

THE GROWTH AND TRANSFORMATION OF ROMANIAN RESORTS: A DATA-DRIVEN STUDY

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Abstract

At the level of Romania, in the year 2024 there are 226 resorts, categorized into national and local interest. Their numerical evolution follows a sinuous line, with a peak year in 1984 which numbered 148 resorts at national level, a period which coincided with the communist political system, decreasing after the year 2000 during democracy at 84 resorts in 2014 (Ilies et al, 2014) and reaching a total of 226 resorts in 2024. From the latter, they mushroomed after the year 2020 when over 80 new resorts were attested. This is accountable to the fact that many localities can easier attract EU funded investments once they get this status, and many local administrations capitalize this opportunity to upgrade or create new tourist-related infrastructure such as cycling tracks, entertainment facilities, cultural houses, public gardens, sports grounds, facades rehabilitation, enhancing life quality by cultural education, sustainable urban planning, roads improvement etc. The resorts prevailing spread is over the major relief shapes that Romania boasts, such as the Carpathian ranges, along the Black Sea coast and to a lesser degree the Danube Delta. The cultural and natural heritage of these resorts range from palaces, archaeological vestiges and sites, ethnographic museums (eggs and icon paintings) and festivals, handicraftsmanship, fortresses, memorial houses, old churches and monasteries, mineral waters of all types such as carbonated, bicarbonate, thermal, sulphuric, chlorine, sodium-enriched, hypo and hyper tonic, oligomineral, salty, petrol, sapropelic muds, paleontological fossil sites, pyramidal hillocks, biogeographical elements such as forests, protected species and areas, mountain areas, geological and speleological reserves, mineral springs, seaside coast, etc. By analysing the accommodation establishments with tourist function within resorts, it results that their number in 2023 is of 3,691 units in mountain resorts; 1,380 units in the seaside resorts; 935 units in spas and 493 units in the Danube Delta out of a total of 12,697 accommodation units at the level of Romania. In terms of arrivals, their highest number is recorded in 2023 at 2,689,496 arrivals in the mountain resorts; 1,394,917 arrivals on the seaside; 1,170,816 in spas and 136,974 arrivals in the Danube delta. The paper is meant as a comprehensive data analysis among variables related to the number of resorts, tourist arrivals, accommodation structures, European Union funded investments within the currently existing

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Tatar Corina, Florina, Stupariu Marius, Linc Ribana, Stasac Marcu, Bucur Liviu, Dehoorne Olivier, Nistor Stelian. 2025. The growth and transformation of Romanian resorts: a data-driven study. *UTMS Journal of Geographical* 1(1): 48-56

resorts of Romania so as to highlight their evolution and prevalence in time. Keywords: Tourist Resorts in Romania, EU-funded Investments, Sustainable Tourism Development, Cultural and Natural Heritage, Accommodation and Tourist Arrivals.

JEL classification: R11; L83; Z32; Q01; O18