

**Sustainable Transport and Tourism
along the Danube**
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WP3: TRANSPORT & TOURISM SYSTEM ANALYSIS
STATUS-QUO / STATE OF THE ART
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



AGENTIA PENTRU DEZVOLTARE REGIONALA A REGIUNII
DE DEZVOLTARE SUD-EST

Action 3.2.

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28/06/2013



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The South-East Region covers 35,762 sqkm or 15 % of the total national surface and ranks the region on the second place among the eight regions of Romania. The South-East Region includes 6 counties: Braila, Buzau, Constanta, Galati, Tulcea and Vrancea. Its neighbouring areas are: The North-East Region to the north, the Centre Region and South-Muntenia Region to the west, Bulgaria to the south, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and the Black Sea to the east.

The main international gateway to the region is Bucharest with a broad choice of international connections by air (two international airports), train (daily international connections to Italy, Austria, Hungary, Czech Republic, Croatia, Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey) and bus (international services to other European countries).

An important regional transportation and tourist node of type B is Tulcea city as the main entry to the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve. Galati, Braila and Constanta represent an important regional transportation and tourism node (type C) outside the focus area.

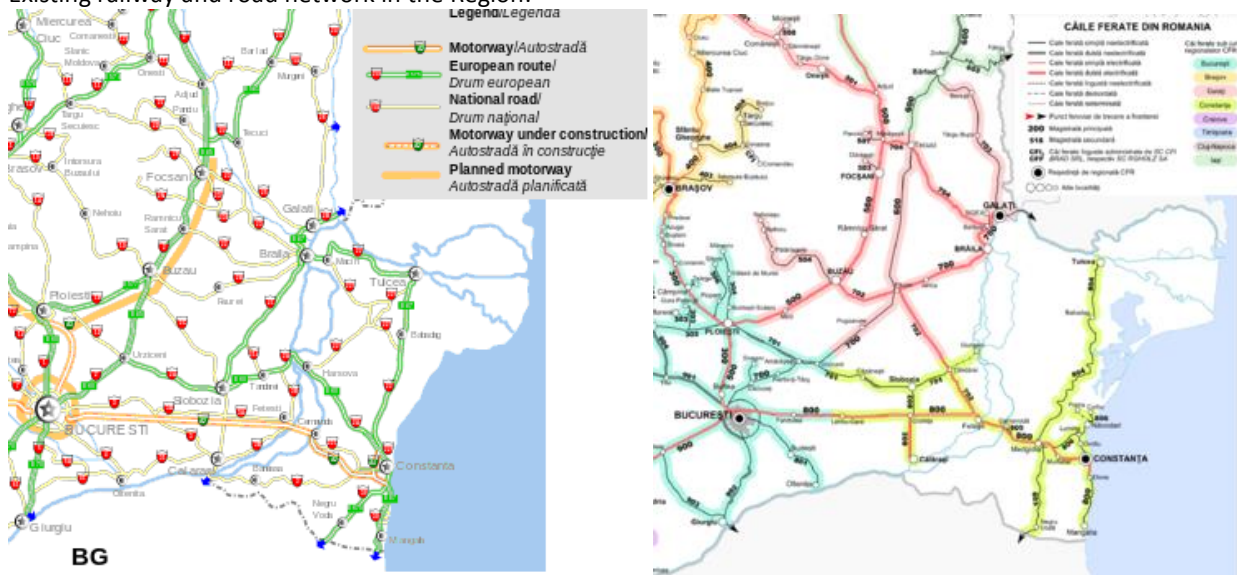
The focus area targets on the following protected areas: “Danube Delta”, the most important natural protected area which was declared “Biosphere Reserve”; “Braila Small Island” Natural Park, a wetland of international importance (Ramsar site) and “Macin Mountains” Natural Park international recognized as a component of NATURA 2000 – „Habitats and Birds” Directive.

Transport system

International corridors, national-european roads:



Existing railway and road network in the Region:



Airports:



Ports:

Black Sea: Constanta, Mangalia, Sulina, Navodari

Danube Ports: Galati, Braila, Tulcea, Giurgiu, Drobeta-Turnu Severin, Oltenita

Danube-Black Sea Channel Ports: Cernavoda, Poarta Alba, Constanta Sud, Agigea, Medgidia.



EuroVelo 6 or EV6, also known as "Euro-Velo-Route Rivers" or "European Cycle Route of Rivers", is a type EuroVelo cycle route, with a length of 3,653 km, that connects Nantes to Bucharest, and, by extension, Saint-Nazaire to Constanta. The route follows the course of the three major European rivers: Loire, Rhine and Danube. Itinerary: France, Switzerland, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Serbia, Romania-Bulgaria (Drobeta Turnu-Severin, Vidin, Lom, Belene, Bucharest, Cernavoda, Braila, Tulcea, Sulina, Babadag, Constanta).



Tourism system

In 2011, the South-East Region registered a total number of 1,134,800 tourists, representing 16.14% of the total number of arrivals in Romania. The number of tourists in 2011 was increased with 8.7% as compared with 2010. In 2011, the Region was the first in the country in terms of accommodation capacity, on the 3rd place as regards the number of arrivals and the first place in terms of overnight stays. The Region concentrates approximately 21% of the country accommodation capacity, most of them on the Black Sea seaside. In terms of used capacity, the Region ranks second in Romania.

Types of tourism in the hotspots

Name of the Park/Reserve	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Macin Mountains Natural Park	X	X			X	X	X	X	p
Braila Small Island	X		X	p	p		X	p	x

Existent and potential tourism attractions in the natural parks and reservations

X=existent; P=potential

1=ciclotourism; 2=tourism trails; 3=tourism for angling; 4=water sports (canoe, kayak, rafting); 5=scientific; 6=cultural attractions; 7=animal observation; 8=equestrian Tourism; 9=agro-tourism

Information system

Information Centres

Inside the protected areas from the target area, there are visitor centres and information points (except in Braila Small Island where the Information and Visitor Centre is no longer functional), with an important role in promoting the information activity, education and awareness concerning the conservation measures of the natural species/habitats. There are also visitor and information centres located in the nearest urban centres. One National Tourism and Information Centre is located in Tulcea city.

Other promotion and information tools

Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve has implemented a set of signs and indicators that significantly improved the public perception on Danube Delta Reserve location and the opportunities for sight-seeing.

Panels with information on the area, habitats, protected species and preservation measures were placed on the most visited routes inside Braila Small Island protected area. There were also placed in Braila, the nearby urban centre.

A wide range of brochures and leaflets for the tourism promotion in the Danube Delta is offered to the tourists. The content of these brochures has been improved lately through collaboration with other institutions.

An Audio-visual guide is available for the tourists in the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve. It is an interpretative tool which offers a precious insight into the natural and cultural values of the area: sounds of the birds living in the Danube Delta.

CDs, flyers, posters, brochures are distributed for the promotion of Braila Small Island.

There are many websites with information concerning the tourism promotion in the natural protected areas. Some examples are presented below.

The protected areas web pages:

www.bmb.ro – the site of Braila Small Island (RO and English)

www.arbdd.ro – the site of Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Administration (RO and English)

www.parcmacin.ro – the site of “Macin Mountains” Natural Park (RO and English)

The websites of the urban centres situated near the protected areas:

www.cjtulcea.ro – the site of Tulcea County Council (RO and English)

www.primariatulcea.ro – the site of Tulcea Municipality (RO)

www.primariabraila.ro – the site of Braila Municipality (RO)

www.cjbraila.ro – the site of Braila County Councils (RO)

Other web pages:

www.eco-romania.ro – the site of the Romania Eco-tourism Association

www.slowtourism.ro – the site of the Eco-tourism Centre from Crisani/Danube Delta (RO and English)

www.rowmania.ro (RO and English)

Financing options, organizational and legal framework

Organisational framework

National public authorities and agencies experienced in the field of sustainable mobility and tourism are: The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MECC) and Environmental Fund Administration; The Ministry of SMEs, Business Environment and Tourism and its National Tourism Authority; The Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration (MDRAP); The Ministry of Transport (MT).

For the development and implementation of the public policies on various branches of activity at regional level, functions & Regional Development Agencies, public, non-governmental and non-profit institutions.

The county public authorities are represented by: County Councils; Prefectures; The Agency of Local Environment Protection; National and Natural Parks Administrations.

National stakeholders and other organisations: Metropolitan Club, Asociatia pentru Tranzitia Urbana/Association for Urban Transition, Organizatia pentru Promovarea Transportului Alternativ in Romania (OPTAR)/Organisation for Promoting Alternative Transport in Romania, Asociatia Industriei Feroviare din Romania/Romania Railway Industry Association, Club Feroviar, Federatia Biciclistilor din Romania/Romanian Cyclists' Federation, Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) Romania, Association of Ecotourism in Romania (AER), Association "Bate Sava sa Priceapa Iapa".

At local level, several associations are involved in promoting sustainable tourism and sustainable mobility, for e.g: "Ivan Patzaichin – Mila 23 Association"/Asociatia Ivan Patzaichin – Mila 23; "Litoral – Danube Delta Association for Tourism Promotion and Development"/Asociatia pentru Promovarea Turismului Litoral-Delta Dunarii, "Danube-Delta Tourism Entrepreneurship Association"/Asociatia Patronatului in Turismul din Delta Dunarii, "Save Danube and Delta" Association/Asociatia Salvati Dunarea si Delta. Still, the initiatives are rather spread out, concentrating mainly on promoting particular types of soft transportation.

Other stakeholders: the Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture from Braila, Galati, Tulcea, other tourism associations and tourism NGOs e.g.: The National Association for Rural, Ecological and Cultural Tourism with representatives in Braila and Tulcea, the National Association of the Travel Agencies with members and representatives in all the counties, Romanian Tourism Employers' Federation with representatives in all the counties.

Legal framework in the field of public transportation and tourism

The Ministry of Transport is responsible for the elaboration of the strategic and the legislative framework in the field of public transport.

As regards the tourism, this field is not included in the category of the exclusive competences or in those shared in the multilevel governance system of the European Union. Therefore, there is no existence of a Community tourist policy, the Commission's involvement refer to the articles concerning the freedom of services. The Romanian Tourism Sector suffered from the absence of an overall policy to run and manage the development of the sector. In 2009, The Ministry of Tourism prepared and published a Tourism Law - draft for consultation, the citizens and institutions concerned having the opportunity to submit any proposals or suggestions. This law was not approved yet by Parliament.

Financial framework

There are many resources, at national and European level for implementation of projects aiming to support sustainable tourism and transport development. The main financial resources are represented by the Structural Funds, especially the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The European and National Funds positively influence these fields, particularly in what concerns the development of the institutional capacities at local and regional level. From the quantitative perspective, the impact of these funds is represented by investments in transportation infrastructure, accommodation or in programs that promote tourism destinations, in addition to indirect effects connected to other local and regional development. Finally, communities supporting different projects focus on the anticipated results and on various types of long-lasting developments.

In terms of project's funding sources with direct or indirect impact on tourism and sustainable transport, the local public administration have the opportunity to access various grants schemes, or may act as project manager and get involved in the implementation of national-scale projects funded by the national government.

Conclusions:

The South-East Region has a strategic position in the country being crossed by important Pan European corridors (IV, IX road/rail; corridor VII fluvial – Danube). Some of the national roads crossing the Region are part of big trans-European corridors. The Region has the 4th largest maritime port in Europe and the largest Black Sea harbour (Constanta). The Region concentrates maritime harbours and river-maritime harbours. The South-East Region has a relative good accessibility, except Tulcea County. The main international gateway to the region is country's capital with a broad choice of international connections by air, train and bus. There is one international airport in Constanta, which is out of the target area and one internal airport in target area (Tulcea). An important regional transportation and tourist node of type B is Tulcea city as the main entry to the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve. Galati, Braila and Constanta represent an important regional transportation and tourism node (type C) outside the focus area.

As regards the percentage of roads that have been modernised (27.27%), the region is ranked the last place among the Romania regions. The regional road network condition and functionality is poor, improvements are expected for the road quality, the lighting and the signing system. Furthermore, in the majority of rural areas the existing interconnecting road system is not paved and in its greater part is composed by sandy roads.

The future actions should be concentrated on the: development of targeted national programmes for road transport sector; high transport development potential, especially for the river and sea transport (Danube and Black Sea); creation of new Danube harbours; transfer of freight transport from road transport to the air, railroad and sea/river; development of deck boats/cruisers connection from Braila through Galati to Tulcea and a fast ship connection to the Danube Delta in order to facilitate the access to the natural protected area.

Due to its geographical position, the SE Region has an important tourism potential with its large diversity of cultural and natural resources, harmoniously distributed, which can provide opportunities for various forms of tourism, from classical ones (mountain, seaside, wellness and spa, cultural tourism), to the rural tourism, ecotourism and adventure tourism. Great and divers number of protected areas exist in the region, the most important being the "Danube Delta", declared "Biosphere Reserve"; "Braila Small Island" Natural Park, a wetland of international importance (Ramsar site) and "Macin Mountains" National Park international recognized as a component of NATURA 2000 – „Habitats and Birds" Directive. In the area of Tulcea county, historical and archaeological sites are present (monasteries and relics), museums with different themes, the tourists having the opportunity to combine the cultural tourism with the eco-tourism, bird watching and fishing. The customs and traditions are preserved especially in Tulcea county and the Danube Delta Biosphere where small ethnic groups of slav people named „lipoveni" are living.

Although, there are some NGOs/Associations very actively in developing and promoting the niche tourism in the Danube Delta, the promotion of the tourism offer at national and international level should be improved. There are some information and promotion centres as well as ecological and training centres available in the protected areas and in the urban centres near the protected areas including a National Information Centre and a Danube Delta Eco-tourism Centre in Tulcea city but their number should be increased especially in the area of Braila Small Island and Macin Mountains National Park. Moreover, the personnel working in those centres should be highly trained, the services offered should be further developed, the working program with the public should be expand and a suitable network of multi-functional tourism centres should be created in the tourism areas.

The tourism offers and packages as well as the soft mobility to/in the target area are underdeveloped. The tourism offer various from one area to another. If in the Danube Delta, the hotels offer tourism packages including transport from Tulcea to the destination, accommodation and meals, boats to visit the Biosphere, fishing trips or bird watching, in the area of Braila Small Island and Macin Mountains National Park, the accommodation facilities are almost inexistent as well as the leisure facilities. Due to the seasonal tourism in the area, the tourism offers and packages should be improved in order to attract tourists and to face the strong competition with the neighbouring regions. As regards the old city centres from the target area, they are in a very poor state and need to be renovated.

The cooperation among the tourism operators, the number of partnerships existing in the tourism field among local administrations and tourism organization are very low. The involvement of the public authorities in developing sustainable mobility plans/strategies/programmes in tourism is low. The efforts of the authorities are isolated and no single cooperation could be identified in the field of "sustainable mobility in tourism" as a distinctive topic between public

authorities, tourism organisations and public transport operators. There are no concrete strategies for supporting tourism development and soft mobility in tourism.

There is no correlation among the initiatives for tourism development and the national programmes of general infrastructure development. The financial resources of the local public administration to implement new development projects including the co-financing resources to support national and European projects in the field are very limited. Also, the capital of the tourism companies for direct investment in tourism is reduced.

The negative factors which influence the tourism development are: the international economic crisis that affects negatively more and more the national economy; the Romania's negative image abroad; the exodus of the qualified workforce in other countries and the fluctuation of the tourism personnel; the trend to develop economic activities with a negative impact on the environment and with no implication of sustainable development of natural resources.

The future actions should be concentrated on: the tourism capitalisation of the Danube river (transport, leisure activities) including soft mobility measures (bike trails in the protected areas and combining bike trails along the Danube river with ship-bus offers to reach the National Park of Macin Mountains); the development of some niche tourism forms (ecotourism, cycle-tourism, off-road tourism, cruise tourism, rural tourism, religious tourism, agro-tourism, nature tourism, angling tourism); the opportunity to access European Funds and to attract foreign investors for the tourism development; high interest at the international level for biodiversity preservation and sustainable tourism promotion; creation of new visiting centres and information points using European funds; increase of public interest and confidence in the information received from the information centres; further development of the existing relationships and structures in cross-border cooperation.

The success of tourism development in the Danube area depends on the support of the stakeholders involved and their cooperation. There is a strong need to develop public and private partnerships in order to capitalize the tourism opportunities and sustainable transportation options, integrating natural and cultural patrimony, environmental protection, accessibility and development with the most appropriate methods.