

TOURISM AS A POSSIBLE SOLUTION FOR THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNE OF HUSASĂU DE TINCA, BIHOR COUNTY, ROMANIA

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Abstract: The aim of the present paper is to analyse the tourism potential of the commune of Husasău de Tinca from the Bihor County, Romania as a sustainable solution of development for the future. The natural setting offers the possibility of practicing various types and forms of tourism, but unfortunately its potential has not been harnessed. Through this paper we would like to highlight the impact that tourism could have on the local community as it could be an alternative for the agricultural function of the commune. The hospitality of the people living here and a still more beautiful landscape might be strengths of the commune in order to develop tourist activities.

Key words: sustainability, community involvement, tourism resources, rural tourism

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INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that for more and more areas tourism is becoming a sustainable solution for the future development. In terms of the present paper we are interested in the manner in which tourism could impact a host community having no or little experience in deploying tourism activities as the only function was the agricultural one. In order to achieve that we propose an analytical debate of the tourism potential of the administrative territorial unit of the Husasău de Tinca via the tourism resources and aspects related to the demographic, social and economical issues that the commune is nowadays confronting with. We have chosen to analyze the commune of Husasău de Tinca due to its favourable position in the territory (nearness to Oradea and Salonta cities and Tinca Spa) and to the fact that it has never been studied as a potential tourist destination. The present study suggests tourism as an alternative solution for the the future development of it.

The territorial administrative unit of Husasău de Tinca is located in the central-southern part of the Bihor County in the Crișurilor Plain. The T.A.U. of Husasău de Tinca is composed of five villages: Miersig, Sîtitelec, Fonău, Oșand and Husasău de Tinca, covering an area of 117 sqkm. It is bordered by the Tinca commune by the south, Mădăras commune by the south-west, Gepiu commune by west, Nojorid commune by north, Hidișelul de Sus commune by north-east and Lăzăreni commune by south-east. The main access route to the commune is DJ792A connecting the town of Oradea to the Ineu de Arad city. The nearest towns to the commune are Oradea at a distance of 35 km and Salonta, 17 km away (figure 1). The connection of the villages of the commune with Oradea is assured by three daily bus routes, except the village of Oșand which is isolated from this point of view and has been so since 1992. The connection with the

Salonta city is assured by one bus route departing from Tinca. The commune has no railway, the nearest is the one from Tinca.

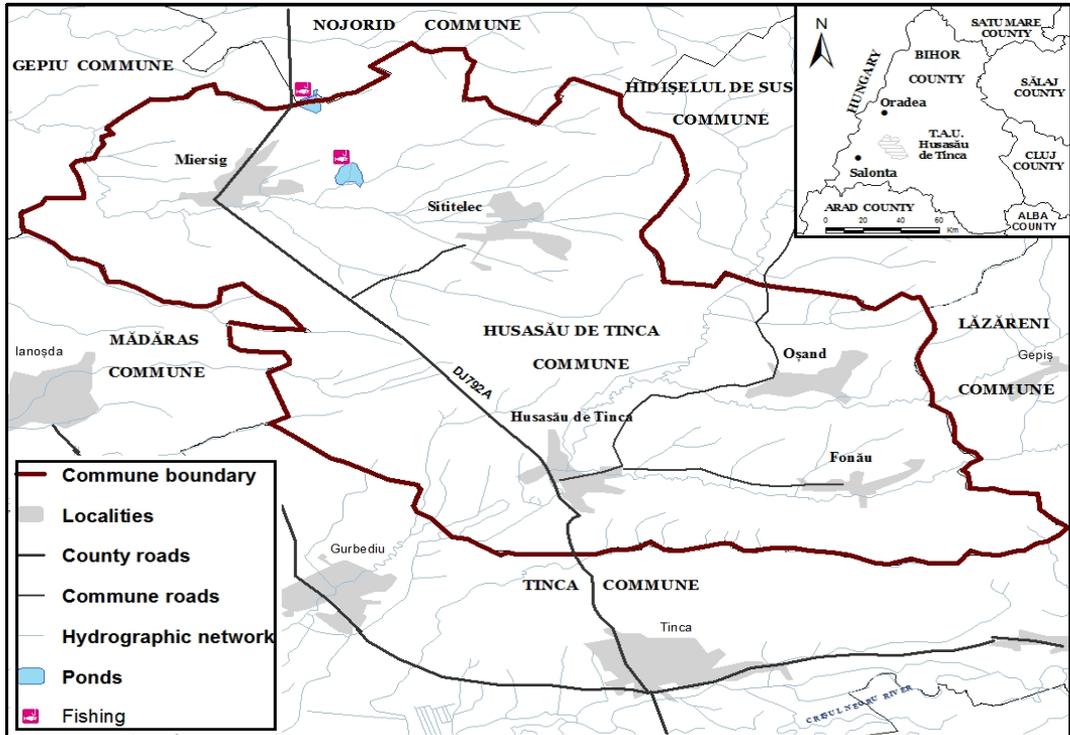


Figure 1. Geographic location of the Husasău de Tinca commune
(Source: own elaboration based on the data basis RomaniaUTMWGS84)

DATA AND METHODS

In order to realise the present paper we had to establish the research methodology. Therefore we have had: a preparatory phase based on the accumulation of information needed to accomplish the present study and its coincides with the bibliographic documentation followed by the field research as it is increasing the understanding of the dynamic of the geographical reality; an analytical data processing and systematization covering the obtained data and a deliberative phase specific to any geographic approach (Glăvan, 2010) crystallizing the given paper

THE STRATEGIC DIAGNOSIS ANALYSIS

Infrastructure issues

One of the weaknesses of the commune has been for the past decades the *road infrastructure*. The roads system is formed of the county roads, commune roads and local roads. The county road DJ792 A connecting the commune with Oradea and Tinca is bitumen but in a bad condition for about of 15 km of a total of 21 km crossing the commune. The commune roads connecting the villages with Husasău de Tinca have been for years in a very bad condition. The first commune road to be rehabilitated was the Husasău de Tinca – Sititelec in 2008, followed by the Fonău- Husasău de Tinca road in 2009. The road connecting Husasău de Tinca to Oșand and farther to Șumugiș has been for decades in a very bad condition, making the access to the village of Oșand very difficult and the rehabilitation has begun only in 2014.

For the utilities infrastructure we should mention that the water supply network covers 90% of the commune and the electric power supply 100%. The commune benefits of stationary phone service and the mobile and internet connection is assured 100% in all the villages.

For a territory is not enough to possess only a suite of attractive potential, it must be able to prone tourism activities. The essential condition of this is the specific tourism infrastructure. We should think at the tourism infrastructure as one of the main determinant of the tourism phenomenon (Neacșu et al., 2006); we cannot speak about quality in tourism in the lack of a suitable material facilities (Erdeli & Gheorghilaș, 2006) or, we might add, in the presence of non-functional components or unable to serve the tourist flow. The territory of Husasău de Tinca does not have so far any specific tourism facilities, a minus point for the commune. Still, we have to mention that on the shore of the Sititelec pond there have functioned for a while a restaurant, but has burned to ground in 2013. It was supposed to develop for the future as the owner was planning to build a boarding-house as well, but due to the 2013 events the idea has been abandoned for the moment.

Demographic aspects

Human resource is a key element having a major role in the development of a community. It is the „*qualitative, quantitative and structural capacity that members of a demographic system can place in the service of the economical activities*” (Novac, 2006, p. 51).

For the present study we have chosen to highlight the following demographic aspects as we considered them having an important impact for the future development of the community of the Husasău de Tinca commune: the numeric evolution of the population, the ethnic and confessional structure. In order to highlight the demographic aspects mentioned above we have used data as following: since 1880 till 2012 for the numeric evolution of the population, data from 1956 to 2012 for the evolution of the ethnic structure and data from 1869 to 2012 for the evolution of the denominations in the commune. The data for 2002 and 2012 has been provided to us by the city hall of the commune.

The numeric evolution indicates a progressive growth of the population starting 1880 till the 1941 when has reached its maximum (6181 inhabitants). After this year the population has decrease continuously as an effect of two major word events which have affected the commune as well: the Second World War and collectivization. The depopulation of the commune has begun in the 70'; the young families have moved to the cities nearby, most of them drawn by the illusion of an easier life in the city promised by the communist regime. Therefore, the data of the 2012 census indicates a drop of 36, 25% of the population (2241 inhabitants). Most of the villages of the commune were over 1000 inhabitants until 1941, when the population started to decrease. It is the case of Oșand and Miersig. Fonău has never reached 1000 inhabitants. Sititelec have had 1000 inhabitants until 1966 and Husasău de Tinca until 1977. The numeric evolution of the population is important as the future predictions for the evolution can be done.

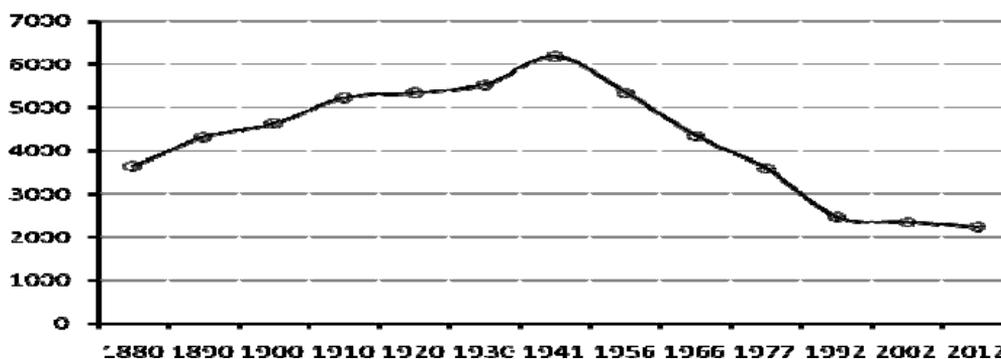


Figure 2. Numeric evolution of the population in Husasău de Tinca commune

(Data Source: <http://kia.hu/konyvtar/erdely/erd2002.htm> & data provided by the city hall of Husasău de Tinca for 2002 and 2012)

A very important indicator that needs to be analyzed for the future evolution of the commune is the ethnic structure. Romanians have had always been the majority and there were insignificant changes in the ethnic structure. Among the Romanians, Hungarians have been a constant presence, but in a small number. The highest number of Hungarians was recorded in 1890 (166 inhabitants), ever since the Hungarian population has dramatically decreased, so that at the 2012 census only 30 persons declared themselves as Hungarians. During the inter-war period a small number of Jews have inhabited the villages of the commune, most of them coming from Tinca. After the First World War the Jews have vanished and the ethnic groups were of the Hungarians and Slovakian, the last one inhabiting the village of Sititelec mostly. The presence of the gypsies is indicated by the statistical documents for the first time in 1930. One person is declared as of the gypsies group. From 1930 to 1956 the presence of the Roma ethnic group isn't testified anymore by the statistical documents. At that time 16 gypsies were living in the commune. Ever since, the numbers of gypsies continued to have a progressive increase (figure 3). The gypsy population have over took the Romanian population in the village of Oșand were now are living 292 gypsies and 230 Romanians. This fact is a consequence of the massive depopulation of the village starting with 1960 (Turla, 2009) as a result of the isolation of the village due to the disastrous road infrastructure. More than 50% percents of the inhabitants of Fonău are gypsies and over one hundred are living in Husasău de Tinca.

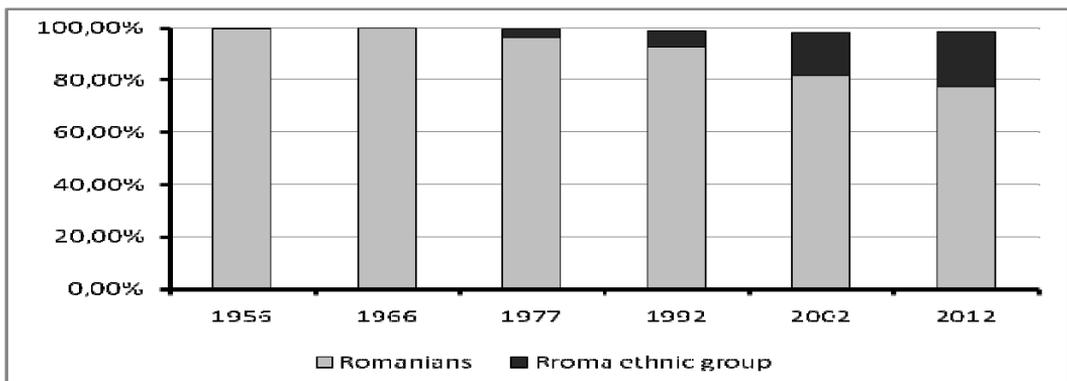


Figure 3. The comparative evolution of the Romanians and Roma ethnic group between 1956 and 2012 in Husasău de Tinca

(Data Source: <http://kia.hu/konyvtar/erdely/erd2002.htm> & data provided by the city hall of Husasău de Tinca for 2002 and 2012)

We have chosen to represent comparative the Romanian and the Roma ethnic group as the last one has increased rapidly for the past decades and continue to increase. The future demographic prognosis highlights the fact that in a few decades in the villages of Oșand and Fonău the population will be entirely of the Roma ethnic group. There are no gypsies in Miersig and Sititelec as the indigenous haven't allowed them to settle in. Therefore, the strategies for the development of the commune must take into account this aspect as well.

The analysis of the confessional structure highlights an orthodox majority. The Greek Catholic religion was well represented in Sititelec, about 20% to 25% between 1869 and 1992. The census data of 1992, 2002 and 2012 indicates a drop of 50% of the Greek Catholic religion, a consequence of the negative numeric evolution of this confessional structure. Among the other religions we can mention: Jew (vanished after First World War), Baptist, Pentecostal, Reformed and Roman Catholic. The Baptist denomination has been registered statistical documents since the '30, but the locals are claiming that the church has been erected in 1901. Vrăbieș (2009) affirmed that the register of the Baptist church from Husasău de Tinca denotes the first baptism in 1896. In the '90 has appeared the Pentecostal

denomination, most of its followers are from the Roma ethnic group. Since 2005 they have organised their own church and minster with the help of the local authorities.

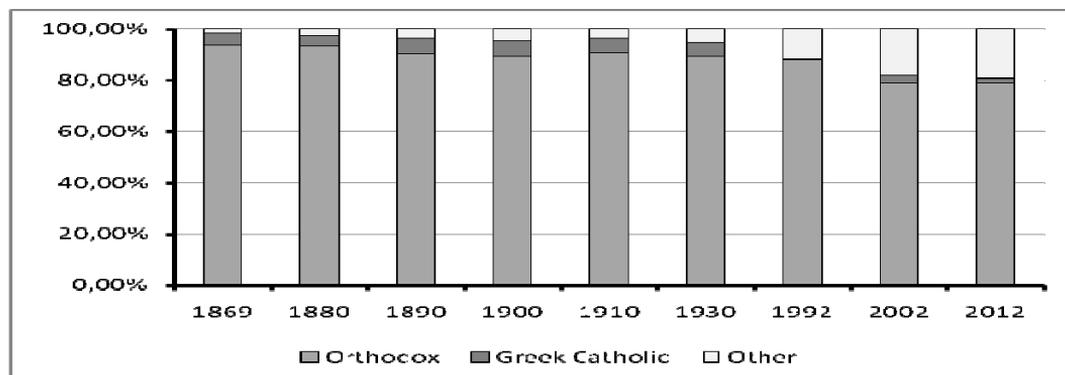


Figure 4. Confessional structure of the Husasău de Tinca commune

(Data Source: <http://kia.hu/konyvtar/erdely/erd2002.htm> & data provided by the city hall of Husasău de Tinca for 2002 and 2012)

Economical activities

The main activity of the active population of the Husasău de Tinca commune is agriculture and zootechny but practiced as a measure of subsistence. Goods obtained in the household are sometimes sold on the markets in Oradea and Tinca, but are few locals who are farming. There is only one foreign investor in the commune carrying agricultural and trade activities. There are few locals working at that company, the rest of the active population who is not working for the public institution are either unemployed or working for companies located in Salonta, Tinca and Oradea.

The 4166, 5 hectares of the commune are divided as following:

Table 1. Distribution of the terrains in the Husasău de Tinca commune

(Data source: city hall of Husasău de Tinca)

CATEGORY	SURFACE (hectares)
Farming area	1908
Forests	1469
Grazing land	592
Lakes and ponds	55
Barren terrain	320
Land within the built area	118,5
Extramural	3981

The natural and anthropic resources

The relief units have a longitudinal alignment. In the eastern part of the commune are the hills, elongations of the Tășadului Hills and in the western part the High Plain of Miersig, component of the Crișurilor Plain. The top of the hills are having the aspects of wide arched interflues and an asymmetric aspect with a one steep slope, a cuesta type, and another versant with a less steep slope. The high plain in the western part of the administrative territorial unit of Husasău de Tinca is fragmented by the secondary valleys crossing it dividing it into numerous interflues fields. The plain is slightly sloping, east to west and north to south, being crossed by numerous ravines (Vrăbieș, 2009; Turla, 2009).

Climate and weather are elements felt at the mental level of the individual (Cocean, 1997; Cocean et al., 2005) and can be able to favour or contra, to inhibit the tourist activities (Cocean, 1997; Cocean et al. 2005; Gaceu, 2003). The climate of the commune has the same features as the climate of the entire country: European transition temperate. For the annual average temperature

are taking into account data's from the Holod weather station. During 1972 and 2002 the annual average temperature was 10,3°C; for the winter season the annual average temperature recorded was 0,3°C and 19,7°C for the summer season (Gaceu et. all, 2009). The geographical position of the commune conditioned the rainfall regime as it exposed to the wet air from the Western Europe, therefore the rainfalls are high. The largest amounts of precipitation are recorded in the summer season (260mm) and the lowest during winter time (113,6mm) (Vrăbieș, 2009).

The hydrographical resources are an important tourist resource as the attraction is given by „the organizing system, the chemical and physical peculiarities and the surface of the basins” (Cocean et al., 2005). The waters sewing the commune are part of the Crișul Negru hydrographic network. The streams cannot be called rivers as they have a temporary drainage; mostly the locals are calling them *valleys*. The mainstream is "Valea Nouă" also called "Valea Gepișului". "Valea Nouă" it's having its spring in the Ghepișului Hills and empties into the Crișul Negru River; its main tributary is "Valea Șumugiului". Some specific parts of these valleys are used for fishing by the locals as they are natural populated with gibel carp (*Carassius gibelio*). In 1965 has been realized a reservoir dam with a total surface of 48.127 sqkm used and designed now for fishing (figure 5). The lake is populated with species of gibel carp (*Carassius gibelio*), European perch (*Perca fluviatilis*) and grass carp (*Ctenopharyngodon idell*). Starting with 2011, each year is organized an sportive fishing championship called *Cupa Primăverii/ Spring Cup* by the fishing association *CS Crap Arad* with support of the lake's administrator. In 2007 and 2008 has been organized an aquacros competition in which no less than 45 persons were involved especially policemen, gendarmes, firemen and members of the *Salvamont Bihor* team.¹ Those two competitions have helped to the promotion of the Husasău de Tinca commune as a weekend possible destination for the inhabitants of the cities nearby and not only. Another two ponds offers fishing possibilities: the pond from Sititelec (figure 6) and the pond at the entrance in the Miersig village, located at the commune's border with the commune of Nojorid.



Figure 5. View of the lake Miersig



Figure 6. View of the fishing pond of Sititelec

The vegetation is rich and diversified especially due to the large surface of forests covering the territory: 3860 hectares of woods, of which 1500 are the property of the commune.² The large extension of the forest within the territory of the commune plays an important role for developing future tourist activities. The forest is considered an oasis of deep serenity attracting the individuals' trough harmony, relaxation and recreation. There are three main bunches of woods within the territory of the commune with species of the *Querqus* genus such as: the English oak (*Querqus robur*), Turkey oak (*Querqus cerris*), hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), ash (*Frasinus excelsior*), the sessile oak (*Querqus petraea*), the Hungarian oak (*Querqus frainetto*), elm (*Ulmus campestris*), tilia (*Tilia cordata*), the European wild pear

¹ http://www.realitateabihoreana.ro/content.php?c=articole&id_categorie=6&articol_id=3241&p=162

² <http://comunahusasaudetinca.ro/comuna-husasau/relieful-si-vegetatia/>

(*Pyrus pyraсте*), and the European crab apple (*Malus sylvestris*). The most common species of the coppice of the woods are: hazel (*Corylus avellana*), blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus*), dog rose (*Rosa canina*), dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and wild privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*). The grassland at the edge of each bunch of woods is proper for camping due to the picturesque of the landscape.

The fauna of the administrative territorial unit of Husasău de Tinca compose the hunting fund. The hunting fund existing within the Husasău de Tinca commune is managed at local level by the *Hunting Association Artemis Cociuba Mare* established in 2011 with the objective of *protecting and breeding game until the optimal number and then put hunters in a position to practice hunting*³. The funding fund managed by *AV Artemis* covers 7854 hectares spread on the territory of Husasău de Tinca and Lăzăreni communes. The hunting fund is entitled *F35 Oșand*. The main species of mammals for hunting are: the common rabbit (*Lepus europaeus*), the red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), the roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus L.*), the boar (*Sus scrofa*), the fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), the badger (*Meles meles*), the ferret (*Putorius putorius*), the weasel (*Mustela nivalis*), the wolf (*Canis lupus*), and the wild cat (*Felis sylestris*). Among the birds with cyegetic functions are: the pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*), the quail (*Coturnix coturnix*), grey partridge (*Pardix pardix*), the common starling (*Sturnus vurgalis*), and the Eurasian collared dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*), the common wood pigeon (*Columba palumbus*), the fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*) etc. For the 15 May 2013 – 15 February season the *Hunting Association Artemis* has offered three trophies of red deer, five trophies for roe deer (female as well), sixty boars and one hundred pheasants.⁴

We cannot forget the fact that hunting is not accepted in all cultures (Swarbrooke, 1999) and fortunately is made by a small number of people at the present (Gozner & Zarilli, 2012) due to the high financial costs involved. We think it is better to hunt animals by the photo camera than the gun, but in the same time we cannot neglect the fact that we are hunters by genes who should not kill for fun, but for food. Cynegetic tourism is a type of tourism which could be developed and exploited for the benefit of the community of the Husasău de Tinca commune as long as the ethics of hunting are respected.

There is a lack of **anthropic resources** within the area of study although the villages of the commune have a long history. For example, the village of Oșand has a history of 800 years as it has been first mentioned in a document in 1213 as *Vaşand or Vila Vasian* (Coriolan & Suci, 1967; Turla, 2009). An important tourist attraction could have been the two archaeological sites of Husasău de Tinca and Oșand villages, but never preserved as being considered of low importance. Both archaeological sites preserved the tracks of the genuine hearth of the villages, destroyed in the XIV century during the ottoman invasion. During this period both villages of Husasău de Tinca and Oșand have been burned to ground (Vrăbieș, 2009; Turla, 2009). Among the nowadays attractions we can only mention the churches of the each village of the commune:

- The "*Adormirea Maicii Domnului*" church from Husasău de Tinca, the oldest church of the commune has been built during 1823–1829. It is a church made out of brick without having neither any elements of architectural importance or any valuable fresco on the interior. It has a spiritual and historic importance for the locals as it has been witnessed significant events of the community.

- The "*Sf. Mihail și Gavril*" church from Miersig has been built in 1907. The floral painting of the interior has been done in the same year by an anonymous painter having the initials *V.A.*⁵.

- The Orthodox Church "*Sf. Ierarh Nicolae*" (figure 7) from Sititelec has been built in roman style between 1926 and 1928. The iconostasis has been retraced in 1934 and in 1976 the church has suffered a major repair.

³ <http://artemisvanatoare.ro/index.php/despre-noi.html> accessed

⁴ <http://artemisvanatoare.ro/index.php/oferte-de-vanatoare-artemis.html>

⁵ <http://www.biserici.episcopiaoradiei.ro/index.php?idmenu=0&sub=276#sthash.AaY2xSLS.dpbs>

- The Greek Catholic Church "*Sf. Nicolae*" (figure 8) has been built in 1873 for the numerous community of Greek Catholic confession since that time.

- The "*Sf. Mihail și Gavril*" church from Oșand has been built between 1926 –1928, and is the largest of the commune testifying a wealthy and numerous population of the village. The genuine fresco of the church has not been preserved and unfortunately the stained glasses as well. In 1998 in the church yard has been erected a triptych for the loving memories of those who have lost their lives in the First and Second World War.

- The "*Adormirea Maicii Domnului*" church from Fonău has been built between 1938– 1939. The paintings have been realised by a peasant painter from Oșand.



Figure 7. View of the "*Sf. Ierarh Nicolae*" Orthodox church from Sititelec



Figure 8. The Greek Catholic church "*Sf. Ierarh Nicolae*" from Sititelec

From the *ethnographic* point of view the administrative territorial unit of Husasău de Tinca overlaps the area of Crișul Negru River. Unfortunately the customs and traditions have vanished almost completely. Few winter traditions such as *Viflemul* or *Steaua* are still preserved, but have lost the spiritual importance, tending to have a more commercial background. The folk costumes have been long forgotten and the traditional domestic household objects have been sold for nothing. The modern society took over the rural-land society, people have forgotten their ancestor roots getting rid of everything what it was no longer considered useful. There are few remaining old houses preserving the traditional architecture of the bucolic style.

The structure of these houses implies the existence of two rooms connected by an aisle. This architectural style is spread on a broad area in Europe as it is a cultural phenomenon of different ethnic groups specific to the XIX century (Ionescu, 1981). It is the wealth of the people of the commune that has brought important changes in the architectural style of the houses and in the building materials as well during the XX century. Clay used for the construction of the houses have been replaced with a new occurred material: bricks. The structure of the houses evolved from two up to three or four rooms in one building; clay was replaced with brick. Most of the households were having two buildings incorporated: the so called *clean room* or *the guest house* were the most valuable things were kept and the *summer kitchen* preserving the archaic style, but an improved one. Each household have had its own agricultural tools and domestic objects for different types of activities as most of the goods were home made. Most of the households were having an outside oven as well as the bread and other pastries were home made. Only few households have kept the outside oven nowadays as it easier for the locals to buy bread or other products of this type from the stores. There is a strong connection between the giving up of the traditions, of the domestic households' objects and demographic evolution of the population. The commune is confronting with the ageing of the population phenomenon opposite with the boom of the Roma population leading to the loss of the traditional identity.

THE SWOT ANALYSIS

Following the Strategic Diagnosis Analysis, we have analyzed the opportunity of the development of tourism in Husasău de Tinca commune using the SWOT analysis as tool to find possible solution for the present problems, either for a new venture (Dealtry, 1992).

Table 2. SWOT Analysis of the Husasău de Tinca commune
(Data source: own elaboration)

Strengths:	Weaknesses:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the geographical position; - the natural tourism potential; - unpolluted environment; - unharmed landscape; - the possibility of deploying numerous types and forms of tourism; - the kindness and hospitality of the locals; - the locals could offer homemade goods; - the internet network connection covering the entire area; - water supply covering 90% of the commune. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of the tourism facilities: e.g. accommodation, nourishment base, etc.; - an insufficient involvement of the authorities in encouraging the locals to deploy tourism activities; - the loss of the traditional identity; - absence of the promotion of the commune as a tourism attraction.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - improvement of the general infrastructure and specific tourism infrastructure; - lease of the terrains and buildings; - logistic support, fiscal facilities given by the Local Council; - the possibility to obtain non-refundable finance in order to begin a new venture in tourism; - arranging routes for different types of tourism activities according to the natural features of the terrain; - the set up of the archaeological sites. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ageing of the population; - youth migration to the urban centres; - demographic boom of the Rroma ethnic group.

CONCLUSION

As many of the communes of Bihor county located in the southern-central part of it, the Husasău de Tinca commune has focused only on the agricultural function ignoring the fact that the natural surroundings were offering the possibility of deploying other types of activities as well. For most of the locals *tourism* is an "alien" word and they hardly believe that someone would be interested in visiting their villages and surroundings. Back in the '90 people were in the fever of getting rid of everything reminding them of their "peasant routes". They have sold all their domestic household objects for nothing as they were no longer considered useful and had the alternative of the modern products esteemed as "new is better". The commune is confronting the depopulation caused by the migration of the youth to the urban centres in search of a working place, therefore its having an ageing population; and the boom of the Rroma ethnic group.

The local authorities are struggling for a few years to aware the population of the benefits that tourism activities could bring. For the past decade there have been many improvements on the roads and facilities infrastructure as the local authorities have spotted the positive impact of deploying tourism activities over the commune. The lack of tourism infrastructure corroborated with the non existing qualified personnel in the tourism field makes the start of tourism development a little more difficult. The first step that has to be taken is to develop a minimum tourism infrastructure and to promote the commune as a tourism attraction. For now the main forms of tourism to be practice is weekend tourism and as a type of tourism is fishing tourism as

the only known attraction of the commune is the lake of Miersig. Among the types of tourism that can be deployed we highlight: leisure tourism, cygetic and fishing tourism, scientific, cultural tourism and rural tourism.

The arguments for the above mentioned forms of tourism could be:

- the large surface of the forests covering the commune offers the possibility of practicing leisure tourism within taking into account that there are no nearby pollution sources;
- the commune overlaps the hunting fund "F35 Oșand" and except lake Miersig, there are another two ponds that can be use for fishing tourism;
- the commune is close to the "Pădurea Goroniște" protected area declared a 2000 Nature sit as well; the sit protecting the daffodil species (*Narcissus angustifolius*) which can be found here at the lowest altitude in the country (100m). There can be organized trips in the blossoming period in order raise the awareness over the protected areas and the protected species within;
- the cultural tourism could be connected to the archeological sites and the churches of the villages, the long history of the commune has interesting stories to be told;
- one type of tourism overlaps entirely the rural areas, rural tourism (Ciangă, 1998: Petrea, 2004). Rural tourism could be developed by the revive of the old traditions and customs, a not so difficult task to achieve taking into account the fact that the population is an ageing one who still preserves in their souls memories of the past traditions. Analyzing the tourism potential of the Husasău de Tinca commune, there is no doubt that tourism activities can be deployed as long the community is interested in finding new solution for a sustainable future development of it.

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