

Moldavia and Maramureş – Micro-destinations for Relaunching the Romanian Tourism*

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Abstract. *Since Romania holds a rich tourism heritage and a great tourism potential, the tourism division into zones was drawn up as “a possibility toward a superior and complex development of the tourism resources, in a unified vision...” (Erdeli, Gheorghilaş, 2006, p. 264), this representing a permanent concern of the specialists from all fields that are related to the tourism management. Although the criteria for selection and ranking of the tourist attractions have been the subject of some controversies, regarding the types of tourism that can be practiced in these areas, there were arrived almost unanimous conclusions. In order to ensure the representativeness and considering that all historical regions of the contemporary Romania are to the same extent micro-destinations with a substantial “tourism heritage”, the regions of Moldavia (including Bukovina) and Maramureş were merged into one for the elaboration of the research that presents, in essence, the main types of tourism and a part of the treasury of Romanian age-old heritage.*

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

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REL Codes: 14F, 14G.

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Introduction

The tourism micro-destination of Moldavia is situated in North-Eastern Romania and covers two historical regions, namely: Moldavia and Bukovina. From the beginning it should be mentioned that nowadays the historical region of Bukovina stretches out on the territory of two countries: Romania (the adjacent area of the cities Rădăuți, Suceava, Gura Humorului, Câmpulung Moldovenesc, Vatra Dornei, Siret and Vicovu de Sus) and Ukraine (Chernivtsi, Cozmeni, Zastavna, Vashkivtsi, Vyzhnytsia, Sadhora and Storozhynets). Regarding the administrative-territorial division, the tourism micro-destination of Moldavia includes on the territory of the modern Romania the following counties: Galați, Vrancea, Bacău, Vaslui, Neamț, Iași, Suceava and Botoșani. The most important cities of this historical region are: Bacău, Bârlad, Botoșani, Dorohoi, Focșani, Galați, Huși, Iași, Pașcani, Piatra Neamț, Roman, Suceava, Târgu Frumos and Vaslui.

The North of Moldavia hosts important ecclesiastic monuments of feudal art, the most of them were built by the former Moldavian rulers (voivodes) and boyars (Mușat family, Alexander the Good/Alexandru cel Bun, Stephen the Great/Ștefan cel Mare, Peter IV Rareș/Petru Rareș, Alexandru Lăpușeanu, etc.): Voroneț Monastery, Humor Monastery, Sucevița Monastery, Putna Monastery, Arbore Monastery, Dragomirna Monastery, Pătrăuți Monastery, Probota Monastery, etc., all of them being real evidences of the continuity of the ancient faith. This tourism micro-destination also hosts many memorial houses of some personalities such as: Ion Creangă (Iași), Mihai Eminescu (Ipotesti), Vasile Alecsandri (Mircești), George Enescu (Livezeni), Nicolae Labiș (Mălini), Ciprian Porumbescu (Stupca). Along with the religious tourism, the recreation and the cure are sporadically practiced, in the suburban areas (entertainment) and in the areas with mineral water (medical spa activities), a widespread form of tourism being represented by the transit tourism practiced by many external tourists coming from the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine (Cocean, 2010: p. 225).

Similar to the historical region of Bukovina, the historical region of Maramureș covers nowadays the territory of the two countries: Romania (the North-Eastern part of the county of Maramureș) and Ukraine (the East of the region of Transcarpatia, covering the districts: Rakhiv, Solotvyno, Tiachiv and Khust). On the territory of the modern Romania, in terms of administrative-territorial division, the tourism micro-destination of Maramureș comprises the two counties: Satu Mare and Maramureș. The most important cities are: Baia Mare, Borșa, Satu Mare, Sighetu Marmației, Vișeu de Sus.

The tourism micro-destination of Maramureş is famous not only for its spectacular and charming landscape it offers to the tourists, but also for the customs and traditions that endured over the years and for the wooden churches, remarkable examples of Orthodox architecture, eight of them were included in the list of UNESCO World Heritage in 1999. The Merry Cemetery situated in the village of Săpânţa represents a popular tourist attraction. It became famous due to the colorful painted crosses of the graves and due to the epitaphs written on them.

In the following, the historical regions of Moldavia (including Bukovina) and Maramureş will be presented exclusively from the perspective of the Romanian territory.

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 tourism micro-destinations of Moldavia and Maramureş helps in the development of the identity within the elaboration process of the destination marketing strategy.

According to the classification of the types 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 types of tourism), the respondents could choose the main type of tourism practiced within the historical regions of Moldavia and Maramureş.

Regarding the distribution of the types of tourism for the two micro-destinations, the results are as follows: 61.2% of the respondents considered the *cultural tourism* as being representative for the two regions, 30.3% opted for *leisure tourism*, 3.6% chose *medical spa tourism*, 3.0% opted for *visiting friends and relatives*, 1.6% chose *other types of tourism*, while 0.3% of the respondents opted for *business and professional tourism* (Figure 1).

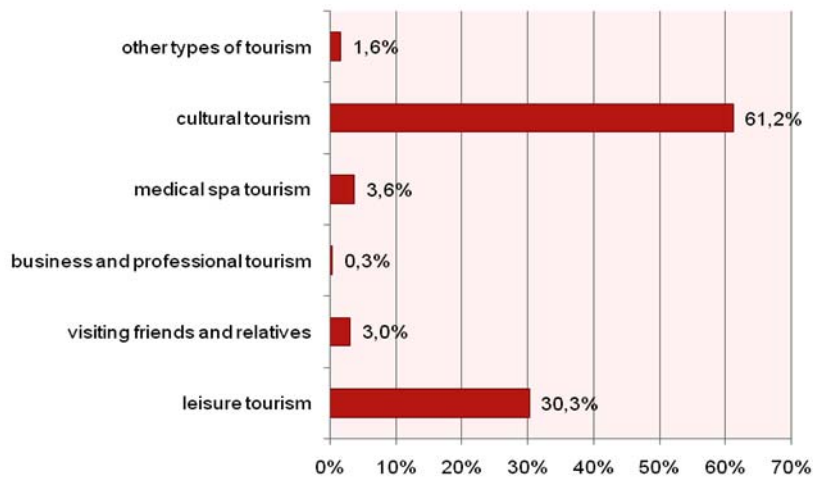


Figure 1. The distribution of the types of tourism for the micro-destinations of Moldavia and Maramureș

Taking into consideration the regions of origin of the respondents, it can be noticed that the *cultural tourism* constantly holds the first position as predominant type of tourism for the two historical regions and it is frequently followed by the *leisure tourism*. The last place was occupied in general by the business and professional tourism. An exception occurs in the case of the respondents with Muntenia as region of origin, situation in which the last place belongs to other types of tourism. Regarding the established regional structure, the situation is as follows (Table 1):

1) Muntenia as region of origin (Figure 2):

- 63.5% of the respondents chose *cultural tourism* as representative type of tourism for the historical regions of Moldavia and Maramureș;
- 28.9% opted for *leisure tourism*;
- 3.9% chose medical spa tourism;
- 3.1% opted for visiting friends and relatives;
- 0.4% chose business and professional tourism;
- 0.2% of the respondents – other types of tourism.

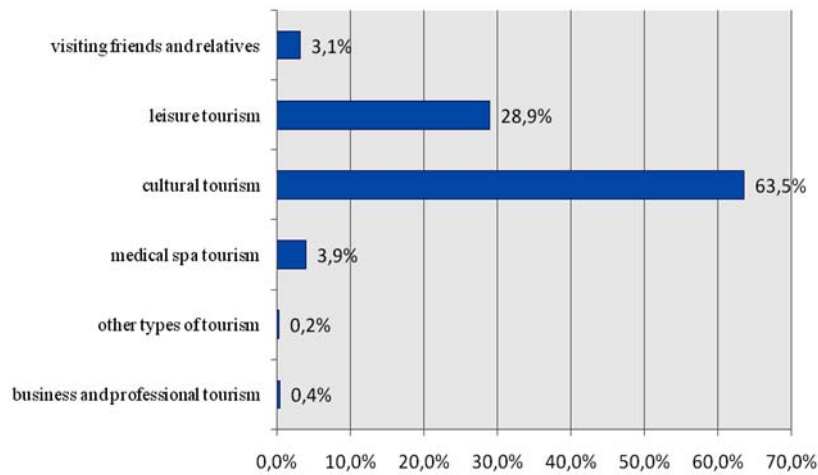


Figure 2. The distribution of the types of tourism for the micro-destinations of Moldavia and Maramureş. Region of origin of the respondents: Muntenia

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

- 62.9% of the respondents chose *cultural tourism* as representative type of tourism for the historical regions of Moldavia and Maramureş;
- 30.1% opted for *leisure tourism*;
- 3.5% chose medical spa tourism;
- 1.8% opted for other types of tourism;
- 1.3% chose visiting friends and relatives;
- 0.4% of the respondents opted for business and professional tourism.

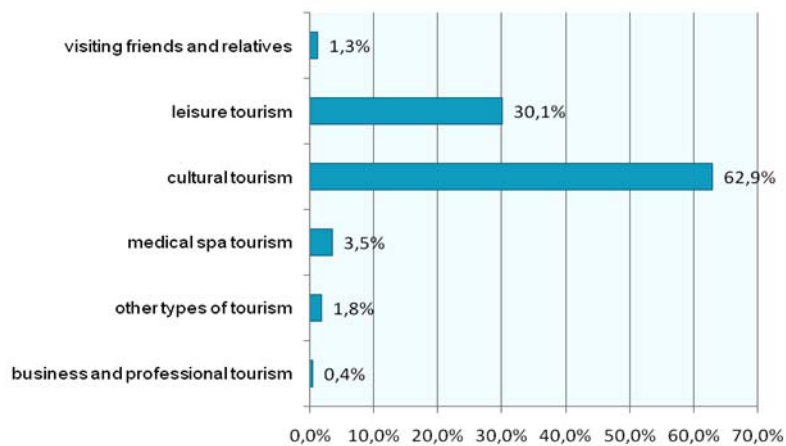


Figure 3. The distribution of the types of tourism for the micro-destinations of Moldavia and Maramureş. Region of origin of the respondents: Oltenia

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

- 48.3% of the respondents chose *cultural tourism* as representative type of tourism for the historical regions of Moldavia and Maramureș;
- 29.2% opted for *leisure tourism*;
- 12.4% chose medical spa tourism;
- 5.6% opted for other types of tourism;
- 3.4% chose visiting friends and relatives;
- 1.1% of the respondents opted for business and professional tourism.

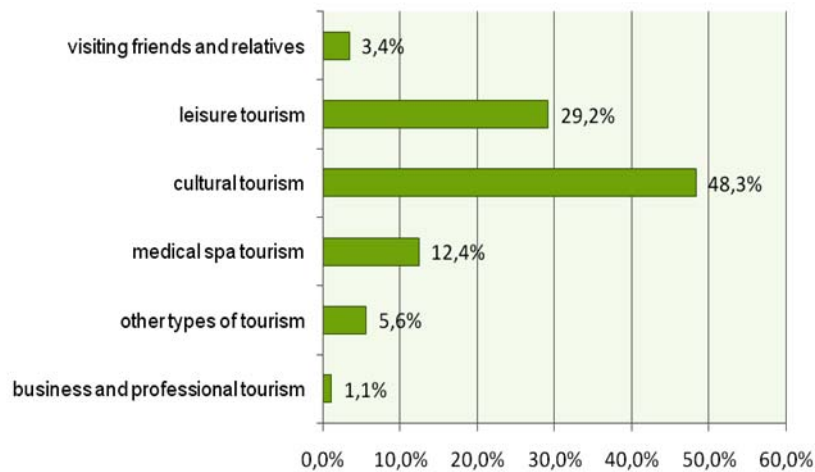


Figure 4. The distribution of the types of tourism for the micro-destinations of Moldavia and Maramureș. Region of origin of the respondents: Banat-Crișana

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

- 53.6% of the respondents chose *cultural tourism* as representative type of tourism for the historical regions of Moldavia and Maramureș;
- 38.4% opted for *leisure tourism*;
- 4.2% chose medical spa tourism;
- 2.1% opted for visiting friends and relatives;
- 1.3% chose other types of tourism;
- 0.4% of the respondents opted for business and professional tourism.

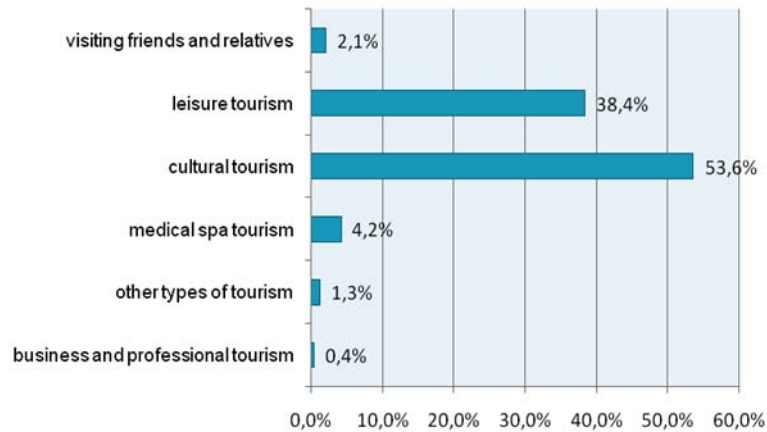


Figure 5. The distribution of the types of tourism for the micro-destinations of Moldavia and Maramureş. Region of origin of the respondents: Transylvania

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

- 59.4% of the respondents chose *cultural tourism* as representative type of tourism for the historical regions of Moldavia and Maramureş;
- 30.8% opted for *leisure tourism*;
- 3.8% chose medical spa tourism;
- 3.0% opted for other types of tourism;
- 2.2% chose visiting friends and relatives;
- 0.8% of the respondents opted for business and professional tourism.

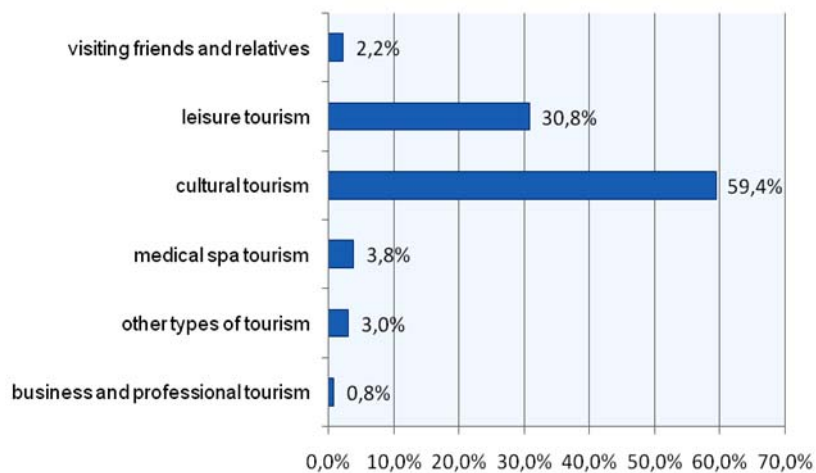


Figure 6. The distribution of the types of tourism for the micro-destinations of Moldavia and Maramureş. Region of origin of the respondents: Bucovina

6) Moldavia and Maramureș as regions of origin (Figure 7):

- 52.5% of the respondents chose *cultural tourism* as representative type of tourism for their regions;
- 37.8% opted for *leisure tourism*;
- 5.5% chose medical spa tourism;
- 2.3% opted for visiting friends and relatives;
- 1.4% chose other types of tourism;
- 0.5% of the respondents opted for business and professional tourism.

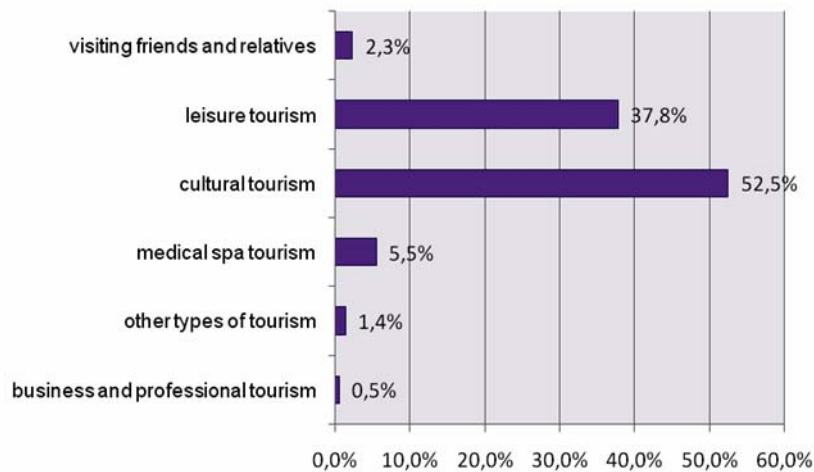


Figure 7. The distribution of the types of tourism for the micro-destinations of Moldavia and Maramureș. Regions of origin of the respondents: Moldavia and Maramureș

7) Dobrogea as region of origin (Figure 8):

- 65.0% of the respondents chose *cultural tourism* as representative type of tourism for the historical regions of Moldavia and Maramureș;
- 20.6% opted for *leisure tourism*;
- 6.9% chose medical spa tourism;
- 4.4% opted for other types of tourism;
- 2.5% chose visiting friends and relatives;
- 0.6% of the respondents opted for business and professional tourism.

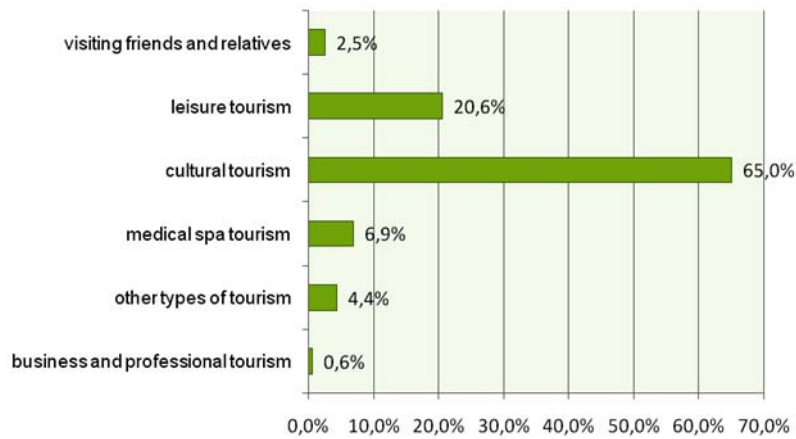


Figure 8. The distribution of the types of tourism for the micro-destinations of Moldavia and Maramureş. Regions of origin of the respondents: Dobrogea

Table 1

The distribution of the responses by types of tourism and by region of origin of the respondents

Region of origin of the respondents	Business and professional tourism	Other types of tourism	Medical spa tourism	Cultural tourism	Leisure tourism	Visiting friends and relatives
Muntenia	0.4	0.2	3.9	63.5	28.9	3.1
Oltenia	0.4	1.8	3.5	62.9	30.1	1.3
Banat – Crişana	1.1	5.6	12.4	48.3	29.2	3.4
Transylvania	0.4	1.3	4.2	53.6	38.4	2.1
Bucovina	0.8	3.0	3.8	59.4	30.8	2.2
Moldavia and Maramureş	0.5	1.4	5.5	52.5	37.8	2.3
Dobrogea	0.6	4.4	6.9	65.0	20.6	2.5

The choice of the respondents for the *cultural tourism* as representative type of tourism for the tourism micro-destinations of Moldavia and Maramureş can be explained mainly due to the fact that the two historical regions are well-known as places of pilgrimage, so destined for practicing the religious tourism. The tourism micro-destination of Maramureş is famous for the wooden churches, while the tourism micro-destination of Moldavia hosts many monasteries founded by Moldavian voivodes and boyars, some of them having one specific color: Voroneţ Monastery (blue), Humor Monastery (red), Suceviţa Monastery (green), Moldoviţa Monastery (yellow), Arbore Monastery (combination of colors).

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

A. NATURAL POTENTIAL	% of respondents
<i>topography</i> : the Moldavian Plateau, the Moldavian Plain, the Moldavian Subcarpathians, the Suceava Plateau, the Central Moldavian Plateau, the Bârlad Plateau, the Carpathians of Maramureș and Bukovina, the Bârgău Mountains, the Gutâi Mountains, the Maramureș Mountains, the Oaș Mountains, Obcina Feredeului/ the Feredeului Ridge, Obcina Mare/the Great Ridge, the Rodna Mountains, the Țibleș Mountains, etc.	3.3
<i>climate/climatic elements</i> : mountain air, hard/severe winters, crivăț (north-easterly wind).	0.7
<i>hidrography</i> : Prut River, Siret River, Tisza River, Iza River, Vișeu River, Cailor Waterfall/Horses' Waterfall, etc.	1.0
<i>flora and fauna</i> : Maramureș Mountains Nature Park, Creasta Cocoșului Geological Reserve.	0.4
B. ANTHROPIC POTENTIAL	% of respondents
<i>historical traces and art monuments</i> : Neamț Citadel, Princely Citadel (Suceava), "A.I. Cuza" Memorial Palace (Ruginoasa), the statue of Stephen the Great/Ștefan cel Mare (Iași), etc.	2.8
<i>elements of ethnography and folklore</i> : folk music, folk costumes, folk dances, gastronomy, customs and traditions, pottery, weaving, egg decorating, etc.	16.4
<i>museums and memorial houses</i> : the memorial house "Ion Creangă" (Humulești), Bojdeuca "Ion Creangă", the memorial house "Mihai Eminescu" (Ipotești), the memorial house "George Enescu" (Liveni), the memorial house "Ciprian Porumbescu" (Stupca), the memorial house "Mihail Sadoveanu" (Vânători Neamț and Iași), the Palace of Culture (Iași), "Mihai Eminescu" Museum, the History Museum (Suceava), etc.	6.4
<i>cultural-artistic institutions</i> : wooden churches, Putna Monastery, Moldovița Monastery, Dragomirna Monastery, Church of the Three Hierarchs (Biserica Trei Ierarhi), Sucevița Monastery, Humor Monastery, Arbore Monastery, Bârsana Monastery, Văratec Monastery, Golia Monastery, Metropolis of Moldavia and Bukovina, Galata Monastery, Cetățuia Monastery, the National Theatre "Vasile Alecsandri" (Iași), the Philharmonic (Iași), etc.	34.5
<i>events</i> : the Snow Festival (Borșa), the Daffodils' Festival (Repedea), Vișeu Days (Vișeu de Sus), Sânzieni, Căvnic Days (Căvnic), International Wedding Festival (Vadu Izei), etc.	2.9
<i>contemporary constructions</i> : the Merry Cemetery, Botanical Garden (Iași), the Copou Park (Iași), "A.I. Cuza" University of Iași, etc.	12.5
<i>human settlements</i> : Iași, Galați, Suceava, Botoșani, Baia Mare, Satu Mare, Bacău, Vaslui, Piatra-Neamț, Vatra Dornei, Bârlad, Fălticeni, Rădăuți, Pașcani, Târgu Frumos, Huși, Roman, Seini, Sighetu-Marmației, Slănic Moldova, Borșa, Baia Sprie, etc.	9.3
C. MISCELLANEOUS	% of respondents
<i>personalities</i> : Stephen the Great/Ștefan cel Mare, Alexandru Ioan Cuza, Ion Creangă, Mihai Eminescu, Vasile Alecsandri, Mihail Sadoveanu, Nadia Comăneci.	2.2
<i>other elements/aspects</i> : the first university, the gates from Maramureș, "Voroneț blue", narrow-gauge train, etc.	7.6

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

Figure 9. Structure of the tourism potential of the regions Moldavia and Maramureș

Conclusions

From the conducted research it can be concluded that the *cultural tourism* is the representative type of tourism for the regions of Moldavia and Maramureş, the two tourism micro-destinations being intensely promoted not only as places of pilgrimage, but also as Romanian areas where the customs and traditions remained alive, intact, despite the passage of time.

In comparison with other Romanian historical regions, the historical region of Moldavia is considered to be the poorest in tourism resorts, aspect that should be “[...] taken into consideration in any strategy for tourism development, especially since, in perspective, the tourism flows from Eastern Europe will intensify” (processed after Cocean, 2010, p. 225).

For an accurate assessment of the tourism micro-destinations of Moldavia and Maramureş, similar researches should be conducted for other categories of population, of different ages and with different level of education.

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