



**TOURISM &
RURAL SPACE**

TARS 28th International Conference

CONFERENCE BOOKLET

**22-23
MAY 2026**

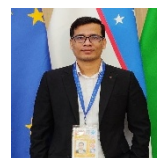
Vatra Dornei, Romania

**Romanian Academy
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development**

SPEAKERS



GÜLERKOL BAYRAM
Sinop University, Türkiye



MUHAMMAD SHAHPARAN
Silk Road International University
of Tourism and Cultural Heritage,
Uzbekistan



VIMAL CHANDRA VERMA
Siddharth University, India

ORGANIZERS



ROMANIAN ACADEMY – BRANCH OF IAȘI

**Gheorghe Zane Institute for Economic and Social
Research**

2 Codrescu Street, Iași 700481, Romania

GEORGIA TACU
DANIELA MATEI



MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

National Agency for Mountain Areas (ANZM)

23 Runc Street, Vatra Dornei 725700, Romania

DĂNUȚ UNGUREANU



ROMANIAN ACADEMY – "COSTIN C. KIRIȚESCU" INCE

Centre of Mountain Economy (CE-MONT)

49 Petreni Street, Vatra Dornei 725700, Romania

IOAN SURDU
DĂNUȚ UNGUREANU
TUDOR RĂZVAN ANICHITEI

AGENDA

Thursday, 21 May

Reception

4:00 PM – 9:00 PM

(Bucharest Time: GMT+3)

National Agency for Mountain Areas (ANZM)

Address: 23 Runc Street (opposite Vinătorul Guesthouse),
Vatra Dornei 723700

Contacts:

- Dănuț Ungureanu: +40 745 865 163 (phone/WhatsApp)
- Georgia Tacu: +40 759 669 081 (phone/WhatsApp)



AGENDA

Friday, 22 May

Breakfast

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM

Vînătorul Guesthouse

Address: 8A Runc Street, Vatra Dornei 725700



AGENDA

Friday, 22 May

Registration

9:00 AM – 9:30 AM

National Agency for Mountain Areas (ANZM)

Address: 23 Runc Street (opposite Vinătorul Guesthouse),
Vatra Dornei 723700

Contacts:

- Dănuț Ungureanu: +40 745 865 163 (phone/WhatsApp)
- Georgia Tacu: +40 759 669 081 (phone/WhatsApp)



AGENDA



Friday, 22 May

Welcome Messages

9:30 AM – 10:00 AM

Connect Online

Aula Magna (ANZM)

Addresses:

- Zoltán-József Mihály, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
- Cristina-Emanuela Dascălu, Parliament of Romania
- Daniela Matei, Gheorghe Zane Institute for Economic and Social Research
- Gheorghe Hîrlav, National Agency for Mountain Areas (ANZM)
- Ioan Surdu, Centre of Mountain Economy (CE-MONT)
- Dănuț Ungureanu, National Agency for Mountain Areas (ANZM) // Centre of Mountain Economy (CE-MONT)
- Marius Rîpan, Vatra Dornei City Hall
- Dănuț Candrea, Dorna Candrenilor Town Hall

Chairs: Emanuela Adina Nicula (Romania), Daniela Matei (Romania)

Keynote Addresses

10:00 AM – 11:30 PM

Connect Online

Aula Magna (ANZM)

Speakers:

- Gül Erkol Bayram (Türkiye)
- Mohammad Shahparan (Uzbekistan)
- Vimal Chandra Verma (India)

Chairs: Emanuela Adina Nicula (Romania), Daniela Matei (Romania)

AGENDA



Friday, 22 May

Sessions 1, 2

11:45 AM – 1:30 PM

National Agency for Mountain Areas (ANZM)

Webinar

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Connect Online

Online

Religious Festivals and Tourism: A Global Perspective

Language: English

Organizer: M. K. Amila Indika (Sri Lanka)

Coordinator & Chair: M. K. Amila Indika (Sri Lanka)

Special Guests:

- Alexandra Prodanović Stamenović (Serbia)
 - Eyong Ayuk Ako-Ebot (Cameroon)
 - Khairiah Ismail (Malaysia)
-

Lunch

2:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Vînătorul Guesthouse

Sessions 3, 4, 5

3:30 PM – 7:00 PM

National Agency for Mountain Areas (ANZM)

AGENDA



Friday, 22 May

Workshop

4:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Connect Online

National Agency for Mountain Areas (ANZM)

Rural vs. Gastronomic Tourism: Best Practices, Legislative Framework, Key Challenges, and Recommendations

Language: Romanian

Organizer: National Agency for Mountain Areas (ANZM)

Coordinator & Chair: Dănuț Ungureanu (Romania)

Special Guests:

- Gabriela Bârză (Romania)
- Maria Bidian (Romania)
- Paul Candrea (Romania)
- Maricica Cazimirciuc (Romania)
- Ema Chiriluş (Romania)
- Mihaela Cocîrţă (Romania)
- Adrian Crucianu (Romania)
- Ida Csont (Romania)
- Elena Drelciuc (Romania)
- Iulia Grigoraş (Romania)
- Dan Pavel (Romania)
- Irina Păcuraru (Romania)
- Adriana Tudor (Romania)
- Antineea Țugulea (Romania)
- Melinda Zsombori (Romania)

AGENDA

Friday, 22 May

Gala Dinner

7:30 PM – 10:00 PM

Vînătorul Guesthouse

Organizer: Dănuț Ungureanu (ANZM)

- Plai Bucovinean Folkloric Ensemble, Dorna Candrenilor
- Poetic Interlude: Authors' Reading
- Awards Ceremony



AGENDA

Saturday, 23 May

Breakfast

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM

Vînătorul Guesthouse

Field Trip

9:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Visiting tourist attractions:

- Baths Casino Museum Center (Vatra Dornei)
- Dorna Candrenilor balneoclimatic resort (Dorna Candrenilor)
- Poiana agritourism guesthouse (Poiana Negrii village, Dorna Candrenilor commune) – model of a short food supply chain
- Farm of Poiana agritourism guesthouse

Organizer & Coordinator: Dănuț Ungureanu (ANZM)

Lunch

2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Poiana Agritourism Guesthouse

Sponsors: Paul and Mariana Candrea, the owners



Addresses

Connect Online



ZOLTÁN-JÓZSEF MIHÁLY

Secretary of State, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural
Development, Romania



CRISTINA-EMANUELA DASCĂLU

Vice-Chair, Committee on Education, Chamber of
Deputies, Parliament of Romania



DANIELA MATEI

Senior Researcher, Gheorghe Zane Institute of
Economic and Social Research, Iași Branch of
Romanian Academy, Romania

Addresses



GHEORGHE HÎRLAV

General Director, National Agency for Mountain Areas (ANZM), Vatra Dornei, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Romania



IOAN SURDU

Director, Centre of Mountain Economy (CE-MONT), Vatra Dornei, "Costin C. Kirițescu" National Institute for Economic Research, Romanian Academy, Romania



DĂNUȚ UNGUREANU

Director, Centre of Training and Innovation for Development in the Carpathians (CEFIDEC), National Agency for Mountain Areas (ANZM), Vatra Dornei, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Romania

Addresses



MARIUS RÎPAN

Mayor of Vatra Dornei, Romania



DĂNUȚ CANDREA

Mayor of Dorna Candrenilor, Romania

Speakers

Connect Online



GÜL ERKOL BAYRAM

Professor & Vice-Dean, Faculty of
Tourism, Sinop University //
Director, International Relations
Practice and Research Center, Sinop
University, Sinop, Türkiye

**Reimagining Rural Tourism for
Sustainable Futures**



MOHAMMAD SHAHPARAN

Lecturer, Faculty of Tourism
Management, "Silk Road" International
University of Tourism and Cultural
Heritage, Samarkand, Uzbekistan

**Education for Tourism and
Hospitality: Threats, Trends and
Opportunities**

Speakers



VIMAL CHANDRA VERMA

Senior Assistant Professor, Faculty of
Commerce, Siddharth University,
Kapilvastu, Siddharthnagar, Uttar
Pradesh, India

**Gastronomic Tourism as a Catalyst
for Rural Development:
Opportunities, Sustainability, and
Cultural Preservation**

Related events



WEBINAR

Friday, 22 May

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Online

English

Connect Online

Religious Festivals and Tourism: A Global Perspective

Organizer:

- M. K. Amila Indika (Sri Lanka)

Coordinator & Chair:

- M. K. Amila Indika, Senior Lecturer, University College of Ratmalana, University of Vocational Technology, Ratmalana, Colombo, Western Province, Sri Lanka

Special Guests:

- Aleksandra Prodanović Stamenović, Professor, International Center of Professional Studies, Belgrade, Serbia
- Eyong Ayuk Ako-Ebot, PhD, University of Bertoua, Cameroon
- Khairiah Ismail, PhD, Taylor's University, Subang Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia

Related events



WORKSHOP

Friday, 22 May

4:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Runc Hall (ANZM)

Romanian

Connect Online

Rural vs. Gastronomic Tourism: Best Practices, Legislative Framework, Key Challenges, and Recommendations

Organizer:

- National Agency for Mountain Areas (ANZM), Vatra Dornei, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Romania

Coordinator & Chair:

- Dănuț Ungureanu, Director, Centre of Training and Innovation for Development in the Carpathians (CEFIDEC), National Agency for Mountain Areas (ANZM), Vatra Dornei, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Romania

Special Guests:

- Gabriela Bârză, Manager, Local Gastronomic Point, Gheorgheni, Dorna Arini, Suceava County, Romania
- Maria Bidian, Manager, Maria Bidian Local Gastronomic Point, Bistrița Bârgăului, Bistrița-Năsăud County, Romania

Rural vs. Gastronomic Tourism: Best Practices, Legislative Framework, Key Challenges, and Recommendations

Special Guests (continued):

- **Paul Candrea**, Manager, Poiana agritourism guesthouse, Poiana Negrii, Dorna Candrenilor, Suceava County, Romania
- **Maricica Cazimirciuc**, Destination Manager, Țara Dornelor Ecotourism Association, Vatra Dornei, Suceava County, Romania
- **Ema Chiriluş**, Manager, Casa Emma guesthouse, Vatra Dornei, Suceava County, Romania
- **Mihaela Cocîrţă**, Manager, Țara Dornelor Destination Management Organization, Vatra Dornei, Suceava County, Romania
- **Adrian Crucianu**, Manager, Elena agritourism guesthouse, Drăgoiasa, Panaci commune, Suceava County, Romania
- **Ida Csont**, Manager, Gerendás Panzió guesthouse, Ghindari, Mureş County, Romania
- **Elena Drelciuc**, Manager, Vatra Satului Local Gastronomic Point, Plutoniţa, Frasin, Suceava County, Romania
- **Iulia Grigoraş**, Manager, La Grigoraş din Bucovina grocery /butcher shop, Vatra Dornei, Suceava County, Romania
- **Dan Pavel**, Teacher of Agritourism, Agricultural School Group of Dorna Candrenilor, Suceava County, Romania
- **Irina Păcuraru**, Manager, Cabana Poiana Cerbilor Local Gastronomic Point, Dîrmoxa, Broşteni, Suceava County, Romania
- **Adriana Tudor**, Manager, Casa cu Poveste guesthouse, Călineşti, Dorna Arini, Suceava County, Romania
- **Antineea Țugulea**, Manager, Casa Antineea guesthouse, Poiana Stampei, Suceava County, Romania
- **Melinda Zsombori**, Manager, Eden Garden guesthouse, Sovata, Mureş County, Romania

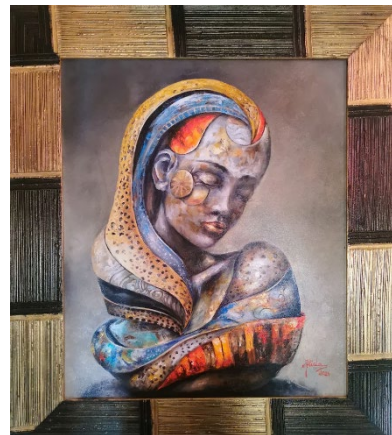
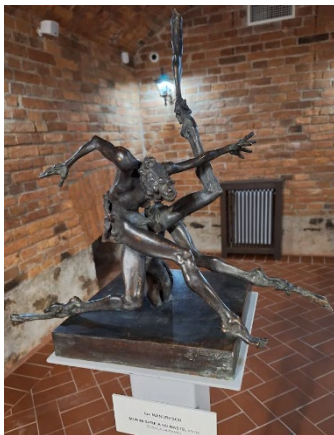
Baths Casino Museum Center

On July 10, 1899, the Baths Casino in Vatra Dornei was inaugurated.



Field trip

Baths Casino Museum Center



Dorna Candrenilor Balneoclimatic Resort

The resort offers numerous amenities and services: semi-Olympic swimming pool, freshwater pool, salt mineral water pool, freshwater pool for children, steam sauna, dry sauna, Finnish sauna, salt room, jacuzzi, ice fountain, relaxation bed, emotional shower (water, light & aromas), massage, terraces with sun loungers and umbrellas, restaurant, etc.



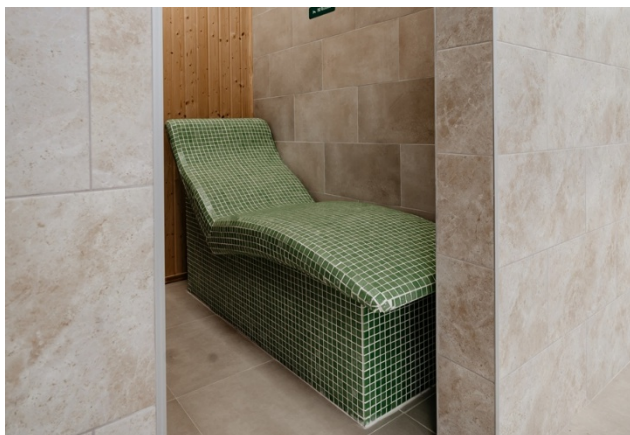
Field trip

Dorna Candrenilor Balneoclimatic Resort



Field trip

Dorna Candrenilor Balneoclimatic Resort

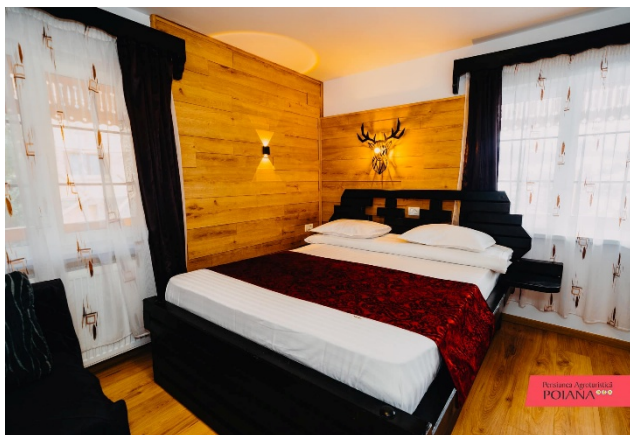


Dorna Candrenilor Balneoclimatic Resort



Field trip

Poiana Agritourism Guesthouse



Field trip

Poiana Agritourism Guesthouse



Session 1

Friday, 22 May

11:45 AM – 1:30 PM

Mountain Amphitheater (Amfiteatrul Munților)

English

Hybrid

Chair: Emanuela-Adina NICULA (Romania)

Connect Online

Khusen IBRAGIMOV

The Impact of Governance Quality on Inbound Tourism Demand: Evidence from Europe

Carles LLORENS VILA

Rural Tourism as a Strategic Axis: The Role of Intermediate Governments Facing the Challenge of Population Exodus

Nodira MUKHAMMADIEVA

Eco-Tourism Practices and Biodiversity Conservation in the Foothills of the Zarafshan Range, Samarkand's Mountain Villages

Emanuela-Adina NICULA

Tourism Development, Economic Growth and Carbon Emissions: Global Evidence and Implications Outlook

Mohammad SHAHPARAN

Impact of Environmental Factors on Tourist Perceptions and Decision-Making in Uzbekistan

Cristina SOLTAN RUSU

Digital Transformation in the Hotel Industry: A Systematic Literature Review and a Research Agenda for Romania

Tongqian ZOU

A Comparative Study on the Development Model of Tourism Villages in China and Uzbekistan

Session 2

Friday, 22 May

11:45 AM – 1:30 PM

Council Room 1 (Sala de Consiliu 1, Corp B)

Romanian

Hybrid

Chairs: Ina ISAC (Republic of Moldova), Manuela APETREI (Romania)

Connect Online

Daniela ANTONESCU

Integrated Territorial Planning of a Homogeneous Mountain System: Bucovina de Munte Microregion

Manuela APETREI, Irina Simona AIONESĂ, Brîndușa COVACI

Analysis of the Synergy between Ecosystem Services and Marketing in the Context of Sustainable Development in the Dornelor Basin

Laetitia CASANGIU SIEA

Dobrogea Kashkaval: A Local Identity Brand

Alexandru CORDOȘ

Legislative Framework of Rural-Urban Interconnections and Mountain Tourism

Doru NECULA

Approaching Equestrian Tourism in Romania

Georgia TACU

Tourism and Living Cultural Traditions in the Context of Sustainable Development

Vasile TODINCĂ, Maria Flavia POP

Traditional Tourist Village of Colești, Bihor County

Session 3

Friday, 22 May

3:30 PM – 7:00 PM

Mountain Amphitheater (Amfiteatrul Munților)

English

Hybrid

Chairs: Emanuela-Adina NICULA (Romania), Richard WITT (Greece), Ioan SURDU (Romania)

Connect Online

Pratima GUPTA, Vimal Chandra VERMA

Viksit Bharat@2047 and Sustainable Consumption: The Role of Women in Organic Food Markets

Kadjo KOUAMÉ

Rural Development in Regional and Local Authorities in Côte d'Ivoire: The Case of Sud-Comoé

Maria-Magdolna MACULA, Isabelle Margareta OPREA

Modeling Regional Tourism Demand via Digital Proxies: Evidence from Romanian NUTS-3 Regions

Casandra-Mariana MĂNICA

Research on the Multifaceted Attachment of Experiential Tourists in Religious Destinations

Marilena ONETE, Florian Paul BODESCU, Roxana Georgiana NICOARĂ, Minodora MANU, Monica Angela NEBLEA

Beyond Conservation: Integrating Biodiversity Conservation with Rural Revitalization in the Natura 2000 Site Dealurile Strehăia-Bâtlanele

Ana-Maria PECA (OPREA), Isabelle Margareta OPREA

Artificial Intelligence and Digitalization as Drivers of Rural Development

Marius POPESCU, Smaranda TOMA

Opportunities for Sustainable Tourism Development along the Danube between Fetești and Giurgeni

Hamidreza SOLAYMANI OSBOOEI

Integrated Watershed Management: A Key Element of Sustainable Rural Development

Brankica TODOROVIĆ

Creative Industries and Regenerative Tourism: Culture for Destination Resilience

Brankica TODOROVIĆ

Digital Activism: An Innovative and Creative Model for Promoting Tourism

Liliana VELEA, Zenaida CHIȚU, Sorin CHEVAL, Mihaela CAIAN, Vasile CRĂCIUNESCU, Anișoara IRIMESCU, Radu MOTIȘAN

Air Pollution in Brașov City, Romania: Tourism-Oriented Analysis and Information Tools

Richard WITT

Pilgrimage Mementos

Session 4

Friday, 22 May

3:30 PM – 7:15 PM

Council Room 1 (Sala de Consiliu 1, Corp B)

Romanian

Hybrid

Chairs: Luminița PANAIT (Romania), Ion TALABĂ (Romania), Daniela MATEI (Romania)

Connect Online

Mihaela CUȚUHAN

Aligning the Skills of Technological High School Graduates with the Requirements of the Tourism Labor Market at National and European Level

Marilena DONCEAN

Current Changes and Trends in the Rural Tourism Labor Market

Cătălin George FEDOR

Tourism, Social Economy, and Community Identity

Ioana Cristina FLORESCU, Daniela ANTONESCU

Determinants of Cereal Crop Production in the Counties of the North-East Region of Romania

Ioan GONTARIU

Slatina Monastery: Cultural Heritage and Destination for Ecumenical Tourism

Doina GURIȚĂ

Analysis of the Tourism Market in the Danube Delta and the Design of a Strategic Marketing Plan

Doina GURIȚĂ

Tourist Behaviour in Rural Tourism: Motivations, Experiences, and Cultural Heritage. Case Study: Rural Churches and Monasteries

Doina GURIȚĂ, Petru Emil STANCIU

Rural Tourism as a Sustainable Alternative for Urban Western Tourists: The Case of Rural Destinations in Romania

Elena IAGĂR

The Valorization of UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage as a Catalyst for Multidimensional Development in Rural Communities: A Case Study of Whitsun Holidays in Argeș

Ina ISAC

Monastic Architectural Minimalism Reflected in the "Dormition of the Mother of God" Skete in Oricova, Republic of Moldova

Ina ISAC, Doina SOLOMON

The Role of the Orheiul Vechi Cultural and Natural Reserve in the Development of Romanian Rural and Gastronomic Tourism in the Republic of Moldova

Elena-Manuela IȘTOC

Resilience-Building for Rural Tourism Destinations in Response to Unforeseen Crises

Corina MATEI GHERMAN, Lăcrămioara DELIU

The Concept of Product Positioning in the Agro-Food Industry

Daniela MATEI, Ciprian Ionel ALECU

Reconceptualizing Peri-Urban Tourism: A Conceptual Framework for an Emerging Field

Ion MĂRGINEANU

Reserved Title

Puiu NISTOREANU

Observation and Appreciation of Rural Life and Local Traditions through Tourism

Luminița PANAIT

Tourism and Climate Change

Dan Constantin ȘUMOVȘCHI

Is the Rise of Lifestyle Brands Leading to a Global Trap of Generic Similarity?

Dan Constantin ȘUMOVȘCHI, Radu Adrian MORARU

The "Death" of the Tour Guide in the Age of Algorithms? Augmented Digitalization and the Return to Authenticity within Local Interpretive Ecosystems

Ion TALABĂ

Romanian Rural Tourism and Agrotourism: Between Needs, Requirements, and Achievements

Doina TĂTARU, Petru Emil STANCIU

Râncea – A Sustainable Mountain Tourist Resort: Failure or Promise?

Dănuț UNGUREANU

Local Gastronomic Points: Evolution, Opportunities and Challenges

Session 5

Friday, 22 May

3:30 PM – 7:00 PM

English

Online

Chair: Georgia TACU (Romania)

Connect Online

Jibbie ANN

The Economic Impacts of Agriculture in The Gambia

Abdou Rahman BARRY

Enhancing Productivity and Community Resilience

Adama BOJANG MANSARAY

Agricultural Development in Rural The Gambia: A Pathway to Sustainable Livelihoods and Food Security

Muhammed CEESAY

The Impact of Rice Production on Employment Opportunities and Food Security in Rural Gambia: An Analysis of Socioeconomic Benefits

Saikou FADERA

Harnessing Agriculture: A Sustainable Solution to Curb Irregular Migration of Gambian Youths via the Mediterranean Sea to Europe

Kaddy FATTY

The Green Shift: Assessing the Socio-Economic Impact of Organic Farming Practices on Rural Households in The Gambia

Lamin FATTY

Assessment of Vegetable Production as a Sustainable Source of Livelihood and Employment in Rural Gambia

Kaddy JADAMA

Impact of Climate Change Challenges on Agricultural Yields and Income of Rural Farmers in The Gambia

Ousainou JALLOW

Assessing the Impact of Climate Change on the Livelihoods of Rural Farmers in Northern Gambia

Temidayo Samuel OJO

Sustainable Tourism Development

Alhagie SILLAH

The Role of Agriculture in Enhancing Livelihoods for Youth and Women in Upper River Region of The Gambia

Jibbie ANN

The Economic Impacts of Agriculture in The Gambia

Agriculture is the foundation of Gambia's economy with its vital positive impacts or benefits. Key (vital) positive impacts or benefits are as follows: (1) job creation (employment): agriculture creates job opportunities for youths in The Gambia. About 85 percent of youth folks engaged in agriculture. It contributes about 20 to 35 percent of Gross Domestic Products (GDP) and provides over 60 percent of employment more especially in the rural areas of The Gambia; (2) food security (food self-sufficiency): during the rainy season, people of the rural areas of The Gambia are busy farming, cultivating, and harvesting crops like groundnuts (cash crops), coos, millet, rice and the like for daily human consumption and also for earning incomes (monies); (3) animal husbandry: animal husbandry is the rearing and breeding of livestock animals. For example livestock farmers and business people do go to our neighboring countries like Senegal and Mali to buy varieties of livestock animals and transported them to the country, The Gambia to breed them with our local livestock animals here in The Gambia. In this process we have enough meat for daily human consumption and also for earning incomes (money); (4) economic growth: agriculture is very important because it boost the economy of The Gambia in the sense that it is the back bone of The Gambia's economy because it constitutes about 85 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Products (GDP); (5) foreign exchange (currencies): agriculture here also is very important to the economic impacts of the economy of The Gambia because it provides major exports in terms of groundnuts (cash crops). The Gambia is among the global leaders in groundnut export (60% of world supply) entirely depends on groundnut exportation. Secondly we export crops like cashews, and cotton in earning vital foreign exchange (currencies). In conclusion, the recommendation to any government is to invest heavily in agriculture in order to boost the economic growth of any given country more especially The Gambia, our motherland.

Daniela ANTONESCU

Integrated Territorial Planning of a Homogeneous Mountain System: Bucovina de Munte Microregion

According to the scientific method that served as the foundation for its creation, the paper suggests two different kinds of methods. The first strategy concentrates on theoretical and methodological elements with the goal of examining the primary facets of territorial planning from an integrated approach at the mountain area level. Applied to the current situation in Bucovina de Munte, the second strategy is pragmatic and considers the attainment of integrated territorial coherence as well as the reduction of social and economic disparities at the component locality level. The specific objectives analyzed in the article are consistent with the trajectory of the logic of the scientific approach, as follows: (1) presenting the main elements of the integrated territorial planning process; (2) analyzing the economic and social profile of the mountain area; (3) conducting a SWOT analysis for each of the evaluated areas; (4) identifying the main objectives of the integrated development strategy and the directions of action at the level of the Bucovina de Munte mountain microregion.

Manuela APETREI, Irina Simona AIONESĂ, Brîndușa COVACI

Analysis of the Synergy between Ecosystem Services and Marketing in the Context of Sustainable Development in the Dornelor Basin

In the context of the unprecedented amplification of ecological disasters and the continuous decline of biodiversity, the sustainable valorization of the tangible and intangible resources of an ecosystem (such as the Dornelor Basin) represents an essential direction to address the climate and environmental crises. Ecosystem services refer to a flow of resources or services from the environment that people benefit from directly or indirectly and are vital for the well-being of humanity. Due to the pressure of globalization and uniformity that manifests itself with disturbing virulence, the need to protect historical traditions, but also identity values, has emerged as a vital response. The distinctive elements specific to a region provide it with a tourist identity and the identity-region binomial represents the cornerstone for building a brand. The identity of a territory is always based on the resources that encompass them (protected areas, landforms, climatic peculiarities, cultural landscapes, routes, itineraries, etc.) and can be used to promote the region from a tourist point of view.

Abdou Rahman BARRY

Enhancing Productivity and Community Resilience

Agriculture is the primary source of livelihood for the majority of rural households in The Gambia, serving as both a means of subsistence and income generation. Rural communities depend heavily on crop production, particularly groundnuts, rice, millet, sorghum, and horticultural products. Women play a central role in vegetable gardening and rice cultivation, contributing significantly to household nutrition and local markets. The sector, however, is largely characterized by traditional farming methods, low mechanization, and dependence on seasonal rainfall. Climate change has intensified challenges such as droughts, erratic rainfall, and land degradation, which negatively impact crop yields and livestock production. Limited financial services, poor rural road networks, and inadequate extension services further restrict farmers' ability to expand and modernize their operations. Promoting sustainable agricultural practices is crucial for improving rural livelihoods. The introduction of improved seed varieties, irrigation schemes, soil conservation techniques, and access to microfinance can increase productivity and income stability. Encouraging youth participation in agribusiness and strengthening farmer cooperatives can also stimulate innovation and market access. Furthermore, investment in agro-processing and storage facilities can reduce post-harvest losses and enhance food security. Overall, transforming rural agriculture in The Gambia requires coordinated efforts from government, development partners, and local communities. With proper support and strategic investment, agriculture can drive economic growth, reduce poverty, and build resilient rural communities capable of adapting to environmental and economic changes.

Adama BOJANG MANSARAY

Agricultural Development in Rural The Gambia: A Pathway to Sustainable Livelihoods and Food Security

Agriculture remains the backbone of rural livelihoods in The Gambia, employing a significant portion of the population and contributing substantially to household income and national food security. In rural areas, farming is predominantly small-scale and rain-fed, with families cultivating crops such as groundnuts, millet, maize, rice, and vegetables. Livestock rearing and small-scale poultry production also play a crucial role in supporting rural economies and improving nutrition. Despite its importance, the agricultural sector in rural Gambia faces numerous challenges, including climate variability, limited access to modern farming technologies, inadequate storage facilities, and restricted market access. Soil degradation, unpredictable rainfall patterns, and occasional flooding further threaten productivity and food stability. These constraints often lead to low yields and seasonal food shortages, affecting income levels and overall rural development. However, agriculture in rural Gambia presents significant opportunities for growth and transformation. The

adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices, improved irrigation systems, access to quality seeds and fertilizers, and farmer training programs can enhance productivity and resilience. Strengthening farmer cooperatives, improving rural infrastructure, and promoting value addition through agro-processing can also increase income and create employment opportunities, particularly for women and youth. In conclusion, sustainable agricultural development in rural Gambia is essential for poverty reduction, economic empowerment, and national food security. By investing in modern techniques, infrastructure, and capacity building, agriculture can become a powerful driver of inclusive growth and long-term development in rural communities.

Laetitia CASANGIU SIEA

Dobrogea Kashkaval: A Local Identity Brand

In the treasure chest of Dobrogean food products, a place of honour is held by Dobrogea Kashkaval, a local emblematic brand with a long-standing tradition. This study, which continues the research conducted during the doctoral studies period, aims to illustrate the characteristics of a centuries-old food product and the arguments for its registration as a Geographical Indication.

Muhammed CEESAY

The Impact of Rice Production on Employment Opportunities and Food Security in Rural Gambia: An Analysis of Socioeconomic Benefits

Rice is a staple food in The Gambia, playing a crucial role in the diet of the population. With the increasing demand for rice, understanding its production's impact on employment opportunities and food security in rural areas is essential. This research analyzed the socioeconomic benefits of rice production in rural Gambia, focusing on employment generation and food security enhancement. The Gambia agricultural sector is vital for the economy, with a significant portion of the population engaged in farming. Rice production has the potential to create jobs, improve livelihoods, and enhance food security. However, challenges such as climate change, limited access to resources, and inadequate infrastructure hinder the full realization of these benefits. The research also provides valuable insights into the socioeconomic benefits of rice production in rural Gambia, contributing to policy formulation and program development aimed at enhancing agricultural productivity, employment, and food security. The findings will be beneficial for government agencies, NGOs, and community organizations working in the agricultural sector and By understanding the socioeconomic benefits, stakeholders can also make informed decisions to support the agricultural sector and improve the livelihoods of rural communities.

Alexandru CORDOŞ

Legislative Framework of Rural-Urban Interconnections and Mountain Tourism

The paper analyzes the legislative framework that regulates rural-urban interconnections and tourism development in the mountainous areas of Romania, highlighting the role of public policies in supporting territorial cohesion and sustainable development. The emphasis is on how national and European regulations facilitate the integration of rural and mountainous areas into urban economic circuits, through infrastructure, mobility, services and the valorization of local resources. The research methodology is based on the documentary analysis of relevant normative acts and regional development strategies, as well as on the evaluation of financing instruments dedicated to rural tourism. The main dysfunctions are identified, such as the fragmentation of the institutional framework, limited accessibility and the low level of coordination between sectoral policies, which affect the efficiency of rural-urban interconnections. The results highlight that the development of mountain tourism directly depends on the strengthening of these interconnections, through integrated and coherent policies. In this regard, the paper highlights the need for harmonization of the legislative framework and a better correlation between rural, urban and tourism development policies. The

conclusions propose directions for improving public policies, aimed at increasing the attractiveness of mountain areas, supporting local initiatives and reducing territorial disparities, thus contributing to the sustainable development of rural tourism in Romania.

Mihaela CUȚUHAN

Aligning the Skills of Technological High School Graduates with the Requirements of the Tourism Labor Market at National and European Level

One of the major concerns of educational policies in Romania and the European Union is the alignment of competencies acquired in technological high school education with the requirements of the labor market. The tourism sector is highly dynamic, influenced by digitalization, artificial intelligence, European mobility, sustainability, and continuously changing needs and expectations. This context requires the development of compatibility between labor market demands and the competencies of graduates seeking employment in tourism. This paper analyzes how the partnership between schools and the labor market, both at national and European level, establishes a common objective: reducing the gap between labor market requirements and the educational offer, thereby supporting the professional integration of young people and the provision of high-quality tourism services, which ultimately contributes to economic competitiveness. The paper also highlights the effectiveness of internships and work-based learning, ERASMUS+ experiences, graduate employment monitoring, the updating of the school curriculum, and the validation of competencies acquired in formal, non-formal, and informal contexts, regardless of the form of tourism addressed.

Marilena DONCEAN

Current Changes and Trends in the Rural Tourism Labor Market

The paper presents, in its first part, a brief clarification of the concepts frequently encountered in economic literature and practice, namely the labor force market or the labor market. It then introduces the basic variables related to the labor market in rural tourism. Thus, the notions of demand and supply are analyzed, together with the factors influencing them and some of their particular characteristics. It is shown that the relationship between demand and supply takes place in two stages: first, at the level of the economic sector, and second, at the level of the rural tourism enterprise, where labor demand meets labor supply. In connection with labor demand, the concept of marginal physical product is presented. Therefore, a rural tourism enterprise aiming to maximize profit must determine the size of its labor resource up to the point where its price equals the value of the marginal product. The main forms of remuneration applied in rural tourism are briefly presented, although these require certain improvements in the sense that conditions should be created for the action of factors such as fairness, participation, and socialization. The paper then proceeds with an analysis of labor costs, taking into account three components: the primary cost, or the total amount of remuneration; the secondary cost, consisting of social and parafiscal charges; and the tertiary cost, represented by labor management expenses.

Gül ERKOL BAYRAM

Reimagining Rural Tourism for Sustainable Futures

Rural tourism is no longer merely an alternative form of travel; it is becoming a transformative force for sustainable development, cultural preservation, and community empowerment. In an era shaped by climate change, digital transformation, shifting traveler expectations, and global uncertainties, rural destinations hold unique potential to redefine the future of tourism. This keynote speech explores how rural tourism can be reimagined through innovation, sustainability, and inclusive development strategies. It highlights the growing importance of community-centered tourism models, women and youth entrepreneurship, smart tourism technologies, cultural heritage preservation, and environmentally responsible practices in creating resilient rural economies. The discussion will also address how local identity, authenticity, and creative experiences

can position rural regions as competitive and meaningful destinations in the global tourism landscape. Drawing on international perspectives and emerging global trends, the keynote emphasizes the need for collaborative governance, digital adaptation, and sustainable policy frameworks that balance economic growth with social and environmental responsibility. The session ultimately argues that the future of tourism lies not only in smart cities and mass destinations, but also in the revitalization of rural communities as spaces of innovation, sustainability, and human connection. This keynote aims to inspire academics, policymakers, tourism professionals, and local stakeholders to rethink rural tourism as a catalyst for sustainable futures and inclusive global development.

Saikou FADERA

Harnessing Agriculture: A Sustainable Solution to Curb Irregular Migration of Gambian Youths via the Mediterranean Sea to Europe

The Gambia, with its rich agricultural heritage, relies heavily on the contributions of its youth in farming and related sectors. However, the increasing trend of irregular migration through the Mediterranean Sea poses significant challenges to agricultural sustainability and economic growth. Irregular migration has become a pressing issue for many Gambian youths seeking better opportunities abroad, often risking their lives in perilous journeys across the Mediterranean Sea. This reach aims to explore how enhancing agricultural practices and promoting agribusiness can provide viable alternatives for these youths, ultimately reducing the urge to migrate. The creation of sustainable agricultural practices that can provide employment opportunities for Gambian youths and promoting agribusiness as a viable career path, encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector. To enhance food security and self-sufficiency in The Gambia, reducing dependency on imports and foster community development through cooperative farming and local agricultural initiatives. Skills Development and Training: Establish training programs focused on modern agricultural techniques, sustainable farming practices (smart agriculture), and agribusiness management. Collaborate with local universities and agricultural institutions to provide hands-on training and workshops. Access to resources: facilitate access to land, seeds, and farming equipment for young farmers through government initiatives and partnerships with NGOs. Create microfinance schemes to provide financial support for youths interested in starting their agricultural ventures. Promotion of agribusiness: encourage the establishment of cooperatives where youths can pool resources and share knowledge to enhance productivity. Support the development of value chains in agriculture, including processing, packaging, and marketing of agricultural products. Awareness campaigns: launch campaigns to raise awareness about the potential of agriculture as a sustainable livelihood and the risks associated with irregular migration. Highlight success stories of young entrepreneurs in agriculture to inspire others. Government and policy support: advocate for policies that support youth engagement in agriculture, including subsidies, tax incentives, and infrastructure development. Foster partnerships between government, private sector, and civil society to create a supportive ecosystem for agricultural development. These would significantly increase employment opportunities for Gambian youths in the agricultural sector. Enhanced food security and reduced reliance on imports. A shift in perception of agriculture as a viable and respected career path. A decrease in the number of youths attempting irregular migration due to improved local opportunities. Investing in agriculture and creating a supportive environment for young people, The Gambia can address the root causes of irregular migration. This proposal seeks to empower youths, promote sustainable development, and ensure that they have the opportunity to thrive in their homeland.

Kaddy FATTY

The Green Shift: Assessing the Socio-Economic Impact of Organic Farming Practices on Rural Households in The Gambia

As global demand for sustainably sourced food rises and the cost of synthetic agricultural inputs fluctuates, organic farming has emerged as a promising alternative for smallholder farmers in The Gambia. This research

investigates the multi-dimensional impact of organic farming on the lives of rural families, focusing on three key pillars: financial independence, family health, and environmental stewardship. Through a comparative analysis of organic and conventional farming households in the North Bank and Central River Regions, this study evaluates whether the reduction in input costs (pesticides and fertilizers) translates into higher net household savings. Data collected through field observations and family interviews suggests that while organic farming may require higher initial labor, it significantly reduces debt cycles associated with chemical purchases and improves the long-term fertility of communal lands. Furthermore, the study explores the "health dividend"—the reduction in chemical-related ailments and the improvement of family nutrition. The findings aim to provide a roadmap for NGOs and the Gambian government to promote organic certification as a tool for rural poverty alleviation and climate resilience.

Lamin FATTY

Assessment of Vegetable Production as a Sustainable Source of Livelihood and Employment in Rural Gambia

This study investigates the socio-economic impact of small-scale vegetable production on rural communities in The Gambia, where horticulture serves as a critical pillar for economic resilience. Despite its potential, rural populations often face systemic barriers to commercializing their produce. Using a mixed-methods approach—combining household surveys and semi-structured interviews across selected rural regions—this research evaluates how vegetable gardening contributes to household income, food security, and job creation, particularly for women and youth. The findings indicate that vegetable production is not merely a subsistence activity but a primary employment engine that mitigates the effects of the "hungry season" and provides liquid capital for education and healthcare. However, the study also identifies significant bottlenecks, including limited access to consistent water sources, lack of cold-storage infrastructure, and fragmented market linkages. The research concludes that with targeted policy interventions in irrigation technology and value-chain integration, the horticultural sector can serve as a definitive solution to rural-urban migration and poverty.

Cătălin George FEDOR

Tourism, Social Economy, and Community Identity

The purpose of this article is to analyze the role of the social economy in strengthening community and cultural identity by capitalizing on local characteristics and traditions in the context of developing initiatives with tourism potential, such as folk costume production centers. The research premise stems from the idea that older adults in rural areas are the custodians of collective memory and cultural identity, and their integration into social enterprises can contribute to both social inclusion and the preservation of cultural heritage. At the same time, local traditions and characteristics can become resources for community development and tourism promotion. The research is a qualitative one, based on the grounded theory methodology. Comprehensive interviews were conducted with older adults from rural communities in Neamț and Bacău counties, and the data were analyzed inductively through thematic coding to identify relevant patterns regarding local identity and the social economy. The results highlight the central role of traditions (especially traditional folk costumes) in defining community identity and reveal a growing interest among older adults in getting involved in social enterprises. These initiatives generate benefits at the behavioral, attitudinal, and identity levels and contribute to the transmission of cultural values. At the same time, institutions such as the church or local initiatives play an important role in preserving traditions. The social economy is an effective tool for revitalizing community identity and promoting local distinctiveness, including from a tourism perspective. Support from the community and institutions is essential for the sustainability of these initiatives, which simultaneously contribute to social inclusion and the preservation of cultural heritage.

Ioana Cristina FLORESCU, Daniela ANTONESCU

Determinants of Cereal Crop Production in the Counties of the North-East Region of Romania

Agriculture represents a key economic sector in the North-East region of Romania, characterized by extensive agricultural land, a high rural population share, and significant dependence on crop production. This study aims to analyze the main determinants of cereal production in the North-East region of Romania, focusing on the impact of cultivated area and agricultural productivity over the period 2008-2024. The analysis is based on panel data covering the six counties of the region: Bacău, Botoșani, Iași, Neamț, Suceava, and Vaslui. The econometric methodology employs panel data regression techniques, including fixed effects and random effects models, followed by the Hausman test to determine the appropriate specification. Unit root tests indicate that all variables are stationary in levels, allowing estimation without differencing. The Hausman test results support the use of a fixed effects model, indicating that county-specific characteristics significantly influence cereal production. The empirical findings reveal that both the cultivated area and the yield per hectare have a statistically significant and positive impact on cereal production. The results highlight that agricultural productivity, measured through average production per hectare, exerts the strongest influence on total cereal output. This suggests that improvements in agricultural efficiency, technology adoption, and farm management practices play a crucial role in increasing production levels. Furthermore, the fixed effects specification confirms the presence of structural differences between counties, reflecting variations in soil quality, climatic conditions, and agricultural infrastructure. Overall, the study demonstrates that enhancing productivity and optimizing land use are essential factors for increasing cereal production in the North-East region of Romania. These findings provide valuable insights for regional agricultural policies aimed at improving efficiency and supporting sustainable agricultural development.

Ioan GONTARIU

Slatina Monastery: Cultural Heritage and Destination for Ecumenical Tourism

Slatina Monastery, dedicated to the "Transfiguration of the Lord", was founded by Prince Alexandru Lăpușneanu (reigned 1552–1561 and 1564–1568). It is considered one of the great monastic ensembles of Moldavia and was consecrated on October 14, 1558. The monastery church has a triconch plan, with a tower above the nave and a richly decorated exterior. During Lăpușneanu's reign, a school of Byzantine psaltic music and a library were established here, while in the 19th century a theological school was founded. Between 1948 and 1958, the monastery's abbot was Archimandrite Cleopa Ilie, alongside well-known monks such as Antonie Plămădeală, Paisie Olaru, and Petroniu Tănase. After 1990, extensive restoration works were carried out at the monastery.

Pratima GUPTA, Vimal Chandra VERMA

Viksit Bharat@2047 and Sustainable Consumption: The Role of Women in Organic Food Markets

The vision of Viksit Bharat@2047 represents India's aspiration to become a developed, inclusive, and environmentally sustainable nation by the centenary year of its independence in 2047. Sustainable consumption and responsible production systems are central to achieving this vision. In the agricultural sector, organic farming and organic food markets have emerged as significant components of sustainable development due to their potential to reduce environmental degradation and promote healthier food systems. Women play a significant role in the development and expansion of organic food markets in India. As active participants in agricultural activities, women contribute to organic farming practices, food processing, local marketing, and household consumption decisions. Their involvement is particularly visible in self-help groups, farmer cooperatives, and small-scale enterprises that produce and sell organic food products. Through these activities, women not only support sustainable agricultural practices but also contribute to rural livelihoods and community-based economic development. Furthermore, women often act as key decision-makers in household food consumption, influencing dietary patterns and encouraging the adoption of healthier and more sustainable food options. This paper examines the role of women in organic food markets and explores how

their participation contributes to sustainable consumption in the context of India's development vision for 2047. The study is based on secondary data collected from academic literature, policy documents, and government reports related to organic agriculture and women's entrepreneurship. The findings highlight that strengthening women's participation in organic food systems can promote sustainable agriculture, enhance rural economic opportunities, and support the broader objectives of inclusive and environmentally responsible development envisioned under Viksit Bharat@2047.

Doina GURÎȚĂ

Analysis of the Tourism Market in the Danube Delta and the Design of a Strategic Marketing Plan

The Danube Delta is one of the most valuable natural areas in Europe, holding significant potential for the development of sustainable tourism. This paper aims to analyze the current state of tourism in this region and to develop a strategic marketing plan designed to increase the destination's attractiveness on both the national and international markets. The research methodology combines quantitative analysis of statistical data with qualitative assessment of specialized literature and best practice models in ecotourism. The results highlight the region's strengths, such as its unique biodiversity, natural landscapes, and cultural heritage, as well as existing limitations, including underdeveloped infrastructure and limited tourism promotion. The paper proposes a strategic marketing framework focused on destination branding, digitalization, and the development of integrated tourism products. It emphasizes the importance of collaboration among local stakeholders and the implementation of sustainability principles for the long-term development of tourism in the Danube Delta.

Doina GURÎȚĂ

Tourist Behaviour in Rural Tourism: Motivations, Experiences, and Cultural Heritage. Case Study: Rural Churches and Monasteries

In recent years, tourist behaviour in rural tourism has undergone significant transformations, shaped by the growing demand for authentic, meaningful, and culturally enriched experiences. This paper examines the motivations, preferences, and behavioural patterns of tourists who choose rural areas, with a particular focus on their interest in cultural and spiritual heritage. The study adopts a theoretical and analytical approach, drawing on consumer behaviour models and tourism experience frameworks. It highlights the importance of emotional engagement, authenticity, and the search for tranquillity as key drivers of demand for rural tourism. The research includes a case study on rural churches and monasteries, which represent essential components of cultural and spiritual tourism. These sites attract both domestic and international tourists seeking reflective experiences, heritage exploration, and religious tourism. The analysis shows that such destinations significantly influence tourist satisfaction and contribute to the preservation of local identity. The findings suggest that integrating cultural heritage into rural tourism strategies enhances destination attractiveness and supports the development of sustainable tourism.

Doina GURÎȚĂ, Petru Emil STANCIU

Rural Tourism as a Sustainable Alternative for Urban Western Tourists: The Case of Rural Destinations in Romania

Rural tourism has increasingly emerged as a sustainable alternative to mass urban tourism, particularly among Western tourists, including those from France, who are seeking authentic and less crowded destinations. This paper explores the motivations of urban tourists who experience saturation with urban environments and are drawn toward rural areas for relaxation, cultural immersion, and reconnection with nature. The research is based on a qualitative and comparative analysis of tourism trends, supported by European statistical data and recent literature in the field. The findings highlight that key factors influencing tourists' decisions include natural landscapes, traditional gastronomy, and interaction with local communities. The study focuses on rural

destinations in Romania, analyzing their capacity to attract foreign tourists through authenticity, preserved traditions, and sustainable tourism practices. The case study reveals that rural areas with well-promoted cultural identity and strong local engagement strategies are more successful in attracting international visitors. The paper concludes that rural tourism represents a strategic opportunity for sustainable development and diversification of international tourism, especially when supported by effective marketing and destination branding.

Elena IAGĂR

The Valorization of UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage as a Catalyst for Multidimensional Development in Rural Communities: A Case Study of Whitsun Holidays in Argeş

The paper examines the mechanisms through which the Căluş ritual—inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity—can function as a strategic asset for the revitalization of communities in the southern area of Argeş County. From a tourism perspective, Căluş represents a key competitive differentiator, enabling a shift from transit tourism toward experiential and cultural tourism. Integrating this ritual into thematic routes and niche festival events generates visitor flows in search of authenticity, thereby increasing demand for local hospitality infrastructure and related services. From an economic standpoint, its impact is characterized by a multiplier effect. Căluş acts as a driver of local entrepreneurship, fostering the emergence of circular micro-economies centered on traditional crafts (such as the production of specific costumes and ritual props), artisanal food production, and agritourism. These dynamics contribute to the diversification of rural incomes and reduce reliance on subsistence agriculture. In its social dimension, the role of Căluş extends beyond mere aesthetic performance, becoming a vital instrument for community cohesion and resilience. The intergenerational transmission of knowledge strengthens local identity and belonging, mitigating the risks of cultural marginalization and rural depopulation by actively engaging younger generations. In conclusion, Căluş represents a valuable endogenous resource which, if managed through an integrated public policy framework, can support socio-economic sustainability and the preservation of the region's cultural integrity.

Khusen IBRAGIMOV

The Impact of Governance Quality on Inbound Tourism Demand: Evidence from Europe

This study analyzes the combined effects of governance quality on international tourist arrivals from 128 countries of origin to 27 European countries for the period from 1995 to 2024. The study employs a comparative European framework to examine the influence of governance indicators on international tourism flows to European countries. Although previous research has examined the economic and institutional factors influencing tourism demand from a destination perspective. The governance indicators, such as political stability, governance quality, and accountability within a gravity-model framework, are not deeply analyzed from origin and destination perspectives, especially in panel and cross-sectional data. The number of tourist arrivals from origin to destination has been collected from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2024). Governance indicators been obtained from World Development Indicators. Based on the data characteristics, panel data has been structured. The gravity model has been employed for the analysis with the fixed and random effect model technique. The study shows that governance quality has a substantial long-term impact on tourism demand and encourages international visitors to European destinations, especially from countries with common borders.

Ina ISAC

Monastic Architectural Minimalism Reflected in the "Dormition of the Mother of God" Skete in Oricova, Republic of Moldova

The smallest church in the Republic of Moldova is part of a recently established monastic settlement dating back approximately a decade. It was built in 2016 by the well-known writer, poet, publicist, and hieromonk Savatie Baştovoi. The church covers an area of only 16m², a size rarely encountered in the Romanian cultural space, bringing it closer to the typology of small sketes found on Mount Athos. The "Dormition of the Mother of God" Skete in Oricova is located approximately 60 km from Chişinău and 7 km from Călăraşi, between the villages of Sipoteni and Hirjauca, near Hirjauca Monastery. From an architectural perspective, the building is constructed in the shape of a nave and is based on the architecture of the churches from the first Christian centuries, characteristic of Paleochristian art. A distinctive feature is its lateral bell tower, a unique solution within the local ecclesiastical space, determined both by the small dimensions of the bell and by the unilateral access to the church. This element provides a second volumetric perspective of the building, being positioned on the right side of the altar's semi-dome and configured as a small turret crowned with a cross, symbolically superimposed over the body of the church. The bell weighs 8 kg, is handmade from a single piece, and is operated by means of a rope extending almost to ground level. Another distinctive feature is the proportion of the altar semi-dome, which is lower than the ridge of the church roof. The iconostasis is likewise minimalist: at the center stands the Savior, while on the sides are depicted two great prophets (John the Baptist and David), two apostles (Peter and Paul), and two hierarchs (John Chrysostom and Basil the Great). The mural decoration was executed in fresco technique by the founder of the skete together with the painters Ioan Popa, Toma Chitiuc, Camelia Popa, and the church painter Adrian Adochiţei, accredited by the Romanian Patriarchate. On the exterior, the church is adorned all around with handmade ceramic elements. The church fronton represents an exterior iconostasis framed within the wall stones. In the upper section, beneath the cross, are depicted the four Evangelists. The next register includes the prophets Moses and John the Baptist, Archdeacon Stephen, and John of Damascus, the hymnographer of the Mother of God. The entrance door is guarded by the icon of the Mother of God and the icon of the Savior, while above it is represented the patronal icon of the church, the Dormition of the Mother of God. The monastic life practiced here evokes traditional ascetic customs from 400–500 years ago. The absence of electricity, together with the reduced size of the windows, preserves a natural chiaroscuro atmosphere conducive to recollection during prayer. Through its dimensions, materials, and functionality, the building belongs to the category of small monastic constructions made of wood and modest masonry, intended for everyday liturgical practice, with a capacity of approximately 20 people.

Ina ISAC, Doina SOLOMON

The Role of the Orheiul Vechi Cultural and Natural Reserve in the Development of Romanian Rural and Gastronomic Tourism in the Republic of Moldova

The Orheiul Vechi Cultural and Natural Reserve plays an essential role in the preservation and promotion of the cultural and natural heritage of the Republic of Moldova, serving as an important factor in the development of Romanian rural and gastronomic tourism. Through its cultural, educational and tourism related activities, the reservation contributes to the promotion of local cultural identity and to the integration of traditional heritage into the national and international tourism circuit. The importance of the Orheiul Vechi Cultural and Natural Reserve is highlighted through the continuous organization of various cultural and artistic activities, such as traditional craft workshops, creative camps, art exhibitions, book launches, film screenings and music festivals, all of which contribute to the revitalization of traditions and the promotion of authentic cultural values. At the same time, the reservation hosts traditional museums and peasant households specific to the Romanian rural environment, offering visitors the opportunity to discover the traditional way of life, rural occupations and ethnographic values preserved by local communities. The Orheiul Vechi Cultural and Natural Reserve plays an important role in preserving ancestral architecture and the traditional cultural landscape by

protecting the characteristic elements of rural households, traditional buildings and the authentic atmosphere of the local communities in the area. These aspects contribute to maintaining cultural identity and to the development of tourism based on authenticity and heritage. In addition, the guesthouses and restaurants within the destination capitalize on the rustic character and traditional gastronomy, offering dishes prepared from local natural products while preserving authentic culinary methods, such as baking bread in wooden-fired ovens. The accommodation facilities are arranged in an ancestral style while also being adapted to modern standards of comfort and the current demands of the tourism market. Through its cultural activities and the integrated promotion of natural, architectural and gastronomic heritage, the Orheiul Vechi Cultural and Natural Reserve contributed to strengthening the image of the Republic of Moldova as a representative destination for Romanian rural and gastronomic tourism, promoting sustainable.

Elena-Manuela IȘTOC

Resilience-Building for Rural Tourism Destinations in Response to Unforeseen Crises

The global rural tourism industry, a major driver of economic growth and cultural exchange, is currently vulnerable. Rural tourist destinations are increasingly exposed to unforeseen crises such as natural disasters, health crises, political unrest, and socio-economic shocks. These disruptions cause economic losses and threaten the viability of rural tourist destinations. In response, both academia and industry are shifting from reactive crisis management to a proactive approach focused on building rural destination resilience. This paper examines the concept of resilience in rural tourism, identifies key vulnerabilities, and proposes strategic pathways to strengthen resilience. Based on recent empirical and theoretical studies, this paper emphasizes the importance of diversification, community engagement, governance, and innovation as key factors in building resilience. It introduces a comprehensive framework that covers economic, environmental, and social dimensions, aimed at helping decision-makers improve resilience. The paper highlights the significance of collaboration among all stakeholders and demonstrates the interconnectedness of sustainability and resilience in rural tourism destinations. By synthesizing current research and best practices, it offers tools to strengthen rural tourism, enhance its adaptability, and promote sustainability. Additionally, it proposes a new framework for future research on resilience and crisis management in the rural tourism sector.

Kaddy JADAMA

Impact of Climate Change Challenges on Agricultural Yields and Income of Rural Farmers in The Gambia

Climate change poses significant challenges to agricultural productivity and the livelihoods of rural farmers in The Gambia. As a country heavily reliant on agriculture, the adverse effects of climate change threaten food security, economic stability, and the overall well-being of rural communities. This proposal aims to assess the impact of climate change on agricultural yield and income among rural farmers in The Gambia and to recommend strategies for mitigation and adaptation. The Gambia's agricultural sector is predominantly rain-fed, making it particularly vulnerable to climate variability. Changes in rainfall patterns, increased temperatures, and the frequency of extreme weather events such as droughts and floods have been observed. These changes directly affect crop yields, livestock health, and the income of farmers, leading to increased poverty and food insecurity. To analyze the impact of climate change on agricultural yield in The Gambia, assess the economic implications of reduced agricultural productivity on rural farmers' income. Also identifies vulnerable communities and crops most affected by climate change. A comprehensive report detailing the impact of climate change on agricultural yield and income, that identify key crops and farming practices that are most vulnerable to climate change. Recommendations for policy interventions and support programs aimed at enhancing the resilience of rural farmers and developing community-based adaptation strategies that empower farmers to cope with climate challenges. Addressing the challenges posed by climate change is crucial for the sustainability of agriculture and the livelihoods of rural farmers in The Gambia. This research provided a framework for understanding the impacts of climate change and to develop strategies that will

enhance the resilience of the agricultural sector. We believe that with the right support and interventions, rural farmers can adapt to changing climatic conditions and secure their livelihoods.

Ousainou JALLOW

Assessing the Impact of Climate Change on the Livelihoods of Rural Farmers in Northern Gambia

Agriculture, a key sector in The Gambia, is threatened by changing rainfall patterns and increased temperatures, which can lead to food insecurity. This study explores the multifaceted effects of climate change on the livelihoods of rural farmers in the northern region of The Gambia. Through a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods, we analyze how changing weather patterns, increased temperatures, and unpredictable rainfall are affecting agricultural productivity, food security, and economic stability. The findings highlight the vulnerabilities faced by these farmers, including reduced crop yields, increased pest infestations, and challenges in accessing resources. Additionally, the study examines adaptive strategies employed by farmers to mitigate these impacts and emphasizes the need for targeted interventions and policy support to enhance resilience in the face of ongoing climate challenges.

Kadjo KOUAMÉ

Rural Development in Regional and Local Authorities in Côte d'Ivoire: The Case of Sud-Comoé

The 31 regions and 2 autonomous districts, territorial authorities in Côte d'Ivoire, ensure rural development within the territorial limits of competence granted by Law No. 2014-451 of 5 August 2014, which allows them to intervene in areas outside municipalities. The Sud-Comoé, with an area of 7,189 km² and a population of 784,893 inhabitants, of which 53% live in rural areas, is bordered by the Abidjan District, Ghana, and the regions of La Mé and Indénié-Djuablin. The Regional Council implements a rural development policy based on its vision, which relies on five territorial priorities, namely: (1) the sustainable management of natural resources and environments; (2) regional economic development; (3) the strengthening of infrastructure and social services; (4) the sustainable management of the living environment; (5) the promotion of sustainable governance.

Carles LLORENS VILA

Rural Tourism as a Strategic Axis: The Role of Intermediate Governments Facing the Challenge of Population Exodus

This intervention addresses the revitalization of rural areas through a tourism model that transcends mere economic activity to become a tool for territorial balance and sovereignty. Starting from the premise that preventing rural exodus is a key and strategic priority, it argues for the urgent need to strengthen the social and productive fabric of the countryside to halt the progressive abandonment of the territory. Rural development cannot be an individual "act of heroism"; it requires a solid institutional framework where intermediate governments—regions, departments, and provinces—assume a leading role. These governments represent the optimal level for coordinating local actors and deploying strategies that seize every opportunity in the territory, ranging from digitalization and 5G connectivity to the creation of innovation ecosystems that allow young people to develop life projects without the need to emigrate. Within the context of the International Tourism Conference 2026, a paradigm shift is proposed: abandoning the pejorative view of the rural world as "retrograde" and positioning it as a space of modernity and quality services. The intervention concludes that the success of rural tourism depends on effective decentralization and differentiated taxation that rewards territorial resilience, transforming tourism potential into an engine of cohesion that ensures the survival of rural communities. Strategic perspectives for the discourse to overcome the challenges left by rural depopulation, an integral approach is required where it is no longer enough to rely on contemplative tourism; instead, every economic and social niche within the rural environment must be detected and exploited to fill the existing territorial void. This demands strong intermediate leadership, as regional governments possess

the deepest understanding of the local reality and can apply precise solutions to fix the population to the land. Ultimately, this strategy seeks to dismantle the myth that progress is absent from rural areas, promoting the countryside as a dignified, competitive, and modern life choice that guarantees equal opportunities across the entire state.

Maria-Magdolna MACULA, Isabelle Margareta OPREA

Modeling Regional Tourism Demand via Digital Proxies: Evidence from Romanian NUTS-3 Regions

This research investigates the nexus between digital footprints, tourism demand, and regional economic performance. Focusing on the NUTS-3 regions (counties) of the Center and North-East development areas of Romania (2008–2024), the study explores how online search behavior can be synthesized into digital proxies to track tourism dynamics and their subsequent impact on regional Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The paper employs a flexible quantitative framework to evaluate the interaction between digital interest and macroeconomic indicators. The methodology emphasizes the construction of a composite digital tourism indicator, utilizing a panel data setup that accounts for regional specificities and structural shifts. The approach is designed to test the consistency of digital signals as predictors of both physical tourism flows and regional economic output, ensuring robustness across diverse geographical and developmental contexts. The empirical analysis reveals a significant relationship between the proposed digital proxies and regional economic variables. The findings suggest that digital visibility not only tracks tourist arrivals but also serves as a leading indicator for local value creation and economic resilience. The model demonstrates high explanatory power, confirming that digital transparency at the NUTS-3 level is closely correlated with regional development patterns. For stakeholders in the analyzed regions, these indicators offer a versatile tool for "nowcasting" and strategic planning. The results bridge the gap between real-time consumer behavior and official economic reporting, providing a roadmap for data-driven regional marketing and investment strategies.

Corina MATEI GHERMAN, Lăcrămioara DELIU

The Concept of Product Positioning in the Agro-Food Industry

Starting from the idea that marketing is essential for achieving the economic performance of companies in the agro-food sector, which must continuously adapt to the increasingly demanding requirements of consumers, this paper analyzes the concept of positioning in the agro-food industry. The organization of marketing activities ensures the integration of specific activities and provides a marketing-oriented direction to the organizational departments. The organization of marketing activities is carried out in two stages: establishing the size and profile of specialized marketing departments within the company's organizational structure; and determining the internal structure of the marketing department. Organizational solutions have evolved from simple sales-focused departments toward the full subordination of the company's activity to marketing: sales department; commercial directorate; autonomous marketing service; marketing division/ directorate/ department. The size and internal structure of the marketing department vary significantly from one company to another, depending on its size, profile, and the internal and external factors influencing its activity. This structure is designed in accordance with the overall organizational framework, and several organizational approaches are possible: functional organization, which considers the main activities that can be grouped as distinct functions within the marketing department and which can form groups of specialists, offices, and services; product- or service-based organization, recommended for large companies with diversified production and homogeneous customers; geographic or customer-type organization; and mixed (combined or matrix) organization. However, the essence of modern strategic marketing can be captured by the concept of "STDP marketing" (segmentation, targeting, differentiation, positioning). This paper focuses on the concept of positioning, which has become an important element for agro-food companies.

Daniela MATEI, Ciprian Ionel ALECU

Reconceptualizing Peri-Urban Tourism: A Conceptual Framework for an Emerging Field

Peri-urban tourism is emerging as a distinct yet insufficiently theorized field, situated at the intersection of urbanization processes, rural transformations, and new forms of recreational mobility. In the absence of a unified conceptual framework, the current literature addresses these hybrid spaces in a fragmented manner, oscillating between urban, rural, or functional perspectives. This paper proposes a reconceptualization of peri-urban tourism by defining a set of fundamental socio-spatial characteristics: proximity to urban centers, infrastructural accessibility, multifunctionality of land use, landscape dynamics, and evolving territorial identities in transition. Based on these observations, a research methodology is proposed, focused on governance, sustainability, mobility, resilience, and integrated approaches. The contribution aims to position peri-urban tourism as a distinct field of study with strategic relevance for contemporary international research.

Casandra-Mariana MĂNICA

Research on the Multifaceted Attachment of Experiential Tourists in Religious Destinations

This review study investigates the multifaceted attachment of experiential tourists in religious destinations, based exclusively on the analysis of recent academic literature. The main goal of the research is to synthesize existing literature on the dimensions of attachment - emotional, cognitive, social and spiritual - by exploring how transformative tourist experiences at these religious destinations contribute to sustainability, enhance personal and transformative experiences as well as loyalty in religious destinations. The research methodology involves a systematic review of research studies from 2015 to 2026 and includes over 30 relevant articles on religious tourism and attachment in experiential tourism contexts, selected through academic-based searches focusing on religious tourism, pilgrimages and community interactions. The results indicate that the multifaceted attachment is driven by hybrid motivations: spiritual (seeking self-development and inner peace) and non-religious (cultural aesthetics, UNESCO heritage, therapeutic landscapes), leading to a transition from experiential tourism to loyal and emotional tourism. However, managerial challenges such as site overcrowding and the need to balance tourist facilities with religious aspects still exist. The findings emphasize the potential of Romanian religious destinations for sustainable tourism, recommending diversified marketing strategies and infrastructure investments to enhance tourists' attachment to the place. This synthesis contributes to a deeper understanding of experiential tourism in religious contexts, providing foundations for future empirical research and public policies and valuable insights into the academic literature.

Nodira MUKHAMMADIEVA

Eco-Tourism Practices and Biodiversity Conservation in the Foothills of the Zarafshan Range, Samarkand's Mountain Villages

The foothills of the Zarafshan Mountains are a perfect location for eco-tourism, trekking, and cultural immersion, located near Samarkand in Uzbekistan. It provides a contrasting landscape of mountains and rural villages. This research paper explores the relationship between the implementation of eco-tourism activities and the results of biodiversity conservation in the foothills of the Zarafshan Range, and evaluates the adoption of ecotourism activities by the rural tourism business, the involvement of the community in tourism activities related to biodiversity conservation, develop the policy for sustainable mountain tourism. Primary data were collected between 2022 and 2025 in 5 mountain villages that practice eco-tourism. Eco-tourism enterprise questionnaires by 75, 120 household surveys, and 50 tourist interviews, both local and international was conducted. Ecological data were collected from the local governmental department, using GIS software. Secondary data was collected from local tourism and environmental protection bureaus. This paper was developed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Multiple regression analysis was used to examine the relationship between eco-tourism revenue and conservation cost. The results show that the foothills of the

Zarafshan Range, adopting eco-tourism activities, recorded 27.8% increase in community income from conservation sources and allocated an average 8.6% of tourism income to environmental conservation activities. In the last 3 years, eco-tourism villages recorded a 6.4% constructed with a 1.2% reduction in the control village. The result from regression analysis reveals a positive and significant relationship ($\beta = 0.52$, $p < 0.01$) between the growth of eco-tourism income and investment in biodiversity conservation. 68% of tourist willing to pay a conservation fee average USD 4.50 per visit. The result of this research paper shows that eco-tourism can be an effective conservation financing tool for the foothills of the Zarafshan Range, Samarkand's Mountain Villages in Uzbekistan. The government and collaboration with private organizations, should establish community-based conservation funds, provide training related to sustainable tourism, improve land use regulations, and branding. Eco-tourism is one of the best sustainable tourism models that has the potential to balance economic development and biodiversity conservation in mountains regions of Uzbekistan.

Doru NECULA

Approaching Equestrian Tourism in Romania

Tourism from a social and economic point of view in the Romanian integrated cultural space is also linked to the special relationship between man and horse. This study highlights the impressive role that tourism can play in valorizing the natural and spiritual heritage of the mountains as well as the cultural diversity through the traditional and centuries-old practices of the mountain natives. Through this study, we bring to the scientific circuit new information of real interest, and a whole series of activities related to the breeding, care and valorization of horses in an increasingly ascendant public sector. Currently a whole series of parameters in this sector are not exploited as they should be from an economic point of view, with the possibility of a decrease in the role of the horse in the activities of rural households and a reorientation towards the recreation and leisure industry - equestrian tourism. The approach in Romania to such tourism takes into account not only the historical and economic side, but also the institutional element that targets it. In recent decades, mountain tourism has developed rapidly, representing a new field of research, but knowledge about its development is limited and less known by practitioners of mountain tourism combined with equestrian tourism.

Emanuela-Adina NICULA

Tourism Development, Economic Growth and Carbon Emissions: Global Evidence and Implications Outlook

This paper examines the relationship between global tourism development and carbon emissions, focusing on recent trends, sectoral sources, geographical disparities, and sustainability prospects. Drawing on international statistical data, the analysis highlights the growing environmental pressure generated by tourism in the context of expanding travel demand and its increasing economic contribution. The study shows that tourism's share of global greenhouse gas emissions rose from 7.3% in 2009 to approximately 9% in 2019, while the sector's carbon footprint increased by around 40%, reaching 5.2 billion metric tons of CO₂ equivalent. Although emissions fell sharply in 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions, the recovery of international tourism and the projected growth of travel and tourism GDP suggest renewed pressure on global climate targets. The sectoral analysis indicates that transport is a major source of tourism-related emissions, especially aviation and cruise tourism. Cruise ships and short-haul flights are among the most carbon-intensive modes of travel, while commercial passenger flight emissions have continued to rise after the pandemic. The data also reveal significant regional and national inequalities, with North America and Europe recording high tourism-related shares of total emissions, and countries such as the United States and China accounting for large proportions of the global tourism carbon footprint. The paper argues that the future sustainability of tourism depends on reducing carbon intensity, accelerating the use of low-carbon energy, promoting modal shifts toward less polluting transport, and aligning tourism growth with climate objectives. While travelers increasingly

recognize the importance of sustainable travel, structural changes in transport, energy, and policy remain essential.

Temidayo Samuel OJO

Sustainable Tourism Development

Sustainable tourism has become an increasingly popular field of research since the late 1980s. Sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments. Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability. However, the sustainable tourism debate is patchy, disjointed and often flawed with false assumptions and arguments. This paper is a brief critique of some of the weaknesses in the sustainable tourism literature. In particular, it explores six issues that are often overlooked but must be addressed in research: the role of tourism demand, the nature of tourism resources, the imperative of intergenerational equity, the role of tourism in promoting socio-cultural progress, the measurement of sustainability, and forms of sustainable development. Indicators have been identified for all three aspects of sustainable tourism development – ecological, economic and social. The World Tourism Organisation (WTO) recently proposed the use of selected indicators for sustainable tourism, in order to be useful to tourism sector managers and administrators. The selected indicators are demand-driven; they respond to decision-makers' need to know and they are practical for most nations or regions. Sustainable tourism development requires the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders, as well as strong political leadership to ensure wide participation and consensus building. Achieving sustainable tourism is a continuous process and it requires constant monitoring of impacts, introducing the necessary preventive and/or corrective measures whenever necessary. Sustainable tourism should also maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction and ensure a meaningful experience to the tourists, raising their awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable tourism practices amongst them. Sustainable tourism concerns particularly important aspects such as competitive and socially responsible tourism businesses, the opportunity to participate in tourism for all citizens, good employment opportunities in the sector and benefits from the tourism activities for the local community. This requires the preservation of cultural integrity and the integration of environmental protection and cultural heritage resources in programs related to tourism. Extensive attempts to implement the principles of sustainable tourism development are made both at the regional level and at the level of tourism enterprises. A specific kind of sustainable tourism is eco-tourism defined by the International Ecotourism Society as the responsible travel to natural areas that preserve the environment and sustain the local people welfare. It includes at the same time elements of rural and cultural tourism. The principles of sustainable development in tourism is applied relatively rare. It is due to the fact that tourism businesses in the economic calculation does not include (or include to a limited extent) the social costs and costs related to environmental protection. In practice, the most common solutions are those that are inexpensive (printing booklets, marking the site, etc.) helping to reduce costs (energy saving in hotels, recycling), allow for better positioning of the brand companies to distinguish themselves from the competition, induce a positive reaction of customers. The most important barriers to the application of the principles of sustainable development by companies should include a lack of awareness of the problem, the need to reduce costs and lack of conviction that the use of such practices can be reflected in an increased number of clients. Among tourism enterprises organizers of tourism and ship-owners rarely apply the principles of sustainable development (mainly due to the high level of variable costs and the high elasticity of demand), while the transport undertakings and hotel management often include sustainable principles when shaping their product (due to higher share of less price-sensitive business customers).

Marilena ONETE, Florian Paul BODESCU, Roxana Georgiana NICOARĂ, Minodora MANU, Monica Angela NEBLEA

Beyond Conservation: Integrating Biodiversity Conservation with Rural Revitalization in the Natura 2000 Site Dealurile Strehaia-Bâtlanele

Located in south-western Romania (Mehedinți County), the Dealurile Strehaia-Bâtlanele protected area (Natura 2000 codes ROSCI0405 and ROSAC0405) covers a relatively small area of 803.9 hectares. The site was designated primarily due to the presence of *Testudo hermanni*, along with two types of forest habitats: Pannonian-Balkan turkey oak-sessile oak forests (91M0) and Dacian oak-hornbeam forests (91Y0). However, field studies conducted during the summers of 2018 and 2019 enabled an updated assessment of plant species, herpetofauna, and invertebrates. These investigations led to the identification of several species listed under the Habitats Directive, some of which represent newly recorded occurrences in certain regions of Romania. In recent years, anthropogenic pressures have intensified considerably, including waste accumulation, habitat fragmentation, agricultural expansion, intensive logging, and the spread of invasive species. These factors have negatively affected the ecological condition of the site, threatening its natural balance. Despite these pressures, the Natura 2000 site Dealurile Strehaia-Bâtlanele could be transformed into a driver of sustainable rural development through ecotourism. The presence of species such as the Hermann's tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*) and other Natura 2000-listed taxa, together with its unique forest habitats, can support specialist tourism and educational trails, turning conservation needs into local economic opportunities.

Luminița PANAIT

Tourism and Climate Change

The paper analyzes the increasingly complex relationship between tourism and climate change, highlighting both the negative impact of climate phenomena on the tourism industry and the need for this sector to adapt to new environmental realities. The author emphasizes that tourism depends directly on the quality of the natural environment, while ecosystem degradation, rising temperatures, and the intensification of extreme weather events significantly affect traditional tourist destinations and tourist behavior. The main effects of climate change on tourism are presented, including the reduced attractiveness of certain tourist regions, the migration of tourist flows toward cooler areas, the decrease of snow cover in mountain resorts, and the increasing frequency of wildfires, floods, and heatwaves. In this context, the tourism industry is compelled to adapt its infrastructure and development strategies. The paper highlights the measures required for tourism adaptation to climate change, such as diversifying tourism offers, modernizing infrastructure, using energy-efficient technologies, developing early warning systems, and promoting sustainable tourism. It also mentions concrete solutions for mitigating climate effects, including the use of renewable energy, the creation of green urban spaces, and improving safety conditions for tourists. An important role is played by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), which supports member states through policies and strategies aimed at reducing carbon emissions and developing sustainable tourism. Relevant international initiatives are also mentioned, such as the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism and the Paris Agreement. Finally, the paper underlines the importance of Romania's involvement in combating climate change through adaptation policies and emission reduction measures, considering environmental protection not only an obligation, but also an opportunity for the sustainable development of tourism.

Ana-Maria PECA (OPREA), Isabelle Margareta OPREA

Artificial Intelligence and Digitalization as Drivers of Rural Development

A large number of rural regions face persistent challenges such as limited access to essential services, quality education and decent work opportunities, along with declining populations and economic vulnerability. In this context the emerging technologies offer new solutions for resilience and inclusive growth. Although the potential of such tools is widely recognized, less is known about their measurable impact on rural economic

performance. This research seeks to address this gap by examining the contribution of digital adoption to rural development outcomes. The aim of the paper is to examine how Artificial Intelligence-enabled tools and digital platforms, can improve access to quality education and decent work in rural areas. The methodology includes linear regressions that analyze the quantitative indicators of digital adoption in relation to rural socio-economic performance metrics. The findings show that digitalization and AI have a significant impact on rural development while increasing the innovation capacity and reducing progress gaps between rural and urban areas. The paper findings can be used to formulate policy and strategic recommendations to support the adoption of advanced technologies in rural communities, to ensure long-term sustainability, equity, and economic diversification.

Marius POPESCU, Smaranda TOMA

Opportunities for Sustainable Tourism Development along the Danube between Fetești and Giurgeni

This study highlights to capitalize the natural and cultural potential of the villages in the Danube area, between Fetești and Giurgeni, in order to support the local economic development and environmental protection. The area is currently facing depopulation, a local economy dependent of agriculture, and insufficient tourism infrastructure. The study's aims refers to development of sustainable thematic tourism trails and certified ecological accommodation infrastructure, the organization of cultural and culinary events, and increasing the population's awareness of sustainable tourism and environmental protection. This research proposes an integrated and sustainable approach, as well as solutions aimed of creating jobs, diversifying the local economy, reducing migration, protecting natural and cultural heritage, and promoting an attractive image of this region along Danube. By applying these measures, the Danube area between Fetești and Giurgeni can become a regional example of good practice for durable tourism, and a pole of sustainable development in Ialomița County.

Mohammad SHAHPARAN

Education for Tourism and Hospitality: Threats, Trends and Opportunities

Due to the dynamics of the experience economy, sustainability priorities, innovations, and evolving experiences, the global tourism and hospitality sector is rapidly transforming and developing. Currently, the education system is increasingly pressured to generate a skilled and efficient workforce in the tourism and hospitality industry, including hotels, MICE, wellness, creative industries, travel agencies, and destination management. This keynote addresses the key threats facing tourism and hospitality education, including skill mismatches, the gap between academic preparation and industry demand, and significant labor shortages. Dual demands are important for the tourism and hospitality industry, besides strong technical competencies in operations skills industry also needs critical soft skills like emotional intelligence, communication, problem solving, and stress resilience. The session also explores emerging trends that will influence the sector going forward, such as digital transformations, immersive and customized services, hybrid guest experiences, and sustainable business models. With the help of applied learning, industry partnerships, project-based training, and internship integration, these advancements offer educational institutions significant chances to modify their curricula. In order to meet international standards, improve employability, and support the industry's long-term competitiveness and sustainable growth, this keynote will offer strategic insights into how tourism and hospitality education can change. This keynote invites educators, researchers, and industry stakeholders to reconsider traditional educational paradigms and to collaboratively shape a resilient, future-oriented framework for tourism and hospitality education in a rapidly evolving global environment.

Mohammad SHAHPARAN

Impact of Environmental Factors on Tourist Perceptions and Decision-Making in Uzbekistan

Tourism is the most vibrant global industry. Population, climate, scenery, and pollution are the main environmental factors that influence this tourism industry. Rich history, vibrant culture, and natural beauty are the main attractions for tourists. Environmental and socio-cultural are the two challenges for maintaining sustainability. Environmental factors have a close relationship with tourists and their decision-making, especially in countries such as Uzbekistan, which boasts a rich cultural heritage, natural beauty, and a growing tourism sector. This paper examines how climate change, landscape, fresh air, water quality, cleanliness, and green spaces affect environmental quality as perceived by tourists. Survey data were collected from 150 respondents through structured questionnaires to measure their perceived experiences, attitudes, and satisfaction with environmental conditions during their visit to Uzbekistan. In this paper, the regression analysis shows that climate and green space are much more important and positive, although statistically insignificant, in terms of the quality of environmental ratings. Water quality, air quality, and scenery show negative correlations, and it's indicating areas of concern for tourists. Although cleanliness was found to have a small and insignificant effect on perceived environmental quality, the results show that prioritizing cleanliness may not necessarily be necessary for tourists when making their evaluation. The results support specific efforts to improve the air quality and need detailed investigations to understand the negative relationship between environmental quality ratings and scenic importance. This research paper provides actionable recommendations for the government, private, and public-private partnership (PPP) to enhance the environmental quality, better expectations for tourists with local resources, and advanced sustainable tourism. In the near future, Uzbekistan can build a positive image, such as green and sustainable tourist destinations, for tourists.

Alhagie SILLAH

The Role of Agriculture in Enhancing Livelihoods for Youth and Women in Upper River Region of The Gambia

In the Upper River Region (URR) of The Gambia, agriculture remains the backbone of the local economy, yet youth and women often face systemic barriers to full economic participation. Despite these hurdles, the sector presents a critical pathway for poverty alleviation and self-employment. This study investigates the extent to which agricultural activities serve as a primary and sustainable source of income for youth and women in the URR. It examines the specific value chains—including horticulture, cereal production, and small-scale livestock—that offer the highest returns on investment for these demographics. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the research draws on surveys from [Number] households and qualitative interviews with local farming cooperatives. The study analyzes the impact of access to land, micro-finance, and climate-smart technologies on income levels. Preliminary findings suggest that while agriculture contributes significantly to household food security, its transition into a reliable income stream is hindered by limited market access and the high cost of inputs. However, youth engaged in agribusiness and women participating in communal vegetable gardens report a percentage higher financial independence compared to those in subsistence farming alone. The study concludes that agriculture is a viable engine for economic empowerment in the URR. To maximize this potential, targeted policy interventions are required to improve rural infrastructure, provide gender-sensitive land tenure security, and integrate digital marketing tools to bridge the gap between URR producers and national markets.

Hamidreza SOLAYMANI OSBOOEI

Integrated Watershed Management: A Key Element of Sustainable Rural Development

Integrated Watershed Management (IWM) and sustainable mountain development are closely linked approaches that focus on conserving water, soil, and ecosystem services in high-altitude areas. By promoting

sustainable practices, they enhance livelihoods, reduce disaster risks, and improve water availability. These programs often generate significant economic benefits by increasing agricultural productivity and groundwater recharge, while also playing a crucial role in climate change adaptation in fragile upland ecosystems. IWM is a holistic and participatory approach that treats a catchment area as a single management unit in order to conserve soil, water, and vegetation resources. It balances the competing demands of multiple resource users while promoting sustainable land-use practices. Successful watershed management in mountain areas can lead to substantial increases in irrigated land (often exceeding 50%) and crop intensity. It also contributes to reducing soil loss to less than 1.1 tons/ha/year and decreasing surface runoff. The present study aims to highlight these issues in the context of the MENARID project, which was implemented between 2010 and 2015. The main outputs of the project included a monitoring and information system for land-use change; assessments of land, water, and ecosystem degradation; an inventory of best practices derived from research, farmer innovation, Participatory Technology Development (PTD), and local knowledge; as well as increased awareness at all levels, from local communities to national stakeholders.

Cristina SOLTAN RUSU

Digital Transformation in the Hotel Industry: A Systematic Literature Review and a Research Agenda for Romania

This article presents a systematic literature review on digital transformation in the hotel industry, with a specific focus on Romania as a peripheral economy in Europe. The study aims to identify key aspects of digitalization, the managerial processes affected by technology adoption, and research gaps relevant to the Romanian hospitality sector. Following the PRISMA protocol, this study analysed peer-reviewed articles published between 2020 and 2025, extracted from the Scopus and Web of Science databases, including foundational works on technology adoption and strategic management. The results reveal a significant contextual gap: while the literature focuses primarily on mature markets and large hotel chains, research on hotel chains in peripheral European countries, such as Romania, is limited. There is also a thematic gap, as most studies emphasize technology and the customer experience, neglecting the impact on human resources, organizational culture, and managerial decision-making. A methodological gap is identified in the dominance of quantitative cross-sectional studies, which lack mixed-methods and longitudinal approaches. At the same time, the analysis highlights a gap in the literature, as few studies investigate the socio-technical mechanisms through which digital technologies are integrated into daily managerial routines. Based on these findings, we propose an integrated theoretical framework that combines the Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE) model, Actor-Network Theory (ANT), and Dynamic Capabilities (DC) theory; this framework is designed to capture the complexity of digital transformation, from contextual factors, through socio-technical processes, to performance outcomes. The article concludes with a research agenda for Romania and practical recommendations for hotel managers and national policymakers, emphasizing the need for strategies tailored to the specific context of peripheral economies.

Dan Constantin ȘUMOVȘCHI

Is the Rise of Lifestyle Brands Leading to a Global Trap of Generic Similarity?

The global hospitality industry is currently facing a "paradox of choice" driven by the convergence of lifestyle brands, where rapid expansion has led to a profound loss of genuine differentiation. This paper analyzes the saturation of standardized lifestyle concepts and investigates the strategic potential of Personality Branding and Hybrid Models as disruptive alternatives. Focusing on the North-East Development Region of Romania, the research challenges the necessity of adopting uniform global hospitality templates. Instead, it proposes a strategic pivot toward a relational model, where authenticity is not merely a marketing attribute but a structural foundation for community-based experience networks. Using a qualitative, case-study-driven approach, the study explores how local identity can be synthesized into unique "personality brands" that resist the commodification of the guest experience. The findings suggest that the North-East's competitive

advantage lies in its capacity to leverage existing cultural capital into an integrated, digitally-augmented ecosystem of shared narratives. The paper concludes that the future of regional hospitality does not belong to the replication of international standards, but to the creation of singular hybrid spaces where local heritage meets modern functional flexibility. This work serves as a strategic positioning manifesto, offering a scalable framework for stakeholders to transition from generic tourism products to high-value, relationship-driven destination brands capable of thriving in a volatile global market.

Dan Constantin ȘUMOVȘCHI, Radu Adrian MORARU

The "Death" of the Tour Guide in the Age of Algorithms? Augmented Digitalization and the Return to Authenticity within Local Interpretive Ecosystems

Contemporary tourism is undergoing a metamorphosis, evolving from passive information consumption toward participatory experiences where tourists become co-creators, generating value through direct interaction with local communities. In a context marked by global volatility and the hegemony of social algorithms, rigid models are becoming inefficient, questioning the very survival of the traditional tour guide. This crisis is exacerbated by the tourist's role as a "prosumer" who, through real-time digital content and social media trends, acts as a primary architect and validator of the tourism offering, often competing with official narratives. This paper investigates the "death" of the classic guide and proposes a paradigm shift toward a local interpretive ecosystem, analyzed within North-East Romania—a destination where fragmented offerings necessitate innovative solutions. Employing a multi-method qualitative approach, the research combines a systematic literature review with participant observation and semi-structured interviews to explore the dynamics between human actors and technology. The core contribution lies in introducing "augmented digitalization," where technology acts as a catalyst for human interaction rather than a substitute. Results demonstrate that the future of tourism belongs neither to algorithms nor to guides in isolation, but to a digitally-augmented ecosystem. This model integrates local stakeholders and tourist-prosumers into a shared narrative, proving that professional "death" can only be avoided by transforming the guide from a mere transmitter of information into a facilitator of authentic, co-created experiences anchored in both digital and local realities.

Georgia TACU

Tourism and Living Cultural Traditions in the Context of Sustainable Development

The paper examines the relationship between intangible cultural heritage and the development of contemporary tourism, highlighting the role of living traditions in promoting a sustainable model for the valorization of local resources. In the context of globalization and increasing tourist mobility, cultural traditions – such as folk customs, handicrafts, traditional gastronomy, music, and community rituals – have become essential elements of local identity and important factors of tourist attractiveness. The study is theoretical in nature and aims to emphasize the main concepts and perspectives regarding sustainability in tourism, intangible cultural heritage, and the relationship between local communities and tourism activities. It analyzes approaches from the specialized literature concerning cultural tourism and the need to protect the authenticity of traditions against excessive commercialization. Furthermore, the paper presents the principles of sustainable development applied to tourism, focusing on the balance between economic valorization, cultural heritage preservation, and the maintenance of social cohesion. The study highlights that living cultural traditions can contribute to local development by stimulating the economy, creating opportunities for communities, and strengthening cultural identity. At the same time, it points out the risks associated with transforming traditions into standardized tourism products, which may lead to the loss of authenticity and the reduction of cultural value. In this regard, the paper emphasizes the importance of involving local communities in the planning and management of tourism activities, as well as the need for public policies aimed at safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. The conclusions underline that the development of sustainable tourism based on living cultural traditions requires an integrated approach in which cultural heritage

protection and economic development complement each other. Thus, tourism can become a tool for promoting cultural diversity and supporting the sustainable development of local communities.

Ion TALABĂ

Romanian Rural Tourism and Agrotourism: Between Needs, Requirements, and Achievements

This study aims to highlight a series of requirements, actions, and achievements related to Romanian rural tourism. The analysis focuses especially on emphasizing the positive aspects specific to Romanian tourism, while not overlooking the negative ones, which unfortunately do exist.

Doina TĂTARU, Petru Emil STANCIU

Râncea – A Sustainable Mountain Tourist Resort: Failure or Promise?

A major challenge, but also an opportunity for Romania, has been—and continues to be—the development of areas with exceptional tourism potential. Often, these areas have not been fully utilized due to misguided approaches that are inconsistent with the objectives of sustainable community development. The case of the Râncea site is significant in this regard: it has exceptional tourism potential, yet faces a management crisis. This conclusion is based on an analysis of the site's historical development, its natural characteristics, comparisons with high-end resorts in other European regions, and the opportunities it has benefited from and can continue to capitalize on. In line with the principles of sustainable tourism, this study highlights how this destination within the Parâng Mountains—despite its underutilized potential—can be revitalized through advanced conceptual planning and development strategies, so that recreational objectives, including rest, leisure, and sports, are achieved in full harmony with the preservation of the environmental ecosystem's integrity, encompassing its natural, cultural, and social components. Implicitly, the study demonstrates the role of responsible tourism in the sustainable development of a community and how its impact can positively or negatively influence the development prospects of a region.

Vasile TODINĂ, Maria Flavia POP

Traditional Tourist Village of Colești, Bihor County

The project concerns a recent tourism initiative in a village located in the foothill area of Bihor County. The investment will result in a tourist village suitable for leisure activities in a pollution-free area of outstanding natural beauty. The future tourist village represents a section of the village of Colești, which is administratively part of the town of Vașcău, Bihor County. The tourism entrepreneur has purchased 24 traditional, disused (abandoned) houses, which are being restored for tourism purposes. Once the restoration works are completed, the tourist village will have an accommodation capacity of 100–120 people. The village will include craft workshops (pottery, woodworking, household crafts, blacksmithing, etc.), where folk artisans will be permanently working. According to the entrepreneur, it will not be possible to rent rooms in the tourist village; instead, entire households will be rented. These will include a living area, sleeping area, relaxation space, terrace, and an outdoor food preparation area. At the entrance to the village, there will be a reception area arranged in one of the households. All tourists' cars will be parked there, and transportation within the village will be provided by electric vehicles that will take tourists to their assigned households.

Brankica TODOROVIĆ

Creative Industries and Regenerative Tourism: Culture for Destination Resilience

The regeneration of urban and rural spaces while preserving cultural identity connects sustainable and regenerative tourism practices with circular economy principles. The repurposing of industrial and urban heritage into tourism and cultural spaces contributes to strengthening destination identity and promoting local economic development. This study analyzes cultural and creative initiatives implemented within the framework of the New European Bauhaus (NEB) initiative in the European Union, aiming to examine the

effects of repurposing industrial or historical sites into cultural and tourism spaces. A qualitative, exploratory research approach was employed, combining case studies, document analysis, and a review of the literature to identify key mechanisms through which creative interventions enhance the authenticity, attractiveness, and socio-economic sustainability of destinations. The findings suggest that collaboration between creative industries and tourism stakeholders not only revitalizes physical spaces but also fosters social cohesion, strengthens local identity, and encourages environmentally responsible practices. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of culture in destination resilience and provides a foundation for future interdisciplinary studies in sustainable and regenerative tourism development.

Brankica TODORVIĆ

Digital Activism: An Innovative and Creative Model for Promoting Tourism

Digitalization has transformed communication practices related to the presentation and promotion of tourism offerings in a global context. In contemporary tourism development, digital activism is increasingly recognized as a form of using digital platforms and tools to promote tourism in a socially responsible and sustainable manner. Digital activism functions as a mechanism for highlighting the negative consequences of accelerated tourism development, environmental degradation, and the need for sustainable tourism development. This study focuses on online campaigns and dominant narratives related to the responsible tourism and sustainable tourism development, with the aim of identifying prevailing forms of digital activism and key actors, with particular emphasis on its potential influence on tourism destination governance and sustainable development. The research is based on a qualitative and exploratory research approach, applying digital ethnography to analyze social media campaigns, omnichannel campaign strategies, dominant narratives and messages, and other relevant elements of digital activist practices. The paper contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the role of digital platforms in contemporary tourism and provides a foundation for further interdisciplinary research in the field of sustainable and responsible tourism.

Dănuț UNGUREANU

Local Gastronomic Points: Evolution, Opportunities and Challenges

The concept of the Local Gastronomic Point emerged in Romania as a way of capitalizing on traditional culinary resources and stimulating the rural economy. The study examines the legislative and institutional framework that enabled the operation of Local Gastronomic Points (LGPs), highlighting their role in promoting local products, encouraging entrepreneurship, and strengthening the cultural identity of communities. From an evolutionary perspective, the paper highlights the growth in the number of LGPs and the diversification of the gastronomic offer, in the context of increasing interest in rural tourism and authentic experiences. Local Gastronomic Points represent a valuable tool for the sustainable development of rural areas; however, their long-term success depends on continuous adaptation to market demands and adequate institutional support.

Liliana VELEA, Zenaida CHIȚU, Sorin CHEVAL, Mihaela CAIAN, Vasile CRĂCIUNESCU, Anișoara IRIMESCU, Radu MOTIȘAN

Air Pollution in Brașov City, Romania: Tourism-Oriented Analysis and Information Tools

In touristic destinations, air pollution affects daily life of residents but it may also impact the touristic experience, with potential effects on return intention and overall tourism flux. This issue is of higher interest especially in larger urban destinations where multiple types of air pollution sources are present (e.g., residential, traffic, constructions, industry) and where the tourist flow is quite high. Brașov city is associated with all these conditions, being in the top 10 of most populated city in country, one of the most preferred touristic destinations and still having challenging air quality issues. We therefore focus on Brașov city as a case study for a tourism-oriented analysis of air pollution and information tools accessible for tourists and

general public. Firstly, we investigate the links between air pollution levels with respect to PM10 and PM2.5 in Braşov city and tourism flow during the period 2022-2023. The analysis employs measured data from two air quality networks: the national network coordinated by National Environmental Protection Agency, Romania and the community-based network uRADMonitor® (www.uradmonitor.com). Additionally, sectoral data on the accredited accommodation units and tourism flow available from National Institute for Statistics is used. Secondly, we present several on-line sources of freely available information (e.g., current status, expected pollution levels, frequency and location of high-pollution events) that may help tourists to make informed decisions on aspects related to air pollution. The study presents results partially funded by the projects CARMINE (Climate-Resilient Development Pathways in Metropolitan Regions of Europe; www.carmine.eu), funded by the European Union under the Horizon Europe Programme (GA 101137851) and CAMS NCP Romania (www.cams4ro.ro) funded by European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts under the CAMS National Collaboration Programme.

Vimal Chandra VERMA

Gastronomic Tourism as a Catalyst for Rural Development: Opportunities, Sustainability, and Cultural Preservation

Gastronomic tourism has emerged as a dynamic and transformative dimension of contemporary tourism, particularly within rural spaces where culture, agriculture, and tradition are deeply intertwined. This keynote explores the role of gastronomic tourism as a strategic tool for rural development, emphasizing its capacity to generate economic opportunities, preserve cultural heritage, and promote sustainable practices. The study highlights how rural regions can leverage their unique culinary traditions, indigenous ingredients, and local food systems to create authentic tourism experiences. By integrating agriculture with tourism through farm-to-table models, food festivals, and local culinary enterprises, gastronomic tourism contributes to income diversification, employment generation, and entrepreneurial development, especially among women and youth. Furthermore, the abstract underscores the importance of gastronomy in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, including traditional recipes, cooking techniques, and community-based knowledge systems. In the context of increasing globalization, gastronomic tourism serves as a means to reinforce local identity while enhancing destination attractiveness. The paper also addresses key challenges such as lack of infrastructure, limited marketing of rural cuisine, issues of standardization versus authenticity, and the risks of over-commercialization. It emphasizes the need for policy support, capacity building, digital integration, and public-private-community partnerships to ensure inclusive and sustainable growth. By drawing on global and regional perspectives, the keynote advocates for a holistic framework where gastronomy acts as a bridge between rural livelihoods, cultural sustainability, and experiential tourism. The findings suggest that well-planned gastronomic tourism initiatives can transform rural spaces into vibrant economic and cultural hubs, contributing significantly to sustainable rural development.

Richard WITT

Pilgrimage Mementos

The purpose of a pilgrimage is to produce a beneficial and lasting effect of the pilgrim, spiritually and materially. One way of achieving this aim is for the pilgrim to purchase a memento which will keep him or her, in future life, constantly in mind of the experience itself. Nowadays this is need is of course met by tourist souvenirs in their millions; the psychology however remains the same as in earlier, more reverent times.

Tongqian ZOU

A Comparative Study on the Development Model of Tourism Villages in China and Uzbekistan

Starting with the UN Tourism's Best Tourism Villages selection practice, this paper introduces cutting-edge theories and best practices in rural tourism and tourism village development, particularly comparing three

common development models: pro-poor tourism, enterprise-dominated tourism, and community-based tourism. It then summarizes the historical evolution, resource reliance, development models, and government governance models of tourism village development in China and Uzbekistan, comparing the advantages and disadvantages of the two countries' development models and the general patterns of successful tourism village development. Finally, the authors analyze various major trends in tourism village development, such as: from sustainability to regenerative tourism; hyper-localization and "rooted" experiences; digital nomad villages and "workation" ecosystems; wellbeing and silence tourism; creative tourism and residencies, niche agri-tech and food transparency, etc.

Irina Simona AIONESĂ

Research Assistant, Centre of Mountain Economy (CE-MONT), Vatra Dornei, "Costin C. Kirițescu"
National Institute for Economic Research, Romanian Academy, Romania // PhD Student, Doctoral
School of Engineering Sciences, "Ion Ionescu de la Brad" Iași University of Life Sciences, Iași,
Romania
aionesairina21@gmail.com

Eyong Ayuk AKO-EBOT

PhD, University of Bertoua, Cameroon

Ciprian Ionel ALECU

Researcher III, Gheorghe Zane Institute for Economic and Social Research, Iași Branch of Romanian
Academy, Romania
aiciprian@yahoo.com

Tudor Răzvan ANICHITEI

Assistant II, Centre of Mountain Economy (CE-MONT), Vatra Dornei, "Costin C. Kirițescu"
National Institute for Economic Research, Romanian Academy, Romania
anichitei.razvan@gmail.com

Jibbie ANN

PhD Student, University of The Gambia, Banjul, Gambia
kalilujanneh3@gmail.com

Daniela ANTONESCU

Senior Researcher, Centre of Mountain Economy (CE-MONT), Vatra Dornei, "Costin C. Kirițescu"
National Institute for Economic Research, Romanian Academy, Romania
daniela.antonescu25@gmail.com

Manuela APETREI

Researcher III, Centre of Mountain Economy (CE-MONT), Vatra Dornei, "Costin C. Kirițescu"
National Institute for Economic Research, Romanian Academy, Romania
sincari_manuela@yahoo.com

Abdou Rahman BARRY

Researcher, Farm Fresh Gambia, Serrekunda, Gambia

abdourahmanbarry338@gmail.com

Gabriela BÂRZU

Manager, Local Gastronomic Point, Gheorgheni, Dorna Arini, Suceava County, Romania

Maria BIDIAN

Manager, Maria Bidian Local Gastronomic Point, Bistrița Bârgăului, Bistrița-Năsăud County, Romania

Florian Paul BODESCU

Managing Director, Multidimension SRL, Săveni, Ialomița County, Romania

Adama BOJANG MANSARAY

Researcher, Kankanba Farm, Sanyang, Gambia

abojang08@gmail.com

Mihaela CAIAN

Senior Researcher, National Meteorological Administration, Bucharest, Romania

Dănuț CANDREA

Mayor of Dorna Candrenilor, Romania

Paul CANDREA

Manager, Poiana agritourism guesthouse, Poiana Negrii, Dorna Candrenilor, Suceava County, Romania

Laetitia CASANGIU SIEA

PhD, Independent Researcher, Parma, Italy

laetitia.casangiu@gmail.com

Maricica CAZIMIRCIUC

Destination Manager, Țara Dornelor Ecotourism Association, Vatra Dornei, Suceava County, Romania

Muhammed CEESAY

Researcher, Gam Agro Industrial Group, Serekunda, Gambia

salimatouleigh608@gmail.com

Sorin CHEVAL

Senior Researcher, National Meteorological Administration, Bucharest, Romania

Ema CHIRILUȘ

Manager, Casa Emma guesthouse, Vatra Dornei, Suceava County, Romania

Zenaida CHIȚU

Researcher, National Meteorological Administration, Bucharest, Romania

zenaida.chitu@meteoromania.ro

Mihaela COCÎRȚĂ

Manager, Țara Dornelor Destination Management Organization, Vatra Dornei, Suceava County, Romania

Alexandru CORDOȘ

Research Assistant, Centre of Mountain Economy (CE-MONT), Vatra Dornei, "Costin C. Kirițescu" National Institute for Economic Research, Romanian Academy, Romania // Associate Professor & Dean, Faculty of Law, Cluj-Napoca, "Dimitrie Cantemir" Christian University, Bucharest, Romania
alexandruc.cordos@gmail.com

Brîndușa COVACI

Researcher III, Centre of Mountain Economy (CE-MONT), Vatra Dornei, "Costin C. Kirițescu" National Institute for Economic Research, Romanian Academy, Romania
zealandina.agency@gmail.com

Vasile CRĂCIUNESCU

Researcher, National Meteorological Administration, Bucharest, Romania

Adrian CRUCIANU

Manager, Elena agritourism guesthouse, Drăgoiasa, comuna Panaci, Suceava County, Romania

Ida CSONT

Manager, Gerendás Panzió guesthouse, Ghindari, Mureș County, Romania

Mihaela CUȚUHAN

Teacher, Alexandru cel Bun College, Gura Humorului, Suceava County, Romania
mihaella_ela@yahoo.com

Cristina-Emanuela DASCĂLU

Vice-Chair, Committee on Education, Chamber of Deputies, Parliament of Romania // Adjunct Professor, Swiss School of Management, Rome, Italy // Associate Professor, Apollonia University, Iași, Romania
cristinaemanueladascalu2016@yahoo.com

Lăcrămioara DELIU

Teacher, Poieni Secondary School, Poieni, Schitu-Duca, Iași County, Romania

Marilena DONCEAN

Researcher III, Gheorghe Zane Institute for Economic and Social Research, Iași Branch of Romanian Academy, Romania
doncean_m1967@yahoo.com

Elena DRELCIUC

Manager, Vatra Satului Local Gastronomic Point, Plutonița, Frasin, Suceava County, Romania

Gül ERKOL BAYRAM

Professor & Vice-Dean, Faculty of Tourism, Sinop University // Director, International Relations Practice and Research Center, Sinop University, Sinop, Türkiye
gulerkol@windowslive.com

Saikou FADERA

Researcher, CEO & General Manager, Sofaniama Marketing Federation, Brikama, Gambia
faderasaikou@yahoo.co.uk

Cătălin George FEDOR

Researcher III, Olga Necrasov Center for Anthropological and Biomedical Research, Iași Branch of Romanian Academy, Iași, Romania
cgfedor@yahoo.com

Kaddy FATTY

Agricultural Engineer, National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI), Brikama, Gambia
mariamajagana05@gmail.com

Lamin FATTY

Researcher, Gam Agro Industrial Group, Serekunda, Gambia
abdouazizj67@gmail.com

Ioana Cristina FLORESCU

Research Assistant, Institute of National Economy, Romanian Academy, Bucharest, Romania

Ioan GONTARIU

Associate Professor, Faculty of Food Engineering, Ștefan cel Mare University, Suceava, Romania
ioang@fia.usv.ro

Iulia GRIGORAȘ

Manager, La Grigoraș din Bucovina grocery/butcher shop, Vatra Dornei, Suceava County, Romania

Pratima GUPTA

PhD Student, Siddharth University, Kapilvastu, Siddharthnagar, Uttar Pradesh, India
pratimag410@gmail.com

Doina GURIȚĂ

Lecturer, Petre Andrei University, Iași, Romania // President, Europress Spain Sub-Branch, Union of Professional Journalists of Romania (UZPR), Madrid, Spain
doinagurita@yahoo.com

Gheorghe HÎRLAV

General Director, National Agency for Mountain Areas (ANZM), Vatra Dornei, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Romania
gheorghe.hirlav@azm.gov.ro

Elena IAGĂR

President, Culture Committee, Argeș County Council, Pitești, Romania
elena_iagar@yahoo.com

Khusen IBRAGIMOV

Assistant Professor & Head of Department of Tourism, Faculty of Tourism Management, "Silk Road" International University of Tourism and Cultural Heritage, Samarkand, Uzbekistan
khusen.ibragimov@ua.pt

Amila INDIKA

Senior Lecturer, University College of Ratmalana, University of Vocational Technology, Ratmalana, Colombo, Western Province, Sri Lanka
amilaindika@ucr.ac.lk

Anișoara IRIMESCU

Senior Researcher, National Meteorological Administration, Bucharest, Romania
anisoara.irimescu@meteoromania.ro

Ina ISAC

Head of Restoration and Conservation Laboratory, Orheiul Vechi Cultural and Natural Reserve, Republic of Moldova
ipatrimoniu@gmail.com

Khairiah ISMAIL

PhD, Taylor's University, Subang Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia

Elena-Manuela IȘTOC

Senior Researcher, Centre for the Economics of Industry and Services, "Costin C. Kirițescu" National Institute for Economic Research, Romanian Academy, Bucharest, Romania
elenamanuela.istoc@gmail.com

Kaddy JADAMA

Researcher, CEO & Manager, Dijas Farm, Gambia
jadamakaddy679@gmail.com

Ousainou JALLOW

Researcher, AB Agri, Gambia
sannabaldeh13@gmail.com

Kadjo KOUAMÉ

Professor & First Vice President, Regional Council of Sud Comoé, Côte d'Ivoire
kadjokouame@yahoo.fr

Carles LLORENS VILA

Secretary-General, ORU Fogar, Barcelona, Spain
cllorens@regionsunies-fogar.org

Maria-Magdolna MACULA

PhD Student, Doctoral School of Economic Sciences, School of Advanced Studies of the Romanian Academy, "Costin C. Kirițescu" National Institute for Economic Research, Institute for Economic Forecasting, Romanian Academy, Bucharest, Romania
magdamacula@gmail.com

Minodora MANU

Senior Researcher, Institute of Biology, Romanian Academy, Bucharest, Romania
minodoramanu@gmail.com

Corina MATEI GHERMAN

Economist // Member, General Association of Economists of Romania - Branch of Iași, Romania // Member, Association of Tourism Journalists and Writers of Romania - Branch of Iași, Romania // Member, Writers' Union of Romania - Branch of Iași, Romania
corinavgherman@yahoo.com

Daniela MATEI

Senior Researcher, Gheorghe Zane Institute for Economic and Social Research, Iași Branch of Romanian Academy, Romania
daniela_matei2004@yahoo.com

Casandra-Mariana MĂNICA

PhD Student, Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Romania
manicacasandra07@stud.ase.ro

Ion MĂRGINEANU

Independent Scholar, Kishinev, Republic of Moldova

ionirmg@yahoo.de

Zoltán József MIHÁLY

Secretary of State, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Bucharest, Romania

Radu Adrian MORARU

Senior Lecturer, "Ion Ionescu de la Brad" Iași University of Life Sciences, Iași, Romania

Radu MOTIȘAN

CEO, Magnasci SRL, Timișoara, Romania

Nodira MUKHAMMADIEVA

Assistant Lecturer, Department of Tourism, Faculty of Tourism Management, "Silk Road" International University of Tourism and Cultural Heritage, Samarkand, Uzbekistan

n.mukhammadieva@univ-silkroad.uz

Monica Angela NEBLEA

Lecturer, Faculty of Sciences, Physical Education and Informatics, Pitești University, Pitești, Argeș County, Romania

Doru NECULA

Researcher, Centre of Mountain Economy (CE-MONT), Vatra Dornei, "Costin C. Kirițescu" National Institute for Economic Research, Romanian Academy, Romania

sv63dor@yahoo.com

Roxana Georgiana NICOARĂ

Researcher III, Institute of Biology, Romanian Academy, Bucharest, Romania

roxanaion85@gmail.com

Emanuela-Adina NICULA

PhD Student, Doctoral School of Economic Sciences, School of Advanced Studies of the Romanian Academy, "Costin C. Kirițescu" National Institute for Economic Research, Institute for Economic Forecasting, Romanian Academy, Bucharest, Romania // Researcher III, Centre of Mountain Economy (CE-MONT), Vatra Dornei, "Costin C. Kirițescu" National Institute for Economic Research, Romanian Academy, Romania

emanuela.nicula@ce-mont.ro

Puiu NISTOREANU

Professor Emeritus, Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Romania

puiunistoreanu@yahoo.it

Temidayo Samuel OJO

Travel & Tourism Expert, Chattanooga Travel Concept, Pretoria, South Africa // Pretoria Campus
Department of Tourism, University of South Africa (UNISA), South Africa
ojotemidayo1@gmail.com

Marilena ONETE

Senior Researcher, Institute of Biology, Romanian Academy, Bucharest, Romania
marilena.onete@gmail.com

Isabelle Margareta OPREA

PhD Student, Doctoral School of Economic Sciences, School of Advanced Studies of the Romanian Academy, "Costin C. Kirițescu" National Institute for Economic Research, Institute for Economic Forecasting, Romanian Academy, Bucharest, Romania
isabelle.oprea@gmail.com

Luminița PANAIT

International Tourism Expert, Ex-Focus Point OMT for Romania, Bucharest, Romania
lumi.panait@gmail.com

Dan PAVEL

Teacher of Agritourism, Agricultural School Group of Dorna Candrenilor, Suceava County, Romania

Irina PĂCURARU

Manager, Cabana Poiana Cerbilor Local Gastronomic Point, Dîrmoxa, Broșteni, Suceava County, Romania

Ana-Maria PECA (OPREA)

PhD Student, Doctoral School of Economic Sciences, School of Advanced Studies of the Romanian Academy, "Costin C. Kirițescu" National Institute for Economic Research, Institute for Economic Forecasting, Romanian Academy, Bucharest, Romania
ana-maria.pec@ince.ro

Maria Flavia POP

Curator I/A, Țara Crișurilor Museum, Oradea, Romania
maria.ciocotisan19@gmail.com

Marius POPESCU

Senior Advisor, Ialomița County Directorate of Statistics, Slobozia, Romania
mpopescu74@gmail.com

Aleksandra PRODANOVIĆ STAMENOVIĆ

Professor, International Center of Professional Studies, Belgrade, Serbia

Marius RÎPAN

Mayor of Vatra Dornei, Romania

Mohammad SHAHPARAN

Lecturer, Department of Tourism, Faculty of Tourism Management, "Silk Road" International University of Tourism and Cultural Heritage, Samarkand, Uzbekistan

mohammad.shahparan@univ-silkroad.uz

Alhagie SILLAH

Assistant Professor, Bakadagi Green Farm, Latrikunda Sabiji, Gambia

alhagiesillah25@gmail.com

Hamidreza SOLAYMANI OSBOOEI

Senior Technical Advisor, Projecticon International Consulting, Rychnov nad Kněžnou, Czech Republic // Head of Innovation and Affiliated Technology Centre, Natural Resources and Watershed Management Organization, Iran

hamid.r.solaymani@projecticon.cz

Cristina SOLTAN RUSU

PhD Student, Doctoral School of Economics and Business Administration, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University, Iași, Romania

cristina.rusu_87@yahoo.ro

Doina SOLOMON

Project Manager, Orheiul Vechi Cultural and Natural Reserve, Republic of Moldova

Petru Emil STANCIU

Vice-President, Union of Professional Journalists of Romania (UZPR), Bucharest, Romania // President, Casa Presei Branch, Union of Professional Journalists of Romania (UZPR), Bucharest, Romania

stempe@gmail.com

Ioan SURDU

Senior Researcher & Director, Centre of Mountain Economy (CE-MONT), Vatra Dornei, "Costin C. Kirițescu" National Institute for Economic Research, Romanian Academy, Romania

surdu.ioan@gmail.com

Dan Constantin ȘUMOVSCI

Research Associate, Department of Mountain Bioeconomy, Centre of Mountain Economy (CE-MONT), Vatra Dornei, Costin C. Kirițescu National Institute for Economic Research, Romanian Academy, Romania // Manager, Țara Fagilor Guesthouse, Mitocu Dragomirnei, Romania

sumovschi.dan@gmail.com

Georgia TACU

Researcher, Gheorghe Zane Institute for Economic and Social Research, Iași Branch of Romanian Academy, Romania
geo_tacu@yahoo.com

Ion TALABĂ

Senior Researcher, Gheorghe Zane Institute for Economic and Social Research, Iași Branch of Romanian Academy, Romania
ion.talaba@yahoo.com

Doina TĂTARU

PhD, Romanian Academy, Bucharest, Romania // Member of Science Section, Union of Professional Journalists of Romania (UZPR), Bucharest, Romania
doina_ta@yahoo.com

Vasile TODINĂ

Senior Researcher, Țara Crișurilor Museum, Oradea, Romania
todinca_vasile@yahoo.com

Brankica TODOROVIĆ

Associate Professor, Faculty of Contemporary Arts, Belgrade, Business Academy University, Novi Sad, Serbia
todorovic.brancica77@gmail.com

Smaranda TOMA

Associate Professor, Pitești University, Pitești, Romania

Adriana TUDOR

Manager, Casa cu Poveste guesthouse, Călinești, Dorna Arini, Suceava County, Romania

Antineea ȚUGULEA

Manager, Casa Antineea guesthouse, Poiana Stampei, Suceava County, Romania

Dănuț UNGUREANU

Director, Centre of Training and Innovation for Development in the Carpathians (CEFIDEC), National Agency for Mountain Areas (ANZM), Vatra Dornei, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Romania // Researcher III, Department of Mountain Bioeconomy, Centre of Mountain Economy (CE-MONT), Vatra Dornei, "Costin C. Kirițescu" National Institute for Economic Research, Romanian Academy, Romania
danut_u@yahoo.com

Vimal Chandra VERMA

Senior Assistant Professor, Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Commerce,
Siddharth University, Kapilvastu, Siddharthnagar, Uttar Pradesh, India // Leslie Kirkley Visiting
Fellow, University of Oxford, United Kingdom

vimalchandravarma@gmail.com

Richard WITT

Independent Scholar, Athens, Greece

wittsend@gmail.com

Tongqian ZOU

Professor, Beijing International Studies University, Beijing, China // Professor & Vice Rector for
Research and Innovation, "Silk Road" International University of Tourism and Cultural Heritage,
Samarkand, Uzbekistan

zoutongqian@bisu.edu.cn

Melinda ZSOMBORI

Manager, Eden Garden guesthouse, Sovata, Mureş County, Romania

Notes

Notes

Notes

CONTACT INFORMATION

Website

www.tarsconference.com

Facebook

Tourism and Rural Space

E-mail

tourismconference.ro@yahoo.com

Address

23 Runc Street, Vatra Dornei, Romania