

PROMOTING NAUTICAL TOURISM IN ROMANIA

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La promotion du tourisme nautique en Roumanie. Pour le tourisme nautique, la politique de promotion représente l'une des composantes les plus essentielles du développement du tourisme. Les éléments de promotion sont importants pour la création et le développement de certaines relations à moyen et long terme avec des clients éventuels. La promotion a la plus forte influence sur le tourisme de niche, comme la chasse et le tourisme de la pêche, le tourisme nautique, le tourisme d'aventure. Au cours des années, dans le but de promouvoir le tourisme nautique est plus axée non seulement sur l'information exclusive et la popularité, mais pour encourager une vraie consommation par des touristes possibles. Dans ce contexte, les actions visant à déterminer les clients potentiels d'acheter des produits touristiques spécifiques deviennent le véritable but de promotion, créé par une équipe de marketing, existent dans une agence de tourisme ou dans une entreprise importante de tourisme.

INTRODUCTION

In terms of proportions and characteristic features in different geographical areas on the Globe, water is a modelling and decisive factor in the evolution of settlements. For economic activities, including tourism, water is used by two major transportation systems and one for tourism.

The attraction for nautical tourism¹ derives from the original organization and development of tourism activities and the way of combining resources and tourist services that can provide a wide variety of tourism programs. This type of tourism relies on the existence of some certified routes of navigation, of some well-managed coastal areas and the use of certain transportation means.

In the last 5-6 decades, nautical tourism has been on greater demand after it had been included in tourist sojourn programs. Therefore, tourists may travel on land to reach sea or riversides with exceptional landscapes, or make a voyage in order to benefit from tourist services offered in harbours.

The term nautical tourism is linked to the idea of navigation, but currently yachting, navigation tourism, nautical recreation are more often used. There are also universally accepted definitions, formulated by nautical tourism experts, standing for the *sum of multi-functional activities and relations caused by the tourists mooring in or off nautical tourism harbours using vessels or other navigation facilities, for the purpose of recreation, sports or simply for the enjoyment of leisure*².

Nautical tourism is a form of tourism which beside recreational navigation, organized with one's own or rented boats, accommodation and/or overnights on board, includes also trips organized by cruising ship owners and travel agencies, cabin cruisers for the tourists' rest and recreation (e.g. fishing, scuba diving, underwater photographing). The marinas specialized in this type of tourism are seen in France, Italy, Spain, Greece, Turkey, Israel, USA, the United Arab Emirates – Dubai, Qatar –, Croatia, and Bulgaria, Pursuant to the International Council of Maritime Association – ICOMA, in 2012 there were 4,500 marinas in the EU coastal and inland waters, with a turnover of 6 billion Euros

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¹ In the literature, nautical tourism includes water activities, bathing, swimming, scuba diving and – floating and sailing with various ships.

² Luck, M. editor (2007) *Nautical Tourism: Concepts and Issues*, Chapter III, Cognizant Communication Corporation, Elmsford NY, ISBN:1-882345-50-9

for ship-building. Around 2,000 marinas are seen in Northern Europe, 800 on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean, and 1,200 in the Mediterranean Sea.

In Romania (Government Decision No. 452/2003 regarding *the development of recreational activities*) recreation represents the sum of recreational or sporting activities performed with specific equipment, and/or with nautical recreational boats in navigable national waters³. In this form of tourism, there are two essential elements – ships/ boats of any size and marinas.

Some initiatives for practicing this type of tourism have been taken in this country, too, over the last years. Gradually, there emerged a desire to build more marinas on the Romanian Black Sea coastal areas and organize a series of events devoted to nautical sports.

Thus in 2012, on Surduc Lake and its surrounding area (Timiș County), a sporting event combining an aviation show with nautical sports took place from the 30th of June to the 1st of July. It attracted for more tourists, than if the offer had been simply accommodation and participation in sports water⁴. Other nautical sporting events such as the annual festival of rowing boats in Tulcea, and the Neptun regatta at Mangalia⁵ take place on Siutghiol Lake and Snagov Lake.

In this context, nautical tourism includes an active human component (teams and beginner navigators, and licensed commanders), a passive component (passengers, tourists, and visitors who prefer boating and sailing), and the management and endowment component, that is specialized harbours and various types of boats⁶.

Distinctive elements of nautical tourism and its promotion

The notion of nautical, very much used in the specialist literature, refers to all that is connected to water, being used to identify all water-related activities and sports but, at the same time, all that refers to navigation⁷. Nautical tourism proper, includes nautical ports (marinas), yacht charter, river and maritime cruises. In relation with customers, nautical tourism contains a series of fundamental requests (harbour facilities – marinas, transportation services, parking, sheds, etc.) and additional requests (accommodation, food, extreme sports, recreation and entertainment, etc., the final purpose being to satisfy the customers).

This desideratum places in direct relationship requirements and final satisfaction likely to make the client return to the same tourist market, the same or another tourist destination very close to it; a high degree of satisfaction could decide the client to buy a tourist services package for a longer period of time and for the same destination. The phenomenon of satisfaction becomes very important by its two components: a material one (stable quality-to-price) and an emotional one (the level of satisfaction attained, maximum personal satisfaction).

Very important in all the phases of implementing the marketing mix in nautical tourism and water-based sports is the general profile of a possible client/tourist.

The profile of the nautical tourist:

- middle aged person who loves the natural environment (nature, culture, beautiful landscapes);
- prefers individual or small-group travels;
- can spend a certain amount of holiday money.

³ INCDT (2012), *Planning of integrated development of nautical tourism in Romania – 1st Stage – Development of international and domestic nautical tourism*, Bucharest, pp. 13–17.

⁴ During the 3rd edition, sail-boats, dragon boats, and nautical ski demonstrations were seen on Surduc Lake; the Timiș County Red Cross gave a drowning rescue lesson.

⁵ <http://www.nauticmagazine.ro/evenimente/concursuri/> in Romania.

⁶ Translation, adaptation and interpretation from Ludovic Tihomir, Mirjana Kovacic – *The new profile of town ports in the development of nautical tourism* – Faculty of Maritime Studies at Rijeka / Journal of Maritime Studies/UDK 656.61 Pomorstvo (Rij, 1999), God./vol. 21, no. 2/Str./all p. 232/Rijeka 2007./pp. 185–206.

⁷ Conceptual adaptation, source: Thierry Michot, article in Cahier Espaces no. 35 – *Loisirs nautiques et aquatiques*, Editions Espaces tourisme & loisirs, February 1994 – 2 pages.

In these conditions, in the marketing mix applied mainly to niche tourism, any client becomes ever more valuable as active participant in accepting and purchasing tourist products, thereby contributing to the business welfare of a tourism company or agency.

Thus, one can determine the effects of customer relationship management (CRM)⁸ for niche tourism, especially for he/she who is assessing them, effects that are expressed by:

- a more selective orientation towards various customer segments, with focus on the quality of tourist products;
- having clients really satisfied, in all development phases of a tourist product or program;
- greater responsibility of all the participants who sustain a certain tourist program – product;
- greater attention to the clients' education, professional qualification, family and social background, religion, ethnicity, incomes in order to evaluate options and specialize the tourist products;
- greater preoccupation of tourism economic operators for quality and the client, with highlight on the individual and collective satisfaction of both parties.

It follows that the best method to sell a tourism service package to a client is to concentrate your attention on the respective person to make sure that he/she will have a pleasant and appealing holiday sojourn, which is very important when a tourist product has no brand or well-consolidated image. In Romania, nautical tourism does not hold a privileged position and is not practiced by domestic tourists, but rather by those who come from other European countries. Moreover, the conditions offered by the Black Sea waters and the respective harbours are not up to the mark to those of countries where nautical tourism is already a consolidated type of tourism, with a well-defined place within the tourist industry. As regards endowment and specific services, most harbours fall into the 3rd category.

Another form of promotion is regional marketing that includes, apart from the price, also product, promotion, distribution and presentation of the region to sustain nautical tourism and its nominal capital, specific promotion approaches being required in order to create a regional brand⁹. This form of tourism also promotes the locality hosting it.

In order that this form of tourism become a hobby, customer relationship management (implemented in 1991) should become a priority for marketing specialists. Potential customers in nautical tourism are very different from those in other forms of tourism, because the aquatic environment and its specific infrastructure impose other requirements, attitudes and satisfactions.

Depending on the evolutions of the tourist markets and the competition among them, especially in what concerns the practice of this niche tourism, we may distinguish several advantages primarily for tourists but for the locals, too, such as:

- better information offered to customers concerning the particularities of the tourist products compared to others already in the market;
- greater time-and-space stability of customers for certain products on offer;
- the advantage of building direct relationships between promoters/marketers and customers;
- a better quality of services and support of innovation in all tourist activities developed on the coast, on water, and underwater;
- expanding businesses and various partnerships (public-private, private-public, and public-public), in order to accelerate direct investments;
- maintaining moderate costs and practicing prices used in the tourist market to attract different categories of customers;
- a process of promotion oriented to the customers' needs and preferences.

⁸ Better communication and customer information focuses on the implementation of customer relationship management (CRM).

⁹ *** The National Institute for Tourism Research and Development (2012), *Planning the integrated development of nautical tourism in Romania – 4th Stage/the Management of sustainable development of nautical harbours/Marketing guide for the localities that have nautical marinas*, pp. 102-111, Bucharest.

Aside from these advantages, the implementation of a customer relationship management requires that the product lifecycle be correlated with the customer's lifecycle (childhood, adolescence, youth, adulthood, old age); this proves that the new marketing mix is synchronized with product competitiveness in the tourist market, according to the customers' income and options. This aspect becomes obvious in the case of nautical tourism, because activities such as driving a boat, and practicing nautical sports are closely linked to one's age and a good physical condition.

In the near future, customer relationship marketing will become one of the essential components of the niche tourism promotion process, allowing for tourism companies and agencies to focus their action strategies on customers, by permanently innovating quality and relationships of communication and promotion.

The influence of sustainable development on the promotion of nautical tourism

Nowadays, activities and services that sustain nautical tourism and water sports imply the implementation of complex legal mechanisms which, on the one hand, are connected with the maritime and river domain and on the other hand, with the local administrations of cities and villages, and have in view environmental protection.

In summer, when the number of visitors and tourists is at its highest, conflicts may occur between boat users and the people discharging economic, commercial, transport and fishing activities. There are numerous situations in which such conflicts may develop, for example:

- lack of coherence in the local management policies of public and private terrains situated in port areas, due to the public administration system (absence of updated cadastres and of land management for the business milieu);
- ambiguities in establishing functions and activities that may be developed on any harbour precincts whatever size and draught of ship;
- the attitudes of great navigation companies that do not respect mooring rules, piloting¹⁰ and environmental protection;
- vandalism and disturbance of public quiet by visitors/ tourists temporarily anchored in port-cities;
- the seasonal character of activities in harbours and tourism which are less intense in winter than in transition seasons and summertime.

In general, it is commonly accepted that the aquatic environment (fluvial and marine) has a fragile ecological balance; man-and-climate-change-induced environmental degradation and destruction over the past few decades has been taking place at a faster pace. Therefore, harbour managers, local public administrations, the entrepreneurial milieu, town-planners, architects, builders, and tourism companies should correlate their activities in order to ensure as best as possible medium-and-long-term development of port areas and zones so as to maximize economic functionality and competitiveness.

Attaining these goals requires taking several actions, regardless of whether harbours are located in river or marine ecosystem:

- drafting a bibliographical documentation on the harbour history, development and expansion, as well as dysfunctions registered in time and space;
- elaborating a questionnaire inquiry targeting all actors of harbour-areas in order to know their future development strategies and the difficulties they are being faced with;
- defining the economic role of harbours in regional, local and national tourism;
- determining the contribution of entertainers and designing various cultural-artistic and sporting events, for the development of harbour tourism.¹¹

¹⁰ Piloting means directing the vessels to the berth and anchoring places.

¹¹ Adaptation and interpretation, source: *Guide de savoir-faire – La valorisation touristique des ports de plaisance*, ODIT, France, pdf, pp. 12–15, 2001.

All data and information obtained will contribute decisively to the elaboration of a harbour development strategy that is to include also nautical tourism and water sports, and set the directions for updating infrastructure and diversifying economic activities.

Therefore, it is necessary to determine the support capacity of each harbour, since there are lots of natural factors which can negatively influence port activities (e.g. sea level rise, strong water erosion, extreme weather phenomena, combined pollution forms, etc.).

According to EU environment directives, sustainable development of port areas requires major interventions as follows:

- the management of waste water and garbage to prevent the pollution of coastal and off-shore sea waters; all boats and vessels must clear wastes on board within the harbour area, before navigating in national and international water;
- the allocation of distinct spaces to different economic harbour functions, given that commercial and tourism activities are overlapping in the peak summer season, and slow down in winter;
- the implementation of drastic measures for pollution and polluters of port areas, measures distinct from other punitive forms, because the ecological balance being very fragile, both fauna and flora are affected;
- provision of educational and professional training to ship owners, freighters, tourists, visitors, and the local population, as well as information on ecology and environmental protection data;
- registration of an increasing number of harbours in the “Blue Flag” category, thereby improving their image for tourists and visitors.¹²

Sustainable development of port areas, irrespective of size, mooring capacity, draught of ship, the existence of urban and harbour infrastructure, city/village status, has direct advantages and a positive influence on tourism promotion, as follows:

- Improvement of the general image of a harbour and increase of its tourist activity;
- Establishment of an active communication system between all participants who contribute to the existence of the respective harbour and to local development;
- Development of nautical, sporting and cultural events, which in time should become a tradition;
- Progressive diminution of pollution sources in harbour areas, beginning with chemical pollution, the most frequent one, up to noise pollution;
- Quality improvement of principal and auxiliary tourism services, such as accommodation, food and entertainment.

Currently, two concepts sustain horizontal and vertical harbour development: the Anglo-Saxon one that stresses on closed harbour area, of high security for boats and people, and the French concept, more permissive, of an open harbour area for the public at large.¹³

Presently, the French approach is unanimously accepted, it underlining two crucial aspects, namely: the maintenance of a convivial harbour atmosphere open to various activities and access restriction and control to pontoon bridges and technical areas, anchoring, etc. Furthermore, the creation of panoramic spaces and public walking paths highlighting the cultural and natural potential of each harbour is also allowed.

This open approach requires the implementation of stricter land management rules, the careful use of existing resources, having urban-type furniture, securing watch-guard services and night lighting, that is a careful attitude meant to implement some minimal infrastructural elements for visitors and tourists. The modification of some port areas specifically for tourism, or the modernization of existing areas requires the implementation of rules for the sustainable development of fluvial and

¹² Translation and adaptation, source: Peaudeau P., Richebe R. (2002), *Le tourisme nautique – pour un développement local coordonné*, pp. 46–58, ODIT, France.

¹³ Adaptation and interpretation, source: *Guide de savoir-faire – La valorisation touristique des ports de plaisance*, in “Le Cahier de l’AFIT”, ODIT, France, p. 30, pdf, 2011.

maritime areas. Therefore, it is crucial to restore and preserve important buildings in any marina, to light the façade, maintain some traditional commercial areas and a specific harbour landscape.

Moreover, since 1999, a new management concept of port areas has been developed, namely, **the eco-harbour**. In Europe, there is a foundation, EcoPorts, to which anyone can adhere voluntarily, a good-practices guide-book being applied. At the beginning, this foundation was meant for sea port, subsequently including also river harbours. In this context, special attention has been paid to implementing more environmentally-friendly solutions for the development of marinas and tourist activities. Since 2011, the European Council has been sustaining measures to preserve the natural and cultural biodiversity and protect the environment as part of current harbour management.¹⁴

Under these circumstances, **the PERS certificate – Port Environmental Review System** may be granted after a previous analysis of all activities discharged in the respective harbour. The evaluation is made by **EPSO – European Sea Ports Organization**, which drafted a complete implementation guide in 2004. This evaluation working tool focuses on the port area – lands and water bodies, boat-harbour interactions, the analysis of coastal and off-coast zones with economic and transport roles.¹⁵ During the early decade of the 21st century, the first “land” ports emerged, in which tourist boats do not dock on water, but on shore, in specially designed places. Moreover, there is also the European Marina Federation – Euromarina, founded in 1989 with 17 permanent members.

At the same time, a project for an ecological navigation system was elaborated¹⁶, it suggesting the use of light, composite building-items, alternative renewable energy sources and of some non-water-polluting adhesives and paints. Since 2011, the cleaning of the ship bottom directly in water is forbidden in several harbours of France, Great Britain, and the Scandinavian countries, this operation must be performed only in special places, where waste water can be filtered and inside waste can be collected.

In some European harbours, car traffic has been limited in favour of public transport and urban cycling, and a pedestrian street network has been built, the aim was to reduce parking places, air and noise pollution.

The central and local public administrations involved in the management of sea and river areas have singled out the terrains on which tourist ports (marinas) can be built, or planned only for mooring/anchoring. In addition, mooring to land areas was devised to make room for other aquatic uses. In this way, pontoons and berths were left free during peak periods for commercial and tourist vessels.

In Romania, such management of marinas and environment is in an early stage. A priority is to reduce the volume of waste waters and the selective collection of waste for recycling and ecological storage.

Another aspect is the creation of **nautical resorts** focused on services and activities for people keen on this form of tourism. These resorts have in view a special program trying to operate activities during transitional seasons – spring or autumn, so as to extend the tourist season.

Elsewhere, nautical resorts are part of a tourist network, which includes other localities, too, thus broadening the offer of tourist attractions and extending the tourist season. This network does not focus on nautical tourism alone, but offers also all natural and cultural resources that can attract different categories of tourists and visitors. Therefore, infrastructural development and promotion are carried out through and with the support of this network (*e.g.*; the France Station – Voile Nautisme et Tourisme network).

¹⁴ At the beginning, the following harbours listed to obtain eco-harbour status: Amsterdam, Anvers, Barcelona, Göteborg, Gdansk, Hamburg, Oslo, Rotterdam, and Valencia.

¹⁵ Translation and adaptation, source: *Guide de savoir-faire – La valorisation touristique des ports de plaisance*, ODIT, France, pdf and wikipedia.org/wiki/ecoport, 2011.

¹⁶ <http://www.econav.org/?Guide-EcoNav-pour-un-bateau/fr>, 2002.

In Romania, such preoccupations began in the last decade targeting the harbours of Constanța, Mangalia, Eforie Nord – Marina Ana Yacht, Limanu marina in the small Mangalia estuary, Costinești marina and recreation area where major investments were made and others are just in progress. Small endowments have been earmarked to the Danube ports – Tulcea, Brăila, Galați, Sulina, Sfântu Gheorghe, Giurgiu, and Orșova.

Since the sea and river harbour areas do not allow for expansion beyond what has already been allocated to tourist activities, or there is no clear-cut zoning of harbour areas for economic activities, the best solution for nautical tourism to be operated at intermediate level is the creation of mixt companies.

Thus, a small local community may choose this type of organization and operation system, which relies on a public-private partnership; the head of the company, together with the main shareholders, the representatives of professional associations, NGOs and the local public administration elaborate a strategy which sets the first goals and actions for nautical tourism to become functional.

This mixt company has the advantage of being sustained by general interest, is transparent in matters of decision-making and action, can become efficient and profitable, has the capacity to attract important investors, or to get advantageous loans from the banks. Moreover, it encourages real social dialogue in order to avoid conflicts of interest and other possible conflicts with the local community. This system is working in France, Italy, Greece and Turkey.

Irrespective of the formula chosen for the existence and development of nautical tourism in port areas, there are four components of tourism sustainability:

- *The economic component*, whereby nautical tourism puts to account some aquatic and territorial areas that are less suitable for other economic activities because of lower depth, and cliffs, but may contribute to increasing occupancy in hotels, support local commercial and artisanal activities, as well as public and local services;

- *The cultural component*, basically developing a so-called maritime culture, that is a certain architecture, buildings with special functions, the maintenance of some sea-and-river – related professions and of an active cultural life – theatre, music, dance, etc.;

- *The social component* contributes to the greater stability of the local population, fewer people living only on fishing, the development of other professions required by the new tourist and nautical services incomes, and a better quality of life;

- *The environment component* involves codes of good practice in sea/river areas, both tourists and the local community members becoming more preoccupied with preserving the present quality of the environment in order to maintain its attractivity and the quality of natural and cultural tourist resources; a periodical evaluation of the state of environment is necessary in order to estimate investment effects made in time and space.

If these components are observed, any project for the development of this form of tourism will support the tourist attributes of a marina, even though it may not be particularly attractive urbanistically. Reaching a certain sustainable development level means having numerous forms of partnership and a legislation adjusted to sustain these forms. There are lots of ways of sustaining them but, a coherent and realistic project, offering a long-term perspective should be elaborated for each marina.

Romania is far from meeting these requirements, as there are no projects for all the localities on the Romanian seashore to have them developed in a complementary way, capable to diversify economic and tourist activities. Moreover, through this form of partnership there is less pressure on the natural and cultural resources and more effective land-use management.

Applying current sustainable development requirements will turn harbours into polyvalent places, open to the public at large and to private business alike. Moreover, since most urban centres are port-cities, they become entities of economic and urbanistic progress.

State-of-the-art in the promotion of nautical tourism

Neither the Romanian seaside nor the Danube River can presently be considered representative tourist products of this country in Europe or in the world, because they do not make it more competitive in this respect. There are many reasons for this situation but what is particularly obvious is the State's lack of interest for the development of tourism, the politicizing of this domain, and the absence of strategies on the part of local authorities.¹⁷

The general and the tourist infrastructure existing on the seaside and along the Danube cannot be included in the Romanian tourist brand, because there are no particular characteristics of our seaside and river areas to distinguish them from other countries; these areas cannot become attractive for various tourist segments, as they are not sufficiently promoted.

This situation is the result of the State's disinterest in the development and promotion of Romanian tourism, politicized tourism, incoherence and lack of a strategy on the part of the central authorities, repeated blocking of valuable projects and excessive focus on the projects of local communities and of local tour operators (coastal road, lake town, nautical cable ski lift, yacht marinas, etc.) rather than on smaller projects that could solve the current problems of the two tourist areas.

At the same time, the Association for the Promotion-Development of Seaside and Danube Tourism considers that lack of financing the programs and the special offers made by tourism partnerships also contribute to the present situation of the Romanian littoral area. A local and political strategy for the development of local tourism on the seaside and along the Danube was drafted in 2009; this strategy was devised and financed exclusively by the local authorities and local tourism investors (hotel keepers, tourism associations, tourism agencies, private tour operators) with direct support from the Association for the Promotion-Development of Seaside and Danube Tourism. The central tourism authorities cannot fund the projects elaborated by associations for the promotion and development of local tourism.

In order to obtain concrete and better results, it is necessary to change the legislation so that the projects of regional associations for tourism development and promotion could be sustained, which is the only effective and real formula for these geographical areas.

In this strategy, nautical tourism is presented in brief, as an opportunity for the diversification of tourist activities on the seaside and less so alongside the Danube, the river area being mentioned only for cruises from the upstream countries.

In order to elaborate a strategy for the promotion of nautical tourism, the latter should be structured on three levels (we wish to emphasize the need for effective and close cooperation between these three levels of Romanian tourism promotion):

– The promotion strategy national level is elaborated and applied mainly by the profile ministries, the main aim of tourism offices being to promote Romanian tourist products in domestic and foreign markets through tourist information and promotion offices at home and abroad; in this context, the task devolves primarily on the Romanian tourist offices abroad; an important role is also played by the profile federations but which in this country have not a unitary approach to common goals;

– The role of drafting and implementing a promotion strategy at regional level belongs to the regional promotion associations recently founded in this country; a substantial contribution have the local public administrations and the harbour management systems, for example the Association for the Promotion-Development of Seaside and Danube Delta Tourism;

– At local level, each economic nautical tourism and water-sports agent sets his own policies for tourist offers promotion, according to his specific competences; an important place is held by the partnership between tourism companies and the Federations for nautical/water sports in Romania;

¹⁷ <http://ww.capitalul.ro/macro-economie/litoralul-romanesc-un-produs-turistic-nereprezentativ-din-cauza-lipsei-de-interes-a-statului.html>

Strategic orientations, irrespective of level, must sustain new sojourn and water trips products and services for tourists, the elaboration of programs for tourists and the local community to discover and appreciate nautical tourism, sustain the development of nautical tourism and make it safe for tourists' lives and goods.

Moreover, the service offer and promotion policy differ according to the category of marinas – for example, in very large and large marinas, where port and tourist services are more attractive, promotion will target sojourn tourists, as well as passengers that are stopping over, while in medium and small marinas, promotion will be aimed at sojourn clients.

In view of it, tourist promotion as a component of the marketing mix, consists in supplying customers with various types of information, advice and encouragements helping them to get acquainted with a specific offer, become interested and attracted by it, being persuaded that the respective offer can better meet one's expectations than others can do and decide to buy it. In order to ensure the success of promotion, *the principle of three C-s should be observed: continuity – convergence – coordination*. In tourism, two direct promotional styles are obvious:

- image promotion – with focus on tourist destinations that are to be extensively advertised as best as possible;

- sales promotion for tourists.

In the promotion policy and the means and strategies of implementing it, tourist companies largely disseminate complete information on their activity, products and services, expecting a feedback on how these products and services have been received. In this respect, the tourist company acting in a marina becomes a source of communication that aims at reinforcing its image and prestige, and also its products and services in the milieu or in the market the respective company acts in.

There are three essential messages about marinas that presumable customers should become informed on, namely:

- The marina is an active and modern economic support for a wide range of nautical activities, events, tourism services, and entertainment during the season or in extra-season, that can attract regional, but also national/international clients;

- The marina has a well-outlined tourist sector, with focus on agreement, that may improve the quality of life at local level and determine greater solicitation for the extension of residential areas and vacation dwellings;

- The marina has a valuable heritage – historical monuments, landscapes, fishing, gastronomic, and artistic traditions, and a very good tourist infrastructure.¹⁸

This is the most correct and effective practice, but, in nautical tourism, there are also other conjectural situations. In the first place, there is the property regime: in most European countries coastal regions belong to the State public domain, as they are important not only economically, but also strategically and militarily. Therefore, some coastal areas can be franchised only for a specific period of time.

In view of it, the local state institutions may develop their own businesses, beneficial for the central budget, and produce their own promotion mechanisms. In the private sector, which uses franchised marine coastal lands or riverside terrains, other actions are taken in order to make the economic activity profitable and become competitive.

Thus, a ship-owner who possesses a cruise vessel, but also pleasure-boating crafts, may manage a franchised parking-place; he may own a ship repair workshop and a pontoon for landing, also a medium-sized hotel or any type of accommodation, a restaurant, a yachting club, etc.¹⁹

¹⁸ Assessment, source: *Guide de savoir-faire – La valorisation touristique des ports de plaisance*, ODIT, France, pp. 70–72, pdf, 2011.

¹⁹ Translation and adaptation, source: Peaudeau, P., Richebe, R. (2002), *Le tourisme nautique – pour un développement local coordonné*, pp. 46–58, ODIT, France.

In these conditions, this owner may create his own tourist product and promote it by own means or through some agencies specialised in this form of tourism. This case is very frequent in France – Bretagne and Finistère, Canada, USA, Great Britain, Australia, etc. Therefore, this complete management system may engender *a local or regional brand*, a brand emphasizing the existence of a well-organized nautical system, including high-quality tourist and complementary services, active and coherent promotion.²⁰

In order to emphasize this form of tourism, tourist companies in maritime and river areas must ensure that all information promoted are coherent, because not correlating the ways and means of dissemination, the numerous information issued or, in the case of foreign markets, confrontation with the information and multitude of promotion means used by rival companies may have negative effects on the activity and prestige of the respective company.

In nautical tourism, the costs for creating a complete and attractive tourist product are high; as the weather is not predictable, the risk for the potential buyer is also high. The risk margin is high, despite active and successful promotion.

The promotional activity has also different objectives depending on the moment consumers are given specific information that is before, during and after they decided to purchase the specific tourist product. This process includes:

- influencing the purchase decision by using the AIDA principle (A – drawing attention; I – stimulating interest in the product; D – stirring up one’s desire to have it; A – buying the product/service), which suggests that the process of promotion should hold one’s attention, present interest, stimulate desire and determine action;

- the buyer’s conviction that his/her purchase decision was a good one, and that the promoted data were correct and real;

- promotion after consumption of the tourist product, through offers and updates, meetings, and greetings sent to the consumer in order to influence him/her to repeat the purchase;

These principles are also important in nautical tourism, because there are several participants in the process of achieving a complex tourist product; they should know what dysfunctions that appeared along the way which the client can reveal at the end of his/her sojourn. In this context, the information provided by customers can establish if the promotion was effective and if it needs further changes.

The process of promotion should not cease once selling has ended. In the case of tourist products there is a substantial period between purchase (booking) and the experience proper, in which interval the cognitive dissonance of the post-purchase decision should be reduced. Thus, the seller (tour-operator or tourism agency) should offer the client *information on the facilities provided while the tourist product is actually consumed and strengthen one’s conviction that the purchase decision made is a correct one*. The trip experience is modeled by the supply of additional information concerning the characteristic features of the destination and the additional services offered in order to maximize the purchaser’s satisfaction; doing it is essential in the field of nautical tourism and of water sports, as the purchase of the tourist offer supposes booking ahead navigation facilities or equipment for practicing these sports.

The tendency noted over the past few years has been to influence one’s decision-making process rather than to largely use attraction strategy, mainly because of the negative economic situation which entailed the following:

- the increase of advertising costs in the mass-media, a less efficient channel given the greater influence of digital media;

- the economic activity of many companies has been slowing down because of the same economic situation;

²⁰ ****Plan stratégique de développement et du marketing du tourisme nautique*, 2002, Le Groupe DBSF, Montréal, Canada, pdf, pp. 1–13.

– a single tourist company can take over and develop several activities in order to maximize its benefit and cover more of the customers' requests.

Choosing one of these strategic alternatives, or combining them, means using adequate promotion tools, create a promotion mix according to one's tourist objectives and distribute the promotional budget for each promotion tool and its functions.

In nautical tourism, promotional strategy should be correlated with the stages of the tourist product lifecycle, which are largely dependent on the duration at boat and vessel use, the water sports equipment employed and weather-induced damage risks in harbour areas. Indeed, in this form of tourism, the basic concept to describe a marketing strategy in terms of the evolution of the product lifecycle is the range of tourist services.

Moreover, the promotional strategy should be adapted to the specificity of each foreign market, also having in view the categories of tourists and the sociological, economic, psychological and geographical variables. At the same time, depending on the results of motivational research promotional strategy should present an attractive tourist image of the domestic offer with focus on the specific attractions of nautical tourism.

Besides, promotional strategy should underline the diversity and particularities of the Romanian tourist product, available services and options for new tourist services, diversifying the initial offer. According to the profile scientific literature, nautical tourism has several requirements for promotion to be efficient and competitive:

- good management of the tourist products on offer – accessibility, reception, guide services, accommodation, food, etc.;
- teams of entertainers specialized in navigation and water sports;
- an attractive design of boats and of stands in exhibitions and profile fairs;
- dioramas, short films, video documents presented to the public;
- promotional and relational activities performed by trainers and skippers to attract children and young people to practice water sport and navigation;

In Romania, despite the fact that some facilities for the practice of water sports and of nautical tourism do exist, yet there are no harbour poles specific to this form of tourism that would include all services necessary for a complete and attractive tourist product. Developing the nautical infrastructure represents a major challenge for the authorities. Some investments have been made over the last years at Sfântu Gheorghe, Constanța, Mangalia, and Limanu. Infrastructure is a prerequisite for the development of nautical activity, beneficial not only to boat merchants, but also to tourism, services, the real estate or building sectors, and that of the main tourist services.

The creation of real harbour poles will help diversify the range of tourist products, enable the organization of European events and favour more active promotion. In this context, powerful government support is imperative in order to build an appropriate harbour infrastructure, hardly sustainable only by the private sector or the local budgets.

There are several types of events that can be promoted in this sector:

- International events, addressed to water-sports lovers and pleasure-boaters;
- Cruises for amateurs, which have a preset itinerary and a specific time-interval from departure to arrival; the first people who arrive are given an award;
- Sporting competitions for experienced sportsmen and tourists in navigation, water sports and coasting;
- Public/private organized regattas, with the support of the local public administration and the private business sector, as well as numerous sponsorships for awards;
- Schools for motor boat and sail boat navigation, issuing licenses, schools for underwater diving and swooping, also issuing official licenses;
- Commercial events – showrooms and fairs of products designed for navigation and nautical sports, nautical holidays in marinas and in nautical and sporting clubs, fishing contests;

– Sea/river parades of old boats used in certain historical stages of harbour evolution or of maritime and fluvial navigation;

– Open Door Day to harbours, when commercial and transport departments, but also naval construction sites and repair workshops may be visited;

These events should be used and promoted in order to attract tourists who practice nautical sports, but also those who prefer activities “on the ground” and may participate in such events by paying a specific fee. Moreover, nautical events could be integrated into tourist programs that include also other activities – visits to maritime museums, botanical gardens, memorial houses; cultural and artistic evenings, creative workshops, visits to religious monuments, fairs for traditional products, practicing horse-riding, etc.

Promotion should have in view this form of tourism and its complex nature, which includes several nautical activities: on the one hand, water and recreation sports, on the other hand, tourism proper, which may contain also a cultural component. This implies a good organization of the tourist sojourn, but also a very good communication between all the actors who contribute to the creation of the tourist product. Therefore, *communication* acquires a decisive role: for example, a tourist who loves nautical tourism, but who is not informed, is a lost customer, as he will choose another destination that provides comfort and all information to enjoy good weather and moderate-swell waters for pleasure-boating or for other water-based activities.²¹

Communication is crucial as there is increasing demand for this form of tourism due to population ageing, retirement of the baby-boom generation, looking for new tourist experiences; this form of tourism is in direct competition with the tourism practiced in secondary residences, caravanning, and other forms of classical tourism. Communication allows to extend promotion from domestic to foreign markets; at the same time, specialist guide-books, Internet sites, promotion through airlines and rail companies, through the great hotel chains and tourism agencies, etc. should be improved. All in all, there are four major types of communication resources: in public spaces (events), in the prints, the mass-media (including the Internet), and promotional products (gifts and souvenirs).

The tendency is to introduce a single communication manager, in order to have complete and updated information and to accurately choose advertisements data, moreover so if they refer to a harbour or a harbour network. Communication frequently uses brochures, Internet sites, flyers, articles in the local, regional and international press, annuals, nautical guide-books, local TV and radio stations, etc. Promotion should be differentiated by age groups: about 15-35-year olds; 45-65-year olds.

In Romania, promotion of nautical tourism is still unknown to many domestic and foreign tourists; at the same time, it is insufficiently organized and has many presentation and promotion deficiencies. Besides, there are many services dysfunctions in this particular form of tourism.

CONCLUSIONS

In the current context, when also nautical transport services are globalized and extended, the tendency of expanding water tourism activities is expected to get momentum. Marinas represent a dynamic, open and complex system, with a fast-going evolution; as a result, they can satisfy more clients keen on nautical sports. Good location, modernization of the marina infrastructure, large and small boats, and moderate prices is not sufficient to attract a big number of tourists.

Promotion has a crucial role. All promotion activities must observe the characteristics of a nautical product and its customers. In this sense, it should focus on the target public, the manner of presenting available services, the prices practiced and the facilities provided to possible customers. In Romania, the development of this form of tourism is in an early stage, and its promotion by modern

²¹ Translation and adaptation, source: Paudeau, P., Richebe, R. (2002), *Le tourisme nautique – pour un développement local coordonné*, pp. 42–43, ODIT, France.

communication practices and advertising companies will evolve in terms of the spatial and temporal expansion of nautical tourism in the marinas and fluvial harbours of this country.

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