

TOURISM MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING OF CLIMATIC AND SPA RESORTS IN ROMANIA

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Abstract: *This paper refers to the management, planning, certification and authorization of climatic and spa resorts, as well as to the organizing activity of using the natural therapeutic factors in Romania. The certified climatic and spa resorts are delimited by urbanism and territory planning plans. The predominant type of natural therapeutic factors determines the specificity of a resort and its therapeutic profile. Romania has 108 certified tourist resorts. The statute of climatic and spa resort is granted by Government decisions. The functioning authorization for the natural therapeutic factors, medical-spa and recovery units in climatic and spa resorts, is issued by the National Institute of Recovery, Physical Medicine and Balneoclimatology. The coordination and control of health care activity in spa and climatic resorts and the proper organization and functioning of these resorts are carried out by the Ministry of Health. The current legislation provides a series of technical rules on systemizing and organizing climatic and spa resorts. Since the legislative terms are met, a proper tourism management and planning, a better involvement of local and national authorities, a better and diversified offer, a new strategy to develop medical tourism, and a better promotion of the Romanian balneological tourism are the key elements to develop medical tourism in Romania, to the benefit of all stakeholders.*

Keywords: Tourism management, Tourism planning, Climatic resort, Spa.

JEL Classification Codes: Z320, Z300, O140.

1. INTRODUCTION ON CERTIFYING TOURIST RESORTS AND NATURAL THERAPEUTIC FACTORS IN ROMANIA

Certification of tourist resorts is made by the Ministry of Tourism, at the request of the local public administration authorities, and it is approved by a Government decision. Certification as a tourist resort does not change the rank of the respective locality established under the law (Simoni, 2017).

The norms and criteria of certifying tourist resorts (of national or local interest) were established by Decision no. 852/2008, and belong to the following categories, for which a certified tourist resort has to achieve a minimum score:

- natural environment, natural treatment factors and environment quality (the natural and anthropogenic resources must be entered in the Tourist Heritage Register, and in case of natural treatment factors, there must be documents attesting their value);
- access and roads to / in the resort;
- urban utilities;



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- accommodation and leisure facilities (minimum 500 accommodation places for the national resorts, minimum 100 accommodation places for those of local interest, minimum 30% accommodation units ranked 3-5 stars);
- tourist information and promotion;
- additional criteria of certifying a tourist resort.

At present (tables 1 and 2) Romania has 108 certified tourist resorts, divided into 47 tourist resorts of national interest (of which 23 spa and climatic resorts and 3 spas) and 61 local tourist resorts (including 4 spa and climatic resorts). Most tourist resorts have not received yet the status of spa and climatic resorts, because the necessary documentation for certification has not been prepared and submitted by the local authorities.

Table 1. The evolution of certified tourist resorts in Romania

Year	Total number of certified tourist resorts	Tourist resorts of national interest	Tourist resorts of local interest	Legislative acts attesting the status of tourist resort
2002	65	29	36	Government Decision no. 1122/2002
2008	83	37	46	Government Decisions nos. 867/2006 and 852/2008
2011	89	41	48	Government Decisions nos. 848/2009, 1204/2009, 1205/2009, 511/2010, 1181/2011 and 1016/2011
2013	98	41	57	Government Decisions nos. 1161/2012 and 1072/2013
2017	100	40	60	Government Decision no. 58/2017
2018	108	47	61	Government Decision no. 107/2018

Source: processed and updated data after Simoni (2017)

Table 2. The certified tourist resorts of Romania (2018), according to the legislation in effect

Pos.	Certified tourist resorts of national interest	Location (county)	Pos.	Certified tourist resorts of local interest	Location (county)
1	Amara (S)	Ialomița	1	1 Mai (SC)	Bihor
2	Azuga	Prahova	2	Albac	Alba
3	Bușteni	Prahova	3	Bughea de Sus	Argeș
4	Buziaș (SC)	Timiș	4	Arieșeni	Alba
5	Băile Govora (S)	Vâlcea	5	Balványos	Covasna
6	Băile Felix (SC)	Bihor	6	Bazna (SC)	Sibiu
7	Băile Herculane (S)	Caraș-Severin	7	Băltătești	Neamț
8	Băile Olănești (SC)	Vâlcea	8	Băile Homorod	Harghita
9	Băile Tușnad (SC)	Harghita	9	Băile Turda	Cluj
10	Câmpulung Moldovenesc	Suceava	10	Băile Băița	Cluj
11	Cap Aurora (SC)	Constanța	11	Bran	Brașov
12	Călimănești-Căciulata (SC)	Vâlcea	12	Breaza	Prahova
13	Costinești	Constanța	13	Călacea	Timiș
14	Covasna (SC)	Covasna	14	Cheia	Prahova
15	Eforie Nord (SC)	Constanța	15	Crivaia	Caraș-Severin
16	Eforie Sud (SC)	Constanța	16	Durău	Neamț

17	Geoagiu-Băi (SC)	Hunedoara	17	Harghita-Băi	Harghita
18	Gura Humorului	Suceava	18	Horezu	Vâlcea
19	Jupiter (SC)	Constanța	19	Izvoru Mureșului	Harghita
20	Mamaia	Constanța	20	Lacu Roșu	Harghita
21	Mangalia (SC)	Constanța	21	Lacu Sărat	Brăila
22	Moneasa (SC)	Arad	22	Lipova	Arad
23	Neptun-Olimp (SC)	Constanța	23	Moieciu	Brașov
24	Poiana Brașov	Brașov	24	Ocna Sibiului (SC)	Sibiu
25	Predeal	Brașov	25	Ocna Șugatag (SC)	Maramureș
26	Pucioasa (SC)	Dâmbovița	26	Păltiniș	Sibiu
27	Slănic (SC)	Prahova	27	Pârâul Rece	Brașov
28	Saturn (SC)	Constanța	28	Praid	Harghita
29	Sinaia	Prahova	29	Săcelu	Gorj
30	Sângeorz-Băi (SC)	Bistrița-Năsăud	30	Sărata Monteoru	Buzău
31	Slănic-Moldova (SC)	Bacău	31	Secu	Caraș-Severin
32	Sovata (SC)	Mureș	32	Semenic	Caraș-Severin
33	Târgu Ocna (SC)	Bacău	33	Snagov	Ilfov
34	Techirghiol (S)	Constanța	34	Stâna de Vale	Bihor
35	Vatra Dornei (SC)	Suceava	35	Straja	Hunedoara
36	Venus (SC)	Constanța	36	Soveja	Vrancea
37	Voineasa	Vâlcea	37	Tășnad	Satu Mare
38	Petroșani-Parâng	Hunedoara	38	Timișu de Sus	Brașov
39	Târgu Neamț	Neamț	39	Tinca	Bihor
40	Piatra Neamț	Neamț	40	Trei Ape	Caraș-Severin
41	Râșnov	Brașov	41	Vălenii de Munte	Prahova
42	Borsec	Harghita	42	Vața de Jos	Hunedoara
43	Sucevița	Suceava	43	Zona Fântânele	Cluj
44	Borșa	Maramureș	44	Zona Muntele Băișorii	Cluj
45	Dâmbovicioara	Argeș	45	Vișeu de Sus	Maramureș
46	Mamaia Nord-Năvodari	Constanța	46	Șuior-Baia Sprie	Maramureș
47	Pestera-Padina (Moroieni)	Dâmbovița	47	Baia de Fier	Gorj
Notes: Certification of localities as tourist resorts of national or local interest by Government Decisions nos. 1122/2002, 867/2006, 852/2008, 848/2009, 1204/2009, 1205/2009, 511/2010, 1181/2011, 1161/2012, 1072/2013, 58/2017, 107/2018. (S) – the status of spa, according to the law (Government Decisions nos. 1016/2011 and 1072/2013) (SC) – the status of spa and climatic resort, according to the law (Government Decisions nos. 1016/2011 and 1072/2013) Please note that the table contains only the certified tourist resorts, the actual list of all Romanian resorts and tourist centers being larger.			48	Boghiș	Sălaj
			49	Colibița	Bistrița-Năsăud
			50	Moisei	Maramureș
			51	Negrești Oaș	Satu Mare
			52	Pojorâta	Suceava
			53	Sângeorgiu de Mureș	Mureș
			54	Băile Banffy (Toplița)	Harghita
			55	Ocna Dej	Cluj
			56	Moinești-Băi	Bacău
			57	Cacica	Maramureș
			58	Dorna Căldreilor	Suceava
			59	Oncești	Maramureș
			60	Poiana Stampei	Suceava
			61	Solca	Suceava

Source: processed and updated data after Simoni (2017)

Romania's therapeutic factors of great touristic potential are the following physical and chemical natural elements: therapeutic mineral and thermal springs, therapeutic lakes, therapeutic muds, salines, mofettes, the Black Sea coast, bioclimates.

Due to the palaeogeographic evolution and the geological complexity of Romania's territory, the mineral water reserves are rich and varied in terms of chemical composition, belonging to all categories recognized by the World Health Organization. The carbonated mineral waters are characteristic for the mountains with post-volcanic activity, the chlorinated-sodium and sulphurous waters for the Subcarpathians, while the thermo-mineral waters are either linked to mountains with post-volcanic activity or to the western fault system of our country. From the point of view of their physico-chemical composition, the therapeutic mineral waters of Romania are classified as follows, according to the legislation in effect (Government Decision no. 1154/2004): *oligo-metallic - akritic; alkaline and alkaline nitrate – bicarbonate; sodium; calcium; magnesium; sodium chloride - salted; iodine; brominated; sulphate; ferruginous; arsenical; sulphurous; carbonated; radioactive.*

Depending on the chemical composition and the concentration in mineral substances, these therapeutic mineral waters are used in the following ways (Government Decision no. 1154/2004):

- internal therapy for drinking - crenotherapy, aerosols and inhalations;
- parenteral injections;
- external therapy as baths: in individual baths, bathing pools, kinetic therapy pools, swimming pools and solariums, as well as in the form of medicinal irrigation;
- to extract salts or gases for therapy or for industrialization.

The authorization to use the therapeutic mineral waters for drinking is granted by order of the Minister of Health, on the basis of the documentation drawn up by the National Institute of Recovery, Physical Medicine and Balneoclimatology.

2. DEFINING CLIMATIC AND SPA RESORTS. MANAGING THE USE OF NATURAL THERAPEUTIC FACTORS IN ROMANIA

According to the Romanian legislation (Law no. 343/2002), there are three types of resorts with natural therapeutic factors:

- a *climatic resort* is a locality located in areas with benefic climatic factors, having facilities to maintain and improve health and/or work capacity, as well as rest and recreation facilities;
- a *spa* is a locality having mineral resources that are scientifically proven and traditionally recognized as therapeutically effective, specific facilities for therapy and organized to provide medical care appropriately;
- a *spa and climatic resort* is a locality that meets the terms listed in the above two cases.

The localities and/or the areas established as spa, climatic or spa and climatic resorts are delimited by urbanism and territory planning plans. The predominant type of natural therapeutic factors determines the specificity of a resort and its therapeutic profile (Government Decision no. 1154/2004).

The status of spa, climatic or spa and climatic resort is granted by Government decision, at the proposal of the local councils, consulting, if necessary, the population involved, on the basis of the unitary technical norms elaborated by the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Waters and Forests, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Economy, with the approval of the National Agency for Mineral Resources.

The activity of using the natural factors for therapeutic purposes, including the functioning of medical, spa and recovery facilities, irrespective of their legal status and their subordination,

the use of mineral waters for drinking and the establishment of sanitary protection perimeters are authorized by the Ministry of Health, documented by the National Institute of Recovery, Physical Medicine and Balneoclimatology (Government Decision no. 1154/2004).

The National Institute of Recovery, Physical Medicine and Balneoclimatology is a health unit with legal personality, subordinated to the Ministry of Health, having a series of technical, methodological and promotional attributions regarding the medical, spa and recovery activities. It also ensures the legal functioning of climatic and spa resorts.

The coordination and control of health care activity in spa and climatic resorts and the proper organization and functioning of these resorts are carried out by the Ministry of Health. The Ministry of Health collaborates with the Ministry of Waters and Forests, the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Transport and the local councils of the localities that function as spas and climatic resorts, to the rational use of natural environmental factors.

The Committee for balneo-physio-therapy and medical recovery of the Ministry of Health establishes for each climatic and spa resort, before consulting the National Institute of Recovery, Physical Medicine and Balneoclimatology, the treatment profile, the categories of diseases to be cured, the contra-indicated conditions, depending on the therapeutic properties of the natural therapeutic factors in the respective area, as well as the minimal conditions the balneo-physic and recovery facilities must meet (Government Decision no. 1154/2004).

According to the legislation in effect, the establishment of sanitary protection perimeters is mandatory for each spa and climatic resort and for the sources of natural therapeutic factors. The following therapeutic factors are protected: mineral waters; therapeutic lakes; seashore, seaside and coastal seas and lakes; therapeutic muds; therapeutic gases; the air; the natural landscape of each resort.

3. CERTIFYING AND AUTHORIZING CLIMATIC AND SPA RESORTS

The authorization to operate the medical, spa and recovery facilities in climatic and spa resorts, from the medical and therapeutic points of view, is mandatory and it is issued upon request, for a period of 10 years, by the National Institute of Recovery, Physical Medicine and Balneoclimatology.

The status of climatic or spa resort is granted if the following terms are met (Law no. 343/2002):

a) complex analysis of the natural factors in the respective area, carried out by specialized institutions;

b) the Ministry of Health, through the National Institute of Recovery, Physical Medicine and Balneoclimatology establishes the sanitary protection perimeters, listed in the urbanism and territory planning plans;

c) facilities to use the natural therapeutic factors;

d) sanitary units, including treatment bases, with appropriate medical and sanitary personnel, accredited according to the law, suitable to provide healthcare and recovery;

e) access roads, urban and public infrastructure, telecommunications;

f) facilities for rest and relaxation.

The criteria to define and authorize climate resorts are the following:

- the existence of a bioclimate with favorable effects on the healthy or diseased human body, well documented (temperatures, pluviometric regime, air movement, air ionization, natural aerosol loading, etc.) and contiguous factors (altitude, soil structure, landform configuration, lakes, general landscaping, green areas, etc.);

- the existence of an observatory to monitor the climatic and microclimatic factors of the resort;
- the conditions to rest and strengthen health and work capacity, by means of installations and facilities ensuring the correct use of the bioclimatic factors of the resort (beaches, solariums, parks, outdoor recreation and sports grounds, marked trails for aerotherapy, terraces, shading places, aerotherapy parks, swimming pools, gyms, etc.);
- establishing and respecting the sanitary protection area of the resort, in order to avoid pollution;
- achieving the terms of modern urbanism;
- the existence of various means of relaxation and recreation;
- providing medical care, including climatic therapy.

The *criteria to define and authorize spas* are the following:

- the existence of appropriate therapeutic sources and natural therapeutic factors that are scientifically recognized as efficient (therapeutic mineral waters, therapeutic lakes and muds, therapeutic natural gases);
- the existence of sanitary units organized in accordance with the legal provisions in force, providing prophylactic, therapeutic and/or recovery medical care, depending on the profile of the resort;
- the existence of balneological facilities necessary to capture, transport and use the natural factors, corresponding to the existing methodologies for the therapeutic application of these factors;
- the existence of a complex of physical medicine facilities and facilities adapted to the pathology profiles treated in that resort (hydro-kinetic therapy, kinetic therapy, thermal-therapy, electrotherapy, pneumo-therapy, occupational therapy, etc.);
- the possibility to provide food regimes adapted to the diseases treated in the resort;
- the existence of the necessary equipment to provide emergency medical assistance permanently (adequately equipped emergency room, doctor on duty, ambulance, as well as intensive care facility in the cardio-respiratory resorts);
- the existence of minimum facilities to conduct investigations adapted to the profile of the resort, to diagnose and monitor the therapeutic effects;
- medical and sanitary personnel trained in the pathology specific to the resort and in the methodology of efficient use of the natural therapeutic factors;
- the existence of an unpolluted microclimate;
- a modern urbanism (drinking and sewerage network, electric lighting, paved access roads, clean and not agglomerated buildings with appropriate architecture, predominant green areas);
- establishing the sanitary protection perimeter of natural therapeutic resources, in order to avoid the elements that could pollute them and the microclimate and that could produce phonic or aesthetic pollution in the resort (constructions, industries, workshops, farms, etc.);
- facilities for relaxation, sport, culture.

The *criteria to authorize spa and climatic resorts* cumulate the criteria of spas and climatic resorts mentioned above.

4. TECHNICAL RULES OF PLANNING CLIMATIC AND SPA RESORTS

The current legislation provides a series of technical rules on systemizing and organizing climatic and spa resorts (Government Decision no. 1154/2004).

Depending on the structure or the proximity to other localities, the spas, climatic or spa and climatic resorts may be classified into the following categories:

- resorts with exclusive functions of treatment or resting, as independent localities;
- resorts located as continuation of urban or rural localities;
- resorts located in urban or rural localities, where treatment and rest areas intersect with other areas of the locality.

The *delimitation of the resort* is in accordance with the provisions of Law no. 350/2001 on urbanism and territory planning, respecting an index of at least 100-200m² per visitor or permanent resident.

The *systematization of the resorts* is subject to the following general restrictions:

- prohibiting activities that could pollute the air, water, soil, subsoil and natural therapeutic resources, forests and any terrestrial and aquatic vegetation, as well as buildings, in the limits and in the surrounding area of the resort;
- preventing any harmful interference with the treatment, rest and tourism areas, for those resorts having other functions (industrial, agricultural, etc.).

The *green areas* represent 2/3 of the territory of a spa, climatic or spa and climatic resort, being sized according to the norm of 50-150m² per visitor or permanent resident. The green areas have the following purposes:

- ensuring an optimal and curative landscape in the resort area;
- protecting the natural factors;
- treatment and rest (green areas specifically organized within the accommodation and treatment areas);
- leisure (public parks).

The spa, climatic, and spa and climatic resorts have, from the point of view of systematization and composition, the following *functional areas*:

a) *the accommodation area for spa and recovery treatment* (hospitals, sanatoriums and therapy hotels). The accommodation units for spa and recovery treatment are complex pavilions for accommodation-meals-treatment or small units (villas), whose location should be as close as possible to the treatment units, to the therapeutic factors and restaurants. These accommodation units should be located far from high traffic roads, with many green areas and parks, especially for the resorts with cardiovascular, respiratory and neurotic profiles. The capacity of an accommodation pavilion for spa and recovery treatment exceeds 50 beds.

b) *the accommodation area for rest* is organized according to the length of the stay, from a few days to several weeks, in hotels, villas and cottages. Catering is provided by units such as restaurants, canteens, buffets, confectioners, brasseries, etc. In addition, there are social, cultural and sports facilities, some commercial and public service units, as well as green areas. Transit or high traffic roads should be located at the edge of the accommodation area for rest. The density index within the accommodation area for rest is around 100-150 beds/ha.

c) *the area for transit and short stay tourism*

d) *the living area for the residents*

e) *the area for private resting houses*

f) *the political, administrative, social, cultural and commercial area* (headquarters of the political and public organizations, tourism offices, pharmaceutical points, public catering units, non-food commercial units, traditional food market, handicraft shops, etc.)

g) *the area of social and cultural activities* (multi-purpose room with adequate equipment for cinema, theater performances, conferences, club, library, exhibitions, etc.)

h) *the public service area* (police units, postal services, banking units, travel agencies, taxi stations)

i) *the area for local industries and warehouses*

j) *the area for sports facilities*

k) *the area for balneological and climatic treatment facilities*, where the main medical facilities are: treatment units, natural therapeutic resources, specialized dispensaries and hospital units with sanatorium beds, hospitals.

The *treatment units* in spa, climatic, spa and climatic resorts represent all buildings and spaces designed to carry out the qualified process of treatment with natural physico-chemical therapeutic factors (mineral waters, therapeutic muds, mofettes, climatic therapy) and by procedures of physical medicine (kinetic therapy, respiratory therapy, aerosols, therapeutic swimming pools). The natural curative factors should be transported to the treatment units or these units should be located as close as possible to the therapeutic sources, applying the necessary measures for the hydro-geological and health protection of the respective factors. The treatment units may be designed independently of the accommodation areas, with a number of advantages in operation, such as concentrating the equipment and the specialized personnel. In this case, the treatment units should be located at convenient distances and should liaise with the accommodation units through sheltered corridors.

The organizational structure necessary to carry out the activities in the treatment units may include, depending on the profile of the resort, specialized areas to provide the following treatments and procedures:

- mineral water balneology, hydrotherapy, application of therapeutic muds and the like;
- application of therapeutic gases and the like;
- therapeutic parks;
- kinetic therapy, occupational therapy and massage therapy;
- electrotherapy;
- respiratory therapy.

In addition, there should be areas for relaxation and group psychotherapy, as well as the outdoor therapeutic areas, considered balneological, physiological and climatic treatment bases:

- drinking fountains;
- swimming pools;
- solariums;
- therapeutic lakes;
- marked trails for hiking;
- salines;
- others likewise.

The prophylactic balneological medical care requires some of the following programs: fitness programs, programs to combat obesity, programs for thermoregulation mechanisms; programs to combat risk factors. Depending on the applied program, the following minimum facilities are required:

- kinetic therapy room equipped with aerobic training equipment;
- alternative hydro-thermo-therapy compartment;
- swimming pools and ponds;
- marked trails;
- green areas;
- solariums;
- rooms for relaxation and group therapy.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This paper contributes scientifically through an overview of tourism management and planning of climatic and spa resorts in Romania, the legislation in effect, a short history of tourist resort certification and a complete and up-to-date list of the certified tourist resorts in Romania.

Although Romania has an exceptional balneological and climate potential, only a few tourist resorts are certified as spas or climatic resorts, according to the legislation in effect. Since the legislative terms are met, a proper tourism management and planning, a better involvement of local and national authorities, a better and diversified offer, a new strategy to develop medical tourism (more investments in healthcare infrastructure and latest medical technologies, highly educated medical personnel, a fair balance between service costs and quality - Vasile, Toma & Țigu, 2018), and a better promotion of the Romanian balneological tourism are the key elements to develop medical tourism in Romania, to the benefit of all stakeholders.

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