

Dobrogea as Romanian Tourism Micro-destination*

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Abstract. *Dobrogea, known since antiquity as Dacia Pontica, after the name of the sea that was bordering it – Pontus Euxinus, is a region situated in Southeastern Romania and covers four counties of which two – Constanța and Tulcea – belong to the Romanian territory. The celebrity of Dobrogea consists in its openness to the Black Sea, in Danube Delta (reservation of the biosphere that belongs to the UNESCO heritage since 1991) and in its archaeological traces that prove the existence and the continuity of the Romanian population next to “Turks, Tatars, Circassians, Macedo-Romanians and Greeks, Italian and Ukrainian, Catholic and Protestant Germans, Bulgarians and Russians, even Egyptians and Gipsy Muslims – a true ethnic mosaic” (Popoiu, 2010, p. 15). The conducted research refers just to the two Romanian counties and aims to highlight the role of the image of the historical region of Dobrogea in building its own brand and to identify its main tourist attractions and forms of tourism.*

Keywords: tourism destination; tourism micro-destination; destination image; regional tourism brand; forms of tourism; destination marketing.

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REL Codes: 14F, 14G.

* The paper is part of a research presented in detail in No. 2(555)/2011 and examines, from this perspective, just the Romanian territory of the historical region of Dobrogea.

Introduction

Known in the past as Dacia Pontica or Scythia Minor, the historical region of Dobrogea stretches out from administrative point of view on the territory of two countries: Romania (Constanța and Tulcea counties) and Bulgaria (Dobrici and Silistra counties). This paper and the conducted research focus just on the Romanian territory of this region.

The micro-destination of Dobrogea is situated in the Southeastern Romania and it is bordered on the North by the Dobrogea's massif (the Măcin Mountains), surrounded by three tablelands (Tulcea, Babadag and Casimcea), on the North-East by Danube Delta, on the East by Black Sea, on the West by the lower reaches of the Danube and on the South by the state border with Bulgaria. Regarding the administrative-territorial division, the region covers two counties: Constanța and Tulcea. The most important cities are: Constanța, Mangalia, Medgidia and Tulcea. The region includes both spa resorts (Eforie Nord, Eforie Sud, Saturn) and leisure resorts such as Mamaia, Jupiter, Neptun, Olimp, Venus, Costinești, 2 Mai and Vama Veche.

Very well known in Romania (it holds the first position in the preferences of the 1887 respondents), but also in Europe, as one of the most attractive tourist features that shapes its own tourism destination as "an exotic area with more than 1,200 plant species, with the richest ornithological fauna (over 300 species, including unique colonies of pelicans) and ichthyological fauna (represented by around 100 species) on the continent, Danube Delta is the largest reservation of wet lands in Europe (2,681 km²) and was included into the UNESCO heritage" (Matei, 2011, p. 174). In addition to the natural landscape offered by the Black Sea and the Danube Delta, there are many key tourist attractions, such as: the ruins of the Greek colonies (Tomis, Callatis and Histria), the Casino (Constanța), the National Museum of History and Archeology (Constanța), the Aquarium (Constanța), the Dolphinarium (Constanța), the Planetarium (Constanța), the Astronomical Observatory (Constanța), the Navy Museum (Constanța), the Tropaeum Traiani monument from Adamclisi, monasteries such as: Derwent Monastery, Celic Dere Monastery, Cocoș Monastery, the Monastery Cave of St. Andrew (St. Apostle Andrei).

Operational framework

The research conducted in October-December 2010 – January 2011 on a sample of 1,887 young people aged 20-24 years, with ongoing studies, aimed to identify the extent to which the perceptions of the residents coming from different Romanian regions related to the micro-destination of Dobrogea helps in the development of the identity within the elaboration process of the destination marketing strategy.

According to the classification of the forms of tourism proposed by the World Tourism Organization (WTO/UNO) in 1979, which takes into account the reasons guiding the choice of tourism destination (business and professional tourism, medical spa tourism, cultural tourism, leisure tourism, visiting friends and relatives and other forms of tourism), the respondents could choose the main form of tourism practiced within the historical region of Dobrogea.

Regarding the distribution of the forms of tourism for the micro-destination of Dobrogea, the results are as follows: 74.5% of the respondents considered the *leisure tourism* as being representative for this region, 16.3% opted for *medical spa tourism*, 3.3% chose *cultural tourism*, 3.1% opted for *other forms of tourism*, 2.3% chose *visiting friends and relatives*, while 0.5% of the respondents opted for *business and professional tourism* (Figure 1).

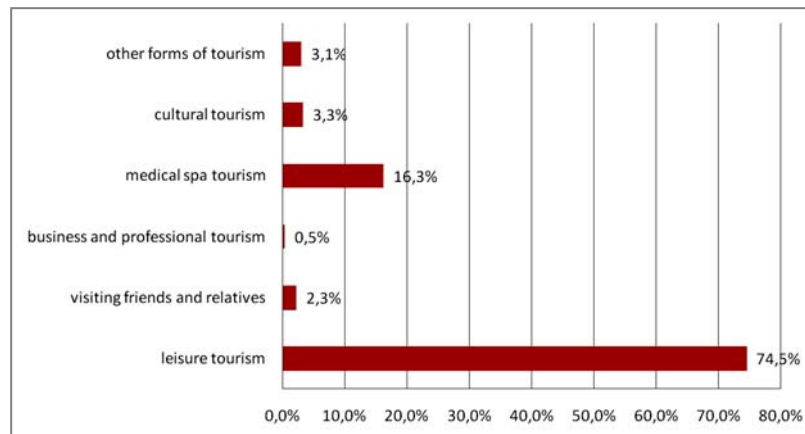


Figure 1. The distribution of the forms of tourism for the micro-destination of Dobrogea

Taking into consideration the regions of origin of the respondents, it can be noticed that the *leisure tourism* constantly holds the first position as predominant form of tourism for this historical region and it is frequently followed by the medical spa tourism. The last place belongs to the business and professional tourism. Regarding the established regional structure, the situation is as follows (Table 1):

- 1) Muntenia as region of origin (Figure 2):
 - 73.7% of the respondents chose *leisure tourism* as representative form of tourism for the region of Dobrogea;
 - 17.7% opted for *medical spa tourism*;
 - 3.2% chose cultural tourism;
 - 2.9% opted for other forms of tourism;
 - 2.1% chose visiting friends and relatives;
 - 0.4% of the respondents – business and professional tourism.

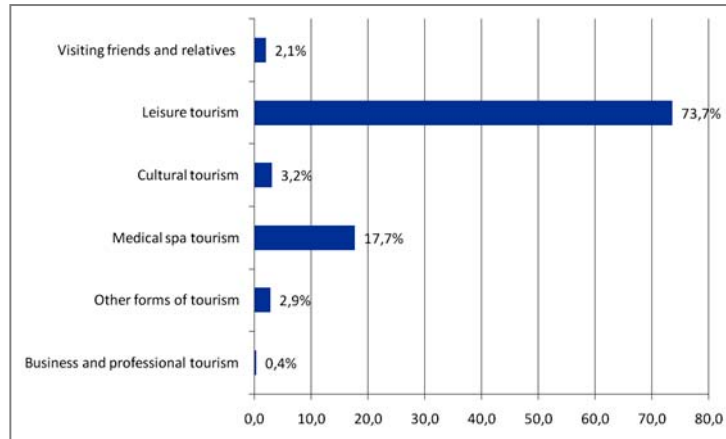


Figure 2. The distribution of the forms of tourism for the micro-destination of Dobrogea. Region of origin of the respondents: Muntenia

2) Oltenia as region of origin (Figure 3):

- 63.6% of the respondents chose *leisure tourism* as representative form of tourism for the region of Dobrogea;
- 17.4% opted for *medical spa tourism*;
- 7.4% chose cultural tourism;
- 5.8% opted for visiting friends and relatives;
- 4.1% chose other forms of tourism;
- 1.7% of the respondents opted for business and professional tourism.

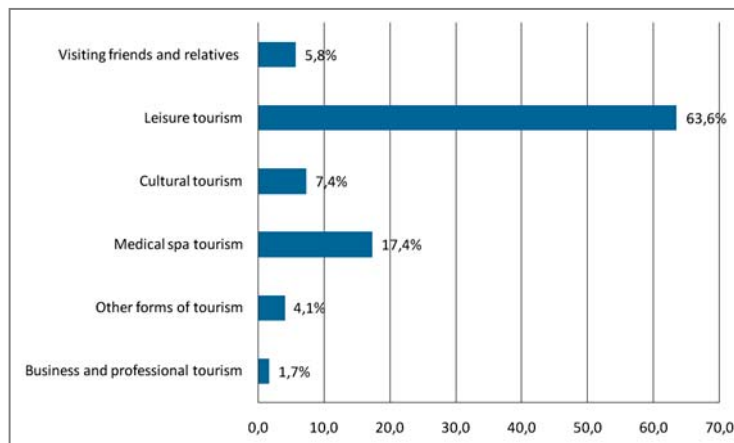


Figure 3. The distribution of the forms of tourism for the micro-destination of Dobrogea. Region of origin of the respondents: Oltenia

3) Banat-Crișana as region of origin (Figure 4):

- 63.4% of the respondents chose *leisure tourism* as representative form of tourism for the region of Dobrogea;
- 12.2% opted for *cultural tourism*;
- 10.2% chose medical spa tourism;
- 7.1% opted for other forms of tourism;
- 5.1% chose visiting friends and relatives;
- 2.0% of the respondents opted for business and professional tourism.

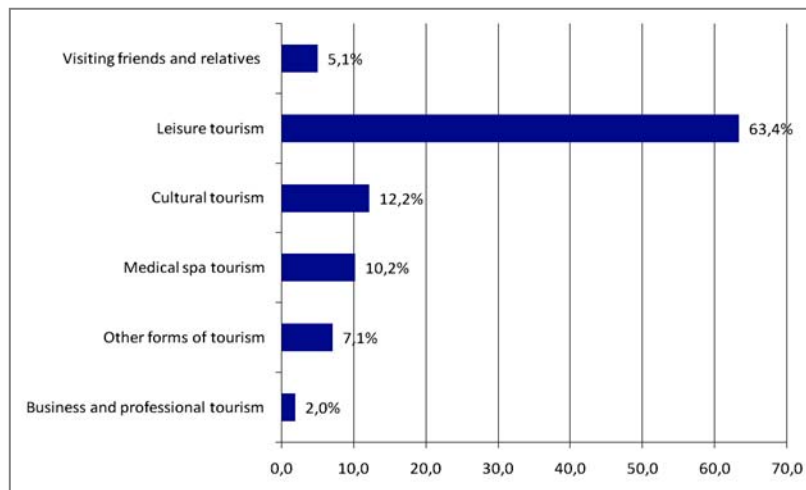


Figura 4. The distribution of the forms of tourism for the micro-destination of Dobrogea.
Region of origin of the respondents: Banat-Crișana

4) Transylvania as region of origin (Figure 5):

- 50.0% of the respondents chose *leisure tourism* as representative form of tourism for the region of Dobrogea;
- 22.9% opted for *medical spa tourism*;
- 11.8% chose other forms of tourism;
- 8.5% opted for cultural tourism;
- 5.1% chose visiting friends and relatives;
- 1.7% of the respondents chose business and professional tourism.

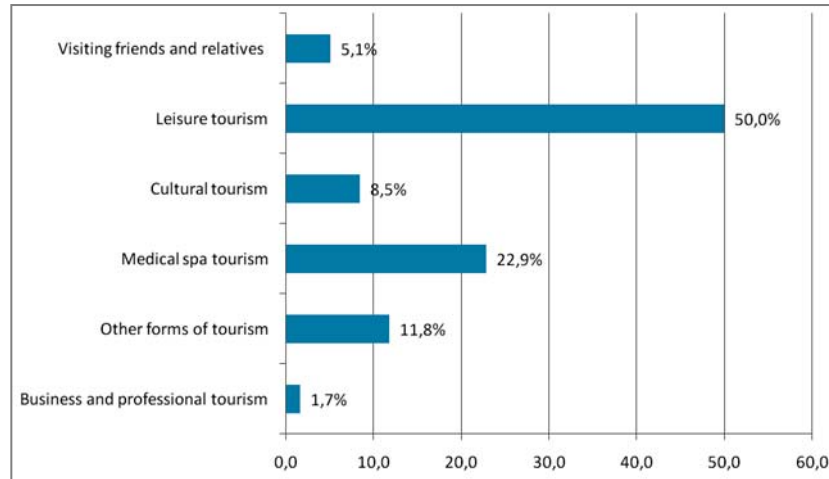


Figure 5. The distribution of the forms of tourism for the micro-destination of Dobrogea. Region of origin of the respondents: Transylvania

5) Bucovina as region of origin (Figure 6):

- 58.9% of the respondents opted for *leisure tourism* as representative form of tourism for the region of Dobrogea;
- 17.9% chose *medical spa tourism*;
- 8.4% opted for cultural tourism;
- 7.4% chose visiting friends and relatives;
- 5.3% opted for other forms of tourism;
- 2.1% of the respondents chose business and professional tourism.

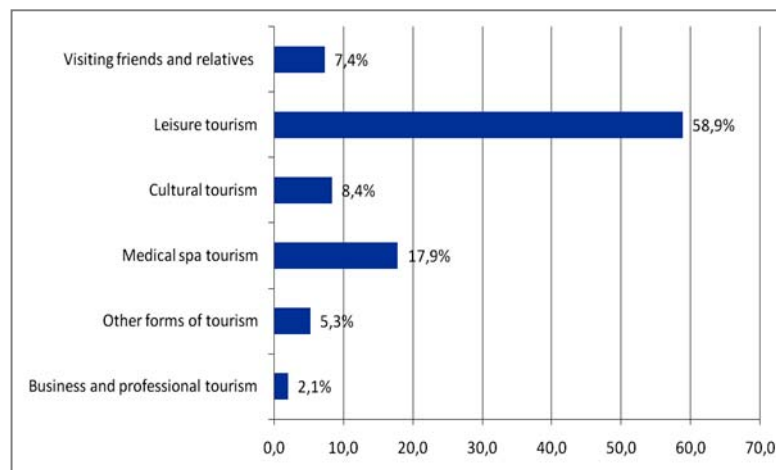


Figure 6. The distribution of the forms of tourism for the micro-destination of Dobrogea. Region of origin of the respondents: Bucovina

- 6) Moldavia and Maramureş as regions of origin (Figure 7):
- 66.8% of the respondents chose *leisure tourism* as representative form of tourism for the region of Dobrogea;
 - 16.9% opted for *medical spa tourism*;
 - 6.8% chose cultural tourism;
 - 4.7% opted for visiting friends and relatives;
 - 3.4% chose other forms of tourism;
 - 1.4% of the respondents chose business and professional tourism.

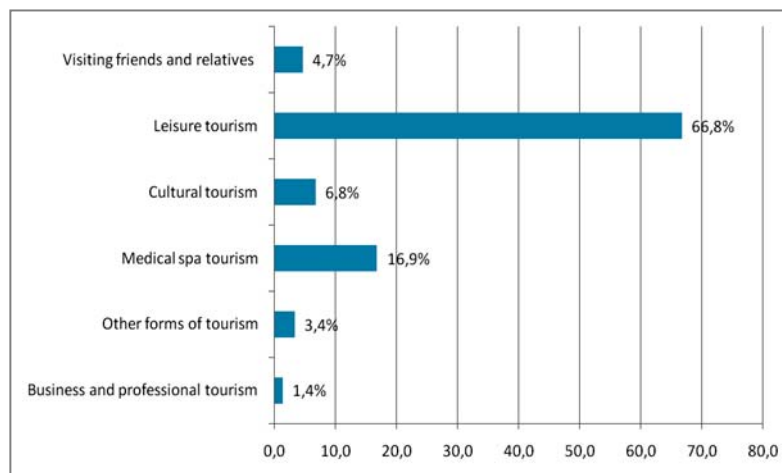


Figure 7. The distribution of the forms of tourism for the micro-destination of Dobrogea.
Region of origin of the respondents: Moldavia and Maramureş

- 7) Dobrogea as region of origin (Figure 8):
- 55.6% of the respondents chose *leisure tourism* as representative form of tourism for their region;
 - 21.0% chose *medical spa tourism*;
 - 11.3% opted for cultural tourism;
 - 6.5% chose visiting friends and relatives;
 - 4.0% opted for other forms of tourism;
 - 1.6% of the respondents chose business and professional tourism.

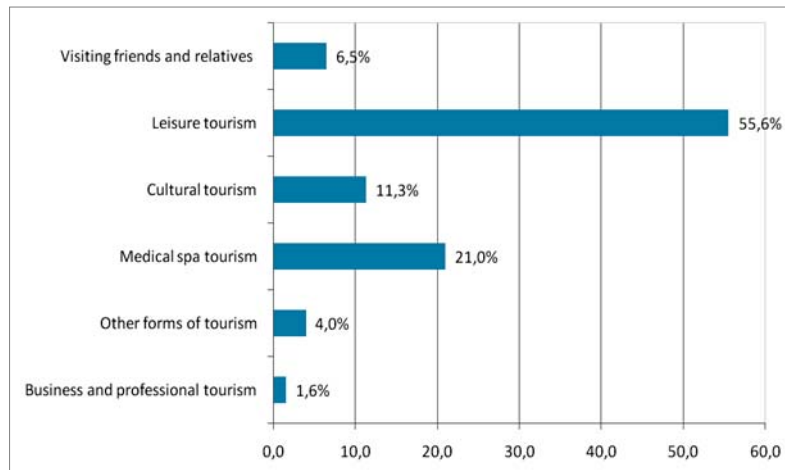


Figure 8. The distribution of the forms of tourism for the micro-destination of Dobrogea.
Region of origin of the respondents: Dobrogea

Table 1

**The distribution of the responses by forms of tourism
and by region of origin of the respondents**

Region of origin of the respondents \ Forms of tourism	Forms of tourism					
	Business and professional tourism	Other forms of tourism	Medical spa tourism	Cultural tourism	Leisure tourism	Visiting friends and relatives
Muntenia	0.4	2.9	17.7	3.2	73.7	2.1
Oltenia	1.7	4.1	17.4	7.4	63.6	5.8
Banat – Crișana	2.0	7.1	10.2	12.2	63.4	5.1
Transylvania	1.7	11.8	22.9	8.5	50.0	5.1
Bucovina	2.1	5.3	17.9	8.4	58.9	7.4
Moldavia and Maramureș	1.4	3.4	16.9	6.8	66.8	4.7
Dobrogea	1.6	4.0	21.0	11.3	55.6	6.5

The choice of the respondents for the *leisure tourism* as representative form of tourism for the micro-destination of Dobrogea can be explained in particular by the existence of a beautiful natural landscape offered by the Black Sea and Danube Delta. The resorts located along the Black Sea coast were considered to be before the 90's the preferred holiday destinations especially during the summer months (June-August) and for the last years it can be noticed a tendency for tourism during the weekend.

The references made by the respondents to the natural and anthropic tourism resources of the tourism micro-destination of Dobrogea are illustrated by order of relevance in Figure 9.

A. NATURAL POTENTIAL	% of respondents
<i>topography</i> : the Danube Delta, the Romanian littoral of the Black Sea, Dobrogea Plateau, Măcin Mountains, Culmea Niculițelului, Tulcea Hills, Babadag Plateau, Limanu Cave, etc.	47.8
<i>climate/climatic elements</i> : scorching heat, humidity.	1.4
<i>hidrography</i> : Danube River, the three branches of the Danube (Chilia, Sulina, Sfântul Gheorghe/Saint George), Siutghiol Lake, Techirghiol Lake, etc.	19.0
<i>flora and fauna</i> : the Biosphere Reservation of Danube Delta, Letea Forest, Geological Complex of Cheile Dobrogei, seagulls, fish, etc.	0.9
B. ANTHROPIC POTENTIAL	% of respondents
<i>historical traces and art monuments</i> : the ruins of the ancient Greek colonies (Histria, Tomis, Callatis), the Tropaeum Traiani Monument from Adamclisi, the Turkish mosque of Ali-Gaza Pasha, etc.	2.8
<i>elements of ethnography and folklore</i> : folk music, folk dances, folk costumes, gastronomy (fish soup, fish brine, Dobrogean stew, Dobrogean pie, wines), customs and traditions, etc.	3.6
<i>museums</i> : the National Museum of History and Archeology, the Popular Art Museum, the Sea Museum, the Romanian Navy Museum, etc.	0.4
<i>cultural-artistic institutions</i> : Dervent Monastery, Celic Dere Monastery, Cocoș Monastery, the Monastery Cave of St. Andrew (St. Apostle Andrei), the Big Mosque from Constanța, etc.	2.0
<i>events</i> : Callatis Festival.	0.1
<i>contemporary constructions</i> : Nuclear Power Plant from Cernavodă, Thermal power station from Năvodari, Dolphinarium, Telegondola, Aqua Magic, the Anghel Saligny Bridge, wind farms, etc.	1.7
<i>human settlements</i> : Constanța, Techirghiol, Mamaia, Eforie Nord, Eforie Sud, Costinești, Olimp, Neptun, Jupiter, Cap Aurora, Venus, Saturn, Mangalia, 2 Mai, Vama Veche, Tulcea, Sulina, Cernavodă, Năvodari, etc.	12.0
C. MISCELLANEOUS	% of respondents
<i>personalities</i> : Anghel Saligny, Panait Cerna, Aneta Stan, Gheorghe Hagi, Radu Mazăre.	0.2
<i>other elements/aspects</i> : affiliation (home), childhood, holiday, recreation, fishing, population (Lipovans, Turks, Macedo-Romanians), etc.	8.1

Source: adapted after Minciu, R. (2001). *Economia turismului*, Ed. Uranus, București, p. 161

Figure 9. Structure of the tourism potential of the region of Dobrogea

Conclusions

From the conducted research it can be concluded that the *leisure tourism* is the representative form of tourism for the region of Dobrogea, fact which can be in particular explained by the relaxing and special natural landscape offered by the Black Sea and the Danube Delta, by the specific gastronomy, customs and traditions and by the existence of the ruins of the former Greek colonies such as Tomis, Histria and Callatis – all these tourist attractions allowing the development of the cultural tourism besides the leisure tourism. The medical spa tourism emerged as a result of the existence of the Techirghiol Lake (which is rich in concentrated salt water and sapropelic mud) and comes to complete the other forms of tourism practiced in this region.

For an accurate assessment of the tourism micro-destination of Dobrogea, similar researches should be conducted for other categories of population, of different ages and with different level of education and afterwards strategies should be mapped out in order to develop appropriate tourism products.

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