

## **The Current State of Tourism Traffic along the Danube on the Romanian Territory**

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**Abstract:** The author aims at highlighting the evolution of tourism activity lately. The economic crisis has affected the whole world and it has made its mark also on the tourism activities. The tourism resources have a special importance in the Danube area. The diversity of the relief, the multitude of species of flora and fauna create possibilities for development as a niche type of tourism. The analysis of the main indicators of the tourism traffic has found significant changes in terms of tourism activity along the Danube valley. In this article it is considered the area strongly influenced by the river, consisting of the 12 counties bordering the Danube Caras-Severin, Mehedinti, Dolj, Olt, Teleorman, Giurgiu, Calarasi, Constanta, Ialomita, Braila, Galati, Tulcea.

**Keywords:** tourism traffic; Danube; tourism

### **1. Introduction**

The Danube is the second longest river in Europe, with a total of 2880 km. The Danube river basin is the home to over 80 million people, which means that it has the highest international openness in the world.

The Danube has been since antiquity an artery of communication between Central Europe and the Balkan Peninsula. The river is bordered by four major European capitals Vienna, Budapest, Bratislava and Belgrade, as many other beautiful cities, which makes the Danube waterway to be important and it is a popular destination for cruise tourism. Tourism offers many ways to discover this area of natural and cultural patrimony, being outside major cities. The Danube creates landscapes, ideal for spending active holidays. The river's route has configured several national parks and nature reserves, important wetlands and beautiful islands, and few sites inscribed on UNESCO world heritage. There are less known hiking trails along river or around it, revealing breathtaking views inside the country. The Danube

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Delta is the home to many species of birds and fish, and today it holds an important fishing industry.

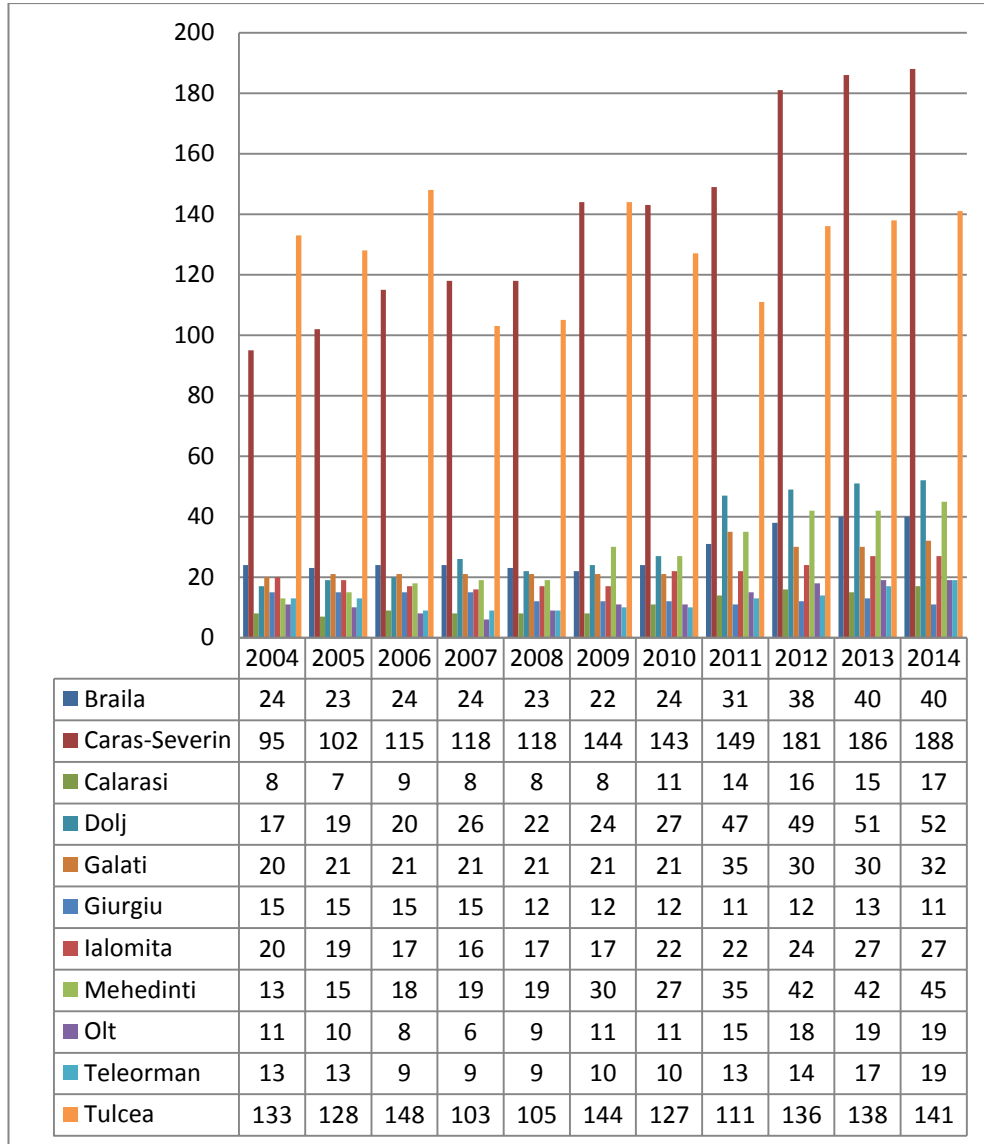
## **2. Tourism Traffic on the Danube's Route in Romania**

The most popular areas are Defileul Dunarii/Danube Defile and the Danube Delta, but tourists are interested also in the mountain areas or the rural traditions.

The most spectacular section of Danube is the defile cut into limestone, with wild and tall walls. The Cazane which contain Cazanele Mari, which have a length of 4 km and where there are two interesting caves (Veterani and Gura Ponicovei) and Cazanele Mici, which stretch over a distance of 3 km.

The Danube's Cazane, along with massive Ciucarul Mare/Ciucarul Mic are included in the Iron Gates National Park. The main sights which can be seen at Cazane are Tabula Traiana and the bust of Decebal. Tabula Traiana memorial plaque is a testament for having crossed through in this region the Roman Emperor, Traian. The plaque is on the Serbian side of the Danube and it is often partially covered by water. The monument is of 4 meters long and 1.75 meters high. There is also the Orsova city dating since the Roman period, being called then Dierna. The giant bust of the Dacian king, Decebal, is carved into the rock by the Mraconia bay. The monument has been achieved in the period 1994-2004 and it is the tallest rock sculpture in Europe. It has 55 meters high and 25 meters width. Still at Cazane there is, near Coronini (previously called Pescari), in the midst of the waters, a spur of rock, called Babacai.

Eighty percent of the Danube Delta, more than 5,000 square kilometers, is located in Romania. The Danube Delta is the largest wetland in Europe and is the home to 5,400 species of animals and plants, including rare migratory birds such as the Dalmatian pelican - the Delta's emblematic bird. It appears as a huge surface covered in reed from which arise water lilies, carnivorous plants and amphibians, weeping willows and poplar forests. The Danube Delta is also the richest fauna park in Europe, with over 300 species of birds, 60 species of fish of great economic value.



**Figure 1. Establishments of tourist reception with functions of tourists' accommodation in counties bordering the Danube / MU: Number**

*Source: © 1998 - 2015 National Institute of Statistics*

From the analysis “Establishments of tourist reception with functions of tourists' accommodation” for a period of 11 years it can be noticed a significant change during the economic crisis period and immediately after it. The indicator values recover in most cases, sometimes doubling or even more the value.

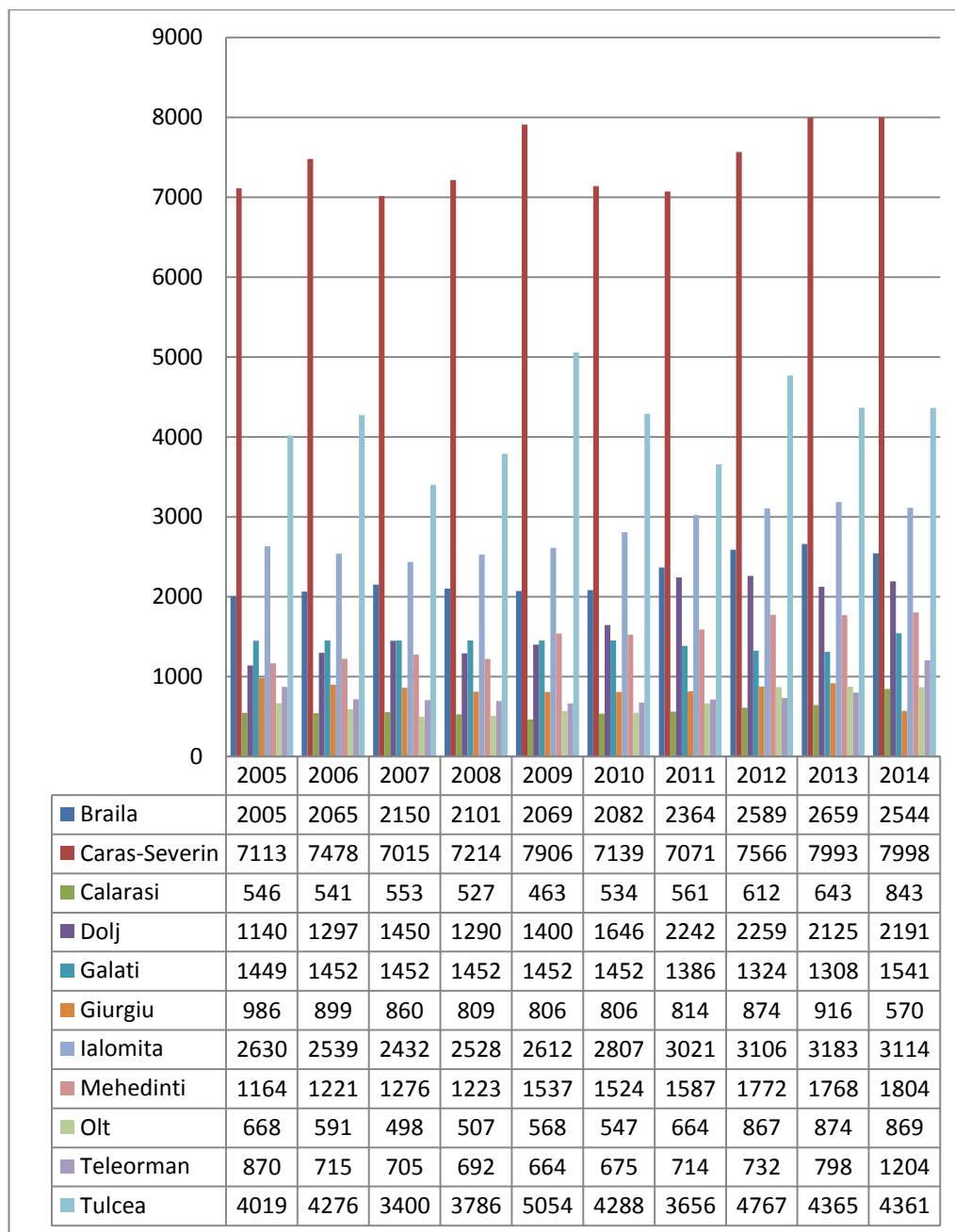
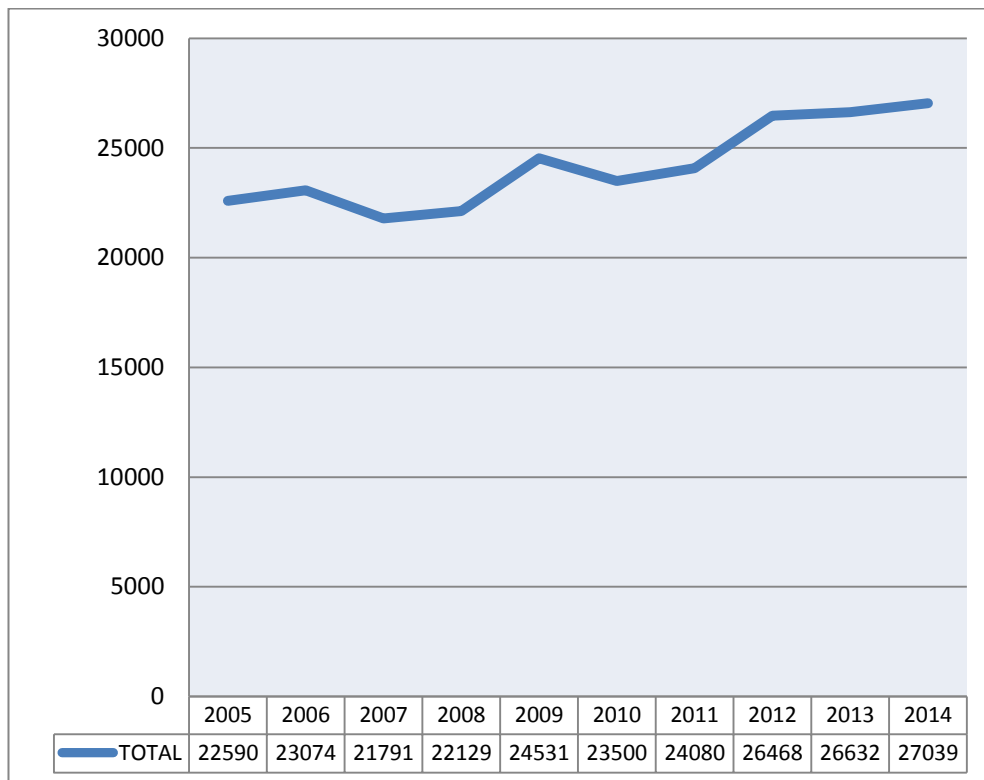


Figure 2. The tourist accommodation capacity in counties bordering the Danube / UM: seats

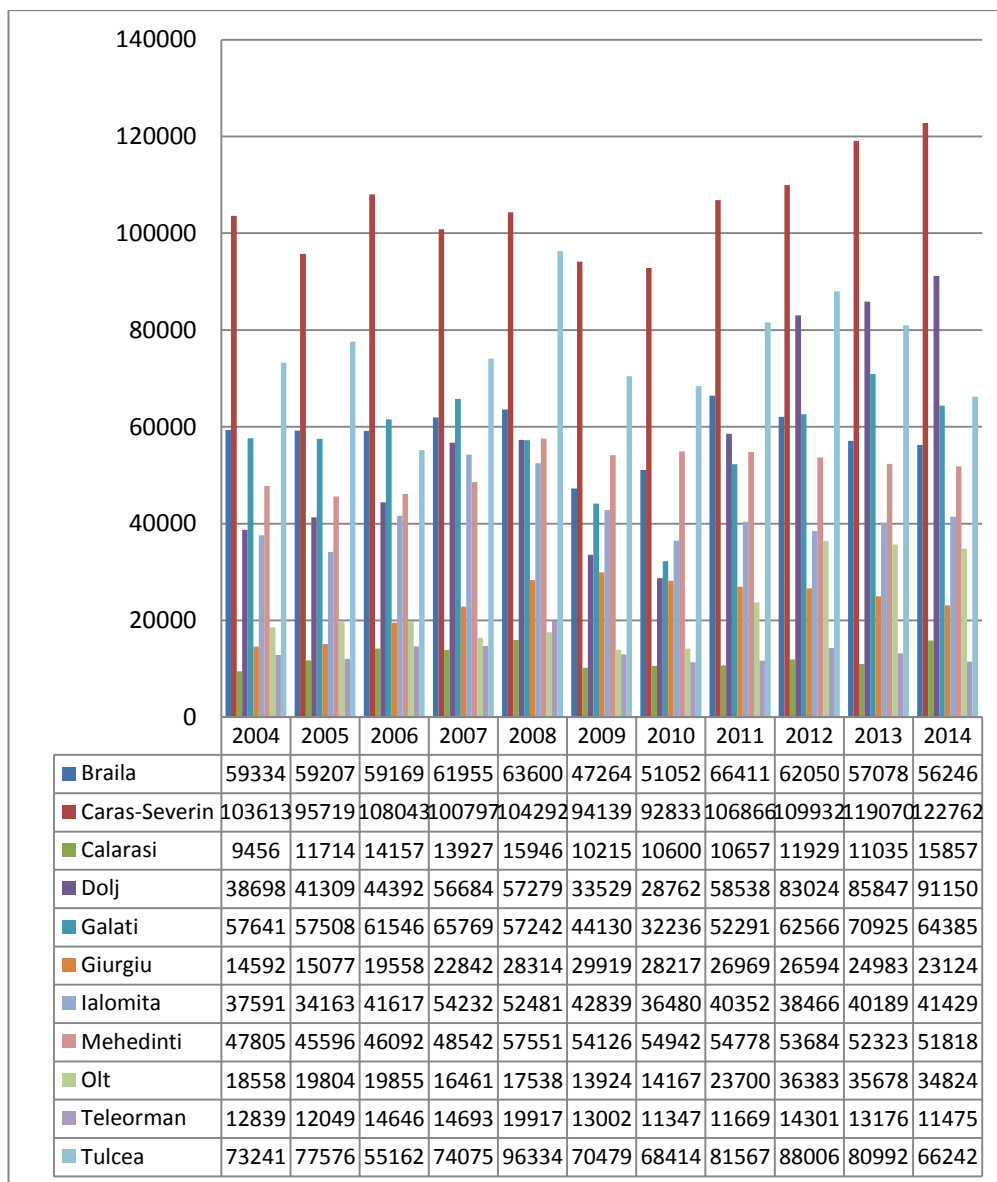
Source: © 1998 - 2015 National Institute of Statistics

For the period 2004-2014 “the tourists’ accommodation capacity” in counties bordering the Danube highlights a drop in the period 2008-2010 for most analyzed areas. Also we notice that it maintains the hierarchy, the greater capacity is in Cars-Severin County which recorded with 7998 seats in 2014 followed by Tulcea County with 4361 seats in 2014 and Ialomita is ranked three with 3114 seats in 2014.



**Figure 3. Tourist accommodation capacity in counties bordering the Danube Tourism / UM: seats**

*Source: © 1998 - 2015 National Institute of Statistics*



**Figure 4. Tourist arrivals in tourist accommodation structures / MU: Persons**

*Source: © 1998 - 2015 National Institute of Statistics*

Regarding the analysis of indicator “Tourist arrivals in tourist accommodation structures” we have observed a significant decrease in the period 2010-2012, but there are regions bordering the Danube which recorded decreases in years 2013 and 2014, in this case we speak of Braila, Galati, Giurgiu, Mehedinti, Olt, Teleorman,

Tulcea. Caras Severin area, the Danube Defile, a dramatic drop in the 2009 and until 2014 it recorded an uptrend.

### 3. Conclusion

The tourism zone of the Danube River is destined for cruises and hiking. The cultural and natural attractions continue along the Danube to its lower extreme point, located in the Delta, already starting to assert itself as niche tourism. There is therefore a high potential for connecting all the existing tourism areas. Encouraging tourism for hiking along the Danube would bring multiple benefits in terms of promoting tourism values in the area, interconnection of the existing offers along the Danube, and the cross-border offers.

The cooperation between various Romanian Danube riparian areas would increase the employability in the tourism infrastructure. There are already programs to promote tourism in the Danube area where they focus on hiking tourism such as:

“Ideas for promoting hiking tourism destinations:

- Choose the most beautiful hiking trails;
- Connecting the most attractive points of interest;
- Ensuring access to main route (municipalities, landowners, etc.)
- Planning to mark the milestones of the routes;
- Establish a plan in terms of costs;
- Provide financial support (from the EU, regions, etc.)
- Promoting and developing products for hikers.”

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