
TOURISM SALON – SPRINGBOARD OF THE ROMANIAN TOURISM

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Abstract

The authors are highlighting in this paper the fact that the exhibition was and remains the ideal place for the contact with customers, because this is the main objective of participating in a fair/exhibition/salon. The exhibition is not only the environment where the players from a market choose to see each other the promoted offers, but the more important thing for exhibitors is that during a fair, the active buyers and other persons with decision making power on the market are used to be present. To become more effective, the participation in fairs/salons and international exhibitions of tourism exceeds the function of information.

Keywords: promotion, fairs, shows, travel, opportunity.

JEL Classification: M39, M51, L83

1. Introduction

VERT is the holiday's state room in the francophone Belgium. After its first edition in 1971, VERT has evolved significantly. State room destined for hobby and gardening at first, VERT has developed progressively its poles of tourism, of holidays and free time.

Since 2004 is proposed a new formula. Two nocturnes instead of one, allowing the of the four corners of the world until 22 pm.. Dedicating only for the holidays and tourism, the state room is developing its activity during the 6 days under its new name Salon Vert, Bleu, Soleil.

The salon attracts almost 70.000 visitors "actives" at which can be added the press, the participants in conferences and colloquialisms salon, as and the children less than 12 years. He receives every year almost 300 of exhibitors come from around the world and is being proud with its prestigious guests of honor: Louisiane, Valais Suisse, Portugal, Tunisia, the region of Cotes d'Amor, etc. He also hosts events like: launching of professional brochures, press conferences of the professional associations, meetings between official organisms of tourism (Attractions and Tourism, The Tourism Promotion Office, etc.) [Ioan and Turtureanu, (2005)]

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2. Guest of honor of the international fair liege

Studies can be included in promotional materials, which can bring practical information to possible visitors. That is why it is very important to make sure that the material is precise, well drawn-up (without too many superlatives) and fixed at the adequate level for making them attractive for the audience [Kotler, (2002)]. This will assure us that people will not arrive with expectations that cannot be met, and will most probably be disappointed by the experience. [Ladkin, and Spiller, J (2003)] The best reputation is that built by being orally transmitted, recommended by marketing managers. We have also remember that a reputation is not built over night, five years may pass until the marketing strategy begins to bring profit. Consequently, the strategy has to be seen as a long term activity in order to be revised and updated constantly in compliance with the changing needs of the visitors' feedback market. [Tureac, (2008)] This also means that a considerable merit belongs also to the establishment of a tourism strategy that would aim for the tourists, even after they left the place. This helps to accumulate faithful clients and encourage repeated visits.

The tourism salon Vert, Bleu, Soleil is dividing the spaces and its touristic presentations in thematic way:

- ◆ Cultural tourism
- ◆ Natural tourism
- ◆ Resorts tourism

For 6 days, the Salon Bert, Bleu, Soleil receives visitors from the francophone Belgium, Lombourg Province, Province of Luxembourg and from the border regions: Germany, Netherlands

Category of visitors in 2008 was:

- youth - 26%
- family - 54%
- seniors - 30%

The salons and fairs organized by the International Fair Liege are emphasized through a promotional action entitled “Guest of honor”. The guest of honor is a country or a region of a country which proposes to the International Fair Liege its file of application to be accepted as a guest of honor at the Salon Vert, Bleu, Soleil. Once accepted, he must attend to the salon for two consecutive yeas with a small stand, stand which will have as role the initiation of the visitor in the new touristic product. Only after these two years he can participate as a guest of honor. The coordinator of this project can be the Ministry of Tourism or another institutional organization. [Cristureanu, (2004)]

In 23 years, with a presence of quality, 54 countries and regions came to Liege to promote their touristic potential, and in the last years the guest of honor was:

2004 : Inland of Madagascar

2005 : Aix-Les-Bains Et le Lac du Bourget

2006 : China – La province de Fujian

2007 : In Tunisia – Governorat de Sousse

2008 : France- Le morbidan

2009 : Belgium – The Meuse

The topics presented by the guest of honor are :

- the resort tourism;
- cultural tourism (tours, guided tours, artwork, etc);
- Gourmet tourism (places of tasting and presentation of the regional products)
- Natural tourism (national parks, itineraries for promenade);
- Activities and products specific to the country

In the view of a remarkable presence, the guest of honor must have:

- a presentation of the tourism institutions (tourisms offices)
- an overview of the tourism resources (hotels, restaurants, organized trips, various infrastructures, museums, exhibitions, etc)
- a presentation and sale of the regional products (fabrics, common objects, decorative objects, etc)
- a space of animation (arranging a animated with musicians, dancers, games, decorations, flowers, facades of houses typical to the region/country
- a presentation of theater, literature, cinema (conferences, publications, various animations)
- a presentation of operas and classical artists and/or contemporary

To present its application, the guest of honor must send to the International Fair Liee a file which must include:

- a booklet presenting the touristic topics what are making the object of the promotion action
- a scheme of the arrangement plan of the stands;
- a list with all the conscriptions that will be present at the saloon (hotels, tourism operators, etc)
- a program with the animation that will be taking place throughout the salon.

3. Guest of honor – the oportunityt to promote the romanian tourism in the western europe

The Vert, Bleu, Soleil in Liege may be a real opportunity for Romania to make known in the Western Europe trough tourism. Often wrongly perceived by the most foreigners, Romania remains a country unknown to its true value. Those who have visited were yet impressed by its natural beauty, by its Latin charm almost forgotten in this corner of Europe.

To change this perception, it can be proposed three regions from Romania, Maramures, Moldova and Dobrogea – as guest of honor at the Salon Vert, Bleu, Soleil from Liege. In this case the target market will be just the Wallome region from Belgium.

After a survey carried out by the Observer of tourism Wallon on the Belgians travels in the country and abroad, it can be observed that the Belgian tourist likes to travel. The total of the population and the percentage of the departures on holiday:

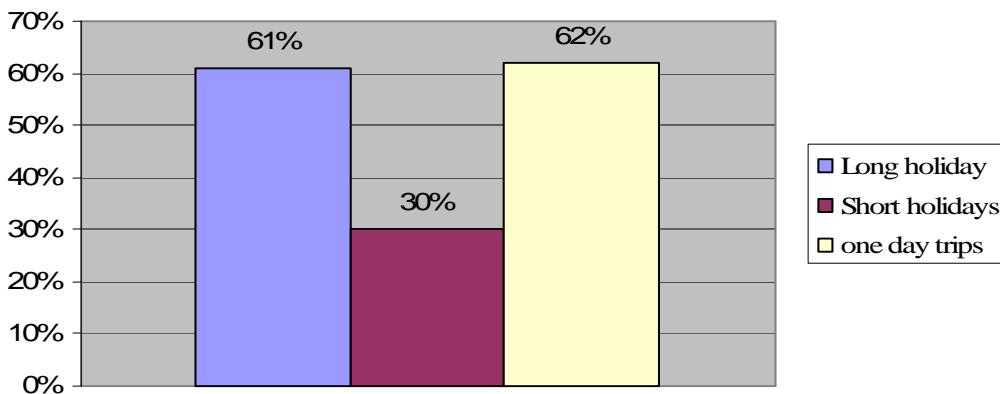
Table no. 1 The Belgians departures in country and abroad

POPULATION (millions)	10,1
NET RATE OF DEPARTURE IN	
• Long holidays (%)	61
• Short holidays (%)	30
• One day trips (%)	62

Source: *Observatoire du Tourisme Wallon* -, „Le plan stratégique de développement touristique de la Province de Liège”

Long vacations mean a holiday away from home of at least 4 consecutive nights. Short vacancies mean a holiday away from home between one and three nights. Trips for a day means to a distance from his home at least 20 km; are excluded the visits to friends and family. The rate of departure in long holidays is of 61%, in short vacancies 30% in trips for a day 62%.

The Belgian departures



Depending on the region of origin:

Table no. 2 The belgian movements by the region of origin

Share of departure in	Origin region		
	FLANDR E	BRUXELLES	WALLONIE
• Long vacations (%)	65,6	76,4	55
• Short vacations (%)	33,6	24,5	18,2
• One day trips (%)	71,4	52,9	44,6

Source: *Observatoire du Tourisme Wallon* -, „Le plan stratégique de développement touristique de la Province de Liège”

For the Liege province, are remarked:

- Long Vacations : 49,2%
- Short Vacations: 19%
- One day trips: 46,1%

The departures of the Belgians from the Liege province

Province Liege

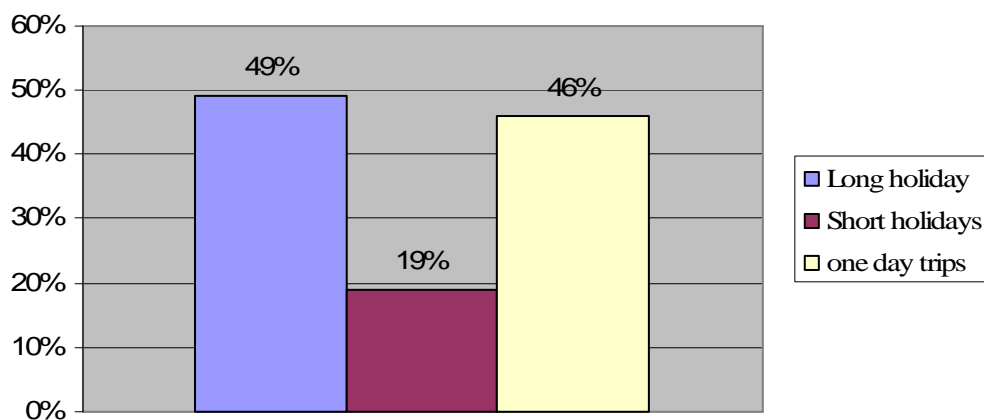


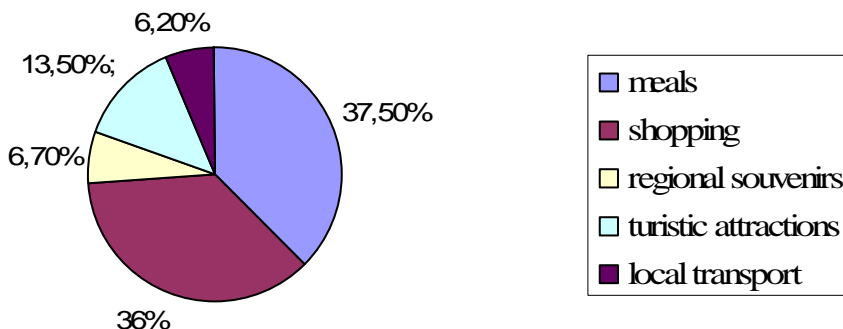
Table no.3 The destinations according to the type of destination

DESTINATIONS	Tips of holidays		
	LONG HOLIDAYS	SHORT HOLIDAYS	ONE DAY TRIPS
In Belgium	28,7%	59,7%	89%
ABROAD	71,3%	40,3%	11%
Of which	France 22,5% Spain 13,2% Italy 5,8% Austria 4,6% Switzerland 3,1%	France 17,4% Germany 6,2% Netherlands 6,1% England 4,5% Luxemburg 3,5% Others 2,6%	Netherlands 5,9% France 2% Germany 1,5% Luxemburg 1% England 0,6%

Source: *Observatoire du Tourisme Wallon* -, „Le plan stratégique de développement touristique de la Province de Liège”

- Belgium don't occupies a very important place on the long holiday's market: 31%
- Belgium occupies a place relatively important on the touristic market of the short holidays: 60%
- Belgium holds 90% of the tourism for a day
- For the holidays abroad the rapport is reversed: 71% long holidays, short holidays 40% and trips 11%. So we can see that the Belgian tourist prefers the long holidays for the trips abroad, favorable situation for Romania, taking into account the great distance between Romania and Belgium.

The distribution of the touristic expenditure in Belgium by the type of activites



For the holidays to sea, the wallon tourist spends more; it goes often and stays a while longer than the tourist from Brussels or from the Finland region.

Table no. 4 Long holidays to sea

Long holidays to sea	2006	2008
Flamands	68,2%	66%
Bruxellois	9,5%	6%
Wallons	22,3%	28%

Source: *Observatoire du Tourisme Wallon - „Le plan stratégique de développement touristique de la Province de Liège*

Table no. 5 Short holidays to sea

Vacanțe scurte la mare	2006	2008
Flamands	71,6%	71,8%
Bruxellois	4,8%	3,9%
Wallon	23,6%	24,3%

Source: *Observatoire du Tourisme Wallon - „Le plan stratégique de développement touristique de la Province de Liège”*

Analyzing all these statistic data we can observe that the Belgian tourist prefer both the long holidays (61%) and both the trips (62%).

If we refer only to the Wallonie region, because here we want to make the touristic promotion of Romania, the wallon tourist prefers the long holidays (55%) and especially the holidays to the North Sea (28%). The same thing is available and for the tourist from Liege which prefers the long holidays in a proportion of 49.2%.

As for the stays abroad the most searched are the neighboring countries (France, Spain, Italy) but also the more distant countries such as Switzerland, Austria..

In what concerns the expenses made during the holidays, the belgian tourist prefers the sector of restoration (37.50%) and that of shopping (36%)

But in the same time is noted, that compared with the region Flandre and Brussels, Wallonie is located in the third place for the departures in holidays. However the region chosen to promote the three Romanian provinces is Wallonie.

As is known in Belgium is the capital of the European Union. So it is a good time to begin to make our acquaintances here, especially because the people don't know much about Romania. And the tourism is the ideal domain.

Wallonie, because it is a French-speaking region, contrary to Flanders, and so there will not be any problems at the communication level. In addition, Liege is only at 100 km away from Brussels and it has an important road, rail and fluvial network due to the river Meuse, which crosses the city. Liege can be considered as a „entrance

gate” or as a test market towards Brussels and this due to the Office of Tourism Promotion which promotes both the region Wallonie and Brussels.

In conclusion, Liege and more precisely the Salon Vert, Bleu, Soleil is the ideal place to make the touristic promotion of Romania – the provinces, Maramures, Moldavia and Dobrogea.

4. SWOT analysis – the liege pronvince/ provinces : Maramures, Moldavia and Doborgea

Province of Liege

Strengths

- Liege has a great potential to set for value as city of art along with other resources: shopping, animations and events.
- A rich natural potential (forests, valleys, lakes, rivers...) in Ourthe, Ambleve and Hautes Fagnes.
- Some small towns and typical villages as a quality rural heritage.
- A great variety of regional products of quality and gastronomic references (pays d’Herve)
- An interesting heritage of castles and farms in Hesbave and Condroz

Weaknesses:

- Unstable climate.
- A hotel offer of “haute gamme” (luxury) and “moyenne gamme” (average) insufficient in the Liege city to organize congresses, exhibitions.
- Natural parks aren’t sufficiently populated by forest trees
- The landscape isn’t presenting characteristics for ski and there isn’t no opening to the sea.
- Closing the commercial centers Sunday in certain important towns in terms of tourism
- Few complexes covered susceptible to attract the tourists throughout the year, indifferently of the season.

Opportunities

- An interest becoming bigger for the green tourism, discovering the nature and sport in nature
- European funding for assessing certain museums of Liege
- Large potential of reserves and natural sites
- European credits for different projects of development of the tourism

Threats

- A strong competition manifested by the neighboring regions (Nsamur, Luxembourg, Ardennes Francaises...)

- A strong competition for all the sunny destinations are taking into account and by the lowering the plains tariffs
- The promises made to the tourists in the brochures of promoting the museums and the touristic attractions is often superior to reality, leading to negative recommendations.

The Provincials Maramures, Moldavia and Dobrogea

Strengths

- A rich and varied natural and cultural potential in the three provinces and an important heritage
 - A favorable climate for practicing almost all the types of sport (skiing, kayaking, riding, swimming, fishing...)
 - A diverse landscape and particularly charming
 - Numerous villages and towns that are holding an important rural heritage of high quality
 - Gastronomy specific and large vineyards (Moldavia and Dobrogea) of a national and international reputation
 - Tradition, handicraft and wood carving in Maramures
- Many opportunities for shopping, animations and cultural and artistic events

Weaknesses:

- A insufficient hotel offer in Maramures and Moldavia close by the touristic objectives (Monasteries, museums,)
- Tourism heritage unexploited
- There isn't a good touristic promotion, few promotional material (brochures, leaflets,...)
- The road infrastructure still undeveloped at the European standards
- Lack of a touristic coordination at level of region
- Lack of a synergy between the public operators and private operators.

Opportunities:

- Integration of Romania in the European Union
- A great touristic unexploited potential
- Facilities for access with all means of transport
- EU funding (PHARE)

Threats:

- Insufficient known potential touristic in the world or a wrong impression about Romania because of the old regime
- A strong competition from the neighboring countries (Turkey, Bulgaria, Hungary,...)

5. Conclusions

The key of relaunching the Romanian tourism is found in identifying some possible partnerships of ideas and of funding. It is true that in Romania were built in recent years some hundred motels, hotels, pensions, most of them imposing itself through elegance and quality service. But to this industry lacks the connection of information, of communication of services to make them attractive and rapid known. [Cristureanu, (2006)]. The owners of hotels must realize that the touristic product isn't sold alone, but it must be assessed or in a framework of a touristic circuit, or within some integrated offers.

The communicating process can be defined as an exchange of information and news. Such a process is carried out mostly by participating at the salon although, initially, the exhibitor is primarily in the position of supplier of information concerning the stand, products and the goods displayed. The visitor at the salon is, initially in the position of receiver of information, later becoming an active participant at the exchange of information. It becomes, for the exhibitor, value supplier of information concerning its preferences, of the buyers and users, the characteristics of the market demand which is organized in the salon, the ways of selling these products on the market.

In fact, the salon, exhibition stand are becoming catalysts, promoters of the relations between the interested exhibitor and the visitors as potential buyers. Therefore, communication can be considered as one of the main functions of the salon.

The benefits can be of several types: an increase in the turnover or an increase of the reputation. In addition, the salon reunites, according to its specific, a good part of the actors of the economical life that are having the same/almost the same object of activity with that of the exhibitioner. As example of title: the direct or indirect competitors, partners, potential clients and politicians.

This it is and advantage that mustn't be ignored, because in the case of prospecting a new market, allows to identify what offers the competition and at the same time to make knows to the potential clients. In the case of participating to a salon, this presence will allow to confront its image.

The salons are becoming increasingly competitive. Their organizers hire and are using tactics more and more diverse and more pervasive in attracting the exhibitors and the professional visitors, including: tactics of pressure through diplomatic channels of its own country, the representatives in various financial organization, chambers of trade, organisms of promotion of the exports and imports from the origin countries of the groups of potential exhibitors and professional aimed visitors, publicity, logistic support in accessing, maintaining and strengthening the position on a certain market of interest which usually is the market of the host country, of the salon, etc.

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