturale și a speciilor de faună și floră sălbatică, online source: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:1992L0043:20070101:RO:PDF>

¹⁹⁰ Iucnredlist.org - The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species - *Emys orbicularis*, online source: <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/7717/0>

¹⁹¹ Iucnredlist.org - The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species - *Bombina variegata*, online source: <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/54451/0>



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The Mud Volcanoes from Pâclele Mari

The Living Fires from Lopătari (in Romanian: Focul Viu – Lopătari) is a natural phenomenon due to the emission of natural gas that comes to the surface through the cracks of the earth's crust, forming flames that burn, ignited by the sun's rays (or by humans if the flame goes out). The foundation of the phenomenon is represented by the existence of underground hydrocarbon deposits¹⁹².



Living Fire, a natural phenomenon from Buzău County, online source:

<https://cartaplimbareata.ro/index.php/2554/focul-viu-de-la-terca-comuna-lopatari-Buzău/>

¹⁹² (in Romanian) Analiza privind situația actuală a ariilor naturale protejate din Regiunea de Dezvoltare Sud – Est, "Inovare în domeniul managementului sustenabil al ariilor naturale protejate", Agenția pentru Dezvoltare Regională Sud-Est, Institutul Național de Cercetare - Dezvoltare "Delta Dunării", Tulcea, 2014, p. 19, online source: http://www.adrse.ro/Documente/DIP/4GreenInn/Analiza_zone_protejate_Regiunea_SE.pdf

You can see flames bursting from the earth rising in the wind, sometimes with a higher height, sometimes just blinking - it depends a lot on the gas pressure inside and on the weather: just as well they can be temporarily extinguished. If it rains heavily you can see how the water is bubbling in the places where the gas comes out. The area where the phenomenon takes place has a relative area of 25 square meters.

The name comes from the fact that the flames burn almost permanently and are sometimes visible from a distance, especially at night and during the times when the foliage of the trees is in small quantity.

White Rock of Grunj Nature Monument (in Romanian: Piatra Albă „La Grunj”) is a nature monument (category III IUCN) with geological reservation status, which is located on the radius of Mânzălești commune in Buzău county, at the confluence of the Slănic river with the Jgheab stream¹⁹³. The reservation has a pyramidal shape and occupies an area of 0.025 ha at the base, has a height of 18 m and a diameter of 15 m and is located laterally in front of the main watercourse. The ensemble has a cross at the top and the name "Grunj" has the meaning of "throat" or "shrinking". By its shape (comparable to another scale), it reminds of the Sugarloaf Mountain from Brazil.

The land is a control of (differential) hydraulic and wind erosion, consisting of white - gray - yellowish of Badenian age, the whole being trapped between layers of marl (cineritic) and sandstone with an almost vertical position and micropediment aspect. It originates from the southern end of a small, narrow eastern strip with bushes, from the Lopătari anticline¹⁹⁴.

¹⁹³ ProtectedPlanet.net, Piatra Albă "La Grunj" in Romania, online source:

<https://www.protectedplanet.net/piatra-alba-la-grunj-natural-monument>

¹⁹⁴ (in Romanian) Analiza privind situația actuală a ariilor naturale protejate din Regiunea de Dezvoltare Sud – Est, "Inovare în domeniul managementului sustenabil al ariilor naturale protejate", Agenția pentru Dezvoltare Regională Sud-Est, Institutul Național de Cercetare - Dezvoltare "Delta Dunării", Tulcea, 2014, p. 20, online source:

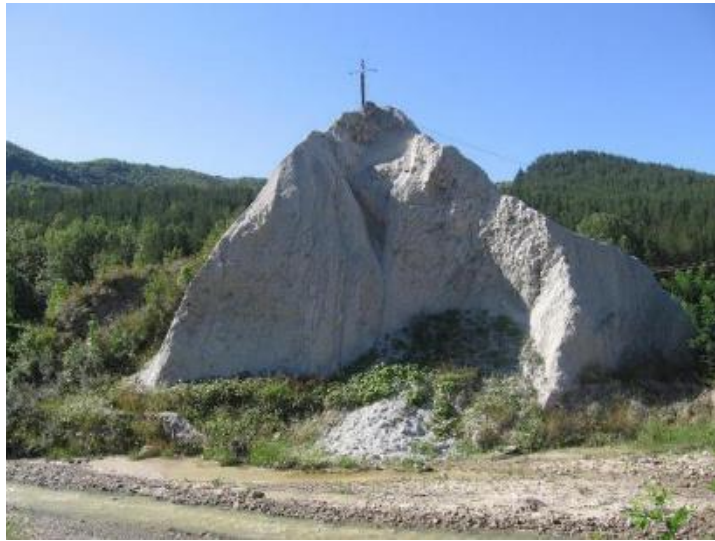
http://www.adrse.ro/Documente/DIP/4GreenInn/Analiza_zone_protejate_Regiunea_SE.pdf



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White Rock of Grunj Nature Monument in Mânzălești

Marine Reservation 2 Mai - Vama Veche (in Romanian: Rezervația marină 2 Mai – Vama Veche) is a natural reserve located in the south of the Romanian coast, between the locality 2 Mai and Vama Veche, on the border with Bulgaria, covering an area of about 5,000 ha, along 7 km of coast, extending from the coast line to the 40 m isobate. On a relatively small surface, it houses a large variety of habitats and biocenoses specific to the Romanian marine area, rare or endangered species, habitats of European importance¹⁹⁵.



¹⁹⁵ <http://www.rmri.ro/VV2M/index.html>

Marine Reservation 2 Mai - Vama Veche, Online source: https://www.infopensiuni.ro/cazare-2-mai/obiective-turistice-2-mai/rezervatia-naturala-acvatoriul-litoral-marin-vama_4190

The purpose of the reservation is to protect and conserve important marine habitats from a floristic and wildlife perspective. The protection and conservation of the marine landscape are also considered. Reservation management is differentiated, depending on the characteristics of existing habitats and species. In addition to the scientific activities, scientific, educational and recreational research activities, diving activities, as well as some activities of sustainable use of traditional natural resources are allowed. The objectives of this reservation are: studying the marine environment in an area with a low anthropogenic impact; maintaining the harmonious interaction of man with nature; protection of habitats and diversity of the underwater marine landscape; promoting the traditional use of resources and activities in the marine area; opportunities for recreation and ecological tourism, concurrently with the development of scientific activities¹⁹⁶.

Dobrogea Mouth Nature Reserve (in Romanian: Rezervația naturală Gura Dobrogei) is a protected area of national interest corresponding to the IUCN IV category (mixed nature reserve) situated in Constanța county, Târgușor commune. It was declared a protected area in 2007 and offers conditions of habitat for various species of birds, animals and flowers. Moreover, the reservation has a great geologic and spelean importance. It has a surface of 242 hectares¹⁹⁷. The natural area represents an area of geological, floristic and faunal interest in the Casimcei Plateau consisting of limestone cliffs (attributed to the Jurassic), gorges and banks of valleys, which houses a diverse range of flora (with halophilic, hygrophilous, mesohygrophilic species) and provides conditions of hosting, feeding and nesting for several species of migratory and passage birds. The natural area overlaps the Dobrogea Gorges site, a natural area of special bird protection.

¹⁹⁶ (in Romanian) Planul de management al rezervației marine 2 Mai - Vama Veche, online source: http://www.rmri.ro/VV2M/plan_management_rezervatie.pdf

¹⁹⁷ <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/rezervatia-naturala-gura-dobrogei/>



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Dobrogea Mouth Nature Reserve, online source: <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/rezervatia-naturala-gura-dobrogei/>

Dobrogea Gorges (in Romanian: Cheile Dobrogei) are a protected area (special avifaunistic protection area) located on the territory of Constanța county. The natural area is located in the north-central part of Constanța county, on the administrative territories of the communes Cogealac, Grădina, Mihail Kogălniceanu, Pantelimon, Săcele, Siliștea and Târgușor and is crossed by the national road DN22¹⁹⁸.

¹⁹⁸ Protectedplanet.net - Cheile Dobrogei Special Protection Area (Birds Directive), online source: http://protectedplanet.net/sites/Cheile_Dobrogei_Special_Protection_Area_Birds_Directive



Dobrogea Gorges, online source: <https://zigzagprinromania.com/blog/cheile-dobrogei-poftiti-e-deschis/>

The area of the Dobrogea Gorges has been declared a Special Avifauna Protection Area in 2007 regarding the declaration of special bird protection areas as an integral part of the European ecological network Natura 2000 in Romania, and it covers an area of 10,929 hectares. This includes Dobrogea Mouth Natural Reservation, Adam Cave and Dobrogea Mouth Cave¹⁹⁹.

Marine Dunes from Agigea

Marine Dunes from Agigea (in Romanian: Dunele marine de la Agigea) make up a protected area of national interest that corresponds to the IV category IUCN (botanical nature reserve), located in Constanța county, on the administrative territory of Agigea commune. The natural area represents an area (of botanical interest) of the Romanian coast, with sand dunes fixed to the ground by thermophilic plant species, with fauna characteristic to arid areas (Dobrogean steppe) and floristic elements constituted by associations of vascular plants²⁰⁰.

¹⁹⁹ Agenția Națională pentru Protecția Mediului - Aree de Protecție Specială Avifaunistică, online source : http://www.anpm.ro/upload/3690_HG_1284_2007_SPA.pdf

²⁰⁰ Protectedplanet.net Dunele marine de la Agigea Nature Reserve, online source: <http://www.protectedplanet.net/sites/9390>



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Online source: <https://lataifas.ro/destinatii-turistice-unice/65819/rezervatia-naturala-dunele-marine-de-la-agigea/>

Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve (DDBR)²⁰¹

The Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve is a labyrinth of water and land shared between Romania and Ukraine. It is made up of countless lakes, channels and islands at the end of a 2,860 km-long river²⁰².

At the end of a course of over 2,860 km, collecting the water from a vast hydrological basin that exceeds 8% of the area of Europe, the Danube (the second largest river of the Continent) has during the last 16,000 years built at its mouth with the Black Sea one of the most beautiful deltas in Europe, perhaps in the whole world. The Danube Delta is famous as one of the greatest wetlands of the earth. The wonderful natural habitats formed here offer good living conditions for an impressive number of plants and animals. Among these, reeds form one of the largest single expanses in the world, and Letea and Caraorman forests represent the northern limit for two rare species of oak that are more frequently met in the south of the Italian and Balkan peninsulas. Together with the great number of aquatic and terrestrial plants, there are also many

²⁰¹ <http://www.ddbra.ro/en/danube-delta-biosphere-reserve/danube-delta>

²⁰² <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/ecological-sciences/biosphere-reserves/europe-north-america/romaniaukraine/danube-delta/>

important colonies of pelicans and cormorans, which are characteristic of the Danube Delta, as well as a variety of other waterbirds which reside in or visit the delta for breeding or wintering. The large number of fish is also notable, with species of both high economic and ecological value.

Without doubt, the impressive range of habitats and species which occupy a relatively small area makes the Danube Delta a vital center for biodiversity in Europe, and a natural genetic bank with incalculable value for global natural heritage.

Many of the plant and animal species found in the delta are also important natural resources for economic use as food, building materials and medicines, they have attracted people to the area since ancient times. The human dwellings were chiefly based on the use of these natural resources, so developing traditional economic activities and characteristic cultural and social habits. Later, there was a tendency to overexploit some of these natural resources.

This tendency, which is still seen at the present, time, put increasing pressure on the resources, especially fish and grasslands, and was compounded by the development of economic activities which were not in harmony with the environment; for example, sand mining at Caraorman upset the ecological balance, causing the loss of some areas of natural fish spawning grounds through the sedimentation and eutrophication (or nutrient enrichment) of water channels and lakes. Because of the cumulative negative effects of human activity in the delta, together with those occurring around the delta itself, there was an increasing danger that the natural ecological balance would become irreparably harmed if appropriate measures were not taken to reduce these impacts, to restore already damaged areas, to protect the existing unaffected areas, and to harness local and regional support for these measures.

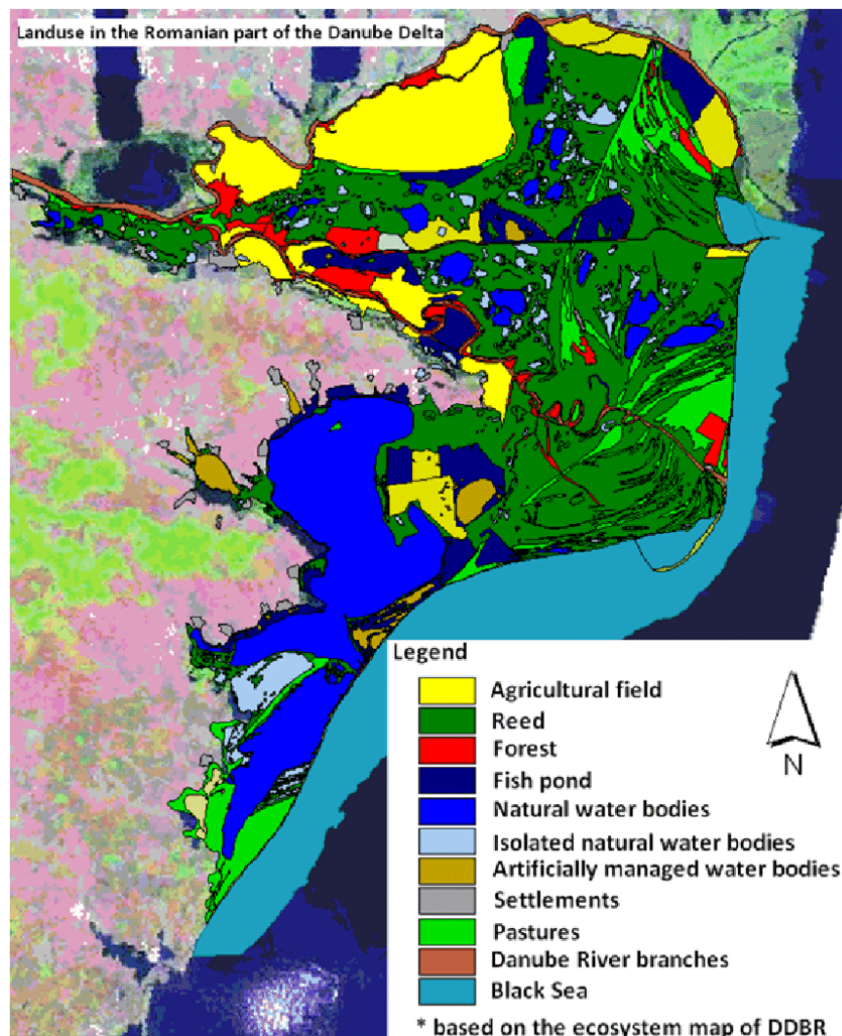
The factory briefly described above provided arguments for the designation of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve (DDBR) by the Romanian Government in 1990, a decision then confirmed by the Romanian Parliament through law 82 of 1993. The universal value of the reserve was recognised by the Man and Biosphere Programme of UNESCO in 1990 through its inclusion in the international network of biosphere reserves.



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Land use map of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve-Romania²⁰³

In fact, DDBR possesses all the main features of a biosphere reserve, namely:

- a) it conserves examples of characteristic ecosystems of one of the world's natural areas and contains strictly protected core areas, traditional use areas, e.g. for fishing and reed harvesting, and buffer zones to reduce external impacts;
- b) it is a land and coastal/marine area in which people are an integral component, and which is managed for objectives ranging from complete protection to intensive yet sustainable production;

²⁰³ Doroftei, Mihai & Mierla, Marian & Silviu, Covaliov & Nanu, Cristina & Lupu, Gabriel, HABIT-CHANGE, Climate change adapted management plan for Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, 2016, This project is implemented through the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme co-financed by the ERDF, online source: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/292616339_HABIT-CHANGE_5_3_1g_DDNI_CAMP_for_Danube_Delta_BR



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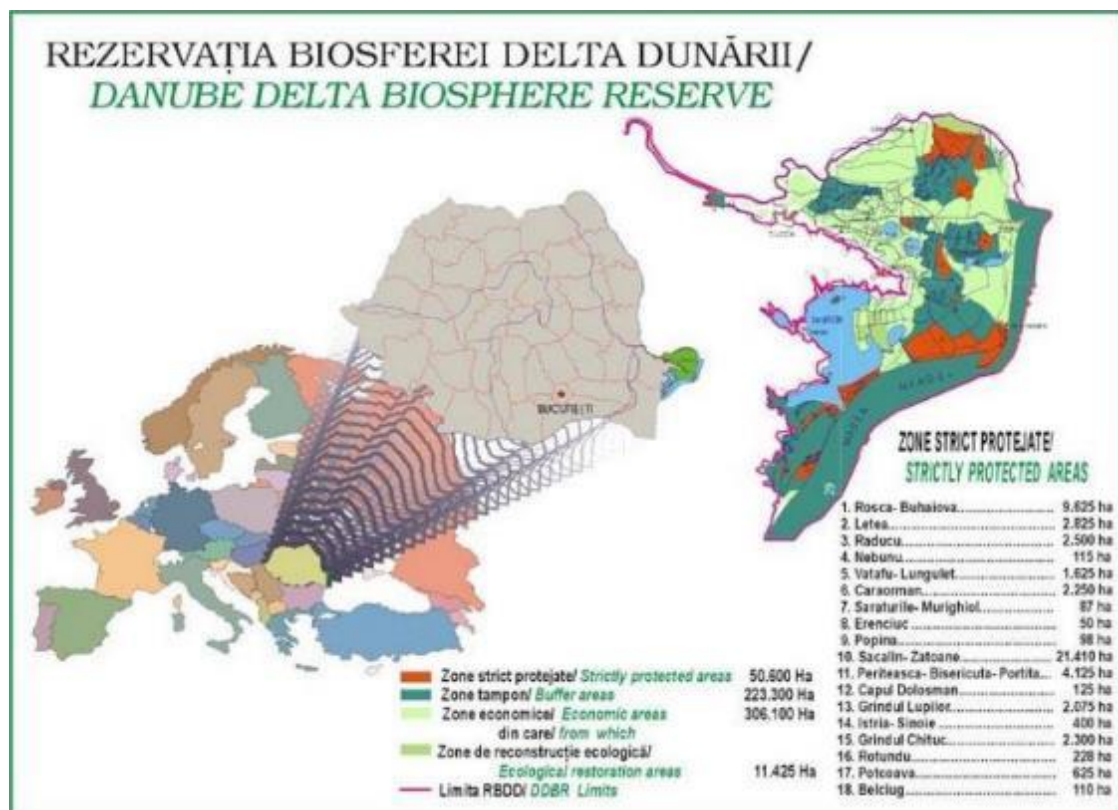


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- c) it is a regional center for monitoring, research, education and training on natural and managed ecosystems;
- d) it is a place where government decision-makers, scientists, managers and local people cooperate in developing a model programme for managing land and water to meet human needs while conserving natural processes and biological resources;
- e) it serves as a symbol of voluntary cooperation to conserve and use resources for the well-being of people everywhere.

From September 1990, the DDBR was listed as a wetland of international importance especially as waterfowl habitat under the Ramsar Convention, and is among the largest of the 600 or so wetlands recognized. The universal natural heritage value of the reserve was recognized in December 1990 by the inclusion of the strictly protected areas in the World Heritage List under the World Heritage Convention.



Romanian Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Zones, Online source:
<https://willzuzak.ca/lp/danube/map-zone-strict-protejate.html>

The Danube Delta comprises 20 strictly protected areas, totaling a total area of over 50,000 ha, representing about 9% of the total area of the reservation. The most important of these are²⁰⁴:

Roșca – Buhaiova Nature Reserve (9 625 ha) is characterized by a complex of ponds and lakes, currently the largest colony of common pelicans in Europe.

Sărăturile Murighiol Nature Reserve (87 ha) is home to a colony of Black-winged stilt, woodpecker, duck and other wader species.

Periteașca-Leahova National Reserve (4,125 ha) is a stopping and feeding place for red-necked geese, pelicans, ducks and caliphs. It includes a series of sandy shores, the Church Island, the lakes Leahova Mare and Mică, Periteașca and Coșna.

The Complex Sacalin - Zătoane (21410 ha) offers favorable conditions for swan nesting, and the Sacalin Island provides shelter and nesting place for several wader species.

Măcin Mountains National Park

Măcin Mountains National Park is a protected area of national interest that corresponds to the IUCN II category (national park, special conservation area), located in the south-eastern part of Romania, on the north-western territory of Tulcea county²⁰⁵. It was created for the purpose of conservation and scientific and tourist exploitation of the area, given that the Măcin Mountains represents the oldest geological formation in the country²⁰⁶. The natural area extends to the northeast of the Dobrogea Plateau (in the central part of the Măcin Mountains) in Tulcea county, on the administrative territories of Cerna, Greek, Hamacearca, Jijila, Luncavița and Turcoaia communes. The park is bordered in the eastern part by the county road DJ222A, which connects the village Nifon with Luncavița. The national park includes the natural reserve The Beech Valley Forest (Pădurea Valea Fagilor) and overlaps both the site of community importance Măcin Mountains and the special avifaunistic protection area Măcin – Niculițel.

²⁰⁴ (in Romanian) <https://romaniasalbatica.ro/ro/rezervatie-biosfera/delta-dunarii>

²⁰⁵ Protectedplanet.net - Parcul Național Munții Măcinului,
<http://www.protectedplanet.net/sites/184172>

²⁰⁶ (in Romanian) Unibuc.ro - University of Bucharest - The Dobrogea Plateau (physico-geographical framework) - Geological survey and paleogeographic evolution, online source:
http://www.unibuc.ro/prof/sandulache_m_i/Podisul_Dobrogei.php



Măcin Mountains National Park
<http://www.parcmacin.ro/en/acasa>

In this region, several tectonic movements took place (hundreds of millions of years ago) which led to the formation of a mountain chain with a high geological complexity. Here crystalline shale outcrops consisting of metamorphic rocks (quartzites, micaschists, amphibolite, filites) attributed to the Paleozoic are encountered; herculean magmatic rocks; magmatites formed from intrusive rocks (diorites, granodiorites, granites), effusive rocks (rhyolites, basalts), rocks formed by cementing sediments (volcanic tuffs) and sedimentary rocks; slates and tiles. From the geomorphological point of view, the Măcin Mountains presents a relief diversity (erosion witnesses rounded on volcanic rocks, irregular rock assemblages with different geomorphic dimensions and shapes, groats, ridges on quartzite shales, hills, elongated ridges, depressions) consisting of hills, peaks and valleys²⁰⁷.

Cultural features

Built heritage (monuments, ruins, castles, churches, etc)

The Sphinx from Buștea

Mânzălești commune is 50 kilometers from the city of Buzău, on the Slănicului Valley. Some historians say that the Sphinx from Buștea is one of the oldest human settlements in our country and they even have the courage to believe that it is the cradle of European civilization, because, they say, this is the only place on the continent where salt is found on the surface, a mineral from which the body human is dependent²⁰⁸.

²⁰⁷ Id.

²⁰⁸ <http://romaniamegalitica.blogspot.com/2010/12/sfinxul-din-bustea-com-manzalesti-jud.html>



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Online source: <http://romaniamegalitica.blogspot.com/2010/12/sfinxul-din-bustea-com-manzalesti-jud.html>

The Genoese Lighthouse from Constanța

The Genoese Lighthouse from Constanța was built at the beginning of the 14th century by the merchants from Genoa, Italy, that came to the seaport of Tomis for business. They built two more lighthouses – one in Sulina and the other one in Mangalia. The lighthouse was destroyed by the weather across the years, but was restored between 1858 – 1860 with British funds. Its octagonal base was made of stone. Above the base a small room with a metal dome was designed²⁰⁹.

²⁰⁹ <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/farul-genovez/>



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Online source: <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/farul-genovez/>

Tropaeum Traiani

The Tropaeum Traiani is a monument in Roman Civitas Tropaensium (site of modern Adamclisi, Constanța County), built in 109 in then Moesia Inferior, to commemorate Roman Emperor Trajan's victory over the Dacians, in the winter of 101-102, in the Battle of Adamclisi. Before Trajan's construction, an altar existed there, on the walls of which were inscribed the names of the 3,000 legionaries and auxilia (servicemen) who had died "fighting for the Republic". (Latin: Tropaeum from Greek: Tropaion, source of English: "trophy"). Trajan's monument was inspired by the Augustus mausoleum, and was dedicated to Mars Ultor in AD 107/108. On the monument there were 54 metopes depicting Roman legions fighting against enemies; most of these metopes are preserved in the museum nearby. The monument was supposed to be a warning to the tribes outside this newly conquered province²¹⁰.

²¹⁰ F.B Florescu Das Siegesdenksmal von Adamclisi: Tropaeum Traiani (1965)



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Online source: <https://zigzagprinromania.com/blog/complexul-arheologic-tropaeum-traiani-adamclisi/>

Casino from Constanța

The Casino from Constanța was built in 1909 and is located on the banks of the Black Sea. It is built in Art Nouveau style. During the First World War, it served as a military hospital and it returned to its original destination after the creation of the Great Union of Romanian provinces. Although the Casino is a symbol for Constanța, the conflicts between the Ministry of Culture and the City transformed the edifice into ruins. Nevertheless, the Casino remains a reference point for Constanța. It is a historic monument²¹¹.

²¹¹ <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/cazinoul-din-Constanța/>



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Online source: <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/cazinoul-din-Constanta/>

Independence Monument in Tulcea

As one of the most imposing structures in Tulcea, the Independence Monument is one of the main attractions of the city. It is located on the North-East side of Tulcea, on top of a hill where you can also find the ruins of the ancient roman city of Aegyssus. The monument was erected as homage to the heroic soldiers who fought to free the country from the Ottoman rule between 1877 and 1888. The war also brought Dobrogea back to Romania and established it as one of the most flourishing regions of the country in the next few decades. Sculptor George Vasilescu created the concept and supervised the works. Construction began on 17 October 1879 with King Carol I present. The structure consists of a 22 meters tall obelisk, made of Ravenna granite, with two sculptures on the sides: a bronze soldier on the right and a vulture on the left. Both were forged in Milan. During the First World War, the frontline was pretty much set on the Danube and Tulcea sustained heavy damage. The monument was almost completely destroyed and remained for years. 1932, it was rebuilt, but without the soldier and the vulture. It was finally restored to its original form in 1977, for the celebration of a century on independence²¹².

²¹² <https://www.trecator.ro/europa/romania/dobrogea/monumentul-independentei-tulcea/>



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Online source: <https://www.trecator.ro/europa/romania/dobrogea/monumentul-independentei-tulcea/>

The Statue of Mircea the Elder (Mircea I of Wallachia)

The Statue of Mircea the Elder (Mircea I of Wallachia), in Romanian: Mircea cel Bătrân, was built in the name Voivode of Wallachia. The byname "elder" was given to him after his death in order to distinguish him from his grandson Mircea II ("Mircea the Younger"), although some historians believe the epithet was given to him as a sign of respect by later generations. He is considered the most important Wallachian ruler during the Middle Ages and one of the great rulers of his era, and starting in the 19th century Romanian historiography has also referred to him as Mircea the Great (in Romanian: Mircea cel Mare)²¹³. The statue of Mircea the Elder, Tulcea was erected in 1900 - 1902 on the place named until 1947 Mircea Square (today, Civic Square). The monument had a 5 m base, made of granite blocks. The statue, 4 m high, represented the ruler in armor, with the mantle on his shoulder, with the crown prince on the head,

²¹³ Dr. Brackob, A.K. (2018). *Mircea the Old: Father of Wallachia, Grandfather of Dracula*. Buffalo, U.S.A.: Center for Romanian Studies / Histria Books. pp. 9–11.

with the sword in the left hand and the mace in the right hand. At the base, there were placed two lions holding trophies obtained by the ruler in the battles with the enemy. In front of the monument was placed a bronze plaque on which was engraved the title of the ruler "I, The Great Mircea, Voivode and Ruler of both parts across the Danube to the Great Sea and the fortress of Darstor." Destroyed by the occupation troops in 1916-1918, only the remains of the monument still remain in the park today²¹⁴.



Online source: <https://destepti.ro/statuia-lui-mircea-cel-batran-din-tulcea-tulcea>

Victory Statue

Victory Statue from Tisita, Vrancea county, is a historic monument, created in honor of Marasesti fights from 1917. The sculptor of this statue is Oscar Han. It represents the goddess of victory impersonated by a woman who has a sword over her head. The monument was inaugurated in September, 1934²¹⁵.

²¹⁴ (in Romanian)

<https://www.citulcea.ro/sites/citulcea/PrezentareaJudetului/Obiective%20Turistice/Pages/CetatiMonumente.aspx>

²¹⁵ <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/statuia-victoriei/>



Online source: <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/statuia-victoriei/>

Union Monument from Focsani

The Union Monument from Focsani was erected in homage of the 1859 Union created by Alexandru Ioan Cuza. It is situated in the center of the city. The Monument was built in 1976 and was made by the sculptor Ion Jalea. On the bronze plaque from the main side of the obelisk it is written "Union of the Romanian Principalities, 1859"²¹⁶.



Online source: <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/monumentul-unirii-de-la-focsani/>

The Church Made of One Stone, situated in Naeni commune, Buzău county, was built, just as its name suggests, from one stone – travertine extracted from a mine close to Naeni. It is dedicated to "Palm Sunday" and its painting was made with a

²¹⁶ <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/monumentul-unirii-de-la-focsani/>



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Byzantine influence. The iconostasis is also made of travertine, which is very rare in European orthodoxy²¹⁷.



Online source: <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/biserica-dintr-o-piatra/>

Berca Monastery is situated in Berca locality from Buzău county. It was built by a family of local noblemen in 1694. The initial built skete became a monastery and fortress in the 18th century. Across time the monastery was enlarged by other buildings. It is dedicated to "Saints Archangels Michael and Gabriel" and is a historic monument. Only a few walls can be seen today from the old fortress²¹⁸.

²¹⁷ <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/biserica-dintr-o-piatra/>

²¹⁸ <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/manastirea-berca/>



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Online source: <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/manastirea-berca/>

Găvanu Monastery is located in Manzalesti commune from Buzău county. It is dedicated to the "Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary" and was built in 1707 from wood beams supported by a stone base²¹⁹.



Online source: <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/manastirea-gavanu/>

King's Mosque from Constanța is also known as Carol the 1st Mosque. It was built between 1910 – 1913 as a gift of the king Carol the 1st to the Muslim community from

²¹⁹ <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/manastirea-gavanu/>



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Dobrogea. Its minaret is 40 meters high and people can reach the top of it by climbing 140 stairs. From up there they can see the view of Constanța²²⁰.



Online source: <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/moscheea-regelui/>

Muntioru Skete is situated in Poiana Muntioru, near Vintileasca commune, Vrancea county. The Orthodox Skete is located at an altitude of 1,300 meters and is managed by Poiana Marului Monastery. It was founded by the priest Macarie Besliu in 1999 and is dedicated to "The Holy Face of Jesus"²²¹.



Online source: <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/scithul-muntioru/>

²²⁰ <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/moscheea-regelui/>

²²¹ <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/scithul-muntioru/>

Small heritage features (fountains, chapels, walls, etc) Danube Cliff from Galați

The Danube Cliff from Galați was built in the 20th century and is one of the most important relaxation areas from the city. Some of the vessels across the cliff were transformed in restaurants, where people can have a quiet meal. The cliff has two levels, the upper level and the lower level, which were built to strengthen an unstable soil layer. Periodically, the cliff hosts various events, such as: sports competitions, concerts, art exhibitions, etc²²².



Online source: <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/faleza-dunarii/>

Statue “Woman with Harp”

Statue “Woman with Harp” is located in Decebal Square from Medgidia city, Constanța county. The statue was created in 1933 by the sculptor Ion Jalea (1887 – 1983). It represents a woman playing a cordless harp. The idea behind the cordless harp is that the cords represent parts of nature – either the water that pours down the statue when it rains or the wind when it blows – creating a symbolic connection between the work of art and the environment²²³.

²²² <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/faleza-dunarii/>

²²³ <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/statuia-femeia-cu-harpa/>



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Online source: <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/statuia-femeia-cu-harpa/>

Heritage objects (tools, clothes, furniture, tapestries, etc.)

Traditions (skills, know-how, customs)

From the repertoire of craftsmen from Southeastern Region of Romania's heritage, we can mention²²⁴:

Weaving – sewing by Iustina Mother at Saint Pantelimon Monastery

Address: STAȚIUNEA LACUL SĂRAT, ALEEA MĂNĂSTIRII NR 3, JUD. BRĂILA, BRĂILA

Phone: 0723117006

Email: iustina.andreea.maica@gmail.com

Mother Iustina is always in the tailoring workshop of the monastery, where she sews church clothes. It has been 11 years since the woman found her peace in the Monastery, where, she says, she was helped and encouraged to express herself freely and to arrange this museum as she thinks fit. An idea born out of passion for folklore, which was nourished over time as a duty to the past, to ancestors, as described by

²²⁴ <https://repertoriulmesterilor.patrimoni.ro/mestesuguri-artistice/>

Mother Iustina, and this is also seen in her paintings on wood, another passion of the mother with whom she nourishes her soul whenever she has the opportunity²²⁵.

Products: religious and traditional embroidery, priestly vestments.



Woodworking: carving, sculpturing by Piron Valeriu

Address: Bld. DOROBANȚILOR, BRĂILA, BRĂILA

Phone: 0727398447

Email: pironvaleriu@yahoo.co.uk

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/PironValeriuTheSculptor/>



Wood / glass religious icons, or other materials by Baciú Elena-Ecaterina

²²⁵ (in Romanian) <http://obiectivbr.ro/content/m%C4%83n%C4%83stirea-lacu-s%C4%83rat-oaza-de-lini%C5%9Fte-din-buza-br%C4%83ilei>

Address: STRADA LEONARD TENOR NR.9, BUZAU, BUZĂU, COD POȘTAL:
120218

Phone: 0742 094 897

Email: coriniana@yahoo.com



Online source: <https://www.facebook.com/baciu.ecaterina/photos>

Sewing traditional folklore clothes by Copăcel Viorica

Address: COM. MÂNZĂLEȘTI, JUD. BUZĂU, BUZĂU, COD POȘTAL:

Phone: 0764963699

Products: shirts, dresses, children's suits, men's shirt





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Online source : https://adevarul.ro/locale/buzau/video-mama-fiica-dintr-o-comuna-buzoiana-expun-costume-populare-tesaturi-targuri-festivaluri-1_5b263076df52022f7539c5c4/index.html

Pottery by Bănică Dumitru-Aurel

Address: COMUNA RĂCOASA, SAT VARNIȚA, JUD VRANCEA, VRANCEA, COD
POȘTAL: 627280

Phone: 0237680617

Products: pots, jugs, plates, toys, vases



Painted eggs by Ochiar Silvia

Address: NĂRUJA, JUD. VRANCEA, VRANCEA



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Phone: 0732576948



The most widespread Christian Easter tradition is the painting of red eggs, whose presence is obligatory on the Easter table, is an ancient custom in Năruja village. If, for young people, the art of Easter eggs is unknown, in Năruja there are some old people who still keep this great technique from ancestors. And the most important thing is that they are not used chemically, but the eggs are reddened and environmentally friendly, like 100 years ago. The ecological paint for the reddening of the eggs is made from wildflower flowers and wild apple leaves that are macerated for three days with warm water²²⁶.

Gastronomy (local products, recipes, production methods)

Matthew's fishery (in Romanian: Pescaria lui Matei)

After the second bridge from Agigea was built over the Danube-Black Sea Canal, it became more accessible, and "Matei's Fishery" became in just four years one of the most popular fishing restaurants on the coast, with constant customers regardless of season or season. The restaurant is not in the tourist area, but on a more commercial route, which can be confused with a truck parking, but its location on the rocks and the

²²⁶ (in Romanian) https://adevarul.ro/locale/focsani/Incondeierea-oualor-pasti-obicei-strabun-saptamana-mare-vrancea-arhaica-1_5523d512448e03c0fd4f8691/index.html



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sea view have quickly gained its popularity. As well as its own source of fresh fish, which made those who passed the threshold recommend the fishery in Agigea²²⁷.



Online source: <http://pink-blog.ro/pareri-despre-pescaria-lui-matei-agigea/>

Serbian Tavern (in Romanian: Taverna Sârbului)

Serbian gastronomy is the strongest example that the tastes of a nation can cross the ages not by altering themselves, but by enriching themselves from those who have been along the way. In the crucible of this national cuisine, with a thousand unmistakable flavors, history has thrown the tastes of other recipes. The Ottoman one - in turn a mixture of culinary cultures. The Greek - old since the world and always renewed. The Austrian or the Hungarian - because while men were fighting their wars, women shared recipes. The Italian - gentle delights. But especially those of the Slavic nations from the southwest of the ripple water of the Danube. The restaurant is perhaps one of the richest gastronomies of the Eastern half of Europe, having for each client a dish to be savored, sweeter or spicier, but always tasty! Among the delicacies, we find a strong Slivovitz, the drink of the ancient heroes of Serbia, the traditional preparations of Serbia and of the Slavic world of the Balkans: ćevapčići - Serbian correspondent of

²²⁷ (in Romanian) <https://www.pescarialuimatei.ro/>



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the Romanian “mititei”, the pljeskavica (to which some call it The Serbian hamburger) sausages, Sarma and moussaka, in Serbian style²²⁸.



Online source: <https://Constanta.tavernasarbului.ro/despre-taverna-sarbului/>

Life Harbour Restaurant

The restaurant consists of two areas, the first one includes a club and terrace located near the checkpoints and with a capacity of 50 people, inside, and 60 outside, and the second, a floating restaurant, with a capacity of 70 people. The spectacular location, between yachts, of the two areas of the restaurant, offers a unique setting and makes this location a trend-setter in the tourist field. Life Harbor Restaurant offers international-specific menus and cuisine, including freshly caught Black Sea fish. During the warm season, room-service also works, both for accommodation spaces and for those who want to dine on their own boats²²⁹.

²²⁸ (in Romanian) <https://Constanta.tavernasarbului.ro/despre-taverna-sarbului/>

²²⁹ (in Romanian) <http://lifeharbour.ro/club-restaurant>



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Online source: <http://lifeharbour.ro/club-restaurant>

Ovid Island Restaurant

Nature created Ovidiu Island thousands of years ago, and people created legends around it. This is a modern and traditional place at the same time. Ovidiu island located on Lake Siutghiol at 5000m from the shore of Mamaia resort and 500m from Ovidiu city, is one of the most unique places of the Romanian coast, being the only tourist objective that operates on an island. Currently, the tourist complex has 20 accommodation places for tourists, in 10 3-star cottages, each equipped with double bed, own bathroom, air conditioning, television, cable, minibar.

The rustic restaurant also satisfies the most demanding tastes through the ambiance and the traditional Romanian dishes and the fish specialties. It is the ideal place for business dinners, different special family or professional events. In addition to the 400-seat restaurant, the complex also includes a Country Terrace with 150 seats that complement the island's enchanting environment. The "Ovidius" ship is a novelty for the Romanian coastline, with 3-star facilities that transport tourists to the island, but at the same time offers unique walks on the lake. The steam being functional throughout the year, festive or mundane events can be organized within the restaurant, which holds 50 seats, but also on the terrace, which has 80 seats²³⁰.

²³⁰ (in Romanian) <https://www.facebook.com/pg/insulaovidiumamaia/about/>



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Online source: Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/pg/insulaovidiumamaia/>

Nikos Greek Taverna

All those who walked along the shore of the great Aegean fell in love with the preparations of the Greek taverns. That is why Nikos Greek Taverna tried their best to bring the flavor of these dishes to the Black Sea shore. After countless beautiful and unique experiences of the chain of taverns opened in Constanța, Nikos Greek Taverna want to take the story of the tavern further. The smell of authentic spices and the multitude of preparations made after Greek recipes will convince you that you are truly on Greek lands. At Nikos Greek Tavern you will be greeted with the fusion of flavors of a diversified menu, which will guarantee an authentic Greek culinary experience²³¹.

²³¹ (in Romanian) http://Constanta.nikosgreektaverna.ro/#about_nikos



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Nikos Greek Taverna on the Bd. Tomis Boulevard no. 44, online source:

<http://Constanța.nikosgreektaverna.ro/>



Nikos Greek Taverna on Mamaia Nord, online source: <http://Constanța.nikosgreektaverna.ro/>

The Fishermen's Stop (in Romanian: Popasul pescarilor)

The Fishermen's Stop is one of the oldest fishery restaurants on the south of the Romanian coast, being opened in 1996. The fish served is fished in the early hours of the Black Sea in the morning by our fishermen or in the lake behind the restaurant²³².

²³² <http://www.popasul-pescarilor.ro/restaurant/>



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Online source: <http://www.popasul-pescarilor.ro/restaurant/>

Babel - Mediterranean Fish and Lebanese Restaurant

Babel is a Lebanese restaurant, located in a picturesque place in Năvodari, secluded, discreet, right by the sea. The magnificent view accompanies the Lebanese dishes, prepared with great care according to the original recipes. It is the place where you can discover Lebanese cuisine from A to Z. Fish is always fresh, and vegetables, eggs, rams and poultry come from their own Bioferma²³³.



Online source: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/BabelRestaurantLibanez/photos/>

²³³ (in Romanian) <https://www.facebook.com/pg/BabelRestaurantLibanez/about/>



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Mediterranean Seafood Restaurant - Caru' cu Scoici

A place of story, a destination for gourmets, a magical land for children and a garden with a great fragrance, this is what best describes the relaxed universe within the Caru' cu Scoici, a Mediterranean fishing restaurant. Located on the seafront, in the Venus resort, at the exit towards Cap Aurora, the restaurant offers a varied menu inspired by the famous cuisines in the Mediterranean area. Preparations of fish and seafood, but also other delicacies are prepared with great skill by the chefs of the restaurant. The fishing restaurant is arranged in the form of an airy terrace, lined with flowers and greenery, which descend smoothly towards the beach. At every visit, the sea keeps you company with its smooth breeze and the waves you can admire in the area. Even for children, the visit to this restaurant is delicious! For them, the restaurant created tasty menus and set up a colorful playground where time is measured by laughter, fun and appetite²³⁴.



Online source: <https://carucuscoici.ro/galerie.html>

Island Restaurant from Neptun

The Island Restaurant, opened in 1968, is located on the island of a lake from Neptune. It is one of the few places where fish from Delta, seafood, but also classic dishes of beef, pork, chicken, pasta and many other Romanian dishes can be served. But what it is special about this restaurant is the unique location on the coast. Once you arrive on the island you can choose to serve a meal on the little ships, on one of the pontoons

²³⁴ (in Romanian) <https://carucuscoici.ro/despre.html>

on the water, near the waterfall, under a willow tree, in a booth or a verandah. The coolness of the lake and the sea breeze are felt all over the island²³⁵.



Online source: <https://www.insulaneptun.ro/restaurant/>

The Gulf Fishermen's Restaurant

The Gulf Fishermen's Restaurant was born from the need to enjoy the beauty of nature and from a great desire to express the culinary art through tasty dishes of fresh fish and seafood. Located on Agigea beach, far from the bustle of urban civilization, the restaurant has a Mediterranean style and it keeps its tradition²³⁶.



Online source: <https://www.golfulpescarilor.ro/>

Water Gate – A Fish Restaurant near the Black Sea

The Water Gate (in Romanian: Poarta Apelor) is a restaurant with a fishery specific, located in Eforie Sud, near the Black Sea. The varied fish products are lovingly

²³⁵ (in Romanian) <https://www.insulaneptun.ro/restaurant/>

²³⁶ (in Romanian) <https://www.golfulpescarilor.ro/>

prepared by the chefs for all tastes. You will find in the menu a variety of fishery products that will delight the taste buds, prepared on the plate or fried, tasty brine, fish salads, fish soups and soups, in aromatic herb crust or salt crust. The seafood is prepared with great care to conquer you from the first bite, but also the tagliatelle with seafood that can delight your senses. You can also delight in preparations of chicken, beef, pork or rat. Water Gate is a restaurant ready to delight you with fresh fish products and a pleasant atmosphere near the Black Sea!²³⁷



Online source: <https://www.facebook.com/PoartaApelor/>

Blue Aqua Restaurant

The organic architecture of the restaurants in Galați represents a combination of the natural elements with the service areas, in a perfect symbiosis that are mutually enhancing. Asymmetrical groups in the open plan, is a feature of the design applied by one of the owners, Sorin Dragan being in love with the organic shapes and nature,

²³⁷ <https://www.eforieonline.ro/restaurantul-pescaresc-poarta-apelor-eforie-sud.html>

continuously developing a concept in which they filter light and punctuate the colors, creating a coherent and seductive ensemble for tasting. The central terrace offers intimacy to those who cross our threshold, eliminates the separation of the interior and exterior space, thus achieving the maximum freedom of expression of those who taste our preparations, while maintaining harmony with the environment. With the passage of time and the evolution of the culinary techniques of preparing fish products, from smoking the products until their marination (the process of soaking foods in a seasoned, often acidic, liquid before cooking), the owners thought to transport the wild fish to the more remote areas, to satisfy even the most demanding gourmets. The owners took the initiative to take advantage of the rich freshwater fish and opened the first restaurants, where they gathered classic or traditional recipes, original and innovative. Later, they combined them with other bio-certified products, in a tasteful explosion with seafood and other wonders on the shores of the Mediterranean. Because there is plenty, taken directly from the fishermen on the banks of the Danube, we can delight the taste buds with the most refined dishes or the most common recipes, using exclusively extra virgin olive oil, olives harvested from the hills of Tuscany or vegetables grown in a bio environment by the Romanian villagers²³⁸.

²³⁸ (in Romanian) <https://www.blueacqua.ro/Galati/povestea-blue-acqua>



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Online source: <https://www.blueacqua.ro/Galați/galerie-foto-Galați>

Kingfisher Bar (in Romanian: Ivan Pescar Fish Bar)

Ivan Pescar Fish Bar from Tulcea offers fresh fish dishes from Danube Delta and Black Sea, cooked by Lipovans chefs. Ivan Pescar is a small bird of an almost electric blue, a kind of Delta hummingbird, known internationally as Kingfisher. The owner borrowed his name because Ivan Pescar is not only an exclusive fish restaurant, but a declaration of love for Danube Delta. The restaurant is a project born from friendship and shared passion for delta tastes and scents, local gastronomy and the delta's intangible heritage. Ivan Pescar offers a sincere experience, based on the quality and freshness of the fish. The dishes are cooked respecting the recipes of the place and the prohibition periods, from fresh, local and seasonal fish, from responsible catches, because we protect our future fish sources²³⁹.

²³⁹ (in Romanian) <https://www.ivanpescar.ro/povesteanoastra>



Online source: <https://www.facebook.com/IvanPescar/photos>

Events and festivals

Lyra Palace from Brăila

Lyra Palace from Brăila was built between 1924 – 1926 at the initiative of George Cavadia, songwriter and president of Lyra Society. Today, the Palace hosts Lyra Symphonic Orchestra and is a place to see classical music concerts²⁴⁰.

²⁴⁰ <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/palatul-lyra/>



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Online source: <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/palatul-lyra/>

Gulliver Puppet Theater

Gulliver Puppet Theater was created on October 1st, 1952. Initially, it was a theater for children, but in recent years, the institution also started to develop plays for youngsters. The most important event of the theater is The Gulliver Festival, one of the most important festivals of its kind from Romania, when Galați is transformed into the “capital of the puppet theater”²⁴¹.



Online source: <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/teatrul-de-papusi-gulliver/>

Constanța Aquarium

The Aquarium from Constanța is located near the famous Casino and was open in 1958. It displays aquatic flora, fauna organized in permanent exhibitions and

²⁴¹ <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/teatrul-de-papusi-gulliver/>

temporary exhibitions of biology and ecology. The Aquarium is part of the Natural Sciences Museum Complex from Constanța. It is organized on three departments: Marine Section, Fresh Water Section and Exotic Fish²⁴².



Online source: <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/acvariul-Constanta/>

Dolphinarium from Constanța

The Dolphinarium is part of the Museum Complex of Natural Sciences from Constanța. It was open in 1958, when the Aquarium was also inaugurated. Visitors can see shows with dolphins and sea lions guided by their trainers, see exhibitions with exotic birds or other temporary exhibitions²⁴³.



Online source: <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/delfinariu/>

Aqua Magic Park from Mamaia Resort

²⁴² <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/acvariul-Constanta/>

²⁴³ <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/delfinariu/>

Aqua Magic Park from Mamaia Resort in Constanța is one of the important attractions on the Romanian coast, it has an impressive area of 27200 square meters. The most emblematic water park in the country reveals the secret of an exceptional holiday: the diversity of events, the aquatic attractions and a lot adrenaline. Aqua Magic addresses all age categories, satisfying the desire to relax some but also the adventure and adrenaline rush of the others, being able to host 3000 visitors a day. This park offers you 15 endless sources of activities²⁴⁴:

- **Waterplayground** is a playground specially designed for children, with an area of 1400 sqm, consisting of pools and multiple slides, where the water depth is 40 cm.
- **Baby pool** is a children's pool, with an area of 800 square meters, the water depth is maximum 20 cm, it is noticed by the multitude of colorful mini-slides, the characters from the stories, the blue whale, the playful dolphins, the turtle frogs, the sea bass, the octopus, which accompany the children on the great adventure in a magical world.
- **River ride** is a spectacular experience, an attraction that guarantees the joy being the largest canyon circuit with a diameter of 1700 mm, a starting height of 5 meters and a running length of 50 meters.
- **Multislide** invites you to compete with 3 friends for the fastest landing in swimming pools. The departure is made from 8 meters high, on a length of 41 meters.
- **Space bowl** gives you three different sensations in one slide; at first a rapid slip from a height of 11 meters through a tubular slide, then you will reach a huge funnel where with the help of the centrifugal power you will circle in a circle, then by free fall you will land in a swimming pool with a depth of 2 meters.
- **Mega pipe** is a curved and restless slide, designed for those who have the speed and pleasure of curves; is presented as a closed tube, with a diameter of 800 mm, starts from a height of 11.4 meters and runs on a length of 45 meters.
- **Twister** offers you twists, turns, fast gliding and adrenaline as it comes in two braided tubes, of different colors, with a diameter of 800 mm, starting from a height of 11.4 meters and has a running length of 50 meters.
- **Kamikaze** is an expert in creating strong sensations, being reserved for the bravest! With an open tube, 700 mm wide, it descends abruptly from a height of 11.4 meters and continues running on a length of 50 meters and its configuration ensures easy landing and maximum safety. This adrenaline slide is a favorite of waterparks.

²⁴⁴ (in Romanian) <https://www.facebook.com/aquamagic/>

- **Super Crater** always gives you an extraordinary ride! See the world from 11 meters high and slide slowly through a closed tube with a diameter of 1400 mm, after which the speed increases and you are thrown into the giant crater where gravitational forces take control, you circle, then descend into the middle crater that leads you to the landing.
- **Turbo slide.** If the speed is the one that produces you the most adrenaline, throw yourself in a closed, red tube, with a diameter of 800 mm starting from a height of 11 meters, 50 meters running in which it makes a loop, then pass through a transparent tube with drops in the landing pool.
- **Black hole** is the completely closed, circular tube, with a diameter of 1400 mm, starting from a height of 10 meters, in which you are allowed to slide only with a swimbelt which gives you a rolling length of 70 meters. Black hole is the most popular slide, a mixture of speed and fun that offers an incredible experience.
- In Aqua Magic Mamaia you find the only **Side Winder slide** in Romania! This attraction has been developed for lovers of maximum fun who are looking for high speed experiences, starting from a height of 14 meters, offering unique sensations of free fall!
- **Lazy river** is the best guide in Aqua Magic, with a length of 360 meters, 3 meters wide, 1.3 meters depth, communicates with all the swimming pools and shows you the whole story of the park in the most relaxing way.
- **Relax Pool** is everyone's favorite place, a refreshing escape when the sun's rays warm the atmosphere. The pool is the ideal option to spend your sunny summer days, in a holiday atmosphere, tasty cocktails, harmony and music.
- **Aqua Bar** is an aquatic bar that combines the coolness of the water in the pool with tasty cocktails.
- **Jacuzzi** - The jacuzzi have a capacity of 7 people each. The jacuzzi therapy gives the skin the most coveted care and helps to regain the well-being, to treat discomforts such as poor circulation, arthritis symptoms or back pain. Water jets offer a variety of options, from an in-depth, revitalizing massage, to an extremely relaxing, easy massage. Using this type of massage, different points of the body will be stimulated, thus benefiting not only from a relaxing massage but also a therapeutic one.



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Online source: Facebook Aqua Magic, online source: <https://www.facebook.com/aquamagic/>

„Major Gheorghe Pastia” Folk Atheneum

”Major Gheorghe Pastia” Folk Atheneum is a cultural institution from Focsani, Vrancea county, which organizes musical shows, workshops, art exhibitions, conferences, etc. Its building started in 1927 at the initiative of Major Gheorghe Pastia²⁴⁵.



Online source: <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/ateneul-popular-maior-gheorghe-pastia/>

Area as a whole

Climate

Romania’s location in the Southeastern portion of the European continent gives it a climate that is transitional between temperate regions and the harsher extremes of the continental interior. In the Southeastern Region, the continental influences of the Russian Plain (East European Plain) make themselves felt and in the extreme southeast there are even milder sub-Mediterranean influences. This overall pattern is

²⁴⁵ <http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/ateneul-popular-maior-gheorghe-pastia/>

substantially modified by the relief, however, and there are many examples of climatic zones induced by changes in elevation²⁴⁶.

The climate of the Southeastern Region is part of the general characteristics of the temperate temperate climate of transition, with a series of local features, given by certain factors (relief, Black Sea, Danube). The average annual temperatures vary quite a bit, especially due to the relief. Thus, if in the Danube, the south of Dobrudja, the coastal area and the Danube Delta the multiannual average exceeds 11°C (11.2°C Mangalia and Murfatlar), in the mountain area the average temperature reaches values between 0 and 6°C, and on the highest peaks below 0°C. The prevailing winds are from the eastern and northern sectors, mainly the brood, in winter. Local winds such as sea breezes and mountain breezes also appear. The amount of precipitation is influenced, primarily by altitude, but also by the continental climatic influences from the east. Thus, in the southern area, on the coast and in the Danube Delta the amount of precipitation is below 400mm / year and reaches over 1000mm / year in the mountain area. The bioclimate in the Black Sea is temperate-continental, with few marine influences, with reduced thermic changes in 24 hours, good thermic stability in the summer season, reduced precipitations, uniform degree of atmospheric humidity²⁴⁷.

²⁴⁶ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Romania/Drainage#ref42837>

²⁴⁷ (in Romanian) http://www.adrse.ro/Regiunea/Geografie_Demografie.aspx

Stakeholders

The survey area in Romania includes: The Southeastern Region of Romania which comprises the following counties: Brăila, Buzău, Constanța, Galați, Tulcea, and Vrancea. The main target groups to record the tourism and culture stakeholders of the study areas that are interested in the SILC project, by use of questionnaires are:

- Regional public authorities (all the local stakeholders can be found in Annex 2)
- NGOs (all the local stakeholders can be found in Annex 3)
- National Tourism Information Centers (all the local stakeholders can be found in Annex 4)
- Accommodations – Hotels (all the local stakeholders can be found in Annex 5.1)
- Accommodations – Guesthouses (all the local stakeholders can be found in Annex 5.2)
- Food places (all the local stakeholders can be found in Annex 6)
- Tourism agencies (all the local stakeholders can be found in Annex 7)

The major local tourism and culture stakeholders that showed interest in the SILC project by answering the questionnaires are displayed in the following table below.

Table 1. Major local stakeholders for the Southeastern Region of Romania

<i>N</i>	<i>Target group</i>	<i>Name of Organization</i>	<i>Contact person</i>	<i>E-mail</i>	<i>Website</i>
1	Regional public authorities	Buzău County Council	Claudiu - Tourism Department Counselor	claudiu.bz21@gmail.com	http://cjbuzau.ro/en/home-2/
2	Regional public authorities	Cosmești City Hall		cosmesti@gl.e-adm.ro	http://primaria-cosmesti.ro/
3	Regional public authorities	City Hall of Galați	Dr. Arh. Dragoș Horia Buhociu (Chief Architect institution)	arhitectsef@primariagalati.ro	https://www.primariagalati.ro/portal/index.php
4	Regional public authorities	Guidance counselor at Administrative Territorial Unit of the Isaccea Municipality		secretariatisaccea@gmail.com	https://www.isaccea.ro/
5	Regional public authorities	Ostrov City Hall		secretariat@primariaostrovtulcea.a.ro	https://www.primariaostrovtulcea.ro/
6	Regional public authorities	Ceatalchioi City Hall		primariaceatalchioi@gmail.com	https://www.primariaceatalchioi.ro/
7	Regional public authorities	Constanța City Hall	Alina Bădilă (Tourism department)	compartiment.turism@primaria-constant.ro	http://www.primaria-constant.ro/
8	Regional public authorities	Chilia Veche commune town hall	Oprisan Daniela Corina	primaria_chilia_veche@yahoo.com	https://www.primariachilia.ro/
9	Regional public authorities	Crișan Commune Hall		primariacrisan@gmail.com	https://www.primariacrisan.ro/



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10	NGOs	FLAG Delta (Local Group Association for Sustainable Fisheries Danube Delta)		flag.delta@yahoo.com	http://www.flagdelta.ro/
11	NGOs	Anticus Multicultural Association	Taner Murat	taner@anticusmulticultural.org	https://www.anticusmulticultural.org/
12	NGOs	Association of the Ecological Tourist Club MONT-DELT-MAR	President	mdm.cornel@gmail.com	https://www.facebook.com/mont.delt.mar/
13	NGOs	ANTREC Constanța	Florentina Dospinescu (President)	constantina@antrec.ro / florentina.dospinescu@gmail.com	http://www.antrec-se.ro/index.php/ro/judete/constantina
14	NGOs	Foundation of the Romanian School of Business of Chambers of Commerce and Industry Tulcea Branch	Florentina Jelescu (Director)	sraftl@yahoo.com	https://www.sraftl.ro/
15	NGOs	Golovița Fishermen's Association	Cătălin Balaban	asociatia.golovita@gmail.com	https://asociatiagolovita.wordpress.com/
16	NGOs	DAKIA Association for Sustainable Development, the project "Integrated Management of the North Dobrogea Plateau"	Tiberiu Cazacioc	comunicare@dakia.ro	www.dakia.ro www.apnd.ro
17	NGOs	Alpin Club Brasov	Marcel-Marian Radu (president)	marian@alpinclubbrasov.ro	http://alpinclubbrasov.ro/
18	National Tourism Information Centers	CNIPT Nehoiu	Florea Florina (Director of the tourist information center)	cniptnehoiu@yahoo.com	http://www.cniptnehoiu.ro/
19	National Tourism Information Centers	CNIPT Băneasa		cniptbaneasa@yahoo.com	http://www.baneasacnipt.ro/



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20	Accommodations – Hotels	Club D'or tourist complex in Vama Veche (SC TANDER MAXX SRL)	Manager Hotel	office@clubdor.ro	http://www.clubdor.ro/
21	Accommodations – Hotels	Delta Hotel (SC COMPLEX DELTA SRL)	Alina Dima (Front Desk Department)	receptiedelta3@gmail.com	https://www.hoteldelta.eu/
22	Accommodations – Hotels	Esplanada Hotel (SC TRIDENT SRL)	Cimpoesu Oana Raluca (Front Desk Department)	office@hotelesplanada.ro	www.hotelesplanada.ro www.esplanadaparc.ro
23	Accommodations – Guesthouses	Agrotourism Bunica Maria Guesthouse		contact@bunicamaria.com	https://www.bunicamaria.com/
24	Accommodations – Guesthouses	Andreea 2 Mai Guesthouse		casaandreea2mai@yahoo.com	https://casaandreea2mai.ro/
25	Accommodations – Guesthouses	Mariana Guesthouse	Mariana Brudaru	casamariana.murighiol@gmail.com	https://www.booking.com/hotel/ro/casa-mariana.ro.html
26	Accommodations – Guesthouses	Agrotourism guesthouse Valea Fagilor (Ilie Marian Agro I.I.)	Ilie Marian (Manager)	iliemarian07@yahoo.com	https://www.pensiuneavaleafagilor.ro/
27	Accommodations – Guesthouses	Vasiliu Guesthouse (Ecoturism Delta SRL)	Petre Vasiliu (Manager)	petrerotl@yahoo.com	https://www.ecoturismdelta.ro/
28	Accommodations – Guesthouses	Cormoran Resort (SC Inpro Romania SRL)	Cornel Găină (General Director)	cornel_gaina@yahoo.com	http://www.cormoran.ro/
29	Accommodations – Guesthouses	Puiu Guesthouse	Băncioiu Rodica (Administrator)	pensiunea.puiu@yahoo.com	http://www.pensiuneapuiu.ro/



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30	Accommodation s – Guesthouses	4 Willows Guesthouse (Pensiunea 4 Sălcii)	Scurtulescu Răzvan (Administrator)	scurtulescurazvan@yahoo.com	http://pensiunea4salcii.ro/
31	Accommodation s – Guesthouses	Danube's Shore House (Casa Malul Dunării)	Panschi Nicoleta	casamaluldunarii@gmail.com	https://casamaluldunarii.ro/
32	Tourism agencies	Alternative Travel (SC Dobrogea Misterioasa SRL)	C.E.O. (lawyer)	contact@alternativetravel.ro	https://www.alternativetravel.ro
33	Tourism agencies	Verada Tour	Marcel Mocanu (Director)	contact@veradatour.ro	http://veradatour.ro/en
34	Tourism agencies	Chettusia Tours	Mihai Baci	info@chettusia.com	https://www.chettusia.com/
35	Tourism agencies	Descopera Delta Dunării	Andreea Zaharcu (tourism agent)	newstravelromania2012@yahoo .com / contact@descoperadeltaduna rii.ro	www.descoperadeltadunarii.ro
36	Certified tour guide in Danube Delta	Ionuț Călin	Ionuț Călin	ionutcalin125@gmail.com	https://www.facebook.com/ionut.calin. 165
37	Higher Education and Research Institutions	Jean Bart Theoretical High School Sulina	Valentin (educational coordinator - tour guide)	valentinropl@yahoo.com	http://liceuljeanbartsulina.info/
38	SMEs	Souvenir from Dobrogea	Bianca Cristina Folescu (Administrator)	suvenirdindobrogea@gmail.com	http://suvenirdindobrogea.ro/
39		Cultural center in Mahmudia, Tulcea	Domnița Maftei (Director)	domnitamatfei@yahoo.ro	-



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40	SMEs	TONIDEL BLUE SRL in Mahmudia commune, Tulcea County	Efimov Hariton (sailor)	tonidelblue@gmail.com	-
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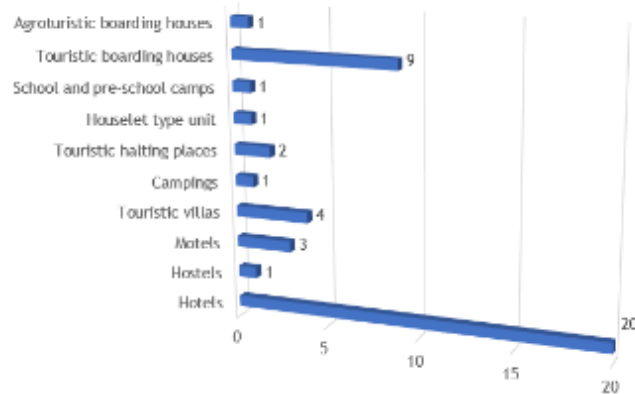


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Infrastructure Accommodation

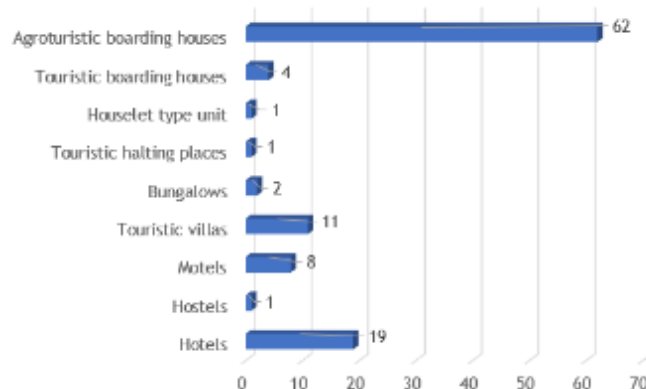
Tourists accommodation in Brăila County in 2019



Tourists accommodation in Brăila County in 2019

Source: National Institute for Statistics - ROMANIA, Online source:
<http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>

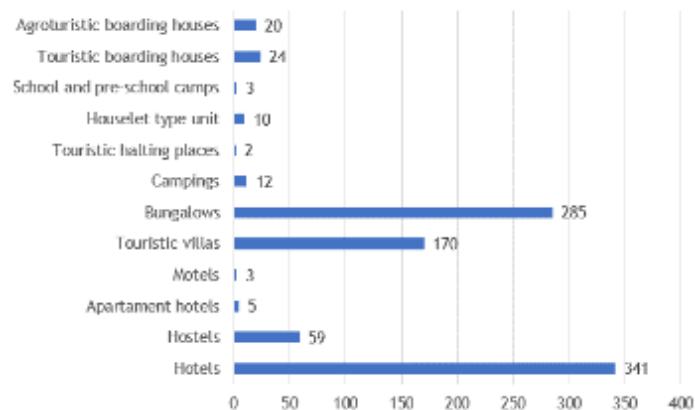
Tourists accommodation in Buzău County in 2019



Tourists accommodation in Buzău County in 2019

Source: National Institute for Statistics - ROMANIA, Online source:
<http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>

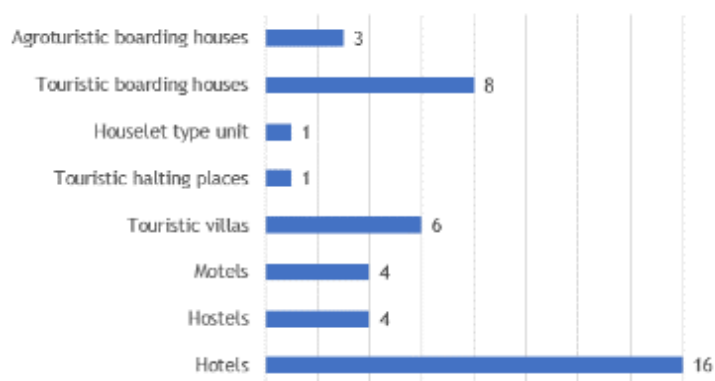
Tourists accommodation in Constanța County in 2019



Tourists accommodation in Constanța County in 2019

Source: National Institute for Statistics - ROMANIA, Online source:
<http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>

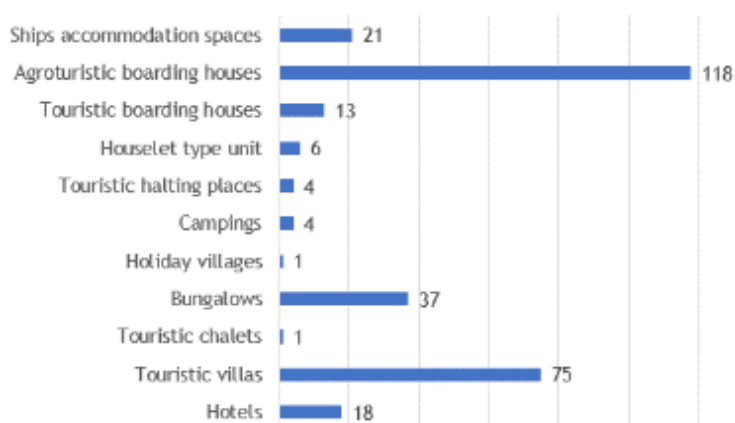
Tourists accommodation in Galați County in 2019



Tourists accommodation in Galați County in 2019

Source: National Institute for Statistics - ROMANIA, Online source:
<http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>

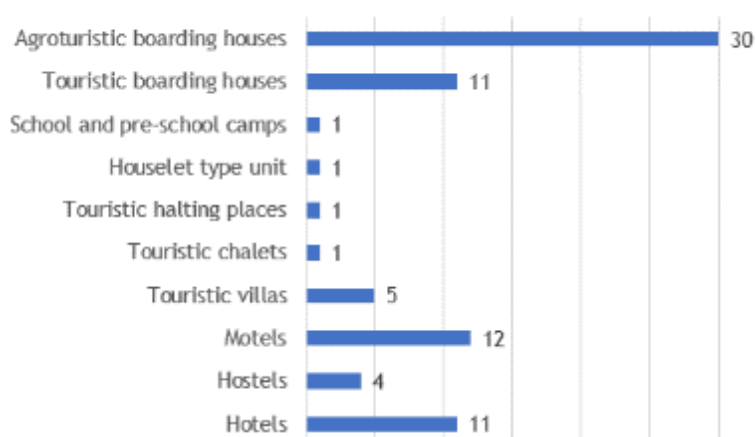
Tourists accommodation in Tulcea County in 2019



Tourists accommodation in Tulcea County in 2019

Source: National Institute for Statistics - ROMANIA, Online source:
<http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>

Tourists accommodation in Vrancea County in 2019



Tourists accommodation in Vrancea County in 2019
Source: National Institute for Statistics - ROMANIA, Online source:
<http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>

Transportation Infrastructure

Road network, Rail network, Sea Transport – Ports, Airports, and transportation within destination, access and proximity to cities, airports, other destinations

Brăila County features one of the oldest electrical tram lines in Romania, inaugurated at the end of the 19th century and still in use. Brăila's bus system is operated by the town hall in cooperation with Braicar Company, with four primary bus configurations available servicing most of the city. The Brăila city has a polycentric development, clearly differentiated by neighborhoods, a flat topography, with equal possibilities of expansion in all directions²⁴⁸. Although there is an increase in the number of new buildings in the municipality, areas with urban, architectural, cultural and historical value are preserved. Unfortunately, many historical monument buildings are privately owned and many are in a state of degradation due to lack of funds (such as those located on the current Mihai Eminescu street, as well as in the old historical center of the municipality). The city, dominated by the presence of the Danube, enjoys the existence of green areas (Monument Park, Public Garden, Danube Cliff, Salt Lake), of a total area of green spaces of 471.46 ha, of which 350.37 ha represent parks, leisure areas, squares, alignments streets, green spaces in apartment complexes. However, in accordance with the legislation the area of green spaces must be expanded.

The character of a garden city, the natural environment and the existence of areas with historical architectural heritage (especially the old central area) are favorable premises for the development of an attractive pedestrian infrastructure. Moreover, to improve this infrastructure, the City Hall of Brăila has implemented and is implementing a series of projects financed from European non-reimbursable funds / state budget, which have directly targeted it:

- The pedestrian crossing Platou Independence Square,
- The promenade area between Calea Călărașilor street and Danube Waterfront,
- The park in the Dulce Lake neighborhood,
- Monument Park,

²⁴⁸ STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF BRĂILA MUNICIPALITY 2014 – 2020, Chapter 5 - Infrastructure, equipping the territory, p. 53, online source: <http://www.primariabr.ro/wp-content/uploads/2018/documentePDF/Proiecte%20si%20strategii/Strategia%20Brăila%202014-2020.pdf>

or indirectly, by rehabilitating / modernizing the sidewalks of the main *road arteries*:

- Grivița Street,
- Calea Călărașilor Street,
- Calea Galați Sstreet,
- Dorobanților Boulevard.

Also, through the National Program of Local Development, two entry arteries will be modernized in the Brăila Municipality, Calea Călărașilor and Buzău Road.

*Public transport*²⁴⁹ In 2014, the average age of the car park under 10 years was 44%. In order to improve the public transport fleet with new, high performance vehicles, the project "Acquisition of 10 new city buses" was implemented, financed from the local budget. Also, the tram line has been rehabilitated and modernized, along a length of 11.3 km. In order to make public transport more efficient, it would be useful to set up dedicated traffic lanes, allowing for a high commercial traffic speed. In addition, passenger services need to be improved (for example satisfactory passenger information, e-ticketing services), as well as the quality of specific urban furniture.

In Brăila there are only underground parking spaces (consuming public space), with reduced capacity. Also, the distribution of parking spaces is uneven, especially in the block neighborhoods.

The concern of the City Hall of Brăila for solving this problem was materialized by the arrangement of parking places, within some road infrastructure projects, where there was the possibility, following that in the 2014-2020 programming period projects will be submitted to carry out this desideratum.

*Road and rail network*²⁵⁰ The roads that facilitate access to the municipality of Brăila are the following:

- E 584 (DN 21) (Poltava –Slobozia) Slobozia - Brăila
- DN 2B Buzău - Brăila
- DN 22 Râmnicu Sărat - Brăila
- DN 23 Focșani - Brăila
- DN 22B (Dig Brăila - Galați)
- E 87 (Odessa –Antalya), on the territory of Romania, connect the cities: Galați, Brăila, Tulcea, Constanța)

²⁴⁹ Ibidem, p. 54.

²⁵⁰ Id.

The length of the public roads in the region was 10,898 km in 2011, being the sixth place at the national level. Of the total of the regional public roads, only 27.2% were modernized, which placed it in the last place at the national level. % with light road clothing. A major problem for the Brăila - Galați sector was the lack of a bridge over the Danube. Thus, a member of IHI Group, IHI Infrastructure Systems Co., Ltd. (IIS, Location: Sakai City, Osaka Prefecture; President: Akira Inoue), in a joint venture with the Italian construction company Astaldi, received an order for construction of the Brăila suspension bridge from Romania's National Company for the Administration of Road Infrastructure and signed a construction contract on January 15, 2018. This will be a fast road connection of the cities Brăila and Galați with Tulcea, the connection of the SE region with the Nordic ones, as well as with the European transport corridors. At the same time, access to the Black Sea Coast and the Danube Delta would be improved.

The Brăila Bridge is a road suspension bridge in Romania, under construction over the Danube river, between Brăila, a major city in the east of Romania, and the opposite bank of the river in Tulcea County. It will be the first bridge over the maritime Danube sector, and the fourth bridge over the Romanian section of the river. The bridge will improve road traffic accessibility of the Galați-Brăila area to Constanța and Tulcea, and connections between Moldavia and Dobruja regions. Crossing to the opposite bank of the Danube at Brăila City is limited to using road detours exceeding 100 km or crossing by ship. However, the construction of the suspension bridge will simplify crossing the Danube and significantly improve the convenience of transportation. In addition, as the connecting road that is part of this project leads to an existing highway, it contributes to the efficiency of cargo distribution between the Port of Constanța, the largest port in the country, and the eastern region of Romania. It can contribute to economic revitalization within the EU²⁵¹.

The municipality of Brăila is crossed by an important railway line: Bucharest-Galați (through Urziceni-Făurei-Brăila) and Bucharest-Ploiești-Buzău-Făurei-Brăila, the locality being an important railway hub in the south-east region, but also in the interregional relationship²⁵².

²⁵¹ IHI Infrastructure Systems Co., Ltd., online: <https://www.ihico.jp/iis/en/news/2017/180117.html>

²⁵² Ibidem, p. 55.

The Port of Brăila is located on the maritime sector of the Danube River. There is growth potential at the Port of Brăila if river transport could be carried out to a greater extent by the industrial units in the region with the increase in the port's capacity to handle cargo. The Port of Brăila is an important port of Romania for the handling and transport of cereals. The port is a part of the TEN-T comprehensive network. Main objective is the modernization of port infrastructure in the Port of Brăila.

Buzău County is crossed by national road DN2 (part of European Road E85), which connects the city to Bucharest to the South and to Râmnicu Sărat and the main cities of Western Moldavia to the North. National road DN1B (European Road E577) branches out of DN2 in Buzău. This road connects the city to Ploiești. In the North of the city, DN10 also branches from DN2. It crosses the Carpathians at their South-Eastern curvature through Buzău Pass towards Brașov. The South of Buzău is also crossed by national road DN2B, which branches from DN2 in the neighboring commune of Costești, leading eastward to Galați and Brăila. In Buzău, county road DJ203D branches from DN2B. It leads South to Țintești and Smeeni, where it ends in DN2C, a road along which it helps connect Buzău to Slobozia. In the Buzău city area, the only functional road bridge over Buzău River is the one crossing with DN2 to Mărcăineni. There is another road bridge, connecting the city to Vadu Pașii, near the railway bridge. It was however closed after it was destroyed by a flash flood in 2005, and repairs kept being postponed, which had an impact on the economy of the neighboring communes, North-East of the city, as it remains used only by pedestrians and cyclists. Works began in the fall of 2017.

Two main bust stations, one in the North and one in the South next to the railway station, as well a few other secondary bus stops, are used by private transportation companies that operate services to other cities or nearby villages.

Buzău is one of the country's main important railway hubs, as it connects Bucharest and Ploiești with Focșani, Galați and Constanța. The city railway station was open in 1872, along with the Bucharest-Galați railway.

A branch of this railway, from Buzău to Mărșești was opened a few years later, on 13 June 1881,[82] and it was the first railway designed by Romanian engineers.

The Buzău-Nehoiășu line, open in 1908, connects Buzău to the smaller towns and villages along the Buzău River valley, including Nehoiu and Pătârlagele.

Buzău has no civil airport. The only air transport infrastructure present in the city is the military airport and heliport South-West of the city, but it is used only by emergency

sanitary flights. Civil air traffic for Buzău is performed through Henri Coandă International Airport in Otopeni, Bucharest, 110 km away, the main air hub.

10 bus lines connect residential areas to industrial areas (including Buzău South industrial platform), the city center and the railway station. There are a few taxi companies licensed by the city also operating in the surrounding villages.

The opening, in 1895, of the *railway* to Bucharest, which crosses the Danube River at the bridge at Cernavodă, brought Constanța County considerable transit trade in grain and petroleum, which are largely exported; coal and coke head the list of imports, followed by machinery, iron goods, and cotton and woollen fabrics.

The A2 motorway provides a rapid road link between Constanța and Bucharest, while the A4 motorway acts as the city's outer traffic ring, diverting heavy traffic to and from the Port of Constanța and to Mangalia.

The Port of Constanța includes the North Port and the South Port, and is the fourth largest in Europe. It is protected by breakwaters, with a lighthouse at the entrance. The port is sheltered from the northerly winds, but southerly winds can prove highly dangerous at times. The Black Sea squadron of the Romanian fleet is stationed here. A large canal (the Danube-Black Sea Canal) connects the Danube River to the Black Sea at Constanța.

The city is served by Mihail Kogălniceanu International *Airport*.

Constanța's *public transport system* is run by Regia Autonomă de Transport în Comun Constanța (RATC), and consists of 23 year-round bus lines, and one summer sightseeing double decker open top bus line to tourists.

In the early 2000s, the city bought 130 new MAZ buses to replace the aging fleet of DAC buses. The entire fleet is now made up of buses from the 2000-2008 period, which are painted in distinctive bright colors, such as pink, yellow and green. There is also a fleet of double decker Volvo buses that run in the summer, providing access to and from the resort of Mamaia²⁵³.

Trams were active until the early 2000s. By this time, however, the cars were almost 25 years old and with the difficulties in maintenance, were decommissioned in favor of long-wheelbase buses. Two trolley bus lines were active until the late 2000s - now also decommissioned and replaced by buses.

²⁵³ ILiNC. "Regia Autonomă de Transport în Comun Constanța | Home". www.ratc.ro.

At the end of March 2014, all public buses were upgraded with Wifi for free use by all passengers. Speeds fall into the 3G HSDPA mobile range. Also, as an upgrade to the ticketing system, since the same time, tickets and per day all bus lines subscriptions can be bought via SMS, accepted by all national operators.

In July 2018 Constanța municipality signed a contract to acquire new buses manufactured by the Turkish company Anadolu Isuzu.

There are also plenty of private minibuses (similar to a share taxi) which run along longer and more intricate lines.

Galați County railway station has straight train services to cities such as Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca, Brașov and Iași all year and in the summer to Constanța.

Public transport in Galați is provided by a combination of trams, trolleybuses, autobuses (all of which are operated by TRANSURB, an agency of the municipality).

*Ports*²⁵⁴. Galați, located on the left bank of the Danube, 80 Km away from the Danube Delta, has 4 ports, one for passenger transport and three for cargo transport. Galați is Romania's second important port, having the possibility to connect to the Black Sea; it is located on the maritime stretch. Port of Galați is the biggest Romanian river-sea port, located on the left bank of the Danube river, between Km 157+600 and Mm 78+1300. It has 4 anchorage areas, near the right bank of the Danube river.

Port of Galați consist of 4 terminals, as follows:

1. *Mineral Terminal* specialized in loading and discharge of bulk cargos and also steel rolled products.
2. Commercial Terminal
3. Docks Terminal
4. New Basin Terminal.

Tulcea County. The city of Tulcea has a bus network, operated by S.C. Public Transport S.A .. The main bus line is line 1, which links A. Saligny High School to Neptune Neighborhood, but there are several bus lines that cover almost the whole city. The succession intervals are about 20 minutes, but the central area, the most requested, is crossed by several routes (1, 1b, 2, 3, 4, 4b), their circulation graphs

²⁵⁴ Danube Transnational Programme (DAPhNE), Portinfrastructure & industrial development, D.5.1.1: Status of port infrastructure development along the Danube, Project co-funded by European Union funds (ERDF, IPA), p. 145, online source: http://www.interreg-danube.eu/uploads/media/approved_project_public/0001/27/73f53f59745d05389b91577ed0a17ed0f17a6b07.pdf

making, on this portion of route to run a bus every 6 to 7 minutes. Also, the local transport operator also carries out transport to Babadag, Nalbant, Iazurile, Nufăru, Visterna and Zebil, but also to Tulcea Airport.

Close to Tulcea (in Mihail Kogălniceanu commune, Tulcea-Constanța road, at kilometer 15) is the Danube Delta airport.

Access roads in Tulcea

By car

- Brăila - 92 km
- Bucharest - 283 km (via Hârșova - DN2)
- Constanța - 126 km
- Galați - 113 km (via Brăila)
- Vaslui - 290 km (via Galați)

With train

- Tulcea City Railway Station

There are two stations in Tulcea: Tulcea Cargo and Tulcea City. The latter is the most important and is the end of line 804, which connects Tulcea to Medgidia (144 km).

Every day, two pairs of personal trains leave for Constanța and a pair of accelerated trains for Bucharest, the latter being served by Siemens Desiro (Blue Arrow) cars.

By bus

- Bucharest - Tulcea (minibuses)
- Constanța – Tulcea
- Iasi - Tulcea-Alba Iulia

By plane

- Mihail Kogălniceanu Constanța International Airport (~ 105 km from Tulcea) - ~ 15 km from Constanța city
- Tulcea Danube Delta Airport - 15 km from Tulcea city

By boat in Danube Delta

- Tulcea - Sf. Gheorghe
- Tulcea – Sulina
- Tulcea – Chilia
- Tulcea - Periprava

The Isaccea town is also a port on the Danube, having two mooring places for ships. It is mostly used for loading cereals and stone onto cargo ship. Isaccea is the entry point in Romania of the Isaccea-Negru Vodă gas pipeline (built between 2000-2002 to replace a smaller pipeline built in the 1980s) linking Ukraine and Bulgaria, bringing natural gas from Russia to Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey. The town is also the entry point of the 400 kV Isaccea-Vulcănești electrical transmission line, through which

Romania imports electricity from the Russian-owned Cuciurgan powerplant in the Transnistria region of Moldova.

Vrancea county is crossed by the European road E85 (the national road DN2 that connects the road with Bacău, Roman and Suceava (towards the north) and with Buzău, Bucharest and Giurgiu (towards the south)). Also, the county is crossed by the railway line CFR 500 (Bucharest-Suceava). Adjud municipality is crossed by the National road E 85 for a length of 11 km, from km 226 at the Trotuș Bridge up to 237 km to Bacău running in downtown for a section of 3 km. It is also crossed by the national road 11A, from the agro-food market towards Onești - Bacău, for a length of 4 km from km 37 + 450 to km 33 + 450. The national road E 85 branches out to Adjudu Vechi, while 11A goes to Bârlad, from km 42 to 46, for a length of 4 km running in the downtown area for a section of 1.5 km.

Other facilities and services (shops, etc.)

County Center for Preservation and Promotion of Traditional Culture

County Center for Preservation and Promotion of Traditional Culture is a public cultural institution under the authority of Brăila County Council, which initiates and carries out cultural projects and programs in the field of traditional culture of lifelong learning, consistently pursuing:

- the protection and treasuring representative values of popular contemporary creations, constituting the base of data and values;
- the elaboration programs for the recovery of traditions, in order to stimulate creativity in all genres of performing unprofessional arts;
- the initiation of supporting and affirmation projects for the creators and performers of popular and authentic tradition, protecting against distortions and falsifications;
- the promotion of multiculturalism and protection of minority cultures;
- the elaboration of attractive and useful projects of continuing education;
- the development of cultural knowledge activities for youth and promoting projects to meet these needs;
- the revitalization and promotion of traditional crafts and trades and support those who are practicing them (artisans and craftsmen etc.);
- the stimulation of the perpetuation and value of cultural traditions and customs;

A well-known saying goes like this: “Who does not know his past cannot build his future” – an additional argument to justify, if needed, the necessity of returning to tradition²⁵⁵.



Online source: <https://www.facebook.com/Centrul.de.Creatie.Brăila/photos>

ARTT - The Traditional Weaving Revitalization Workshop

Since 2006, ARTT - The Traditional Weaving Revitalization Workshop of the Brăila Creation Center is one of the few places where the traditions, customs and duties of women from the ethnographic-folkloric area of Brăila are revived, promoted and preserved. They work on horizontal, archaic looms (a device used to weave cloth and tapestry), creating true ornamental jewelry. The products of the workshop are admired at all the trade fairs or those dedicated to domestic and international tourism, where every time the fabrics created with imagination, soul and love are always sought and appreciated. The growing interest of the contemporary world for the work done by hand and especially the development of domestic and international tourism are well-founded motivations for the further development of popular art meant to ensure the preservation of the traditional specificity and the character of authenticity²⁵⁶.

²⁵⁵ <http://centruldecreatieBrăila.ro/despre-noi/>

²⁵⁶ <http://centruldecreatieBrăila.ro/artt-atelier-de-revitalizare-a-tesaturilor-traditionale/>



Online source: <https://www.facebook.com/arttBrăila/photos>

Souvenir from Dobrogea

Traditional welcoming Dobrogea household, good host for crafts and art, for non-formal education and movement, for relaxation and rest and support of a healthy lifestyle²⁵⁷.



²⁵⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/SuvenirdinDobrogea>



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Online source: <https://www.facebook.com/SuvenirdinDobrogea/photos>

Contemporary folk art gallery/shop store

Apart from the exceptional patrimony of vernacular architecture exhibited on the open-air expo, the „Dimitrie Gusti” National Village Museum from Bucharest is on a quest to continually support folk creation, be it anonymous in nature, or the works of master craftsmen skilled in traditional techniques, to advocate an artistic genre most cherished by specialists and all people alike, to protect the objects of yesteryear, as still asserting themselves today. The contemporary popular arts gallery hosts a permanent sale expo featuring objects crafted by contemporary folk masters, sculptors, painters and artistic societies centered on popular arts and crafts. The objects exhibited illustrate the rich heritage of folk creations – ceramics, textiles, weavings, wood, painted eggs, wood and glass paintings, popular rugs and carpets, toys, furniture, masks, popular adornments, costume pieces, sheepskin waistcoats, leather objects etc. The visitors

will discover the famous red and black ceramics, rough or enameled, representative of (still) active pottery centers²⁵⁸.



Online source: <http://muzeul-satului.ro/en/magazin/>

Textile art is represented with a rich variety of fabric pieces to fit the wants and needs of our public. Pieces ranging from napkins, towels, table cloths, traditional wear like chemises and blouses, vests, fabric belts, aprons etc., made from cotton, flax, hemp or wool. Noteworthy fabrics to peruse are Avrig cotton scarves, mini Bucovina scarves, Dobrogea region borangic scarves, cotton chemises and Breaza blouses.



We feature wooden items, objects such as – cupels, forks, curd cheese patterns, stampers, spoons, musical instruments, coffers, furniture pieces – handmade by talented folk craftsmen and painters.

²⁵⁸ <http://muzeul-satului.ro/en/magazin/>



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Slik Road Local Culture



Online source: <http://muzeul-satului.ro/en/magazin/>

Current channels of information and marketing

The tourism potential of the Southeastern Region

The Ministry of Culture and National Identity is responsible for the support and encouragement of cultural life and cultural institutions throughout the country. In the early years of the communist period, Romania's cultural institutions were generously supported by the government as it sought to gain prestige and to maintain control of the arts. For example, the Museum of Natural History and Archaeology in Constanța has an important collection of Greek and Roman artifacts from the ancient city of Tomis (7th century BCE). In addition to subsidizing cultural institutions, the Romanian government awards scholarships and other grants to artists, composers, and writers²⁵⁹. Also, the National Museum of Romanian History, with a surface of over 8,000 square meters, the museum has approx. 60 valuable exhibition rooms. The permanent displays include a plaster cast of the entirety of Trajan's Column, the Romanian Crown Jewels, and the Pietroasele treasure. As of 2012, the museum is undergoing extensive restoration work and it is only partially open; a late medieval archaeological site was discovered under the building²⁶⁰.



²⁵⁹ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Romania/Cultural-institutions>

²⁶⁰ (in Romanian) <http://www.mnir.ro/index.php/muzeul-national-de-istorie-a-romaniei/>

The Ministry of Culture and National Identity, Online source:

<https://www.agerpres.ro/cultura/2020/02/14/ministerul-culturii-anunta-lansarea-sesiunii-2020-a-programului-tezaure-umane-vii--449136>



The National Museum of Romanian History, Online source:

<https://bucurestiulmeudrag.ro/fotografii/575f06a3-cc90-4d51-99c8-5afd592b13d5>

The tourism potential of the Southeastern Region is related to the cultural heritage, which includes historical vestiges, religious and cultural buildings, monuments and museums. The religious objectives include a significant number of monasteries, located in all counties. Established for the most part in the past centuries, some of the monasteries in the South-East Region are often very valuable historically and / or artistically, some also offering accommodation facilities. Numerous historical vestiges, religious buildings, museums, monuments and tourist attractions attract tourists every year:

- The Pietroasele Treasure in Buzău;
- Dacian settlement - Monteoru Culture (in the "Cetățuia" point), Dumbrăveni Commune, Căndesti village, Vrancea county;
- The Histria Fortress (Constanța), the oldest Greek settlement on the territory of Romania, founded in 657 BC by Greek colonists, who came from Asia Minor. Now, it is called the "Romanian Pompeii";

- Tomis Fortress in Constanța (6th century BC), which preserves valuable vestiges from the ancient port city; Constanța Aquarium, the first section of the Natural Science Museum Complex, located on the seafront on the Casino's cliff, in its immediate vicinity, is also the first public aquarium in Romania and was inaugurated on May 1, 1958. It is the largest institution of this kind in the country, although later other museums of natural sciences have set up sections with the same profile;
- The Dolphinarium in Constanța, which started its activity on June 1, 1972, constituting the first museum-type of its kind in the country and the first in southeastern Europe at that time. In the amphitheater with swimming pool and in the covered basin, demonstrations with dolphins and sea lions are organized;
- The Danube cliffs in the municipalities of Brăila and Galați is a promenade place where the modern constructions blend harmoniously with the architecture of the beginning of the 20th century (Brăila river station), the river landscape being completed by a rich collection of art monuments (sculptures);
- The Botanical Garden in the municipality of Galați is part of the Museum Complex of the Natural Sciences of Galați, where 260,846 specimens of trees, shrubs and flowers can be admired, of 1,542 species, some very rare, which are on the way to extinction²⁶¹.

Concerts, national and international festivals, competitions and other traditional events that take place in the South-East Development Region are another tourist attraction.

The Black Sea coast - balneoclimatic tourism & leisure tourism

The tourist landscape of the Black Sea coast is rarely found along the coast of the European continent, being of a specific uniqueness. The Black Sea coast is also famous for practicing balneoclimatic tourism. The complex consisting of water, sand, air and sun has therapeutic effects, doing miracles for people who are looking for a beneficial place for health. The air is well ionized with marine aerosols which, together with the influence of the waves, generate special thalassotherapy treatments; moreover, some resorts such as Eforie Nord, Mangalia, Costinesti, Neptun, Techirghiol are both recreational and balneoclimatic resorts. The numerous services offered on the coast (children's clubs, indoor and outdoor pools, children's pools equipped with

²⁶¹ (in Romanian) http://www.adrse.ro/Regiunea/Turism_Patrimoniu.aspx

slides, playgrounds, green spaces set up for outdoor sports activities, facilities for SPA services and fitness rooms, etc.) have led to the development of leisure tourism. With a low salinity compared to other continental seas (only 17%), tourists can practice underwater and nautical sports²⁶².

The towns of Năvodari, Mamaia, and Eforie were erected after World War II, and the older settlements of Mangalia and Techirghiol have undergone extensive redevelopment. Lakes—among which Lakes Taşaul, Siutghiol, Agigea, Techirghiol, and Mangalia are the most significant—further enhance the attractions of the region. Several of them contain deposits of mud and sulfurous hot springs believed to have therapeutic properties.

Danube Delta - great scientific value and high tourist potential

The Danube Delta, the second largest delta in Europe (after that of the Volga River), is a special attraction of great scientific value and high tourist potential, especially after its inclusion in 1990, together with other adjacent natural areas, in the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve. The natural and cultural values of the Danube Delta are valuable resources by practicing the following types of tourism:

- Tourism for rest and recreation (practiced through the services of tour operators);
- Knowledge tourism (itinerant), practiced either individually or through organized excursions exploring the variety of the wild landscape, combining rides with manually propelled boats on picturesque canals with hiking along canals or on river and marine ridges, etc;
- Specialized - scientific tourism (for specialists, researchers, students);
- Agrotourism (tourists are hosted and accompanied by locals to visit the Danube Delta);
- Tourism for water sports (Crişan locality);
- Tourism for practicing sport fishing highly appreciated by visitors of all ages, in any season, for any species of fish, and sport hunting.
- Specific for the Danube Delta is niche tourism (eg bird watching, photo-safari). In the Danube Delta there are rare species that are missing from other areas of the

²⁶² (in Romanian) http://www.adrse.ro/Regiunea/Turism_Patrimoniu.aspx

continent: 30 types of ecosystems and 5,429 species - of which 1,839 species of flora and 3,590 species of fauna, considering that in the Danube Delta 331 species of water birds live which include most of the European population of common pelican (*Pelecanus onocrotalus*) and crested pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*), 60% of the world population of small cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pygmaeus*) as well as 50% of the world population of red-tailed goose (*Branta ruficollis*) (during winter)²⁶³.

The Danube Delta has become increasingly popular, because of the growing worldwide interest in ecology and conservation. Special features of interest to tourists include the lakes and underground cave systems and the fine churches and monasteries, with frescoes dating from the 14th to the 16th century, that are found in Southeastern region. More generally, the folk costumes and the ancient folklore of Romanians, notably in the Southeastern region, provide a reminder of the country's long traditions²⁶⁴.

National Tourist Information Centres

The National Centre for Information and Tourism Promotion Nehoiu was opened in December 2015. The overall objective of the national centre is to promote Romanian tourism potential, especially the tourism potential anthropogenic city Nehoiu (heritage ecumenical, cultural, historical, traditional and recreational), both domestically and abroad, in order to increase the number of tourists²⁶⁵. The centre aims at building a specific information center and tourism promotion in the city of Nehoiu, creating a website to promote tourism and human resources in the city and neighboring towns Nehoiu, more visible landmarks in the city of Nehoiu. By making complex travel, original, attractive, competitive and creating an attractive image of the city Nehoiu Romanian tourism market by promoting sustainable tourism based on a variety of forms of tourism²⁶⁶.

²⁶³ (in Romanian) http://www.adrse.ro/Regiunea/Turism_Patrimoniu.aspx

²⁶⁴ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Romania/Trade#ref276015>

²⁶⁵ <https://www.carpathian-gardens.com/cnipt-nehoiu.html>

²⁶⁶ <http://www.cniptnehoiu.ro/index-4.htm#>



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Online source: <https://www.carpathian-gardens.com/cnipt-nehoiu.html>

National Centre for Tourism Information and Promotion Cernavodă

Cernavoda town is situated in the Plateau of the Lower Dobruja, at Danube's confluence with the Danube- Black Sea Channel, respectively with the Carasu, Tibrin and Silistea valleys. The defining element of the city and of its administrative territory is the Danube- Black Sea Channel, as an axis of urban structuring of the town, dividing it in two different regions²⁶⁷.



Online source: <https://visitorcenter.ro/cernavoda-tourist-info>

²⁶⁷ <https://www.cernavoda-turistica.ro/en/>

National Centre for Tourism Information and Promotion Murfatlar

The main characteristic from the point of view of the settlement and which offers a great advantage to the city of Murfatlar is the fact that it is on the main road, rail, naval and air traffic arteries, which connects the whole country with Europe, the seaside resorts and the port Constanța. The Danube-Black Sea Canal crosses the locality, thus the city becoming a sea and river port. The geographical position in which it is located, what is called today, the city of Murfatlar, gave it special importance, because it was on the isthmus between Cernavodă and Constanța and due to the construction of the first railway from Dobrogea in 1860 meant to facilitate trade and exchanges, it it developed from a simple stop where the world stopped to feed the horses, feed the animals and rest, to a small permanent settlement. Along with the native population, the mocans who came in transhumance, especially from Transylvania, and settled here, a Turkish garrison also appeared in 1877, and in the following years numerous Tatars from Crimea settled. The first name under which the town was known was that of Murfatlar in 1855. The name Murfatlar comes from the Tatar word "Muvet" (generous man)²⁶⁸.



²⁶⁸ (in Romanian) <http://cniptmurfatlar.ro/descopera-murfatlarul/>

Online source: <https://www.ziuaConstanta.ro/stiri/ziua-in-judet/lucrarile-la-centrul-national-de-informare-turistica-in-toi-orasul-murfatlar-promovat-intens-pentru-comorile-turistice-573688.html>

National Centre for Tourism Information and Promotion South Eforie Sud

South Eforie has potential natural tourist complex within which the necessary resources spas. The beach is open down gentle slope into the sea, favoring large bathrooms and "walking on water". A thick layer of sand provides optimum conditions for sunbathing - sunbathing and sand - arinoterapie. The sea water with a salinity reduced 17%, with the water-air heat contrast with the action of waves and marine aerosol floating in the air, generating a special form of course - wave therapy - used in the treatment of certain disorders. Along with these factors, there are other natural tourist attractions that enhance the seaside potential, namely²⁶⁹:

- Techirghiol mud
- original fish fauna - the existence of sturgeon and dolphins, sharks and other species lack of concern;
- recreational lakes, natural or artificial, for water sports;
- forests, parks and nature reserves, which help maintain a microclimate tonic for the body.



²⁶⁹ <https://www.info-eforiesud.ro/despre-eforie/informatii-generale/>



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Online source: <https://www.info-eforiesud.ro/despre-eforie/informatii-generale/>

National Centre for Tourism Information and Promotion Eforie Nord

Eforie Nord is the second largest resort of Romanian seaside. Located about 15 km from Constanța, on the road linking the city of Mangalia, Eforie Nord is a seaside resort famous both at home and abroad. Joining recreational tourism with the treatment makes the resort to be open to tourists all year round. The treatment facilities of the resort annually attract a large number of Romanian and foreign tourists, offering them modern treatments and cures using natural factors in the area. Being a resort continuously expanding Eforie Nord appearance changes from year to year. Besides hotels and terraces renowned resort arise from season to season and guest houses, terraces and restaurants prepared to meet the needs of tourists. Out of hours spent on the beach, in the sun, or waves, Eforie Nord offers other opportunities for fun and relaxation. The resort can find sports courts and miniature golf, playgrounds for children, recreation, pool halls, summer theater, swimming pools, etc. Water sports enthusiasts can rent sailboats and other boats or take diving lessons in the Europa Yacht Club, the first private pleasure port in Romania. It is a few minutes from the resort on the beach next to the Hotel Europe. The resort complex there are several shops and bazaars, both in the center and in the cliff. From here you can buy products and beach accessories (towels, bathing suits, buoys, mattresses, umbrellas, lotions etc.), souvenirs and clothing and footwear²⁷⁰.

²⁷⁰ <https://www.info-eforienord.ro/despre-eforie/informatii-generale/>



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Online source: <https://www.info-eforienord.ro/despre-eforie/informatii-generale/>

National Centre for Tourism Information and Promotion Tulcea

The National Centre for Tourist Information and Promotion (CNIPT), which promotes tourism in the county, will guide you in your discovery of Tulcea, but also of the Danube Delta, the mountains Măcin, etc. Here you will find all the information you need to organize your stay: accommodation offers, transport, presentation of tourist objectives, up-to-date maps, events, contacts and packages from local operators, excursions and guided tours²⁷¹.

²⁷¹ <https://www.cnipttulcea.ro/>



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Online source: <https://www.cnipttulcea.ro/>

The National Centre of Tourist Information and Promotion Măcin

Specific objectives of this center are measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound:

- Promotion of Romanian tourism potential by improving the image of the country, aiming to promote the region abroad Macin and increase its attractiveness for tourism
- Improving the flow of tourists to the city Macin
- Developing local tourism print a better information to potential visitors.

Măcin is located at the western extremity of Tulcea County, in the northwest of the territory between the Danube and the Black Sea, 12 km from the confluence of the Danube and the Danube Old Nine. Tulcea, administrative and political center of the county of Tulcea is 80 km away from the city center, 25 km from the city of Galați. The city is approaching Brăila, Măcin 14 km away. The city is situated on a plateau terrace that output overland or by river west to Smârdan and Brăila, exit road in the east to Greece, Cerna, Tulcea and Constanța, exit River south to Carcaliu Turcoaia, Peceneaga and north to Jijila, Isaccea, Tulcea on the road. Macin has many natural and anthropogenic resources, so this centre is an important step towards the

harmonization of development disparities between regions and economic interest, thus increasing networking of commercial, economic and social relations²⁷².



Online source: <https://turism-macin.ro/ro/>

Legal and policy context

Based on the provisions of the European Commission, starting with 2018, the Agency for Regional Development of the South-East Development Region (South-East ADR), participates in the consultation process, at national and regional level, for the preparation of the 2021-2027 programming period, process coordinated by the Ministry of European Funds (MFE) and the Ministry of Public Works, Development and Administration (MLPDA).

In order to ensure a coherent and unitary coordination of the process of elaboration of programming documents for the period 2021-2027, MFE has developed a set of methodological guidelines whose main purpose is to establish guidelines for the programming process of European non-reimbursable funds.

At regional level, the elaboration of the South-East Regional Development Plan 2021-2027 (PDR) is carried out respecting the methodology proposed by MLPDA as well as

²⁷² <https://turism-macin.ro/en/macin/cnipt/>

the “Framework Regulation for the organization and functioning of the Regional Committees for the elaboration of Regional Development Plans”.

In 2020, the Agency for Regional Development of the South-East Development Region continues the consultation process within the inter-institutional partnership created at regional level, by organizing working meetings at county and regional level, in order to complete the planning process, elaboration and substantiating the programming documents for the next programming period

In the next period, ADR South-East will organize in the counties of the region, working meetings of the Regional Thematic Groups, in order to elaborate the South-East Regional Development Plan (PDR), the South-East Regional Operational Program 2021-2027 and the preparation of the future period of programming 2021-2027, according to the Policy Objectives 2021-2027:

OP 1 - A smarter Europe

OP 2 - A greener Europe

OP 3 - A more connected Europe

OP 4 - A more social Europe

OP 5 - A Europe closer to its citizens

For the programming period 2021-2027, the Agency for Regional Development of the South-East Development Region will continue the process of programming the activities specific to regional development in accordance with the national strategic documents and the strategic documents of the European Union.

In the next long-term EU budget for 2021-2027, the Commission proposes to modernize cohesion policy, the EU's main investment policy and one of the most tangible expressions of solidarity. The aim is to stimulate economic and social convergence, while at the same time supporting regions to make full use of globalization and equipping them with appropriate tools for strong and sustainable growth. All regions remain eligible for funding through cohesion policy, based on three categories: less developed, transition and more developed regions. In the period 2021-2027, five policy objectives will stimulate EU investment.

Investment in regional development will focus in particular on Objectives 1 and 2. 65% to 85% of ERDF and Cohesion Fund resources will be allocated to these priorities, depending on the relative prosperity of the Member States.

1. A smarter Europe through innovation, digitalisation, economic transformation and support for small and medium-sized enterprises

2. A greener, carbon-free Europe, the implementation of the Paris Agreement and investments in the energy transition, renewable energy and the fight against climate change
3. A connected Europe with strategic transport and digital networks
4. A more social Europe, to achieve the European pillar of social rights and to support the quality of jobs, education, skills, social inclusion and equal access to the health system
5. A Europe closer to its citizens, by supporting locally led development strategies and sustainable urban development in the EU.

Cohesion policy continues to invest in all regions, based on 3 categories (less developed, in transition, more developed). The method of allocating funds is still largely based on GDP per capita. New criteria are introduced (youth unemployment, low level of education, climate change and the reception and integration of migrants), in order to better reflect the reality on the ground. The outermost regions will continue to receive special support from the EU. Cohesion policy continues to support locally led development strategies and to empower local authorities to manage their funds. The urban dimension of cohesion policy is also growing, with the allocation of 6% of the ERDF to sustainable urban development and a new networking and capacity-building program dedicated to urban authorities, under the name European Urban Initiative. (According to the official website of the European Commission)²⁷³.

2.2. Assessment of the tourism growth potential of local Silk Road footprint in project areas: Inventory

2.2.1. Inventory in Survey Area in Romania

The main Silk Road cultural assets identified that are related to local tourism potential aspects are assessed in the following inventory tables, leading to the elaboration of tourism potential assessment inventories for SILC Project study area – the Southeastern Region of Romania.

²⁷³ http://www.adrse.ro/Planificare/PlanificareRegionala_2021-2027.aspx



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Natural features

Features	Cultural assets	Tourism potential	Online information
Characteristic and attractive landscapes	The Romanian coastline of the Black Sea	The Romanian coastline of the Black Sea is between Midia head at the north and Old Vama at the south, having a length of 245 km. The northern part is the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, Europe's largest nature reserve. The southern part consists of an almost uninterrupted chain of tourist resorts, alternating with towns and harbours. The Black Sea coast is inherently connected to the region of Tulcea and Constanța counties that had a strategic location on the ancient map of Europe. It was on the route of main commercial roads that linked the Northern Sea and the Black Sea, but also the Mediterranean ports with the Eastern world of the continent	https://www.uncover-romania.com/attractions/nature/black-sea/ https://www.infoghidromania.com/coastline.html
	The Great Brăila Island (Romanian: Insula Mare a Brăilei)	It is an island on the Danube river in the Brăila County, Romania. It has on average 57.9 km length and 18.6 km width, with a total area of 710 km².	
	Ceaplace Island (in Romanian: Insula Ceaplace)	It is located in the north of Lake Sinoe, near the boundary of the The Wolves Spit protection area. With an area of 0.6 ha and a length of 4,514m, the island in the form of an atoll delimits in the northwest of the lake a small bay. As territorial-administrative classification belongs to the commune Mihai Viteazu, Constanța county. Since 2010, a scientific reserve has been established around the island, consisting of the gloss of water of Lake Sinoe, up to a distance of about 1km from its center. The total area of the reserve is 117 ha, including the water slide. The scientific reserve is one of the three places in Romania that shelter colonies of pelicans (<i>Pelecanus crispus</i>) and the third largest colony of pelicans in Europe, a species in danger of extinction worldwide. The island is an important stopping place for the common pelican (<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>), but also for other species, especially aquatic birds. Access by unauthorized persons is prohibited on the island and in the reservation area.	



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	The Prundu Islands with birds (in Romanian: Insulele Prundu cu păsări)	These are two nearby islands located in the southwestern part of Lake Sinoe, near the shore. With an area of approximately 1.4 ha and a length of 5,468m, the islands are shaped like atolls. As territorial-administrative classification belong to the commune Mihai Viteazu, Constanța county	
	Popina Island (in Romanian: Insula Popina)	It is a Romanian island in the northern part of the Razelm Lake (Razim). The island spans 98 hectares and it is a protected reserve, hosting an important nesting area for shelducks. Razelm Lake is the largest natural lake in Romania, and the largest permanent water expanse in the Danube Delta, separated from the Black Sea by two long grinds, and flows into Lake Golovița through a 1.9 miles (3.1 km) channel to the south. Geologically speaking, Popina Island consists of Triassic limestones which crop out over the island. Some parts are covered by loess.	
	Sacalin Island (in Romanian: Insula Sacalin)	It is a newly formed island in the Black Sea, right off the coast of the Romanian Danube Delta, off the Sfântu Gheorghe branch. Initially Sacalin was made up of two smaller islands, Sacalinu Mare (Greater Sacalin) and Sacalinu Mic (Lesser Sacalin). In time, however, the two merged into one continuous landmass. The Romanian government has declared the area an ecological reserve and no settlement is permitted on the island.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T2puGk2w0mw
	Ovid Island	Ovid Island is located in the center of Siutghiol Lake, at 500 meters distance from the city of Ovidius and 5 kilometers away from Mamaia Spa Resort. It has a surface of 26,000 square meters. Half of it was set up as a tourist resort. The Island has a limestone origin and was formed thousands of years ago. It is said that, Ovid – the famous Roman poet – during his exile in Tomis came here often to write. This is why the island has his name.	http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/insula-ovidiu/
Flagship species or habitats	Saiga antelope (in Romanian: Antilopa Saiga)	The only species of antelope that populated the territory of Romania is now in critical condition of extinction. Some specimens live in the Lower Prut Floodplain Natural Park (in Romanian: Parcul Natural	



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		Lunca Joasă a Prutului Inferior), but they can no longer be found in the wild	
	The Dalmatian pelican (in Romanian: Pelican creț)	The Dalmatian pelican is an endangered species that is protected by law. The disturbance and poaching, associated with the degradation of wetlands and the loss of nesting areas are the main threats. For the Dalmatian pelican, a national Action Plan has been developed which regulates the measures necessary for the conservation of the species (Danube Delta Biosphere Administration together with SOR / BirdLife Romania). Also, the artificial platforms installed in the lagoon complex Razim-Sinoe have proved their efficiency by their occupation by the pelicans.	
	Egyptian vulture (in Romanian: Hoitar)	Egyptian vulture (Hoitar) is a noble bird that does not nest in Romania anymore and is in danger in the rest of Europe. 1-2 more specimens are observed annually in the Dobrogea area	
	Red-breasted goose (in Romanian: Gâscă cu gât roșu)	The red-breasted goose (Branta ruficollis) is a brightly marked species of goose in the genus Branta from Eurosiberia. Their habitat has changed since the 1950s, which has altered their migration habits. Most of the population of 55,000 copies from all over the world in the coastal area of Romania and Bulgaria.	
	Danube Delta Sturgeons: Beluga (in Romanian: Morun) Russian Sturgeon (in Romanian: Nisetru) Stellate Sturgeon (in Romanian: Păstrugă) Sterlet (In Romanian: Cegă) European Sturgeon (in Romanian: Șip) Romanichthys (in Romanian: Aspretele)	Originating 200 million years ago, sturgeons are an ancient migratory fish which is today teetering on the brink of extinction. Currently, 27 sturgeon and paddlefish species inhabit the coastal waters, rivers and lakes of the northern hemisphere and the Danube River basin preserves some of the most important sturgeon populations in the world today. Danube sturgeons play an important role as indicators of healthy ecosystems. They live mostly in the Black Sea, migrating up the Danube and other major rivers to spawn. In the past, they grew up to 4.5 meters long and lived up to 100 years. Due to their long life cycles and late maturity, sturgeons are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and to other threats, including pollution and habitat fragmentation, with stocks taking many years to recover.	



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	Lynxes (in Romanian: Râs)	Once widespread throughout Europe, the feline almost disappeared in the last century from the west and center of the continent, being reduced to a few isolated populations, with a small number of individuals. In the last hundred years, the lynxes population in Romania has undergone a positive evolution (from about 150 copies in the period 1930-1940, to over 1,500 copies at present). In 2005, a study was conducted on lynxes in Vrancea county and infrared video cameras and motion sensors were used for monitoring. In the last years, in this county an number of about 80 copies was evaluated (5.5% of the population of Romania and 3.5% of the population of Europe). At the end of the projects for large carnivores in Vrancea, in 2010, after long studies, in order to conserve the lynxes in the county, large enough surfaces must be protected to ensure the perpetuation of the species, paths of movement between the different habitats must be ensured and buffer zones must be delimited, where large carnivores could coexist with anthropogenic activities. All these are currently being done in the local ecological protection network, in which the Putna-Vrancea Natural Park plays a key role.	
	Marbled polecat (in Romanian: Dihor pătat)	The marbled polecat (<i>Vormela peregusna</i>) is a small mustelid, very thin and agile, with a sharp nose, thick fur, with thin, soft and glossy hair. With only 500 specimens in the wild and protected since 1993, the sparrow lives in arid and steppe areas in the Dobrogea area. The only populations in the European Union of this species are in the territory of our country and it is a conservation objective in ROSCI0201 Northern Dobrogean Plateau and a strictly protected species.	
	The Romanian hamster (in Romanian: Hamster dobrogean)	It is a unique and endemic species for a small area in Dobrogea and the northern part of Bulgaria. The Romanian hamster is very little known, and the intensification of agriculture and the destruction of habitats in Dobrogea are the most serious threat. In Romania, there are probably about 2,000 individuals.	
	Saker falcon – The Danube falcon (In Romanian: Șoim dunărean)	The Danube falcon is not only the rarest bird species in Romania, but also one of the most impressive birds of prey, and certainly one of the	



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		<p>most imposing and interesting falcons in the world . It is a rare summer bird, widespread in Dobrogea and in the Măcin Mountains where it nests. The silhouette gives the impression of solidity, with a rather short tail and wide wings at the base and very narrow at the tip. The back feather is brownish-rusty, with blue gloss, each with a reddish edge. The crest is reddish-rust and the chin and whitish whiteness. The tail feathers are gray-brown. Abdominal is whitish with dark brown, longitudinal stripes. The beak is blue with a black tip. The young specimens have a brown back.</p>	
	<p>European mink (in Romanian: Nurcă europeană)</p>	<p>The European mink (<i>Mustela lutreola</i> L.) is one of the rarest and most endangered mammal species on our continent, currently surviving only in Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve (DDBR), one of the last refuges of this species at the area level. In the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, the European mink is widespread. Basically, except for the large aquatics, the localities, the agricultural and forest polders, the presence of the species has been confirmed in most areas of the DDBR. The European mink population in the RBDD was evaluated to a minimum of 1,130 copies, respectively a maximum of 2,280 copies.</p>	
<p>Other interesting, unusual or representative wildlife</p>	<p>European bison (in Romanian: Zimbru)</p>	<p>The largest terrestrial animal in Europe has been hunted to extinction in our country. After the introduction of 5 copies in 2012, their number has increased to a few tens, living in reserves, according to National Geographic</p>	
	<p>The gray wolf (in Romanian: Lupul)</p>	<p>Naturally, the wolf (<i>Canis lupus</i>) is found in Romania in the Danube Delta, in the alpine gulf, presenting a great ecological amplitude, due to its special intelligence, as is the case with the crow. The area for the spread of wolves was in the past in the Danube Delta. Although they preferred the wooded areas more, the wolves were also found in the delta conditions of survival in the reefs. Unfortunately, the excessive hunting caused this noble animal to disappear from the Danube Delta. Older people remember the wolves passing the frozen Danube. There are only toponyms as the Wolves Spit that reminds of this animal in the</p>	



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		parts of the Delta. In 2011, three wolf families were introduced to the Măcin Mountains in order to repopulate this protected area.	
	The brown bear (in Romanian: Ursul brun)	Romania has the largest population of brown bears in the European Union, but nonetheless the species is increasingly rare in us in the country. According to official data, in the country there are 6,000 brown bears, about 40% of the total in the EU, but despite the large number, the animals are in danger due to habitat destruction, illegal deforestation, construction or destruction of the ecosystem. Until the first half of the century XIX was found throughout the country, from the Danube Delta to the Carpathians. Unfortunately, it was exterminated from the plains, so as not to hinder extensive farming and extensive livestock breeding, extensive fishing and other similar practices from the 19th century.	
	Eurasian otter (in Romanian: Vidra)	The Eurasian otter always lives in the vicinity of the waters, especially in the Danube Delta ponds, feeding on fish, frogs, colds and aquatic mammals, which they skillfully hunt especially during the night and rarely during the day. The Eurasian otter swims with ability and withstands underwater 6-7 minutes and it moves with the weight on the ground, jumping. Because of the food mainly composed of fish, the Eurasian otter represents a real danger for ponds. Vidra moves easily from one aquatic basin to another, exclusively for the search of food.	
	The Wildcat (in Romanian: Pisică sălbatică)	Also known as the little tiger in the forests of our country, the wildcat is very similar to the house cat, especially the gray-tiger specimens of the Norwegian forest cat breed. It is a predator endowed with excellent senses, and the hearing and sight are truly remarkable. Attack like any classic feline, after a long chase, or after a clever sneak, followed by an explosive leap. If it fails, it no longer pursues its prey, but retains its energy for a new hunting attempt. In Romania, it lives mainly in the plains and hills, having a great ecological amplitude, being spread from the Danube Delta to the mountain.	
	The wild horses (in Romanian: Caii sălbatici)	In the Danube Delta live about 4,000 semi-wild horses. They are the descendants of horses released in the 1980s from a livestock farm in	



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		<p>Sfântu Gheorghe, which exported animals to Italy. The Letea Forest Nature Reserve from Danube Delta is an important spot due to it's rich fauna and flora, in recent years, there have been concerns that the growing population may overgraze and cause imbalances in biodiversity . Abandoned by masters in a natural environment, the wild horses from Letea Forest are monitored by local and national sanitary-veterinary authorities, together with the animal protection NGO, Vier Pfoten. It is estimated that between 1000 and 2000 wild horses live in that area, and these populations must be kept under control, to limit abusive grazing. Obviously, the biosphere from that perimeter must also be maintained and protected, especially since Letea Forest is the oldest nature reserve in our country.</p>	
<p>Diversity of ecosystems</p>	<p>Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve biodiversity and ecosystems</p>	<p>The Danube Delta maintains its enormous biodiversity in a better state than most other deltas in Europe, even in the world. It contains a greater range of habitat types, lower and higher plants, invertebrates and vertebrates than all other deltas in Europe. Many of the species that live within the delta are unique to it, these include plants and animals. The static freshwater ecosystems provide the base for the food chain in much of the delta. The contribution they make „spills over” in canals, rivers and other moving waters. Protozoa, micro-algae, algae and macrophytes are the primary producers, on which zooplankton, oligochaetes, mollusks, insects, fish, amphibia, reptiles, birds and mammals feed in ascending order within the food chain. Terrestrial ecosystems have suffered less than aquatic ones, because they are less easy to pollute and over fish. Exploitation by grazing, arable cropping, forestry, reed cutting is limited to areas where this is possible and in much of the delta these potentially damaging activities are impossible. The Dobrogea region that adjoins the Danube Delta provides habitats for 50 % of the 3,800 plant species recorded in Romania. Compared with this, the delta itself and the Razim-Sinoie lake complex supports 1839 species. Their distribution is as follows: euroasiatic (30 %), continental asiatic (15 %), cosmopolitan (10 %).</p>	



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		<p>Euroasiatic and cosmopolitan plants dominate the aquatic, swamp and marsh communities. From an ecological standpoint, the most interesting and valuable plant communities occur within the larger dune systems, like Grindul Letea and Grindul Caraorman. There are areas of steppe grassland associated with the sandy soils of Letea and Caraorman and these support a range of interesting grasses more often encountered in the Mediterranean. Many of the plants that survive on these hot and dry soils are xerophilous and therefore drought resistant. The woodland associated with dune slacks are particularly important in that species of oak, ash and poplar provide the canopy above rich shrub and field layers. Whilst some of the trees and shrubs are commonplace elsewhere in Europe, the fluffy ash and the grey oak are special within this area. A climber with a Mediterranean distribution, Greek liana (<i>Periploca graeca</i>) grows within Letea Forest. Also unique to this forest is the rare steppe viper (<i>Vipera ursinii</i>). The final plant assemblage of great interest and value, are the salt rich depressions that occur in association with the larger dune systems. Most of the species found in the delta are typical of salt marshes across Europe. An enormous diversity of species – 3586 – is found within the delta. Over 190 species of copepod and cladoceran crustaceans have been recorded; 418 species of freshwater rotifer, nematode worms and oligochaete worms have been identified, along with 90 species of molluscs (some of these are marine); 18 species of mollusc are endangered.</p>	
<p>Geological features such as lakes, rivers, cliffs</p>	<p>The Salt Lake (in Romanian: Lacul Sărat)</p>	<p>The Salt Lake (in Romanian: Lacul Sărat), known worldwide as a source of health, is located in the Chișcani rural town, only 5 km from the Brăila municipality. It's said that the miraculous therapeutic properties of the lake's water were discovered centuries ago by Prince Vlad the Impaler (Vlad Tepes) . This place is appreciated from a tourist point of view for its good positioning in nature and for the healing properties that have the sapropelic sludge and the hypertonic mineral water, the source being the Salt Lake itself. There is also a spa</p>	



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		<p>complex that operates throughout the year and offers accommodation, meals served in the restaurant, soccer field, tennis . The lake, formed on an old Danube river course, which is now completely isolated, is surrounded by 70 forest hectares that mitigate the steppe climate. The water depth varies between 0.6 and 1.80 meters, and the bottom of the lake is entirely covered by healing sludge highly mineralized . The lake contains significant reserves of sapropelic mud and hypertonic mineral water, with sulfur, chlorine, magnesium and bromine compounds, mineralization of 70-84 grams per liter. The main natural curing factors of the resort are: the lake's water with high contents of sulfate, chloride, sodium, magnesium, a mineralization of 83.955 mg/liter, sapropelic mud that contains 41 percent mineral substances and 39 percent organic substances rich in hydrogen sulfide.</p>	
	The Vulture Lake (in Romanian: Lacul Vulturilor)	<p>It is in the Siriu Massif and it is one of the main natural tourist attractions of Buzău County. Vultures Lake is not only the only glacial lake in the Carpathian Mountains, but the only glacial lake in the Carpathians, between the Călimani Mountains and the Făgăraș Massif, that is on a distance of 500 km from the ridge</p>	
	Meledic Lake	<p>It is also known as "The Great Lake" or "Bottomless Lake" and represents a unique phenomenon in Europe in that it is a freshwater gloss on a mass of salt. Legend has it that there is a treasure at the bottom of the lake, but no one has been able to find it until now. During summer, Lake Meledic is the perfect destination for the beach and for fishing, but not for swimming. It is not the only lake on the Meledic plateau, there are still 5 lakes, but none larger than this one.</p>	
	The Black Lake (in Romanian: Lacul Negru)	<p>The Black Lake (in Romanian: Lacul Negru), a name taken due to the color of the water given by the abnormal eutrophication, is located 200 m from The Clear Lake, is covered by vegetation in over 70% . From the initial locations of freshwater lakes, formed in dolines developed on sandstone with sedimentary sludge bottom - today, as a negative effect of surface erosion, only Black Lake and The Clear Lake remained. The dolines, which are in the early stages of development, have slopes and</p>	



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		shallow slopes. Lake Limpede is the only one that survived the clogging	
	Bucur's Table (in Romanian: Masa lui Bucur)	Bucur's Table (in Romanian: Masa lui Bucur) is a huge rock that has an altitude of 1,000 m and has 150 tons. The legend says that from here the shepherd Bucur left, the one who founded the city of Bucharest, today the capital of Romania. Bucur's table is located on a mountain plateau and sits on three smaller boulders, like a traditional Romanian table. It is said that Bucur sat on this plateau from the top of the mountain and watched over the pastures where the sheep grazed.	
	The Giants' Wall (in Romanian: Zidul Urișilor)	The Giants' Wall (in Romanian: Zidul Urișilor) is a layer of hard rocks which includes shells from 11 million years ago beach (from the prehistoric sea Paratethys), in the form of a wall of 6-7m located to the springs of Călnău river, in Valea Salciei commune in Buzău county	
	Prunceea Waterfall (in Romanian: Cascada Prunceea – Cașoca)	Prunceea Waterfall (in Romanian: Cascada Prunceea – Cașoca) the most beautiful waterfall in Buzău county, is located in the Massif of Podul Calului, about 10 km from the Siriu Dam	
	Camp Măgura (in Romanian: Tabăra Măgura)	Camp Măgura (in Romanian: Tabăra Măgura) represented the homage to the 16 centuries since the first documentary attestation of Buzău, as well as the ancient local tradition of stone carving. According to the archives, over 160 sculptors worked here, with countless stone carvers in the area. As a raw material the cochiliferous limestone extracted from the quarries from Năeni, Ciuta and Pietroasele was used.	
	The Old Ladies from Ulmet	The Old Ladies from Ulmet are found in Buzău Mountains and represent a few trovants with strange forms. They are located in Bozioru commune from Buzău county. Trovants are also known to be "alive stones", people considering they have magic properties because of their rare shapes. They are generally round, sometimes with a sphere shape, and were formed on the bed of the ancient sea Paratethys, which existed thousands of years ago in this area. Trovants grow 4 – 5 centimeters every 1,200 years and due to this they are also called "the stones which grow.	



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	Lake Techirghiol (in Romanian: Lacul Techirghiol)	<p>The name of the lake comes from the Turkish Tekirgöl, meaning "Tekir's lake". The name also means (in Turkish) "Striped Lake" (tekir - striped, and göl - lake). This is because of the salinity of the lake; when the wind blows, white salt stripes appear on the surface of the lake.</p> <p>The legend says that once upon a time a crippled and blind old man named Tekir, riding on the back of his donkey, reached the shore of this lake by mistake. The old man tried to get out of that smelly mud for hours on end, but his stubborn donkey didn't want to move at all, as if a mysterious force was not letting him out of the lake. It was with great wonder and joy that the old man realized, when getting out of the lake, that his eyes could see light again, and that his feet, which had stopped working a long time ago, began to obey him. As for his wise donkey - its bad wounds on the back had healed, and his body was younger than ever. When they found out about this, lots of people rushed to the shore of the lake, bathing and putting mud all over their bodies so that they'd be cured. Tekir and his donkey are featured in a statue located in the center of the town of Techirghiol.</p>	
	Agigea Lake (in Romanian: Lacul Agigea)	<p>It is located northeast of the Black Sea Danube Canal and southwest of Agigea commune. The surface of the lake is 35 ha and is part of Lake Agigea Nature Reserve, a zoological reservation, a valuable national monument. An important lake of fluvio-maritime liman, Lake Agigea, together with its surroundings, houses between 5,000 - 10,000 birds, many of them considered very valuable. In 1985, the lake was transformed into a fishing arrangement, which greatly reduced the number of birds in the area. The access to the lake is on DN 39 Constanța - Vama Veche.</p>	
	The Tălăbasca Pond Nature Reserve (in Romanian: Balta Tălăbasca)	<p>The Tălăbasca Pond Nature Reserve (in Romanian: Balta Tălăbasca) was designated by Law 5/2000 on the approval of the national territory planning plan (Section III - protected areas - Mon. Of. 152 / 12.IV.2000). The code of the protected area is 2412, belongs to the commune of Tudor Vladimirescu, Galați County and the surface of the reservation is 139 ha . Geomorphologically, the region is a lake and</p>	



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		geologically is from a sedimentary domain. The geomorphology is characteristic of lakes in areas with low humidity. The geology is characterized by fine alluvial deposits, predominating sands and loessens - Holocene (Quaternary) deposits. Pedologically, the soils are alluvial glazed. Hydrologically, Tălăbasca Lake is a meadow lake in the lower Siret Plain. In its northwest part is the outlet of the intermittent valley of Călmățui. Genetically, it is a freshwater meadow lake, naturally fed from Călmățui stream.	
	The Horseshoe Pond (in Romanian: Balta Potcoavă)	The Horseshoe Pond (in Romanian: Balta Potcoavă) is situated in Brăniștea locality, at about 25 kilometers away from the city of Galați. It is 4 meters deep and its name comes from its shape – a horseshoe. The Pond is filled with all species of fish, making it an attraction for people who love fishing	
	"Black Lake" Natural Reservation (in Romanian: Lacu Negru)	"Black Lake" Natural Reservation (in Romanian: Lacu Negru) is located in Vrancea Mountains, on the upper basin of Naruja river. It is a natural protected area of mixed type, which has a surface of 20 hectares. The reservation comprises valleys, gorges, grass lands, etc. The Black Lake is the most important sight of the protected area. It is situated at an altitude of 1,250 meters and its maximum depth is 7.50 meters	
Protected areas: nature reserves, national parks	The Brăila Small Puddle Natural Park (in Romanian: Parcul Natural Balta Mică a Brăilei)	<p>The Brăila Small Puddle Natural Park (in Romanian: Parcul Natural Balta Mică a Brăilei) is a protected area in Brăila County, on the administrative territory of communes Berteștii de Jos, Chiscani, Gropeni, Mărașu and Stăncuța. The Natural Park is located in the inferior course of the Danube, between the Brăila Plain (Wallachian Plain) and Great Brăila Island, based on the Small Brăila Island, in the south-eastern part of country.</p> <p>The Brăila Small Puddle Natural Park, an area of 17.529 ha, was declared protected area by the Law Number 5 of March 6, 2000 (published in Romanian Official Paper Number 152 of March 12, 2000) and is a wetland of international importance especially a waterfowl habitat (aquatic ecosystem) and terrestrial species.</p>	



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	Camnița Forest (in Romanian: Pădurea Camnița)	<p>Camnița Forest (in Romanian: Pădurea Camnița) is a protected area of national interest that corresponds to the 4th category IUCN (nature reserve, forest type), located in Brăila county, on the administrative territory of Șuțești commune .</p> <p>The nature reserve located in the northern part of the village of Țuțești, has a surface of 1.30 ha, and represents a forest area, covered with vegetation in the category of deciduous forests. It is populated with white and black poplar trees, acacia, willow, ash, etc.</p>	
	The Amara Pond (in Romanian: Balta Amara)	<p>The Amara Pond (in Romanian: Balta Amara) is a natural lake in the Râmnicului Plain, located near the town of the same name. It is important both by the fact that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - it hosts important herds of protected bird species - it serves as a wintering place for pond birds and a resting place during the migration period <p>It is part of the group of rivers of the Buzău River, the category of mesoeutrophic, with fish use, with a hydrographic basin of about 115kmp. Its saline and brackish waters, with hydrophilic and marsh species, are highly conservative .</p> <p>Amara Pond has been designated as a protected natural area for the purpose of protecting and conserving the habitat of continental salt meadows and restoring a favorable conservation status to the specific habitats designated for the protection of the species of wild migratory birds .</p> <p>The reservation corresponds to the category of IUNC IV, being located on the huge main avenue of bird migration, which starts from the wetlands of the 1000 lakes and reaches, after about 5000 km, to the heart of Africa, near Lake Tanganyika. On this corridor, the Danube Delta is one of the two refueling and restoration bases</p>	
	The Forest with English Yew (in Romanian: Pădurea cu tisă)	<p>The Forest with English Yew (in Romanian: Pădurea cu tisă) is a protected area of national interest that corresponds to the 4th category IUCN (forest type nature reserve) located in Buzău county, on the administrative territory of Chiojdu commune . The forest is a protected</p>	



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		natural reserve of forest type which can be found at the foot of the Monteoru Mountains. It has 197 hectares and the natural area represents a forested area with a protective role for the arboreal species of <i>Taxus Baccata</i> , known under the popular name of the English Yew (Tisă).	
	Meledic Plateau	Meledic Plateau is a protected area of national interest that corresponds to the 4th category IUCN (mixed geological, speleological, botanical and zoological nature reserve) located in Buzău county, on the administrative territory of Lopătari and Mânzălești communes. The declared area is 136 ha. On the surface of the Meledic plateau are small conglomerates of salt resembling pips. The spectacular karst relief is due to the dissolution of the salt at shallow depth or surface, thus giving rise to the most interesting phenomenon of saline karst relief in Romania, which strikingly resembles the relief formed on limestone.	
	The Berca Mud Volcanoes (in Romanian: Vulcanii Noroioși de la Pâclele Mici)	The Berca Mud Volcanoes (in Romanian: Vulcanii Noroioși de la Pâclele Mici) is a geological and botanical protected area of national interest that corresponds to the 4th IUCN category, located in Scorțoasa commune close to Berca in Buzău County. This reservation is unique in Romania. The Berca Mud Volcanoes are at an altitude of 341 m and have an area of 16.5 ha. Its most spectacular feature is the mud volcanoes, small volcano-shaped structures typically a few metres high caused by the eruption of mud and natural gases. As the gases erupt from 3000 metres deep towards the surface, through the underground layers of clay and water, they push up underground salty water and mud, so that they overflow through the mouths of the volcanoes, while the gas emerges as bubbles. The mud dries off at the surface, creating a relatively solid conical structure resembling a real volcano. The mud expelled by them is cold, as it comes from inside the Earth's continental crust layers, and not from the mantle. There are several sites (the main tourist sites being Pâclele Mari and Pâclele Mici), and gas analysis shows that the composition varies from site to	



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		<p>site, but is mainly methane, with 10-25% Helium, and 2-15% nitrogen. Some carbon dioxide was also detected. The mud volcanoes create a strange lunar landscape, due to the absence of vegetation around the cones. Vegetation is scarce because the soil is very salty, an environmental condition in which few plants can survive. However, this kind of environment is good for some rare species of plants, such as <i>Nitraria schoberi</i> and <i>Obione verrucifera</i>.</p>	
	<p>The Mud Volcanoes from Pâclele Mari (in Romanian: Vulcanii Noroioși de la Pâclele Mari)</p>	<p>The Mud Volcanoes from Pâclele Mari (in Romanian: Vulcanii Noroioși de la Pâclele Mari) are a protected area of national interest that corresponds to the 4th category IUCN (natural fauna and floristic geological type reserve), located in Muntenia, on the territory of Buzău county . The natural area is in the central part of Buzău county (at an altitude of 322 m.), on the administrative territory of Scorțoasa commune, near the county road DJ108 that connects the village Policiori and the village Pâclele. The muddy volcanoes grow on a barren circular plateau (162 ha), being occupied by many active devices of 2-3m and fossils of 6-8m, developed on an area of 22ha. Here prevails the volcanoes that produces viscous mud with traces of oil. The reservation represents an area of geological interest (due to the two craters of mud volcanoes on the plateau), floristic (plants that develop in salted environment) and faunistic (mammals, reptiles and amphibians). At the base of the reservation designation are several wildlife species (mammals, reptiles and amphibians) that are on the IUCN Red List and listed in Annex I of EC Directive 92/43 / EC of 21 May 1992 (on the conservation of natural habitats and of wildlife species and wild flora) . The natural area harbors a natural habitat of community interest of type: Meadows and salt marshes of the Pannonian and Ponto-Sarmatic salt marshes. Protected wildlife species reported in the natural reserve area: European poppy (<i>Spermophilus citellus</i>), pond turtle (<i>Emys orbicularis</i>) , yellow-bellied ivy (<i>Bombina variegata</i>) , forest lizard (<i>Lacerta praticola</i>) and <i>Elaphe sauromates</i>, a popular reptile known in the folklore as the big dragon.</p>	



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	<p>The Living Fires from Lopătari (in Romanian: Focul Viu – Lopătari)</p>	<p>The Living Fires from Lopătari (in Romanian: Focul Viu – Lopătari) is a natural phenomenon due to the emission of natural gas that comes to the surface through the cracks of the earth's crust, forming flames that burn, ignited by the sun's rays (or by humans if the flame goes out). The foundation of the phenomenon is represented by the existence of underground hydrocarbon deposits. You can see flames bursting from the earth rising in the wind, sometimes with a higher height, sometimes just blinking - it depends a lot on the gas pressure inside and on the weather: just as well they can be temporarily extinguished. If it rains heavily you can see how the water is bubbling in the places where the gas comes out. The area where the phenomenon takes place has a relative area of 25 square meters.</p> <p>The name comes from the fact that the flames burn almost permanently and are sometimes visible from a distance, especially at night and during the times when the foliage of the trees is in small quantity.</p>	
	<p>White Rock of Grunj Nature Monument (in Romanian: Piatra Albă „La Grunj”)</p>	<p>White Rock of Grunj Nature Monument (in Romanian: Piatra Albă „La Grunj”) is a nature monument (category III IUCN) with geological reservation status, which is located on the radius of Mânzălești commune in Buzău county, at the confluence of the Slănic river with the Jgheab stream . The reservation has a pyramidal shape and occupies an area of 0.025 ha at the base, has a height of 18 m and a diameter of 15 m and is located laterally in front of the main watercourse. The ensemble has a cross at the top and the name "Grunj" has the meaning of "throat" or "shrinking". By its shape (comparable to another scale), it reminds of the Sugarloaf Mountain from Brazil.</p> <p>The land is a control of (differential) hydraulic and wind erosion, consisting of white -gray - yellowish of Badenian age, the whole being trapped between layers of marl (cineritic) and sandstone with an almost vertical position and micropediment aspect. It originates from</p>	



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		the southern end of a small, narrow eastern strip with bushes, from the Lopătari anticline.	
	Marine Reservation 2 Mai - Vama Veche (in Romanian: Rezervația marină 2 Mai – Vama Veche)	Marine Reservation 2 Mai - Vama Veche (in Romanian: Rezervația marină 2 Mai – Vama Veche) is a natural reserve located in the south of the Romanian coast, between the locality 2 Mai and Vama Veche, on the border with Bulgaria, covering an area of about 5,000 ha, along 7 km of coast, extending from the coast line to the 40 m isobate. On a relatively small surface, it houses a large variety of habitats and biocenoses specific to the Romanian marine area, rare or endangered species, habitats of European importance. The purpose of the reservation is to protect and conserve important marine habitats from a floristic and wildlife perspective. The protection and conservation of the marine landscape are also considered. Reservation management is differentiated, depending on the characteristics of existing habitats and species. In addition to the scientific activities, scientific, educational and recreational research activities, diving activities, as well as some activities of sustainable use of traditional natural resources are allowed. The objectives of this reservation are: studying the marine environment in an area with a low anthropogenic impact; maintaining the harmonious interaction of man with nature; protection of habitats and diversity of the underwater marine landscape; promoting the traditional use of resources and activities in the marine area; opportunities for recreation and ecological tourism, concurrently with the development of scientific activities.	
	Dobrogea Mouth Nature Reserve (in Romanian: Rezervația naturală Gura Dobrogei)	Dobrogea Mouth Nature Reserve (in Romanian: Rezervația naturală Gura Dobrogei) is a protected area of national interest corresponding to the IUCN IV category (mixed nature reserve) situated in Constanța county, Târgușor commune. It was declared a protected area in 2007 and offers conditions of habitat for various species of birds, animals and flowers. Moreover, the reservation has a great geologic and spelean importance. It has a surface of 242 hectares . The natural area represents an area of geological, floristic and faunal interest in the	



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		Casimcei Plateau consisting of limestone cliffs (attributed to the Jurassic), gorges and banks of valleys, which houses a diverse range of flora (with halophilic, hygrophilous, mesohygrophilic species) and provides conditions of hosting, feeding and nesting for several species of migratory and passage birds. The natural area overlaps the Dobrogea Gorges site, a natural area of special bird protection.	
	Dobrogea Gorges (in Romanian: Cheile Dobrogei)	Dobrogea Gorges (in Romanian: Cheile Dobrogei) are a protected area (special avifaunistic protection area) located on the territory of Constanța county. The natural area is located in the north-central part of Constanța county, on the administrative territories of the communes Cogealac, Grădina, Mihail Kogălniceanu, Pantelimon, Săcele, Siliștea and Târgușor and is crossed by the national road DN22. The area of the Dobrogea Gorges has been declared a Special Avifauna Protection Area in 2007 regarding the declaration of special bird protection areas as an integral part of the European ecological network Natura 2000 in Romania, and it covers an area of 10,929 hectares. This includes Dobrogea Mouth Natural Reservation, Adam Cave and Dobrogea Mouth Cave.	
	Marine Dunes from Agigea (in Romanian: Dunele marine de la Agigea)	Marine Dunes from Agigea (in Romanian: Dunele marine de la Agigea) make up a protected area of national interest that corresponds to the IV category IUCN (botanical nature reserve), located in Constanța county, on the administrative territory of Agigea commune. The natural area represents an area (of botanical interest) of the Romanian coast, with sand dunes fixed to the ground by thermophilic plant species, with fauna characteristic to arid areas (Dobrogean steppe) and floristic elements constituted by associations of vascular plants.	
	Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve	The Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve is a labyrinth of water and land shared between Romania and Ukraine. It is made up of countless lakes, channels and islands at the end of a 2,860 km-long river . At the end of a course of over 2,860 km, collecting the water from a vast hydrological basin that exceeds 8% of the area of Europe, the Danube (the second largest river of the Continent) has during the last	



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		<p>16,000 years built at its mouth with the Black Sea one of the most beautiful deltas in Europe, perhaps in the whole world. The Danube Delta is famous as one of the greatest wetlands of the earth. The wonderful natural habitats formed here offer good living conditions for an impressive number of plants and animals. Among these, reeds form one of the largest single expanses in the world, and Letea and Caraorman forests represent the northern limit for two rare species of oak that are more frequently met in the south of the Italian and Balkan peninsulas. Together with the great number of aquatic and terrestrial plants, there are also many important colonies of pelicans and cormorans, which are characteristic of the Danube Delta, as well as a variety of other waterbirds which reside in or visit the delta for breeding or wintering. The large number of fish is also notable, with species of both high economic and ecological value.</p>	
	<p>Măcin Mountains National Park</p>	<p>Măcin Mountains National Park is a protected area of national interest that corresponds to the IUCN II category (national park, special conservation area), located in the south-eastern part of Romania, on the north-western territory of Tulcea county. It was created for the purpose of conservation and scientific and tourist exploitation of the area, given that the Măcin Mountains represents the oldest geological formation in the country. The natural area extends to the northeast of the Dobrogea Plateau (in the central part of the Măcin Mountains) in Tulcea county, on the administrative territories of Cerna, Greek, Hamacearca, Jijila, Luncavița and Turcoaia communes. The park is bordered in the eastern part by the county road DJ222A, which connects the village Nifon with Luncavița. The national park includes the natural reserve The Beech Valley Forest (Pădurea Valea Fagilor) and overlaps both the site of community importance Măcin Mountains and the special avifaunistic protection area Măcin – Niculițel. In this region, several tectonic movements took place (hundreds of millions of years ago) which led to the formation of a mountain chain with a high geological complexity. Here crystalline shale outcrops consisting of</p>	



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		<p>metamorphic rocks (quartzites, micaschists, amphibolite, filites) attributed to the Paleozoic are encountered; herculean magmatic rocks; magmatites formed from intrusive rocks (diorites, granodiorites, granites), effusive rocks (rhyolites, basalts), rocks formed by cementing sediments (volcanic tuffs) and sedimentary rocks; slates and tiles.</p> <p>From the geomorphological point of view, the Măcin Mountains presents a relief diversity (erosion witnesses rounded on volcanic rocks, irregular rock assemblages with different geomorphic dimensions and shapes, groats, ridges on quartzite shales, hills, elongated ridges, depressions) consisting of hills, peaks and valleys</p>	
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Cultural features

Features	Cultural assets	Tourism potential	Online information
Built heritage (monuments, ruins, castles, churches, etc)	The Sphinx from Buștea	Mânzălești commune is 50 kilometers from the city of Buzău, on the Slănicului Valley. Some historians say that the Sphinx from Buștea is one of the oldest human settlements in our country and they even have the courage to believe that it is the cradle of European civilization, because, they say, this is the only place on the continent where salt is found on the surface, a mineral from which the body human is dependent.	
	The Genoese Lighthouse from Constanța	The Genoese Lighthouse from Constanța was built at the beginning of the 14th century by the merchants from Genoa, Italy, that came to the seaport of Tomis for business. They built two more lighthouses – one in Sulina and the other one in Mangalia. The lighthouse was destroyed by the weather across the years, but was restored between 1858 – 1860 with British funds. Its octagonal base was made of stone. Above the base a small room with a metal dome was designed.	
	The Tropaeum Traiani	The Tropaeum Traiani is a monument in Roman Civitas Tropaensium (site of modern Adamclisi, Constanța County), built in 109 in then Moesia Inferior, to commemorate Roman Emperor Trajan's victory over the Dacians, in the winter of 101-102, in the Battle of Adamclisi. Before Trajan's construction, an altar existed there, on the walls of which were inscribed the names of the 3,000 legionaries and auxilia (servicemen) who had died "fighting for the Republic". (Latin: Tropaeum from Greek: Tropaion, source of English: "trophy"). Trajan's monument was inspired by the Augustus mausoleum, and was dedicated to Mars Ultor in AD 107/108. On the monument there were 54 metopes depicting Roman legions fighting against enemies; most of these metopes are preserved in the museum nearby. The monument was supposed to be a warning to the tribes outside this newly conquered province.	



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	The Casino from Constanța	<p>The Casino from Constanța was built in 1909 and is located on the banks of the Black Sea. It is built in Art Nouveau style. During the First World War, it served as a military hospital and it returned to its original destination after the creation of the Great Union of Romanian provinces. Although the Casino is a symbol for Constanța, the conflicts between the Ministry of Culture and the City transformed the edifice into ruins. Nevertheless, the Casino remains a reference point for Constanța. It is a historic monument</p>	
	Independence Monument in Tulcea	<p>As one of the most imposing structures in Tulcea, the Independence Monument is one of the main attractions of the city. It is located on the North-East side of Tulcea, on top of a hill where you can also find the ruins of the ancient roman city of Aegyssus. The monument was erected as homage to the heroic soldiers who fought to free the country from the Ottoman rule between 1877 and 1888. The war also brought Dobrogea back to Romania and established it as one of the most flourishing regions of the country in the next few decades. Sculptor George Vasilescu created the concept and the supervised the works. Construction began on 17 October 1879 with King Carol I present. The structure consists of a 22 meters tall obelisk, made of Ravenna granite, with two sculptures on the sides: a bronze soldier on the right and a vulture on the left. Both were forged in Milan. During the First World War, the frontline was pretty much set on the Danube and Tulcea sustained heavy damage. The monument was almost completely destroyed and remained to for years. 1932, it was rebuilt, but without the soldier and the vulture. It was finally restored to its original form in 1977, for the celebration of a century on independence.</p>	
	The Statue of Mircea the Elder (Mircea I of Wallachia), in Romanian: Mircea cel Bătrân	<p>The Statue of Mircea the Elder (Mircea I of Wallachia), in Romanian: Mircea cel Bătrân, was built in the name Voivode of Wallachia. The byname "elder" was given to him after his death in order to distinguish him from his grandson Mircea II ("Mircea the Younger"), although some historians believe the epithet was given to him as a sign of respect by later generations. He is considered the most important Wallachian ruler</p>	



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		<p>during the Middle Ages and one of the great rulers of his era, and starting in the 19th century Romanian historiography has also referred to him as Mircea the Great (in Romanian: Mircea cel Mare) . The statue of Mircea the Elder, Tulcea was erected in 1900 - 1902 on the place named until 1947 Mircea Square (today, Civic Square). The monument had a 5 m base, made of granite blocks. The statue, 4 m high, represented the ruler in armor, with the mantle on his shoulder, with the crown prince on the head, with the sword in the left hand and the mace in the right hand. At the base, there were placed two lions holding trophies obtained by the ruler in the battles with the enemy. In front of the monument was placed a bronze plaque on which was engraved the title of the ruler "I, The Great Mircea, Voivode and Ruler of both parts across the Danube to the Great Sea and the fortress of Darstor." Destroyed by the occupation troops in 1916-1918, only the remains of the monument still remain in the park today.</p>	
	Victory Statue	<p>Victory Statue from Tisita, Vrancea county, is a historic monument, created in honor of Marasesti fights from 1917. The sculptor of this statue is Oscar Han. It represents the goddess of victory impersonated by a woman who has a sword over her head. The monument was inaugurated in September, 1934</p>	
	Union Monument from Focsani	<p>The Union Monument from Focsani was erected in homage of the 1859 Union created by Alexandru Ioan Cuza. It is situated in the center of the city. The Monument was built in 1976 and was made by the sculptor Ion Jalea. On the bronze plaque from the main side of the obelisk it is written "Union of the Romanian Principalities, 1859.</p>	
	The Church Made of One Stone	<p>The Church Made of One Stone, situated in Naeni commune, Buzău county, was built, just as its name suggests, from one stone – travertine extracted from a mine close to Naeni. It is dedicated to "Palm Sunday" and its painting was made with a Byzantine influence. The iconostasis is also made of travertine, which is very rare in European orthodoxy.</p>	
	Berca Monastery	<p>Berca Monastery is situated in Berca locality from Buzău county. It was built by a family of local noblemen in 1694. The initial built skete became</p>	



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		a monastery and fortress in the 18th century. Across time the monastery was enlarged by other buildings. It is dedicated to "Saints Archangels Michael and Gabriel" and is a historic monument. Only a few walls can be seen today from the old fortress.	
	Găvanu Monastery	Găvanu Monastery is located in Manzalesti commune from Buzău county. It is dedicated to the "Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary" and was built in 1707 from wood beams supported by a stone base.	
	King`s Mosque	King`s Mosque from Constanța is also known as Carol the 1st Mosque. It was built between 1910 – 1913 as a gift of the king Carol the 1st to the Muslim community from Dobrogea. Its minaret is 40 meters high and people can reach the top of it by climbing 140 stairs. From up there they can see the view of Constanța.	
	Muntioru Skete	Muntioru Skete is situated in Poiana Muntioru, near Vintileasca commune, Vrancea county. The Orthodox Skete is located at an altitude of 1,300 meters and is managed by Poiana Marului Monastery. It was founded by the priest Macarie Besliu in 1999 and is dedicated to "The Holy Face of Jesus".	
Small heritage features (fountains, chapels, walls, etc)	Danube Cliff from Galați	The Danube Cliff from Galați was built in the 20th century and is one of the most important relaxation areas from the city. Some of the vessels across the cliff were transformed in restaurants, where people can have a quiet meal. The cliff has two levels, the upper level and the lower level, which were built to strengthen an unstable soil layer. Periodically, the cliff hosts various events, such as: sports competitions, concerts, art exhibitions, etc.	
	Statue "Woman with Harp"	Statue "Woman with Harp" is located in Decebal Square from Medgidia city, Constanța county. The statue was created in 1933 by the sculptor Ion Jalea (1887 – 1983). It represents a woman playing a cordless harp. The idea behind the cordless harp is that the cords represent parts of nature – either the water that pours down the statue when it rains or the wind when it blows – creating a symbolic connection between the work of art and the environment.	



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Traditions (skills, know-how, customs)	Weaving – sewing by Iustina Mother at Saint Pantelimon Monastery	<p>Mother Iustina is always in the tailoring workshop of the monastery, where she sews church clothes. It has been 11 years since the woman found her peace in the Monastery, where, she says, she was helped and encouraged to express herself freely and to arrange this museum as she thinks fit. An idea born out of passion for folklore, which was nourished over time as a duty to the past, to ancestors, as described by Mother Iustina, and this is also seen in her paintings on wood, another passion of the mother with whom she nourishes her soul whenever she has the opportunity.</p> <p>Products: religious and traditional embroidery, priestly vestments.</p>	iustina.andreea.mai@ca@gmail.com
	Woodworking: carving, sculpturing by Piron Valeriu	<p>Address: Bld. DOROBANȚILOR, BRĂILA, BRĂILA Phone: 0727398447 Email: pironvaleriu@yahoo.co.uk</p>	<p>Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/PironValeriuTheSculptor/</p>
	Wood / glass religious icons, or other materials by Baciú Elena-Ecaterina	<p>Address: STRADA LEONARD TENOR NR.9, BUZĂU, BUZĂU, COD POȘTAL: 120218 Phone: 0742 094 897 Email: coriniana@yahoo.com</p>	https://www.facebook.com/baciuecaterina/photos
	Sewing traditional folklore clothes by Copăcel Viorica	<p>Address: COM. MÂNZĂLEȘTI, JUD. BUZĂU, BUZĂU, COD POȘTAL: Phone: 0764963699 Products: shirts, dresses, children's suits, men's shirt</p>	
	Pottery by Bănică Dumitru-Aurel	<p>Address: COMUNA RĂCOASA, SAT VARNIȚA, JUD VRANCEA, VRANCEA, COD POȘTAL: 627280 Phone: 0237680617 Products: pots, jugs, plates, toys, vases</p>	
	Painted eggs by Ochiu Silvia	<p>Address: NĂRUJA, JUD. VRANCEA, VRANCEA Phone: 0732576948</p> <p>The most widespread Christian Easter tradition is the painting of red eggs, whose presence is obligatory on the Easter table, is an ancient custom in Năruja village. If, for young people, the art of Easter eggs is unknown, in Năruja there are some old people who still keep this great technique from ancestors. And the most important thing is that they are</p>	



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		not used chemically, but the eggs are reddened and environmentally friendly, like 100 years ago. The ecological paint for the reddening of the eggs is made from wildflower flowers and wild apple leaves that are macerated for three days with warm water.	
Gastronomy (local products, recipes, production methods)	Matthew's fishery (in Romanian: Pescaria lui Matei)	After the second bridge from Agigea was built over the Danube-Black Sea Canal, it became more accessible, and "Matei's Fishery" became in just four years one of the most popular fishing restaurants on the coast, with constant customers regardless of season or season. The restaurant is not in the tourist area, but on a more commercial route, which can be confused with a truck parking, but its location on the rocks and the sea view have quickly gained its popularity. As well as its own source of fresh fish, which made those who passed the threshold recommend the fishery in Agigea.	https://www.pescari.aluimatei.ro/
	Serbian Tavern (in Romanian: Taverna Sârbului)	Serbian gastronomy is the strongest example that the tastes of a nation can cross the ages not by altering themselves, but by enriching themselves from those who have been along the way. In the crucible of this national cuisine, with a thousand unmistakable flavors, history has thrown the tastes of other recipes. The Ottoman one - in turn a mixture of culinary cultures. The Greek - old since the world and always renewed. The Austrian or the Hungarian - because while men were fighting their wars, women shared recipes. The Italian - gentle delights. But especially those of the Slavic nations from the southwest of the ripple water of the Danube. The restaurant is perhaps one of the richest gastronomies of the Eastern half of Europe, having for each client a dish to be savored, sweeter or spicier, but always tasty! Among the delicacies, we find a strong Slivovitz, the drink of the ancient heroes of Serbia, the traditional preparations of Serbia and of the Slavic world of the Balkans: ćevapčići - Serbian correspondent of the Romanian "mititei", the pljeskavica (to which some call it The Serbian hamburger) sausages, Sarma and moussaka, in Serbian style.	https://Constanta.tavernasarbului.ro/despre-taverna-sarbului/
	Life Harbour Restaurant	The restaurant consists of two areas, the first one includes a club and terrace located near the checkpoints and with a capacity of 50 people,	http://lifeharbour.ro/club-restaurant



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		<p>inside, and 60 outside, and the second, a floating restaurant, with a capacity of 70 people. The spectacular location, between yachts, of the two areas of the restaurant, offers a unique setting and makes this location a trend-setter in the tourist field. Life Harbor Restaurant offers international-specific menus and cuisine, including freshly caught Black Sea fish. During the warm season, room-service also works, both for accommodation spaces and for those who want to dine on their own boats.</p>	
	Ovid Island Restaurant	<p>Nature created Ovidiu Island thousands of years ago, and people created legends around it. This is a modern and traditional place at the same time. Ovidiu island located on Lake Siutghiol at 5000m from the shore of Mamaia resort and 500m from Ovidiu city, is one of the most unique places of the Romanian coast, being the only tourist objective that operates on an island. Currently, the tourist complex has 20 accommodation places for tourists, in 10 3-star cottages, each equipped with double bed, own bathroom, air conditioning, television, cable, minibar.</p> <p>The rustic restaurant also satisfies the most demanding tastes through the ambiance and the traditional Romanian dishes and the fish specialties. It is the ideal place for business dinners, different special family or professional events. In addition to the 400-seat restaurant, the complex also includes a Country Terrace with 150 seats that complement the island's enchanting environment. The "Ovidius" ship is a novelty for the Romanian coastline, with 3-star facilities that transport tourists to the island, but at the same time offers unique walks on the lake. The steam being functional throughout the year, festive or mundane events can be organized within the restaurant, which holds 50 seats, but also on the terrace, which has 80 seats.</p>	<p>https://www.facebook.com/pg/insulaovidiumamaia/</p>
	Nikos Greek Taverna	<p>All those who walked along the shore of the great Aegean fell in love with the preparations of the Greek taverns. That is why Nikos Greek Taverna tried their best to bring the flavor of these dishes to the Black Sea shore. After countless beautiful and unique experiences of the chain</p>	<p>http://Constanta.nikosgreektaverna.ro/</p>



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		of taverns opened in Constanța, Nikos Greek Taverna want to take the story of the tavern further. The smell of authentic spices and the multitude of preparations made after Greek recipes will convince you that you are truly on Greek lands. At Nikos Greek Tavern you will be greeted with the fusion of flavors of a diversified menu, which will guarantee an authentic Greek culinary experience.	
	The Fishermen's Stop (in Romanian: Popasul pescarilor)	The Fishermen's Stop is one of the oldest fishery restaurants on the south of the Romanian coast, being opened in 1996. The fish served is fished in the early hours of the Black Sea in the morning by our fishermen or in the lake behind the restaurant	http://www.popasul-pescarilor.ro/restaurant/
	Babel - Mediterranean Fish and Lebanese Restaurant	Babel is a Lebanese restaurant, located in a picturesque place in Năvodari, secluded, discreet, right by the sea. The magnificent view accompanies the Lebanese dishes, prepared with great care according to the original recipes. It is the place where you can discover Lebanese cuisine from A to Z. Fish is always fresh, and vegetables, eggs, rams and poultry come from their own Bioferma	https://www.facebook.com/pg/BabelRestaurantLibanez
	Mediterranean Seafood Restaurant - Caru' cu Scoici	A place of story, a destination for gourmets, a magical land for children and a garden with a great fragrance, this is what best describes the relaxed universe within the Caru' cu Scoici, a Mediterranean fishing restaurant. Located on the seafront, in the Venus resort, at the exit towards Cap Aurora, the restaurant offers a varied menu inspired by the famous cuisines in the Mediterranean area. Preparations of fish and seafood, but also other delicacies are prepared with great skill by the chefs of the restaurant. The fishing restaurant is arranged in the form of an airy terrace, lined with flowers and greenery, which descend smoothly towards the beach. At every visit, the sea keeps you company with its smooth breeze and the waves you can admire in the area. Even for children, the visit to this restaurant is delicious! For them, the restaurant created tasty menus and set up a colorful playground where time is measured by laughter, fun and appetite	https://carucuscoici.ro/despre.html
	Island Restaurant from Neptun	The Island Restaurant, opened in 1968, is located on the island of a lake from Neptune. It is one of the few places where fish from Delta, seafood,	https://www.insulanepun.ro/restaurant/



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		but also classic dishes of beef, pork, chicken, pasta and many other Romanian dishes can be served. But what it is special about this restaurant is the unique location on the coast. Once you arrive on the island you can choose to serve a meal on the little ships, on one of the pontoons on the water, near the waterfall, under a willow tree, in a booth or a verandah. The coolness of the lake and the sea breeze are felt all over the island	
	The Gulf Fishermen's Restaurant	The Gulf Fishermen's Restaurant was born from the need to enjoy the beauty of nature and from a great desire to express the culinary art through tasty dishes of fresh fish and seafood. Located on Agigea beach, far from the bustle of urban civilization, the restaurant has a Mediterranean style and it keeps its tradition	https://www.golfulpe-scarilor.ro/
	Water Gate – A Fish Restaurant near the Black Sea	The Water Gate (in Romanian: Poarta Apelor) is a restaurant with a fishery specific, located in Eforie Sud, near the Black Sea. The varied fish products are lovingly prepared by the chefs for all tastes. You will find in the menu a variety of fishery products that will delight the taste buds, prepared on the plate or fried, tasty brine, fish salads, fish soups and soups, in aromatic herb crust or salt crust. The seafood is prepared with great care to conquer you from the first bite, but also the tagliatelle with seafood that can delight your senses. You can also delight in preparations of chicken, beef, pork or rat. Water Gate is a restaurant ready to delight you with fresh fish products and a pleasant atmosphere near the Black Sea	https://www.facebook.com/PoartaApeilor/
	Blue Aqua Restaurant	The organic architecture of the restaurants in Galați represents a combination of the natural elements with the service areas, in a perfect symbiosis that are mutually enhancing. Asymmetrical groups in the open plan, is a feature of the design applied by one of the owners, Sorin Dragan being in love with the organic shapes and nature, continuously developing a concept in which they filter light and punctuate the colors, creating a coherent and seductive ensemble for tasting. The central terrace offers intimacy to those who cross our threshold, eliminates the separation of the interior and exterior space, thus achieving the	https://www.blueacqua.ro/Galați/povestea-blue-acqua



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		<p>maximum freedom of expression of those who taste our preparations, while maintaining harmony with the environment. With the passage of time and the evolution of the culinary techniques of preparing fish products, from smoking the products until their marination (the process of soaking foods in a seasoned, often acidic, liquid before cooking), the owners thought to transport the wild fish to the more remote areas, to satisfy even the most demanding gourmets. The owners took the initiative to take advantage of the rich freshwater fish and opened the first restaurants, where they gathered classic or traditional recipes, original and innovative. Later, they combined them with other bio-certified products, in a tasteful explosion with seafood and other wonders on the shores of the Mediterranean. Because there is plenty, taken directly from the fishermen on the banks of the Danube, we can delight the taste buds with the most refined dishes or the most common recipes, using exclusively extra virgin olive oil, olives harvested from the hills of Tuscany or vegetables grown in a bio environment by the Romanian villagers</p>	
	<p>Kingfisher Bar (in Romanian: Ivan Pescar Fish Bar)</p>	<p>Ivan Pescar Fish Bar from Tulcea offers fresh fish dishes from Danube Delta and Black Sea, cooked by Lipovans chefs. Ivan Pescar is a small bird of an almost electric blue, a kind of Delta hummingbird, known internationally as Kingfisher. The owner borrowed his name because Ivan Pescar is not only an exclusive fish restaurant, but a declaration of love for Danube Delta. The restaurant is a project born from friendship and shared passion for delta tastes and scents, local gastronomy and the delta's intangible heritage. Ivan Pescar offers a sincere experience, based on the quality and freshness of the fish. The dishes are cooked respecting the recipes of the place and the prohibition periods, from fresh, local and seasonal fish, from responsible catches, because we protect our future fish sources</p>	<p>https://www.ivanpescar.ro/povesteanoastra</p>
<p>Events and festivals</p>	<p>Lyra Palace from Brăila</p>	<p>Lyra Palace from Brăila was built between 1924 – 1926 at the initiative of George Cavadia, songwriter and president of Lyra Society. Today, the</p>	<p>http://www.informatii</p>



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		Palace hosts Lyra Symphonic Orchestra and is a place to see classical music concerts	romania.ro/en/listing/palatul-lyra/
	Gulliver Puppet Theater	Gulliver Puppet Theater was created on October 1st, 1952. Initially, it was a theater for children, but in recent years, the institution also started to develop plays for youngsters. The most important event of the theater is The Gulliver Festival, one of the most important festivals of its kind from Romania, when Galați is transformed into the “capital of the puppet theater	http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/teatrul-de-papusi-gulliver/
	Constanța Aquarium	The Aquarium from Constanța is located near the famous Casino and was open in 1958. It displays aquatic flora, fauna organized in permanent exhibitions and temporary exhibitions of biology and ecology. The Aquarium is part of the Natural Sciences Museum Complex from Constanța. It is organized on three departments: Marine Section, Fresh Water Section and Exotic Fish	http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/acvariul-Constanța/
	Dolphinarium from Constanța	The Dolphinarium is part of the Museum Complex of Natural Sciences from Constanța. It was open in 1958, when the Aquarium was also inaugurated. Visitors can see shows with dolphins and sea lions guided by their trainers, see exhibitions with exotic birds or other temporary exhibitions	http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/delfinariu/
	Aqua Magic Park from Mamaia Resort	Aqua Magic Park from Mamaia Resort in Constanța is one of the important attractions on the Romanian coast, it has an impressive area of 27200 square meters. The most emblematic water park in the country reveals the secret of an exceptional holiday: the diversity of events, the aquatic attractions and a lot adrenaline. Aqua Magic addresses all age categories, satisfying the desire to relax some but also the adventure and adrenaline rush of the others, being able to host 3000 visitors a day. This park offers you 15 endless sources of activities	https://www.facebook.com/aquamagic/
	„Major Gheorghe Pastia” Folk Atheneum	”Major Gheorghe Pastia” Folk Atheneum is a cultural institution from Focsani, Vrancea county, which organizes musical shows, workshops, art exhibitions, conferences, etc. Its building started in 1927 at the initiative of Major Gheorghe Pastia	http://www.informatii-romania.ro/en/listing/ateneul-popular-



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			maior-gheorghe-pastia/
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Area as a whole

Features	Cultural assets	Tourism potential	Online information
Climate	Southeastern Region of Romania	<p>Romania's location in the Southeastern portion of the European continent gives it a climate that is transitional between temperate regions and the harsher extremes of the continental interior. In the Southeastern Region, the continental influences of the Russian Plain (East European Plain) make themselves felt and in the extreme southeast there are even milder sub-Mediterranean influences. This overall pattern is substantially modified by the relief, however, and there are many examples of climatic zones induced by changes in elevation .</p> <p>The climate of the Southeastern Region is part of the general characteristics of the temperate climate of transition, with a series of local features, given by certain factors (relief, Black Sea, Danube). The average annual temperatures vary quite a bit, especially due to the relief. Thus, if in the Danube, the south of Dobrudja, the coastal area and the Danube Delta the multiannual average exceeds 11°C (11.2°C Mangalia and Murfatlar), in the mountain area the average temperature reaches values between 0 and 6°C, and on the highest peaks below 0°C. The prevailing winds are from the eastern and northern sectors, mainly the brood, in winter. Local winds such as sea breezes and mountain breezes also appear. The amount of precipitation is influenced, primarily by altitude, but also by the continental climatic influences from the east. Thus, in the southern area, on the coast and in the Danube Delta the amount of precipitation is below 400mm / year and reaches over 1000mm / year in the mountain area. The bioclimate in the Black Sea is temperate-continental, with few marine influences, with reduced thermic changes in 24 hours, good thermic stability in the</p>	http://www.adrse.ro/Regiunea/Geografie_Demografie.aspx



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		summer season, reduced precipitations, uniform degree of atmospheric humidity	
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Stakeholders

The survey area in Romania includes: The Southeastern Region of Romania which comprises the following counties: Brăila, Buzău, Constanța, Galați, Tulcea, and Vrancea. The main target groups to record the tourism and culture stakeholders of the study areas that are interested in the SILC project, by use of questionnaires are:

- Regional public authorities (all the local stakeholders can be found in Annex 2)
- NGOs (all the local stakeholders can be found in Annex 3)
- National Tourism Information Centers (all the local stakeholders can be found in Annex 4)
- Accommodations – Hotels (all the local stakeholders can be found in Annex 5.1)
- Accommodations – Guesthouses (all the local stakeholders can be found in Annex 5.2)
- Food places (all the local stakeholders can be found in Annex 6)
- Tourism agencies (all the local stakeholders can be found in Annex 7)

The major local tourism and culture stakeholders that showed interest in the SILC project by answering the questionnaires are displayed in the following table below.

Table 1. Major local stakeholders for the Southeastern Region of Romania

<i>N</i>	<i>Target group</i>	<i>Name of Organization</i>	<i>Contact person</i>	<i>E-mail</i>	<i>Website</i>
1	Regional public authorities	Buzău County Council	Claudiu - Tourism Department Counselor	claudiu.bz21@gmail.com	http://cjbuzau.ro/en/home-2/
2	Regional public authorities	Cosmești City Hall		cosmesti@gl.e-adm.ro	http://primaria-cosmesti.ro/
3	Regional public authorities	City Hall of Galați	Dr. Arh. Dragoș Horia Buhociu (Chief Architect institution)	arhitectsef@primariagalati.ro	https://www.primariagalati.ro/portal/index.php
4	Regional public authorities	Guidance counselor at Administrative Territorial Unit of the Isaccea Municipality		secretariatisaccea@gmail.com	https://www.isaccea.ro/
5	Regional public authorities	Ostrov City Hall		secretariat@primariaostrovtulcea.ro	https://www.primariaostrovtulcea.ro/
6	Regional public authorities	Ceatalchioi City Hall		primariaceatalchioi@gmail.com	https://www.primariaceatalchioi.ro/
7	Regional public authorities	Constanța City Hall	Alina Bădilă (Tourism department)	compartiment.turism@primaria-constant.ro	http://www.primaria-constant.ro/
8	Regional public authorities	Chilia Veche commune town hall	Oprisan Daniela Corina	primaria_chilia_veche@yahoo.com	https://www.primariachilia.ro/
9	Regional public authorities	Crișan Commune Hall		primariacrisan@gmail.com	https://www.primariacrisan.ro/



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10	NGOs	FLAG Delta (Local Group Association for Sustainable Fisheries Danube Delta)		flag.delta@yahoo.com	http://www.flagdelta.ro/
11	NGOs	Anticus Multicultural Association	Taner Murat	taner@anticusmulticultural.org	https://www.anticusmulticultural.org/
12	NGOs	Association of the Ecological Tourist Club MONT-DELT-MAR	President	mdm.cornel@gmail.com	https://www.facebook.com/mont.delt.mar/
13	NGOs	ANTREC Constanța	Florentina Dospinescu (President)	constantina@antrec.ro / florentina.dospinescu@gmail.com	http://www.antrec-se.ro/index.php/ro/judete/constantina
14	NGOs	Foundation of the Romanian School of Business of Chambers of Commerce and Industry Tulcea Branch	Florentina Jelescu (Director)	sraftl@yahoo.com	https://www.sraftl.ro/
15	NGOs	Golovița Fishermen's Association	Cătălin Balaban	asociatia.golovita@gmail.com	https://asociatiagolovita.wordpress.com/
16	NGOs	DAKIA Association for Sustainable Development, the project "Integrated Management of the North Dobrogea Plateau"	Tiberiu Cazacioc	comunicare@dakia.ro	www.dakia.ro www.apnd.ro
17	NGOs	Alpin Club Brasov	Marcel-Marian Radu (president)	marian@alpinclubbrasov.ro	http://alpinclubbrasov.ro/
18	National Tourism Information Centers	CNIPT Nehoiu	Florea Florina (Director of the tourist information center)	cniptnehoiu@yahoo.com	http://www.cniptnehoiu.ro/
19	National Tourism Information Centers	CNIPT Băneasa		cniptbaneasa@yahoo.com	http://www.baneasacnipt.ro/



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20	Accommodations – Hotels	Club D'or tourist complex in Vama Veche (SC TANDER MAXX SRL)	Manager Hotel	office@clubdor.ro	http://www.clubdor.ro/
21	Accommodations – Hotels	Delta Hotel (SC COMPLEX DELTA SRL)	Alina Dima (Front Desk Department)	receptiedelta3@gmail.com	https://www.hoteldelta.eu/
22	Accommodations – Hotels	Esplanada Hotel (SC TRIDENT SRL)	Cimpoesu Oana Raluca (Front Desk Department)	office@hotelesplanada.ro	www.hotelesplanada.ro www.esplanadaparc.ro
23	Accommodations – Guesthouses	Agrotourism Bunica Maria Guesthouse		contact@bunicamaria.com	https://www.bunicamaria.com/
24	Accommodations – Guesthouses	Andreea 2 Mai Guesthouse		casaandreea2mai@yahoo.com	https://casaandreea2mai.ro/
25	Accommodations – Guesthouses	Mariana Guesthouse	Mariana Brudaru	casamariana.murighiol@gmail.com	https://www.booking.com/hotel/ro/casa-mariana.ro.html
26	Accommodations – Guesthouses	Agrotourism guesthouse Valea Fagilor (Ilie Marian Agro I.I.)	Ilie Marian (Manager)	iliemarian07@yahoo.com	https://www.pensiuneavaleafagilor.ro/
27	Accommodations – Guesthouses	Vasiliu Guesthouse (Ecoturism Delta SRL)	Petre Vasiliu (Manager)	petrerotl@yahoo.com	https://www.ecoturismdelta.ro/
28	Accommodations – Guesthouses	Cormoran Resort (SC Inpro Romania SRL)	Cornel Găină (General Director)	cornel_gaina@yahoo.com	http://www.cormoran.ro/
29	Accommodations – Guesthouses	Puiu Guesthouse	Băncioiu Rodica (Administrator)	pensiunea.puiu@yahoo.com	http://www.pensiuneapuiu.ro/



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30	Accommodations – Guesthouses	4 Willows Guesthouse (Pensiunea 4 Sălcii)	Scurtulescu Răzvan (Administrator)	scurtulescurazvan@yahoo.com	http://pensiunea4salcii.ro/
31	Accommodations – Guesthouses	Danube's Shore House (Casa Malul Dunării)	Panschi Nicoleta	casamaluldunarii@gmail.com	https://casamaluldunarii.ro/
32	Tourism agencies	Alternative Travel (SC Dobrogea Misterioasa SRL)	C.E.O. (lawyer)	contact@alternativetravel.ro	https://www.alternativetravel.ro
33	Tourism agencies	Verada Tour	Marcel Mocanu (Director)	contact@veradatour.ro	http://veradatour.ro/en
34	Tourism agencies	Chettusia Tours	Mihai Baci	info@chettusia.com	https://www.chettusia.com/
35	Tourism agencies	Descopera Delta Dunării	Andreea Zaharcu (tourism agent)	newstravelromania2012@yahoo.com / contact@descoperadeltadunarii.ro	www.descoperadeltadunarii.ro
36	Certified tour guide in Danube Delta	Ionuț Călin	Ionuț Călin	ionutcalin125@gmail.com	https://www.facebook.com/ionut.calin.165
37	Higher Education and Research Institutions	Jean Bart Theoretical High School Sulina	Valentin (educational coordinator - tour guide)	valentinropl@yahoo.com	http://liceuljeanbartsulina.info/
38	SMEs	Souvenir from Dobrogea	Bianca Cristina Folescu (Administrator)	suvenirdindobrogea@gmail.com	http://suvenirdindobrogea.ro/
39		Cultural center in Mahmudia, Tulcea	Domnița Maftei (Director)	domnitamatfei@yahoo.ro	-



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40	SMEs	TONIDEL BLUE SRL in Mahmudia commune, Tulcea County	Efimov Hariton (sailor)	tonidelblue@gmail.com	-
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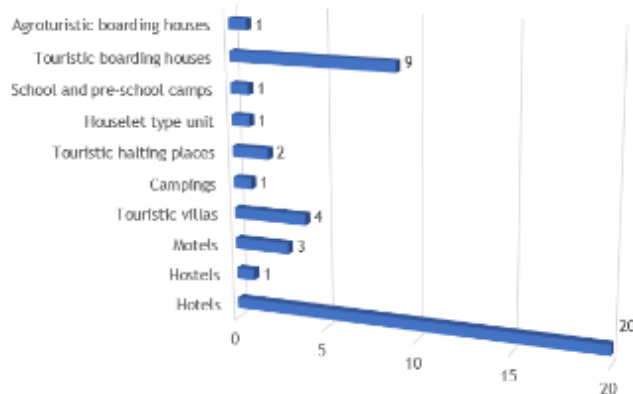


Slik Road Local Culture



Infrastructure Accommodation

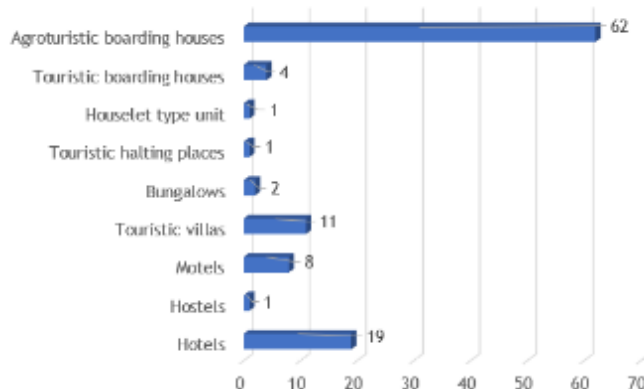
Tourists accommodation in Brăila County in 2019



Tourists accommodation in Brăila County in 2019

Source: National Institute for Statistics - ROMANIA, Online source:
<http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>

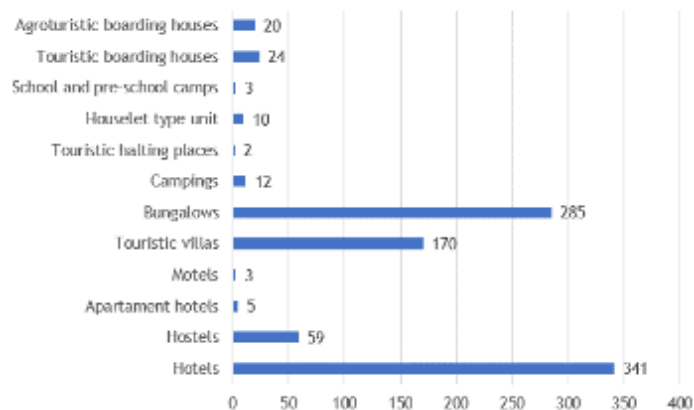
Tourists accommodation in Buzău County in 2019



Tourists accommodation in Buzău County in 2019

Source: National Institute for Statistics - ROMANIA, Online source:
<http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>

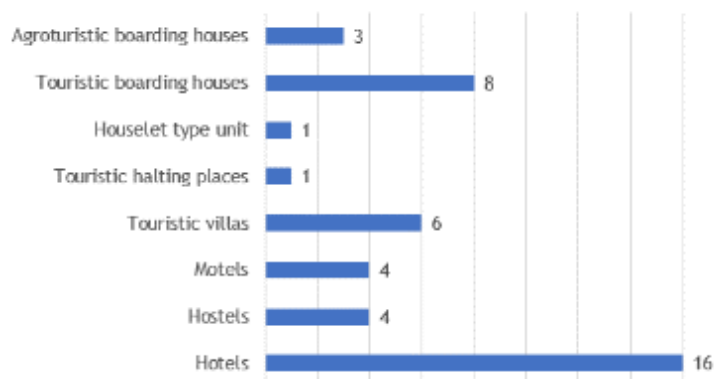
Tourists accommodation in Constanța County in 2019



Tourists accommodation in Constanța County in 2019

Source: National Institute for Statistics - ROMANIA, Online source:
<http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>

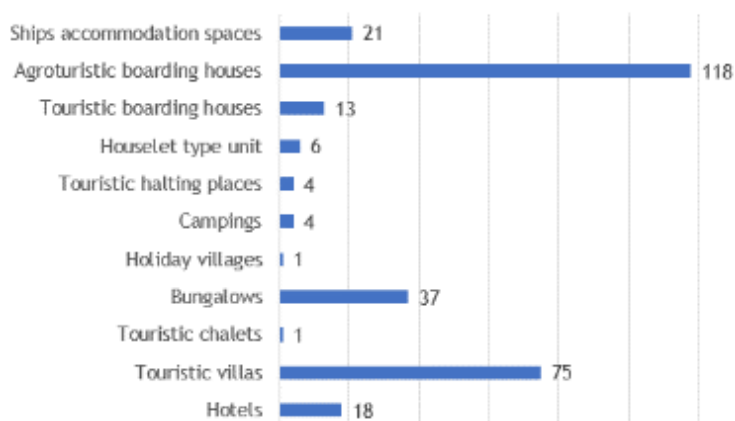
Tourists accommodation in Galați County in 2019



Tourists accommodation in Galați County in 2019

Source: National Institute for Statistics - ROMANIA, Online source:
<http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>

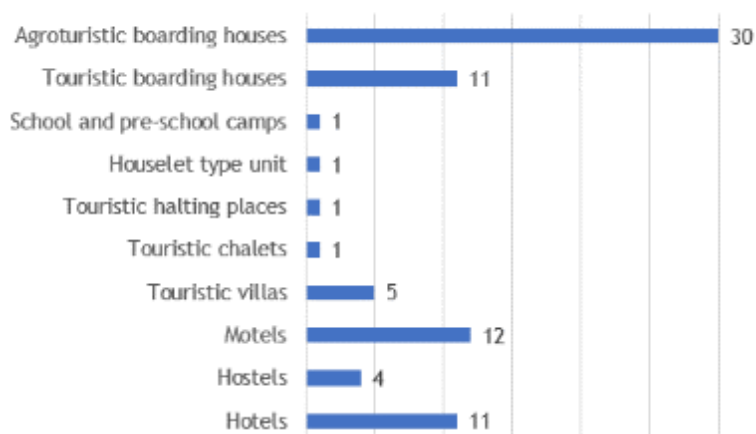
Tourists accommodation in Tulcea County in 2019



Tourists accommodation in Tulcea County in 2019

Source: National Institute for Statistics - ROMANIA, Online source:
<http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>

Tourists accommodation in Vrancea County in 2019



Tourists accommodation in Vrancea County in 2019
Source: National Institute for Statistics - ROMANIA, Online source:
<http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>

Transportation Infrastructure

Road network, Rail network, Sea Transport – Ports, Airports, and transportation within destination, access and proximity to cities, airports, other destinations

Brăila County Transportation Infrastructure	
Road	<p>The roads that facilitate access to the municipality of Brăila are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - E 584 (DN 21) (Poltava –Slobozia) Slobozia - Brăila - DN 2B Buzău - Brăila - DN 22 Râmnicu Sărat - Brăila - DN 23 Focșani - Brăila - DN 22B (Dig Brăila - Galați) - E 87 (Odessa –Antalya), on the territory of Romania, connect the cities: Galați, Brăila, Tulcea, Constanța)
Brăila suspension bridge	<p>A major problem for the Brăila - Galați sector was the lack of a bridge over the Danube. Thus, a member of IHI Group, IHI Infrastructure Systems Co., Ltd. (IIS, Location: Sakai City, Osaka Prefecture; President: Akira Inoue), in a joint venture with the Italian construction company Astaldi, received an order for construction of the Brăila suspension bridge from Romania's National Company for the Administration of Road Infrastructure and signed a construction contract on January 15, 2018. This will be a fast road connection of the cities Brăila and Galați with Tulcea, the connection of the SE region with the Nordic ones, as well as with the European transport corridors. At the same time, access to the Black Sea Coast and the Danube Delta would be improved.</p> <p>The Brăila Bridge is a road suspension bridge in Romania, under construction over the Danube river, between Brăila, a major city in the east of Romania, and the opposite bank of the river in Tulcea County. It will be the first bridge over the maritime Danube sector, and the fourth bridge over the Romanian section of the river. The bridge will improve road traffic accessibility of the Galați-Brăila area to Constanța and Tulcea, and connections between Moldavia and Dobruja regions. Crossing to the opposite bank of the Danube at Brăila City is limited to using road detours exceeding 100 km or crossing by ship. However, the construction of the suspension bridge will simplify crossing the Danube and significantly improve the convenience of transportation. In addition, as the connecting road that is part of this project leads to an existing highway, it contributes to the efficiency of cargo distribution between the Port of Constanța, the largest port in the country, and the eastern region of Romania. It can contribute to economic revitalization within the EU.</p>
Railway line	<p>The municipality of Brăila is crossed by an important railway line: Bucharest-Galați (through Urziceni-Făurei-Brăila) and Bucharest-Ploiești-Buzău-Făurei-Brăila, the locality being an important railway hub in the south-east region, but also in the interregional relationship</p>
The Port of Brăila	<p>The Port of Brăila is located on the maritime sector of the Danube River. There is growth potential at the Port of Brăila if river transport could be carried out to a greater extent by the industrial units in the region with</p>

	the increase in the port's capacity to handle cargo. The Port of Brăila is an important port of Romania for the handling and transport of cereals. The port is a part of the TEN-T comprehensive network. Main objective is the modernization of port infrastructure in the Port of Brăila.
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Buzău County Transportation Infrastructure	
Road	Buzău County is crossed by national road DN2 (part of European Road E85), which connects the city to Bucharest to the South and to Râmnicu Sărat and the main cities of Western Moldavia to the North. National road DN1B (European Road E577) branches out of DN2 in Buzău. This road connects the city to Ploiești. In the North of the city, DN10 also branches from DN2. It crosses the Carpathians at their South-Eastern curvature through Buzău Pass towards Brașov. The South of Buzău is also crossed by national road DN2B, which branches from DN2 in the neighboring commune of Costești, leading eastward to Galați and Brăila. In Buzău, county road DJ203D branches from DN2B. It leads South to Țintești and Smeeni, where it ends in DN2C, a road along which it helps connect Buzău to Slobozia.
Bridge	In the Buzău city area, the only functional road bridge over Buzău River is the one crossing with DN2 to Mărăcineni. There is another road bridge, connecting the city to Vadu Pașii, near the railway bridge.
Railway line	Buzău is one of the country's main important railway hubs, as it connects Bucharest and Ploiești with Focșani, Galați and Constanța. The city railway station was open in 1872, along with the Bucharest-Galați railway. A branch of this railway, from Buzău to Mărășești was opened a few years later, on 13 June 1881, and it was the first railway designed by Romanian engineers. The Buzău-Nehoiășu line, open in 1908, connects Buzău to the smaller towns and villages along the Buzău River valley, including Nehoiu and Pătârlagele.
Bus station	Two main bust stations, one in the North and one in the South next to the railway station, as well a few other secondary bus stops, are used by private transportation companies that operate services to other cities or nearby villages. 10 bus lines connect residential areas to industrial areas (including Buzău South industrial platform), the city center and the railway station. There are a few taxi companies licensed by the city also operating in the surrounding villages.
Airport	Buzău has no civil airport. The only air transport infrastructure present in the city is the military airport and heliport South-West of the city, but it is used only by emergency sanitary flights. Civil air traffic for Buzău is performed through Henri Coandă International Airport in Otopeni, Bucharest, 110 km away, the main air hub.

Constanța County Transportation Infrastructure	
Road	Constanța has a strategic geographic position, being located on the route of 3 Trans-European Transport corridors (Corridor IV, Corridor IX and Corridor VII Danube) and also at the junction of commercial routes that link the markets of countries which do not have sea access from Central and Eastern Europe with the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Middle East regions.
Bus line	Constanța's public transport system is run by Regia Autonomă de Transport în Comun Constanța (RATC), and consists of 23 year-round

	bus lines, and one summer sightseeing double decker open top bus line to tourists. There are also plenty of private minibuses (similar to a share taxi) which run along longer and more intricate lines.
Railway line	The opening, in 1895, of the railway to Bucharest, which crosses the Danube River at the bridge at Cernavodă, brought Constanța County considerable transit trade in grain and petroleum, which are largely exported; coal and coke head the list of imports, followed by machinery, iron goods, and cotton and woollen fabrics.
Motorway	The A2 motorway provides a rapid road link between Constanța and Bucharest, while the A4 motorway acts as the city's outer traffic ring, diverting heavy traffic to and from the Port of Constanța and to Mangalia.
The Port of Constanța	The Port of Constanța includes the North Port and the South Port, and is the fourth largest in Europe. It is protected by breakwaters, with a lighthouse at the entrance. The port is sheltered from the northerly winds, but southerly winds can prove highly dangerous at times. The Black Sea squadron of the Romanian fleet is stationed here. A large canal (the Danube-Black Sea Canal) connects the Danube River to the Black Sea at Constanța. Constanta Port, the biggest on the Black Sea, is one of the main economic players in the region and together with the hospitality industry and the tertiary sector shapes Constanta's economic environment.
Mamaia Resort	Mamaia resort (one of Constanta's neighbourhoods) is the most vibrant Romanian resort on the Black Sea attracting more than 883.900 tourists each summer and for the past 10 years these numbers are continuously growing by 10-15 % per annum.
Airport	The city is served by Mihail Kogălniceanu International Airport ~ 15 km from Constanța city.

Galați County Transportation Infrastructure	
Bus line	Public transport in Galați is provided by a combination of trams, trolleybuses, autobuses (all of which are operated by TRANSURB, an agency of the municipality).
Railway line	Galați County railway station has straight train services to cities such as Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca, Brașov and Iași all year and in the summer to Constanța.
Ports	<p>Galați, located on the left bank of the Danube, 80 Km away from the Danube Delta, has 4 ports, one for passenger transport and three for cargo transport. Galați is Romania's second important port, having the possibility to connect to the Black Sea; it is located on the maritime stretch. Port of Galați is the biggest Romanian river-sea port, located on the left bank of the Danube river, between Km 157+600 and Mm 78+1300. It has 4 anchorage areas, near the right bank of the Danube river.</p> <p>Port of Galați consist of 4 terminals, as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mineral Terminal specialized in loading and discharge of bulk cargos and also steel rolled products. 2. Commercial Terminal 3. Docks Terminal 4. New Basin Terminal.

Tulcea County Transportation Infrastructure
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Road	Access roads in Tulcea by car Brăila - 92 km Bucharest - 283 km (via Hârșova - DN2) Constanța - 126 km Galați - 113 km (via Brăila) Vaslui - 290 km (via Galați)
Bus line	The city of Tulcea has a bus network, operated by S.C. Public Transport S.A .. The main bus line is line 1, which links A. Saligny High School to Neptune Neighborhood, but there are several bus lines that cover almost the whole city. The succession intervals are about 20 minutes, but the central area, the most requested, is crossed by several routes (1, 1b, 2, 3, 4, 4b), their circulation graphs making, on this portion of route to run a bus every 6 to 7 minutes. Also, the local transport operator also carries out transport to Babadag, Nalbant, Iazurile, Nufăru, Visterna and Zebil, but also to Tulcea Airport.
Railway line	Tulcea City Railway Station There are two stations in Tulcea: Tulcea Cargo and Tulcea City. The latter is the most important and is the end of line 804, which connects Tulcea to Medgidia (144 km). Every day, two pairs of personal trains leave for Constanța and a pair of accelerated trains for Bucharest, the latter being served by Siemens Desiro (Blue Arrow) cars.
Danube Delta	Access by boat in Danube Delta Tulcea - Sf. Gheorghe Tulcea – Sulina Tulcea – Chilia Tulcea - Periprava
The Port of Tulcea	The Port of Tulcea is one of the largest Romanian river ports. Located in the city of Tulcea on the Danube river, the port is an important source of revenue for the city because many large international companies have established there. The Isaccea town is also a port on the Danube, having two mooring places for ships. It is mostly used for loading cereals and stone onto cargo ship. Isaccea is the entry point in Romania of the Isaccea-Negru Vodă gas pipeline (built between 2000-2002 to replace a smaller pipeline built in the 1980s) linking Ukraine and Bulgaria, bringing natural gas from Russia to Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey. The town is also the entry point of the 400 kV Isaccea-Vulcănești electrical transmission line, through which Romania imports electricity from the Russian-owned Cuciurgan powerplant in the Transnistria region of Moldova.
Airport	Close to Tulcea (in Mihail Kogălniceanu commune, Tulcea-Constanța road, at kilometer 15) is the Danube Delta airport.

Vrancea County Transportation Infrastructure	
Road	Vrancea county is crossed by the European road E85 (the national road DN2 that connects the road with Bacău, Roman and Suceava (towards the north) and with Buzău, Bucharest and Giurgiu (towards the south).
Railway line	the county is crossed by the railway line CFR 500 (Bucharest-Suceava).

Other facilities and services (shops, etc.)

County Center for Preservation and Promotion of Traditional Culture

County Center for Preservation and Promotion of Traditional Culture is a public cultural institution under the authority of Brăila County Council, which initiates and carries out

cultural projects and programs in the field of traditional culture of lifelong learning, consistently pursuing:

- the protection and treasuring representative values of popular contemporary creations, constituting the base of data and values;
- the elaboration programs for the recovery of traditions, in order to stimulate creativity in all genres of performing unprofessional arts;
- the initiation of supporting and affirmation projects for the creators and performers of popular and authentic tradition, protecting against distortions and falsifications;
- the promotion of multiculturalism and protection of minority cultures;
- the elaboration of attractive and useful projects of continuing education;
- the development of cultural knowledge activities for youth and promoting projects to meet these needs;
- the revitalization and promotion of traditional crafts and trades and support those who are practicing them (artisans and craftsmen etc.);
- the stimulation of the perpetuation and value of cultural traditions and customs;

A well-known saying goes like this: “Who does not know his past cannot build his future” – an additional argument to justify, if needed, the necessity of returning to tradition²⁷⁴.



²⁷⁴ <http://centruldecreatieBraila.ro/despre-noi/>

Online source: <https://www.facebook.com/Centrul.de.Creatie.Braila/photos>

ARTT - The Traditional Weaving Revitalization Workshop

Since 2006, ARTT - The Traditional Weaving Revitalization Workshop of the Brăila Creation Center is one of the few places where the traditions, customs and duties of women from the ethnographic-folkloric area of Brăila are revived, promoted and preserved. They work on horizontal, archaic looms (a device used to weave cloth and tapestry), creating true ornamental jewelry. The products of the workshop are admired at all the trade fairs or those dedicated to domestic and international tourism, where every time the fabrics created with imagination, soul and love are always sought and appreciated. The growing interest of the contemporary world for the work done by hand and especially the development of domestic and international tourism are well-founded motivations for the further development of popular art meant to ensure the preservation of the traditional specificity and the character of authenticity²⁷⁵.



Online source: <https://www.facebook.com/arttBraila/photos>

Souvenir from Dobrogea

²⁷⁵ <http://centruldecreatieBraila.ro/artt-atelier-de-revitalizare-a-tesaturilor-traditionale/>

Traditional welcoming Dobrogea household, good host for crafts and art, for non-formal education and movement, for relaxation and rest and support of a healthy lifestyle²⁷⁶.



²⁷⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/SuvenirdinDobrogea>



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Online source: <https://www.facebook.com/SuvenirdinDobrogea/photos>

Contemporary folk art gallery/shop store

Apart from the exceptional patrimony of vernacular architecture exhibited on the open-air expo, the „Dimitrie Gusti” National Village Museum from Bucharest is on a quest to continually support folk creation, be it anonymous in nature, or the works of master craftsmen skilled in traditional techniques, to advocate an artistic genre most cherished by specialists and all people alike, to protect the objects of yesteryear, as still asserting themselves today. The contemporary popular arts gallery hosts a permanent sale expo featuring objects crafted by contemporary folk masters, sculptors, painters and artistic societies centered on popular arts and crafts. The objects exhibited illustrate the rich heritage of folk creations – ceramics, textiles, weavings, wood, painted eggs, wood and glass paintings, popular rugs and carpets, toys, furniture, masks, popular adornments, costume pieces, sheepskin waistcoats, leather objects etc. The visitors

will discover the famous red and black ceramics, rough or enameled, representative of (still) active pottery centers²⁷⁷.



Online source: <http://muzeul-satului.ro/en/magazin/>

Textile art is represented with a rich variety of fabric pieces to fit the wants and needs of our public. Pieces ranging from napkins, towels, table cloths, traditional wear like chemises and blouses, vests, fabric belts, aprons etc., made from cotton, flax, hemp or wool. Noteworthy fabrics to peruse are Avrig cotton scarves, mini Bucovina scarves, Dobrogea region borangic scarves, cotton chemises and Breaza blouses.



We feature wooden items, objects such as – cupels, forks, curd cheese patterns, stampers, spoons, musical instruments, coffers, furniture pieces – handmade by talented folk craftsmen and painters.

²⁷⁷ <http://muzeul-satului.ro/en/magazin/>



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Online source: <http://muzeul-satului.ro/en/magazin/>

Current channels of information and marketing

The tourism potential of the Southeastern Region

The Ministry of Culture and National Identity is responsible for the support and encouragement of cultural life and cultural institutions throughout the country. In the early years of the communist period, Romania's cultural institutions were generously supported by the government as it sought to gain prestige and to maintain control of the arts. For example, the Museum of Natural History and Archaeology in Constanța has an important collection of Greek and Roman artifacts from the ancient city of Tomis (7th century BCE). In addition to subsidizing cultural institutions, the Romanian government awards scholarships and other grants to artists, composers, and writers²⁷⁸. Also, the National Museum of Romanian History, with a surface of over 8,000 square meters, the museum has approx. 60 valuable exhibition rooms. The permanent displays include a plaster cast of the entirety of Trajan's Column, the Romanian Crown Jewels, and the Pietroasele treasure. As of 2012, the museum is undergoing extensive restoration work and it is only partially open; a late medieval archaeological site was discovered under the building²⁷⁹.



²⁷⁸ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Romania/Cultural-institutions>

²⁷⁹ (in Romanian) <http://www.mnir.ro/index.php/muzeul-national-de-istorie-a-romaniei/>

The Ministry of Culture and National Identity, Online source:

<https://www.agerpres.ro/cultura/2020/02/14/ministerul-culturii-anunta-lansarea-sesiunii-2020-a-programului-tezaure-umane-vii--449136>



The National Museum of Romanian History, Online source:

<https://bucurestiulmeudrag.ro/fotografii/575f06a3-cc90-4d51-99c8-5afd592b13d5>

The tourism potential of the Southeastern Region is related to the cultural heritage, which includes historical vestiges, religious and cultural buildings, monuments and museums. The religious objectives include a significant number of monasteries, located in all counties. Established for the most part in the past centuries, some of the monasteries in the South-East Region are often very valuable historically and / or artistically, some also offering accommodation facilities. Numerous historical vestiges, religious buildings, museums, monuments and tourist attractions attract tourists every year:

- The Pietroasele Treasure in Buzău;
- Dacian settlement - Monteoru Culture (in the "Cetățuia" point), Dumbrăveni Commune, Căndesti village, Vrancea county;
- The Histria Fortress (Constanța), the oldest Greek settlement on the territory of Romania, founded in 657 BC by Greek colonists, who came from Asia Minor. Now, it is called the "Romanian Pompeii";

- Tomis Fortress in Constanța (6th century BC), which preserves valuable vestiges from the ancient port city; Constanța Aquarium, the first section of the Natural Science Museum Complex, located on the seafront on the Casino's cliff, in its immediate vicinity, is also the first public aquarium in Romania and was inaugurated on May 1, 1958. It is the largest institution of this kind in the country, although later other museums of natural sciences have set up sections with the same profile;
- The Dolphinarium in Constanța, which started its activity on June 1, 1972, constituting the first museum-type of its kind in the country and the first in southeastern Europe at that time. In the amphitheater with swimming pool and in the covered basin, demonstrations with dolphins and sea lions are organized;
- The Danube cliffs in the municipalities of Brăila and Galați is a promenade place where the modern constructions blend harmoniously with the architecture of the beginning of the 20th century (Brăila river station), the river landscape being completed by a rich collection of art monuments (sculptures);
- The Botanical Garden in the municipality of Galați is part of the Museum Complex of the Natural Sciences of Galați, where 260,846 specimens of trees, shrubs and flowers can be admired, of 1,542 species, some very rare, which are on the way to extinction²⁸⁰.

Concerts, national and international festivals, competitions and other traditional events that take place in the South-East Development Region are another tourist attraction.

The Black Sea coast - balneoclimatic tourism & leisure tourism

The tourist landscape of the Black Sea coast is rarely found along the coast of the European continent, being of a specific uniqueness. The Black Sea coast is also famous for practicing balneoclimatic tourism. The complex consisting of water, sand, air and sun has therapeutic effects, doing miracles for people who are looking for a beneficial place for health. The air is well ionized with marine aerosols which, together with the influence of the waves, generate special thalassotherapy treatments; moreover, some resorts such as Eforie Nord, Mangalia, Costinesti, Neptun, Techirghiol are both recreational and balneoclimatic resorts. The numerous services offered on the coast (children's clubs, indoor and outdoor pools, children's pools equipped with

²⁸⁰ (in Romanian) http://www.adrse.ro/Regiunea/Turism_Patrimoniu.aspx

slides, playgrounds, green spaces set up for outdoor sports activities, facilities for SPA services and fitness rooms, etc.) have led to the development of leisure tourism. With a low salinity compared to other continental seas (only 17%), tourists can practice underwater and nautical sports²⁸¹.

The towns of Năvodari, Mamaia, and Eforie were erected after World War II, and the older settlements of Mangalia and Techirghiol have undergone extensive redevelopment. Lakes—among which Lakes Taşaul, Siutghiol, Agigea, Techirghiol, and Mangalia are the most significant—further enhance the attractions of the region. Several of them contain deposits of mud and sulfurous hot springs believed to have therapeutic properties.

Danube Delta - great scientific value and high tourist potential

The Danube Delta, the second largest delta in Europe (after that of the Volga River), is a special attraction of great scientific value and high tourist potential, especially after its inclusion in 1990, together with other adjacent natural areas, in the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve. The natural and cultural values of the Danube Delta are valuable resources by practicing the following types of tourism:

- Tourism for rest and recreation (practiced through the services of tour operators);
- Knowledge tourism (itinerant), practiced either individually or through organized excursions exploring the variety of the wild landscape, combining rides with manually propelled boats on picturesque canals with hiking along canals or on river and marine ridges, etc;
- Specialized - scientific tourism (for specialists, researchers, students);
- Agrotourism (tourists are hosted and accompanied by locals to visit the Danube Delta);
- Tourism for water sports (Crişan locality);
- Tourism for practicing sport fishing highly appreciated by visitors of all ages, in any season, for any species of fish, and sport hunting.
- Specific for the Danube Delta is niche tourism (eg bird watching, photo-safari). In the Danube Delta there are rare species that are missing from other areas of the

²⁸¹ (in Romanian) http://www.adrse.ro/Regiunea/Turism_Patrimoniu.aspx

continent: 30 types of ecosystems and 5,429 species - of which 1,839 species of flora and 3,590 species of fauna, considering that in the Danube Delta 331 species of water birds live which include most of the European population of common pelican (*Pelecanus onocrotalus*) and crested pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*), 60% of the world population of small cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pygmaeus*) as well as 50% of the world population of red-tailed goose (*Branta ruficollis*) (during winter)²⁸².

The Danube Delta has become increasingly popular, because of the growing worldwide interest in ecology and conservation. Special features of interest to tourists include the lakes and underground cave systems and the fine churches and monasteries, with frescoes dating from the 14th to the 16th century, that are found in Southeastern region. More generally, the folk costumes and the ancient folklore of Romanians, notably in the Southeastern region, provide a reminder of the country's long traditions²⁸³.

National Tourist Information Centres

The National Centre for Information and Tourism Promotion Nehoiu was opened in December 2015. The overall objective of the national centre is to promote Romanian tourism potential, especially the tourism potential anthropogenic city Nehoiu (heritage ecumenical, cultural, historical, traditional and recreational), both domestically and abroad, in order to increase the number of tourists²⁸⁴. The centre aims at building a specific information center and tourism promotion in the city of Nehoiu, creating a website to promote tourism and human resources in the city and neighboring towns Nehoiu, more visible landmarks in the city of Nehoiu. By making complex travel, original, attractive, competitive and creating an attractive image of the city Nehoiu Romanian tourism market by promoting sustainable tourism based on a variety of forms of tourism²⁸⁵.

²⁸² (in Romanian) http://www.adrse.ro/Regiunea/Turism_Patrimoniu.aspx

²⁸³ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Romania/Trade#ref276015>

²⁸⁴ <https://www.carpathian-gardens.com/cnipt-nehoiu.html>

²⁸⁵ <http://www.cniptnehoiu.ro/index-4.htm#>



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Online source: <https://www.carpathian-gardens.com/cnipt-nehoiu.html>

National Centre for Tourism Information and Promotion Cernavodă

Cernavoda town is situated in the Plateau of the Lower Dobruja, at Danube's confluence with the Danube- Black Sea Channel, respectively with the Carasu, Tibrin and Silistea valleys. The defining element of the city and of its administrative territory is the Danube- Black Sea Channel, as an axis of urban structuring of the town, dividing it in two different regions²⁸⁶.



Online source: <https://visitorcenter.ro/cernavoda-tourist-info>

²⁸⁶ <https://www.cernavoda-turistica.ro/en/>



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National Centre for Tourism Information and Promotion Murfatlar

The main characteristic from the point of view of the settlement and which offers a great advantage to the city of Murfatlar is the fact that it is on the main road, rail, naval and air traffic arteries, which connects the whole country with Europe, the seaside resorts and the port Constanța. The Danube-Black Sea Canal crosses the locality, thus the city becoming a sea and river port. The geographical position in which it is located, what is called today, the city of Murfatlar, gave it special importance, because it was on the isthmus between Cernavodă and Constanța and due to the construction of the first railway from Dobrogea in 1860 meant to facilitate trade and exchanges, it developed from a simple stop where the world stopped to feed the horses, feed the animals and rest, to a small permanent settlement. Along with the native population, the mocans who came in transhumance, especially from Transylvania, and settled here, a Turkish garrison also appeared in 1877, and in the following years numerous Tatars from Crimea settled. The first name under which the town was known was that of Murfatlar in 1855. The name Murfatlar comes from the Tatar word "Murvet" (generous man)²⁸⁷.



²⁸⁷ (in Romanian) <http://cniptmurfatlar.ro/descopera-murfatlarul/>

Online source: <https://www.ziuaConstanta.ro/stiri/ziua-in-judet/lucrarile-la-centrul-national-de-informare-turistica-in-toi-orasul-murfatlar-promovat-intens-pentru-comorile-turistice-573688.html>

National Centre for Tourism Information and Promotion South Eforie Sud

South Eforie has potential natural tourist complex within which the necessary resources spas. The beach is open down gentle slope into the sea, favoring large bathrooms and "walking on water". A thick layer of sand provides optimum conditions for sunbathing - sunbathing and sand - arinoterapie. The sea water with a salinity reduced 17%, with the water-air heat contrast with the action of waves and marine aerosol floating in the air, generating a special form of course - wave therapy - used in the treatment of certain disorders. Along with these factors, there are other natural tourist attractions that enhance the seaside potential, namely²⁸⁸:

- Techirghiol mud
- original fish fauna - the existence of sturgeon and dolphins, sharks and other species lack of concern;
- recreational lakes, natural or artificial, for water sports;
- forests, parks and nature reserves, which help maintain a microclimate tonic for the body.



²⁸⁸ <https://www.info-eforiesud.ro/despre-eforie/informatii-generale/>



Online source: <https://www.info-eforiesud.ro/despre-eforie/informatii-generale/>

National Centre for Tourism Information and Promotion Eforie Nord

Eforie Nord is the second largest resort of Romanian seaside. Located about 15 km from Constanța, on the road linking the city of Mangalia, Eforie Nord is a seaside resort famous both at home and abroad. Joining recreational tourism with the treatment makes the resort to be open to tourists all year round. The treatment facilities of the resort annually attract a large number of Romanian and foreign tourists, offering them modern treatments and cures using natural factors in the area. Being a resort continuously expanding Eforie Nord appearance changes from year to year. Besides hotels and terraces renowned resort arise from season to season and guest houses, terraces and restaurants prepared to meet the needs of tourists. Out of hours spent on the beach, in the sun, or waves, Eforie Nord offers other opportunities for fun and relaxation. The resort can find sports courts and miniature golf, playgrounds for children, recreation, pool halls, summer theater, swimming pools, etc. Water sports enthusiasts can rent sailboats and other boats or take diving lessons in the Europa Yacht Club, the first private pleasure port in Romania. It is a few minutes from the resort on the beach next to the Hotel Europe. The resort complex there are several shops and bazaars, both in the center and in the cliff. From here you can buy products and beach accessories (towels, bathing suits, buoys, mattresses, umbrellas, lotions etc.), souvenirs and clothing and footwear²⁸⁹.

²⁸⁹ <https://www.info-eforienord.ro/despre-eforie/informatii-generale/>



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Online source: <https://www.info-eforienord.ro/despre-eforie/informatii-generale/>

National Centre for Tourism Information and Promotion Tulcea

The National Centre for Tourist Information and Promotion (CNIPT), which promotes tourism in the county, will guide you in your discovery of Tulcea, but also of the Danube Delta, the mountains Măcin, etc. Here you will find all the information you need to organize your stay: accommodation offers, transport, presentation of tourist objectives, up-to-date maps, events, contacts and packages from local operators, excursions and guided tours²⁹⁰.

²⁹⁰ <https://www.cnipptulcea.ro/>



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Online source: <https://www.cnipttulcea.ro/>

The National Centre of Tourist Information and Promotion Măcin

Specific objectives of this center are measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound:

- Promotion of Romanian tourism potential by improving the image of the country, aiming to promote the region abroad Macin and increase its attractiveness for tourism
- Improving the flow of tourists to the city Macin
- Developing local tourism print a better information to potential visitors.

Măcin is located at the western extremity of Tulcea County, in the northwest of the territory between the Danube and the Black Sea, 12 km from the confluence of the Danube and the Danube Old Nine. Tulcea, administrative and political center of the county of Tulcea is 80 km away from the city center, 25 km from the city of Galați. The city is approaching Brăila, Măcin 14 km away. The city is situated on a plateau terrace that output overland or by river west to Smârdan and Brăila, exit road in the east to Greece, Cerna, Tulcea and Constanța, exit River south to Carcaliu Turcoaia, Peceneaga and north to Jijila, Isaccea, Tulcea on the road. Macin has many natural and anthropogenic resources, so this centre is an important step towards the

harmonization of development disparities between regions and economic interest, thus increasing networking of commercial, economic and social relations²⁹¹.



Online source: <https://turism-macin.ro/ro/>

Legal and policy context

Based on the provisions of the European Commission, starting with 2018, the Agency for Regional Development of the South-East Development Region (South-East ADR), participates in the consultation process, at national and regional level, for the preparation of the 2021-2027 programming period, process coordinated by the Ministry of European Funds (MFE) and the Ministry of Public Works, Development and Administration (MLPDA).

In order to ensure a coherent and unitary coordination of the process of elaboration of programming documents for the period 2021-2027, MFE has developed a set of methodological guidelines whose main purpose is to establish guidelines for the programming process of European non-reimbursable funds.

At regional level, the elaboration of the South-East Regional Development Plan 2021-2027 (PDR) is carried out respecting the methodology proposed by MLPDA as well as

²⁹¹ <https://turism-macin.ro/en/macin/cnipt/>

the “Framework Regulation for the organization and functioning of the Regional Committees for the elaboration of Regional Development Plans”.

In 2020, the Agency for Regional Development of the South-East Development Region continues the consultation process within the inter-institutional partnership created at regional level, by organizing working meetings at county and regional level, in order to complete the planning process, elaboration and substantiating the programming documents for the next programming period

In the next period, ADR South-East will organize in the counties of the region, working meetings of the Regional Thematic Groups, in order to elaborate the South-East Regional Development Plan (PDR), the South-East Regional Operational Program 2021-2027 and the preparation of the future period of programming 2021-2027, according to the Policy Objectives 2021-2027:

OP 1 - A smarter Europe

OP 2 - A greener Europe

OP 3 - A more connected Europe

OP 4 - A more social Europe

OP 5 - A Europe closer to its citizens

For the programming period 2021-2027, the Agency for Regional Development of the South-East Development Region will continue the process of programming the activities specific to regional development in accordance with the national strategic documents and the strategic documents of the European Union.

In the next long-term EU budget for 2021-2027, the Commission proposes to modernize cohesion policy, the EU's main investment policy and one of the most tangible expressions of solidarity. The aim is to stimulate economic and social convergence, while at the same time supporting regions to make full use of globalization and equipping them with appropriate tools for strong and sustainable growth. All regions remain eligible for funding through cohesion policy, based on three categories: less developed, transition and more developed regions. In the period 2021-2027, five policy objectives will stimulate EU investment.

Investment in regional development will focus in particular on Objectives 1 and 2. 65% to 85% of ERDF and Cohesion Fund resources will be allocated to these priorities, depending on the relative prosperity of the Member States.

1. A smarter Europe through innovation, digitalisation, economic transformation and support for small and medium-sized enterprises

2. A greener, carbon-free Europe, the implementation of the Paris Agreement and investments in the energy transition, renewable energy and the fight against climate change
3. A connected Europe with strategic transport and digital networks
4. A more social Europe, to achieve the European pillar of social rights and to support the quality of jobs, education, skills, social inclusion and equal access to the health system
5. A Europe closer to its citizens, by supporting locally led development strategies and sustainable urban development in the EU.

Cohesion policy continues to invest in all regions, based on 3 categories (less developed, in transition, more developed). The method of allocating funds is still largely based on GDP per capita. New criteria are introduced (youth unemployment, low level of education, climate change and the reception and integration of migrants), in order to better reflect the reality on the ground. The outermost regions will continue to receive special support from the EU. Cohesion policy continues to support locally led development strategies and to empower local authorities to manage their funds. The urban dimension of cohesion policy is also growing, with the allocation of 6% of the ERDF to sustainable urban development and a new networking and capacity-building program dedicated to urban authorities, under the name European Urban Initiative. (According to the official website of the European Commission)²⁹².

²⁹² http://www.adrse.ro/Planificare/PlanificareRegionala_2021-2027.aspx

3. ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT AND POTENTIAL MARKETS

3.1. Assessing current markets and methodology

3.1.1. Research Results: Survey area in Romania

The coverage of the survey consists of the Romanian residents aged at least 15 years, within in a representative sample of households. The data are registered by face to face interviews, the main role being played by surveyors who visit the dwellings included in the survey sample. There, they obtain information on the number of tourists, trips and overnight stays of the residents in Romania as to the holidays (rest, recreation, visits to friends and relatives) as well as to business and professional reasons.

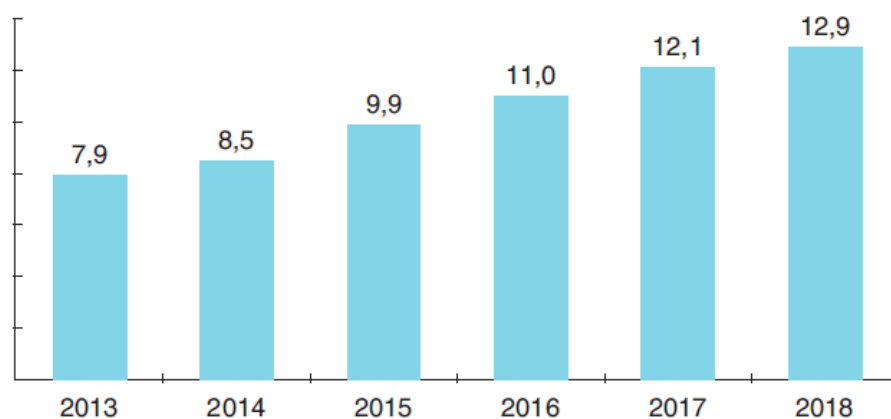
The survey sample includes about 8900 dwellings/quarter, its volume being calculated for 95% probability of results guarantee and $\pm 5\%$ representativeness error, providing the representativeness at national level for key variables of the survey (persons aged 15 years and over, by sex and residence area - urban, rural).

For samples extraction during 2017-2018, data on population were used, not influenced by external migration.

The trips having as purpose a remunerated activity as well as the trips without overnight stay in the visited place are excluded.

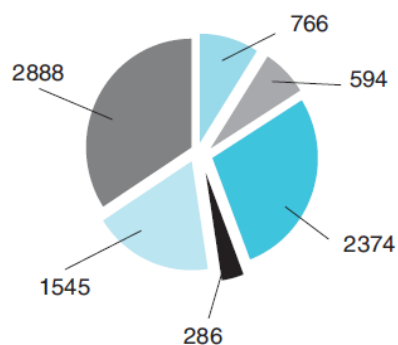
Number of tourists accommodated in tourist accommodation establishments

milioane turiști / million tourists



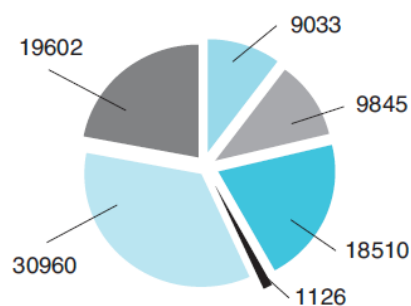
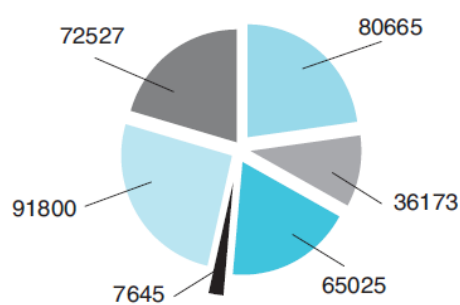
Establishments of touristic reception with functions of touristic accommodation and touristic accommodation capacity, by touristic destinations, in 2018

Establishments of touristic reception with functions of touristic accommodation (number)



Capacitatea de cazare existentă (locuri)
Existing accommodation capacity (places)

Capacitatea de cazare în funcțiune (mii locuri - zile)
Accommodation capacity in operation (thou places - days)



Litoral¹⁾
Seaside¹⁾

Stațiuni balneare
Spas

Stațiuni montane
Mountain resorts

Delta Dunării²⁾
Danube Delta²⁾

Orașe reședință de județ³⁾
County residence towns³⁾

Alte localități
Other localities



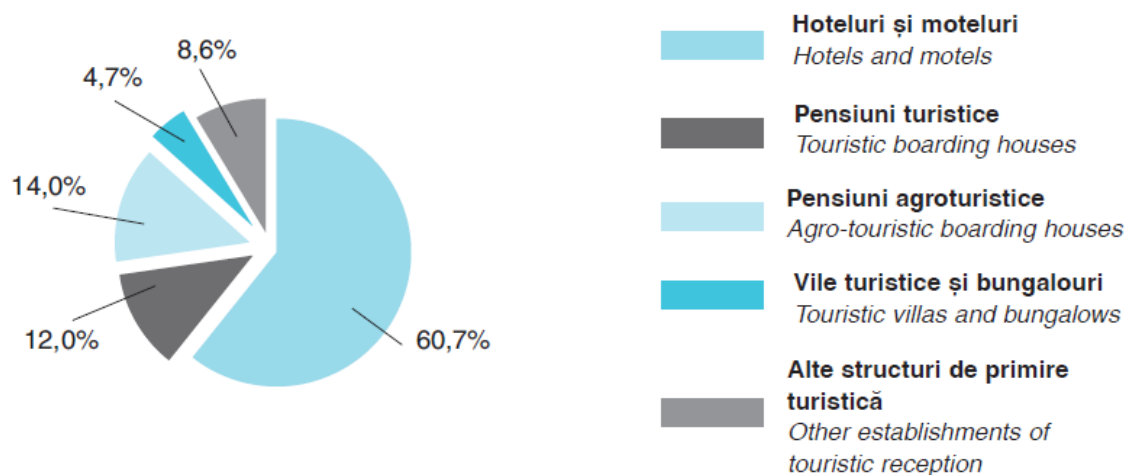
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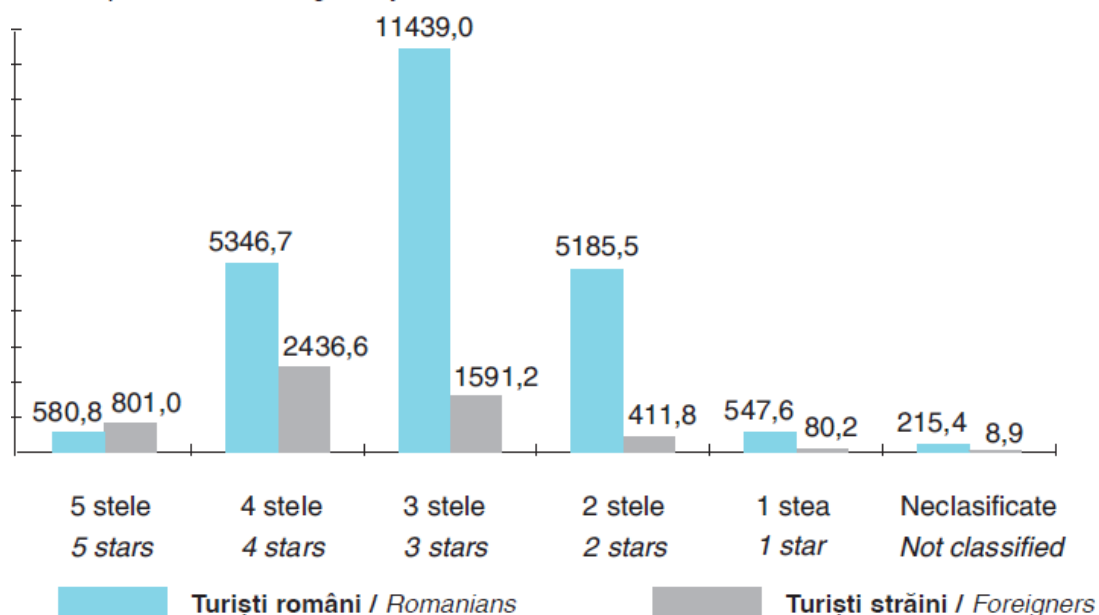


Structure of touristic accommodation capacity in operation, in 2018

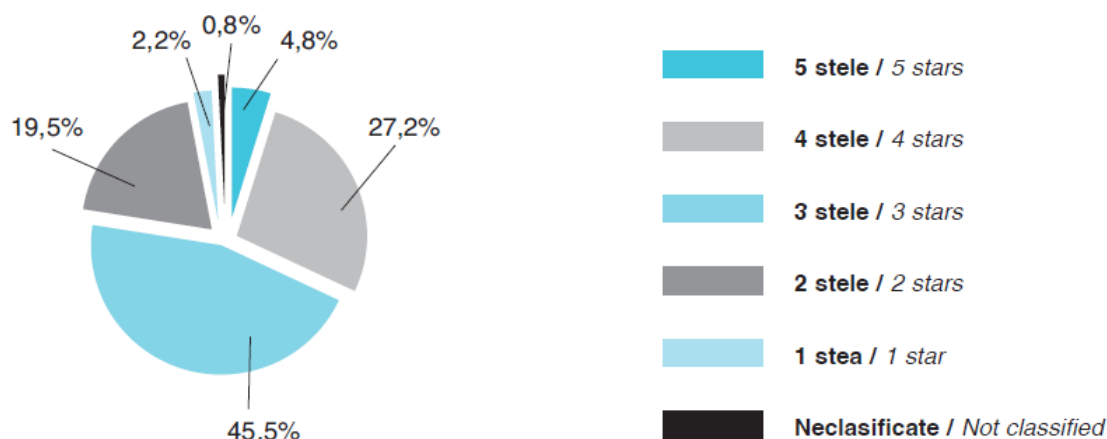


Overnight stays in the establishments of touristic reception, by category of comfort, in 2018

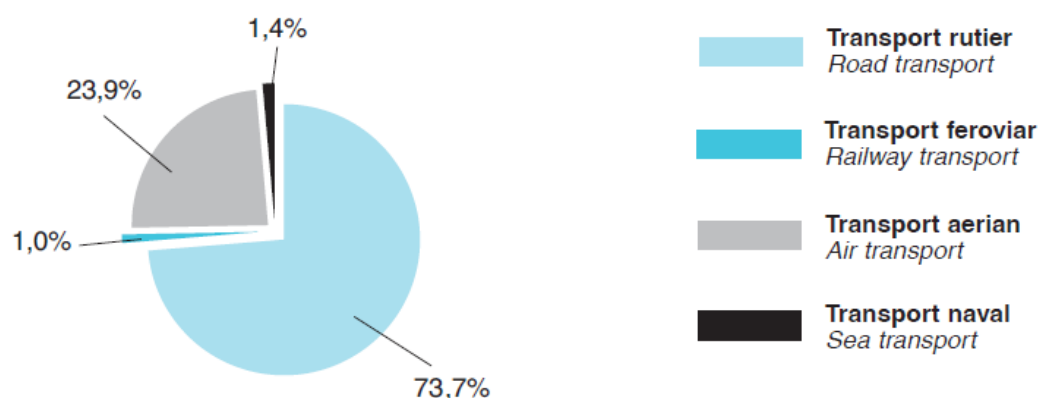
mii înnopțări / thou overnight stays



Overnight stays, by category of comfort, in 2018



Structure of foreign visitors arrivals in Romania, by means of transport used ¹⁾, in 2018



Establishments of touristic reception with functions of touristic accommodation

						număr unități / units number
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	
6009	6130	6821	6946	7905	8453	Total
1660	1685	1766	1769	1819	1867	Hotels and motels
185	204	248	266	300	319	Hostels
3	5	3	3	3	4	Touristic inns
152	162	196	194	225	231	Touristic chalets
93	105	127	120	127	131	Campings and houselet - type units
870	866	923	923	1093	1228	Touristic villas and bungalows
62	62	63	58	57	59	School and pre-school camps
1335	1323	1527	1530	1666	1709	Touristic boarding houses
1598	1665	1918	2028	2556	2821	Agro-touristic boarding houses
35	35	33	38	40	47	Touristic halting places
6	9	7	7	9	10	Holiday villages
10	9	10	10	10	27	Ships accommodation spaces

Touristic accommodation capacity and activity, by touristic destination

2018							
Destinații turistice / Touristic destinations							
Total	Litoral ¹⁾ Seaside ¹⁾	Balnear Spas	Montan Mountain resorts	Delta Dunării ²⁾ Danube Delta ²⁾	Orașe reședință de județ ³⁾ County residence towns ³⁾	Alte localități Other localities	M.U.
8453	766	594	2374	286	1545	2888	Establishments of touristic reception with functions of touristic accommodation ⁴⁾
1636	295	133	213	20	683	292	number of which: hotels
353835	80665	36173	65025	7645	91800	72527	Existing capacity ⁴⁾
197234	63566	24913	18718	1928	68664	19445	places of which: hotels
89076	9033	9845	18510	1126	30960	19602	Capacity in operation
51346	7622	7340	6262	563	23653	5906	places-days of which:
12905	1111	1019	2217	165	6179	2214	Arrivals
2797	35	40	219	25	2148	330	of which: foreigners
28645	4553	4406	4545	372	10712	4057	Overnight stays
5330	120	140	436	61	3980	593	of which: foreigners
32,2	50,4	44,8	24,6	33,0	34,6	20,7	Indices of net using of capacity in operation
2,2	4,1	4,3	2,1	2,2	1,7	1,8	Average duration of stay

Tourism organized by travel agencies, by touristic action and touristic area

Number of tourists taking part in tourist actions organized by travel agencies

Incoming activity ¹⁾		Internal touristic activity		Outgoing activity ²⁾		
2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	
105310	111686	670428	959030	746928	804610	Tour operator agencies
						- Number of tourists - total
8766	10523	93791	187187	152791	349445	Sale activity agencies
						- Number of tourists - total

Number of Romanian tourists taking part in internal tourist actions, by tourism areas

Tour operator agencies		Sale activity agencies		
2017	2018	2017	2018	
670428	959030	93791	187187	Tourists - total
346005	611796	35278	47372	Seaside area
123	253	17	6	River cruises
172	554	35	-	Sea cruises
5090	5914	990	3418	Danube Delta
4982	19652	217	37221	Cultural tourism
28886	30022	166	141	Religious pilgrimage
80595	84570	11651	15135	Mountain area
30994	49991	10958	19082	Spa area
173581	156278	34479	64812	Other area

Number of travels and overnight stays, by main purpose of the travel

<i>Travels</i>		<i>Overnight stays</i>		
2017	2018	2017	2018	
19058365	19094492	73520974	73876673	Total
16897668	17309808	63695620	64465302	<i>of which:</i> <i>Holidays ¹⁾</i>
9378847	8826046	30747117	29342968	<i>of which:</i> <i>Visits to friends and relatives</i>
707055	484485	2972714	2591477	<i>Business and professional purpose</i>

Internal travels of residents for holidays and business, by touristic area, by travel duration and organizer

<i>Rural area, including lakes, rivers</i>		<i>Cruises</i>		<i>Mountain area</i>		<i>Other areas</i>		
2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	
4546691	4412085	17873	8895	3832933	4427278	54391	29081	Total
3392710	3237984	12323	8895	2455914	2797151	42542	20220	Travel duration
948208	980926	5550	-	1234988	1510414	9100	4242	<i>1 - 3 overnight stays</i>
149837	158284	-	-	100916	93570	1660	2496	<i>4 - 7 overnight stays</i>
34039	22930	-	-	23359	15383	1089	1490	<i>8 - 14 overnight stays</i>
21897	11961	-	-	17756	10760	-	633	<i>15 - 28 overnight stays</i>
								<i>29 overnight stays and over</i>
11628	10334	1088	-	153478	249978	6007	675	Travel organizer
107166	86819	675	-	73771	89568	3170	2259	<i>Travel agencies</i>
971	2140	-	-	5694	8540	1084	-	<i>Union</i>
4384543	4291445	15426	2553	3533085	4014088	37975	22976	<i>Pension offices, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection</i>
								<i>On own account</i>
								<i>Other means (professional, cultural, religious associations a.s.o.)</i>
42383	21347	684	6342	66905	65104	6155	3171	

The tourism potential of the Southeastern Region is related to the cultural heritage, which includes historical vestiges, religious and cultural buildings, monuments and museums. The religious objectives include a significant number of monasteries, located in all counties. Established for the most part in the past centuries, some of the monasteries in the South-East Region are often very valuable historically and / or artistically, some also offering accommodation facilities. Numerous historical vestiges, religious buildings, museums, monuments and tourist attractions attract tourists every year:

- The Pietroasele Treasure in Buzău;
- Dacian settlement - Monteoru Culture (in the "Cetățuia" point), Dumbrăveni Commune, Căndesti village, Vrancea county;
- The Histria Fortress (Constanța), the oldest Greek settlement on the territory of Romania, founded in 657 BC by Greek colonists, who came from Asia Minor. Now, it is called the "Romanian Pompeii";
- Tomis Fortress in Constanța (6th century BC), which preserves valuable vestiges from the ancient port city; Constanța Aquarium, the first section of the Natural Science Museum Complex, located on the seafront on the Casino's cliff, in its immediate vicinity, is also the first public aquarium in Romania and was inaugurated on May 1, 1958. It is the largest institution of this kind in the country, although later other museums of natural sciences have set up sections with the same profile;
- The Dolphinarium in Constanța, which started its activity on June 1, 1972, constituting the first museum-type of its kind in the country and the first in southeastern Europe at that time. In the amphitheater with swimming pool and in the covered basin, demonstrations with dolphins and sea lions are organized;
- The Danube cliffs in the municipalities of Brăila and Galați is a promenade place where the modern constructions blend harmoniously with the architecture of the beginning of the 20th century (Brăila river station), the river landscape being completed by a rich collection of art monuments (sculptures);
- The Botanical Garden in the municipality of Galați is part of the Museum Complex of the Natural Sciences of Galați, where 260,846 specimens of trees, shrubs and flowers can be admired, of 1,542 species, some very rare, which are on the way to extinction²⁹³.

Concerts, national and international festivals, competitions and other traditional events that take place in the South-East Development Region are another tourist attraction. The tourist landscape of the Black Sea coast is rarely found along the coast of the European continent, being of a specific uniqueness. The Black Sea coast is also famous for practicing balneoclimatic tourism. The complex consisting of water, sand, air and sun has therapeutic effects, doing miracles for people who are looking for a

²⁹³ (in Romanian) http://www.adrse.ro/Regiunea/Turism_Patrimoniu.aspx

beneficial place for health. The air is well ionized with marine aerosols which, together with the influence of the waves, generate special thalassotherapy treatments; moreover, some resorts such as Eforie Nord, Mangalia, Costinesti, Neptun, Techirghiol are both recreational and balneoclimatic resorts. The numerous services offered on the coast (children's clubs, indoor and outdoor pools, children's pools equipped with slides, playgrounds, green spaces set up for outdoor sports activities, facilities for SPA services and fitness rooms, etc.) have led to the development of leisure tourism. With a low salinity compared to other continental seas (only 17%), tourists can practice underwater and nautical sports²⁹⁴.

The towns of Năvodari, Mamaia, and Eforie were erected after World War II, and the older settlements of Mangalia and Techirghiol have undergone extensive redevelopment. Lakes—among which Lakes Taşaul, Siutghiol, Agigea, Techirghiol, and Mangalia are the most significant—further enhance the attractions of the region. Several of them contain deposits of mud and sulfurous hot springs believed to have therapeutic properties.

The Danube Delta, the second largest delta in Europe (after that of the Volga River), is a special attraction of great scientific value and high tourist potential, especially after its inclusion in 1990, together with other adjacent natural areas, in the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve. The natural and cultural values of the Danube Delta are valuable resources by practicing the following types of tourism:

- Tourism for rest and recreation (practiced through the services of tour operators);
- Knowledge tourism (itinerant), practiced either individually or through organized excursions exploring the variety of the wild landscape, combining rides with manually propelled boats on picturesque canals with hiking along canals or on river and marine ridges, etc;
- Specialized - scientific tourism (for specialists, researchers, students);
- Agrotourism (tourists are hosted and accompanied by locals to visit the Danube Delta);
- Tourism for water sports (Crişan locality);

²⁹⁴ (in Romanian) http://www.adrse.ro/Regiunea/Turism_Patrimoniu.aspx

- Tourism for practicing sport fishing highly appreciated by visitors of all ages, in any season, for any species of fish, and sport hunting.

- Specific for the Danube Delta is niche tourism (eg bird watching, photo-safari). In the Danube Delta there are rare species that are missing from other areas of the continent: 30 types of ecosystems and 5,429 species - of which 1,839 species of flora and 3,590 species of fauna, considering that in the Danube Delta 331 species of water birds live which include most of the European population of common pelican (*Pelecanus onocrotalus*) and crested pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*), 60% of the world population of small cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pygmaeus*) as well as 50% of the world population of red-tailed goose (*Branta ruficollis*) (during winter)²⁹⁵.

The Danube Delta has become increasingly popular, because of the growing worldwide interest in ecology and conservation. Special features of interest to tourists include the lakes and underground cave systems and the fine churches and monasteries, with frescoes dating from the 14th to the 16th century, that are found in Southeastern region. More generally, the folk costumes and the ancient folklore of Romanians, notably in the Southeastern region, provide a reminder of the country's long traditions²⁹⁶.

²⁹⁵ (in Romanian) http://www.adrse.ro/Regiunea/Turism_Patrimoniu.aspx

²⁹⁶ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Romania/Trade#ref276015>