



TOURISM &
RURAL SPACE

TARS 27th International Conference

CONFERENCE BOOKLET

29-31
MAY 2025

Vatra Dornei, Romania

Romanian Academy
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

SPEAKERS



GÜL ERKOL BAYRAM
Associate Professor, Sinop
University, Türkiye



MARCO VALERI
Associate Professor,
Niccolò Cusano
University, Italy



FERGUS MACLAREN
President Emeritus, ICTC
of ICOMOS, Canada



JEETESH KUMAR
Head of Research, CRiT,
Malaysia

ORGANIZERS



ROMANIAN ACADEMY – BRANCH OF IAȘI

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

2 Codrescu Street, Iași 700481, Romania

GEORGIA TACU

ALINA-PETRONELA HALLER



MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

National Agency for Mountain Areas (ANZM)

23 Runc Street, Vatra Dornei 725700, Romania

DĂNUȚ UNGUREANU



ROMANIAN ACADEMY

Centre of Mountain Economy (CE-MONT)

49 Petreni Street, Vatra Dornei 725700, Romania

IOAN SURDU

DĂNUȚ UNGUREANU

AGENDA



Wednesday, 28 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

Contact: Dănuț Ungureanu, +40 745 865 163



AGENDA



Thursday, 29 May

Breakfast

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM

Vînătorul Guesthouse

Address: 8A Runc Street, Vatra Dornei 725700



AGENDA



Thursday, 29 May

Registration

9:00 AM – 9:30 AM

National Agency for Mountain Areas (ANZM)

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

Contact: Dănuț Ungureanu, +40 745 865 163



AGENDA



Thursday, 29 May

Welcome Messages

9:30 AM – 10:00 AM

Aula Magna (ANZM)

Addresses:

- Zoltán-József Mihály, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
- Gheorghe Dănuț Bogdan, Ministry of Economy, Digitalization, Entrepreneurship and Tourism
- Cristina-Emanuela Dascălu, Parliament of Romania
- Alina-Petronela Haller, Gheorghe Zane Institute for Economic and Social Research
- Gheorghe Hîrlav, National Agency for Mountain Areas (ANZM)
- Dănuț Ungureanu, National Agency for Mountain Areas (ANZM) // Centre of Mountain Economy (CE-MONT)
- Ioan Surdu, Centre of Mountain Economy (CE-MONT)
- Marius Rîpan, Vatra Dornei City Hall
- Virgil Saghin, Vatra Moldoviței Town Hall

Chairs: Mohammad Shahparan (Uzbekistan), Emanuela Adina Nicula (Romania)

Keynote Addresses

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Aula Magna (ANZM)

Speakers:

- Gül Erkol Bayram (Türkiye)
- Marco Valeri (Italy)
- Fergus Maclaren (Canada)
- Jeetesh Kumar (Malaysia)

Chairs: Mohammad Shahparan (Uzbekistan), Emanuela Adina Nicula (Romania)

AGENDA



Thursday, 29 May

Session 1

12:15 PM – 2:00 PM

National Agency for Mountain Areas (ANZM)

Lunch

2:15 PM – 3:30 PM

Vînătorul Guesthouse

Sessions 2, 3, 4

4:00 PM – 6:30 PM

National Agency for Mountain Areas (ANZM)

Webinar

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

National Agency for Mountain Areas (ANZM)

Heritage Festival Tourism and Cultural Economy in Sri Lanka

Language: English

Organizer & Chair: Amila Indika (Sri Lanka)

Special Guests:

- Suleyman Toy (Türkiye)
 - Arunesh Parashar (India)
 - Prachi Agarwal (India)
 - Natalia Țurcanu (Moldova)
 - Erum Khan (Pakistan)
-

Dinner

8:00 PM – 10:00 PM

Vînătorul Guesthouse

AGENDA



Friday, 30 May

Breakfast

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM

Vînătorul Guesthouse

Sessions 5, 6, 7, 8

9:30 AM – 12:00 PM

National Agency for Mountain Areas (ANZM)

Lunch

1:00 PM – 2:30 PM

Vînătorul Guesthouse

Workshop

3:00 PM – 4:00 PM

National Agency for Mountain Areas (ANZM)

Successful Romanian Entrepreneurial Practices in Tourism

Languages: English & Romanian

Organizer: National Agency for Mountain Areas (ANZM)

Coordinator & Chair: Dănuț Ungureanu (Romania)

Special Guests:

- Serhii Hakman (Ukraine)
- Zhanna Buchko (Ukraine)
- Tetiana Skutar (Ukraine)
- Mihaela Cocîrță (Romania)
- Andrei Chirilă (Romania)
- Dan Constantin Șumovschi (Romania)
- Ioana Popa Tomoioagă (Romania)
- Vasile Popescu (Romania)

AGENDA



Friday, 30 May

- Maria Bidian (Romania)
 - Carmina Chiuzan (Romania)
 - Roman Mezdrea (Romania)
 - Sanda Mariana Hoza (Romania)
 - Iacob Simionescu (Romania)
-

Round Table I

4:00 PM – 5:00 PM

National Agency for Mountain Areas (ANZM)

Romanian Cultural Tourism

Languages: Romanian

Organizer & Chair: Luminița Panait (Romania)

Special Guests:

- Ina Isac (Moldova)
 - Vasile Todincă (Romania)
 - Ion Talabă (Romania)
 - Doina Guriță (Romania)
 - Corina Matei Gherman (Romania)
-

Round Table II

5:00 PM – 6:00 PM

National Agency for Mountain Areas (ANZM)

The Scientific Press in the Face of New Challenges

Language: Romanian

Organizers:

- Union of Professional Journalists of Romania (UZPR), Bucharest, Romania
- Gheorghe Zane Institute for Economic and Social Research, Romanian Academy - Branch of Iași, Romania

AGENDA



Friday, 30 May

▪ Centre of Mountain Economy (CE-MONT), Vatra Dornei, Romanian Academy, Romania

Coordinator & Chair: Petru Emil Stanciu (Romania)

Special Guests:

- Puiu Nistoreanu (Romania)
 - Dănuț Ungureanu (Romania)
 - Sebastian Cătănoiu (Romania)
 - Doina Guriță (Romania)
 - Doina Tătaru (Romania)
 - George Niculescu (Romania)
 - Eugeniu Diaconescu (Romania)
-

Documentary Film

6:00 PM – 7:00 PM

National Agency for Mountain Areas (ANZM)

My Father's Journey: From Bălți to Alba Iulia. The Route of the Great Union Centennial

Language: Romanian

Organizer: Gheorghe Zane Institute for Economic and Social Research, Romanian Academy - Branch of Iași, Romania

Coordinator & Chair: Ion Talabă (Romania)

Special Guests:

- Violeta Gorgoș (Romania)
- Ion Mărgineanu (Romania)
- Vasile Arhire (Romania)

AGENDA

Friday, 30 May

Romanian Folk Songs and Dances

7:30 PM – 8:00 PM

National Agency for Mountain Areas (ANZM)

"Plai Bucovinean" Folk Ensemble, Dorna Candrenilor

Organizer: Dănuț Ungureanu (ANZM)

Gala Dinner

8:00 PM – 12:00 AM

National Agency for Mountain Areas (ANZM)

Organizer: Dănuț Ungureanu (ANZM)

Awards Ceremony

9:00 PM – 9:30 PM

National Agency for Mountain Areas (ANZM)



AGENDA

Saturday, 31 May

Breakfast

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM

Vînătorul Guesthouse

Field Trip

9:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Visiting tourist attractions:

- Mocănița Huțulca, from Moldovița to Vatra Moldoviței
- Moldovița Monastery (Vatra Moldoviței)
- Lucia Condrea Painted Eggs Museum (Moldovița)
- Valcan Guesthouse (Vatra Moldoviței)

Organizer & Coordinator: Dănuț Ungureanu (ANZM)

Lunch

2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Valcan Guesthouse

Address: 13 Valcanu Street, Vatra Moldoviței 727595



Addresses



ZOLTÁN-JÓZSEF MIHÁLY

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



GHEORGHE DĂNUȚ BOGDAN

Deputy Secretary General, Ministry of Economy,
Digitalization, Entrepreneurship and Tourism,
Romania



CRISTINA-EMANUELA DASCĂLU

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

Addresses



ALINA-PETRONELA HALLER

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



GHEORGHE HÎRLAV

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



IOAN SURDU

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



MARIUS RÎPAN

Mayor of Vatra Dornei, Romania



VIRGIL SAGHIN

Mayor of Vatra Moldoviței, Romania

Speakers



GÜL ERKOL BAYRAM

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

**Empowering Women Entrepreneurs
for Regenerative Tourism Futures:
From Rural Barriers to Global
Resilience**



MARCO VALERI

Associate Professor, Faculty of
Economics, Niccolò Cusano University,
Rome, Italy // Lecturer, Xenophon
College, London, United Kingdom //
Associate Researcher, Magellan
Research Center, School of
Management, Jean Moulin University,
Lyon, France

Managing Conflicts in Organizations

Speakers



FERGUS MACLAREN

President Emeritus, International
Cultural Tourism Committee of
International Council on Monuments
and Sites (ICOMOS), Chelsea,
Quebec, Canada

**Establishing Sustainable and
Responsible Tourism at Rural World
Heritage Sites: The Role of the
ICOMOS International Cultural
Heritage Tourism Charter**

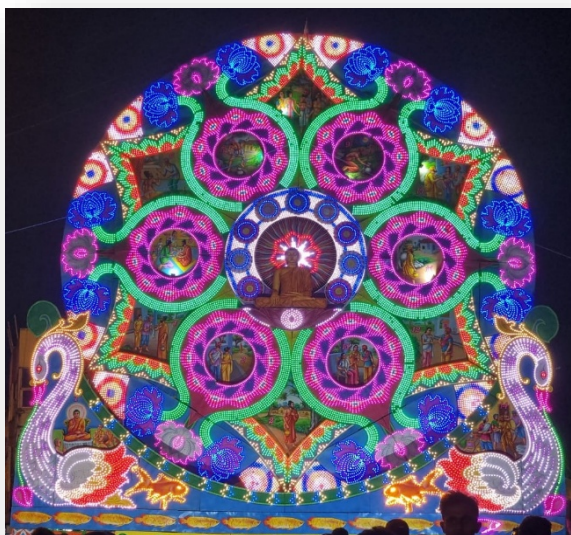


JEETESH KUMAR

Head of Research, Faculty of Social
Sciences and Leisure Management;
Senior Lecturer, School of Hospitality,
Tourism and Events; Associate Director
for Information Management and
Documentation, Centre for Research
and Innovation in Tourism, Hospitality
and Food Studies (CRiT), Taylor's
University, Subang Jaya, Malaysia

**Revolutionizing the Hospitality
Industry: The Role of AI in Enhancing
Customer Experience and Driving
Operational Efficiency**

Related events



WEBINAR

Thursday, 29 May

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Council Room 1 (ANZM)

English

Heritage Festival Tourism and Cultural Economy in Sri Lanka

Organizer & Chair:

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

Special Guests:

- Suleyman Toy, Professor, Department of City and Regional Planning, Faculty of Architecture and Design, Atatürk University, Erzurum, Türkiye
- Arunesh Parashar, Associate Professor, Head of Department of Tourism Management, Dev Sanskriti Vishwavidyalaya, Haridwar, Uttarakhand, India
- Prachi Agarwal, Associate Professor, Department of Tourism Management, Dev Sanskriti Vishwavidyalaya, Haridwar, Uttarakhand, India
- Natalia Țurcanu, PhD Candidate, Moldova State University, Kishinev, Republic of Moldova
- Erum Khan, Member of Board of Directors, Department of Culture, Tourism, Antiquities and Archives, Government of Sindh, Pakistan

Related events



WORKSHOP

Friday, 30 May

3:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Mountain Amphitheater (ANZM)

Romanian & English

Successful Romanian Entrepreneurial Practices in Tourism

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:

- Serhii Hakman, Associate Professor, Deputy Director, Chernivtsi Regional Centre for Advanced Training, Chernivtsi, Ukraine
- Zhanna Buchko, Associate Professor, Department of Geography and Tourism Management, Faculty of Geography, Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University, Chernivtsi, Ukraine

Successful Romanian Entrepreneurial Practices in Tourism

Special Guests (continued):

- **Tetiana Skutar**, Associate Professor, Department of Geography and Tourism Management, Faculty of Geography, Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University, Chernivtsi, Ukraine
- **Mihaela Cocîrță**, Destination Manager, Destination Management Organization "Țara Dornelor", Vatra Dornei, Romania
- **Andrei Chirilă**, President, Țara Dornelor Ecotourism Association, Neagra Șarului, Șaru Dornei, Romania
- **Dan Constantin Șumovschi**, Research Associate, 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
- **Ioana Popa Tomoioagă**, Manager, Belvedere Hotel, Vatra Dornei, Romania
- **Vasile Popescu**, Manager, Koaja Bukovina Local Gastronomic Point, Falcău, Brodina, Romania
- **Maria Bidian**, Manager, Maria Bidian Local Gastronomic Point, Bistrița Bîrgăului, Romania
- **Carmina Chiuzan**, Manager, Bucovina Travel, Vatra Dornei, Romania
- **Roman Mezdrea**, Manager, La Izvorul Dornei Cheese Dairy, Prăleni, Poiana Stampei, Romania
- **Sanda Mariana Hoza**, Manager, Sanda lu' Mărișica Local Gastronomic Point, Sîngeorz-Băi, Romania
- **Iacob Simionescu**, Manager, Valea Dornelor Agritourism Guesthouse, Dorna-Arini, Romania

Related events



ROUND TABLE I

Friday, 30 May

4:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Mountain Amphitheater (ANZM)

Romanian & English

Romanian Cultural Tourism

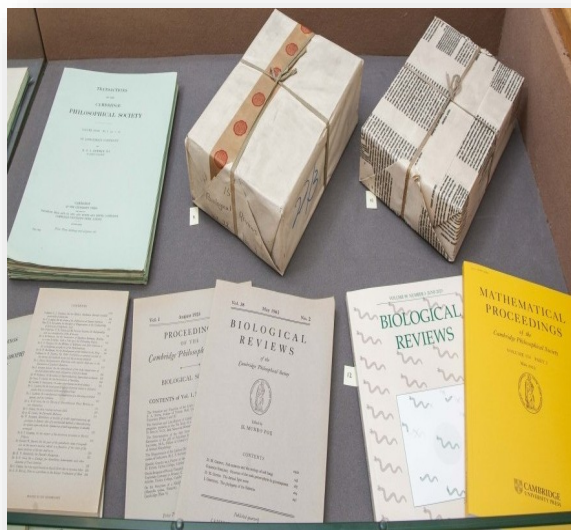
Organizer & Chair:

- Luminița Panait, expert in international tourism, unaffiliated, Bucharest, Romania

Special Guests:

- Ina Isac, Head of Restoration and Conservation Laboratory, Orheiul Vechi Cultural and Natural Reserve, Republic of Moldova
- Vasile Todincă, Senior Researcher, Țara Crișurilor Museum, Oradea, Romania
- Ion Talabă, Senior Researcher, Gheorghe Zane Institute for Economic and Social Research, Romanian Academy - Branch of Iași, Romania
- Doina Guriță, Lecturer, Petre Andrei University, Iași, Romania // President, Spain Sub-Branch, Union of Professional Journalists of Romania (UZPR), Madrid, Spain // Member, Association of Tourism Journalists and Writers of Romania (AJTR) - Branch of Iași, Romania
- Corina Matei Gherman, Economist // Member, General Association of Economists of Romania (AGER) - Branch of Iași, Romania // Member, Association of Tourism Journalists and Writers of Romania (AJTR) - Branch of Iași, Romania // Member, Writers' Union of Romania - Branch of Iași, Romania

Related events



ROUND TABLE II

Friday, 30 May

5:00 PM – 6:00 PM

Mountain Amphitheater (ANZM)

Romanian

The Scientific Press in the Face of New Challenges

Organizers:

- Union of Professional Journalists of Romania (UZPR), Bucharest, Romania
- Gheorghe Zane Institute for Economic and Social Research, Romanian Academy - Branch of Iași, Romania
- Centre of Mountain Economy (CE-MONT), Vatra Dornei, Romanian Academy, Romania

Coordinator & Chair:

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

Special Guests:

- Puiu Nistoreanu, Professor Emeritus, Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Bucharest, 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

The Scientific Press in the Face of New Challenges

Special Guests (continued):

- **Sebastian Cătănoiu**, Manager, Vânători-Neamț Nature Park, Romania // Founding Member, Bison Land Association, Tîrgu Neamț, Romania
- **Doina Guriță**, Lecturer, Petre Andrei University, Iași, Romania // President, Spain Sub-Branch, Union of Professional Journalists of Romania (UZPR), Madrid, Spain // Member, Association of Tourism Journalists and Writers of Romania - Branch of Iași, Romania
- **Doina Tătaru**, PhD, Romanian Academy, Bucharest, Romania // Member, Union of Professional Journalists of Romania (UZPR), Bucharest, Romania
- **George Niculescu**, Professor, Constantin Stere University of European Political and Economic Studies, Kishinev, Republic of Moldova
- **Eugeniu Diaconescu**, Owner, Hotel Kilometre Zero, Drăgășani, Romania

Related events



DOCUMENTARY FILM

Friday, 30 May

6:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Mountain Amphitheater (ANZM)

Romanian

My Father's Journey: From Bălți to Alba Iulia. The Route of the Great Union Centennial

Organizer:

- Gheorghe Zane Institute for Economic and Social Research, Romanian Academy - Branch of Iași, Romania

Coordinator & Chair:

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

Special Guests:

- Violeta Gorgoș, Film Director, TVR Iași, Romania
- Ion Mărgineanu, Associate Professor, Free International University of Moldova, Kishinev, Republic of Moldova
- Vasile Arhire, First Vice-President, Association of Tourism Journalists and Writers, TVR Iași, Romania

Mocănița Huțulca

A ride on the *Huțulca* narrow-gauge steam train (*Mocănița*) from Moldovița to Vatra Moldoviței



The Huțulca, as the locals affectionately call it, is a charming narrow-gauge steam train that operates in the Moldovița region of Suceava County, in the heart of Bucovina. This scenic journey, at an average speed of just 12 km/h, is among the most beloved tourist attractions in the area. It offers a leisurely and unforgettable ride through the storybook landscape of the Huțul people – a Ukrainian ethnic subgroup – revealing the timeless beauty of mountain villages, traditional homesteads, and the winding course of the Moldovița River.

The railway was originally built in 1888 by Louis Ortieb, a sawmill owner from Munich, to transport timber from the forests to the mills in the area. In 1909, it was taken over by the Church Fund of Bukovina, which adapted the gauge to 760 mm. Initially stretching 23.9 km from Moldovița to Roșoșa, the line eventually expanded to 73 km by 1987. Closed for timber

Mocănița Huțulca

transport in 2001, it was reopened in 2005 for tourism only. Today, the Huțulca line spans 12.5 km and takes passengers through enchanting landscapes of dense forests, gentle hills, and traditional farms, offering a glimpse into the authentic spirit of Bucovina.

The word *mocăniță* is a Romanian colloquialism for a steam train running on a narrow-gauge railway, once widely used for timber transport in mountainous regions. It derives from *mocan* – a term referring to highland shepherds or mountain dwellers, especially in the Carpathians. The affectionate diminutive *mocăniță* can be translated as "the little mountain train" or "the train of the shepherds", encapsulating a blend of historical heritage, classical engineering, and genuine mountain tourism.

The name *Huțulca* comes from *huțul*, denoting a traditional ethnic group from the northern Carpathians, particularly in Bucovina, Maramureș (notably the northern and mountainous parts), and western Ukraine (Ivano-Frankivsk, Chernivtsi, and Transcarpathia regions). In Bucovina, they reside near the sources of the Siret and Cheremosh rivers, a region known as the Obcinele Bucovinei. *Huțulca* is a colloquial, endearing diminutive meaning "the Huțul people's train" or "the little railway of the Huțul land".

The Huțuls are a mountain people renowned for their traditional lifestyle, pastoral heritage, and close connection to nature. For centuries, they have inhabited the Eastern Carpathians, distinguished by their unique folk costumes, craftsmanship (particularly in wood and ceramics), and an archaic Ukrainian dialect.



Mocănița de la Moldovița, „Huțulca” cum îi spun localnicii, este un tren turistic cu aburi, care circulă pe o linie ferată îngustă, cu o viteză medie de aproximativ 12 km/h, în zona Moldovița, județul Suceava, în inima Bucovinei. Este una dintre cele mai îndrăgite atracții turistice din regiune. Te va duce într-o călătorie molcomă și de neuitat, în tărîmul de poveste al huțulilor, un subgrup etnic ucrainean. Este o incursiune în trecut, prin superbe sate de munte din zona Bucovinei, cu case pitorești, înșiruite de-a lungul râului Moldovița.

Calea ferată cu ecartament îngust de la Moldovița a fost construită de un proprietar de gater din München, Louis Ortieb, și dată în folosință în anul 1888 pentru transport de masă lemnoasă de la pădure la gatererele din zonă. În 1909, linia a fost preluată de Fondul Bisericesc al Bucovinei, care a modificat ecartamentul la 760 mm. Inițial, traseul mocăniței avea 23,9 kilometri, de la Moldovița la Roșoșa, însă, de-a lungul anilor, rețeaua s-a extins,

Mocănița Huțulca

atingînd o lungime de 73 km în 1987. În 2001, linia a fost închisă pentru transportul de lemn, iar din 2005 a fost redeschisă exclusiv în scop turistic. Acum linia are 12,5 km. Trenul străbate peisaje de poveste, cu păduri dese, dealuri molcome și gospodării tradiționale, oferind o incursiune în atmosfera autentică a Bucovinei.

„Mocănița” este un termen popular românesc care desemnează un tren cu abur care circulă pe cale ferată îngustă, folosit în trecut mai ales pentru transportul de lemn din zonele montane. Cuvîntul provine din „mocan”, un termen care desemna un păstor de munte sau locuitor al zonelor montane, mai ales în Carpați. Prin extensie, „mocănița” este un diminutiv afectiv și popular, care ar însemna „trenul mocanilor” sau „trenul de munte”. Mocănița este o combinație de patrimoniu istoric, inginerie clasică și turism montan autentic.

Numele „Huțulca” provine de la cuvîntul „huțul”, un termen care desemnează un grup etnic tradițional din zona de nord a Carpaților, în special în Bucovina, Maramureș (mai ales partea nordică și montană) și partea de vest a Ucrainei (regiunile Ivano-Frankivsk, Cernăuți, Transcarpatia). În Bucovina, trăiesc la izvoarele Siretului și Ceremușului, zonă cunoscută ca Obcinele Bucovinei. Este o formă diminutivală și afectivă, folosită în mod colocvial, cu sensul de „mocănița huțulilor” sau „mica cale ferată din ținutul huțulilor”.

Huțulii sînt un popor de munte, cunoscut pentru cultura lor tradițională, traiul pastoral și legătura cu natura. Locuiesc de secole în zona Carpaților Orientali. Se remarcă prin portul popular distinctiv, meșteșuguri (în special lemn și ceramică) și dialectul arhaic ucrainean.



Moldovița Monastery

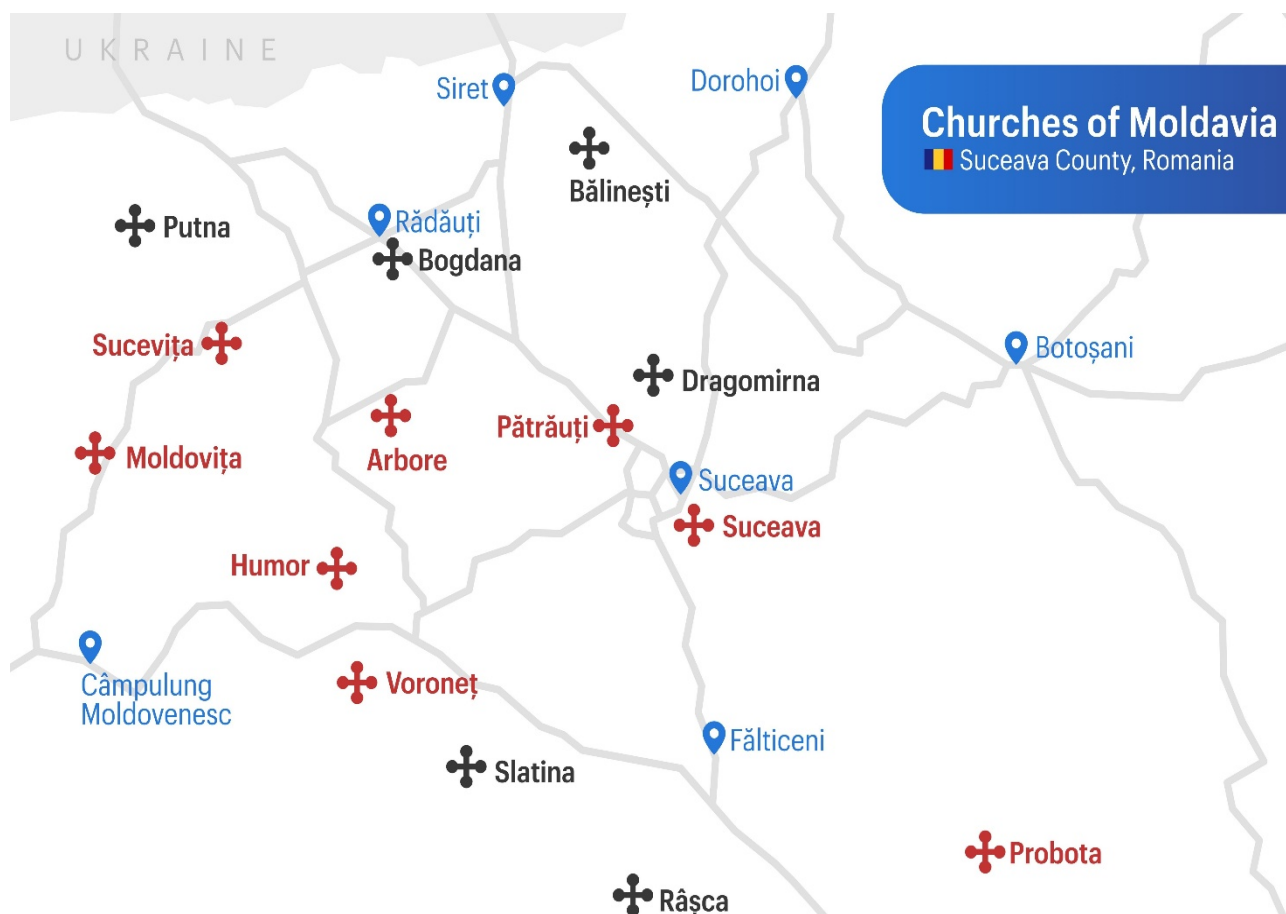
Visiting the Moldovița Monastery, located in the commune of Vatra Moldoviței in Suceava County

The northern part of the Moldavia region in Romania preserves numerous religious edifices that stand as testimony to the Moldavian architectural style, which began to take shape in the Principality of Moldavia starting in the 14th century.

Among these, eight Romanian Orthodox churches located in Suceava County—built between the late 15th and late 16th centuries—have been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List since 1993. The Church of the Resurrection within Sucevița Monastery was added to the site in 2010. These churches are distinguished by their exterior walls, entirely adorned with authentic and unique frescoes depicting complete cycles of religious themes.

Map of the most important northern Moldavian monasteries, Suceava County, Moldavia

Red marks indicate World Heritage Sites



Moldovița Monastery

Vatra Moldoviței is a commune situated in the west-central part of Suceava County, in the historical region of Bukovina, northeastern Romania.

It consists of three villages: Ciumîrna, Paltinu, and Vatra Moldoviței. The latter is home to the Moldovița Monastery, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The commune lies along the banks of the Moldovița River and its tributaries, the Ciumîrna and Paltinu. It is flanked by two ridges of the Bukovina Highlands (Romanian: *Obcinele Bucovinei*): the Great Ridge (*Obcina Mare*) and the Feredeul Ridge (*Obcina Feredeului*).

The first documented mention of the commune of Vatra Moldoviței dates back to the year 1418, during the reign of Alexander I of Moldavia, known as Alexander the Good, who ruled the country from 1400 to 1432.

Vatra Moldoviței is also part of the Via Transilvanica long-distance hiking trail.

The Moldovița Monastery is a Romanian Orthodox convent located in the commune of Vatra Moldoviței, Suceava County, Moldavia, Romania. The first documentary attestation dates back to the year 1402. It appears to have been destroyed by an earthquake in the early 16th century. It was later rebuilt by Petru Rareș, the illegitimate son of Stephen III of Moldavia—better known as Stephen the Great. The monastery was founded as a spiritual and defensive bastion against the advancing Muslim Ottoman forces from the East.

Stephen the Great, Voivode of Moldavia from 1457 to 1504, fought 36 battles, emerging victorious in 34. A deeply devout man, he commissioned the construction of churches following many of his victories. His son, Petru Rareș, who ruled from 1527 to 1538 and again from 1541 to 1546, advanced a new artistic vision for the churches of Bukovina. He commissioned painters to adorn both the interiors and exteriors of churches with elaborate frescoes—depicting saints, prophets, and scenes from the life of Christ.

The best-preserved of these monasteries are found in the communes of Sucevița, Moldovița, Voroneț, Humor, Suceava, Pătrăuți, Arbore, and Probota. These eight, including the Moldovița Monastery, were inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1993 as "the painted churches of Moldavia".

Moldovița Monastery

Church of the Annunciation at Moldovița Monastery

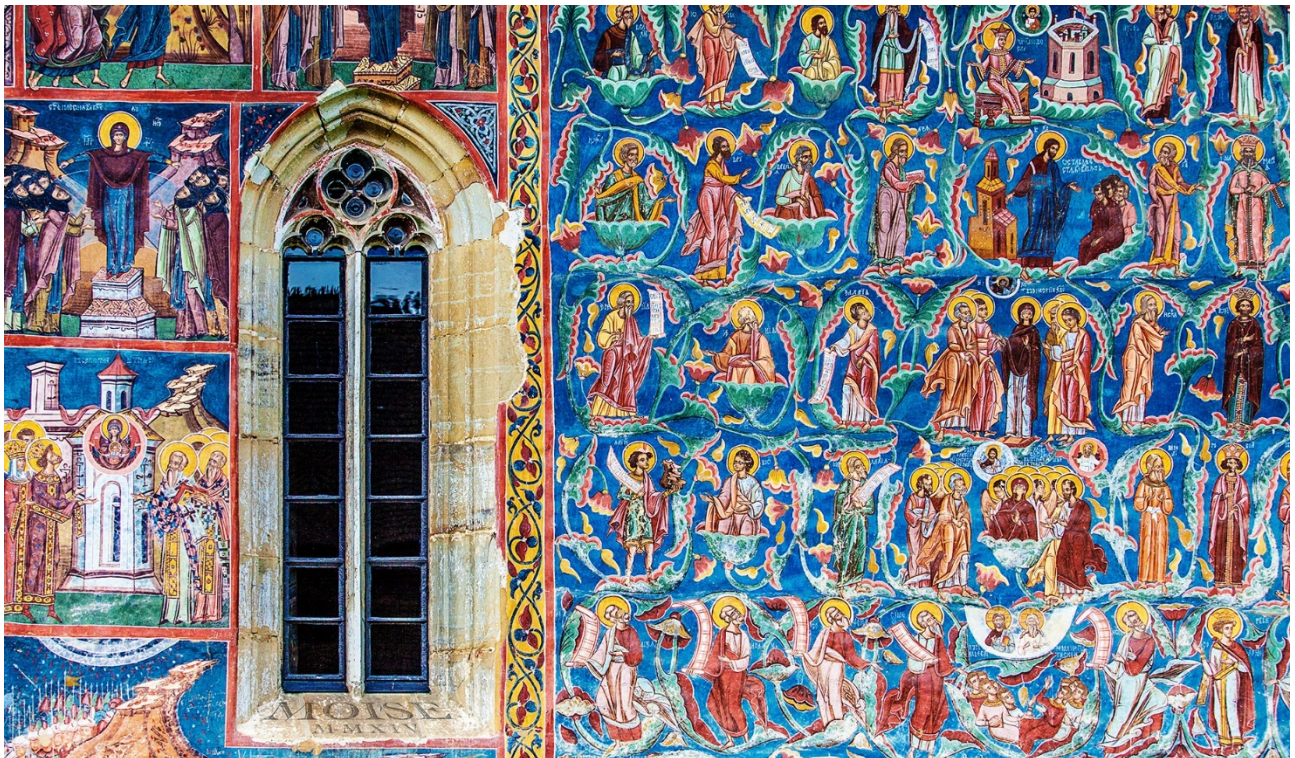


Moldovița Monastery

Founded by Petru Rareș in 1532, the Church of the Annunciation—part of the UNESCO World Heritage—stands out through its iconographic themes: the Siege of Constantinople, the Tree of Jesse, and the Akathist Hymn. The frescoes were painted by Toma of Suceava in 1537 and are distinguished by their characteristic yellow tones and remarkably well-preserved condition. The predominantly yellow-and-blue exterior paintings depict recurring themes in Orthodox Christian art. A procession of saints leads up to the Virgin Mary, enthroned with the Christ Child in her lap, above the narrow east window. The *Tree of Jesse* springs from a reclining Jesse at the base of the wall, tracing Christ's ancestry around the Holy Family. The *Siege of Constantinople* fresco commemorates the Virgin's miraculous intervention in saving the city from Persian attack in AD 626—though the imagery more closely resembles the Fall of Constantinople in 1453.

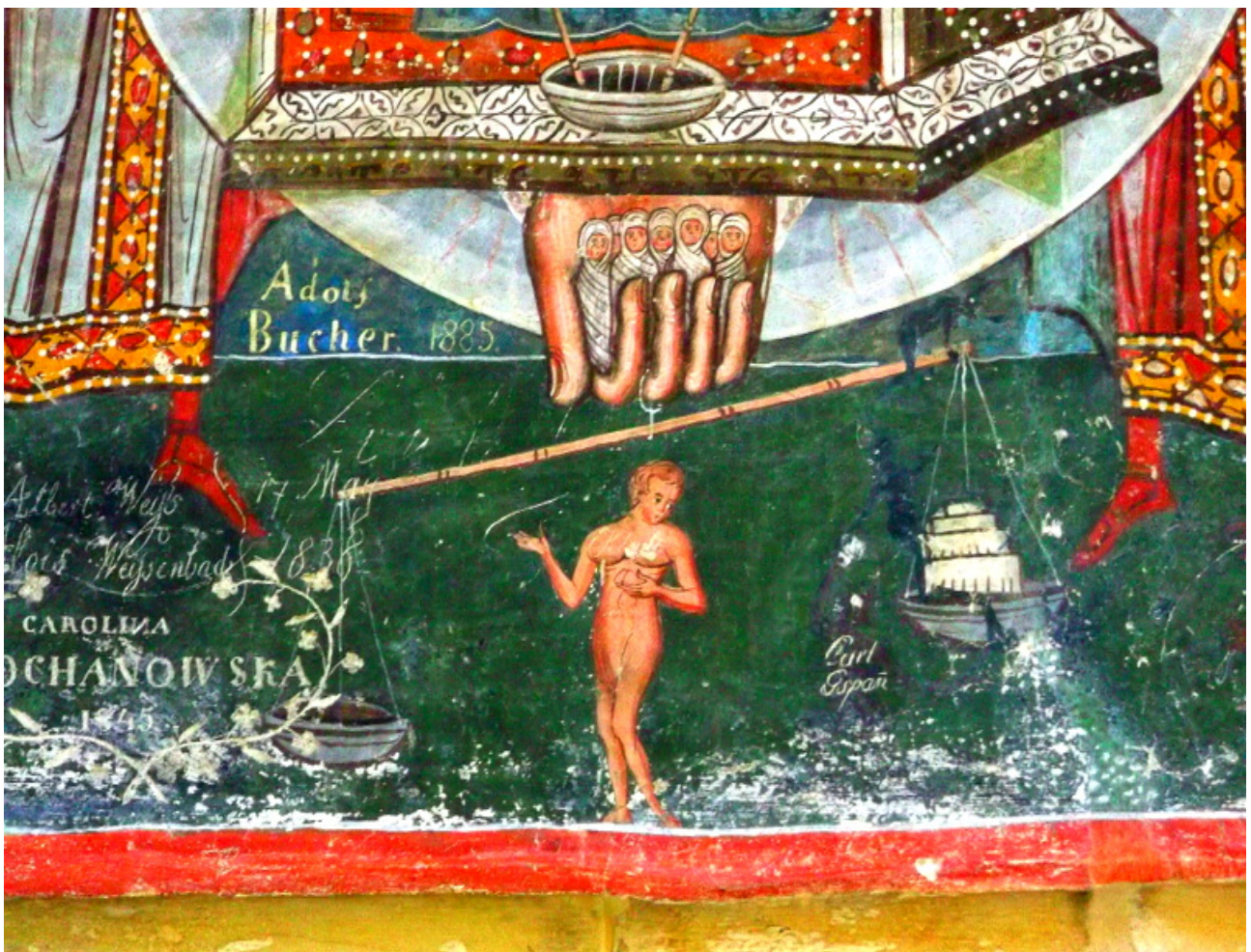


Moldovița Monastery



Moldovița Monastery

Tall arches open the church porch to the outside, flooding it with natural light. Inside, *The Last Judgment* spans the entire west wall, depicting a river of fire and the sea surrendering its dead for judgment. Moldovița and Humor were the last churches to be built with open porches, hidden chambers above the burial vaults, and Gothic-style windows and doorways.



Zona de nord a regiunii Moldova de pe teritoriul României păstrează numeroase edificii religioase, mărturii ale stilului arhitectural moldovenesc configurat în Principatul Moldovei începînd cu secolul al XIV-lea.

Moldovița Monastery

Dintre acestea, opt biserici ortodoxe românești aflate în județul Suceava, construite între sfârșitul secolului al XV-lea și sfârșitul secolului al XVI-lea, au fost incluse, începând din 1993, pe Lista Patrimoniului Mondial UNESCO. Biserica Învierii din incinta Mănăstirii Sucevița a fost adăugată acestei liste în 2010. Bisericile se remarcă prin pereții exteriori în întregime acoperiți cu fresce autentice și unice, care redau cicluri complete de teme religioase.

Vatra Moldoviței este o comună situată în partea central-vestică a județului Suceava, în regiunea istorică a Bucovinei, în nord-estul României. Este alcătuită din trei sate: Ciumîrna, Paltinu și Vatra Moldoviței. Ultimul dintre acestea găzduiește Mănăstirea Moldovița, inclusă în Patrimoniul Mondial UNESCO. Comuna se află de-a lungul râului Moldovița și al afluenților săi, Ciumîrna și Paltinu, fiind străjuită de două dintre Obcinele Bucovinei: Obcina Mare și Obcina Feredeului.

Prima mențiune documentară a localității Vatra Moldoviței datează din 1418, din timpul domniei lui Alexandru I al Moldovei, cunoscut sub numele de Alexandru cel Bun, care a condus țara între anii 1400 și 1432.

Vatra Moldoviței face parte, de asemenea, din traseul de drumeție de lungă distanță Via Transilvanica.

Mănăstirea Moldovița este o mănăstire ortodoxă română de maici, situată în comuna Vatra Moldoviței, județul Suceava, Moldova, România. Prima atestare documentară datează din anul 1402. Se pare că a fost distrusă de un cutremur la începutul secolului al XVI-lea. A fost reconstruită de către Petru Rareș, fiul nelegitim al lui Ștefan al III-lea al Moldovei, cunoscut ca Ștefan cel Mare. Mănăstirea a fost întemeiată ca bastion spiritual și defensiv împotriva înaintării forțelor musulmane otomane dinspre răsărit.

Ștefan cel Mare, domn al Moldovei între 1457 și 1504, a purtat 36 de bătălii și a ieșit victorios în 34. Om profund religios, ridica o biserică după fiecare victorie importantă. Fiul său, Petru Rareș, care a domnit între 1527-1538 și din nou între 1541-1546, a promovat o viziune artistică nouă pentru bisericile din Bucovina. A mandatat pictori care să zugrăvească atât interiorul, cât și exteriorul lăcașurilor de cult cu fresce elaborate, înfățișând sfinți, profeți și scene din viața lui Iisus Hristos.

Moldovița Monastery

Mănăstirile cele mai bine conservate se află în comunele Sucevița, Moldovița, Voroneț, Humor, Suceava, Pătrăuți, Arbore și Probota. Aceste opt mănăstiri – printre care se numără și Mănăstirea Moldovița – au fost incluse, în anul 1993, pe lista Patrimoniului Mondial UNESCO, sub denumirea de „bisericiile pictate din nordul Moldovei”.

Ctitorită de Petru Rareș în 1532, Biserica „Buna Vestire”, aflată în patrimoniul mondial UNESCO, se remarcă prin teme iconografice Asediul Constantinopolului, Arborele lui Iesei și Imnul Acatist. Frescele au fost realizate de Toma din Suceava în anul 1537. Se disting prin tonuri galbene specifice și sînt remarcabil de bine păstrate. Picturile exterioare, predominant în nuanțe de galben și albastru, înfățișează teme recurente ale artei creștin-ortodoxe. O procesiune de sfinți urcă spre Fecioara Maria, așezată pe tron cu Pruncul în brațe, deasupra ferestrei estice, înguste. Arborele lui Iesei pornește de la figura culcată a lui Iesei, la baza peretelui, și redă genealogia lui Hristos în jurul Sfintei Familii. Fresca Asediul Constantinopolului comemorează intervenția miraculoasă a Fecioarei în salvarea orașului Constantinopol de un atac persan în anul 626, deși reprezentarea evocă mai degrabă Căderea Constantinopolului din 1453.

Arcade înalte deschid pridvorul bisericii către exterior, permițînd luminii naturale să inunde spațiul interior. În biserică, fresca Judecata de Apoi acoperă întreaga suprafață a peretelui vestic, înfățișînd un rîu de foc și marea care își cedează morții pentru a fi supuși judecății divine. Moldovița și Humor sînt ultimele biserici construite cu pridvor deschis, cameră ascunsă deasupra criptei și cu uși și ferestre în stil gotic.



Lucia Condrea Painted Eggs Museum

This is the world's largest single-artist museum dedicated to decorated eggs, housing over 15,000 exhibits. Created using a wide range of techniques—including traditional methods, egg lacework, and graphic designs in the batik technique (with raised wax)—the painted eggs place Lucia Condrea among the greatest masters in the world. Her works can be found in major museums, private collections, and royal households across the globe.



Lucia Condrea Painted Eggs Museum

The museum is structured into three sections:

- the unique creations of Lucia Condrea, the originator of the "Condrea art";
- a collection of ancient decorated eggs gathered from the Hutsul villages of Moldovița, Ciumîrna, Breaza, Izvoarele Sucevei, Ulma, Brodina, and Moldova Sulița;
- an international collection comprising exhibits received from artists in 56 countries, all recognized for their longstanding traditions in egg decoration.

Through this museum, the artist has preserved the priceless folkloric heritage of the Hutsul people. This is attested by the historical exhibits from regions where the art of egg decorating and waxing was practiced dating as far back as 1883.

On the occasion of her solo exhibition on 11 May 2007, held in the Gothic Hall of the "Holy Three Hierarchs" Monastery Museum in Iași, the renowned ethnologist, Professor Dr. Ion H. Ciubotaru of the Faculty of Letters at Alexandru Ioan Cuza University in Iași, and



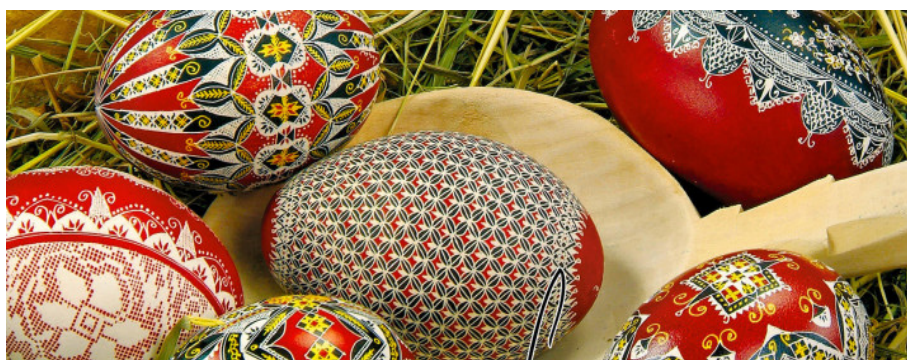
Lucia Condrea Painted Eggs Museum

Honorary Member of the Romanian Academy, stated: "Lucia Condrea's works represent a true innovation in this field, and it shall be known as 'Condrea art'."

Lucia Condrea employs 15 working methods. The first is the traditional batik technique, which served as her starting point and which she has refined over time. The remaining 14 are original methods, each rooted in the batik tradition, yet producing results that differ radically from those of conventional decorated eggs.

Techniques and motifs in "Condrea art":

- Hutsul embroidery recreated on eggs using beeswax and natural pigments;
- motifs from lacework (traditional Romanian embroidery);
- abstract compositions (a single egg may display fragments from dozens of designs);
- 3D cubism;
- motifs from carpets, woven wall rugs, traditional bed and bench covers, and colourful decorative tapestries;
- complex compositions based on combinations of Moorish and Hutsul art;
- motifs from crochet work;
- motifs from macramé;
- graphic design in batik technique (black and white);
- motifs from traditional embroidered towels;
- raised coloured wax;
- zoomorphic motifs;
- sculptural motifs;
- chromatic diversification (the traditional Moldovița palette used by folk artisans consisted of white, yellow, red, and black; the artist expanded it by introducing shades of red and yellow, along with blue, burgundy, violet, and green).



Lucia Condrea Painted Eggs Museum

Acesta este cel mai mare muzeu din lume de unic autor dedicat ouălor decorate, reunind peste 15.000 de exponate. Realizate printr-o paletă amplă de tehnici – de la metode tradiționale, dantelărie pe coajă de ou și desene grafice în tehnica batik (cu ceară în relief) – creațiile pictate o consacără pe Lucia Condrea drept una dintre cele mai mari artiste ale genului la nivel mondial. Lucrările sale se regăsesc în muzee de prestigiu, colecții private și reședințe regale din întreaga lume.



Muzeul este structurat pe trei secțiuni:

- lucrările unicat semnate de Lucia Condrea, autoarea unui stil artistic original, cunoscut sub denumirea de „arta Condrea”;
- o colecție valoroasă de ouă încondeiate vechi, provenite din satele huțule Moldovița, Ciumîrna, Breaza, Izvoarele Sucevei, Ulma, Brodina și Moldova Sulița;
- o colecție internațională impresionantă, compusă din piese oferite de artiști din 56 de țări, recunoscute pentru tradiția lor în arta decorării ouălor.

Prin intermediul acestui muzeu, artista a salvat un tezaur inestimabil de tradiție folclorică huțulă. Mărturie în acest sens stau exponatele provenite din zonele în care s-a practicat încondeiatul și închistritul ouălor din anul 1883.

Cu ocazia vernisajului expoziției personale din 11 mai 2007, găzduită în Sala Gotică a Muzeului Mănăstirii „Sfinții Trei Ierarhi” din Iași, reputatul etnolog prof. univ. dr. Ion H. Ciubotaru, de la Facultatea de Litere a Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” din Iași și membru de onoare al Academiei Române, a afirmat: „Lucrările artistei Lucia Condrea reprezintă o noutate absolută în acest domeniu și se va numi «arta Condrea».”

Lucia Condrea Painted Eggs Museum

Lucia Condrea utilizează 15 modalități de lucru. Prima este tehnica tradițională a batik-ului, care a constituit punctul de plecare al creației sale și pe care a desăvârșit-o de-a lungul timpului. Celelalte 14 metode sunt originale, avînd la bază tot tehnica batik-ului, însă rezultatele finale se diferențiază radical de aspectul convențional al ouălor tradiționale.

Tehnicile și motivele din „arta Condrea”:

- vechi cusături huțule, redată pe ou cu ceară de albine și pigmenți naturali;
- dantelării inspirate din vechile cusături românești;
- desene abstracte, reunind pe un singur ou fragmente vizuale din zeci de lucrări;
- compoziții în stil cubist 3D;
- motive decorative preluate de pe covoare, scoarțe, lăicere și macaturi;
- compoziții complexe, bazate pe combinații între arta maură și arta huțulă;
- motive inspirate din lucrul croșetat;
- motive inspirate din macramé;
- grafică monocromă în tehnica batik-ului (alb-negru);
- motive tradiționale de pe ștergare;
- ceară colorată în relief, pentru efecte plastice;
- motive zoomorfe;
- motive sculpturale;
- diversificarea paletelor cromatice (pe lângă culorile tradiționale din zona Moldovița, alb, galben, roșu și negru, artista introduce nuanțe suplimentare de roșu și galben, dar și culorile albastru, vișiniu, violet și verde).



Valcan Guesthouse

Located in Vatra Moldoviței, several minutes away from the renowned Moldovița Monastery, the guesthouse offers not only a refined setting for rest and relaxation, but also a convenient starting point for exploring the region's most famous monasteries: Voroneț, Humor, Sucevița, Putna, and Arbore.

Nearby lie the Rarău and Giumalău mountain ranges – an excellent opportunity for hikes and expeditions, great for nature and adventure enthusiasts.



Amplasată în Vatra Moldoviței, la puține minute distanță de celebra Mănăstire Moldovița, pensiunea oferă nu doar un ambient deosebit pentru odihnă și relaxare, ci și punctul optim de plecare spre cele mai cunoscute mănăstiri din zonă: Voroneț, Humor, Sucevița, Putna și Arbore.

În apropiere se află masivele muntoase Rarău și Giumalău, excelent prilej de drumeții și expediții dedicate pasionaților de natură și aventură.



Field trip

Valcan Guesthouse



Session 1

Thursday, 29 May

12:15 PM – 2:00 PM

Mountain Amphitheater

English

Hybrid

Chair: Emanuela-Adina NICULA (Romania)

Krisztina Melinda DOBAY

Sustainable Local Food Systems Based on Innovative Short Supply Chains in Romania

Momodou JALLOW

Gambia: Land of Agriculture where Farming Depends on Rural Areas

Minodora MANU, Raluca Ioana BĂNCILĂ, Owen MOUNTFORD, Teodor MARUȘCA, Adrian Vasile BLAJ, Marilena ONETE

Soil Mite Fauna as Bioindicator of Management Type of Praticolous Ecosystems from Bucegi Mountains, Romania

Roxana Georgiana NICOARĂ, Gabriela TAMAȘ, Ioana PAICA, Ciprian BÎRSAN, Loredana BUTA, Marilena ONETE, Sorin ȘTEFĂNUȚ

Coșna, Bucovina: A Model for Ecotourism and Biodiversity Conservation through Peatland Restoration

Marilena ONETE, Florian P. BODESCU, Roxana Georgiana NICOARĂ, Minodora MANU, Luiza Silvia MIHAI, Simona MIHĂILESCU

*Distribution of the Species *Campanula romanica* Săvul. in the Măcin Mountains National Park*

Lucian ROȘU, Mihai BULAI

From Trails to Transformation: The Social Impact of Via Transilvanica on Rural Communities

Doina TĂTARU, George NICULESCU

European and Global Models in the Evolution of Rural Tourism

Session 2

Thursday, 29 May

4:00 PM – 6:30 PM

Mountain Amphitheater

English

Online

Chair: Gül ERKOL BAYRAM (Türkiye)

Paul Andrei ALBU, Violeta TURCUŞ

Tourism, a Powerful Tool for Rural Development in the EU

Nigora Gazievna BUKHAROVA

Agrotourism in Uzbekistan: Prospects, Challenges and Solutions

Nur ÇELİK İLAL, Hivda İLAN, Ozan BAHAR

The Role of Women in the Sustainable Tourism Economy: Insights from Future Tourism Projects in Turkey

Carmen CHASOVSKI, Carol Alexandru MOHR

Preserving Bucovina's Cultural Landscape: A Longitudinal Inquiry into Heritage, Tourism, and Rural Regeneration

Berk DINAR, Nur ÇELİK İLAL

A Bibliographic Analysis of the Role of Tourism in Local Development

Saikou FADERA

Exploring Agriculture as a Sustainable Source of Employment and Livelihood for Rural Women and Youth in The Gambia

Kaddy FATTY

The Gambia: The Place of Agriculture in the Rural Area

Elena GOLISHEVA

Challenges and Opportunities of Inclusive Tourism Development in Uzbekistan

Constantin ILAŞ

Religious Tourism in the North-East Region of Romania: Sacred Heritage and Regional Development

Hatice SARI GÖK, Simge ŞALVARCI

Examination of Glamping Tourism Experiences with Netnography Method: Fethiye Case

Session 3

Thursday, 29 May

4:00 PM – 6:30 PM

Council Room 1 (Building B)

English

Hybrid

Chair: Mohammad SHAHPARAN (Uzbekistan)

Mohammed Tariqul ISLAM, Neethiahnathan Ari RAGAVAN, Jeetesh KUMAR

Cruise Tourism Destination Branding and Economic Growth in Penang, Malaysia: An Integrated Theoretical Framework

Valeria KLITSOUNOVA

The Role of Nongovernmental Organizations in Rural Tourism Development: Global, National and Regional Levels

Ajay KUMAR, Ashish RAINA

Demographic Analysis of Adventure Tourists Visiting Himachal Pradesh: Trends, Preferences, and Motivations

Sardor KUVANDIKOV

The Impact of Tourism on Local Communities and Their Cultural Heritage

Najat MOUHOU

Environmental and Economic Impacts of Mountain Tourism: A Critical Review

Najat MOUHOU

Globalization and Mountain Communities: A Critical Review of Mari Oiry Varacca's book Montagnards dans la mondialisation

Emanuela-Adina NICULA, Isabelle Margareta OPREA

Sustainable Transitions in Rural Tourism: Balancing Economic Growth and Environmental Conservation

Temidayo Samuel OJO

Sustainable Tourism: Theory and Reality

Mohammad SHAHPARAN

Exploring the Potential of Rural Tourism in the Mirankul Region of Samarkand: Opportunities, Challenges, and Sustainable Development

Walter WYMER

Improving Rural and Suburban Bus Tourism Experiences: The Value Chain

Session 4

Thursday, 29 May

4:00 PM – 6:00 PM

Vasile Ardelean Amphitheater

English

Online

Chair: Vimal Chandra VERMA (India)

Pratibha PANDEY, Vimal Chandra VERMA

An Empirical Analysis of Influencing Factors Affecting Health Tourism with Reference to Young Consumers

Hamidreza SOLAYMANI OSBOOEI

The Impact of Climate and Land-Use Changes on Iranian Mountainous Areas

Alijon SUYUNOV

Preserving Nature: Sustainable Tourism Practices in the Nuratau Mountains in Uzbekistan

Brankica TODOROVIĆ

The Potential of Cultural Heritage and Creative Industry in Relation to Sustainable Development

Brankica TODOROVIĆ

The Importance of Events as an Integral Part of the Tourism Offer and the Creative Industry

Liliana VELEA, Anișoara IRIMESCU, Mihaela Tinca UDRIȘTIOIU, Silvia PUIU, Roxana BOJARIU, Zenaida CHIȚU

The Impact of Natural Landscape Attractiveness on Tourism Flow in Romanian Rural Tourist Destinations

Vimal Chandra VERMA

Exploring Agritourism Opportunities in the Siddharthnagar District of Uttar Pradesh: A Focus on Aromatic Kalanamak Rice

George ZOGRAFOS

Mountain Areas of Greece as a Destination for Tourists of Ages 55+

Session 5

Friday, 30 May

9:30 AM – 12:00 AM

Mountain Amphitheater

Romanian

Hybrid

Chair: Ciprian Ionel ALECU (Romania)

Ciprian Ionel ALECU, Daniela MATEI

Resilience in Rural Tourism: A Major Conceptual Challenge in the Current Context

Vasile AVĂDĂNEI, Ioan SURDU, Lidia DORNEANU (AVĂDĂNEI)

Transdisciplinary Approaches in the World of Mountain Tourism

Ioan GONTARIU, Lavinia HRENIUC

Considerations on the Evaluation of Suceava Region Tourism Potential

Ciprian Constantin IFTIMOAEI

The Role of Official Statistics in the Public Policymaking Process in the Field of Tourism in Romania

Manuela-Mihaela IFTIMOAEI

Financial Instruments for the Development of the Social Economy Organizations

Ina ISAC

Rock-Hewn Church "Nativity of the Mother of God", Monastic Complex of the Orheiul Vechi Cultural and Natural Reserve, Republic of Moldova

Elena-Manuela IȘTOC

The Use of Digitalization in Romanian Rural Tourism and the Challenges It Poses

Daniela MATEI, Ciprian Ionel ALECU

Peri-Urban Tourism: An Opportunity for Sustainable Development in Urban Outskirts

Alina Cristina NICULESCU

The Digital Transformation of Cultural Routes, as Tourist Products, in the Age of Technology

Andrei Ștefan VASILE, Liviu MĂRCUȚĂ, Rareș IAGARU

Management of the Identification and Sustainable Valuation of Tourist Resources in the Călimănești Location

Session 6

Friday, 30 May

9:30 AM – 12:00 AM

Council Room 1 (Building B)

Romanian

Onsite

Chair: Corina MATEI GHERMAN (Romania)

Corina MATEI GHERMAN, Doina GURIȚĂ

Rural Tourism in the Face of Food Insecurity: Challenges and Development Prospects

Corina MATEI GHERMAN, Calistrat ROBU

The Tourism Company Manager in the Face of Modern Stress Challenges

Corina MATEI GHERMAN, Matei VASILE

Manager and Motivation: A Pathway to Performance in a Tourism Company

George NICULESCU, Doina TĂTARU

Emerging Trends in Integrating Digital Technologies into Rural Tourism

Cristina SOLTAN RUSU

Digital Transformation in the Tourism Industry

Mirela STOICAN, Carmen Corina VIȘAN, Claudia Cornelia ENACHE

Combating Food Waste in Rural Guesthouses in the Rucăr-Brain Area, Brașov County, by Applying the Principles of One Health and the Circular Economy

Dan Constantin ȘUMOVȘCHI

Redefining the Relevance of Academic Research in Today's Social Landscape

Dan Constantin ȘUMOVȘCHI, Radu Adrian MORARU

The North-East of Romania as a Tourist Destination in the Post-Pandemic Era

Ion TALABĂ

Negative Effects of Overtourism

Vasile TODINCĂ, Maria Flavia POP

Rural Tourism Development Directions and Ethno-Tourism in the Land of Beiuș

Session 7

Friday, 30 May

9:30 AM – 12:00 AM

Vasile Ardelean Amphitheater

Romanian

Hybrid

Chair: Dănuț UNGUREANU (Romania)

Daniela ANTONESCU

Integrated Territorial Planning of a Homogeneous Mountain System: Pădurea Craiului Microregion

Nicoleta BELU, Carmen IORDACHE

Spiritual Landmarks in the Vâlcea Mountains

Mirela CANDREA

Main Determinants of Economic Development in the Dorna Basin

Mirela CANDREA

Comparative Analysis of Mountain Area Development

Ivan LUCHIAN, Svetlana GHERJAVCA

Global Tourism Insurance Trends

Gabriela Cornelia PICIU

Circular Tourism Economy between Hope and Certainty

Silvia SAVCENCO, Mihail CIOBANU

Călărași: A Model for Valorizing Rural Heritage through Tourism

Dănuț UNGUREANU

Tourism Development Models in the French and Swiss Alps

Dănuț UNGUREANU

Local Gastronomic Points: From Concept to a National Tourism Network

Session 8

Friday, 30 May

9:30 AM – 12:00 AM

Council Room 2 (Building A)

Romanian

Hybrid

Chair: Doina GURIȚĂ (Romania)

Manuela APETREI, Irina Simona AIONESĂ

Silvotherapy: A Tourist and Therapeutic Asset of the Mountain Area

Felicia CEAUȘU

Cultural and Social Impact of Tourism in the Digital Age

Alexandru CORDOȘ

Development Projects for Disadvantaged Mountain Areas

Marilena DONCEAN

Methods for Setting Prices of Products and Services in Rural Tourism

Doina GURIȚĂ

International Marketing: The Key to Product Development and Sales in Global Markets

Doina GURIȚĂ

Agri-Food Tourism Today: Trends and Perspectives

Alina-Petronela HALLER

Tourism and Globalization Dynamics in Central and Eastern Europe: Insights from Panel Data Analysis for a Resilient Economy

Georgia TACU

Cultural Tourism in the Age of Globalization: Between Authenticity and Spectacle

Ligian TUDOROIU, Remus Petre CÎRSTEA

Poienari Fortress (Argeş): Lights and Shadows in Contemporary Tourist Valorization

Paul Andrei ALBU, Violeta TURCUŞ

Tourism, a Powerful Tool for Rural Development in the EU

Rural regions play a vital role in the social identity and economic capacity of Europe. They accommodate 137 million individuals and comprise more than 80% of the continent's land area. These regions, comprising remote islands, elevated terrains, farming areas, and various other locations, are well-known and appreciated for their contributions to food cultivation, stewardship of natural resources, preservation of scenic landscapes, and promotion of leisure and tourism activities. One of the policy domains viewed as a possibility is rural tourism. It is thought that rural tourism has the potential to provide fresh opportunities for local rural communities and support rural ecosystems, fostering new energy that enhances the appeal of the area. The research investigates trends in rural tourism growth, highlighting both obstacles and potential benefits, while also assessing the policies and financial strategies that aid rural tourism development. The goal is to provide local and regional officials with insights and policy suggestions that will help in the promotion of rural tourism in these areas.

Ciprian Ionel ALECU, Daniela MATEI

Resilience in Rural Tourism: A Major Conceptual Challenge in the Current Context

The concept of resilience has undergone multiple theoretical and practical developments over the past two decades. The most significant contributions in the specialized literature focus on either the normative or the process-oriented dimension of resilience. Many studies analyze the attributes, resources, or behaviours of organizations that have managed—or failed—to adapt to various challenges in the business environment. It is clear that each field has its own specific characteristics, and in the case of rural tourism, both a processual approach—defining different stages of resilience and emphasizing its dynamic nature—and an analysis of the main dimensions of resilience and the adaptive capacities of organizations are needed. The purpose of this article is to develop a conceptual framework specific to the phenomenon of resilience in rural tourism, with an emphasis on its particular dimension, and to analyze the key competencies and capacities of organizational resilience in correlation with the perspective of "resilience as a process". We also examine the interrelations between the various stages of resilience and the determining factors.

Daniela ANTONESCU

Integrated Territorial Planning of a Homogeneous Mountain System: Pădurea Craiului 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 Pădurea Craiului ("The Forest of the Voivode"), 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 Pădurea Craiului mountain microregion.

Manuela APETREI, Irina Simona AIONESĂ

Silvotherapy: A Tourist and Therapeutic Asset of the Mountain Area

The attraction points of the tourist destination are those that condition the choice of the respective area by tourists, being generated by elements of natural, architectural, cultural and industrial heritage. Modern society has gone through profound crises (especially of economic and ecological nature), crises that were determined in particular by the breaking of the harmonious bond between man and nature, with profound reverberations on the emotional and mental health of individuals. For this reason, the connection with the elements of nature is one of the best ways that we can use in the healing and regeneration process. Silvotherapy ("forest bath"), as an integral part of naturopathy, is an old therapeutic practice and represents a natural method of preventing and/or improving physical, mental or emotional conditions with the help of trees, thanks to the ozonated air charged with negative ions, but also the volatile oils emanated by them. Trees in the mountain area have certain volatile substances that target certain pathogens, also having balancing effects on the autonomic nervous system (sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems).

Vasile AVĂDĂNEI, Ioan SURDU, Lidia DORNEANU (AVĂDĂNEI)

Transdisciplinary Approaches in the World of Mountain Tourism

Rural tourism, but especially mountain tourism, has become an emerging economic sector with an increasingly large share in the income obtained at the level of micro-regions/mountain communities, through the generation of specific added value. Its manifestation takes complex forms and requires a transdisciplinary approach in the supply-consumption relationship, marked by multiple interactions with related fields specific to education, culture, spirituality. These interfaces attract and delight rural tourism consumers, especially those still under the emotions generated by the nostalgia of times not long ago. But, if we try to imagine the near future, we are faced with an increasing concern regarding how the transfer between generations will be made to ensure a sustainable path for the rural mountain space. This paper aims to define the framework for a transdisciplinary scientific approach to rural mountain tourism from the perspective of its economic and social necessity correlated with traditional, historical, cultural and spiritual aspects. Such an approach highlights a chain of hypotheses and evidence on a matrix that defines a succession of links on the supply chain and the value chain. These links constitute component parts of the structure of social-economic systems (SES) and complex adaptive systems (CAS) that lead to the continuous reinvention and reorganization of business models in the mountain countryside. At the same time, topics from the more complex matrix of rural mountain tourism are proposed for debate, through an inter-pluri-transdisciplinary approach. The recommendation for the practical application of these types of approaches, in addition to ensuring the sustainability and profitability of providers/beneficiaries of various forms of rural tourism, is its integration into the integrated territorial development of mountain microregions through responsible tourism, the relationship with the environment, education, respect for nature and culture, respect for history, awareness of the responsibility of intra- and intergenerational messages. In such a system of connections and interdependencies, an important aspect of analysis is human resources management, through the tandem hosts-guests and professional training-skills. The research conducted contributes to deciphering relevant aspects of an inter-multidisciplinary nature with an emphasis on the transdisciplinary one, resulting from the association: integrated rural mountain development – tourism development.

Nicoleta BELU, Carmen IORDACHE

Spiritual Landmarks in the Vâlcea Mountains

The lands of Vâlcea, loaded with history and spirituality represents an important component of national and world cultural heritage. With a significant number of monasteries-each with its history and significance, Oltenia below the mountain can be considered the second Bucovina. Religious tourism reborn in the last period is an important segment both in national and international tourism. Religious tourism and pilgrimage, that is travel for religious, spiritual purposes, visualizing religious monuments and artefacts, are a form of tourism increasingly practiced. Today, tourists are increasingly interested of monasteries, cathedrals, sacred architectures, cultural and historical sites become tourist resources, attractive and profitable. In addition to the divine experience essential in this type of tourism, knowledge is also needed to appreciate and understand the significance and value of these tourist attractions.

Nigora Gazievna BUKHAROVA

Agrotourism in Uzbekistan: Prospects, Challenges and Solutions

Agrotourism in Uzbekistan is gaining increasing importance as a sustainable tool for rural development, preservation of traditional lifestyles, and expansion of local economic opportunities. For information, in 2023-2024, a complex in the safari direction of tourism was created in the Dalvarzin area of Bekabad district and Degantepa area of Nurafshan city. Moreover, each region of the country is famous for its special agricultural product. The country's agricultural riches, including more than 80 grape varieties and a diversity of fruits such as apricots, figs, pomegranates, melons, and persimmons, create favorable conditions for attracting tourists interested in gastronomic and ethno-cultural experiences. In 2024, Uzbekistan received 8.2 million foreign tourists, and tourism revenue reached \$3.4 billion. These figures reflect the growing interest in non-traditional tourism sectors, including agrotourism. Particular attention is paid to the development of agrotourism as a promising area. The country is implementing projects to create "tourist mahallas" and "tourist villages", where tourists are assigned the appropriate status if there are at least 20 family guest houses and various services are provided. A specialized web portal *agroturizm.uz* has been created, uniting agro- and ecotourism sites, which helps to popularize rural tourism and attract tourists. However, the development of agrotourism faces a number of problems: insufficient infrastructure in rural areas, limited financial resources, a shortage of qualified personnel and a low level of awareness of the local population about the possibilities of agrotourism. To solve these problems, an integrated approach is proposed, including government support, the development of partnerships between the private sector and local communities, as well as the introduction of innovative methods of marketing and promoting tourism products. Thus, the integration of traditional rural life with modern technologies and approaches in the field of tourism can become a key factor in the sustainable development of agrotourism in Uzbekistan, contributing to economic growth and cultural enrichment of the country. This study employed qualitative research methods, including a review of national tourism programs, analysis of academic and governmental sources (such as *agroturizm.uz*), and semi-structured interviews with tourism professionals and farmers in Samarkand, Fergana, and Kashkadarya regions. Statistical data were collected from the State Committee of Statistics, the Ministry of Tourism of Uzbekistan, and international databases (UN Tourism, World Bank). Findings indicate that Uzbekistan's agrotourism advantages include its natural diversity, strong agricultural traditions, rich gastronomic heritage, and welcoming attitude toward guests. However, several issues were identified: insufficient infrastructure in remote areas, lack of skilled personnel, weak promotion of agrotourism routes, and limited youth engagement. A positive example is the development of tourist mahallas, designated agrotourism clusters supported by the government. The analysis suggests that agrotourism development requires a comprehensive approach involving infrastructure investment, local population training, digital service implementation (e.g., *agroturizm.uz*), and stronger international collaboration. If these measures are successfully implemented, agrotourism could become a sustainable sector that supports rural development and promotes Uzbekistan's cultural image globally. Agrotourism in Uzbekistan represents a promising sector that combines tradition with innovation. With

systematic support, it can become not only a source of income but also a key mechanism for preserving the country's agricultural and cultural heritage.

Mirela CANDREA

Main Determinants of Economic Development in the Dorna Basin

The Dorna Depression covers an area of 222.194 km², accounting for 0.63% of Romania's territory. Within this region there are 9 communes comprising 49 villages and one urban centre – the town of Vatra Dornei. These localities are administratively part of Suceava County and form the Dorna Basin. In the rural area of the Dorna Basin, the favourable factors for development include: the wealth of natural resources – underground mineral resources, forest vegetation, agricultural land that supports both agriculture and animal husbandry, natural landscapes, human potential (a sizeable labour force), forest resources, natural reserves and monuments, as well as patrimonial values such as historical, cultural, architectural and ethnographic heritage, traditional crafts, handicrafts, gastronomy, and tourism. The definition of development objectives and strategies for the rural space of the Dorna Basin arises from the analysis of the determinants of economic growth and is based on the priorities of local communities: increasing incomes and improving quality of life; transforming agriculture into a high-performance activity; attracting and retaining young people in rural areas; developing human potential through support for professional training; supporting the development of technical and social infrastructure through investments; increasing the economic, ecological, and social role of forests; stimulating tourism and traditional crafts; rehabilitating, protecting, and conserving natural areas.

Mirela CANDREA

Comparative Analysis of Mountain Area Development

The mountain ecosystem in Europe covers approximately 40% of the continent's territory and is home to 20% of the total population. Heavily influenced by human activity, this ecosystem has experienced a series of imbalances over the past century. Due to its geo-climatic disadvantages (altitude, climate, steep slopes, low soil fertility, and short vegetation periods), the mountain area has lagged behind in economic and social development. Starting in the 1960s, these regions began to experience accelerated depopulation. Several European countries with significant mountainous regions have adopted sustained economic measures to retain the population in these areas, alongside social initiatives and efforts to promote the cultural mountain landscape. In countries with a high proportion of mountainous terrain, such as Austria (72% of its territory) and Switzerland, national legislation is fully aligned with the specific needs of mountain areas. In Italy, where 52% of the territory is mountainous, the Mountain Law was adopted in 1971, leading to beneficial outcomes for the entire nation. France, with mountain regions covering 32% of its territory, adopted its Mountain Law in 1985 and established a National Mountain Council, headed by the Prime Minister. This body was designated to oversee the implementation of the law. The French Mountain Law was the first to establish a direct connection between economic development and environmental protection, with mountain policies serving as pioneers in shaping national rural development strategies. The core principles are: national solidarity to compensate for natural disadvantages; recognition of the importance and specificity of mountain areas. The significant economic and social disparities between mountain regions and other areas of the country, as well as between rural mountain and urban settings, require the adoption of long-term development strategies. These must ensure, within mountain territories, simultaneous progress in economic development, social well-being, and environmental protection.

Felicia CEAUȘU

Cultural and Social Impact of Tourism in the Digital Age

Tourism has a significant impact on local communities, influencing both social and cultural aspects. These effects can be either positive or negative, depending on how tourism is managed and integrated into the host

society. The social impact of tourism includes positive effects such as job creation; in 2023, the travel and tourism sector contributed 9.1% to the global GDP, generating approximately 9.9 trillion dollars and supporting millions of jobs worldwide. Another positive effect is infrastructure development: the increased demand from tourists leads to improvements in local infrastructure, including transport, communications, and public services. However, there are also potential negative effects: the cost of living may rise, as the influx of tourists can lead to higher prices for goods and services, negatively affecting the local population. Additionally, an increase in drug use can be considered a negative social outcome. The cultural impact of tourism also includes many positive effects: the promotion and preservation of heritage tourism-generated income can be reinvested in the conservation and restoration of cultural and historical sites. Cultural exchange—interaction between tourists and locals can lead to better mutual understanding and appreciation of different traditions and ways of life. Nonetheless, there can be negative effects as well: the commodification of culture—in order to meet tourist demands, some communities may turn their traditions and customs into mere consumer products, thereby losing their authenticity. Moreover, the erosion of cultural values is another negative effect of cultural tourism: external influences may lead to changes in local behaviours and values, sometimes resulting in the loss of cultural identity. In this article, I will present a synthesis of the effects that tourism can have on host communities.

Nur ÇELİK İLAL, Hivda İLAN, Ozan BAHAR

The Role of Women in the Sustainable Tourism Economy: Insights from Future Tourism Projects in Turkey

Tourism is one of the sectors where sustainable development activities are coming to the fore as sustainable development becomes a global agenda. Tourism, one of the fastest growing industries in the world, has a significant impact on economic growth and development, as well as on the environment and socio-cultural structure. It was not possible to achieve sustainable development goals by ignoring the important role of women in the tourism sector. Women's employment in the tourism sector is an important issue and many studies addressing women's employment can be found in the literature. However, the place of women in the sustainable tourism economy should be evaluated from a broad perspective. This study aims to determine women's role and involvement in the development of sustainable tourism economy in Türkiye and to know how Turkish women the main drivers of cultural and environmental preservation in Türkiye are. The study uses a qualitative method of literature review. The research stage was carried out by collecting literature sources, both primary and secondary. Turkish women have a vital role in the preservation of culture and the environment in Türkiye. In this context, the Future is in Tourism project, which is one of the prominent projects in sustainable women employment in Turkey, will be evaluated. In what ways it contributes to women's place in the economy will be revealed.

Carmen CHASOVSCI, Carol Alexandru MOHR

Preserving Bucovina's Cultural Landscape: A Longitudinal Inquiry into Heritage, Tourism, and Rural Regeneration

Since 2011, a series of community-based and heritage-led initiatives have been implemented in the Bucovina region, aiming to preserve, valorize, and sustainably promote its cultural landscape. Several stakeholders were involved and the projects diversified over the years, in an organic growth, responding to needs that were identified step by step. The multiple actions started initially with the purpose to sensitize the stakeholders from the rural area to implement actions for the preservation of the cultural landscape, that is not perceived unfortunately as a part of the tourism product "Bukovina". The paper explores longitudinally the evolution, interrelation, and impact of key projects such as Save the Bucovina Village, restauration and relocation projects, cultural events. These initiatives were designed to reinforce the connection between intangible heritage (traditions, gastronomy, community rituals) and tangible assets (vernacular architecture, rural heritage, local products), while encouraging sustainable tourism models and rural revitalization. Through a

longitudinal lens, we analyze how these projects responded to changing socio-economic conditions, how they fostered local participation and identity, and how they contributed to the construction of Bucovina's image as a cultural tourism destination. The presentation also critically reflects on challenges—such as demographic shifts, tourism over-development risks, and administrative inertia—while proposing strategic pathways for safeguarding and renewing the cultural landscape of Bucovina in the long term.

Alexandru CORDOȘ

Development Projects for Disadvantaged Mountain Areas

Development projects for disadvantaged mountain areas Abstract Romania's mountain area constitutes a special territory, with an economic, social and cultural potential, representing about a third of the national territory. Unfortunately, in this area, there are also disadvantaged regions, which require a special approach. In this sense, concrete policies and strategies must be developed to achieve the following objectives: ensuring the increase in the attractiveness and sustainable development of the disadvantaged mountain area, by valorizing resources, stabilizing the population, maintaining cultural identity, increasing economic power. The Romanian Government has paid special attention to mountain areas and mountain development since the early 1990s, with the establishment of the Romanian Mountain Area Commission. The first mountain law was the Mountain Law 347/2004, which was designed to "regulate the methods of development and protection of the mountain area (art. 1)". It described mountain areas as "disadvantaged" (art. 1) and focused on the conservation of the landscape and biodiversity (art. 3), as well as on maintaining the use of agricultural land and on the conservation of rural areas (art. 3). Over time, the 2004 Mountain Law and its development strategy have clearly become outdated. In this context, the Mountain Law 197/2018 appears, outlining the government's vision for achieving sustainable and inclusive development and protection of mountain regions in Romania (art. 1).

Berk DINAR, Nur ÇELİK İLAL

A Bibliographic Analysis of the Role of Tourism in Local Development

The main objective of this paper is to investigate in detail the role of tourism in local development. Local development has a multifaceted nature, encompassing economic, social, and environmental factors. The primary aim of local development is to improve the living standards of the local population. The tourism sector plays an important role in this process, contributing to the local economy and creating impacts on social structure and culture. This study will be conducted using a literature review methodology. Within the scope of the research, national and international academic publications addressing the role of tourism in local development will be examined. The analysis will focus on identifying the publication years, temporal distribution patterns, author profiles, research methods employed, and the key findings of the studies. Particular attention will be given to studies that emphasize tourism's contributions to local economies, especially in terms of employment generation, income growth, and infrastructure development. In addition, studies exploring the role of tourism in revitalizing local businesses and its broader contributions to regional development will also be considered. Within this framework, the study will systematically present current trends and perspectives in the literature concerning the role of tourism in local development.

Krisztina Melinda DOBAY

Sustainable Local Food Systems Based on Innovative Short Supply Chains in Romania

The goal of creating a resilient food system that provides healthy and affordable options for all can be achieved by practicing sustainable agriculture and using innovative production methods, in innovative and creative ways to provide fresh and nutritious food, while reducing resource use. This means more local food systems, based on short supply chains, that will not only make food more accessible, but also ensure a healthier future for families, with choices that support both personal well-being and environmental sustainability. All of this

requires innovative collective actions that can contribute to reducing social inequalities within local communities, economic well-being, the development of entrepreneurship and the balanced and sustainable territorial development of rural areas. A new type of innovative local food system has developed around Local Gastronomic Points (LGPs) in Romania and refers to private kitchens in rural areas that use local ingredients to create unique culinary experiences. These local food systems support the regional and local economy, are based on the concept of a short food chain, constituting an incentive for capitalizing on local potential and a factor in improving the image of communities and developing gastronomic and rural tourism. By connecting agriculture, gastronomy, tourism and local entrepreneurship, these LGPs not only promote sustainable agri-food systems, but also the development of communities by stimulating interactions between different entities, thus generating additional social capital.

Marilena DONCEAN

Methods for Setting Prices of Products and Services in Rural Tourism

In general, a price expresses, in monetary terms, the value of a good, product, or service. Each of these economic categories has its own market value, which, depending on certain partners and indicators, may be higher or lower. Price setting is based on three main methods: the cost-based method, the demand-based method, and the competition-based method, the latter being the most widely used. To the extent that these prices are properly substantiated — meaning that both the influence of controllable factors and that of independent ones are taken into account — the selling prices offered to clients are closer to their actual value.

Gül ERKOL BAYRAM

Empowering Women Entrepreneurs for Regenerative Tourism Futures: From Rural Barriers to Global Resilience

In the age of regenerative sustainability, inclusive development remains a cornerstone. The author explores the intersection of women entrepreneurship, rural development, and regenerative tourism. Drawing from field experiences and academic insights, the presentation highlights the socio-cultural and economic barriers women face in rural tourism entrepreneurship. Then the paper examines innovative, policy-driven, and community-based strategies to foster women-led, resilient, and sustainable tourism enterprises. Through case studies and international examples, it emphasizes how empowering women entrepreneurs contributes not only to gender equality but also to the regenerative transformation of tourism systems.

Saikou FADERA

Exploring Agriculture as a Sustainable Source of Employment and Livelihood for Rural Women and Youth in The Gambia

Agriculture has historically been a cornerstone of economic development and a primary source of employment for many communities worldwide. In The Gambia, where a significant portion of the population (80%) relies on agriculture for their livelihood, understanding its role in providing employment opportunities and enhancing living standards is crucial. Agriculture is one of the largest sectors in The Gambia, providing jobs to a significant portion of the population. Many rural families depend on farming as their primary source of income. Women's involvement: women are heavily involved in agricultural activities in The Gambia, often managing farms and gardens, processing food, and participating in local and international markets. Their contributions are vital for food security and economic stability in rural areas and the country as a whole. Youth engagement: with a growing youth population, agriculture offers a pathway for young people to engage in productive activities. Initiatives aimed at training and supporting youth in agriculture help to reduce unemployment and promote innovation in farming practices. Food security: by engaging in agriculture, rural communities effectively enhance their food security. Local production reduces dependence on imported food and helps stabilize prices. Economic development: agriculture contributes to

the overall economic development of The Gambia. By investing in agricultural infrastructure, training, and access to markets, the government and NGOs are supporting on such to improve livelihoods. Sustainable practices: Promoting sustainable agricultural practices can empower women and youth while ensuring environmental conservation. Training in organic farming, agroforestry, and sustainable land management can lead to better yields and healthier ecosystems. Income generation: farmers sell their produce in local and regional markets, generating income that supports their families and stimulates local economies. This income is often reinvested in farming activities, education, and health care. Cultural significance: agriculture is deeply embedded in the cultural practices and traditions of Gambian communities. Farming activities are often linked to social events and community gatherings, reinforcing social ties and cultural identity. Government and NGO support: various initiatives by the government and non-governmental organizations aim to enhance agricultural productivity through training, access to credit, and improved agricultural practices. These efforts are crucial for empowering rural communities and promoting sustainable livelihoods. Access to resources: providing access to credit, land, and agricultural inputs is essential for empowering rural women and youths. Programs that facilitate access to these resources can significantly enhance their productivity and income. Challenges: despite its importance, the agricultural sector faces several challenges in The Gambia, including climate change, limited access to modern farming techniques, inadequate infrastructure, and market access issues. These challenges can hinder productivity and income levels for rural farmers. In summary, agriculture is a vital sector for employment and livelihood in The Gambia, especially for rural women and youths. Supporting this sector through training, resources, and sustainable practices can lead to improved economic outcomes and community resilience.

Kaddy FATTY

The Gambia: The Place of Agriculture in the Rural Area

The Gambia imports appreciatively \$15 million worth of pineapples from Ivory Coast transiting through Senegal. Meanwhile, the country has +500,000 hectares of arable land and unique agricultural, cultural and trade advantages to make it a regional producer and exporter of high-value agricultural produce to Senegal, the United Kingdom and Arab nations. Investing in tropical fruit cultivation can empower thousands of Gambian youths to earn a decent living, boost the agritourism sector, and attract direct foreign investment into the country. This will ultimately lead to an improvement in the quality of life of all Gambians and leapfrog the country into a thriving economic powerhouse. To invest in the Pii'ia Gambia initiative and together make the world-renowned producer, processor and exporter of premium pineapples and tropical fruits.

Elena GOLISHEVA

Challenges and Opportunities of Inclusive Tourism Development in Uzbekistan

This study, conducted by the Research Institute for Tourism Development, explores the challenges and prospects of inclusive tourism in Uzbekistan. Data was collected through surveys of 150 persons with disabilities and 55 tourism business representatives. The survey of people with any physical disabilities revealed a strong desire to travel (80%), both domestically and internationally. However, financial constraints limit accessibility, with only 23% having sufficient income for independent travel. Motivation for travel included escaping social isolation (35%), experiencing new cultures (31%), overcoming personal limitations (28%), and acquiring new skills (6%). Major barriers identified included inaccessible infrastructure, a lack of adapted tourist sites, the absence of special (adapted) tours, limited information availability, and a shortage of trained personnel. Tourism businesses largely lack experience with inclusive tourism, with 80% reporting no services for people with disabilities. Cited challenges included high costs, increased responsibility, the need for non-standard approaches, lack of qualified staff, and the absence of a national social tourism program and a comprehensive approach to inclusive tourism development. Both people with disabilities and businesses emphasized the need for qualified personnel to provide accessible tourism services. The Institute's "Excursion in Sign Language" project, funded by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, represents a pioneering effort to

train deaf individuals as tour guides, promoting social inclusion and diversifying tourism services. The project involved 20 participants, 11 of whom completed the training. Dropouts cited psychological barriers related to working in public spaces. This study highlights the urgent need for a national strategy for the development of inclusive tourism. Key recommendations include: developing and implementing a national program for social and inclusive tourism; adapting tourist sites for accessibility; creating training programs for professionals working with the special category of people; enhancing information dissemination and promoting of inclusive tourism; and supporting and expanding social projects like "Excursion in Sign Language". These initiatives are crucial for ensuring that tourism in Uzbekistan is accessible and enjoyable for all.

Ioan GONTARIU, Lavinia HRENIUC

Considerations on the Evaluation of Suceava Region Tourism Potential

The interest in tourism has expanded in recent years, transforming into a phenomenon that draws millions of tourists travelling for leisure both within the country and beyond its borders. At the same time, tourism also serves as a means of capitalizing on all categories of resources, especially natural ones: the beauty of landscapes, the healing properties of thermal or mineral waters, and favourable climatic conditions. In the current context, due to the presence of untapped and underutilized tourist resources—with significant consequences for the development of the economy and society, as well as for national and international human relations—tourism represents a remedy for disadvantaged regions. As a tourist destination, the Suceava region, also known as Southern Bucovina, is designed as a dynamic model of development and is part of a process of qualitative renewal through the increasingly high-level valorization of its rich resources, aiming to regain tourists' attention as a destination for pure ecological tourism. The diversity, volume, and value of the existing tourism potential in Suceava County support various ways of actively spending leisure time, relaxing, and engaging in specific forms of tourism.

Doina GURÎȚĂ

International Marketing: The Key to Product Development and Sales in Global Markets

In this article, the author discusses international marketing, an essential component for the success of companies in global markets. International marketing involves adapting product, pricing, distribution, and promotion strategies to meet the demands and preferences of consumers in different countries. In a globalized world, characterized by intense competition and diverse consumer preferences, international marketing becomes an absolute necessity for business growth and success. It entails researching foreign markets, complying with local regulations, using intercultural communication strategies, and developing efficient distribution channels. Success in international markets depends on a company's ability to understand and quickly adapt to the dynamics of each region.

Doina GURÎȚĂ

Agri-Food Tourism Today: Trends and Perspectives

In this article, the author discusses agri-food tourism, a form of tourism that is gaining popularity worldwide, offering tourists authentic experiences in rural areas and access to high-quality local products. Agri-food tourism combines farm visits, traditional product tastings, and educational activities, becoming an important source of income for local communities. Nowadays, this type of tourism increasingly focuses on sustainability, organic products, and the promotion of gastronomic heritage. Regions that promote agri-food tourism have seen a significant rise in interest from tourists who are concerned with health, ecology, and authentic experiences.

Alina-Petronela HALLER

Tourism and Globalization Dynamics in Central and Eastern Europe: Insights from Panel Data Analysis for a Resilient Economy

The significance of tourism has driven the exploration of globalization dynamics through factors such as tourism, pollution emissions, digitization, trade openness, and economic growth in the Central and Eastern European (CEE) region. This study employs panel data analysis and regression methods using data from the World Bank, the United Nations World Tourism Organization, and the KOF Index for the period 1999–2021. The findings reveal that globalization is influenced by tourism, except in Croatia and Romania, without following a uniform pattern. While tourism, trade openness, and digitization contribute to the region's integration into the global market, their impact is not decisive. Moreover, sustainability does not show significant effects, but tourism expenditures positively impact the CEE region, particularly in Poland. Tourist flows are beneficial in Bulgaria and Estonia, occupancy rates in Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, and Hungary, digitization in Poland, Bulgaria, Slovenia, and Hungary, and economic growth in Lithuania and Romania. The results contribute to the literature and inform economic policy, highlighting the need for tailored measures to enhance global market integration through tourism.

Ciprian Constantin IFTIMOAEI

The Role of Official Statistics in the Public Policymaking Process in the Field of Tourism in Romania

The paper consists of a descriptive analysis of domestic and international tourism activity, based on data from the National Institute of Statistics: tourist accommodation structures, tourist accommodation capacity in operation, by types of structures, tourist areas, development regions and counties, as well as the arrivals of foreign visitors to Romania, by countries of origin of visitors and the departures of Romanian visitors abroad, by means of transport used. The data provided by the research conducted by the National Institute of Statistics underpin public policies in the field of domestic and international tourism.

Manuela-Mihaela IFTIMOAEI

Financial Instruments for the Development of the Social Economy Organizations

My presentation focuses on the field of social entrepreneurship in which I have been active for over a decade, within the "Alături de Voi" (ADV) Romania Foundation, which is a national leader in the social economy. Social entrepreneurship, to the development of which I have contributed all these years, together with other social economy organizations, is a business model that combines economic objectives with social and environmental impact. Social economy organizations need adapted financial instruments because, unlike traditional businesses, they reinvest profits to support social causes. The ADV Romania Foundation has developed the first non-banking financial institution in Romania dedicated exclusively to the social economy, which facilitates access to affordable credit, financial education and specialized assistance for the sustainable development of businesses that also have social goals. The funding is targeted at areas such as assistive technologies, digitization, social inclusion and ecotourism, with the main objective of supporting vulnerable communities. An example of successful social entrepreneurship is Wise Travel, a travel agency that reinvests 100% of its profits in social projects. Through an innovative model, the agency works with companies and organizations to organize sustainable travel, helping to integrate people from disadvantaged groups. WISE Travel is part of the ADV Romania Group, one of the largest social enterprises in the country, a promoter of the social economy in Romania, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. Wise Travel demonstrates how tourism can become a tool for social inclusion, supported by social funding, grants and strategic partnerships. This example underlines the importance of access to flexible sources of funding, which are essential for expanding the social impact of social economy entrepreneurship.

Constantin ILAȘ

Religious Tourism in the North-East Region of Romania: Sacred Heritage and Regional Development

Religious tourism, as a distinct form of cultural tourism, plays an increasingly important role in the socio-economic development of Romania's North-East region. This paper aims to investigate the interaction between sacred heritage and regional development strategies. It also presents a case study and an interpretation of statistical data related to three major Orthodox pilgrimage centres in the region: Putna Monastery, Neamț Monastery, and the Metropolitan Cathedral of Iași. The findings highlight the positive impact of religious tourism on the local economy, community cohesion, and the preservation of cultural identity, while also addressing challenges related to infrastructure and sustainability. Moreover, the study emphasizes the need for more transparent and effective collaboration between the Church, public authorities, and the private sector in order to facilitate the sustainable development of this form of tourism.

Ina ISAC

Rock-Hewn Church "Nativity of the Mother of God", Monastic Complex of the Orheiul Vechi Cultural and Natural Reserve, Republic of Moldova

The rock-hewn church bearing the same name as the "Nativity of the Mother of God" Monastery is an archaeological, natural, and religious site of both national and international importance. It is one of the oldest and most impressive monastic settlements in the Republic of Moldova. The church is located on the slope of the Răut River, in the village of Butuceni, Orhei District, and is part of the Orheiul Vechi Cultural and Natural Reserve. This place of worship is integrated into a rock-hewn monastic complex consisting of an altar, monks' cells, and cave galleries. The structure was manually carved into the limestone cliff by expanding pre-existing natural niches. These were originally separate, difficult-to-access caves used for prayer and shelter by monks who sought refuge in the area. Archaeological excavations in the surrounding area support the hypothesis that the caves forming the monastery were inhabited since ancient times, with evidence of Geto-Dacian cultures discovered nearby. However, since the monastic complex itself has not undergone systematic archaeological research, the only confirmed historical evidence dates from the early medieval period, specifically the 13th–14th centuries. Over time, the monastic site and church have undergone several modifications. Initially, access was from the steep cliffside, and several cave chambers served as living quarters, prayer spaces, or burial sites. Later, due to the collapse of the original stairway and part of the terrace, the chambers were unified and the entrance relocated. These works were carried out in multiple phases. The most significant changes occurred between 1819 and 1821, under the guidance of Metropolitan Gavriil Bănulescu-Bodoni of Chișinău and Hotin. Responding to local residents' requests to reopen the church, he urged the creation of a safer, more accessible entrance. As a result, the entrance was moved to the slope facing the village, replacing the original access point on the cliffside above the river. The church interior was expanded, and the entrance was lowered to facilitate access for worshippers. Additionally, a two-level stone bell tower was built on top of the rock, above the porch ceiling, giving the church a more complex architectural structure. During the communist regime, the church suffered damage and was closed, like many other places of worship during that period. It was reopened and reinhabited between 1990 and 1991. After reopening, the church came under the administration of the Orheiul Vechi Museum Complex, now the Orheiul Vechi Cultural and Natural Reserve. Today, the church is cared for by a monastic community that decided to change its original dedication from the "Nativity of the Mother of God" to the "Dormition of the Mother of God", celebrated on 28 August. The church continues to stand as a strong symbol of spirituality and the resilience of Christianity in medieval Moldova. It preserves the tradition of ancient Carpathian hermitages—withdrawal, ascetic fasting, prayer, and labour both within and around the monastery. It is one of the oldest and best-preserved rock-hewn churches in Moldova and is visited daily by tourists from both within the country and abroad. Those who cross its threshold often experience a profound spiritual energy, nurtured by the spectacular natural surroundings and the sanctity of the monks who once lived and prayed there.

Mohammed Tariqul ISLAM, Neethiahnathan Ari RAGAVAN, Jeetesh KUMAR

Cruise Tourism Destination Branding and Economic Growth in Penang, Malaysia: An Integrated Theoretical Framework

Cruise tourism is a significant segment of the global tourism industry, driving economic development for numerous destinations. Despite Malaysia's growing tourism sector, its cruise tourism market lags behind regional competitors. Penang, a strategic tourism hub renowned for its cultural heritage and coastal attractions, received approximately 7 million tourists in 2023; however, cruise tourism accounted for only 0.57 million arrivals, highlighting substantial untapped potential. Destination branding is crucial for tourism development, influencing tourist perception, destination choice, and repeat visitation. Yet, research on cruise tourism branding remains fragmented, with limited understanding of its impact on demand and regional economic growth, particularly in emerging destinations like Penang. This study proposes a comprehensive framework to investigate the impact of cruise tourism destination branding on Penang's economic growth. Building upon Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) model, this framework incorporates key branding dimensions such as destination salience, quality, attachment, and loyalty to examine their influence on destination choice intentions. Furthermore, the framework integrates the Tourism-Led Growth Hypothesis (TLGH) to assess broader economic implications and employs Protection Motivation Theory (PMT) to explore the moderating effect of perceived safety on tourist behavior. This study aims to provide destination managers and policymakers with actionable strategies to enhance Penang's cruise tourism sector and foster sustainable economic growth.

Elena-Manuela IȘTOC

The Use of Digitalization in Romanian Rural Tourism and the Challenges It Poses

Digitalization is undeniably one of the most impactful transformations currently redefining our society. New technologies, including artificial intelligence, augmented reality, cloud computing, etc. are changing the way people plan and experience travel and present opportunities not only to reach new consumers with novel tourism products, but also to improve the operations and performance of businesses in the rural tourism sector and accelerate the transition to more sustainable business models. These changes have created new opportunities, as well as challenges, for tourism businesses, which are striving to meet consumer demands and gain a competitive advantage. Accordingly, this paper aims to analyze the extent to which Romanian rural tourism entrepreneurs have embraced digital technologies, the barriers they encounter, and the perceived challenges. The proposed objectives were achieved by surveying enterprises and institutions involved in Romanian rural tourism. The paper provides an overview of the current state of digitalization of the Romanian rural tourism industry and the challenges in adopting ICT innovations. The results of this study can provide useful information to those who manage Romanian rural tourist destinations, to tourism companies, and all those interested.

Momodou JALLOW

Gambia: Land of Agriculture where Farming Depends on Rural Areas

The Gambia economy heavily relies on agriculture, particularly in rural areas. Where 70% of the population depends on farming for their livelihood, contributing significantly to the country's GDP and foreign exchange, and food security. Sustaining millions of rural families and shaping the nation's cultural identity. The fertile lands and favourable climate offer the perfect condition for cultivation a range of crops, from groundnuts and millets to rice and a variety of fruits and vegetables. Rural communities are at the heart of this agricultural tradition. Farming here is not just an economic activity but a way of life intricately linked with heritage and social bonds. Smallholder farmers employ both traditional practices and modern techniques to maximize yields, ensuring that crops can withstand the challenges posed by seasonal changes and occasional erratic weather patterns. Government support plays a crucial role in boosting agricultural productivity. Initiatives

aimed at modernizing the sector and improving rural infrastructure are increasingly prioritized. These efforts include promoting sustainable farming methods, improving access to markets, and investing in research and development to address climate change challenges and enhance food security. Moreover, improved access to technologies and capacity-building programs has empowered rural farmers to face the evolving demand of global markets. These strategic interventions aim not only to increase production but also to ensure that agriculture practices across the rural areas remain sustainable for future generations. The Gambia's identity as a land of agriculture is deeply rooted in its rural communities. As the nation continues to channel efforts towards modernizing farming practice and resilience, the agriculture sector is poised for growth, promising a brighter and more sustainable future.

Valeria KLITSOUNOVA

The Role of Nongovernmental Organizations in Rural Tourism Development: Global, National and Regional Levels

This article analyzes activities of non-profit organizations in the field of rural tourism at different levels – global, national and local. Their special role is shown in uniting rural residents and engaging them in tourism, lobbying their interests, providing education, setting quality standards, creating a tourist product and promoting it on national and international markets, as well as in introducing innovations and creative approaches to sustainable development based on the principle of "think globally - act locally". They change rural environment for the better, attract tourists into rural regions and make economy greener. Global level is characterized by example of the Global Agritourism Network (GAN). National level is described by case studies from Eastern Europe (activities of national rural tourism associations). For characteristic of local processes, we use local initiatives from Belarus, Poland and Estonia. Each case demonstrates special approach and could be very inspirational for whole industry.

Ajay KUMAR, Ashish RAINA

Demographic Analysis of Adventure Tourists Visiting Himachal Pradesh: Trends, Preferences, and Motivations

Adventure tourism is a dynamic and fast-growing area of the global travel business, with substantial economic and cultural implications. This study looks on the demographics, preferences, and motives of adventure visitors in Himachal Pradesh, a popular destination for sports including trekking, paragliding, skiing, and mountain biking. The goals include evaluating important demographic characteristics such as age, gender, income level, and education, as well as determining the elements that influence their travel preferences, such as nature-based experiences, physical difficulties, and cultural exploration. The research takes a mixed-methods approach, incorporating primary data from structured surveys and interviews with 345 adventure visitors, as well as insights from 200 Booking.com reviews. Secondary data from tourism reports and scholarly literature help to contextualize the findings. Quantitative data were evaluated using statistical methods such as SPSS, whereas qualitative data were thematically analyzed to identify patterns in tourist motivations and experiences. According to the findings, Himachal Pradesh's adventure tourism industry primarily attracts young, educated urban professionals aged 25-40, with nearly equal gender distribution. Nature's beauty, exciting activities, and cultural attraction are the key motivators. However, issues such as inadequate transportation, excessive activity costs, and inconsistent safety precautions arose as major concerns. Positive feedback emphasized scenic surroundings, hospitality, and a variety of activities, whilst negative feedback focused on infrastructure and cleanliness issues. The study indicates that focused marketing techniques, infrastructural upgrades, and sustainable practices are critical for increasing tourist satisfaction while protecting Himachal Pradesh's natural and cultural legacy. By resolving these issues, the region can strengthen its position as a top adventure tourism destination while balancing economic growth and environmental care. This research provides governments, tour operators, and local communities with actionable insights to

promote sustainable growth in the adventure tourism sector, assuring long-term benefits for both stakeholders and the environment.

Jeetesh KUMAR

Revolutionizing the Hospitality Industry: The Role of AI in Enhancing Customer Experience and Driving Operational Efficiency

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming the hospitality industry by personalizing guest experiences and streamlining operations. In Malaysia, AI-powered tools are reshaping service delivery from contactless check-ins to dynamic room settings that adjust lighting and temperature based on guest preferences. Hotels like Shangri-La Kuala Lumpur and The Majestic Hotel have adopted AI for personalized guest interactions, predictive analytics, and efficient resource allocation. AI chatbots and virtual assistants offer 24/7 support, enhancing responsiveness and reducing staff workload. Beyond customer-facing roles, AI optimizes operations through smart housekeeping, maintenance scheduling, and energy management, contributing to sustainability goals. AI is also reshaping marketing and customer engagement. Companies such as AirAsia utilize AI to deliver personalized promotions based on customer behaviour, improving loyalty and increasing revenue. Despite its benefits, AI adoption poses challenges, including infrastructure investment, data privacy concerns, and the risk of depersonalizing service. Malaysia's Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA) plays a crucial role in ensuring ethical data use. The integration of AI must therefore balance automation with the essential human touch that defines hospitality. As AI technologies advance, Malaysia's hospitality sector stands to gain a competitive edge by offering smarter, guest-centric services. Embracing AI not only improves service efficiency and customer satisfaction but also positions the nation as a leader in smart tourism, blending innovation with cultural authenticity.

Sardor KUVANDIKOV

The Impact of Tourism on Local Communities and Their Cultural Heritage

This inquiry examines the six components of tourism goals and their impacts on neighborhood communities. The components are attractions, availability, comforts, accessible bundles, exercises, and auxiliary administrations. Up to 60 respondents were included in this study based on a set of surveys. The comes about demonstrated that there are six components of tourism goals within the study region and the foremost noticeable component is the fascination component because it possibly upgrades mindfulness on the preservation of the social and social legacy among the nearby community. The isolation between seen costs and benefits is clear in terms of socio-cultural impacts, where tourism can bring great benefits but moreover risk the pith of a destination's culture. Usually apparent in Center Eastern countries the Inlet country's tourism development is regularly seen as a key financial column, and where questions approximately the social impacts of tourism have to be inquired. Social legacy counting the chronicled and archeological locales of a put or a nation too contributes to traveler fascination. Social tourism can moreover include the appearance of social areas that offer different social encounters to the guests. Devout tourism includes devout journeys to devout locales for devout reasons. Social tourism brings imperative socio-economic benefits to the neighborhood community and makes a difference in protecting the social legacy. Be that as it may, most societies are experiencing changes to offer perfect tourism encounters to guests and this might include presenting unused social components or designing ceremonies that never existed some time ago.

Ivan LUCHIAN, Svetlana GHERJAVCA

Global Tourism Insurance Trends

Tourism insurance, in essence, is a specific form of travel insurance that can be considered a financial safety net to reduce the risks and uncertainties associated with travel. Accordingly, tourism insurance forms a segment of the global travel insurance market which is valued at USD 49.7 billion in 2025 and which can reach

USD 86.4 billion by 2030. The study of the topic addressed is based on the analysis of publications available on the Internet by various experts. The purpose of the research was to determine global trends in the field of tourism insurance. Within tourism insurance policies cover adverse events (insurance cases) that may happen to tourists during trips, picnics or vacations under the conditions of their organization in the established form. Tourism insurance provides a complex of products designed to provide protection against the risk of financial losses arising from damage to the insured or their property, or from their liability for damages caused to a third party. The particular forms provided for by tourism insurance are professional indemnity insurance, public liability insurance, cyber insurance, property all-risk insurance. The fundamental factors contributing to the development of tourism insurance are the increase in the well-being of the global population, the expansion of the tourism industry, and the increase in global passenger transport. The modern travel insurance industry is oriented towards implementing ESG (environmental, social and governance) principles and new technologies, such as artificial intelligence.

Fergus MACLAREN

Establishing Sustainable and Responsible Tourism at Rural World Heritage Sites: The Role of the ICOMOS International Cultural Heritage Tourism Charter

Communities located in and around World Heritage sites in rural areas are often challenged to plan, develop and maintain a viable long-term visitor economy. The resonance of foundational factors such as infrastructure, telecommunications, governance and sufficiently trained and skilled human resources, and dealing with longer term elements like sustainability, emergency preparedness and climate change can be difficult to address for those communities with limited resources. The application of the ICOMOS International Cultural Heritage Tourism Charter provides the framework of seven principles that can help best direct those resources to maintain, interpret and manage rural World Heritage sites for now and into the future.

Minodora MANU, Raluca Ioana BĂNCILĂ, Owen MOUNTFORD, Teodor MARUȘCA, Adrian Vasile BLAJ, Marilena ONETE

Soil Mite Fauna as Bioindicator of Management Type of Praticolous Ecosystems from Bucegi Mountains, Romania

This study demonstrates the importance of knowing the ecology of the mite communities, as important tools for environment assessment. Permanent grasslands represent 33% of the total utilized agricultural area in Europe and 18.90% in Romania. Grasslands are among the most species-rich habitats in Europe. The mountain grasslands of Romania are very important from ecological and pastoral points of view. They are characterized by many species of plants and animals that often have an ecological plasticity. Scientific studies demonstrated that maintaining functionally diverse invertebrate communities in grasslands may have positive effects on ecosystem functionality. Soil mites (Acari, Mesostigmata) are one of the most abundant invertebrate groups. Most species are predators. About 11,000 species have been identified in the world. In soil, they participate indirectly in the decomposition process, feeding mainly on decomposer invertebrates with soft bodies (e.g. springtails, nematodes, larvae of insects or oribatids). They are considered valuable bioindicators, recording a spatial variability that changes over time and is influenced by climatic conditions. Biotic and abiotic factors exert regulatory effects on their populations. Many researchers studied the influence of grazing intensity, fertilization and different abiotic factors on the Mesostigmata communities. Other studies investigated the structure, seasonal and vertical distribution of the mite populations from different types of grasslands. In Romania, studies on Mesostigmata mites have been focused on qualitative and quantitative data or on the influence of heavy metal pollution and other climatic factors on their communities. None of these studies took into consideration chemical and organically fertilized experimental grasslands and their relationship with Mesostigmata fauna. Considering all these aspects, we proposed to investigate some ecological aspects (including the dispersion rate) of soil mite fauna from five experimental grasslands, in correlation with abiotic

factors (vegetation cover, soil temperature, soil moisture content, pH, soil resistance at penetration). In July 2017, 250 soil samples were analyzed, revealing the presence of 30 species, with 1163 individuals. Using modern statistical analysis, we observed that each experimental plot was defined by characteristically environmental conditions, vegetation cover, soil moisture content and soil temperature differing significantly among the experimental grasslands. Each experimental plot was characterized by the specific indicator species and population parameters (numerical abundance and species richness). The effect of these soil variables was demonstrated even at species level. Analyzing the dispersal rates of mite communities between the plots (based on species frequency), we demonstrated that between the experimental grasslands dominated by the accessory and accidental species, the mobility of these invertebrate communities was higher.

Corina MATEI GHERMAN, Doina GURIȚĂ

Rural Tourism in the Face of Food Insecurity: Challenges and Development Prospects

The lack of food remains one of the most serious threats to humanity, with a direct impact on rural development and the tourism industry, especially in vulnerable regions. Rural tourism, which relies on the stability of local communities and natural resources, is deeply affected by hunger, poverty, and the lack of essential infrastructure. As early as 1974, at the World Food Conference in Rome, the goal of eradicating global hunger was set—an initiative that would have also contributed to expanding tourism opportunities in rural areas. Unfortunately, this objective has not been achieved, due to economic crises, the global pandemic, armed conflicts, and climate instability—factors that have directly affected the development of rural regions and their capacity to attract tourists. Food scarcity, combined with deficiencies in education, healthcare, and access to water, turns these areas into regions bypassed by tourists and travel agencies. This vicious cycle between underdevelopment and the absence of tourism hinders local investment and sustainable economic growth. In this context, tackling food insecurity is not only a humanitarian emergency, but also a key condition for revitalizing tourism and building sustainable and inclusive rural development.

Corina MATEI GHERMAN, Calistrat ROBU

The Tourism Company Manager in the Face of Modern Stress Challenges

Referring to the current period, the "free manager" in the tourism company believes that the broad current of ideas exposed will act as one of the intellectual forces that will influence the development policies of the tourism company in Romania. Tourism companies caught in a temporal gear are forced to develop, to adopt demanding profitability policies in order to face national and international competition. The execution of tasks in a rapid flow generating the inevitable: stress among managers but also the teams they coordinate.

Corina MATEI GHERMAN, Matei VASILE

Manager and Motivation: A Pathway to Performance in a Tourism Company

The emergence of marketing management and in the field of tourism has brought a development on all levels of activity within a tourism company. The tourism industry offers a wide variety of activities, the requirements for each compartment being different, but there must be good coordination between them. A standard organizational model does not exist. The organization of the tourism company/organization encompasses the influences of a large number of factors – location, types of services offered, market characteristics, management team, type of ownership and size of the business. Within the tourism company, an important element is the manager and motivation which represents a path to performance.

Daniela MATEI, Ciprian Ionel ALECU

Peri-Urban Tourism: An Opportunity for Sustainable Development in Urban Outskirts

Peri-urban tourism refers to a form of tourism that takes place in areas located on the outskirts of cities, where natural landscapes, local traditions, and recreational infrastructure provide an attractive alternative to

crowded urban destinations. This type of tourism has become increasingly popular due to the growing need to escape the urban environment and the rising interest in authentic experiences, ecotourism, and recreational activities. One of the key factors in peri-urban tourism is sustainability. Peri-urban regions emphasize environmental protection and the integration of tourism into local development, supporting communities by promoting traditional products and the local economy. Thus, this type of tourism contributes to the economic revitalization of peripheral areas and increases regional attractiveness. Current trends in peri-urban tourism include the digitalization of tourism services, the creation of thematic routes (such as hiking along the Via Transilvanica), the development of ecological infrastructure (bike paths and electric transport), and the promotion of wellness and relaxation tourism. Additionally, initiatives such as the Bucovina Tourism Resort and local partnerships demonstrate the potential of this sector in Romania. Peri-urban tourism offers valuable opportunities for the sustainable development of regions surrounding major cities, promoting a balance between nature conservation, cultural heritage, and community well-being. Investments and effective strategies can transform these areas into reference destinations, attracting tourists eager for authentic experiences and contributing to the economic and social evolution of peri-urban regions.

Najat MOUHOU

Environmental and Economic Impacts of Mountain Tourism: A Critical Review

Mountain tourism has rapidly developed into a crucial economic pillar for many regions globally, attracting millions of visitors each year due to its stunning natural landscapes, diverse recreational activities, and the opportunity to engage with unique cultural traditions. These factors contribute to the growing popularity of destinations such as the Atlas, the Alps, and the Himalayas, which benefit from both international and local tourism. However, the increasing influx of visitors also presents significant environmental and economic challenges that need to be critically examined to ensure the sustainability of mountain tourism in the long term. This paper provides a thorough and critical review of the environmental and economic impacts associated with mountain tourism.

Najat MOUHOU

Globalization and Mountain Communities: A Critical Review of Mari Oiry Varacca's book Montagnards dans la mondialisation

The book *Montagnards dans la mondialisation: Réseaux diasporiques et mobilisations sociales dans l'Atlas (Maroc), les Highlands (Écosse) et les Alpes françaises* by Mari Oiry Varacca offers an insightful analysis of mountain communities' responses to globalization. Through a comparative study of three distinct regions—the Atlas Mountains in Morocco, the Scottish Highlands, and the French Alps—the author examines how these communities, often historically marginalized, are engaging with global networks and mobilizing to preserve their identities and respond to socio-economic and environmental challenges. The book highlights the role of diaspora networks in fostering solidarity, enabling social movements, and facilitating community-based development in these mountainous regions. The study addresses key themes such as cultural heritage preservation, environmental sustainability, economic restructuring, and the reshaping of traditional identities within the globalized context. This review article critically engages with the book's key arguments, providing an overview of its methodologies, thematic exploration, and implications for the study of mountain communities in the era of globalization.

Roxana Georgiana NICOARĂ, Gabriela TAMAȘ, Ioana PAICA, Ciprian BÎRSAN, Loredana BUTA, Marilena ONETE, Sorin ȘTEFĂNUȚ

Coșna, Bucovina: A Model for Ecotourism and Biodiversity Conservation through Peatland Restoration

Coșna, a picturesque area in Bucovina, holds significant potential for ecotourism due to its rich biodiversity and unique landscapes. Within the ecological restoration projects undertaken in the bog and marshy areas (PeatRO 2 and PeatRO 3), there were successfully rehabilitated degraded peatland habitats in the region, leading to the designation of a local nature reserve (Mestecănașul de la Coșna) and proposed Natura 2000 sites. In this way, we enhanced peatland habitat quality for key wildlife species and provided opportunities for wildlife tourism, biodiversity-based experiences, and sustainable tourism development. We explore the scientific and conservation-driven approach to promoting Coșna as a destination for responsible nature-based tourism, integrating biodiversity conservation, habitat restoration, and community engagement. We also showcase the creation of an ecotourism web platform developed to highlight restored sites and support sustainable visitation. By aligning conservation with tourism, Coșna stands as a model for balancing environmental protection with rural economic development.

Emanuela-Adina NICULA, Isabelle Margareta OPREA

Sustainable Transitions in Rural Tourism: Balancing Economic Growth and Environmental Conservation

Rural tourism is increasingly acknowledged as a catalyst for economic development, offering new income sources, employment opportunities, and community revitalization. However, its rapid expansion often generates unintended environmental consequences, including resource depletion, biodiversity loss, and landscape transformation. These dynamics underscore the need for a paradigm shift toward sustainable tourism models that balance economic prosperity with environmental responsibility. This study explores the intersection of rural tourism, economic growth, and environmental conservation, emphasizing the central role of environmental economics in shaping sustainable development strategies. By integrating theoretical perspectives with empirical evidence, we investigate the dual impacts of rural tourism—its economic benefits and its ecological costs—through a multidisciplinary methodology. Our approach combines economic impact assessments, environmental valuation techniques, and stakeholder-driven case studies across diverse rural contexts. The findings reveal the complex trade-offs inherent in rural tourism development. While tourism stimulates local economies and supports livelihoods, unregulated growth can undermine long-term sustainability. We critically assess the effectiveness of policy interventions such as green financing mechanisms, sustainable infrastructure investments, ecotourism incentives, and participatory governance models. Furthermore, we highlight the potential of community-based tourism and circular economy practices to reconcile environmental conservation with economic viability. This research contributes to the broader discourse on sustainable rural development by providing a nuanced evaluation of strategic interventions and policy frameworks. It offers actionable insights for policymakers, researchers, and tourism practitioners aiming to foster resilient rural economies without compromising ecological integrity.

Alina Cristina NICULESCU

The Digital Transformation of Cultural Routes, as Tourist Products, in the Age of Technology

In the context of a rapid and constant digitalization of today's society, the increase of tourism and cultural promotion in the virtual space has become an important component of national strategies in the two interconnected domain: tourism and culture. Tourist destinations must currently offer complex experiences, enriched with alternative activities in the virtual space. The elaboration of this article started from the desire to address the current demand for tourism and cultural products of people who are increasingly focused today on digital services. Therefore, this article will examine whether the digitalization of cultural routes can be a

current solution for the development of cultural heritage, in order to provide a perspective on the integration of digital technologies in cultural tourism. In order to elaborate this article, the specialized literature will be analyzed to describe the relationship between technology, tourism and cultural routes. At the same time, the importance of using digital tools in the process of developing cultural routes will be investigated, with a focus on the main trends and perspectives found in the specialized literature, because we want to discover what are the advantages, benefits and implications of using the technology in digitalization projects and initiatives - strictly in the case of cultural routes. Thus, the article will provide an overview of cultural routes, as tourist products promoted in the digital space, with the aim of enriching the tourists' experience.

George NICULESCU, Doina TĂȚARU

Emerging Trends in Integrating Digital Technologies into Rural Tourism

Digital transformation stands as one of the most significant forces shaping the future of rural tourism. This article examines the concept of "smart tourism" and its implications for rural areas, highlighting the potential of digital technologies to drive innovation and enhance tourist experiences. Four dimensions of integrating digital technologies into the rural tourism experience are identified and analyzed: informational dimension (facilitates easy access to information about rural destinations); experiential dimension (enhances the tourist experience through technological means); co-creative dimension (enables active involvement of tourists in creating their tourism experiences); transformative dimension (encourages behavioral and attitudinal changes towards sustainability). In the current context, emerging technologies such as augmented reality, the Internet of Things (IoT), and "blockchain" open new perspectives for the development of rural tourism. In a context marked by rapid technological advancements, artificial intelligence (AI) emerges as a major driver of transformation in rural tourism. This article highlights AI potential to democratize access to expertise in the field of rural tourism, enabling small operators to benefit from sophisticated analysis and optimization tools that were previously accessible only to large companies. Additionally, the implementation of the "smart destination" concept in rural areas is analyzed, emphasizing the potential of these technologies to improve the management of tourist flows and optimize the use of local resources.

Temidayo Samuel OJO

Sustainable Tourism: Theory and Reality

Tourism is an increasingly important global industry. It is one of the ways of generating revenues in a third of all developing countries especially in Africa and the primary source of foreign exchange earnings amongst the 49 least developed countries. The international bodies and national governments are recognizing the potential of tourism in economic growth. However, while tourism is a tool for economic growth, there is very little evidence of the connection between development of tourism and poverty reduction. The continuously weakening public sector of developing countries is unable to respond by regulation and control to the growing ecological and social challenges. Since the 2000s, many of the African nations like South Africa, Egypt, Morocco and Kenya have seen a tremendous growth of tourism, which has contributed immensely to the growth of their economies. This has affected not only national economies and infrastructures but also local environmental, social and cultural politics. Public planning has become ever more complicated with new actors entering coastal towns and natural parks. For example, Costa Rica is today facing similar problems as Thailand, Kenya and the Philippines as sex tourism destination, and these countries have been designated of having the largest child prostitution problem. Some African nations now face urgent problems of mass tourism, although the massive breakthrough of tourism business is yet to appear in these countries of significant poverty, insecurity and crime. Many critical activists and researchers see the fast-growing tourism business as a postcolonial form of environmental and cultural aggression. In view of this, there has been a growing call of introducing a sustainable alternative for tourism development. This international comparative study of three African countries, Kenya, South Africa and Ghana, aims contributing to finding the best solutions, ideas and practices for sustainable tourism business and industry. For this purpose, the project

analyzes, from an interdisciplinary perspective, the development of power relations, politics, policies and practices of African countries' tourism. At the same time, the study seeks the complex interdependencies between public, national and international planning, global tourism, local needs, sustainable development and business interests. Case studies are conducted in all three countries, and comparative macro-analyses of national tourism policies are made. The research materials include a wide array of documents, semi-structured interviews, surveys, and results of participatory observation. Tourism is also one of the most important export industries in nearly every country that Finland has a long-term development cooperation partnership with. In addition, the project can be connected to the challenges of the Finnish National Innovation Strategy, which emphasizes such concepts as globalization, global mobility, tourism and traveling, sustainable development and new technologies. As a travel and tourism professional, I am a living witness of the impact of tourism in South Africa and other countries I have visited. Tourism sector should be highly addressed by the developing countries to improve the economies of their countries just as how the developed nations has made use of the scope of tourism to improve the lives and standard of living of their citizens.

Marilena ONETE, Florian P. BODESCU, Roxana Georgiana NICOARĂ, Minodora MANU, Luiza Silvia MIHAI, Simona MIHĂILESCU

Distribution of the Species Campanula romanica Săvul. in the Măcin Mountains National Park

Campanula romanica Săvul. (*C. rotundifolia* L. subsp. *romanica* (Săvul.) Hayek), commonly known as the "Dobruja bellflower", is a perennial, hemicryptophyte species, 18–30 cm tall, flowering from June to August. It is sporadically encountered in steppe areas on rocky outcrops. This xerothermic and saxicolous species is endemic to south-eastern Romania (Dobruja region). Literature records indicate 29 locations in Romania where the species has been found, with 9 of these confirmed in the past 10 years. *Campanula romanica* is listed as a globally threatened species in the IUCN Red List, in Annex II of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, and under the Bern Convention. During the 2014–2015 period, a total of 64 monitoring plots were surveyed, of which only 35 contained individuals of *Campanula romanica*. The species' habitats are characterised by shallow soils, rocky substrates close to the surface, sparse or low vegetation, and high dryness. It has been observed that the species is relatively resistant to grazing. When juvenile or budding individuals are grazed, lateral shoots can regenerate from the damaged stem and still form buds and flowers. The diversity of plant associations incorporating *C. romanica* is high. Even in some plant associations where dense vegetation cover is unfavourable for its development, the presence of small rocky outcrops or larger rocks surrounded by dense vegetation allows for small favourable microhabitats for the species. *C. romanica* grows not only in rock crevices but also in areas with relatively tall grass, provided vegetation cover is sparse. The population of *C. romanica* is well-represented, and individual density varies mainly due to climatic conditions. The species has the ability to propagate vegetatively, which gives it a competitive advantage. In areas with higher animal activity, the number of flowers and seeds is reduced, but the ability of individuals to spread vegetatively increases. As a result, plots impacted by anthropogenic factors tend to exhibit more rosettes and fewer flowering stems. Seedlings originating from seeds are weak competitors with accompanying plant species, so in places such as anthills, stony areas, or the bases of rocks where vegetation is scarce or absent, seed germination and seedling establishment are more successful. It is essential that the diversity and intensity of pressures exerted on the species remain at least at their current levels. The expansion of local stone quarries could lead to the destruction of the species' habitat.

Pratibha PANDEY, Vimal Chandra VERMA

An Empirical Analysis of Influencing Factors Affecting Health Tourism with Reference to Young Consumers

In the present era health tourism has become a substantial sector of the international health and travel industry, especially among young consumers who demand quality, low-cost medical services. This research attempts to investigate the determinants that guide the decisions of young consumers to participate in health

tourism based on their service quality perceptions, cost-saving, destination image, and professional knowledge. By using a systematic questionnaire, information was gathered from young consumers (18-35 years) who have participated or are likely to participate in health tourism. The research utilizes an empirical method, making use of descriptive and inferential statistical methods in analyzing the feedback. The results indicate that price, technological advancements, and the reputation of the healthcare providers greatly influence consumer decision-making. Furthermore, social media and word of mouth are also significant in influencing young consumers' attitudes and trust towards health tourism destinations. This study adds to the literature by shedding light on the preferences and expectations of young health tourists, thus helping policymakers and healthcare providers improve service delivery. The research emphasizes the importance of clear pricing, excellent service quality, and focused marketing efforts to appeal to young consumers. Longitudinal trends in young consumers' participation in health tourism can be a subject of future research.

Gabriela Cornelia PICIU

Circular Tourism Economy between Hope and Certainty

In recent years, tourism has experienced explosive growth, with major economic and social consequences, with increasingly large shares in countries' GDP. The article analyzes how the circular economy can enhance and improve tourism, as well as its impact on the environment. In essence, it emphasizes the fact that, although tourism is an important component of global economies, having a positive impact on GDP, it also generates a significant amount of waste and pressure on natural resources, due to the linear model of production and consumption. The implementation of the circular model in tourism aims to reduce waste and maintain the value of products for as long as possible. By integrating the principles of the circular economy in the tourism sector, it is possible to reduce the negative impact on the environment and create a more sustainable industry from an economic, social and ecological point of view. The importance of a conceptual model to help the tourism industry adopt the principles of the circular economy is also analyzed. Such a model could contribute to the development of more responsible practices, given the need to preserve natural resources, reduce waste and promote sustainable tourism, with long-term economic benefits.

Lucian ROȘU, Mihai BULAI

From Trails to Transformation: The Social Impact of Via Transilvanica on Rural Communities

The Via Transilvanica Route, Romania's first long-distance cultural trail, has emerged as a key driver of sustainable tourism and rural resilience. Spanning 1,400 kilometers and crossing 20 culturally diverse regions, the trail connects remote villages, UNESCO World Heritage Sites, and natural landscapes while fostering local community engagement. Developed through the efforts of over 10,000 volunteers and various NGOs, the project has played a crucial role in the post-COVID-19 recovery of tourism, revitalizing rural economies and promoting slow tourism experiences. This research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining statistical tourism data, GIS analysis, and qualitative interviews with local stakeholders to assess the route's impact. Findings highlight the increase in tourist arrivals, the growth of local businesses, and the integration of traditional products and services into the tourism experience. Additionally, the route has strengthened social cohesion, enhanced cultural exchange, and encouraged sustainable tourism practices. By linking cultural heritage preservation with economic development, the Via Transilvanica serves as a model for rural resilience, transforming vulnerable communities into thriving, sustainable destinations. This study underscores the critical role of grassroots initiatives and NGO expertise in fostering long-term positive change in rural tourism development.

Hatice SARI GÖK, Simge ŞALVARCI

Examination of Glamping Tourism Experiences with Netnography Method: Fethiye Case

The current post-pandemic process has encouraged tourists to different types of tourism and new searches, and previously unknown types of tourism have begun to become popular. One of them is the concept of glamping, which combines camping and luxury and provides services to people in hotel comfort. The main purpose of this study is to determine what kind of experiences glamping businesses in Fethiye, one of Turkey's important tourist destinations, offer to tourists. For this purpose, the netnography approach, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in the study. Netnographic analysis includes the examination of textual data and the research of online communities. The analyzes carried out in the study will be made through experiential comments. As a result of the content analysis carried out, the main themes of tourists' glamping businesses in the Fethiye region will be revealed. The research results are important in terms of revealing tourists' experiences regarding the Fethiye destination in terms of glamping tourism, which has become popular in recent years.

Silvia SAVCENCO, Mihail CIOBANU

Călărași: A Model for Valorizing Rural Heritage through Tourism

Tourism represents a strategic sector for economic and social development, contributing to job creation, stimulating local entrepreneurship, promoting cultural and natural heritage, and strengthening the identity of rural communities. It is becoming an important vector for sustainable development and territorial cohesion. Călărași District in the Republic of Moldova is increasingly emerging as an example of the effective valorization of rural tourism heritage, based on local initiatives, the promotion of natural, historical, and cultural potential, as well as community involvement in sustainable tourism activities. Rural tourism in this area encompasses a wide variety of forms: agritourism, cultural tourism, religious tourism, gastronomic tourism, wine tourism, and ecotourism. The Călărași Tourist Information Centre has significantly contributed to raising the region's visibility. Tourist attractions such as the "House of Honey" in Răciula, the Violin Museum, and the yurts in Leordoia highlight the authenticity and diversity of the tourism offer. In addition, Orthodox monasteries and natural monuments provide interesting thematic routes, while traditional crafts, wine tastings, and local gastronomy enhance the area's appeal. During the pandemic crisis, rural tourism in Călărași also demonstrated a strong capacity for adaptation. Furthermore, the organization of traditional festivals, digital promotion, and involvement in the creation of informational materials have strengthened the tourism profile of the Călărași District. Thus, Călărași stands as a relevant example of local development based on sustainable tourism and the valorization of cultural identity.

Mohammad SHAHPARAN

Exploring the Potential of Rural Tourism in the Mirankul Region of Samarkand: Opportunities, Challenges, and Sustainable Development

Mirankul is a tourist and recreational area located 12 kilometers from the city of Samarkand. This splendid charming natural attraction is located in the Samarkand region. This region is famous for its traditional agricultural practices, vibrant cultural heritage, and beautiful landscape. This zone offers a unique opportunity to develop sustainable rural tourism. This research paper explores the hidden potential of rural tourism in the Mirankul region of Samarkand, Uzbekistan. This study examines the present condition of rural tourism in Mirankul by identifying some key opportunities like agritourism, cultural heritage and ecotourism also identifying some challenges like infrastructure, community engagement, and environmental sustainability. This paper aims to enhance local livelihoods and preserve traditional ways of life and the tourism economy. Onsite and offsite interviews are employed to collect qualitative data from local communities, international and domestic visitors, tourism experts, and industry policymakers. Chi-squared test and multinomial ordinal regression have been found an appropriate estimation technique to analyze opportunities and challenges

forward to Mirankul visitors' satisfaction and sustainability. The result shows that agritourism, cultural heritage tourism, and eco-tourism are significant opportunities for the development of the Mirankul region. This study recommends increasing capacity-building programs, promoting local ownership of tourism ventures, and implementing environmental management practices in the region.

Hamidreza SOLAYMANI OSBOOEI

The Impact of Climate and Land-Use Changes on Iranian Mountainous Areas

Climate and land-use changes have significant impacts on Iranian forests in mountainous areas, affecting soil quality, vegetation growth, and biodiversity. This research study suggests that the changes lead to soil organic carbon reduction, increased risk of habitat loss, and extinction risk for various species, particularly in regions such as Zagros and Alborz mountainous areas. The results reveal a wide-spread agricultural expansion (27,000 km²) and a significant cultivation intensification (48,000 km²). At the same time, we observe a substantial decline in total water storage that is not represented by a decrease of meteorological water input, confirming an unsustainable use of groundwater mainly for agricultural irrigation. As consequence of water scarcity, we identify agricultural areas with a loss or reduction of vegetation growth (10,000 km²), especially in irrigated agricultural areas under (hyper-)arid conditions. In Iran's natural biomes, the results show declining trends in vegetation growth and land cover degradation from sparse vegetation to barren land in 40,000 km², mainly along the western plains and foothills of the Zagros Mountains, and at the same time wide-spread greening trends, particularly in regions of higher altitudes. Overall, the findings provide detailed insights in vegetation-related causes and consequences of Iran's anthropogenic drought and can support sustainable management plans for Iran or other semi-arid regions worldwide, often facing similar conditions.

Cristina SOLTAN RUSU

Digital Transformation in the Tourism Industry

Digital transformation plays an important role in the tourism and hospitality industry, significantly impacting customer experience and operational efficiency. This paper analyzes how emerging technologies, such as mobile applications, virtual reality, artificial intelligence, and the internet of things, contribute to the personalization of services and the enhancement of customer interactions. Digitalization enables hotels and travel agencies to collect and analyze data about customer preferences, thus facilitating the offering of personalized packages tailored to individual needs. Additionally, the use of online platforms and social media facilitates effective communication with customers, allowing hotels to respond quickly to inquiries and promote available offers. The automatization of internal processes, such as managing reservations and customer information, optimizes operations, enabling companies to focus on improving the services they provide. The paper emphasizes that the adoption of emerging technologies not only enhances guest experiences but also improves the operational efficiency of companies, contributing to cost reduction and increased profitability. In this context, investments in digital transformation become a priority for hotels around the world, having the potential to generate significant benefits in terms of revenue growth and customer loyalty. It is important for these companies to be proactive in integrating digital technologies into their business strategies to remain competitive and adapt to new trends and consumer preferences. This paper provides an overview of the importance of digital transformation in tourism and suggests directions for future research in this field.

Mirela STOICAN, Carmen Corina VIȘAN, Claudia Cornelia ENACHE

Combating Food Waste in Rural Guesthouses in the Rucăr-Brain Area, Brașov County, by Applying the Principles of One Health and the Circular Economy

This study proposes an integrated approach to combat food waste in rural guest houses in the Rucăr-Brain area, Brașov County, using the principles of One Health management and the circular economy. The main objective

of the research is to identify sustainable solutions, applicable by administrators of tourist guest houses, which would reduce food waste without compromising the quality of services offered to tourists. The methodology includes participatory observation, semi-structured interviews with guest house administrators, and questionnaires applied to tourists regarding eating behaviour on holidays. The questionnaires were designed using the funnel model, including dichotomous, multiple choice and Likert scale questions. The results show significant waste generated by oversized portions, lack of planning in supply and tourist habits related to excessive consumption. The study proposes a practical model for circular food resources management, including adapting menus to real demand, reusing surplus, composting waste, and raising awareness among tourists. The implementation of this model supports the economic sustainability of guest houses and protects the local ecosystem, in line with the One Health principles.

Alijon SUYUNOV

Preserving Nature: Sustainable Tourism Practices in the Nuratau Mountains in Uzbekistan

Ecologically rich and culturally significant area The Nuratau Mountains is located in central Uzbekistan, which is the focal point for sustainable tourism. This paper explores how the eco-tourism initiative in the Nuratau Mountains which is contributes to environmental preservation and economic growth in local communities. As Uzbekistan is famous for iconic Silk Road cities, the Nuratau region has engaged community-based tourism models that promote travel and sustainable livelihoods. Qualitative and quantitative methods were applied in this study. Data was collected through field visits, interviews with local stakeholders and analysis of policy documents implemented by the government. Data analyses by the chi-square test to identify the challenges and opportunities. This paper investigates running sustainable tourism practices within the Nuratau Mountains and surrounding villages. Homestay programmers, guided treks, traditional craft workshops and conservation education play an important role for protecting natural habitats and provide income-generating opportunities for residents. Partnership between non-government organizations, government agencies grow the capacity in environmental management. Limited infrastructure, seasonal tourist flows, and a stronger regulatory framework are the main challenges for this region. This research paper contributes to the growing body of literature on sustainable tourism in Uzbekistan. This study will offer practical recommendations for policymakers seeking to replicate similar models in other mountains in Uzbekistan.

Dan Constantin ŞUMOVSCI

Redefining the Relevance of Academic Research in Today's Social Landscape

In the contemporary politico-economic context, the relevance and practical applicability of scientific research are increasingly being scrutinized, fuelling extensive debates both within the academic sphere and in the public domain. A critical assessment of daily academic practices, the ways in which individuals engage with fundamental values, insights derived from participation in international conferences, and a systematic review of recent literature on the interdependence between science and innovation collectively reveal a significant structural dysfunction: a substantial portion of academic output remains inadequately aligned with the pressing needs of modern society and the economy. This concern is not isolated but is echoed in numerous discussions across digital platforms, where the question has been repeatedly raised: *Is the perception that much of today's academic research suffers from stagnation and a lack of real-world relevance justified?* The arguments presented in these debates underscore a widespread apprehension regarding the limited impact of research on practical challenges, as well as the potential stagnation induced by the rigidity of formal evaluation criteria and the recurring reliance on standardized methodologies, which often neglect the applied dimension of knowledge. Building upon these considerations, the present study undertakes a critical examination of the factors contributing to this perception, integrating empirical observations with theoretical insights from the relevant literature. This analytical inquiry aims not only to identify the underlying elements driving this

emergent discourse but also to evaluate the extent to which this phenomenon may be understood as a systemic issue within contemporary academia.

Dan Constantin ȘUMOVȘCHI, Radu Adrian MORARU

The North-East of Romania as a Tourist Destination in the Post-Pandemic Era

This paper investigates the impact of a rapid succession of major events on tourism in the North-East of Romania, beginning with the COVID-19 pandemic and continuing with the geopolitical crisis in the neighboring region, domestic political instability, and other socio-economic shifts. The study explores the multifaceted effects of these crises on the local tourism industry, emphasizing not only the immediate consequences of the pandemic but also the compounding challenges faced by tourism destinations due to regional and political instability. Particular attention is given to the adaptation strategies implemented by local tourism operators, such as the digital transformation of services, the diversification of tourism offers, and the promotion of less-visited, rural, and ecological destinations. The paper identifies both the major challenges and the emerging opportunities in the post-crisis period, highlighting the potential of sustainable tourism development, the revitalization of rural and cultural tourism, and the increasing interest in local, authentic travel experiences. Furthermore, it proposes strategic solutions for long-term recovery, focusing on the importance of collaboration between local authorities, tourism agencies, and communities. By emphasizing resilience and innovation, the study argues that the North-East of Romania can overcome the adversities brought on by successive crises and establish itself as a competitive and sustainable tourist destination in the broader European and international markets.

Georgia TACU

Cultural Tourism in the Age of Globalization: Between Authenticity and Spectacle

This paper offers a theoretical analysis of how globalization influences cultural tourism, focusing on the tension between the search for authenticity and the trend towards the spectacularization of heritage. In an increasingly competitive tourism market, where expectations are shaped by global standards, local cultures are often reinterpreted, adapted, or simplified to meet the demands of a global audience. This transformation carries the risk of losing the deeper meaning of traditions and cultural values, in favour of fast and superficial cultural consumption. The paper discusses key concepts such as *constructivist authenticity*, *the McDonaldization of culture*, and *touristic experientialism*, analyzing how these can be applied to current practices in cultural tourism. It also explores the notion of the *cultural spectacle*, in the sense proposed by Guy Ernest Debord, as a phenomenon of symbolic reconfiguration of cultural identity according to the logic of visibility and marketing. In conclusion, the paper reflects on the ethical and cultural implications of these transformations and argues for the need to develop theoretical frameworks capable of integrating the new dynamics of cultural tourism in the global age—without neglecting the complexity of the relationship between heritage, community, and visitor.

Ion TALABĂ

Negative Effects of Overtourism

The study aims to provide a critical analysis of the negative effects that the phenomenon of excessive tourism growth has on tourist areas, centres, and attractions. The research addresses general issues observed in major European tourist destinations as well as within the Romanian context.

Doina TĂTARU, George NICULESCU

European and Global Models in the Evolution of Rural Tourism

The evolution of rural tourism has followed distinct trajectories in various regions of the world, influenced by the specific geographic, cultural and socio-economic contexts of each area. This article describes the main

models of rural tourism development both within Europe and beyond. For Europe, we refer to three major rural tourism models. Firstly, the Mediterranean model, predominant in countries such as Italy, Spain and France, emphasizes the valorization of local cultural and gastronomic heritage. The second one, the Northern European model, found in the United Kingdom, Ireland and Scandinavian countries, focuses on nature-based activities and landscape conservation, promoting ecotourism. The last but not the least, the Central and Eastern European model, specific to countries like Poland, Romania and Hungary, reflects post-socialist transformations, distinguishing clearly between farms that host tourists as their main economic activity and those that view tourism as a supplementary source of income. Outside Europe, we identify the North American model, where rural tourism has developed in close connection with frontier mythology and the highlighting of an exceptional natural heritage. In Latin America, emphasis is placed on valuing indigenous traditions and involving local communities. On the other side, the development of rural tourism in Asia has been driven by rapid urbanization and economic growth. In Japan, the concept of "furusato" (native village) responds to nostalgia for traditional values, while in China, ambitious rural tourism development programs are implemented as a strategy to reduce poverty in rural areas. All these models are in continuous adaptation, reflecting economic, social, and cultural changes on a global scale.

Vasile TODINĂ, Maria Flavia POP

Rural Tourism Development Directions and Ethno-Tourism in the Land of Beiuș

The reason for choosing the theme of this paper started from the fact that the area of Beiuș is one of the most beautiful tourist destinations in Bihor or maybe even in Romania. These appreciations were based on the fact that the richness of the relief forms expressed by the beauty of the landscape, the structure of the villages, have generated different occupations among the villagers, from woodworking, blacksmithing and pottery to domestic crafts (spinning, weaving, sewing, etc.). We also had in mind the preservation of some customs in the villages of the area, continuity in the organization of fairs and festivals, which recall the traditions, the times when the villagers used to meet, discuss and have fun. Nowadays, private ethnographic museums have sprung up in many localities as a way of expressing local traditions.

Brankica TODOROVIĆ

The Potential of Cultural Heritage and Creative Industry in Relation to Sustainable Development

The value of cultural heritage in tourism development is continuously increasing. The partnership between the cultural and tourism sectors is a prerequisite for a quality tourist product. Highlighting cultural potential and cultural diversity is one of the factors for achieving long-term sustainability of a tourist destination's development. Strategic goals for tourism development, in addition to developing a comprehensive tourist destination offer, also include the development of its cultural potentials. In addition to cultural heritage, social resources related to traditional events, ethnographic heritage, and other anthropogenic attractions are also important elements of quality tourism development. Zlatibor is the most visited mountain destination and protected area in Serbia. Zlatibor's cultural heritage is an important part of Serbia's multicultural space. Local culture is an important characteristic of the destination and can highlight the peculiarities of the area and the quality of the tourist region. The recognizability of the destination is, also, reflected in ethnographic motifs and the creative economy and industry, which connect culture with the economy, tourism, education, and cultural heritage. The research objectives are: (1) the potential of cultural heritage for tourism development in terms of creating tourist offers: cultural-historical monuments and the creative industry in Zlatibor; (2) contribution of cultural heritage to sustainable development and realization of SDGs; and (3) possibilities of improving the accessibility of cultural heritage to foreign tourists (online platforms, exhibitions, museums, etc.).

Brankica TODOROVIĆ

The Importance of Events as an Integral Part of the Tourism Offer and the Creative Industry

Tourism offer in the context of modern tourism development is both quantitatively and qualitatively diverse, aiming to develop in a sustainable way, recognizing the role and importance of tourism for sustainable development. Tourism events are an integral part of tourism, providing opportunities to attract tourists and stimulate the development of the creative industry sector. Tourism destinations with high visitation should be characterized by responsibility in terms of the event development strategy and their contribution to the environment. The paper analyzes tourism events from 2013 to today, in Zlatibor, as the most visited mountain destination in Serbia. The research objectives are: (1) analysis of traditional events in terms of the number, structure, and tendency to increase festivals that promote tradition and authentic creativity; (2) the contribution of the creative industry sector to the development of modern forms of events; and (3) possibilities for development events as sustainable.

Ligian TUDOROIU, Remus Petre CÎRSTEA

Poienari Fortress (Argeş): Lights and Shadows in Contemporary Tourist Valorization

Built in the 14th century, Poienari Fortress was expanded during the reign of Vlad Țepeș. Located near the Vidraru Dam, Poienari is the best-preserved Romanian fortress associated with the legends of Țepeș Vodă. The question this paper seeks to answer is how public authorities and local communities in Argeş are promoting the fortress for tourism in 2025. Statistically, Poienari has been the most visited tourist attraction in Argeş County over the past decade.

Dănuț UNGUREANU

Tourism Development Models in the French and Swiss Alps

The Alps are a mountain range in Europe stretching from Austria and Slovenia to south-eastern France, passing through northern Italy, southern Switzerland, Liechtenstein, and southern Germany. They form a curved arc in the south of Central Europe, approximately 1,200 km in length and covering an area of about 200,000 km². The highest peak in the Alps is Mont Blanc, located on the French-Italian border, with its summit reaching an altitude of 4,810 metres. In total, the Alps contain 128 peaks that exceed 4,000 metres in height. The Alps are divided into the Western Alps and the Eastern Alps. This division follows the line between Lake Constance and Lake Como, along the Rhine River. The Western Alps are located in Italy, France, and Switzerland, while the Eastern Alps are found in Austria, Germany, Italy, Liechtenstein, Slovenia, and Switzerland. Chamonix-Mont-Blanc is a town in France, in the Haute-Savoie department, within the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region. Chamonix is a leading destination for mountaineering and mountain sports. The town is situated in the northern part of the Alps, at the foot of the Mont Blanc Massif, very close to the tripoint border of France, Switzerland, and Italy. Chamonix-Mont-Blanc is the fourth-largest commune in France, covering an area of 245 km². The Aiguille du Midi cable car is one of the most significant engineering achievements of the 20th century. Zermatt is known as a highly picturesque town in Switzerland, where the Gornergrat peak rises to an altitude of approximately 3,100 metres. The Matterhorn is a mountain located in the Alps, on the border between Switzerland and Italy. With its almost symmetrical pyramidal shape, it is part of the Pennine Alps. Its summit, at 4,478 metres, is one of the highest in both the Alps and Europe. The region's main tourist attraction is the cogwheel railway, which takes visitors to the summit of Gornergrat.

Dănuț UNGUREANU

Local Gastronomic Points: From Concept to a National Tourism Network

The development of the regulatory framework for the operation of Local Gastronomic Points was initiated in 2016 by the Ivan Patzaichin – Mila 23 Association, with the support of the National Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Authority (ANSVSA) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. This initiative,

which was based on a public consultation process, aimed to simplify the way in which rural households can engage in economic activities that are not only profitable but also contribute to strengthening the local identity profile of the area. In 2019, the association developed a Guide of Good Hygiene and Culinary Production Practices for Local Gastronomic Points. The concept was taken over by the National Agency for the Mountain Area, which designed a training support and initiated steps to organize and accredit a professional training programme for individuals serving in Local Gastronomic Points. Upon completion of this programme, participants receive a certificate—an official document that can be used in the registration process with the National Trade Register Office as a sole trader, individual enterprise, or family enterprise, in accordance with Government Emergency Ordinance No. 44/2008. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, through the National Agency for the Mountain Area, compiles and manages the national register of Local Gastronomic Points based on public data available on the website of the National Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Authority. By the end of the first quarter of 2025, there were 553 such units in Romania, forming a true national gastronomic tourism network.

Andrei Ștefan VASILE, Liviu MĂRCUȚĂ, Rareș IAGARU

Management of the Identification and Sustainable Valuation of Tourist Resources in the Călimănești Location

The tourism industry is going through a period of growth, but still under the influence of the turbulence created by the COVID 19 crisis and the war in Ukraine. This requires the factors responsible for sustainable local development and tourism service providers to rethink their strategies in order to adapt to the new market conditions. The issue of the sustainability of the tourism industry remains current, but acquires new connotations, and change becomes the element around which the entire activity will gravitate. In this context, we consider it necessary for the specialized economic entities to adopt an intelligent thinking model – the strategic model, which is based on creative thinking and through strategic decisions anticipates and realizes future changes. These elements are the basis of the present research, the purpose of which is the strategic evaluation of the tourist resources in the town of Călimănești, Vâlcea County in order to develop strategic options for integrating sustainability in business by involving the factors of sustainable local development in the selection of the most relevant ones. The strategic assessment consisted of the use of quantitative and qualitative methods such as secondary analysis of statistical data and relevant specialized literature, semi-structured interviews with the responsible factors regarding the integration of sustainability in business and PESTEL and SWOT analysis models. The research methodology used led to the highlighting of the territorial specificity, rightly considered an influencing factor of the identification of the elements of specificity and the development of relevant strategic options for the integration of sustainability in business at the territorial level. The results of the research show that the strategic assessment carried out at the territorial level leads to the development of relevant strategic options for the integration of sustainability in business, supported by the promotion of the heritage elements that make up the cultural endowment of Călimănești and its surroundings through innovation and digitalization.

Liliana VELEA, Anișoara IRIMESCU, Mihaela Tinca UDRIȘTIOIU, Silvia PUIU, Roxana BOJARIU, Zenaida CHIȚU

The Impact of Natural Landscape Attractiveness on Tourism Flow in Romanian Rural Tourist Destinations

Rural tourism in Romania benefits from an increasing consideration from all the tourism actors – tourists, tourism investors and authorities. The literature shows that the natural assets of the destination like climate, environmental features or spa resources are among the important factors in tourists' decision for a specific location. The findings are usually based on qualitative methods (e.g., surveys), while less studies focus on quantitative approaches. The study aims to contribute filling this gap, by investigating with the use of objective

data how the features of natural landscape attractivity are reflected in the tourism flux in Romanian rural destinations. To this end, the analysis, focusing on the period 2010-2018, employs tourism sectoral data for 53 rural destinations, geophysical information on natural landscape features (orography, hydrology, land cover type), climate data expressed through Holiday Climate Index as well as local information on the exploitation of spa resources. The results show that spa resources and climate conditions are the most relevant natural attractivity aspects, followed by features like terrain height variations, presence of surface water or natural vegetation cover. The study provides new and practical insights for tourism investors regarding management and marketing aspects (e.g., destination image, reducing tourism flux seasonality).

Vimal Chandra VERMA

Exploring Agritourism Opportunities in the Siddharthnagar District of Uttar Pradesh: A Focus on Aromatic Kalanamak Rice

Agritourism presents a unique opportunity to integrate rural development with sustainable tourism, particularly in regions known for their distinctive agricultural products. The Siddharthnagar district of Uttar Pradesh is renowned for Kalanamak rice, an aromatic and heritage-rich variety with deep historical and cultural significance. This study explores the potential of agritourism in the district, leveraging the uniqueness of Kalanamak rice to promote rural livelihoods, cultural exchange, and sustainable farming practices. Through qualitative research, including farmer interviews, stakeholder surveys, and secondary data analysis, the study identifies key opportunities, challenges, and strategies for developing an agritourism model centered on Kalanamak rice. Findings suggest that agritourism initiatives—such as farm visits, rice cultivation experiences, traditional food tasting, and cultural events—can enhance rural employment, create new revenue streams for farmers, and increase awareness of sustainable agricultural practices. Additionally, government support, infrastructure development, and marketing strategies are crucial to establishing Siddharthnagar as a hub for agritourism. The study concludes that a well-structured agritourism framework can contribute to the conservation of Kalanamak rice, promote eco-tourism, and drive socio-economic development in the region.

Walter WYMER

Improving Rural and Suburban Bus Tourism Experiences: The Value Chain

News of overtourism in major European cities has become ubiquitous. The overcrowding results in tourist dissatisfaction, local resident dissatisfaction, and negative attitudes toward these locations as desirable tourist destinations. These circumstances provide an opportunity for rural and suburban locations to attract more tourism that will also, ironically, be viewed as a benefit to the major cities instead of competition. The focus of this presentation will be on day bus tours that collect tourists from city centres, cruise ports, and resorts and transports and guides them through a variety of experiences at outer-lying destinations. Tourists are returned to their pick-up locations at the end of the day. To successfully and consistently deliver positive and memorable tourist experiences and attain their resultant benefits, a value chain that consists of members who serve a value-added function will have to be developed and managed. Members of the value chain might include tour operators, local guides, transportation providers, attraction owners, local businesses and vendors, among others. Value chain members and their functions are discussed within the context of the tourist experience continuum: (1) pre-tour phase, (2) tour experience, and (3) post-tour phase. The analysis will conclude with research propositions and managerial implications. The analysis will be informed by the author's personal experiences, by a review of the relevant literature, and by practitioner insights.

George ZOGRAFOS

Mountain Areas of Greece as a Destination for Tourists of Ages 55+

This paper is an attempt to investigate and quantify the views of people aged 55 and over, for the selection of mountain areas of Greece as a tourist destination. The profile of the participants, their intention to choose

Greek mountains as a vacation spot and the experiences they have gained from it, are analyzed. After the analysis of the parameters set by these groups, as criteria for the choice of destination and the analysis of the characteristics of Greek mountains as a tourist destination, a quantitative analysis is made with the help of statistics on how the participants' preference is shaped by gender, educational level, type of occupation and financial income. About 80 people participated in the research, the majority of whom are women. Most were also aged 56-60, married and had a higher education degree. At the end, there are proposals for actions that could be taken in terms of tourism policy, so that hinterland of Greece can become an ideal destination for this segment of the tourism market.

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