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TURISMUL VERDE REGIONAL - UN CONCEPT DE CONSERVARE A ZONEI OLTENEȘTI

GREEN REGIONAL TOURISM –A CONCEPT FOR THE PRESERVATION OF the OLTENIA AREA

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Abstract: *The notion of green regional tourism is a relatively new term in specialized literature, representing a concept of preservation of Oltenia area, which demonstrates how a region can promote itself internationally for its sustainable economic development and the ecological attractions provide a pleasant and unforgettable tourism experience. The paper tries to highlight how green regional tourism increases tourism competitiveness and demonstrates how ecological attraction options can capitalize on existing tourism characteristics in the Oltenia Region.*

Key-words: *green regional tourism, ecological tourism, ecotourism, preservation, parks*

Introduction

Green tourism (nature-oriented tourism) derived from the notion of sustainable development, which requires it to be ecological and culturally integrated [11, 16]. This "green tourism" concept is a still evolving sustainable approach that needs to be implemented so to manage environmental pollution in Oltenia Region [15].

According to authors Votsi, N.E.P. & co. [18], "green tourism supports the recommendations and plans of Agenda 21 and focuses on sustainable development, supporting the use of ecological technologies, promoting socio-cultural initiatives and achieving preservation targets in areas with high biodiversity value".

Green tourism is practiced in preservation areas where the exploitation of natural resources in a wild or undeveloped form is allowed, with a major focus on maintaining the attractiveness and viability of these areas [7]. The two key aspects of ecotourism are: (1) raising tourists' awareness of relatively undisturbed and unspoiled tourism destinations and (2) protecting and preserving the environment by reducing environmentally harmful activities in destination regions [9]; it is considered the most imperishable and feasible form of tourism that preserves the elementary character of nature [13, 17, 5].

Methodology

The methodology applied in this research paper was carried out through a careful and thorough analysis of specialized works (Web of Science indexed articles). Thus, by searching for key words, such as: "green tourism", "ecological tourism", "ecotourism", etc., we synthesized and elaborated our own findings to support the new proposed concept of "green regional tourism", a concept for the preservation of the Oltenia area.

The creation of maps involved the use of the ArcMap 10.5 program. The database used was downloaded from <http://geo-spatial.org/vechi/downloadandhttp://www.mmediu.ro/articol/date-gis/434>.

Results and Discussions

Ecotourism represents the positive and responsible attitude on behalf of tourists and hosts towards the protection and preservation of environmental ecosystem elements [2]; natural and cultural resources are a prerequisite for the development of ecotourism [4]. From the perspective of sustainable tourism paradigm, ecotourism is part of a set of the green economy's elements [6].

The Oltenia *area* is located in the South-West of Romania (figura 1).

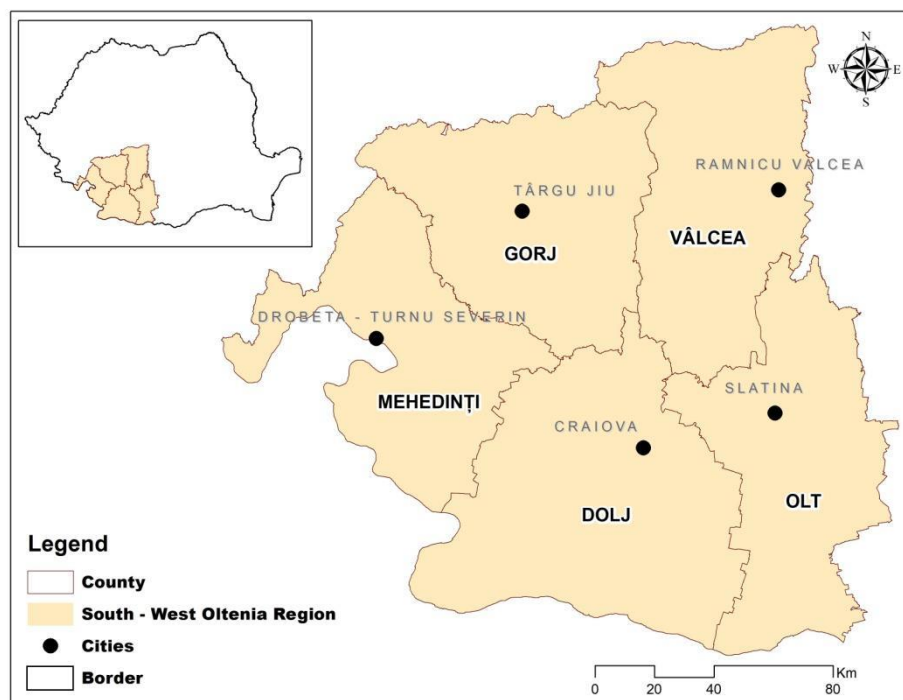


Fig. 1. Location of the Oltenia area at national level
Source: authors' own processing using ArcMap 10.5 [20]

The preservation areas of Oltenia from the perspective of practice, promotion and competitiveness of *green* regional tourism are (figura 2): Buila-Vânturarița National Park, Cozia National Park, Jiu Gorge National Park, Domogled – Cerna Valley National Park, Mehedinți Plateau Geopark and Iron Gates Natural Park.

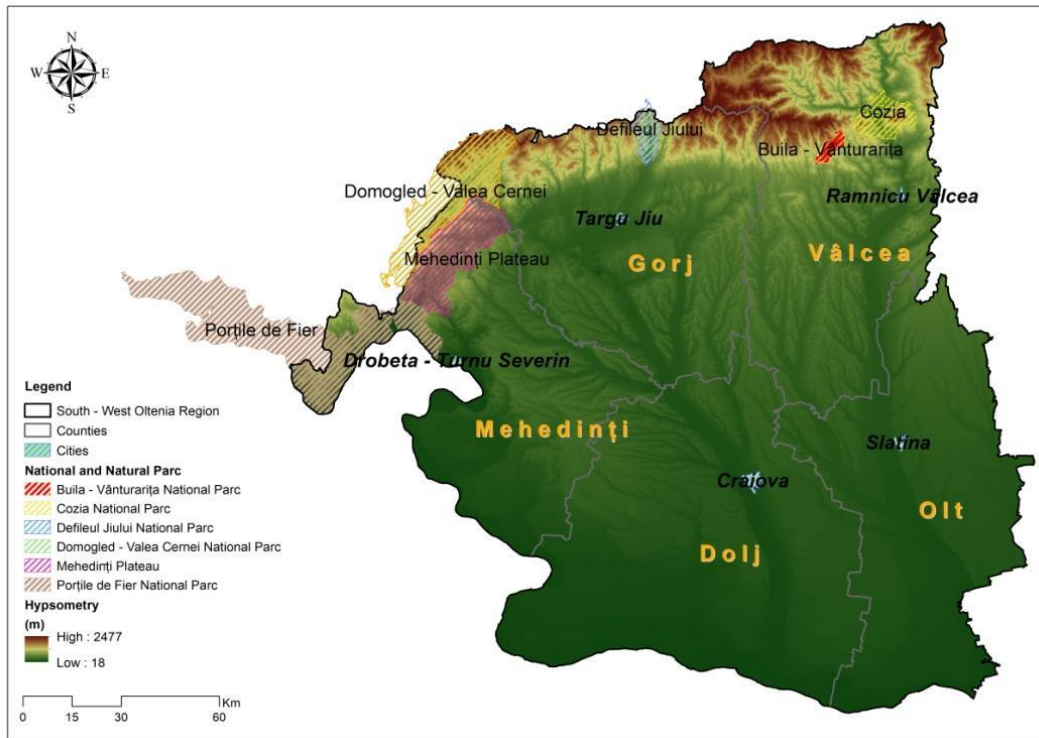


Fig. 2. Location of areas suitable for *green* regional tourism
Source: authors' own processing using ArcMap 10.5 [21]

Analyzing the statistical data of National Ecotourism Development Strategy for the period 2019-2029, we found out that the largest share (over 50% of the estimated number of tourists) was held by Cozia National Park (figura 3), which is located in Vâlcea County (figura 4), more precisely in the central-southern part of the Southern Carpathians.

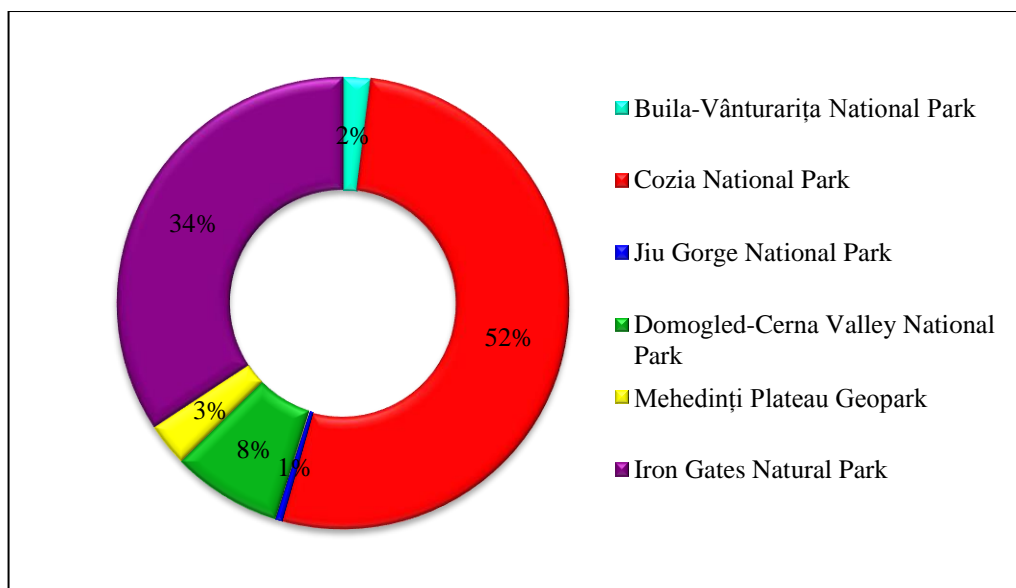


Fig. 3. Estimated percentage of visitors
Source: National Ecotourism Development Strategy data processing [19]

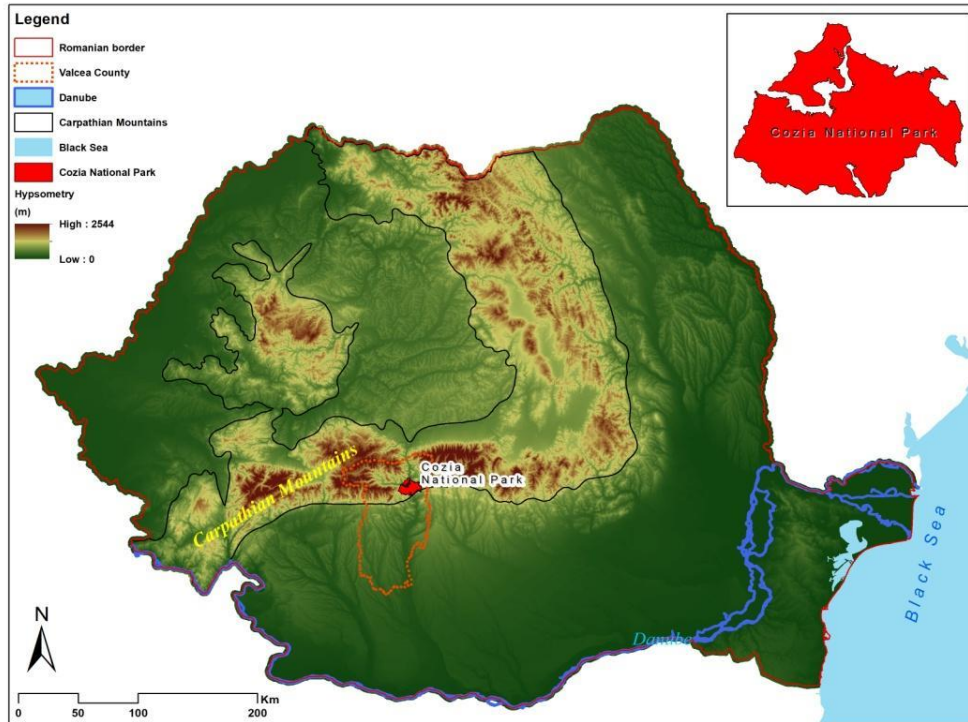


Fig. 4. Location of the Cozia National Park at national level
 Source: authors' own processing using ArcMap 10.5 [20]

The accommodation units that can support Oltenia area from the point of view of economic development are dispersed in the territory (figura 5), most of them being located in the Subcarpathian area, near the river courses and in the Cazanele Dunării/Danube Basins area.

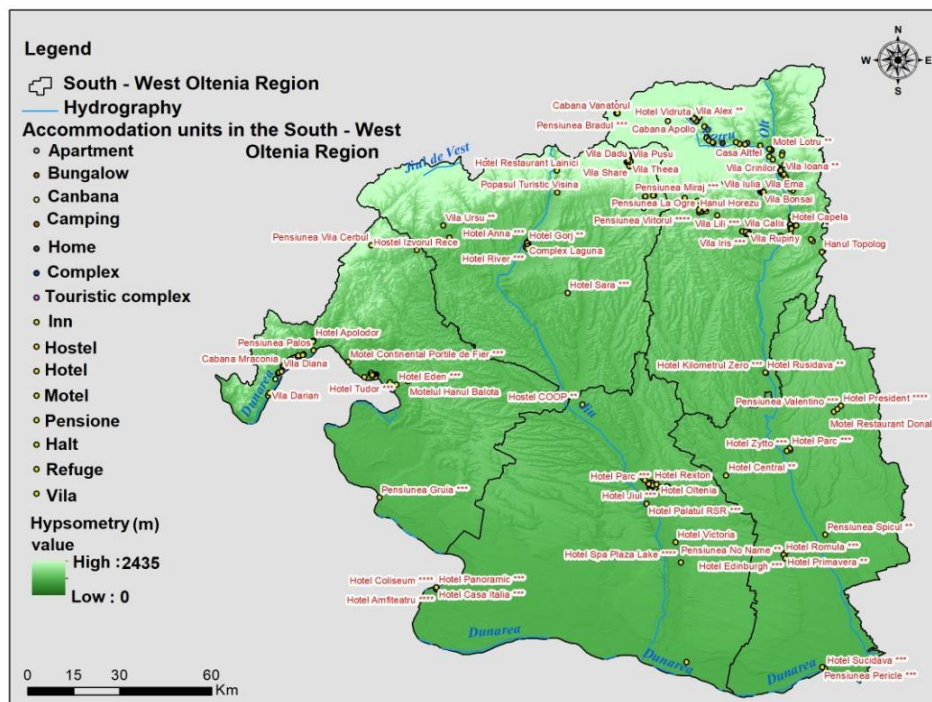


Fig. 5. Accommodation units that support the economic development of Oltenia
 Source: authors' own processing using ArcMap 10.5 [20]

Conclusions: In conclusion, green tourism truly encompasses the principles of ecotourism and supports the developing of responsible travels (for the environment), from an ecological perspective, and visiting natural areas (e.g.: natural park, national park, natural protected areas, etc.).

Also, green (ecological) tourism represents a form of sustainable tourism [12], described by the simple fact that it requires the preservation, safeguard and protection of ecosystems, the use of local human resources, as well as the minimization of the negative impact on natural, cultural, and social environment .

Sustainable development is a key issue of the entire expansion process due to the need for new technologies, but also innovative activities for a better economic and social development of the communities [3], the aim being the preservation of the areas where green regional tourism is practiced in Oltenia.

On the other hand, in this century of climate change and global warming, civilization must rely more on ecological tourism, which integrates not only the economic attractiveness of Oltenia region, but also the natural activity [1, 10, 14]. In fact, a solid scientific basis for assessment, planning and management can be established on the basic foundation of green regional tourism [8], with an intrinsic relation to the competitiveness of ecological tourism destinations in Oltenia.

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