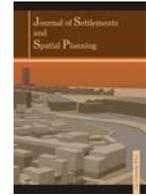




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Holiday Villages in Romania. Typology and Premises for Development

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ABSTRACT

As tourism complex facility the holiday village is both an old and new concept in Romania. It is usually located in a specific area, with controlled access, designed to provide tourists a wide range of services such as: accommodation, catering, additional travel facilities for recreation, sports, and cultural activities. The present study focuses on the legal framework and regulations on the implementation and functioning of holiday villages, by analyzing their stage of development and causes of the increasing number of newly established holiday villages. However, the multitude of holiday villages, not necessarily complying with the requirements of the concept, brings out definite inconsistencies with the concept of holiday village. This was possible due to lack of legal and concept clarification of holiday villages and also due to the spatial dispersion of this tourism development phenomenon. Other states have managed to raise tourism to the rank of basic economic activity by narrowing the range of tourist activities and promotion of advanced specialization of some activities. Yet, it is not the case of tourism in Romania. Without this type of approach, tourism activities are largely losing their particularities, along with the concept of holiday village, whose true meaning is limited to just a few examples. Based on an exhaustive analysis we tried to establish a typology of holiday villages as well as to propose a zoning of the Romanian territory, in accordance with its suitability for the optimal functioning of these types of holiday village.

1. INTRODUCTION

As tourism has become subject to continuously changing demand blended with reinforcement of sustainable economy we find it turned into offer restructuring and going through re-identification in terms of offer and demand. Preoccupations in the field are proved scarce, however bringing out several approaches on the concepts of tourism development and holiday village: Irwin, C. (1979), Butler, R. W. (1980), Mowforth, M., Munt, I. (1998), Rotherham, I. D., Egan, D., Harrison, K. (2005), Erkuş-Öztürk, H., (2006), Ciangă, N., Dezsi, Şt. (2007), Donmez, S., Aciksoz, S., (2010), Cooper, C. (2012). This study is based on the previous researches of the authors Zotic, V., Alexandru, Diana, Puiu, V. (2010, 2011) who have

approached the relation between tourism development and spatial planning, the systemic location of elements in spatial tourism planning in order to properly manage the land, inside and outside the borders of urban areas or in countryside, and give optimal functionality to areas in accordance to their natural and anthropogenic potential [3, p. 26]. On the other hand, the same authors have provided a pattern on the functional inner structure and planning of holiday village and its rank among the traditional tourism facilities in Romania [4]. Most of the specialists focus on the tourism industry that must respond to the changing wants and needs of consumers and stakeholders [8, p. 7] and support the development of new tourism facilities because in this era of post-tourism, traditional tourist destinations must restructure or face decline [9, p. 307]. Tourism

industry has been looking for a new identity, a new type of recreational facility that could fulfil the changing demand by an addition of a man-made attraction [10, p. 9]. Growth and change of demand, decrease of free time, need for short-time distances trigger the emergence of a particularly oriented tourist facility – the holiday village. This concept has been acknowledged ever since the beginning of 1970s. Charles Irwin (1979) with his proposal on Clayton Holiday Village, Australia, debated on the issue of recreational activities, the need for new on the recreational market in case of increasing demand on leisure and increasing use of resources and he proposed the idea of holiday villages and associated activities and their development in a rural environment, first as commercial resorts and then as holiday thematic villages [12]. The first holiday villages in Europe were developed in 1967 and they continued to exist under the brand of Center Parcs as an association of lodging, leisure and nature in a location of limited conventional landscape and environmental value. At the same time preserving and enhancing the sense of “*getting away from the intensity of everyday life’ in a natural setting - the ‘villa in the forest’*” [13, p. 12]. Cooper, C. (2012) analyses holiday villages as part of the four visitor attractions, namely man-made and purpose-built visitor attractions, because it is created with the purpose of attracting tourists [11, p. 154] and states that the novelty of concept can be driven by tourism becoming a major economic sector and the variety and scope of tourism as an activity. After exhausting the traditional destinations, the new type of tourists support the preference for a new tourism different from mass tourism, [18, p. 131] and expect tourism companies to offer environmentally and socially responsible products [19, p. 9]. Thus, the holiday village has become both a destination and a product, a multifunctional facility at the same time holding features of ecological resorts, thematic parks, or commercial resorts consisting of leisure and entertainment facilities and lately shaped around three keywords: family friendly, eco-friendly and stylish [15].

However, the Romanian tourism regulations mention and define holiday village as having primarily lodging function, making a clear distinction between tourism resort, tourism complex, tourist village and other recreational, catering and lodging facilities [17]. Establishing the necessary premises for development and typology of holiday villages represents a new stage in the analysis of concept, which it is the relatively new in Romania. This approach is necessary as much as this concept has been developed as a whole, without complying with the real features of the holiday village and in many cases, facilities having this status do not even meet the minimum requirements of design, organization and functioning. Moreover, many of the existing sites chosen for the development of holiday villages, and also of those currently in phase of

proposals are not selected in accordance with conceptual premises and technical regulations. Their location has been rather dictated by the availability of land or by a series of political, economic and administrative interests. In the end, this brings major damage to the quality of tourism services, a low level of tourist attraction and a low economic profitability.

2. THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

Our research study brings out details on the issue of holiday villages in Romania related the current regulations. It is based on quantitative and qualitative assessment of the current holiday villages registered at national level. The results reside in creating a typology based on particularities and in the attempt to map the spatial distribution of holiday villages presuming the favourability of determinant factors. However, if we refer to the reality in the field and literature, we reach the conclusion that none of the identified holiday villages correspond to the brand. Authors aim to reveal the features of this tourist facility in Romania, even though it is not developed in accordance with the initial brand or comply with the provisions of the law. Once with the regulation established by the ministry of tourism OMT 510/2002 the holiday village has been officially included as an independent category of tourism facility in Romania [5]. We start from the assumption that holiday villages are complex tourism facilities that are able to support all the needs of tourists its design focusing on living everything on the one spot.

Even though the Romanian legislation has established the minimum criteria to be met for the functioning of a holiday village, there are no details on their basic and complementary components. Subsequently they have developed as *hybrid facilities* or models. Their mainly function remains accommodation, whereas the leisure function is minimally provided.

The concept of holiday village in Europe started in the 1960s in the Netherlands with Piet Derksen who was the founder of an innovative trend and has evolved ever since. Even though they started as an answer to the need of people for relaxation *under the purpose of short breaks close to home* the Centre Parcs were characterized by luxury and designed to provide nature touch and they have become one of the most known chains of holiday villages in Europe [6]. The identity that was created took turns on its shape (i.e. park, club, resort) yet maintaining its meaning of a complex facility providing accommodation in cottages, villas, location nearby urban agglomerations, leisure facilities, trade centres.

Beside the preference of location in the countryside the basic concept of holiday village consists of particular components, such as: forest villas, main centre buildings, to include indoor sports, swimming pool, restaurants, retail, hotel and spa, staff

accommodation, support facilities, internal road, cycle and footpath routes, water surface, car parking, outdoor sports and leisure facilities, perimeter fence and main access [14].

The concept of holiday village in Romania appeared after 1989 and it has hardly developed since then. Nevertheless, we find a variety of tourist facilities that exploit natural and anthropogenic resources, such as: tourist village, tourist resort, tourist complex (Ciangă, N., Dezsi, Șt., 2007). The international concept of holiday village involves large investments and high tourist flow that do not exist in Romania yet. The tourist demand here is still fulfilled by the current facilities, maintaining the seasonality of holidays. If we consider that holiday villages appear in the vicinity of large urban centres that are one of the basic conditions and at the same time a reliable tourist provider, we cannot consider this factor in Romania due to the lack in metropolitan cities, except for Bucharest, the capital city. This way, the concept has developed as a tourist facility but taking another shape.

Hence, the Romanian legislation defines the holiday village as: an ensemble of buildings, usually villas or bungalows, located in well delineated area, which provides tourists with accommodation, catering services along with a great range of supplementary services (leisure, sports, cultural). The site should provide a pleasant microclimate, away from pollution sources and other factors that could impair the health and state of tourists. The size, site, architectural style and colour of buildings must not bring any prejudices to landscape and environment. All holiday villages have to be bordered, the access within being directed and monitored. In case of three-star accommodation facilities vegetation has to be abundant in order to create a pleasant ambiance. Green areas for rest and leisure activities have to be at least 25% of the total area of holiday village. Most of the villas and bungalows have to be classified at least in the three-star category [5].

When analysing the name of the concept and its classical meaning the first acknowledged issue is the non-correspondence between the name and the concept. We use the criterion of compliance in case of holiday villages declared functional in order to be able to decide on the compliance with the international standard and the Romanian legislation. The outcomes of our research result from this comparative analysis. All along, we use other criteria such as: type of propriety, functionality and level of complexity, which is strongly related to the compliance criterion. The second issue we debate on is the fact that some facilities are declared as holiday villages, but in fact this form of organization is providing only accommodation function and not the leisure one. And thirdly, we debate on the fact that they are in fact tourist facilities. We try to highlight this deviation from the classical concept, and what are the practical results in the field. Also, what could they become in case we consider the factors of

favourability and the best locations to develop holiday villages.

The actual configuration of the typology of holiday villages in Romania in relation with the national and international conceptual standards is represented in figure 1. Based on the level of complexity all current forms of holiday villages are somehow positioned on the rank between below national and below international standard. The most complex categories though are the hybrids (thematic holiday villages) and complex facilities however ranked only below the international standard (see figure 1).

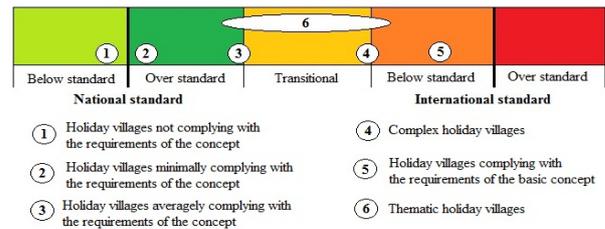


Fig. 1. The typology of holiday villages in Romania as compared to the national and international standard.

Unlike other countries that looked for an alternative for the lack in an attractive environment, Romania still benefits from a well-preserved environment, which could represent a major asset in the development of the classical holiday village based on living in nature and addressed more to the international than to the national tourist demand. We should stress on developing particularized holiday villages, by creating themes specific to the areas where they are established and based on the available resources.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Defining the necessary premises for the development of this concept in Romania and performing an analysis of the current situation represents an analytical process to establish a coherent and correct policy for the development of holiday villages.

Essentially, our research focuses on four major leads: (1) to define the premises for the implementation of the concept of holiday village in Romania; (2) to achieve a comprehensive comparative analysis on the concept in Europe and Romania; (3) to make an assessment of the current status of holiday villages in Romania and highlight the triggering factors that determine the current reality; (4) to identify some patterns for development and depict the most favourable geographical areas for the implementation of holiday villages.

3.1. Premises for the development of holiday villages

The first step in the analytical approach of this concept resides in the identification of the necessary

premises for the development of holiday villages. In this case, premises of development represent a series of general but also particular existing factors and conditions that determine and claim the emergence and development of holiday villages. By establishing these premises we can subsequently determinate cause-effect relationships for the creation of holiday villages and further improvement of development policies on this concept.

The premises for the development of holiday villages in Romania can be grouped into two categories: *general premises* and *particular premises*. General premises cover conceptual parameters and are applicable anywhere and at anytime, whereas particular ones hold a high degree of specificity for the analyzed territory.

Out of the *general premises* necessary for the development of holiday villages in Romania we point out the following:

a). *The need to interconnect the hospitality system (lodging and catering) with the entertainment and leisure system.* This is to reach efficiency and cost-effectiveness of tourist activities by bringing accommodation, catering, entertainment and leisure at the same location. Thus, tourist services will not anymore imply internal transport, therefore increasing the time reserved for tourists' rest and entertainment. These are completed by economic cost-effectiveness determined by intensive management of the site that once equipped with infrastructure and access ways will allow its highly complex management. By concentrating services at the same site, allows them to diversify and become facile, thus improving tourist services offered to customers.

b). *The need to separate tourists from their social and economic environment and create a particular environment based on recreation.* This form of tourist activities focuses on a friendly external and internal environment for tourists, nevertheless representing one of the basic components of the offer. The concept of holiday village is based on offering tourists a rest and recreation environment completely different from the daily one in which landscape plays a key role. Thus, project planners use stylized designs lines and various decorative add-ons both on the inside of tourist infrastructure (boarding houses, hotels, restaurants, etc.) and on their outside (spaces for recreational and rest). Also, if *the village* has a specific theme, then this will be outlined by various particularities (art objects, traditional objects, gastronomy, etc.). However, this separation requires that holiday villages should have high autonomy in operation regarding both the infrastructure and services they provide, in order to satisfy the whole range of basic and entertainment needs tourists may have at the same site, during their entire contracted staying.

c). *The management of existing tourist potential in economically poor areas.* It is well-known

that tourist activities are rather located and developed in economically developed geographic areas, where they can benefit of a multitude of advantages (financial and human capital, upgraded ways of transportation and communication, high accessibility, diversified tourist demand, significant tourist circulation etc.). From the same perspective, tourism investments avoid economically poor geographical areas, except for the sites where there is an objective of particular importance. Given that natural sights have a priori determination and location whereas the anthropogenic ones have a historical determination in most cases they cannot be spatially repositioned, and in case they are located in economically underdeveloped peripheral areas, we notice that tourism activities avoid being located in these areas. The only form of tourist activities suitable to be implanted in such underdeveloped areas are the holiday villages, which are preferably to be located in isolated sites, set in well-preserved natural settings, whereas the presence of a certain tourist attraction at the site or close to it would be an additional factor of choice in the location and foundation of the holiday village. Such investments can further become local economic development cores.

d). *The "Democratization" of the concept of club in countries and territories.* Clubs represent an associative form of social organization for leisure. They usually have an aristocratic sense and a high level of exclusivity. This concept has been perpetuated to present-day, clubs holding significant market share on the supply market of services of leisure and entertainment. The concept of holiday village is based on the concept of club and can be considered a form of its *democratization*, by removing the criteria that generate exclusiveness. This way the concept of holiday village has become a commercial form of the club, to which customers are welcomed without any selection criteria, but who become loyal customers over time due to other criteria (i.e. quality of service, the attractiveness of the area, distance access, etc.). Customer loyalty is thus an important factor in the economic cost-effectiveness of holiday village.

Among the *particular premises* for the development of holiday villages, we mention the following:

a). *The trend of "reverse separation" and the formation of new holiday villages, the exclusive club type.* In Romania this phenomenon took shape along with the widening discrepancy between the poor and the rich and the disappearance of middle social class, which is the main consumer of the holiday village product. Thus, the rich social community, represented by both private and corporate parties, has begun to set up and organize exclusive holiday villages in locations whose development and maintenance costs are very high.

b). *The trend of tourist activities to be considered the universal key for the improvement and*

development of poor areas. This is a concept that has begun to *haunt* the minds of politicians and representatives of local and county public authorities who consider that tourism can develop anywhere and in any conditions, representing a kind of *universal remedy* for the economic development of territory. This reasoning is quite correct, although we need to consider the economic rationale that makes the difference between profitable and doomed to failure. Thus, many local authorities organized in associations and public-private partnerships have launched development projects for holiday villages, investments that are especially located in metropolitan areas or periurban zones. These projects are supposed to create an attractive offer for weekend tourism and at least partially solve the problem of underdevelopment in metropolitan and periurban areas.

c). *The trend of setting up thematic holiday villages.* Setting up themes for holiday villages comes as a response to the problem of competition on the one hand and on the other hand it provides the owners a stable and specific position on the tourist market. This represents a protective position regarding competition on the open market; hence, more and more investors choose to employ an advanced level of particularity to their holiday villages. Specificity lies in the choice of themes for upgrading holiday villages in general or specific to their location. For example, general themes make use of ideas found also in other territories or countries such as: nautical, fishing, hunting holiday villages etc. Specific themes come from the explicit wish of owners to highlight a brand or an element of local specificity, which is strongly preserved in collective memory and local culture.

d). *The chance to manage tourist resources in protected natural areas.* This is the aim of protecting the environment and the concept of holiday village may help to achieve this aim, by the fact that it is a form of tourism less aggressive to the environment. Aggressiveness is limited because of the closed character of the tourist facility, at well defined sites, which thereby allows to choose locations in the vicinity of protected areas (buffer zones), they representing a somewhat a secondary but at the same time supplementary add-on for the tourist offer of holiday villages. This way, location of holiday villages nearby protected areas brings attractiveness of the area, minimizes the impact on environment, and infrastructurally supports the tourist management of the protected areas (i.e. national parks, biosphere reserves, other types of reserves, archaeological and historical sites, etc.). Based on this reasoning, natural and protected areas can represent a space suitable for setting up holiday villages.

e). *The speculative management of the concept of holiday villages.* Lately, this phenomenon has begun to become increasingly visible in Romania. New holiday villages appeared, yet not complying with

the basic features of the concept, in fact being represented by a guesthouse and a few ancillaries of rather personal or group use. This is explainable by the lack in explicit models of holiday village on the tourist market and also by the desire to speculatively exploit a brand concept, on a still insufficiently mature market regarding options for leisure and quality of services.

f). *The impossibility to "spatially transfer" tourist resources.* Most of the tourist resources are spatially stationary, fact that causes them to be managed at the source. This feature makes tourist resources to be set aside from all resources and their management be achieved through specific patterns. Exploitation of resources through holiday villages represents such a special form. The presence of tourist resources in economically underdeveloped areas, where economic activities are weak or not productive, tourist activities are considered *pioneer economic activities* that use these resources at the site, due to impossibility of *spatial transfer*.

g). *The presence of particular, special or one-off tourist resources.* The presence of less-known, particular, special or one-off tourist resources in the territory, on tourist market, where only exceptional resources are relevant usually determine the development of tourist resorts. However, the concept of holiday village can effectively exploit the full range of tourist resources, from unique to less significant ones, of local interest, including geographical elements of the landscape or even the landscape as a whole. In fact, this detail allows the creation of holiday villages almost anywhere where there is an attractive environment. If a natural or anthropogenic tourist attraction is added, then the value of the site and its attractiveness can even increase. Thus, we notice the usual location of holiday villages nearby such resources or landscapes, they being the basis of their setting up.

h). *The low numerical and typological development of holiday villages.* This is one of the most eloquent prerequisites for the emergence of new holiday villages. Since the tourist market is not yet saturated with this kind of offer and this concept has become fashionable, more and more tourism investors are inclining towards this type of tourist facility. Even though we notice a *boom* of holiday villages, the major setback is in their two major faults: poor typological diversification and the fact that many of them are not even developed at the minimum standard required by the concept.

3.2. The typology of holiday villages

In this chapter we analysed the typology and spatial distribution of holiday villages in Romania, aiming to observe the current situation at national level. The concept of holiday village in Romania has become implemented only after 1989, the first noticeably results being observed after 2000 [3]. Currently, this concept

knows an accelerated growth, 142 units being registered, with a differentiated spatial distribution in three hot areas: the Carpathians, the Danube Delta and the Black Sea coast. Trying to typologically classify holiday villages in Romania, we followed various criteria emphasizing a series of issues that would help us understand in detail the studied phenomenon. Therefore, we decided on the following criteria:

a). *Functionality*. The use of this criterion results in the following categories:

- functional holiday villages - facilities that are currently operational;
- holiday villages under construction - they have gone beyond the project phase and are in the process of construction;
- holiday villages in design phase – they are undergoing land-use planning;
- failed holiday villages - facilities that started as holiday villages in the project phase but eventually turned into residential neighbourhoods.

According to this criterion statistics present the following situation at national level (see table 1).

Table 1. Typology of holiday villages (based on functionality) (2011).

Functionality	No. of facilities	(%)
Functional holiday villages	67	47.2
Holiday villages under planning	24	16.9
Holiday villages in design phase	48	33.8
Failed holiday villages	3	2.1
Total	142	100

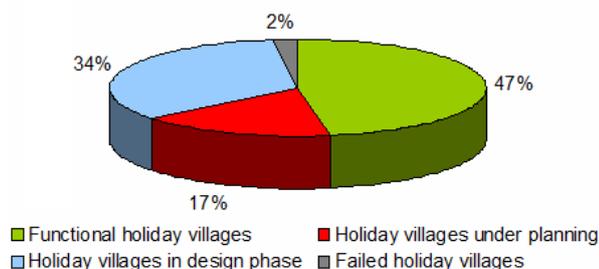


Fig. 2. Typology of holiday villages (based on functionality) (2011).

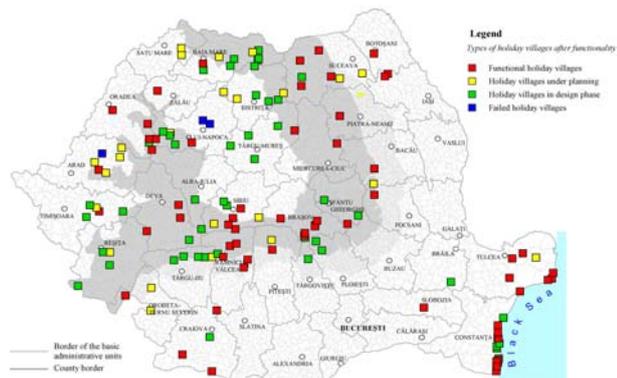


Fig. 3. Spatial distribution of holiday villages (based on functionality).

The table shows that almost half of the holiday villages in the country are operational, the other half being represented by units under land-use planning or in design phase. This is explicable since in the 1990s this concept was not consistent, but after 2000 it started to grow substantially, so that at present we witness the doubling of number in case of operational holiday villages.

The spatial distribution of functional holiday villages reveals a substantial concentration in the Carpathian Mountains, the Danube Delta and the Black Sea coast. Here we can find the first generation of holiday villages, those under planning and in design phase. They also have the tendency to spread in the lowland areas. However, such facilities are scarce in the peripheral regions outside the Carpathians, except for the counties of Dolj and Botoşani, in which we can find some thematic villages with functional character.

b). *Type of property*. We decided to use this criterion since this kind of tourist infrastructure is designed for both recreational activities for the general public as well as for retained social groups or other types (see table 2).

Table 2. Holiday villages based on type of propriety (2011).

Type of propriety	No. of units	(%)
Public-private partnership	42	29.6
Propriety of civic associations	16	11.3
Private property of sole proprietorships and corporations	73	51.4
National consortia	2	1.4
Foreign consortia and corporations	5	3.5
Uncertain status	4	2.8
Total	142	100

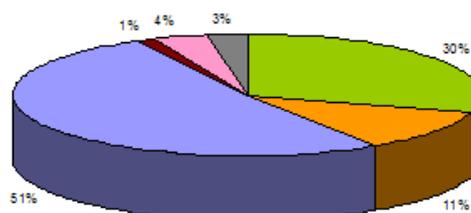


Fig. 4. Holiday villages based on type of propriety (2011).

The situation shows that more than half a share of the holiday villages (51.4%) is property of private individuals and corporations, which shows that this concept is primarily a tourism investment with the purpose of private business. In order to meet the tourist demand many local public authorities have launched a

series of development projects for holiday villages as public-private partnerships.

This would cover the increasing demand for leisure of at weekends. Another form of ownership is the civic associations who set up their own facilities, where public activities are carried out in addition to leisure ones. Lately, we have noticed new holiday villages belonging to transnational corporations, another type of ownership, with a high level of exclusivity for its employees, and also for mundane events.

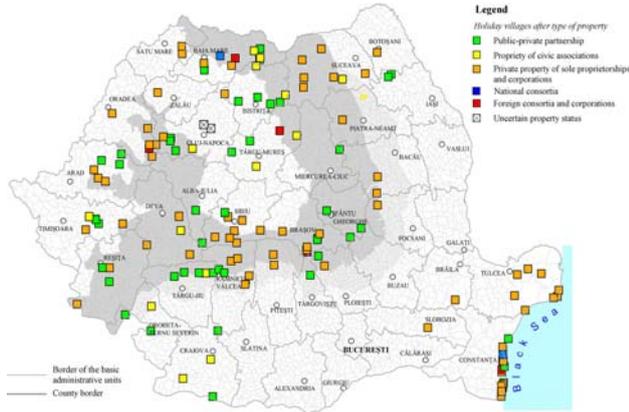


Fig. 5. Spatial distribution of holiday villages (based on type of propriety).

Here again we can notice a differentiated distribution of the holiday villages based on type of property. If in the case of holiday villages belonging to individuals and corporations they are located in well-known traditional tourist areas exploiting the positional factor to make investment profitable, those belonging to the public-private partnerships, paradoxically, are not located nearby tourist provider areas, but rather nearby less-developed villages, for which they become a possible alternative income and a tourist offer for their inhabitants.

Holiday villages that belong to foreign corporations are at the beginning of the process of implementation, and they are located at sites with a remarkable tourist potential, such as: Maramureş Mountains, Black Sea Coast, Bihor Mountains or the Mureş River Gorge between Topliţa and Deda.

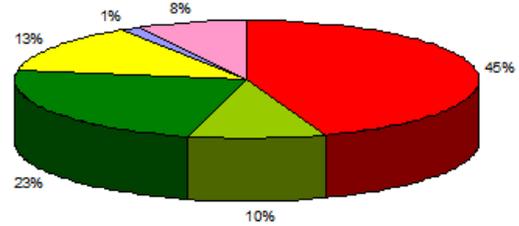
c). *Level of complexity.* The introduction of this criterion in the classification of holiday villages aims to highlight how the new implants comply with the requirements imposed by this concept. In this case we can see a huge variety of ways in which this new concept of tourism development has developed (see table 3).

We can conclude that there is no clear direction in the development of this concept, but rather a trend of imitation of the basic concept depending on the financial means and imagination of designers and investors. Regarding complexity, at the national level, the holiday villages that meet the minimum requirements imposed by the concept (44%) prevail, as

well as those with complex features (23%) in which several types of tourist activities are combined.

Table 3. The typology of holiday villages (based on level of complexity) (2011).

Level of complexity	No. of units	(%)
Holiday villages that do not comply with the requirements imposed by the concept	63	44.4
Holiday villages that minimally comply with the queries imposed by the concept	14	9.9
Holiday villages that averagely comply with the requirements imposed by the concept	33	23.2
Complex holiday villages	19	13.4
Holiday villages that comply with the initial meaning of the concept	2	1.4
Thematic holiday villages	11	7.7
Total	142	100



- Holiday villages that do not comply with the requirements imposed by the concept
- Holiday villages that minimally comply with the queries imposed by the concept
- Holiday villages that averagely comply with the requirements imposed by the concept
- Complex holiday villages
- Holiday villages that comply with the initial meaning of the concept
- Thematic holiday villages

Fig. 6. The typology of holiday villages (based on level of complexity) (2011).

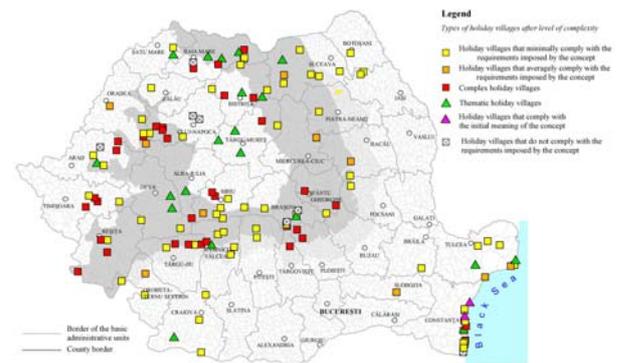


Fig. 7. Spatial distribution of holiday villages (based on level of complexity).

Only two tourist facilities are corresponding to the meaning of the concept, without any major changes. There is a strong tendency that holiday villages become thematic, this category holding a rate of 13% of the total number of structures. On the other hand, we can notice a significant number of such facilities that do not comply at all with the requirements of the concept, they eventually turning into simple residential structures or just secondary residences, without any tourist functions.



Fig. 8. Dealul Mesteacănelui holiday village, Braşov county (that does not comply with the minimal national requirements) [20].



Fig. 10. Creanga holiday village, Bihor county and Gura Portiţei holiday village, Tulcea county (that averagely comply with the national requirements) [22] [23].



Fig. 9. Boga holiday village, Bihor county (that minimally complies with the national requirements) [21].

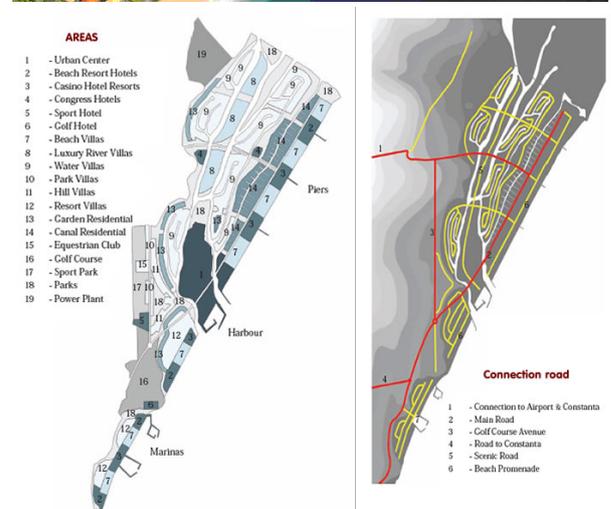


Fig. 11. Design for holiday village in Corbu village, Constanţa county (that corresponds to the basic international standard) [24].



The spatial distribution according to this criterion shows an apparent concentration of complex structures in traditional tourist areas, whereas those minimally complying with the concept requirements are located in rural areas with a natural beauty. Holiday villages with a particular theme are closely linked to sites of some historical significance or carrying rural folk art heritage (e.g. Maramureş).

All three criteria used for the classification of holiday villages aim to highlight the low development level of this type of tourism facility in Romania, not only numerically but from the perspective of compliance with the basic concept. As compared to the basic concept, which has been functional for about 50 years in Europe, we cannot speak of the existence of holiday villages in the true sense of the concept up to present time in Romania.

We rather observe *imitations* of this concept in various shapes and styles, and also its alteration by adding non-value elements. This is explainable by the fact that this concept has not been properly promoted up to present, plus the lack of such a tourist facilities created in accordance with the basic concept on the market, having no model to be followed by other tourist

facilities in the same category. This is also due to the fact that tourist offer in Romania is not yet *founded* on the principles of sustainable development, while aiming at just speculative investment in order to achieve substantial and fast profit.

3.3. Land zoning for the development of holiday villages

Starting from the observation of spatial distribution of holiday villages at national level and taking into account the prerequisites for their setting up, we need to accomplish a general zoning based on favourability of location in order to guide future investments of this kind towards the most favourable areas for development.

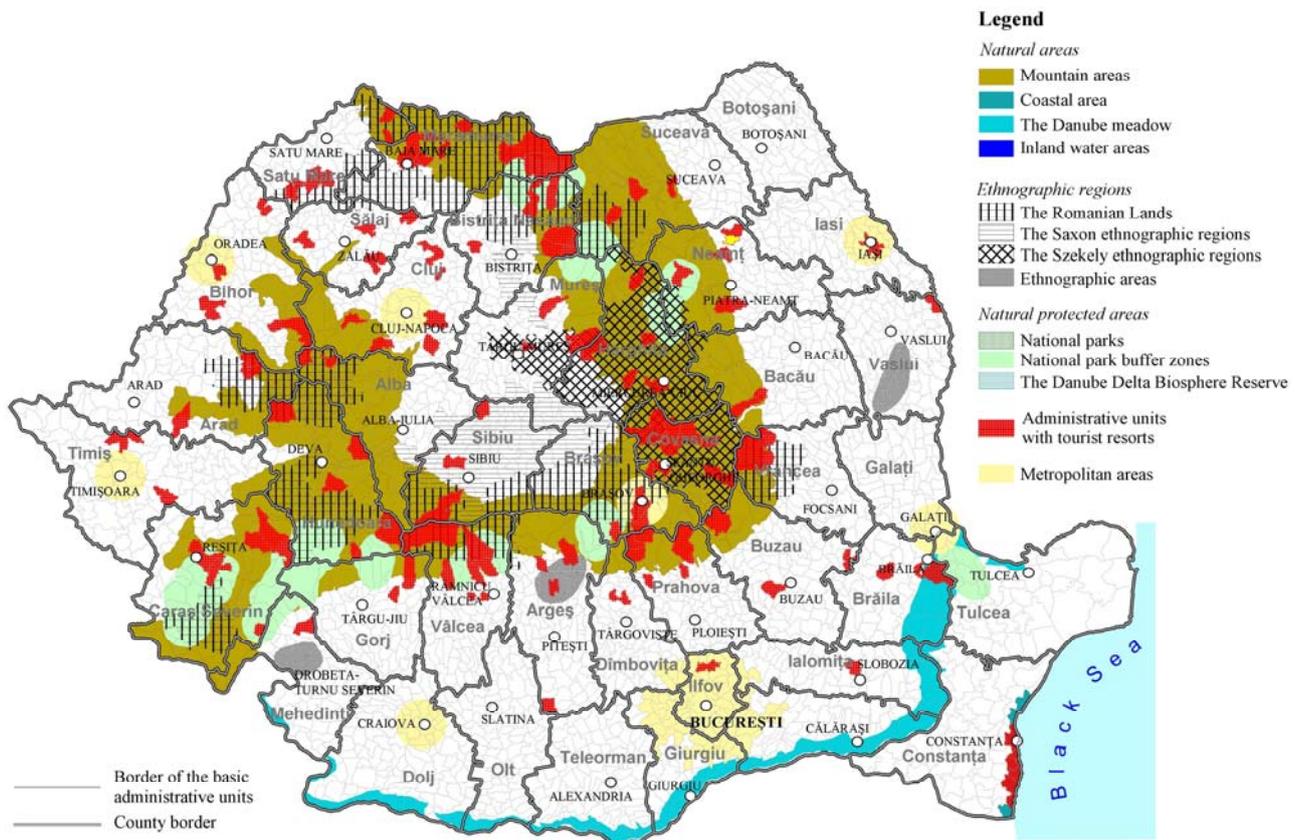


Fig. 12. Land zoning for the development of holiday villages (based on favourability factor).

Among the most suitable geographical areas for such investments we mention:

- *mountain areas* – where there is an association and a huge variety of tourist attractions, unspoiled natural elements and appealing landscapes;
- *coastline area* – part of it can still be equipped with tourist facilities for summer tourism. Coastal area may also include the land strip located at some distance from the beach. The Danube Delta is also added to this category, which from the ecological perspective can generate a high degree of specialization of the implanted facilities;

- *the Danube meadow* – can serve as location for a huge variety of establishments, which can be associated with cruise tourism. The most appealing sector of the meadow and most suitable for such implants is represented by the gorges between Orșova and Moldova Nouă;

- *inland water areas (lakes for fisheries, hydropower lakes)* – these can host theme based facilities based on activities such as: sports, recreational fishing, etc.

- *ethnographic areas* – can determine the change of the basic concept into a thematic one

following a direction related to ethnos, highlighted in architecture, gastronomy, traditional feasts and habits and a specific rural economy, etc.;

- *natural protected areas* – in which category we include national parks with their buffer areas, natural parks, nature reserves where thematic facilities can be created based on ecological policy;

- *tourist resorts* – based on which holiday villages may be redesigned aiming to multiply the tourism offer and fully value the tourist flow. By implementing such a concept within tourist resorts would also diminish the effect of seasonality;

- *metropolitan areas* – are perhaps the most interesting locations for new implants in accordance with the basic concept, due to their proximity to a tourist market. In case of combining several elements of attractiveness of location, the site achieves reliable values for the location of a holiday village in relation to the basic concept or variants of it in accordance with the local specifics.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The concept of holiday village is hardly in its early development stage in Romania. All investments made in the name of this brand are merely fragile and hesitant attempts to implement this concept whereas in Europe it has already become traditional for about 50 years. There is an accentuation of development of this concept after the year 2000, when both private investors and public-private partnerships have begun to invest in this segment of tourism industry. Investments already functional, under planning or in designing phase are mainly focused on the Carpathian area, Danube Delta, Black Sea coast, whereas the other geographical areas register a low degree of employment. Up to present, there is a no holiday village in Romania developed in accordance with the basic concept promoted and developed in Europe.

At national level some favourable premises for the development of this concept should be considered. We can also add the suitability of environment and variety of other natural location factors. Therefore, the concept of holiday village may develop in the future and may represent one of the basic tourist offers of the country.

There is also the need to revise the concept and adapt it for the Romanian context and be realistically addressed, however maintaining its meaning of a new multifunctional facility able to fulfill the demand for lodging, leisure and nature and bringing advantages to the tourism market beside the traditional facilities current tourism provides in Romania. Holiday village has developed around and beyond several traditional and newly established tourist facility concepts and eventually has become itself a tourist destination.

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