

CURRENT TENDENCIES REGARDING THE TOURISTIC INFRASTRUCTURE OF DRĂGOIASA-TULGHEȘ DEPRESSION ALIGNMENT

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Abstract: The study at hand deals with a relatively small region (790 km²), that, from an administrative point of view, encapsulates the territory of Drăgoiasa, Păltiniș, Glodu and Catrinari villages, belonging to Panaci Commune, Suceava County, and Bilbor commune, Secu, a locality of the City of Toplița, the City of Borsec, and Corbu and Tulgheș communes, all situated in the northern part of Harghita County. The touristic infrastructure contains the ensemble of therapeutic, recreational, food and transport elements, whose purpose is to satisfy touristic demand. The aim of this study is to present aspects regarding the main touristic infrastructures, mainly concentrated in Borsec, the oldest of the Eastern Carpathians, which has seen a dramatic decrease in touristic activity, in the last two decades. The accommodation infrastructure mostly remained at the same level as during the interwar years by exclusively maintaining the villa system (until 2001), which only recently went through a restoration process. This led to fewer and fewer demands. This status quo was further exacerbated by precarious connections, which involve transbordations.

Key words: villas, agrotouristic hostels, multifunctional spa complex, ski slope

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INTRODUCTION

The touristic arrangement of Drăgoiasa-Tulgheș area started at the end of the 19th century, when the first private villas were built in Borsec, close to the mineral water springs. The accommodation capacity was quite low, and the entire organisation was based on serving a small number of customers and visitors at very high prices. Most villas were not equipped to handle visitors during winter, the spa being opened only during summer. In 1890, there were 34 villas and three hotels in Borsec, with roughly 350 rooms. The two world wars led to heavy damages to the spas, which were rehabilitated in 1948 (after Strategia de dezvoltare locală și turistică a orașului Borsec, 2006).

That year, the baths, together with the villas, become the property of the Ministry of Health, which rehabilitated, and expanded them. Borsec spa was ready to receive roughly 3 800 visitors in one series, the annual number of tourists surpassing 14 000. The officialization of spa tourism in Borsec took place in 1918, when the first spa enterprise was formed, whose main task was the

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restoration of the spa's infrastructure. The greatest rebirth was during the interwar period, when most villas were built, keeping the same beautiful style of wood lace. Borsec was a spa with a predominantly permanent regime, the largest influx being during the warm months of the year, from May until September. Due to massive investments in the enlargement and modernisation of the touristic base as well as due to the diversification of the functional profile, in 1956, Borsec became an urban settlement.

The communist regime brought major changes in the spa tourism activity, starting with nationalisation of villas, baths, restaurants, which will form the backbone of the Local Spa Enterprise (or I.L.B. Borsec), a state owned enterprise which managed tourism, later becoming The Spa-Climatic Enterprise (I.B.C. Borsec). What followed was the increase in the level of comfort in villas, in order for them to function during winter (Tofan, 2012 b). The peak of Borsec spa was the 70s-80s, but due the wear of the accommodation capacity of the villas, and lack of hotel constructions, which were restricted in the vicinity of the mineral water springs, the accommodation component began to change, villas being replaced by hostels. The spa life based on social grants was no longer fit for the market economy, and due to the obsolete infrastructure, Borsec went into decline (Ciangă, 2001).

In comparison to the other spas, at Borsec, the landscape's aesthetics fit perfectly with the therapeutic effect of mineral waters, with bioclimatic conditions, with the fresh air of spruce forests, and with the characteristic architecture. After 1989, the enterprise joined the State Property Fund, and became a stock company, under the name Commercial Stock Company in Tourism (S.C.A.T). An entrepreneur bought the majority package, and sold part of the villas, while the rest ended in the hands of another entrepreneur group. Due to lack of financial resources needed for touristic infrastructure restoration and tourist attraction strategies, the spa suffered. Touristic activity, after the closing of spa treatment services in 2001, continued under the management of private entrepreneurs, who only offered accommodation and food catering services, Borsec being „downgraded” from spa of national interest, to one of local interest (Tofan, 2013).

WORK METHODOLOGY

For the completion of this study, the following methodological aspects were used:

- consulting references on tourism, especially on touristic infrastructure (Ciangă, 1997, 2001, Beker, 1994, Banos, 1999, Mara, 2005, Păcurar, 2007, Cortes, 2008);
- in order to convey the real picture of the accommodation capacity of the area, three sources were used: statistical data from the National Statistics Institute, data from the Ministry of Territorial Development and Tourism, and data from field research, so that the number of existing accommodation units varies according to the analysed source;
- creating an inventory, processing and creating a data base containing the accommodation units from the area, by consulting different websites (www.cazareborsec.com; www.infopensiuni.ro/borsec/cazare-vile-pensiuni-borsec; www.romania-turistica.ro/Harghita/Cazare-Borsec.htm; www.portal-info.ro/cazare/cazare-borsec.html; www.turismromanesc.ro/cazare-in-Borsec; www.tourismguide.ro/html/orase/Harghita/Borsec/index.php; www.turistinfo.ro/borsec/cazare-hoteluri-vile-pensiuni-borsec.html; www.turistik.ro/pensiunea-turistica-putna-tulghes-harghita--r2708).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation capacity oscillated in the last years, the existing statistical data emphasizing a series of differences for the reference years taken into account (1990-2011), in terms of available places, as well as their distribution among accommodation units.

According to statistical data, in 1990, the accommodation infrastructure was quite complex and extensive, with 2 833 beds, concentrated in villas, with 2 559 (90.3%) and then in camping sites, with 274 (9.7%). One year later (1991), the accommodation base dropped to 504 (10

accommodation units), distributed in hotels, with 103 beds (4%), villas, with 2 068 (88%), and camping sites, with 190 (8%). From 1990 till 2011, in a period of 21 years, there was a massive decrease in units, from 73 in 1990 to just 16 in 2011, thus leading to a decrease in beds by 2 472, a regressive dynamic of minus 87.2%. Borsec resort and spa still are the most complex touristic entity, with 15 accommodation units (93.8%) from a total of 16 at microregional level and 353 beds (97.7%), from a total of 361 in the entire area, 173 rooms in total, while Tulgheș only has one accommodation unit (6.2%) and eight beds (2.3%), in four rooms. In 2011, villas had a percentage of 6.2% of the total accommodation infrastructure and 11% of the total number of beds, camping sites 6.2% and 33.2%, hostels 81.4% and 53,5% while agritouristic hostels 6.2% and 2.3%. If we go back longer in time and choose a broader reference period (1972-2011), we will witness a massive drop in terms of number of beds in Borsec (-87.4%), due to wear and shut downs.

Villas (rest houses) are a traditional category, in spa resorts such as Borsec, with treatment, rest and recreation listed as their main purposes. It is the oldest form of accommodation, has a permanent status and can receive up to a couple dozen guests, has low comfort, rooms with multiple beds (three of four) and no baths in the rooms, being used exclusively for lodging.

Table 1. The dynamic of the accommodation base in the main touristic locations of Drăgoiasa-Tulgheș depression alignment

(Data source: Ciangă, 2001; INS, <https://statistici.insse.ro/shop/>)

Number of beds							
Touristic location	1972	1975	1980	1990	2000	2011	Changes in percentages 1972 - 2011
Borsec	2799	2899	2847	1783	1137	353	-87.4%
Tulgheș	-	-	-	-	-	8	-

The villas of Borsec were built in a mountain Swiss architectural style, with large spacious terraces, fretted ornaments, geometric figures and wood lace, with the exception of the Central Pavilion (Central Villa), a massive, imposing structure. Some villas had multiple floors, the ground floor hosting several shops (Tofan, 2012 a).

Before the nationalisation, most buildings of Upper Borsec were privately owned, bearing the name of their owners (*Szalkay, Barbu, Smilovits, Ștefănescu, Ágnes, Emilia, Sofia, Stoica, Mélik* etc). Public institutions, such as *Caritas*, or *Bunurile Private din Ciuc* forestry associations also had villas here. Once the nationalisation law was introduced, villas were divided between ministries (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of National Defense), and they were managed by I.L.B Borsec (Local Spa Enterprise), later I.B.C Borsec (Spa-Climateric Enterprise), and after 1989 S.C.A.T. In the 90s, an entrepreneur bought the majority stock from private parties and from the State Property Fund, thus becoming the main share holder. Following Law no. 10/2000, a part of the old owners and some inheritors reclaimed their properties, while some villas were abandoned. From 1990 until 2011, the number of villas in Borsec dropped from 71 to 1, while accommodations from 2 559 to 40, which means a decrease of -98.6%, and -98.5% respectively, the main causes being lack of investment and degradation of existing villas. The 71 villas belonged to several owners, few from Borsec, mostly from Kuwait, Ireland, India, US, Canada, Israel, who did not maintain them. Most owners, who got back their villas after retrocessions, sold them in the so called „*privatisation*”, leading to the resort’s current state.

Fraudulent privatisations, the total retreat of the State from the resort, as well as foreign and local Hungarian interests are some of the causes that led to the near extinction of this type of accommodation. Paradoxically, even though the villas are in a state of decay, and tourists are still not enough to compete with Borsec of the old days, their price reaches and

sometimes exceeds 70 000 euros. Only six villas have been renovated. From a total of 71,38 villas are in a deplorable state.

Table 2. Evolution of the accommodation base of Drăgoiasa-Tulgheș depression alignment during 1990-2011 (Borsec and Tulgheș)
(Data source: INS, <https://statistici.insse.ro/shop/>)

Year	Accommodation categories											
	Accommodation units	Number of beds	Hotels	Number of beds	Villas	Number of beds	Camping sites	Number of beds	Touristic hostels	Number of beds	Agritouristic hostels	Number of beds
1990	73	2833	-	-	71	2559	2	274	-	-	-	-
1991	63	2329	3	103	57	2068	3	190	-	-	-	-
1992	64	2381	3	107	59	2092	2	182	-	-	-	-
1993	63	2430	2	68	59	2080	2	282	-	-	-	-
1994	63	2430	2	68	59	2080	2	282	-	-	-	-
1995	61	2421	2	68	58	2080	1	273	-	-	-	-
1996	53	2059	2	68	50	1735	1	256	-	-	-	-
1997	59	2059	2	68	40	1636	1	256	-	-	-	-
1998	63	1601	2	68	37	1632	1	260	-	-	-	-
1999	61	1137	2	68	35	1273	1	260	-	-	-	-
2000	41	995	2	68	28	831	3	238	-	-	-	-
2001	25	790	2	68	20	713	2	202	1	12	-	-
2002	21	790	2	68	17	526	1	184	1	12	-	-
2003	5	238	-	-	3	102	1	124	1	12	-	-
2004	2	136	-	-	-	-	1	124	1	12	-	-
2005	4	163	-	-	-	-	1	124	3	39	-	-
2006	8	226	-	-	1	40	1	122	5	56	1	8
2007	8	288	-	-	1	40	1	184	5	56	1	8
2008	10	322	-	-	1	40	1	184	6	80	2	18
2009	10	170	-	-	1	40	-	-	7	112	2	18
2010	13	330	-	-	2	80	1	100	9	142	1	8
2011	16	361	-	-	1	40	1	120	13	193	1	8

Borsec, Băile Herculane and Sulina are currently (2011) pilot projects of the Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism, managed in cooperation with United Nations. A law was published recently, obligating those who do include their hostels and hotels in the touristic circuit to pay higher taxes, or face expropriations if compliance is not achieved. The state will then open them for business.

Hotels are the main accommodation form that gained momentum in Romania, being extremely adaptable, offering superior comfort in comparison to the other categories, and a wide range of services. In regards to the hotels from the area at hand, their number and number of beds decreased considerably. So, if in 1991 Borsec had three units of this sort with 103 beds, in 2002 there were two hotels with just 68 beds, after which this accommodation category was closed.

Lodges, characteristic for mountain areas, lately became reference points and extremely sought after destinations in some mountains from Drăgoiasa-Tulgheș regional microsystem (Căliman, Giurgeu, Bistricioarei), acting as penetration and starting points for mountain hikes. This category is accessible by mountain trails and logging roads, most of them being situated at over 1000 m, used by tourists that go on hikes, and spend more time on the mountain, or by trophy hunters, as hunting lodges. The latter are connected to the valuable game reserves, and some have been modernised, able to satisfy the demands of an international clientele. The lodges of the area include locations like *Făget Lodge* from Borsec, *Iris Galben Hunting Lodge*, from Valea Seacă, Capu Corbului village, *Casa Țifrii Hunting*

Lodge, situated on Bistricioara Valley, *Tiszas* Hunting Lodge from Tulgheș (Hagota) and *Vămanu* Lodge, situated in Bistriței Mountains, still not renovated.

Table 3. Touristic structures with classified accommodation functions in Borsec
(Data source: Ministry of Territorial Development and Tourism)

No.	Type of structure	Name	Category	Number of rooms	Number of beds	Address
1	Touristic hostel	Chris	1 star	2	5	1 Cerbului Str.
2	Touristic hostel	Ely	3 stars	11	27	12 Jókai Mór Str.
3	Camping	Eti	3 stars	60	120	100 Carpați Str.
4	Touristic hostel	Fitness	2 stars	5	9	20 Cerbului Str
5	Touristic hostel	Ghiocelul	3 stars	9	22	127 Carpați Str
6	Touristic hostel	Intim	3 stars	5	10	6 Carpați Str.
7	Touristic hostel	Kerek	2 stars	4	9	6 Nouă Str.
8	Touristic hostel	Korona	3 stars	10	20	28 Carpați Str.
9	Touristic hostel	Lizi	2 stars	5	12	14 Nouă Str.
10	Touristic hostel	Muskatli	2 stars	5	12	35A 7 Izvoare Boulevard
11	Touristic hostel	Nostalgia	3 stars	4	8	3 Primăverii Str.
12	Touristic hostel	Palma	2 stars	16	35	4 Topliței Str.
13	Touristic hostel	Roland	2 stars	5	10	123 Carpați Str.
14	Villa	Sport	2 stars	20	40	Stadionului Str.
15	Touristic hostel	Weber	3 stars	7	14	17 Cerbului Str.
TOTAL				173	353	

Camping sites (touristic rest stops) have a seasonal functionality, being a complex of light weight constructions (two or four beds), dispersed in an enclosure, with some areas where tents can be erected, plus a touristic reception and guidance component as well as some food serving establishments. Their number, across the 21 year period taken into account, has gone through a series of fluctuations, the area containing a single camping site, according to official statistical data, in Borsec (*Camping Eti*), with electricity, running water and sewage systems, which, in 2011, had 120 beds (33.2% of the total number of beds), in 60 cabins. According to data collected in the field, Borsec also has two additional units of this type (*Camping Irimescu*), which, in 2011, had 24 beds, in 12 cabins, and *Vanda Rest stop* from Creanga Pass, with 12 beds and six cabins.

Touristic hostels are touristic accommodation units, with a capacity of up to 20 rooms, maximum of 60 beds, established in people's households or in other buildings, that offer specially arranged space for tourist lodging and food serving. In Borsec, such establishments began to appear in 2001, with one hostel offering 12 beds. In 2011, their number reached 13 (81.2% of the total number of accommodation units), offering 193 beds (53.4% of the total number), most of them being classified as two or three stars. Accommodation can also be found in *agritouristic hostels*, with a capacity of up to eight rooms, set up in people's households or in separate buildings, that offer specially arranged space for tourist lodging and food preparation and serving, as well as the possibility to participate in several traditional activities, aimed at rural tourism. Official statistical data register only one such establishment, in Tulgheș (*Nicoleta Hostel*), offering eight beds (2.2% of their total number), but unofficially there are four more (two in Bilbor-Codruța and *Vâlcân*, one in Valea Corbului and one in Tulgheș, *Putna Hostel*). There are plans for the construction of four more establishments, one in Secu, two on Barasău Valley, and one in central Corbu, with funds from the local authorities, with a final value of 1.7 million lei, with a capacity of 10 rooms each, in a traditional style, with bathrooms. The grand room with its adjacent rooms has a 350 seat capacity, and will be able to host weddings, christenings and other events, offering traditional cuisine menus. I consider that the only way to fully grasp the real situation is being in the field, but even so it is difficult to identify

their exact number as there are too many types of establishments that offer lodging - from certified hostels, to uncertified ones, with or without functional signals, from holiday households to secondary residences.

Table 4. The accommodation units of Drăgoiaș-Tulgheș depression alignment, in 2011
(Data source: Tofan, 2013)

No.	Type of structure	Name	Category	Number of rooms	Number of beds	Address
1	Touristic hostel	Codruța	2 daisies	4	12	Răchitiș Street, Bilbor
2	Touristic hostel	Vâlcan	3 daisies	5	12	Răchitiș Street, Bilbor
3	Lodge	Casa Țifrii	-	3	10	Valea Seacă, Capu Corbului
4	Lodge	Vămanu	-	2	5	Vămanu, Bilbor
5	Touristic hostel	Agnes	2 stars	4	9	3 Aleea Rotundă Str., Borsec
6	Lodge	Făget	-	5	24	Nadășa Street, Borsec
7	Touristic hostel	Chris	1 star	2	5	1 Cerbului Street, Borsec
8	Touristic hostel	Ely	3 stars	11	27	12 Jókai Mór Street, Borsec
9	Camping site	Eti	3 stars	60	120	100 Carpați, Street, Borsec
10	Touristic hostel	Fitness	2 stars	5	9	20 Cerbului Street, Borsec
11	Touristic hostel	Ghiocelul	3 stars	9	22	127 Carpați Street, Borsec
12	Touristic hostel	Intim	3 stars	5	10	6 Carpați Street, Borsec
13	Touristic hostel	Kerek	2 stars	4	9	6 Nouă Street, Borsec
14	Touristic hostel	Korona	3 stars	10	20	28 Carpați Street, Borsec
15	Touristic hostel	Lizi	2 stars	5	12	14 Nouă Street, Borsec
16	Touristic hostel	Muskatli	2 stars	5	12	35A 7 Izvoare Street, Borsec
17	Touristic hostel	Nostalgia	3 stars	4	8	3 Primăveri Street, Borsec
18	Touristic hostel	Palma	2 stars	16	35	Topliței Street, Borsec
19	Touristic hostel	Roland	2 stars	5	10	123 Carpați Street, Borsec
20	Villa	Sport	2 stars	20	40	Stadionului Street, Borsec
21	Touristic hostel	Weber	3 stars	7	14	7 Cerbului Street, Borsec
22	Touristic hostel	Vila Riki	3 stars	20	40	19 Jókai Mór Street, Borsec
23	Touristic hostel	Roua	3 stars	5	12	10 Bd. 7 Izvoare Street, Borsec
24	Touristic hostel	Trandafir	3 stars	12	24	65 Bd. 7 Izvoare Street Borsec
25	Touristic hostel	Silvanus	3 stars	16	32	6 Jókai Mór Street, Borsec
26	Guest house	Talian	-	5	23	161 Carpați Street, Borsec
27	Villa	Veverița	3 stars	5	20	3 Jókai Mór Str., Borsec
28	Touristic hostel	Weber	3 stars	9	14	17 Cerbului Street, Borsec
29	Villa	Strătan	2 stars	5	11	17 Bd. 7 Izvoare Street, Borsec
30	Touristic hostel	Anton	2 stars	7	14	18 Cerbului Street, Borsec
31	Touristic hostel	Floare de colț	3 stars	6	18	1 Izvorului Street, Borsec
32	Villa	Anna	1 star	4	12	17 Jókai Mór Street, Borsec
33	Camping site	Irimescu	2 stars	12	24	119 Carpați Street, Borsec
34	Villa	Iringo	1 star	5	11	Aleea Rotundă Street, Borsec
35	Touristic hostel	BCR	3 stars	4	8	121 Carpați Street, Borsec
36	Touristic hostel	Casa Floarea	3 stars	7	16	16 Cerbului Street, Borsec
37	Guest house	Kölló	-	7	17	1 Izvorului Street, Borsec
38	Touristic hostel	Iulius	3 stars	10	20	30 7 Izvoare Street, Borsec
39	Camping site	Vanda	2 stars	6	12	Creanga Pass, Borsec
40	Lodge	Iris Galben	-	3	10	Valea Seacă, Capu Corbului

41	Touristic hostel	Nicoleta	3 daisies	4	8	377 Centru Street, Tulgheș
42	Touristic hostel	Corbu	3 daisies	4	8	Valea Corbului Street, Corbu
43	Touristic hostel	Putna	3 daisies	4	8	20A Putn Street, Tulgheș
44	Lodge	Tizsas	2 daisies	4	8	Hagota, Tulgheș
TOTAL				348	795	

According to the data from table 4, the total accommodation capacity of Drăgoiasa-Tulgheș alignment is estimated at 795 beds, and 348 rooms, within 44 units (29 touristic hostels, with 448 beds, five lodges, with 57 beds, three camping sites, with 156 beds, five villas, with 94, and two guest houses, with 40 beds).

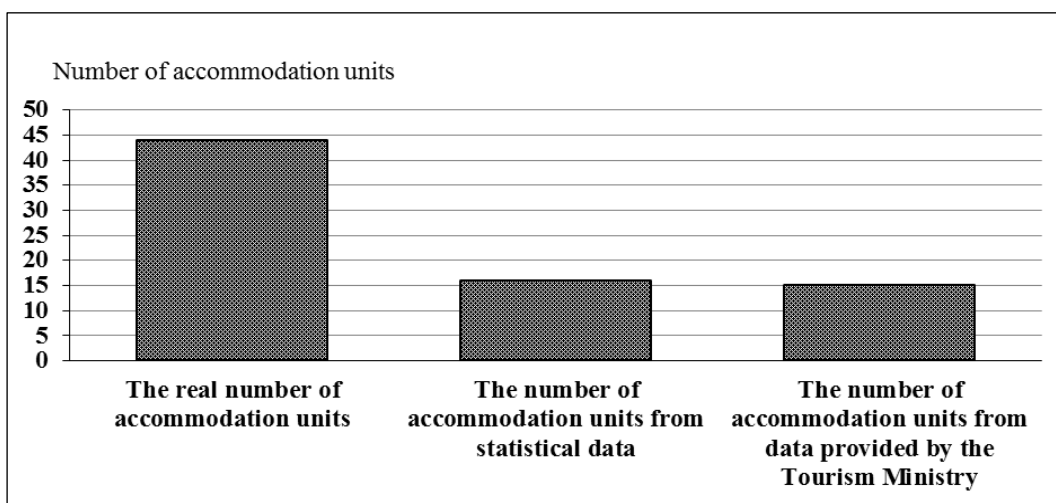


Figure. 1. The situation of accommodation units

(Graphic composed with the help of data from field research, the Tourism Ministry and the National Statistics Institute).

In 1955, Bilbor was declared a spa resort of local interest, but due to its low accommodation capacity, lack of spa installations and infrastructure as well as specialised medical office, it loses its status (Tofan, 2010).

As I pointed out before, Bilbor, Corbu and Tulgheș have a small number of lodgings for touristic purposes, accommodation being found in the local households. An accommodation alternative, in Bilbor, is the boarding school, situated in the centre of the locality. This place can be used during summer and also offers food services in the school's cafeteria. Another such establishment is found in Tulgheș, within the Psychiatric Hospital. According to information given by the priests of the orthodox churches of Bilbor and Tulgheș, there are plans to set up some accommodation, for a small number of tourists, in the attic of the dining hall found near the two churches. We may talk of *touristic circulation* only in the city of Borsec, where two time intervals have been taken into account: 1972-1989 and 2001-2010. The first interval saw a decrease of 41.6% overnight stays and 26.8% in the number of tourists. The vacation length had average values of 12 overnight stays/tourist in 1972 and 9.5 overnight stays/tourist in 1989. The second period (2001-2010), according to statistical data, shows a considerable decrease in the number of overnight stays (-88.5%) and tourists, by 72.5%. The vacation's length had average values of 8.3 overnight stays/tourist in 2001 and 3.5 overnight stays/tourist in 2010. In 2001, most tourists stayed in villas (48.7% overnight stays and 49.1% tourists), while in 2010, the situation was reversed, most staying in boarding houses (68.6% of the overnight stays and 74.1% of the tourists).

COMMUNICATION

Together with the other components of the touristic material base, communications have a massive contribution by guiding touristic flows towards attractive sights. The infrastructure has always had interdependency connections with touristic bases and with the activities that capitalise the touristic potential. Tourists can only reach the area by road (buses, minibuses, personal vehicles), and for certain touristic tracks, that do not allow the usage of the aforementioned vehicles, ATVs, bicycles and off road vehicles can be used. As the forested area overlays most of the analysed area, the routes created for the economic exploitation of the forest (logging roads), can and are being used for the access and even the spatial organisation of the touristic area. They generally follow the hydrographic network, and are sometimes impacted by the flow regime, and by the biotic component and the inclined slopes, which led to extensive and special works for consolidation and stabilisation. Logging roads, if logging activity declines, can be used as touristic roads, that penetrate the mountain area, all the way to the upper limit of the forest.

Direct pedestrian access to the high mountain area and the actual movements take place on marked trails. Many of the old markers from the touristic trails have not been maintained, and there are instances where they are entirely missing. Among the existing touristic trails from the area, I would like to mention the access trails towards the mountain area and the summit and ridge trails of Căliman, Giurgeu, Bistrita and Hăghimaș.

OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE TOURISTIC INFRASTRUCTURE THERAPEUTIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Due to its many characteristics and possibilities, Borsec has been given a certain attention along the years, being one of the first permanent spa resorts, while spa therapy, through its usage, became one of the most important functions of the city. The resort had three main profiles: the treatment of digestive, endocrine and cardiac illnesses. Some of the spa therapy procedures with good effects on the most diverse ailments were: *carbonic acid and mineralised peat mud baths, hydrotherapy, electrotherapy and sparkling water baths*, the latter two being one of the most sought after procedures. All these services were provided by the spa policlinic, which offered a complex and individualised spa treatment with the base. The main pavilion had rooms for hosting patients, while the ground floor hosted a section with mineral baths, which provided daily treatment for over 1 000 patients per series. In 1976, Borsec had a total of 65 villas, grouped per comfort level, with a capacity of 2 646 places, out of which 1 744 were permanent and 902 seasonal. The comfort level of permanent villas was: Comfort A - 92 places; Comfort I - 586 places; Comfort II - 898 places; Comfort III - 168 places, while for seasonal places: Comfort I - 2 places; Comfort II - 451 places; Comfort III - 449 places. There were two additional lodges (86 places), 78 cabins (156 places) and a series of private residences (150 places) (data collected by D. Răucescu, 1977, from the Tourism of Borsec Resort Bureau, file no. 562/1976).

In August 2011, with the support of the Ministry of Tourism, Harghita County Council and the Local Council, construction began for a *multifunctional spa complex*, which will provide, alongside treatment services, all year round services for recreation and relaxation, this being an investment without which the revival of Borsec is unthinkable. The spa center is being built on a land owned by Borsec Town Hall, measuring 4 000 m², in Poiana Harnasliget. The new complex will have a modern spa center, with treatment rooms (hydrotherapy, massage, electrotherapy, salt therapy), mineral water pools and thermal baths, as well as a wellness center (sauna, solarium, beauty salon). The total daily capacity is estimated at around 694 people, taking into account a six hour working day, but without the capacity of the wellness center which does not need the attention of the medical staff. The revival of the treatment complex is another reason for the renovation of villas and attraction of as many tourists as possible, for treatment as well as rest, all year long.

FOOD CATERING

In 1976, in order to cater for tourists, Borsec had five cafeterias with 2 040 seats, offering diverse menus for its guests, four restaurants with 720 seats, 370 out which seasonal, divided into three categories: 1st category - Intim Restaurant; 2nd category - Borsec and Făget restaurants; and 3rd category - Elize Restaurant (seasonal), plus two confectioneries with 85 seats, two grocery stores, one serving department, two pharmacies and two libraries (Răucescu, 1977).

Today, food catering services are fairly limited, as most hostels do not have adequate restaurants or dining halls, which impedes full servicing, and leaves the tourist to fend for himself in most cases. Among the units that offer such services, there is the restaurant from Vila Riki, with a rustic atmosphere, traditional cuisine, and a capacity of 55 people. To cater for the business tourist, the hostel offers a conference hall with 50 seats, with sound and presentation systems for conferences, training sessions, fashion shows, coffee breaks, business dinners, cocktail parties, seminars, team building, workshops etc. Likewise, *Korona*, *Muşcata*, *Palma*, *Silvanus*, *Intim*, *Lizi*, *Anton*, and *Trandafirul* hostels have their own dining halls with kitchen, plus there are two restaurants with a capacity of 80 to 170 people. In Tulgheş, one can enjoy a meal at three restaurants: Millenicum, S.C Mirmar S.R.L and Coop Consum, with a capacity of 50 to 100 people (after Plan de dezvoltare și promovare a turismului din comuna Tulgheş, 2009).

WINTER SPORTS INFRASTRUCTURE

Borsec recently opened (on 16th December 2010) a ski area, „*Speranța*” *Ski Complex*, made of three slopes: one for beginners „*Prichindel*”, 814 m long and 30 m minimal width, with a 139 m level difference, and an average incline of 17%; the main slope, „*Speranța*”, of medium difficulty level, 680 m long and 57 m wide, with night illumination system, a 142 m level difference, and a 21% incline; and a slope for professionals „*Verofeny*”, 726 m long and a minimal width of 30 m, with a level difference of 141 m, and an average incline of 19%. All these three slopes have one *Doppelmayr ski lift*, with a capacity of 720 *people/hour*. The project was backed by the Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism, contract no. 58 / 09.07.2009, with a value of 4.7 million lei, and was executed by *S.C Termogaz Company S.A, Hațeg*. In 2000, in Borsec, a new association was established, named „*Asociația de Turism*”, officially registered in 2002, its main purpose being tourism promotion. Through its activities, it tried to continue some touristic services within the resort, by establishing an info-touristic office, with flier editing and a website in order to offer tourists information regarding accommodation and recreational possibilities in the area.

CONCLUSIONS

Even though the rural space offers a wide range of possibilities for spending one's free time, it does not have the proper infrastructure and arrangement for an optimal capitalisation of local resources, indifferent of their nature. Some of the natural features are inaccessible to tourists, which is why major interventions must be undertaken (ensuring an easy access to the main touristic attractions, the improvement of the mineral water springs, the rehabilitation and conservation of some patrimony values, establishing partnerships, etc), in order to sustainably develop the tourism of this part of the country. The geographic position, the landscape and the local resources of the area entail taking into account proposals regarding tourism development, and not only transit tourism. This implies the modernisation of acces routes and also the construction of touristic infrastructure, for a more intense capitalisation of the touristic potential. Following the examples of Panaci, Crucea and Șarul Dornei, I consider the future implementation of the local electronic reservation system as extremely useful for the accommodation units in the area and the promotion of rural and craft making tourism in the homogenous area of Bilbor-Corbu-Tulgheş.

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