



The Romanian Western Carpathians and Their Premises to Practice Skiing and Tourism Activities

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The Romanian Western Carpathians are special from the point of view of practicing activities of skiing and tourism. Although endowed with natural resources, the area is not used at its most value. In this study, we try to show the main causes due to which skiing and tourism activities do not have a good quota and we try to find the modalities to solve these problems.

In the context of big economic changes of our country, the skiing activities have different roles according to the fundamental mutations of concepts, content and methodology. The accuracy of actual societies enforces them as an integrative formative process, having a different role in the educative quality of the features. Having a large area of application, the population has the possibility to easily adapt to the conditions of labour enforced in the selected profession, which come in strong relation with the social requirements. On this basis, in the current period is imperiously necessary to underline the social responsibility of the skiing and the tourism activities. We must reconsider and lift them to a superior level as part of culture.

One of the finalities of skiing and tourism is to improve the quality of life, to assure the optimum health level to the whole population, expressed through robustness and physical vigour during their life time.

The continuous, systematic practice of physical exercise and activities could be a start for:

- Firstly, the selection basis for the sport performance;
- Secondly, the useful and agreeable use of the spare time;
- Thirdly, the elimination of the effects of stress and chemical and phonic pollution through direct contact with nature and its elements (air, water, sun etc.);
- Fourthly, as a cumulated effect of the previously mentioned, the acquirement of a state of physical comfort and equilibrium of psychic, a spring of integration and social efficaciousness, of general welfare and exultation.

Due to those influences on the growth and physical harmonious development of the youngest people, the tourism and skiing activities are seen like physical skills as they determinate the role in these habits, as a constitutive role in the formation of younger generations.

From an economic point of view we can also speak about the different role of skiing and tourism activities. As for the contribution of these activities to the welfare of the population and its development from point of view of economic geography, we can assert that one of these can be found in the Western Romanian Carpathians

The quantitative and qualitative determination of the geographical area potential is an activity that many specialists are concerned with. The results of the studies will be of a real help for the shares that systematize the territory, by improving the potential of its proper values given by the respective endowments.

The Western Carpathians are an interesting territory below the potential appearance of the activities of skiing, as far as these offer natural possibilities for practice. This capitalization of the funds can cause the development of the skiing activities and, hereupon the inclusion of this territory in the international skiing circuit.

The Western Carpathians fractionally placed westwards have a series of general common features, which are the ideal by-paths for the exhibition activities of skiing and tourism like:

- the low altitudes that makes it accessible if we take into consideration the aspects of transportation and cohabitation of the population;
- the zone is entirely habitable, up to highest altitudes;
- the fragmented bold areas, especially the fractionally westwards waves mature the depressions;
- the network of rural settlements, most of them being adapted to the conditions of the relief and to the prevailing economic activities, within the highly frequented localities;
- an extremely rich and varied tourism potential can be added here, but which has been insufficiently used up to the present. The potential of the most varied tourism is taken down the law, presenting interest through the value of the landscape.

In what the skiing is regarded, the tradition is different because, from 1989 these regions have been accounted for as economic regions having a high level of industrialization. The authorities would prefer the population to work rather than to spend time on the tracks. Therefore, the investments in this area were almost non-existent.

A distinctive feature of the Western Carpathians is the big frequency of the carst phenomena of limestone. The most known areas are: the zone of Scărișoara-Padiș-Cetățile Ponorului (with the Scărișoara glacier, the Cetățile Ponorului underground system etc.), Trascăului Mountains (especially with a relief of guys' quays), Codru-Moma Mountains (with the carstic plateau of Vașcău, and Pădurea Craiului Mountains (with different caves, like Vântului Cave, the longest cave of our country, Meziad Cave etc.). The climate is optimum for skiing and tourism activities; In winter we can feel the influences of the Northern circulation and of a North cold mass of air, of polar and respectively arctic origin, at the altitude of 900 m, the snow reaches 30-40 cm and lasts up to 150 days a year in the high zone of the mountain and up to 30-50 days in the valleys. In the area the snow stratum is stable and accessible to skiing from December to March. In order to satisfy the needs, the tourism accommodation bases are obliged to guarantee a 5% surplus of accommodation places regardless the estimated number of tourists per season be it winter or summer. Nowadays, the tourism resorts of the Western Carpathians cannot provide a large number of places of accommodation for all the tourists, because of the insufficient number of chalets and hotels. The places of accommodation are limited and, moreover, and the comfort is questionable. Among the existing chalets we can mention: The Sime chalet offering a buffet, 25 places of accommodation Poiana Padiș area, Cibela Padiș chalet (buffet, 30 places of accommodation), Vărășoia chalet (cottages with 2, 3, 4 places = 20 places + 30 places). Those chalets as a rule are not available in winter.

Cabana Boga is placed in the Boga area (restaurant, 20 places of accommodation in rooms with 2, 3, 4 beds) and Cabana Piatra Bulzului (buffets, 30 places of accommodation in rooms with 2, 3, 4 beds). We also have the possibility of accommodation in Băișoara, Stâna de Vale and Arieșeni resorts. The absence of the places of accommodation is one of the reasons for which the tourists prefer other areas for spending their leisure time or their weekends. The potential for spending the holidays in the Western Carpathians for skiing is huge. This exploitation area can lead to a significant economic development of all the areas of incidence.

The systems meant for the development of the skiing activities are, presently, multiple and because of the advancements in technology, all rely on publicity. For the development the ski in the Western Carpathians zone the timeliness are multiple.

The optimum zones for skiing and tourism activities must be modernized there where necessary meanwhile others must be taken to the eye of the public, places like Rogojel (Vlădeasa), Lunca Vișagului (Vlădeasa), Steaua (Someșul Rece), Valea Ierii, either nearby the already functional ones, or around large urban agglomerations. The cities, in this case, must be considered as skiing and tourism resorts.

In the last decades the land was given back to the former proprietors. And thus, a significant part of the former skiing surfaces were transformed receiving other destinations. Therefore it is necessary to promote legal prerequisites for the settlements in which the respective transfer of surfaces to the public area was made by the local public authorities.

The Western Carpathians allow the practice of different kinds of sports, such as sleigh, bean, and cross-country skiing.

The local decision makers, along with the national authority – the sports Federations, the sports Clubs, and other specialists like engineers, architects, forest men, specialists from adjacent fields – will have to establish a set of rules according to the models and principles of

organization and the models of improving the tourism resorts for winter sports of the European countries with a tradition in those domains. They must decide the necessary endowments and the way in which these shall be used to achieve the necessary infrastructure regarding the practice of winter sports. Endowments shall be insured with all the necessary equipment such as: cable means of transportation, fittings for track keeping and for producing artificial snow, special fittings of freezing and keeping the track of bean and sleigh etc. The need for tourism activities (accommodation, alimentation, divertissement) will be thought in such a way as to insure the activities on the extent of the whole year, regardless the season. The accommodation capacities shall be built in order to ensure the afferent comfort, and to provide a quality tourism job system and diversify of divertissement for an optimum number of tourists. Together with the facilitation of the tourists movement, the paths of access, the highways, the tourism routes, and the parking lots shall be improved, facilitated or by case, rebuilt.

The Western Carpathians area was industrially preponderant, with an accent on the extractive industry and wood processing. Nowadays we notice an "impasse" of these two economic branches. The area is among the first ones of the country in respect of the number of the unemployed population. In order to get out of this awkward situation a solution would be reconvert the unemployed. This way it can be assured the social function of the reform of the people, in order to wake their internal forces, their desire of cognition and self education, thus contributing to the their multilateral preparation. In the Western Carpathians area, we can organize competitions of:

1. Alpine skiing and cross country skiing; the organizing of slalom and giants slalom competitions on the tracks of Băișoara, Arieșeni, Stâna of Vale resorts, competitions of cross country skiing in Stâna of Vale area, Vlădeasa.

2. Snowboard and extreme skiing: the competition of extreme skiing and snowboard brings the participants and sports lovers from all parts of the world. A very good example is the contest of free ride in April in Bălea area. Every year this competition attracts about 1000 Romanian and foreigner tourists, as participants and spectators. In 2002 and 2003, participated to this event foreign competitors from 10 countries.

3. Tourism orientation: On the occasion of these contests tourism orientation took place in different locations, on different age categories, in the following areas: Padiș, Vlădeasa, Stâna de Vale. The difficulty of the route depends on the selected route.

4. Mountain Bike is the sport that gained ground and nowadays it attracts fans from all over the world. It can be successfully practiced on the route Canton Padiș - Stâna de Vale.

5. Mountain Escalation.

The specific sports programs must and will rethink their role in dynamic ways. These programs are meant to assure the formation of habits and habitudes for the group cooperation, for the conjugation of efforts with the others for reaching one common aim.

The paths of access towards these tourism places differ from to one place to another. The roads towards Băișoara and Arieșeni are the only ones that allow an easy access. For the other zones the situation dramatically changes.

There is no other way to reach the Padiș area, but with the personal automobile. The possibilities for a good accommodation are inadequate. Some hotels and chalets were built, but not big and comfortable enough in order to provide the minimum of comfort. Another problem is represented by the skiing tracks, which are small and must be improved to optimum standards in order to be practiced in decent conditions.

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