

## RESEARCHERS ON THE IMPLICATIONS OF AGRO-TOURISM IN THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RURAL SPACE

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**Abstract:** *Currently, the economic coordinates of the rural environment are strictly dependent on the predominance of agricultural activities and the still high degree of employment in this sector. Thus, in the Romanian rural area, agriculture remains the main economic activity, although there are areas where activities such as forest industries, rural tourism and agrotourism, fishing, etc. dominate. Rural development in Romania must take into account all agricultural and non-agricultural activities that are and can be carried out in rural areas, given the potential of existing resources. In the context of the multifunctionality of rural areas, complementary activities related to agriculture and the provision of services, must become the priorities of sustainable development programs.*

### Introduction

The Romanian rural area has a significant potential, regarding economic growth also having an important social role. It occupies 89% from the total area and concentrates 9.07 million people, representing 46.2% of the total population of the country.

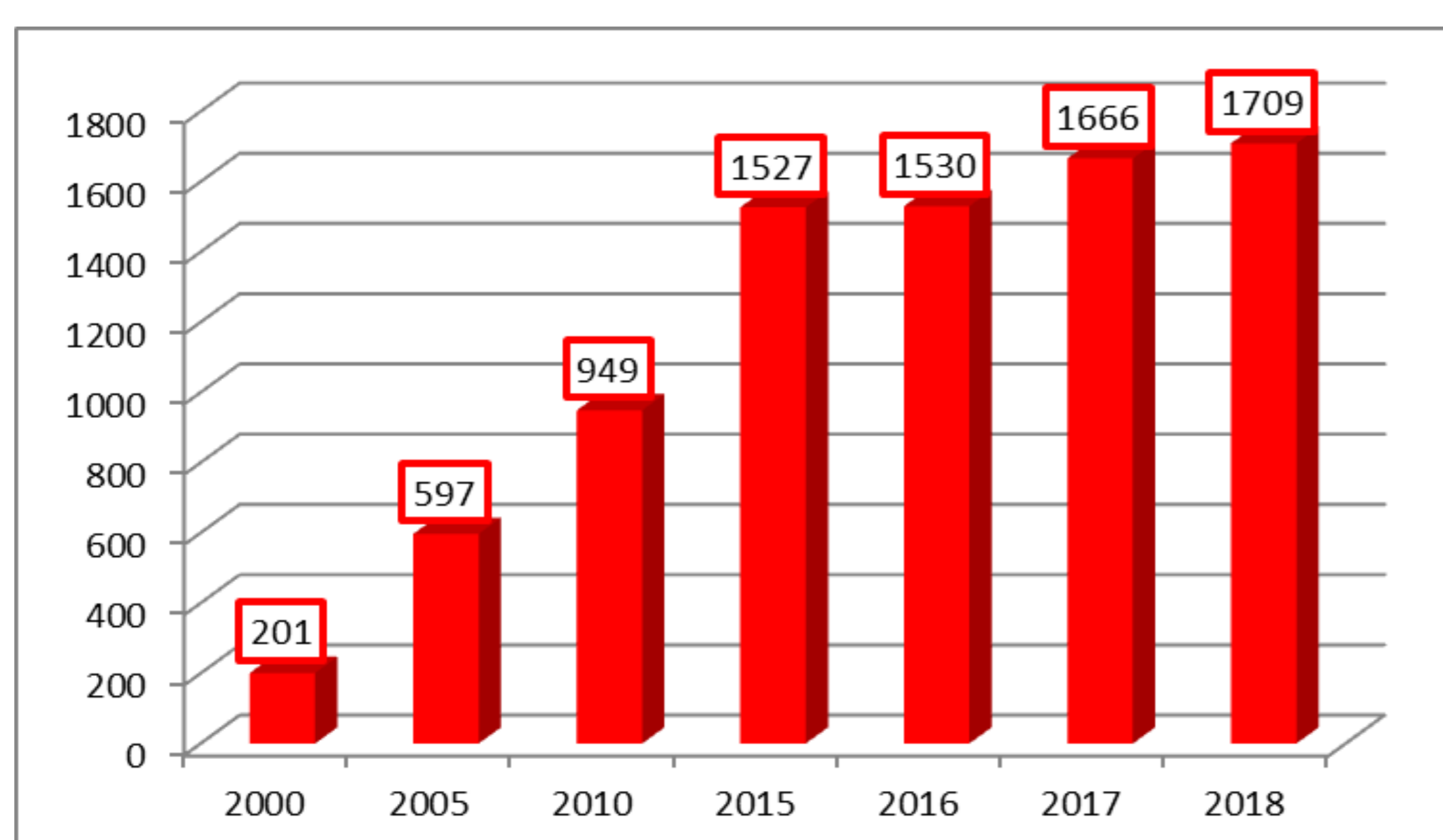
Economic development, as well as increasing living standards, increases the role of the entrepreneurial sector, because more people can access funds to start their own business, in an economic environment capable of facilitating the development of opportunities. In addition, there are other factors that influence the rate of entrepreneurial activity, such as demographic, cultural and institutional characteristics, existing at national level.

### Material and method

This paper has as purpose to highlight the role that tourism activity has in the economic development of rural areas. Being an activity that combines very well the capitalization of agricultural production with the enhancement of the natural and anthropic tourist heritage of the Romanian state, agrotourism is a real alternative source of income for the inhabitants of these areas. The documentation for conducting this study is based on important bibliographic sources in the field and the existing statistical information on this activity.

### Results and discussions

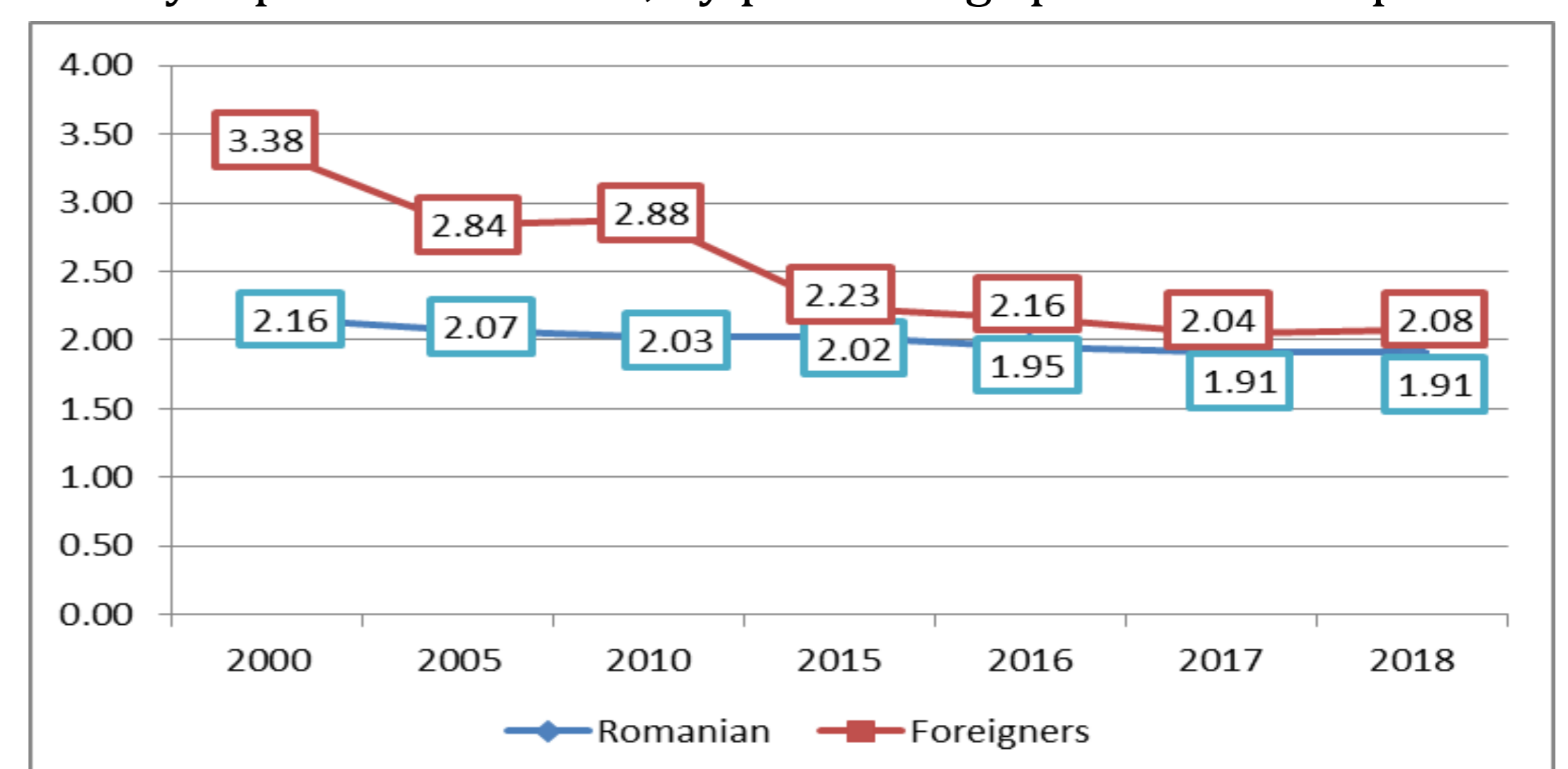
Rural tourism is one of the non-agricultural activities that show an increasingly strong evolution. The geographical position and the potential of natural and anthropic resources, as well as the richness of the cultural and historical heritage, make Romania a special tourist destination, offering the possibility to practice a wide range of tourist activities, starting from classic tourism to those involving rural and its defining elements, meaning rural tourism, agrotourism and ecotourism. approximately equal to that of 2010.



Evolution of the number of agrotourism pensions

The main indicative operations are:

- ❖ creating and promoting the positive image of Romania as a rural tourist destination by defining and promoting the national tourist brand, the capacity to attract investors in order to develop the tourism industry and increase the degree of attractiveness;
- ❖ development and consolidation of domestic tourism by supporting the promotion of tourism-specific products and specific marketing activities. The purpose of this operation is to develop the concept of tourist recreation inside the country, to increase the number of holidays spent in Romania, by promoting specific tourist products.



Average duration of stay in agrotourism guesthouses, days/tourist

Particular importance must be given, in the economic analysis of the tourist activity, to the average length of stay. Overall, there is a longer stay for foreign tourists compared to Romanian tourists.

### Conclusions

The development and intensification of the tourist activity requires investments in the modernization and development of the technical-material base of accommodation, food and leisure of agritourism guesthouses, as well as improving the quality of services provided to customers, increasing the qualification of the workforce, thus increasing the number of tourists and the average length of stay. Future rural development programs in Romania will have to target, among others:

- ❖ sustainable development of the rural environment by strengthening the economic and social role of agriculture;
- ❖ encouraging non-agricultural practices;
- ❖ improving the quality of life in rural areas, in order to maintain the population in this area;
- ❖ conservation of natural resources, agricultural and forestry and cultural heritage;
- ❖ the use of all rural resources through an efficient system and the practice of non-agricultural activities in most agricultural holdings.