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TOURISM DEVELOPMENT OF CARAȘ-SEVERIN COUNTY IN THE PERIOD 2019-2023

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Abstract: *The increased interest of tourists in Banatul Montan had an impact on the tourism development of Caraș-Severin county. The large number of tourists coming to the area has determined the increase in accommodation places, which implicitly impacts the number and diversity of accommodation units.*

The purpose of the article is to analyse how the tourism development of Caraș-Severin county has evolved in the last 5 years per locality.

In the article, I used the documentary analysis method, structuring the information I obtained from the bibliography at the end of the paper.

The result of the research confirms the touristic and economic potential of the Caraș-Severin county by maximising the existing cultural and natural heritage.

• **Introduction**

- The increased interest of tourists in Banatul Montan had an impact on the tourism development of Caraș-Severin county. The large number of tourists coming to the area has led to an increase in accommodation.
- As part of the research, we analysed how the tourism development of Caraș-Severin County has evolved in the last 5 years per locality.
- The 2020 pandemic had a very big impact on the diversification of the types of accommodation units. The desire of tourists to stay as far away from the crowd and as isolated as possible from other guests and even from the staff in the accommodation units determined the appearance and classification of the hotel apartments, but also the increase in the number of agropensions.

• **Material and method**

- In the article, the authors employed the documentary analysis method, systematically organizing and analyzing information sourced from the bibliography appended at the conclusion of the paper. This methodological approach facilitated a comprehensive examination of pertinent literature, enriching the study's theoretical framework and enhancing the depth of analysis.

• **Results and discussions**

1. EVOLUTION OF THE NUMBER OF ACCOMMODATION STRUCTURES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

- The period of the pandemic changed people's habits even more, making them choose accommodation units where they can feel safe. This fact led to the development of the most isolated accommodation units. This research also covers the years of pandemics. The period when tourist activities were limited or closed.

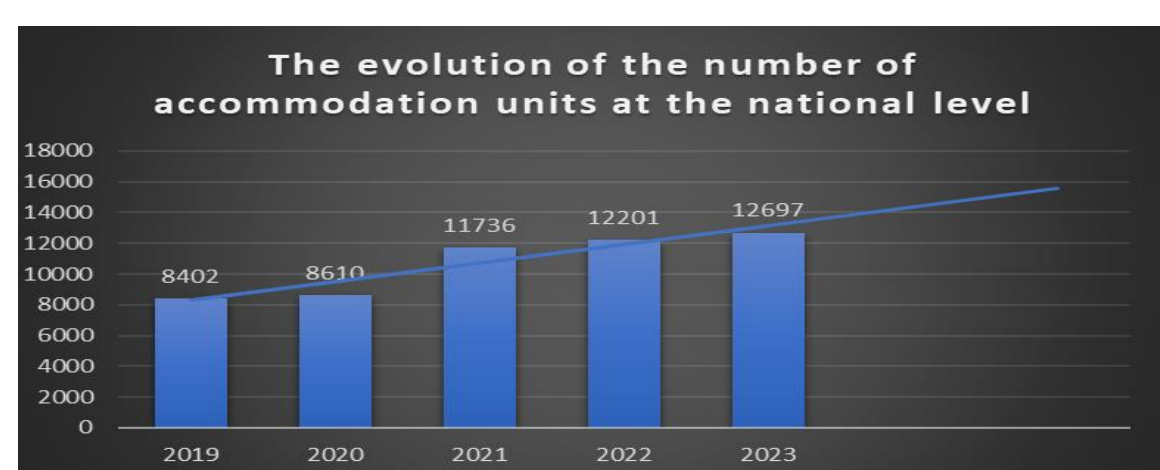


Figure 1. Evolution of the number of accommodation units at the national level

Conclusively, the period spanning from 2020 to 2021 witnessed a notable surge, with a statistically significant 37.12% augmentation observed in the count of accommodation units at the national level. This increase stands as the most substantial escalation documented within the preceding five-year timeframe, indicative of dynamic shifts within the accommodation sector.

2. EVOLUTION OF THE NUMBER OF ACCOMMODATION STRUCTURES BY MACROREGION

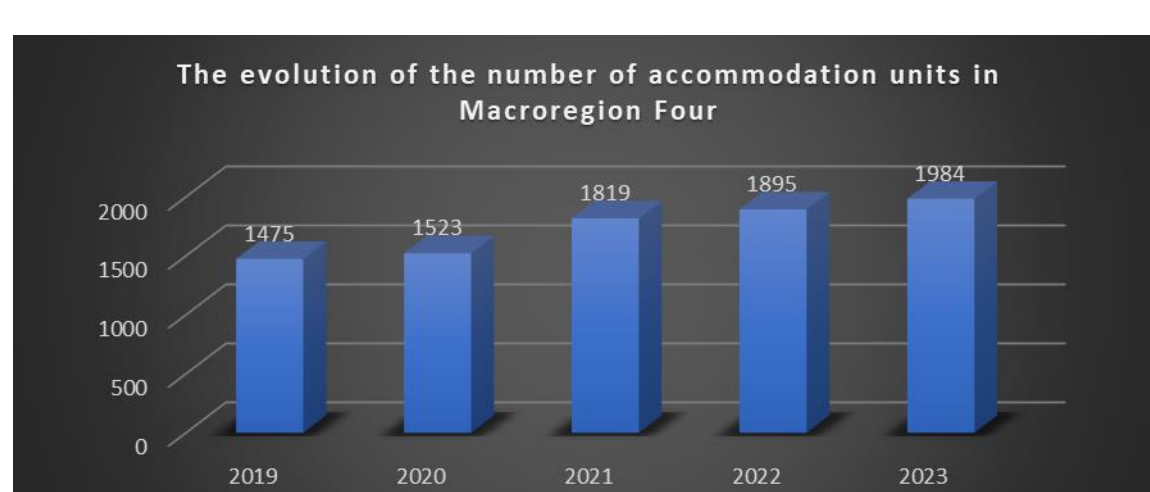


Figure 3. Evolution of the number of accommodation units in Macroregion Four

In conclusion, the Patru Macroregion has exhibited a substantial growth trajectory over the past five years, registering a noteworthy expansion of 34.51%. This robust growth underscores the region's resilience and dynamism, positioning it as a key player in the broader socio-economic landscape.

3. THE EVOLUTION OF ACCOMMODATION UNITS IN THE PERIOD 2019-2023 IN CARAȘ-SEVERIN

In Caraș-Severin county, there has been a consistent upward trend in the number of accommodation units, reflecting the region's burgeoning hospitality sector. Over the past five years, this growth has been particularly pronounced, with a remarkable increase of 38.1%. Such sustained expansion underscores the county's attractiveness as a destination and its evolving role within the tourism industry.

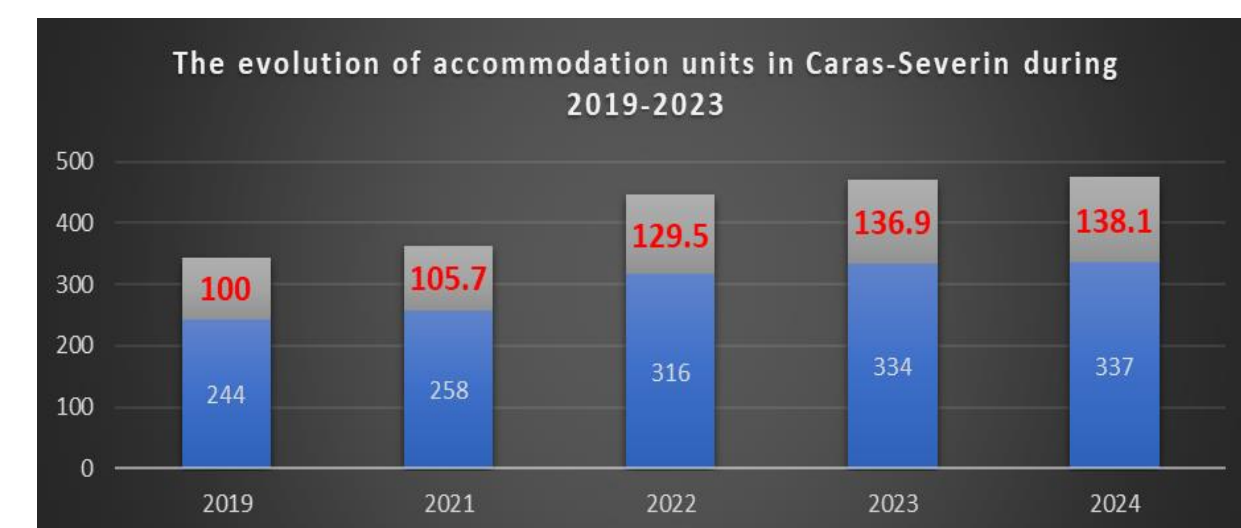


Figure 4. The evolution of accommodation units in Caras-Severin during 2019-2023

In summary, the data indicates a noteworthy uptick of 16.5% in agrotourism lodgings, alongside a substantial 20.5% rise in the utilization of apartments and rented rooms. Remarkably, over the preceding five-year period, apartments and rented rooms contributed 20.5% to the total 38.1% escalation in lodging facilities.

4.EVOLUTION OF THE NUMBER OF OVERNIGHT STAYS IN THE CARAȘ-SEVERIN COUNTY IN THE PERIOD 2019 – 2023

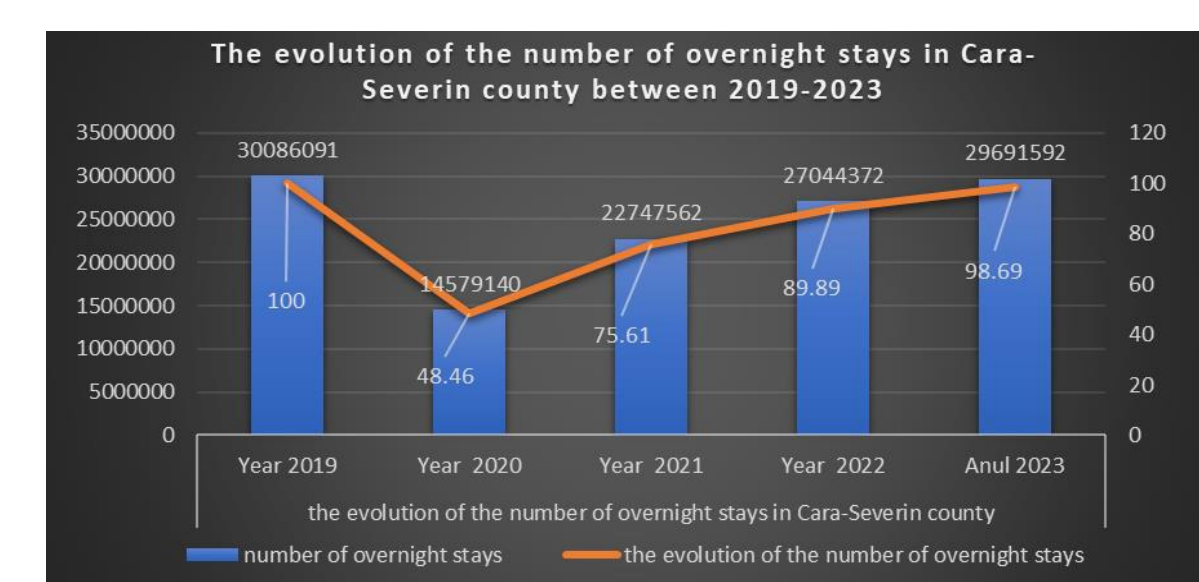


Figure 5. Evolution of the number of overnight stays in Cara-Severin county between 2019-2023

The data reflects not just numbers but a story of perseverance and adaptation, illustrating how industries navigate through challenges and evolve over time. It's akin to a rollercoaster ride, with its twists and turns, yet ultimately showing an upward trajectory toward recovery and growth.

• **CONCLUSIONS**

Between 2020 and 2021, national accommodation units surged by 37.12%, marking the steepest increase in five years. Caras-Severin county saw a remarkable 38.1% rise in accommodation units during the same period. Agrotourism pensions experienced a notable uptick of 16.5%, while apartments and rooms for rent claimed a 20.5% share. By 2021, rural accommodation units surpassed urban ones, catering to tourists eager to explore the scenic wonders of Caras-Severin county.

The pandemic spurred the greatest increase, with a notable 23.8% surge in accommodation capacity. This rise mirrored the national trend, indicating a synchronized response across regions. Caras-Severin County emerged as a significant player, ranking second in tourist infrastructure development within the West Region, showcasing its commitment to bolstering hospitality services. Despite its commendable position, it trailed behind Hunedoara, signaling room for further growth and competition. Within the broader Patru Macroregion, encompassing Hunedoara and Valcea, Caras-Severin County secured a respectable third position, highlighting its regional prominence.

In the face of adversity, tourism faced a steep decline, with a staggering 51.54% drop in tourist numbers recorded in 2020. Recovery proved to be a gradual process, with pre-pandemic levels not regained until the conclusion of 2023, underscoring the industry's resilience amidst unprecedented challenges.

Interestingly, despite the expansion of accommodation units, there seemed to be no discernible correlation between the growth of overnight stays and the increase in accommodation capacity over the past five years. This finding suggests that factors beyond sheer availability of lodging play a role in shaping tourist behavior and preferences.

Furthermore, despite the substantial investment in accommodation infrastructure, Caras-Severin County's capacity utilization remained modest, reaching only 60% by 2023. This underlines the need for targeted efforts to enhance promotion and attract tourists, ensuring optimal utilization of existing resources.

In light of these insights, intensified promotion of tourist attractions emerges as a critical imperative for Caras-Severin County. Such efforts are indispensable for transforming the HORECA sector into a robust source of income for local residents, thereby fostering economic growth and sustainability within the region.