

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF DEFINING, CERTIFYING AND CLASSIFYING THE TOURIST RESORTS IN ROMANIA

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Abstract: *The tourist resort is considered the center of tourism activity and therefore a proper terminology would be helpful for all stakeholders. The Romanian legislation regarding the definition and classification of tourist resorts is not clear and complete. A proper and single terminology would be useful when adopted by businesses, professional organizations and federations in tourism, as well as by the ministries concerned. At present, Romania has a significant number of 100 certified tourist resorts, out of which 43 of national interest and 57 of local interest (plus other three smaller resorts that have received only the status of the spa). The most numerous are the mountain resorts (53), followed by hill and plateau resorts (28), seaside resorts (12) and plain resorts (10). Romania has a high climatic and balneological potential, proven by the existence of 59 spa and climatic resorts, 37 climatic resorts, and 6 spas. In addition, these resorts have rest and leisure functions, offering the possibility of practicing various forms of tourism. Since 2003, the State, through the Ministry of Tourism and favorable legislation, has involved more and more in programs of national interest to develop winter sports tourism, seaside or spa tourism, allocating sums to rehabilitate and revive many declining resorts. The 40 tourist resorts certified in the period 2003-2017 have had the opportunity to attract non-reimbursable financing to develop tourism infrastructure and promote themselves as tourist destinations; because most of them are small localities, tourism would contribute significantly to the welfare of local communities. This study is based on researching the bibliographic sources, the normative and legislative acts in the field, and a good knowledge of Romanian tourist resorts. This paper contributes scientifically through an appropriate definition of the tourist resort, the history of tourist resort certification and the certification criteria under the legislation in effect, a complete and up-to-date list of the certified tourist resorts in Romania, as well as a complex and combined classification of Romanian tourist resorts.*

Keywords: *Romania; tourist resort; definition; certification; classification.*

Introduction

The tourist resort is considered the center of tourism activity and therefore a proper terminology would be helpful for all stakeholders. The Romanian legislation regarding the definition and classification of tourist resorts is not clear and complete and there are some reasons for this situation. A proper and single terminology would be useful when adopted by businesses, professional organizations and federations in tourism, as well as by the ministries concerned. We made a review of the Romanian literature in this field, attempting to obtain some unanimously recognized concepts or opinions on defining and classifying tourist resorts.

It is necessary to adapt the legislation to practice in order to answer tourists' demands. We consider the classification criterion of location (geographic) used in practice to be the most important, while the remaining criteria (tourism resources, tourism function, size, tourism forms, attractiveness, etc.) may vary and could be combined in different ways.

This paper contributes scientifically through an appropriate definition of the tourist resort, the history of tourist resort certification and the certification criteria under the legislation in effect, a complete and up-to-date list of the certified tourist resorts in Romania, as well as a complex and combined classification of Romanian tourist resorts.

Materials and methods

This paper is based on researching the bibliographic sources mentioned therein (specialty books of Romanian researchers or university professors, normative and legislative acts in the field, publications of the National Institute of Statistics and the National Institute for Research and Development in Tourism) and a good knowledge of the tourist resorts in Romania (author's field experience). The data were synthesized (also using Microsoft Excel application) and further processed into pertinent conclusions.

Research results

The importance of defining unitarily the tourist resort

The tourist resort is the center of tourism activity, "a complex territorial system of production and distribution of tourism goods and services" (Tigu, 2001), and therefore a proper terminology is helpful for all stakeholders. The Romanian legislation on tourist resorts is sometimes doubtful and confusing and it does not match the tourist demand or the practice in the field.

The shortcomings we noticed refer to (Simoni, 2015): uncertainty and confusion in tourist resort terminology (in literature and legislation in effect); the lack of an updated, complete and clear legislation in this field (the latest law is the Government Decision no. 852 / 2008, while the Project (draft) of Tourism Law has been amended even since 2010, being recently considered for approval and public debate); the Project Tourism Law 2015 (the latest version) fails to clarify many aspects, but it is certainly the most comprehensive by now; disparity between practice (tourists, travel agencies, tourist resorts' offer, statistical data provided by the National Institute of Statistics) and legislation in the field.

The causes of these uncertainties and disparities are (Simoni, 2015): the frequent changes of the names and responsibilities of the Ministry of Tourism during the post-revolutionary period; the repeated establishment and dissolution of some institutions or organizations such as the National Authority for Tourism, the Office of Licensing and Control in Tourism, or the Tourism Promotion Office; the poor collaboration with the experts in the field from Romania and abroad (researchers, university professors) in preparing legislative acts on tourist resorts, their classification and certification; the

lack of a tourism law in effect (there are a number of governmental decisions and orders in effect and a long-debated and yet unapproved law project); the inability of decision-makers in tourism to create sustainable policies.

The Ordinance no. 58/1998, representing the legislation in effect, defines the tourist resort as "a locality or part of a locality with specific tourist functions, in which the economic activities exclusively support the achievement of the tourism product." The Dictionary of Geographic Terms (Posea, 1986) defines the tourist resort as "a locality specialized in receiving tourists (including those who come for treatment), having appropriate treatment, sport, and entertainment facilities, etc. The resort is most often accompanied by an important commercial activity and organizes transport (access) and trips." In the Dictionary of Human Geography (Erdeli et al., 1999), the tourist resort is defined as "a locality that has balneological potential (mineral waters, mofettes, therapeutic muds), climatic resources (natural factors for treating some diseases) and natural and anthropic tourism resources, arranged and endowed to value them." The book "Lexicon of Tourism Terms" (Stănciulescu, 2002) defines the tourist resort as "a locality (village or city) situated in a region with great tourism potential and equipped with various facilities for receiving tourists. It is an organized territorial unit, with equipment offering a diverse range of performances, assimilated to a settlement or a service sales center, grouping different businesses. In many tourist countries, including Romania, a locality must meet certain criteria, determined by national legislation, in order to gain this status."

The university course "Tourism Facilities" (Erdeli & Gheorghilaș, 2006) is one of the few works having chapters dedicated to tourist resorts. The authors take the definitions of UNWTO and the International Academy of Tourism as follows: the tourist resort is a "locality having a number of attractions, equipped with accommodation units for tourists. It may be, for example, a seaside resort, a climatic, thermal or grape cure resort, if it additionally offers specific features of these resorts". This definition confirms the multiple functionalities of a tourist resort. The authors conclude that in practice (strategies, programs, statistical reports and promotion), the tourist resorts in Romania are classified into three categories (after the main motivation of the offer, the specific tourism functions and the three main segments of tourism) - seaside resorts, spa resorts, and mountain resorts. The Project Tourism Law 2015 is the first document in the last 25 years providing an appropriate definition of the tourist resort: "a locality or part of it that has tourist heritage and tourist infrastructure, where the economic activities support mainly the tourism product, being certified by governmental decision on a proposal of the county administrative authority responsible for tourism, if it met cumulatively the mandatory minimum criteria for certification, approved by governmental decision."

The certified tourist resorts in Romania and the importance of their certification

Certification of tourist resorts is made by the Ministry of Tourism, at the request of the local public administration authorities, and it is approved by a Government decision. Certification as a tourist resort does not change the rank of the respective locality established under the law.

The norms and criteria of certifying tourist resorts (of national or local interest) were established by Decision no. 852 / 2008, and belong to the following categories, for

which a certified tourist resort has to achieve a minimum score: natural environment, natural treatment factors and environment quality (the natural and anthropogenic resources must be entered in the Tourist Heritage Register, and in case of natural treatment factors, there must be documents attesting their value); access and roads to/ in the resort; urban utilities; accommodation and leisure facilities (minimum 500 accommodation places for the national resorts, minimum 100 accommodation places for those of local interest, minimum 30% accommodation units ranked 3-5 stars); tourist information and promotion; additional criteria of certifying a tourist resort.

The Government Decision no. 1122/2002 certified 29 tourist resorts of national interest and 36 tourist resorts of local interest. Annex 4 of the Government Decision no. 852/2008 mentioned 83 certified tourist resorts, 37 of national interest and 46 of local interest. By Order no. 1016/2011, the National Tourism Authority added other 4 tourist resorts of national interest (Petroșani-Parâng, Târgu Neamț, Piatra Neamț, Râșnov) and 2 local resorts (Vișeu, Baia Sprie). Decision no. 1072/2013 added to this list the localities certified as spa and climatic resorts (Băile Felix, 1 Mai, Geoagiu-Băi, Nicolina, Călimănești-Căciulata, Mangalia, Vatra Dornei, Slănic-Moldova, Târgu-Ocna, Sângeorz-Băi, Eforie, Năvodari, Covasna, Pucioasa, Băile Tușnad, Sovata, Slănic Prahova, Ocna Sibiului, Buzias, Băile Olănești, Moneasa, Bazna). Recently, Decision no. 58/2017 has certified 12 new tourist resorts, of which two of national interest (Borsec in Harghita county and Sucevița in Suceava county). Also, a number of 10 localities or parts of some localities have been certified as tourist resorts of local interest: Baia de Fier - Gorj county, Boghiș - Sălaj county, Colibița - Bistrița-Năsăud county, Moisei - Maramureș county, Negrești Oaș - Satu Mare county, Pojorâta - Suceava county, Sângeorgiu de Mureș - Mureș county, Băile Banffy - Toplița municipality - Harghita county, Băile Ocna Dej - Dej municipality, Cluj county, Moinești-Băi - Moinești municipality, Bacău county) – Table 1. Promoted as tourist resorts of national or local interest, these localities may have a high chance of attracting non-reimbursable financing, given that some financing programs require certification as a tourist resort.

Therefore, at present (Tables 1 and 2) Romania has 43 tourist resorts of national interest (of which 23 spa and climatic resorts and 3 spas) and 57 local tourist resorts (including 7 spa and climatic resorts). There are also three other smaller resorts that have received only the status of spa and climatic resort (Nicolina, Buzuș-Băi, Năvodari):

Table 1. The evolution of certified tourist resorts in Romania

Year	Total number of certified tourist resorts	Tourist resorts of national interest	Tourist resorts of local interest	Legislative acts attesting the status of tourist resort
2002	65	29	36	Government Decision no. 1122/2002
2008	83	37	46	Government Decisions nos. 867/2006 and 852/2008
2011	89	41	48	Government Decisions nos. 848/2009, 1204/2009, 1205/2009, 511/2010, 1181/2011 and 1016/2011
2013	98	41	57	Government Decisions nos. 1161/2012 and 1072/2013
2017	103	43	60	Government Decision no. 58/2017

Table 2. The certified tourist resorts in Romania (2017), according to the legislation in effect

Pos.	Certified tourist resorts of national interest	Location (county)	Pos.	Certified tourist resorts of local interest	Location (county)
1	Amara (S)	Ialomița	1	1 Mai (SC)	Bihor
2	Azuga	Prahova	2	Albac	Alba
3	Bușteni	Prahova	3	Bughea de Sus	Argeș
4	Buziaș (SC)	Timiș	4	Arieșeni	Alba
5	Băile Govora (S)	Vâlcea	5	Balványos	Covasna
6	Băile Felix (SC)	Bihor	6	Bazna (SC)	Sibiu
7	Băile Herculane (S)	Caras-Severin	7	Băltățești	Neamț
8	Băile Olănești (SC)	Vâlcea	8	Băile Homorod	Harghita
9	Băile Tușnad (SC)	Harghita	9	Băile Turda	Cluj
10	Câmpulung Moldovenesc	Suceava	10	Băile Băița	Cluj
11	Cap Aurora (SC)	Constanța	11	Borșa	Maramureș
12	Călimănești-Căciulata (SC)	Vâlcea	12	Bran	Brașov
13	Costinești	Constanța	13	Breaza	Prahova
14	Covasna (SC)	Covasna	14	Călacea	Timiș
15	Eforie Nord (SC)	Constanța	15	Cheia	Prahova
16	Eforie Sud (SC)	Constanța	16	Crivaia	Caras-Severin
17	Geoagiu-Băi (SC)	Hunedoara	17	Durău	Neamț
18	Gura Humorului	Suceava	18	Harghita-Băi	Harghita
19	Jupiter (SC)	Constanța	19	Horezu	Vâlcea
20	Mamaia	Constanța	20	Izvoru Mureșului	Harghita
21	Mangalia (SC)	Constanța	21	Lacu Roșu	Harghita
22	Moneasa (SC)	Arad	22	Lacu Sărat	Brăila
23	Neptun-Olimp (SC)	Constanța	23	Lipova	Arad
24	Poiana Brașov	Brașov	24	Moieciu	Brașov
25	Predeal	Brașov	25	Ocna Sibiului (SC)	Sibiu
26	Pucioasa (SC)	Dâmbovița	26	Ocna Șugatag (SC)	Maramureș
27	Slănic (SC)	Prahova	27	Păltiniș	Sibiu
28	Saturn (SC)	Constanța	28	Pârâul Rece	Brașov
29	Sinaia	Prahova	29	Praid	Harghita
30	Sângerorz-Băi (SC)	Bistrița-Năsăud	30	Săcelu	Gorj
31	Slănic-Moldova (SC)	Bacău	31	Sărata Monteoru	Buzău
32	Sovata (SC)	Mureș	32	Secu	Caras-Severin
33	Târgu Ocna (SC)	Bacău	33	Semenic	Caras-Severin
34	Techirghiol (S)	Constanța	34	Snagov	Ilfov
35	Vatra Dornei (SC)	Suceava	35	Stâna de Vale	Bihor
36	Venus (SC)	Constanța	36	Straja	Hunedoara
37	Voineasa	Vâlcea	37	Soveja	Vrancea
38	Petroșani-Parâng	Hunedoara	38	Tășnad	Satu Mare
39	Târgu Neamț	Neamț	39	Timișu de Sus	Brașov
40	Piatra Neamț	Neamț	40	Tinca	Bihor
41	Râșnov	Brașov	41	Trei Ape	Caras-Severin
42	Borsec	Harghita	42	Vălenii de Munte	Prahova
43	Sucevița	Suceava	43	Vața de Jos	Hunedoara
Notes: <i>Certification of localities as tourist resorts of national or local interest by Government Decisions nos. 1122/2002, 867/2006, 852/2008, 848/2009, 1204/2009, 1205/2009, 511/2010, 1181/2011, 1161/2012, 1072/2013.</i> <i>(S) – the status of spa, according to the law (Government Decisions nos. 1016/2011 and 1072/2013)</i> <i>(SC) – the status of spa and climatic resort, according to the law (Government Decisions nos. 1016/2011 and</i>			44	Zona Fântânele	Cluj
			45	Zona Muntele Băișorii	Cluj
			46	Vișeu de Sus	Maramureș
			47	Șuitor-Baia Sprie	Maramureș
			48	Baia de Fier	Gorj
			49	Boghîș	Sălaj
			50	Colibița	Bistrița-Năsăud
			51	Moisei	Maramureș
			52	Negrești Oaș	Satu Mare
			53	Pojorâta	Suceava

1072/2013) <i>Please note that the table contains only the certified tourist resorts, the actual list of all Romanian resorts and tourist centers being larger.</i>	54	Sângeorgiu de Mureș	Mureș
	55	Băile Banffy (Toplița)	Harghita
	56	Ocna Dej	Cluj
	57	Moinești-Băi	Bacău
	58	Nicolina (SC)	Iași
	59	Bizușa-Băi (SC)	Sălaj
	60	Năvodari (SC)	Constanța

Since 2003, the State, through the Ministry of Tourism and favorable legislation, has involved more and more in programs of national interest to develop winter sport tourism, seaside or spa tourism, allocating sums to arrange and revive many declining resorts. The 40 tourist resorts certified in the period 2003-2017, have had the opportunity to attract non-reimbursable financing to develop tourism infrastructure and promote themselves as tourist destinations; because most of them are small localities, tourism would contribute significantly to the welfare of local communities.

The importance of classifying the Romanian tourist resorts

Other shortcomings result from the classification (and thus definition) of tourist resorts by different criteria (Simoni, 2015): the location (geographic) criterion is used in practice by tourists, travel agencies, resort offers, statistics, specialists' studies; the criterion of tourism function is used in legislation; the criterion of attractiveness and level of organization and equipment is also used in legislation to certify tourist resorts.

The National Institute of Statistics uses the location (geographic) criterion combined with the tourism function in its statistics (Statistical Yearbook of Romania, Tourism chapters; Tourism Series; Romanian Tourism. Statistical Abstract), but does not define these terms: spas, seaside resorts, mountain resorts, Danube Delta, Bucharest and county capitals, other localities and tourist routes. The legislation uses the criterion of attractiveness and level of organization and equipment, as well as the criterion of tourist function – the Project Tourism Law 2010-2015 (and other previous provisions such as the Government Decisions nos. 112/2002, 867/2006, 852/2008), distinguishing three types of resorts: spa resort, climatic resort and spa and climatic resort.

To summarize, the Romanian tourist resorts were classified according to various criteria by different authors and authorities, but the most important criteria for classification are: the geographical criterion (of location, reflecting the natural tourism potential), the tourist function (the forms of tourism) and the size and importance of the tourist resort (resulting from the level of organization, certified tourism facilities, degree of attractiveness).

It is difficult to classify the tourist resorts because of the variety of the classification criteria: the tourist potential, the degree of tourism development, the forms of tourism practiced, the character of the tourist activity (permanent, seasonal), the size of the resort (accommodation capacity), etc. We propose a combined classification that would be useful, although in practice (tourists, statistics, travel agencies) it is preferable to work with fewer categories. Thus, we will use some categories (based on the geographic criterion, from which result the characteristics of the natural tourism potential and implicitly the forms of tourism practiced), each broken down by subcategories, depending on the particularities of the tourism potential of each resort.

One classification criterion is not enough to describe the complexity and diversity of Romanian tourist resorts, so a combined classification would be useful (a tourist resort should be characterized by using more classification criteria), as we have done in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3. Model of combined classification of tourist resorts in Romania (2017)

Classification criterion		B. Tourism function (form of tourism)						C. Size and importance		D. Character of tourism activity	
		climatic	spa and climatic	Spa	for rest and leisure (including sports)			of national interest	of local interest	permanent	seasonal
					for practicing winter sports	for practicing water sports	to visit natural and anthropic tourist spots nearby				
A. Geographic	Total										
Mountain resorts	53	3 2	2 1	-	39	5	53	19	34	50	3
Hill and plateau resorts	28	5	2 2	1	4	-	28	10	18	27	1
Plain resorts	10	-	4	5	-	1	6	3	7	8	2
Seaside resorts	12	-	1 2	-	-	12	12	11	1	8	4
Total	103	3 7	5 9	6	43	18	99	43	60	93	10

Certainly, things can be simplified as follows (Table 3): Romania has 103 certified tourist resorts, 43 of national interest and 60 of local interest. The most numerous are the mountain resorts (53), followed by hill and plateau resorts (28), seaside resorts (12) and plain resorts (10). Romania has a high climatic and balneological potential, proven by the existence of 59 spa and climatic resorts, 37 climatic resorts and 6 spas (note that not all of them are certified as spas or climatic resorts yet). In addition, these resorts have rest and leisure functions, such as one or more of the following: hiking to admire landscapes or protected areas (including ecotourism), practicing sports (winter sports, water sports, mountaineering, caving, paragliding, etc.), hunting and fishing, visiting anthropic tourist spots (including those related to rural tourism) nearby. For example, (Table 4), a resort such as Vatra Dornei can be characterized in a complex and proper manner, by fitting it to several classification criteria (Table 4, x-marked cells): it is a mountain tourist resort of national interest (large), permanent, spa and climatic, for practicing winter sports, for rest and leisure.

Table 4. The combined classification of all certified tourist resorts in Romania (2017)

Classification criterion <i>Tourist resort (county location)</i>	B. Tourism function (form of tourism)					C. Size and importance		D. Character of tourism activity		
	climatic	spa and climatic	spa	for rest and leisure (including sports)			of national interest	of local interest	permanent	seasonal
				for practicing winter sports	for practicing water sports	to visit natural and anthropic tourist spots nearby				
A. Geographic										
A.1. Mountain resorts										
1.Azuga (Prahova)	x			x		x	x		x	
2.Bușteni (Prahova)	x			x		x	x		x	
3.Băile Herculane (Caraș-Severin)		x				x	x		x	
4.Băile Tușnad (Harghita)		x		x		x	x		x	
5.Câmpulung Moldovenesc (Suceava)	x			x		x	x		x	
6.Covasna (Covasna)		x		x			x		x	
7.Geoagiu-Băi (Hunedoara)		x				x	x		x	
8.Gura Humorului (Suceava)	x			x		x	x		x	
9.Moneasa (Arad)		x		x		x	x		x	
10.Poiana Brașov (Brașov)	x			x		x	x		x	
11.Predeal (Brașov)	x			x		x	x		x	
12.Sinaia (Prahova)		x		x		x	x		x	
13.Slănic Moldova (Bacău)		x		x		x	x		x	
14.Vatra Dornei (Bacău)		x		x		x	x		x	
15.Voineasa (Vâlcea)	x			x		x	x		x	
16.Petroșani-Parâng (Hunedoara)	x			x		x	x		x	
17.Râșnov (Brașov)	x					x	x		x	
18.Borsec (Harghita)		x		x		x	x		x	
19.Sucevița (Suceava)	x			x		x	x		x	
20.Albac (Alba)	x					x		x	x	
21.Arieșeni (Alba)	x			x		x		x	x	
22.Balványos (Covasna)		x				x		x	x	
23.Borșa (Maramureș)		x		x		x		x	x	
24.Bran (Brașov)	x			x		x		x	x	
25.Cheia (Prahova)	x					x		x	x	
26.Crivaia (Caraș-Severin)	x			x	x	x		x	x	
27.Durău (Neamț)	x			x		x		x	x	
28.Harghita-Băi (Harghita)		x		x		x		x	x	
29.Izvoru Mureșului (Harghita)	x			x		x		x	x	
30.Lacu Roșu (Harghita)	x			x	x	x		x	x	
31.Moieciu (Brașov)	x			x		x		x	x	
32.Ocna Șugatag (Maramureș)		x				x		x	x	
33.Păltiniș (Sibiu)	x			x		x		x	x	
34.Pârâul Rece (Brașov)	x			x		x		x	x	
35.Secu (Caraș-Severin)	x				x	x		x		x
36.Semenic (Caraș-Severin)	x			x		x		x	x	
37.Stâna de Vale (Bihor)		x		x		x		x	x	
38.Straja (Hunedoara)	x			x		x		x	x	
39.Soveja (Vrancea)		x				x		x		x
40.Timișu de Sus (Brașov)	x					x		x	x	
41.Trei Ape (Caraș-Severin)	x			x	x	x		x	x	
42.Vața de Jos (Hunedoara)		x				x		x		x

43.Zona Fântânele (Cluj)	x			x		x		x	x	
44.Zona Muntele Băişorii (Cluj)	x			x		x		x	x	
45.Vișeu de Sus (Maramureș)		x				x		x	x	
46.Șuior-Baia Sprie (Maramureș)	x			x		x		x	x	
47.Boghiș (Sălaj)		x				x		x	x	
48.Colibița (Bistrița-Năsăud)		x		x		x		x	x	
49.Moisei (Maramureș)	x					x		x	x	
50.Negrești Oaş (Satu Mare)	x			x		x		x	x	
51.Pojorâta (Suceava)	x			x		x		x	x	
52.Băile Banffy – Toplița (Harghita)		x		x		x		x	x	
53.Băile Homorod (Harghita)		x		x		x		x	x	
A.2. Hill and plateau resorts										
1.Băile Govora (Vâlcea)		x				x	x		x	
2.Băile Olănești (Vâlcea)		x				x	x		x	
3.Călimănești-Căciulata (Vâlcea)		x				x	x		x	
4.Pucioasa (Dâmbovița)		x				x	x		x	
5.Slănic (Prahova)		x				x	x		x	
6.Sângeorz-Băi (Bistrița-Năsăud)		x				x	x		x	
7.Sovata (Mureș)		x				x	x		x	
8.Tg.Neamț (Neamț)	x			x		x	x		x	
9.Târgu Ocna (Bacău)		x				x	x		x	
10.Piatra Neamț (Neamț)	x			x		x	x		x	
11.Bughea de Sus (Argeș)		x						x		x
12.Bazna (Sibiu)		x						x	x	
13.Băltăești (Neamț)		x				x		x	x	
14.Băile Turda (Cluj)		x				x		x	x	
15.Băile Băița (Cluj)		x				x		x	x	
16.Breaza (Prahova)		x				x		x	x	
17.Horezu (Vâlcea)	x					x		x	x	
18.Ocna Sibiului (Sibiu)		x				x		x	x	
19.Praid (Harghita)		x		x		x		x	x	
20.Săcelu (Gorj)		x				x		x	x	
21.Sărata Monteoru (Buzău)		x				x		x	x	
22.Vălenii de Munte (Prahova)	x					x		x	x	
23. Baia de Fier (Gorj)	x			x		x		x	x	
24.Sângeorgiu de Mureș (Mureș)		x				x		x	x	
25.Ocna Dej (Cluj)		x				x		x	x	
26.Moinești-Băi (Bacău)		x				x		x	x	
27.Nicolina (Iași)			x			x		x	x	
28.Bizușa-Băi (Sălaj)		x				x		x	x	
A.3. Plain resorts										
1.Amara (Ilfov)			x				x		x	
2.Buziaș (Timiș)			x				x		x	
3.Băile Felix (Bihor)		x				x	x		x	
4. 1 Mai (Bihor)		x				x		x	x	
5.Călacea (Timiș)			x					x	x	
6.Lacu Sărat (Brăila)			x			x		x	x	
7.Lipova (Arad)			x			x		x	x	
8.Snagov (Ilfov)					x	x		x	x	
9.Tășnad (Satu Mare)		x				x		x		x
A.4. Seaside resorts										
1.Cap Aurora (Constanța)		x			x	x	x			x
2.Costinești (Constanța)		x			x	x	x			x
3.Eforie Nord (Constanța)		x			x	x	x		x	
4.Eforie Sud (Constanța)		x			x	x	x			x
5.Jupiter (Constanța)		x			x	x	x		x	
6.Mamaia (Constanța)		x			x	x	x		x	

7.Mangalia (Constanța)		x			x	x	x		x	
8.Neptun-Olimp (Constanța)		x			x	x	x		x	
9.Saturn (Constanța)		x			x	x	x		x	
10.Techirghiol (Constanța)		x			x	x	x		x	
11.Venus (Constanța)		x			x	x	x		x	
12.Năvodari (Constanța)		x			x	x		x		x

The *mountain resorts* are the most numerous (over 50% of total tourist resorts), due to the great natural potential of the Romanian Carpathians (alpine and mountain landscapes, rivers and lakes, bioclimate, mineral waters, ski areas, karst relief, national and natural parks, Biosphere reserves, fishing and hunting). The 53 mountain resorts can also be classified as large resorts (19 of national interest) or small resorts (34 of local interest), most of them being permanent (50); depending on the form of tourism practiced, they can be classified in climatic, spa and climatic, and rest and leisure resorts. We mention that all mountain resorts are climatic by definition (the mountain bioclimate favors climatotherapy). 21 of them are a spa and climatic resorts because they developed starting from their mineral and thermal waters, some of them being used since antiquity.

Before the Revolution in 1989, there were fewer ski slopes, concentrated in the area Prahova Valley - Poiana Brașov and several resorts around the country. In recent years (10-15 years), we have witnessed an unprecedented development of facilities for winter sports not only in traditional resorts, but also in smaller resorts, located in mountainous and even peri-mountainous areas, but close to major cities emitting tourists. Beginning with 2003, the State, through the Ministry of Tourism and favorable legislation, got involved more and more in programs of national interest for winter sports tourism development, allocating money to develop ski slopes and trails for hiking and recreation (Simoni, 2017). At present, there are 186 certified ski slopes throughout the country (37 new ski slopes were certified last year), 39 resorts for winter sports, some of them being new ski resorts (Șureanu, Râncea, Colibița, Pojorâta).

The *hill and plateau resorts* are mostly balneo-climatic, with permanent activity, due to the rich mineral water resources (most of them are salty and sulphurous waters, plus iodate, sulphate, ferugine waters, etc.), sedative bioclimate, and additional therapeutic salines. These resorts have old traditions in balneotherapy, and some of them are world renowned. They developed especially in the second half of the 20th century, and after the Revolution in December 1989, some of them continued to grow, but a few declined due to lack of investors and faulty management. Several resorts have recently been certified; they are only climatic resorts, but being located close to the mountains, they have developed leisure functions such as ski slopes, visiting natural or anthropic (including religious) tourist attractions in the area, or knowing the local traditions (Baia de Fier, Pietra Neamț, Târgu Neamț, Horezu, Vălenii de Munte).

The 10 resorts located in the plains are spas or spa and climatic resorts, linked either to the mineral (carbonated or thermal) waters in the western plains or to the salty lakes in the southern ones, to which we add Lake Snagov for recreation. Most of them (7) are small resorts and the majority are open permanently.

The 12 *seaside resorts* are, of course, all spa and climatic resorts (based on some valuable therapeutic resources: sea water, seaside bioclimate, and therapeutic mud from the lakes Techirghiol and Mangalia), seasonal, and all but one of national interest

(their attractiveness and size result from the high number of accommodation places, compared to other types of tourist resorts). Eight of these resorts operate at low capacity throughout the year (mainly hotels with treatment base).

Conclusions and implications

At present, Romania has a significant number of 103 certified tourist resorts, out of which 43 of national interest and 60 of local interest. The most numerous are the mountain resorts, followed by hill and plateau resorts, seaside resorts and plain resorts. Romania has a high climatic and balneological potential, proven by the existence of 59 spa and climatic resorts, 37 climatic resorts, and 6 spas. In addition, these resorts have rest and leisure functions, offering the possibility of practicing various forms of tourism.

The Romanian legislation regarding the definition and classification of tourist resorts is not clear and complete. A proper and single terminology would be useful when adopted by businesses, professional organizations and federations in tourism, as well as by the ministries concerned. We made a review of the Romanian literature in this field, attempting to obtain some unanimously recognized concepts or opinions on defining and classifying tourist resorts.

This paper contributes scientifically through an appropriate definition of the tourist resort, the history of tourist resort certification and the certification criteria under the legislation in effect, a complete and up-to-date list of the certified tourist resorts in Romania, as well as a complex and combined classification of Romanian tourist resorts.

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