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## Tourism Planning in Urban Areas – Trends, Best Practices and Priorities in Bucharest

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*Urban tourism is an old concept having its origin in antiquity, especially when existing ports were frequented at the time. Even though we cannot say that at that time tourism was a concept clearly defined, it is common practice for a few millennia particularly in the Mediterranean area (Greece, the Roman Empire, and Egypt) and the Middle East, with a significant contribution and particular in the evolution of urban areas.*

**Keywords:** *Real tourism; urban tourism planning; urban priorities; good practices*

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### Introduction

Urban tourism planning is an important factor for all urban centers in their attempt to attract tourists. Cities should pursue their strategies in order to highlight the attractions and to give tourists a wide range of services.

In the Middle Ages was recorded a significant progress in terms of tourism, but even in this time we cannot say that we are dealing with tourism in the true sense of the word, this period being the stage called in the literature pseudo-tourism. In the middle Ages it was developed especially religious tourism, pilgrimages taking momentum from ancient times. Only since the nineteenth century we can say that tourism is a broad

phenomenon with mass impact on the population. With the development of communication infrastructure at global level people were traveling for the purpose of knowledge or relaxation.

Nowadays, tourism has become a complex activity, having an important role in the national economy, in some state being even the main branch in the economy.

## **Characteristics of tourism in urban areas**

"Urban tourism refers generally to leisure vacations in cities, visiting them and for carrying out diverse activities such as visits to relatives, meetings with friends, watching performances, exhibitions, carrying shopping etc. According to this understanding, tourism is very broad in scope and it is well outlined from other forms of tourism. [1] "

In the literature we cannot say that there is an exhaustive definition of urban tourism. Moreover, urban tourism is a new concept that emerged after 1970 and developed especially after 1990. Therefore, some of the forms of urban tourism are considered separately by some authors, while others include these forms in the urban tourism, giving it a more complex significance for the term of urban tourism.

### **Forms of urban tourism**

#### **1. Cultural tourism**

Cultural tourism is the main constituent of urban tourism. Although it tends to be confused with the urban cultural tourism, the latter is well defined, but there are many opinions of specialists on its basic components. Cultural tourism refers to the culture of a region, specifically its artistic values. We find cultural tourism as component of urban tourism in big cities that have historical and cultural establishments (museums and theaters). Tourists who prefer this type of tourism may be interested in problems in the sphere of religion, history, physiology, anthropology and so on, and want to take part in the action of knowledge of events that occurred in the past.

Cultural tourism is visiting in order to meet the cultural and spiritual, historical places, museums, monuments, and art galleries, architectural monuments. In light of the conduct, the reasons for it and how to organize it will integrate urban tourism and cultural tourism. Regarding

motivation that determines urban journeys, some experts consider that about 40% of all visits in urban areas are cultural incumbent tourism. [2] In Romania there are museums that attract tourists. According to statistics for 2012, the most visited museums in Romania were:

**Table 1:** Most visited museums in Bucharest – 2012

<b>Crt. nr.</b>	<b>Museum</b>	<b>Number of tourists</b>
1.	Bran (Braşov)	546.000 (39% foreign tourists)
2.	Astra (Sibiu)	409.650 (30% foreign tourists)
3.	Grigore Antipa (Bucureşti)	394.418 (10% foreign tourists)
4.	Brukenthal (Sibiu)	378.181 (23% foreign tourists)
5.	Satului (Bucureşti)	323.696 (40% foreign tourists)
6.	Peleş (Prahova)	285.520 (28% foreign tourists)
7.	National Museum of the Romanian Peasant (Bucureşti)	87.849
8.	National Art museum (Bucureşti)	75.600
9.	National History museum (Bucureşti)	46.000
10.	Bucharest Museum	29.000 (15% foreign tourists).

Source: <http://webcultura.ro/cele-mai-vizitate-muzee-din-romania/>

## 2. Religious tourism

Some of the specialists include religious tourism in the cultural tourism category, some define it on their own, others have coined the term cultural and religious tourism. Usually, the term is used when religious tourism tourist travel is performed solely for the purpose of visiting religious objective, which is called a pilgrim, while if the term cultural and religious tourism is used, tourists, outside religious goals, have also cultural motivations. Religious tourism is old, being practiced since ancient times in Egypt, Greece and India.

In Romania, religious tourism has grown in recent years, about 250,000 pilgrims annually practicing in this type of tourism, according to data provided by the National Institute of Statistics. The most important targets for Romanian pilgrims are monasteries in northern Moldavia and Bukovina (Arbore, Humor, Moldova, Putna, Sucevita Voroneț), Neamt County (Agape, Neamt, Hermitage, Văratec), Maramures (Baia Borsa, Barsana) and Oltenia (Bistrita, tails, one Wood Monastery, Hurezi Lainici Polovragi Tismana).

### 3. Business Tourism

Business tourism (business) started to develop especially towards the end of the 20th century, with a significant share of tourism in developed countries: USA, UK, Japan, and Germany. Swarbrooke J. and S. Horner in 2001 highlighted the following points and increasing recognition of the importance of business tourism market:

- ✓ Business tourism generally involves a higher level of spending per capita than any other type of tourism.
- ✓ Business tourist is a customer base of many airlines and hotels.
- ✓ Business tourism is prevalent in many urban centers.
- ✓ Business tourists are often served by their own suppliers and intermediaries in the market, similar to those used in recreational tourism.
- ✓ Business tourism has its own physical infrastructure, such as exhibitions and conference centers. [3]

Business tourism refers to trips that people are making in the interests of their job. Forms of business tourism are divided into "general business travel, meetings / meetings, incentive travel fairs and exhibitions: [1]

- ✓ Tourism involves the overall business activity performed by people for a short time. There can be delegation, travel on business or work of reporters, journalists when they are outside the unit of work (travel to concerts, sport events etc).
- ✓ Another category is the business tourism fairs and exhibitions. These are defined by the presentation of products and services for an invited audience in order to determine a sale or visitor information. [4] This type of tourism generates two trip categories: [1]

- a). exhibitors - workers from economic enterprises, chambers of commerce, cultural and artistic institutions, individuals;
- b). visitors - represented in turn by specialists (public opinion), whose movement is motivated by professionally and general public, whose motivation is curiosity.

Meetings or gatherings tourism is the act of participating in an event and there are different types, namely meetings, symposia, conferences, congresses. This type of tourism is growing, the most common category being considered barge business travel. The development of technologies in most areas has led to the growth and development of tourism of meetings.

- ✓ The last form of business tourism is the travel-incentive. They refer to the standard short holidays with high luxury. These incentive trips are offered for certain employees and their families. Performance of professional work is rewarded for leadership members by offering them this travel-incentive. Organizations whose management is a modern type are offering to their employees such journeys.

The number of meetings / conventions / congresses that were organized at European level in the Member States, According to the International Congress and Convention Association, in 2012, is presented in table 2.

**Table 2:** Total number of meetings in Europe

<b>Nr. crt</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Number of meetings</b>
1	Germany	649
2	Spain	550
3	GB	477
4	France	469
5	Italy	390
6	Holland	315
7	Austria	278
8	Switzerland	241
9	Sweedden	233
10	Portugal	213

Source: International Congress and Convention Association

#### 4. Sports tourism

In general, sports tourism is an activity for the participation of people in sports, activities or sporting events can be competition taking place in sports camps or training camps, or in some spectacular form of terrain. Many authors expert believes that sports tourism is confused with entertainment, participants traversing distances of at least several tens of kilometers for recreation to meet their own hobbies. Recreational sports tourism can be in turn:

- a). Sport tourism in summer. This includes: hiking, climbing, horseback riding, fishing, rafting, mountain biking, surfing, paragliding, water sports, etc.
- b). Tourism in winter: alpine skiing and snowboarding, ice fishing, etc.

#### **Trends in the evolution of urban**

Urban tourism has a remarkable dynamism, the percentage of increases from one decade to another being significant. While initially these increases were recorded for cities in the developed countries of Europe, U.S. and Japan, lately there have been increases in this type of tourism in the overall share of tourism in some developing countries Europe, Asia and South America. If the latter has been particularly cultural tourism progress, trying to better promote the national cultural values, the others are due to infrastructure development and tourism marketing.

Another problem that requires a solution through systematic projects and organization of rest is to counteract excess travelers rest on occasion. This can be achieved, inter alia, by the development of facilities for rest in the neighborhood, in the city-owned land. Therefore, future projects must accept that travel by car outside the city should not be forced by the scarcity of green areas and rest areas in the city of residence. [5]

#### **Good practices in urban tourism organization**

Good practices are tools that professionals use to find the best solutions in a particular field of activity, leading to better performance then be an example for other activities of the same type. Therefore it is better to learn from best practices of similar organizations that have already gone through their discovery phase.

Good practices in the organization of urban tourism were highlighted in several lines that essentially influenced tourism activity itself. Once you find those ways to improve performance, they have become models for other cities.

Some examples of good practice in urban tourism organization might be found in Budapest and Vienna.

Budapest - Hungary's capital has undergone major changes since 1989 (the fall of communism), managing to be more open to emerging changes, with a transitional period although smaller than cities in the former communist bloc. Budapest was in constant competition with other capitals in Central Europe and had to implement various measures to improve the performance of existing tourism. This was made by a number of initiatives in order to attract and motivate a larger number of foreign tourists to visit Budapest.

One of the most important examples of good practice for Budapest, as in the case of all cities and tourist attractions, is to identify primary and secondary customers to be able to know your target group and shape to them. Therefore there were identified as major markets Germany, Austria, UK, Italy, USA, and Japan. Secondary markets that targeted Budapest were Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Russia, Romania, and France.

"Budapest Winter Invasion" was another successful initiative Hungarian officials dealing with urban tourism. Through this initiative they sought to attract a large number of tourists in the winter season. The guests had the opportunity to spend an extra night in the Hungarian capital, paying hotel accommodation for 4 nights for the price of only 3. Several dozen hotels in Budapest between 2007-2008 participated in this initiative.

Another initiative that was a good example of cooperation with the suburban network was "Seven Stars of Central Europe", which involved a collaboration between Berlin, Dresden, Prague, Budapest, Vienna, Salzburg and Munich in order to promote tourism of the 7 cities Central Europe in the USA [6].

Vienna - Austria's capital is a model of inspiration on good practices for other cities, especially those in Central Europe. One of best practice in the center of Vienna is the existence of a strong tourist information center, which offers visitors the opportunity to receive relevant information about the choice of accommodation, but also the sights "If you arrive in Vienna without a room reservation our colleagues are happy to help you find a

suitable neighborhood. Moreover, you get free brochures and information about attractions, events and day trips. Our guests have at their disposal free WLAN Tourist Information Centre. [7]

A good practice is promoted by Austrian investment in long-term partnerships and the results obtained after a waiting period is outstanding. Moreover, cities with a long tradition travelers prefer this type of partnership, unlike those who for various reasons (political, especially) after years of lack of information, prefer quick results, although the effect are often only for short term.

An example of good environmental practice is given by European cities that have earned the title "European Green Capital". This title is awarded by the European Commission in 2010 for European cities as examples of best practices in continuous improvement of environmental quality and sustainable development. Awards "European Green Capital" were won by: Stockholm in 2010, Hamburg in 2011, Vitoria-gang (Spain) in 2012, Nantes in 2013, following the 2014 title to be awarded the capital of Denmark, Copenhagen. [8]

URBACT is a European Union funded program for exchange and learning for sustainable urban development. This program exchanges best practices through professionals involved in sustainable urban development projects in the countries and cities. Currently URBACT means 29 European countries, 300 cities and 5,000 active participants. Both Romania and Bucharest are participating in the program financed by the European Union European Regional Development Fund.

## **Tourist facilities in urban areas - Bucharest**

"Tourist facilities in a modern sense should be coordinated in a systematic vision, arranged in taxonomic units (usually tourist area or region) that are considered as recreational social space systems. Tourism contributes to shaping its own structures - location at the doorways, the tourism resources, basic amenities etc. material and defining elements of tourism demand in issuing areas: population, income, socio-economic structures." [1]

Bucharest's tourism planning has been a priority in recent years to organizations and there are several related projects, but unfortunately many of the objectives of these projects remained only in the initial stage, on paper.

One problem is the effective use of tourism potential, looking for the weak points to be transformed into strengths. Management must seek ways to contribute to a sustainable continuous development and can be adapted to the existing tourism market at a given time.

The existence of complete travel services (accommodation, transport, food) and complementary is an asset to any important tourist center. Any malfunction of one of the automatic train services and other transportation means threaten the full exploitation of other tourism facilities. Therefore, the development plan must be made by specialized organizations as a whole to prevent the emergence of those failures. It should also be ensured a high economic efficiency, so after fitting a new area or refurbishing an existing one. Quality services are required at competitive costs, similar to other cities where urban tourism is already well developed.

"Urban tourism planning is an action of a territory interdisciplinary organization that helps the economy and tourism, ecology, geography, architecture, natural science, geology, sociology, psychology etc." [1]

## **SWOT Analysis of Bucharest for tourism planning**

### **Strengths**

- The geographical position. Located in SE Romania, Vlasiei Plain
- On the Colentina river is set up a system of 16 lakes, most of them for leisure. Some lakes are used for another favorite activity of Bucharest: fishing.
- In northern Bucharest there are several patches of forest that have been modified for recreation. However, the residents of Bucharest prefer for leisure forests that are further, up to 50 kilometers, such as: Baneasa Forest; Snagov Forest; Căldărușani Forest; Cernica Forest.
- Different architecture, different styles. In recent years there have been initiated a number of projects that have restored monuments, buildings, churches. However the lack of investments still prevents visitors to admire many architectural and cultural attractions.
- The existence of compact land, large areas
- The importance of history. Bucharest has many historical sites, which are described above. Even if the potential is significant, it should be a better recovery. It is also the capital of Romania.

- Complexity of tourist facilities. As highlighted in previous presentations of Bucharest tourism planning is complex, offering a wide range of tourist attractions. This thinking through better marketing strategy will be the main factor in increasing the number of Romanian and foreign tourists.

- Business growing. Romania's capital has seen a jump in this area particularly in the last 10 years, becoming a dynamic business center, with visible growth. According to a study titled Business Foot print survey of some 280 companies in 232 cities (from 100 countries), Bucharest ranks a respectable 29th place. Thus, almost 40% of the companies considered in the study were in Bucharest, with premises in the coming years, half of these companies have offices in the metropolis on the Dâmbovița River.

- Increasing the number of green spaces. In the period 2008-2011 there was an increase in the number of green spaces in the capital. From 4139 in 2008 reached a total of 4807 in 2011, according to the National Statistics Institute.

- Romanian cuisine: although has little impact from the French cuisine, Italian or Chinese, Romanian cuisine is diverse and interesting at the same time for foreign tourists. With a tradition of the time Dacians at funerals when the tables are eating buckwheat and "boiled wheat" (cage today), Romanian cuisine has been heavily influenced by immigrant populations, being an amalgam of Western and Oriental cuisine (sec . 13-1821), (1821-1918).

## **Weaknesses**

- Lack of natural attractions. Bucharest unlike other European cities/capitals has no hot springs, mountains, caves. This undoubtedly lead to a decline in interest of foreign tourists, who prefer a city (Budapest) that has similar features, but enriched with natural attractions: comes from the former communist bloc, is located at the intersection of Western influences with oriental communist period and has influenced architecture.

- Lack of projects to promote tourism potential.

- The duration of the summer season. Like most cities in the continental temperate zone, where it is not practicable to specific mountain tourism in the winter, the number of tourists is very low. Bucharest can implement policies for cities in similar situations by motivating tourists to various facilities (e.g., during winter, offering a free night accommodation).

- Poor correlation between services. As we mentioned, the good correlation between services is very important. In Bucharest, the infrastructure is outdated, being inherited from the communist period. Therefore, it requires major investment in its development, in order to keep pace with other competitors.

- Poor management of existing waste in public places, which can make the tourists to depart from Bucharest.

- Offer hospitality is not diverse enough, being dominated by high class hotels.

- Low degree of absorption of European funds in tourism planning, which leads to cuts and loss of funding.

- Development of new residential suburban areas that do not have socio-cultural features.

### **Opportunities**

- Creation of international festivals. Given the presence of the Village Museum and Romanian Peasant Museum near its center, Bucharest can organize festivals that promote national traditions, much better preserved and more attractive than in other European countries. For several years, the Romanian Peasant Museum is running a fair with natural foods and traditional historical regions, but the impact on tourists is insignificant.

- Promotion of medical tourism. With the Institute of Gerontology and Geriatrics Ana Aslan (first of its kind in the world, 1952), the results of which have enjoyed over time many global personalities (Tito, JF Kennedy, Charlie Chaplin, Salvador Dali etc.), Bucharest can develop this type of medical tourism, creating an asset, one of the few that you can have over your competitors. Also, given the lower cost than similar services in developed countries in Europe, dental services in the capital can be an attraction for foreign tourists.

- Implementing an effective marketing strategy. Many cities give priority to tourism marketing tourism potential, with special organizations that deal with this area.

- Better use of the potential of Parliament House. Although attracts most foreign tourists their number is very small compared with other similar European buildings. The Palace of the Parliament in Budapest, although much smaller, attracts double the number of foreign tourists from the People's House.

## Threats

- Competition of European cities. Bucharest has the disadvantage of being situated nearby to some cities that are more attractive for tourists: Prague, Vienna, Budapest, and Istanbul. All of them have to offer more experiences than the Romanian capital in the tourism sector, especially in terms of services offered.

- Increasing prices. In the future, some of the current advantages, i.e. prices, could become a threat to tourism development in Bucharest. Rising prices, irretrievable and an improvement in service quality can remove tourists, allowing them to refocus on locations similar but cheaper.

- Quality standards. Quality of service is one of the main problems of Romanian tourism in general. Many Romanian tourists prefer the Bulgarian seaside against the Romanian, because of this problem. And the main problem is not the lack of accommodation for example, but the lack of education and training of staff working in the tourism sector.

- Weaknesses that could threaten critical aspects. It has been mentioned before, some of them can be removed, while others may be enhanced and others may be converted into a positive aspect.

## Priorities for tourism planning in Bucharest

The development of sustainable Bucharest Plan for 2009-2012 identified a number of priorities for tourism, some of which have been implemented to date, others, for various reasons, being left in the status of project:

- Creation of the Tourist Information Centre in the University Passage. It was completed in July 2010, was inaugurated in December 2010. Tourism Development Department of the Bucharest Municipality is responsible for the cluster. Until 31.12.2012 it was visited by about 10,000 Romanian and foreign tourists.

- Creation of the Tourist Information Centre on Calea Victoriei. This project could not be completed because of the legal status of the area where the center would be arranged.

- Establishment of a tourist car line. Bucharest Autonomous Transportation opened a special bus line for sightseeing, especially for foreign tourists visiting the capital on 'Delhi City Tour ". Trail, 15.4 km long with 14 stations, can be covered in 50 minutes.

- Establishment of parking for coaches. Identified areas of the important landmarks that can be arranged parking for coaches. Were subject to Commission approval of Traffic.

- Bucharest Daily Pass. Creating a card to ensure free entrance or at a lower price from any tourist attraction for adults and children, access to any means of transportation, discounts on products and services offered by the municipality and businesses, partners of the project . This card is used by many other major cities of Europe. For example, in Copenhagen (capital of Denmark) there is such a card (Copenhagen Card) which offers many tourist facilities.

Bucharest must implement in the future a number of priorities for tourism planning:

- Fully implement existing plans and projects, finding solutions to remedy all difficulties encountered in their implementation.

- Develop viable marketing based on market surveys.

- Creation of a computerized booking system by participating in a joint program of all housing units in Bucharest and its suburbs.

- Development of advertising to promote Bucharest in television stations that has with global impact.

- Creating new tourism centers, development of the existing ones, development of promotional materials to better promote the main tourist attractions.

- Creating new places, diversification, especially those in the middle and lower classes, given that Bucharest has particular places in the upper, looking for and attracting tourists with less financial opportunities.

- Participation in the organization of trade fairs / exhibitions to promote the capital's main tourist attractions.

- Devolution tourist areas of the city. Many tourists are looking for other spaces than the traditional city center. New topics: gardens and green spaces in the city, premises, industrial premises, strange locations.

- Speed up the reform in tourism through active involvement of the state to support its deployment

- Organization of international festivals, such as the famous cities.

In this way tourists arriving in Bucharest as foreigners will visit existing attractions (museums, theaters, parks, botanical gardens).

- Entering the main tourist attractions in Bucharest tourism in the largest travel agencies in the European Union, Russia, China, India, Brazil, USA, Canada, Ukraine etc
- Establishing partnerships with other European capitals.
- Implementing EU legislation.
- Efficient use of natural and human resources.
- Establish a program to pursue increased education and training of staff serving the tourism sector, staff training by managers from other European cities with outstanding achievements in this field.
- Attracting a large number of tourists, especially foreigners, by the promotion of tourism in Bucharest on social networks (e.g. Facebook, Twitter).
- Reducing seasonality by creating facilities and events during the low season.
- Create a main shopping area, having as model cities / capitals that have tradition in this practice.
- Promotion of Bucharest's monuments in order to come under the aegis of UNESCO, Bucharest having no monument included in this heritage category.
- Creation of new forms of tourism to be developed based on sports and recreation.
- Preservation and conservation of the environment and natural landscape.

## Conclusions

Poor recovery of tourism potential, the lack of relevant policies for its development, nonexistence of a marketing plan in place based on the requirements of the world market, totally unfinished projects and programs initiated, old up infrastructure are just some of the current problems of the tourism situation in Bucharest . To attract a number of tourists, especially foreigners, we shall study the impact to the discovery target groups of tourists to bring their services to the needs.

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