

# AIR AND WATER - INDISPENSABLE ELEMENTS OF CURATIVE TOURISM. CASE STUDY: MOINEȘTI, TÂRGU OCNA, SLĂNIC MOLDOVA

GĂMAN G.<sup>1</sup>

**ABSTRACT.** Air and water - indispensable elements of curative tourism. **Case study: Moinești, Târgu Ocna, Slănic Moldova.** The present paper aims to create a curative tourism system at the level of three urban settlements which possess known therapeutic factors within which will be outlined a curative touristic offer, characterized by networking and interdependence of specified touristic elements of each city studied. For creating a curative offer at the level of three localities, first, it must be a compatibility between the components of proposed system, for this achievement being necessary to select the specified touristic elements of each urban settlement, the compatibility consisting in differentiation of each city's tourism offer; therefore each locality must participate with its distinctive attractions at the unifying of a functional curative touristic system. The methodology used (historical, analysis, synthesis, comparative, statistical, graphic, cartographic, geographic) is centred on a multilateral analytical treating of tourism in Moinești, Târgu Ocna, Slănic Moldova, through a qualitative and quantitative tourism vectors comparison, through its graphic and cartographic representation. For a deep curative tourism analyzing it is necessary to examine the whole tourism phenomenon, because, regarding the evolutionary trends of curative tourism, the preferences of modern patient-tourist focus, not only on health recovery, but also on ways to relax, recreational opportunities.

**Keywords:** touristic system, curative offer, water springs, local bioclimate

## 1. INTRODUCTION

All of these three urban settlements are situated in the western part of Bacău County, in Subcarpathian zone, the single exception being Slănic Moldova which can be found in the eastern extremity of Moldo-Transilvani Oriental Carpathian group. Moinești Municipality is located at the boundary between Intracarpadian Basin of Comănești and Subcarpathian Basin of Tazlău, in the northwestern part of Bacău District, in the middle basin of Trotuș-Tazlău river system, Târgu Ocna SPA Resort is positioned in north-western part of Cașin Depression, at Berzunți Mountains hem, and Slănic Moldova is situated at Nemira Mountains hem. From these three localities, only the last two possess „SPA Resort” title (Găman, 2011).

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<sup>1</sup> Babeș-Bolyai University, Faculty of Geography, Cluj-Napoca, Romania  
e-mail: gaman.george07@yahoo.com

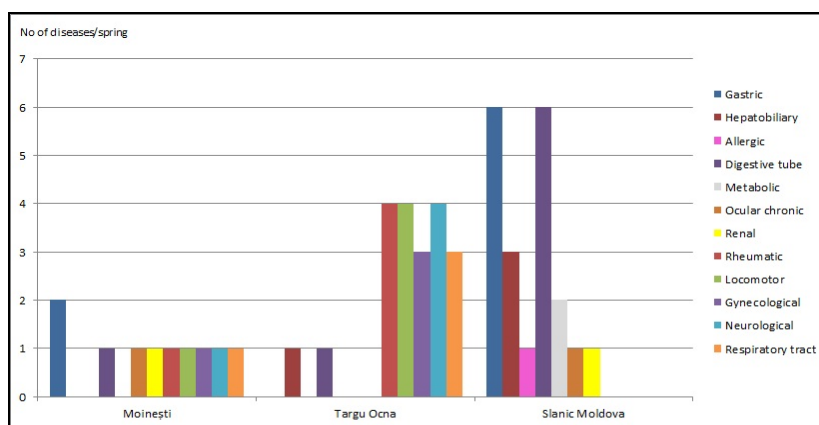
## 1.1. Mineral water springs and local bioclimate - primary base of touristic pyramid

Each urban settlement studied disposes of different number and types of mineral water springs with different therapeutic values.

Moinești disposes of 5 mineral water springs, all of its being located in Parc Băi, a green area situated in the center of municipality.

Târgu Ocna SPA Resort has 7 sources of mineral water whose therapeutic values have been recognized since 1846 (Stoica, 2003).

Slănic Moldova SPA Resort has 11 sources which have been recognized since at the beginning of 19th century, being well-know for its therapeutic value (Slănic Moldova is the SPA Resort which won the the most medals at international expositions from Vienna Frankfurt, Paris).<sup>2</sup>



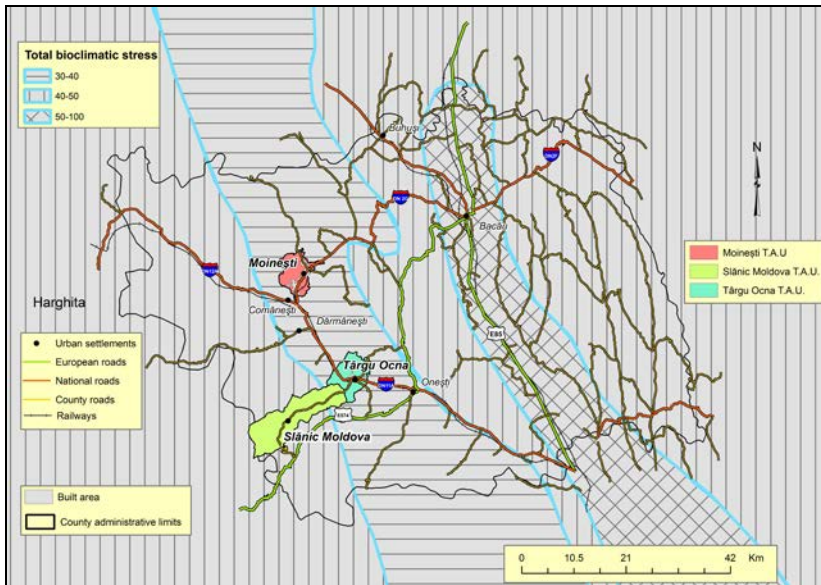
**Fig. 1. The kinds of diseases which can be cured from each mineral water spring in Moinești, Târgu Ocna and Slănic Moldova**  
(Source: after local strategies' information)

In a quality SPA Resort doesn't matter the number of mineral water springs or its seniority, but the most important thing consists in the number of diseases which can be cured by these valuable therapeutic elements. For the present paper, this information proves to be very useful, given that it aims to create a curative touristic system in which it must be revealed each settlement's touristic potential for creating a general offer, but in the same time, it must be taken into account the fact that each urban locality must participate with different elements.

Analyzing the 2<sup>nd</sup> figure, it can easily be observed that Moinești offers the chance for treating the biggest range of diseases. Moreover, this ex-SPA Resort is the only one which has mineral water springs that can be used in internal, external and mixed cure also.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.slanicmoldovalive.ro/index.php/istoric.html>

Each locality dispose of a bioclimate which belongs to indifferent-sedative hills one, which is considered the most suitable for persons whose organisms can not support climatic factors stress (Teodoreanu, 1984).



**Fig. 2. Total bioclimatic stress' situation on Bacău County area**  
(Source: after Elena Teodoreanu, 1984)

The climatic influences over human body are represented by dermic and pulmonary biostress, and gathered together, form the total bioclimatic stress.

Analyzing the 3<sup>rd</sup> figure, it can be figured out that Moinești and Târgu Ocna have the smallest value (30-40) of bioclimatic stress in Bacău County, while Slănic Moldova disposes of a bigger value (40-50).

Besides natural resources, for creating a touristic system is necessary to analyze the anthropic elements types of primary and derived touristic offer too.

## 2. THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

Regarding the methodology used on this paper, it were used analysis, synthesis, graphic, cartographic and comparison methods.

The analysis method consisted in detailed status of the components which conditionate tourism phenomenon, especially the curative type, like naturals (mineral springs and local bioclimate) and anthropic ones (religious edifices, archaeological vestiges, cultural and historical monuments, museums etc).

The synthesis method represented the information integration gathered in an unitary representation, for emphasizing the tourism phenomenon complexity. In tourism's case, domains like geography, economy, demography, have a link between them, interfere each other becoming conditioning elements.

The graphic method consisted in graphical supports representation (tables and graphics) of those elements which are conditioning the tourism phenomenon and of proposals which were made on the strength of documentation obtained.

The cartographic method consisted in several maps achievement which illustrated the studied urban settlements localization inside of Bacău County's territory, the bioclimatic stress map of Bacău County, Parc Băi proposals and terrain cure routes, all being realized in ArcGis 9.3.

The comparison method was focused on quantitative and qualitative comparison of natural resources (mineral springs, local bioclimate), anthropic ones and elements of derived touristic offer (accommodation units, recreational and transport infrastructure).

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Regarding the geography domain, a system represents a complex formed of independent elements which constitute an organized unit that is functioning according certain criterias, having a natural or anthropic character.<sup>3</sup>

For creating a general curative offer at the level of these urban settlements, there must be a compatibility between touristic phenomenon components of each locality and the best measure in this case consists on choosing the specific elements of touristic potential in order to create a compatible offer, attribute which is based on difference; each locality must participate in the general offer with different elements. Otherwise, one of them will fail because the modern tourist is attracted by elements with big level of autenticity. It must be found a balance between these three urban settlements' sub-offers.

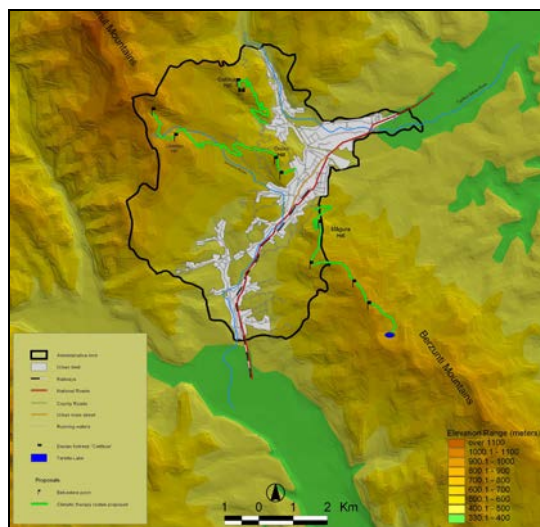
*Table 1. Authentic touristic potential elements of Moinești, Târgu Ocna, Slănic Moldova*

|                          | Moinești  | Târgu Ocna   | Slănic Moldova  |
|--------------------------|---|--|---|
| Curative potential       | - best conditions for terrain cure practicing<br>- the most concentrated sulphurous mineral waters  | - saline microbioclimate<br>- balneary complex   | - mineral water springs' notoriety<br>- SPA Sanatorium<br>- mofettes  |
| Other natural attraction | - protected area "Pădurea de Pini"  | - geological reservation "Dealul Drăcoia"<br>- protected area "Muntele Măgura"   | - "Nemira" Nature Reserve   |
| Anthropic potential      | - Jewish cemetery and Kaddish House<br>- DADA Monument<br>- archaeological site "Dealul Lucăcioaia"<br>- Events like annual symposium and museum exhibition "Tristan Tzara și cultura DADA", annual manifestations "Aurul negru- tradiție și continuitate în Moinești", festival traditions and carols "Anii vechi și anii noi" | - the biggest number of religious edifices<br>- archaeological sites "Podei" and "Titelca"<br>- "Festival Customs and Winter Traditions" | - Sky slope<br>- "The Casino"<br>- "Trotuș Valley Festival Customs and Winter Traditions"<br>- "Country Folk Festival"<br>- "Craftsmen's Fair"<br>- "The Cultural Season of Slănic" |

Analysing the authentic touristic potential elements of Moinești, Târgu Ocna, Slănic Moldova, it can be underlined some proposals for creating a complete curative touristic offer.

<sup>3</sup> Dictionary of Human Geography, 1999, pg. 292

### 3.1. Terrain cure routes in Moinești



*Fig. 3. The proposed routes for terrain cure in Moinești*

Terrain cure represents air with/without sunlight exposure by movement on different sloping routes. It seems to be the most suitable settlement for terrain cure routes planning, because it belongs to the area that has the smallest total bioclimatic stress from Bacău County, the greatest landscape potential where can be planned routes for efficient treatments and, in the same time, belvedere points equipped with benches, tables, fixed binocular for observing the surroundings, panel which gives information regarding the current and other belvedere points position, landforms and settlements which can be observed.

### 3.2. SPA Hotel in Moinești

After European Project “Parc Băi modernization and development” implementation within which mineral springs’ gazebos and alleys have been reconstructed, eighty-five benches and one hundred lighting pole have been installed and one hundred ten trees have been planted, the next step proposed for maximum mineral springs and local bioclimate therapeutic utilization is to build a hotel endowed with treatment base for hydrotherapy (swimming pools, steamy baths and water compression salons) and solarium for heliotherapy.

Aerotherapy can be practiced in open-air spaces, away from the sun (usually near tree vegetation), which allow airbath and air cure performing (medical gymnastics with medical records making), and heliotherapy can be practiced in outdoor spaces with sunlight contact, but with possibility of retreating in shade (solariums, terraces).

### 3.3. History museum in Slănic Moldova

Slănic Moldova, known as a locality with many therapeutic factors, has a long history. From 1801, when the first mineral water spring had been discovered, until nowadays, this SPA resort proved to have one of the most efficient mineral water in the Europe, owing to the medals won at different exhibitions in Frankfurt, Paris, Wien. It’s history is very laden, because during the both World Wars, Slănic Moldova was very affected. Despite of that, this settlement was called “pearl of Moldavia”. It is being considered that a history museum would become very

interesting for patient-tourists, because it would hold many pictures and vestiges for outlining the deep history of Slănic Moldova. Moreover, this potential museum could contain pictures and replications of different vestiges from other SPA resorts, for showing the entire evolution of curative tourism inside of national territory.

### **3.4. Interrelations between accommodation units**

For a functional touristic system between each localities it is necessary an efficient collaboration between all accommodation units. In this way, must be created a software that is capable to include these units into a network, in which must exist strong relations like: mutual advertising, competition renouncing. For a perfect network each accommodation unit has to know all the time the occupancy rate, events calendar, the future bookings of others and to eliminate “the competition law”. Moreover, each hotel, pension, motel must have information materials about the others, in case that tourists requires other services that the actual accommodation unit cannot offer its, or the unit is fully occupied.

### **3.5. Interrelations between travel agencies**

Like in case of accommodation units, the travel agencies, with the aid of a software, could be submitted into a network. The main mission is to realise mutual advertising. For example, a travel agency from Slănic Moldova could promote the mineral waters of Moinești, or the religious edificies from Târgu Ocna. Also, each travel agency must have information materials about the other settlements of the system, its touristic attractions (natural, anthropic and tourist events).

### **3.6. Interrelations regarding the transport**

For an efficient touristic system, the transport aspect is very important and urgent measures must be taken. To ensure the collaboration between these settlements, must be organized a functional transport system by means of which tourists can travel when they want from a locality to another.

In present, exist only two road transport connections between Moinești and Târgu Ocna, and only one between Moinești and Slănic Moldova, but for a touristic system functionality are needed connections programmed every half hour.

### **3.7. Interrelations regarding the events of each settlement**

Analyzing the table of authentic touristic events of Moinești, Târgu Ocna, Slănic Moldova, for an efficient curative system is important for tourists to know the events calendar of each locality. The best measure is installing a big panel in public locations which can offer the essential information in this case (events per day/month): cultural, sporting, artistic events.

### **3.8. Interrelations regarding promotion activities**

In this case, an important role is given to doctors and medical science associations and, of course, tourists. If for the first three segments these promotion materials contain scientific information regarding the therapeutic values of mineral

water spring and local bioclimate, for tourists, the containing information must have a less level of science, because they are interested in viewing pictures which illustrate the general image of SPA resort and information about natural, anthropic attractions and ways leisure spending.

An important place regarding promotion activities and materials is occupied by actioning at international level. The curative touristic system's localities must also attract foreign tourists. For being an efficient action, the promotion materials must be made in several foreign languages (English, French, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian), the local authorities must participate at foreign conferences, international medical reunions, and they must invite international medical personalities, travel agencies, foreign journalists at regular local conferences.



**Fig. 4. Promotion material regarding the curative tourism system Moinești-Târgu Ocna-Slănic Moldova**

For highlighting the settlements' curative specialization an important role is given to the achievement of each locality touristic image.

### 3.3. Treatment period program proposal

As it was mentioned, the general curative touristic offer must be composed by different attractiveness elements (therapeutic and non-therapeutic), each settlement participating with it's specificity.

**Table 3. The schedule of 2 days treatment, based on climatotherapy in Moinești**

| Interval of time (hours) | Activities  |
|--------------------------|---|
| <b>Day 1</b>             |   |
| 8-9                      | Breakfast (medical prescription)  |
| 9-11                     | Heliotherapy/aerotherapy/terrain cure (medical prescription)  |
| 12-13                    | Lunch (medical prescription)  |
| 13-14                    | Visiting Jewish cemetery and Kaddish House  |
| 14-18                    | Renting ATVs from "Pădurea de Pini" Complex and visiting archaeological site "Dealul Lucăcioaia" and Târnița lake in Berzunți Mountains |
| 19-20                    | Dinner (medical prescription)   |
| <b>Day 2</b>             |   |
| 8-9                      | Breakfast (medical prescription)  |
| 9-11                     | Heliotherapy/aerotherapy/terrain cure (medical prescription)  |
| 12-13                    | Lunch (medical prescription)  |
| 13:30-14:30              | Taking the bus to Târgu Ocna  |
| 14:30-15:30              | Visiting the center of Târgu Ocna   |
| 15:30-17:30              | Visiting the saline   |
| 17:30-18:30              | Visiting "Măgura Ocnei" Monastery   |
| 19-20                    | Dinner (medical prescription)   |

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

Creating the curative touristic system Moinești-Târgu Ocna-Slănic Moldova represents a premiere in tourism phenomenon of Romania.

The first purpose of creating this type of system is to refresh the settlements' economy, the most viable solution for a economic revival being the curative tourism (balneotherapy and climatotherapy). The tourism phenomenon, for a succesfull implementation and durable effects, needs more attention than the other economic branches. It requires investments at short periods of time, due to the quickly worldwide evolution which causes moral and material degradation in what concerns it's infrastructure.

Besides the economic development of these settlements the second purpose of this curative touristic system is represented of being a motivational factor for other SPA resorts' touristic development. It could be an example of curative tourism development, because almost all Romanian SPA resorts are doing the same mistakes. Except for the first one mentioned at the beginning of conclusions, another one refers to deficiency of local bioclimate's therapeutic values utilization, given the fact that most of its dispose of a "indifferent-sedative" hills climate, which is for all ages and for all sicknesses.

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