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**FACULTY OF GEOGRAPHY**  
**DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF GEOGRAPHY**

# **DOCTORAL THESIS**

**PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF  
TOURISM IN THE ȘUREANU MASSIF**  
**~ ABSTRACT ~**

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**CLUJ-NAPOCA**  
**2018**

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**KEY WORDS:** the Șureanu Massif, tourism planning and development, tourism, tourism infrastructure, touristic potential, mountain resorts, skiing area.

## **1. RESEARCH EPISTEMOLOGY IN TOURISM AND TOURISM PLANNING**

### **1.1 Theoretical framework of the study**

As in all the sciences, now more than ever, at the beginning of the 21st century, Geography is in search of a practical purpose, an immediate application of the ideas, solutions and measures proposed by the analyses. A purely scientific study of a region for example is only of interest for the experts. However, in order to meet the practical requirements of the age in which we live, any scientific research must prove and justify its applicability and practical necessity.

Such a practical application of Geography can be found in tourism, regardless of whether the introspections dealing with different aspects of the recreational - educational sphere have as a main objective the interest of a region's attractive potential, planning strategies - redevelopment, valorisation or tourism impact studies.

### **1.2 Methodological framework of the study**

The methodological tools used in the elaboration of the present study include logistical elements of Geography as a science intertwined by the theme of Tourism Geography and, in particular, by its component of Tourism planning, a discipline in continuous improvement due to its importance in the organisation of anthropogenic geographic space.

This chapter of methodology emphasises the steps taken for the elaboration of a study of tourism planning and development. Methodological milestones were also included in the other chapters. The four stages of work, namely the creation of the database, the on-site documentation, the data processing and the interpretation of the results, having as final result the actual writing of the present thesis, were accomplished by the use of different methods, techniques and means.

### **1.3 Localisation, limits and spatial relations**

A first step towards the achievement of the desideratum of better planning and valorisation of the Șureanu Massif is its correct spatial delimitation. The boundaries of the region have been traced and dealt with in various specialised studies, in which every author had their own opinion on this aspect. In the present case, the delimitation offered by Trufaș V. and Trufaș C. (1976), Velcea Savu and the Romanian Carpathians, was considered suitable for tourism planning and development because it supports the maintained unity of geomorphological individualities.

## **2. THE ŞUREANU MASSIF- PARTICULAR GEOGRAPHICAL ELEMENTS**

### **2.1 Geomorphological elements of the Şureanu Massif**

The geological formations that make the foundation of the massif are predominantly composed of crystalline shale of the Getic - Supragetic area, along with a significant proportion of limestone and other sedimentary deposits of the Getic Nappe, each of these rocks conditioning the modelling processes and implicitly the various resulting landforms. The crystalline slate extends over the largest area in the massif, respectively on about 87% of the entire mountainous area.

The Jurassic-Aptian limestones (70 sq.km.) are decisive in shaping the personality of Şureanu Massif, even if it is manifested on a relatively narrow territory (in relation to the surface of the massif). Within the area it occupies, a morpho-graphic differentiation is very important for tourism, marked by most spectacular, different and unique landforms.

### **2.2 Climate elements**

Based on the analysis of the data obtained from the weather stations in the neighbouring areas (Ţarcu, Păltiniş and Petroşani), values for the period 1961-2013, the existence of a moderate continental climate within the Şureanu Massif was confirmed, with multiannual average temperatures of 4.9° C in the alpine floor, 7.3° C in Petroşani and 7.8° C in Păltiniş. Average monthly rainfall has maximum summer values (over 120 l/sq.m. in June) and minimum winter values (32 l/sq.m. in January) within the forest floor and values ranging from 59.3 l/sq.m. in March and 144.4 l/sq.m. in June on the alpine floor.

The snow layer has different characteristics depending on certain features of the landforms (altitude and degree of sunshine of the surfaces). Thus, in the lower regions, the snow layer has a non-continuous character, from November to April and a maximum thickness of 15.3 cm. At an altitude of 1.400 m, the snow layer, with a maximum thickness of about 40 cm, is maintained from October to May. At heights greater than 2,000 m, the snow lasts over 200 days and the average thickness reaches almost one metre in February.

### **2.3 Hydrological elements**

Tourism planning and development in the area is positively influenced by the wealth of water resources. The resorts and the tourist infrastructure are well supplied with water. Also, the main communication axes can be easily traced along the valleys. The characteristics of the hydrographic network and of lacustrine surfaces and the attractiveness of the water resources

have put their mark on the region. The hydrographic network shaped spectacular and interesting landscapes due to the numerous rhythm disruptions offered by the high fragmentation of the territory. From this point of view, tourism has favourable conditions for development, benefiting from an extraordinary complexity and richness of the attractive elements offered by the hydrographic network.

#### **2.4 Bio-pedo-geographic elements**

In addition to presenting the types and characteristics of soils present in the Șureanu Massif, the correlation between soil and vegetation has been individualized through profiles. Another aspect discussed in this sub-chapter is highlighting the changes imposed by the edaphic component on land use, as well as the elements establishing the role played by soils and vegetation in tourism development.

When referring to wildlife, it is important to note, within the context of touristic valorisation, the presence of hunted species (bear, deer, roe deer, boar, marten, wolf, fox), which can constitute an important complementary resource for the touristic activity of the studied area.

### **3. THE TOURISTIC POTENTIAL OF THE ȘUREANU MASSIF**

#### **3.1 Natural touristic potential**

An inventory of the natural touristic potential of the Șureanu Massif has highlighted the unequal distribution of its elements, with well identified tourism concentrations as the density of attractive resources increases as the tourists get closer to the top of the mountain, where there is less anthropogenic activity. As a result of the prospecting of all natural attractive resources, through the diagnostic analysis of the territory, various attractive resources were shaped by the genetic factor: panoramic vistas, surface and deep karstic forms, caves and avenues, geological reserves, lakes and glaciers, gorges and straits, mountain climates favourable to winter sports, a skiing area, accumulation lakes, bio-pedo-geological elements, hunting and sporting fund, or the presence of geomorphological, geological and paleontological elements declared for their value and uniqueness as reserves or monuments of nature. These can all underpin the development of scientific tourism.

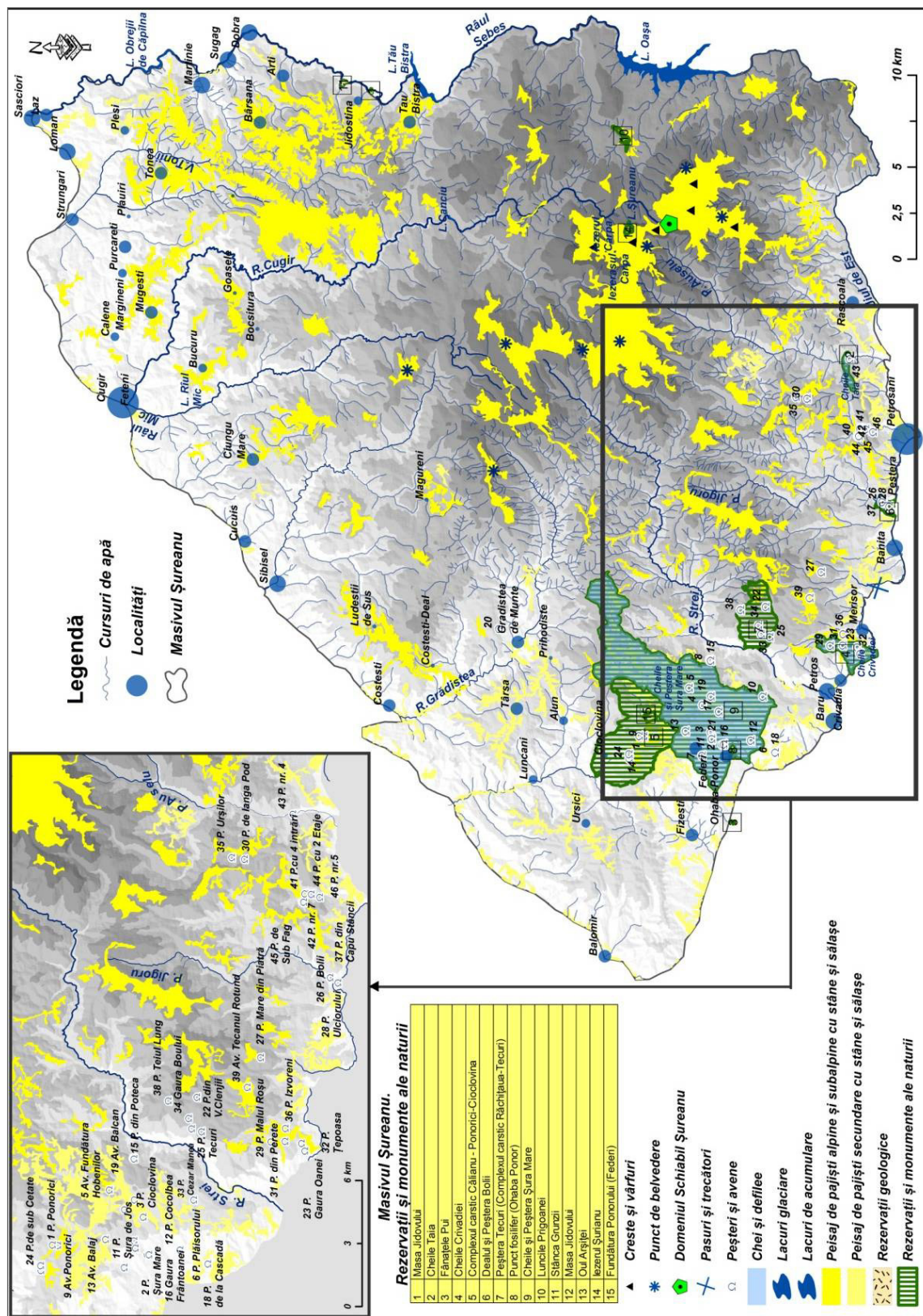


Figure 23. The Șureanu Massif. Morpho-touristic potential

### 3.2 Anthropogenic touristic potential

The anthropogenic touristic potential reunites a wide and varied range of buildings grouped and analysed in the present study according to their typologies such as: historical, religious, cultural, sports, economic, tourist or ethnographic tourism resources. Representative through its cultural





national importance (category A) and 25 of local importance (category B). Depending on their nature, monuments can be classified into 52 monuments of archaeology (I), 14 monuments of architecture (II) and 1 memorial and funeral monument (IV).

#### **4. EXISTING TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE**

##### **4.1 Accommodation and catering infrastructure**

According to a thorough analysis of the existing situation at the beginning of the year 2018, the total accommodation capacity of the Șureanu Massif exceeds 4,400 beds within 188 accommodation units, among which the most frequent are guesthouses and chalets in rural areas and hotels in urban areas. The highest number of accommodation units is found in the town of Petroșani (46 accommodation units) and in the administrative and territorial units of Șugag, Sălașu de Sus and Orăștioara de Sus (38, 18 respectively 11 accommodation units). At the opposite side are found Săliște and Romoș (2 respectively 1 accommodation units). The degree of comfort is medium, ranging between 2 or 3 stars. On a more detailed analysis of the typology and physical condition of tourist accommodation units, the 188 existing accommodation structures are far from covering the existing demand, causing difficulties in keeping tourists in the area. Food services are mainly found in accommodation units as a secondary function in the high mountain area, and as we approach the edges of the massif, we find more and more independent food service units. Of the total of 216 units, the most commonly found types are restaurants.

##### **4.2 Infrastructure of communication means and means of tourist transportation**

The access infrastructure, road and railway infrastructure has been treated in terms of essential concepts, the fulfilment of which depends on the economic and implicit tourism development of the Șureanu Massif: interconnectivity (which highlighted the external and internal connections of Șureanu Massif), accessibility and viability, aspects that highlighted the quality of roads and the necessary intervention work to be done at the infrastructure level.

Special transports inside the Șureanu Massif are poorly represented in number and in terms of diversity. There are two ski lifts and a chair lift, which are located within the Șureanu Skiing Area. There are 10 ski slopes with a total length of approx. 11,000 metres.

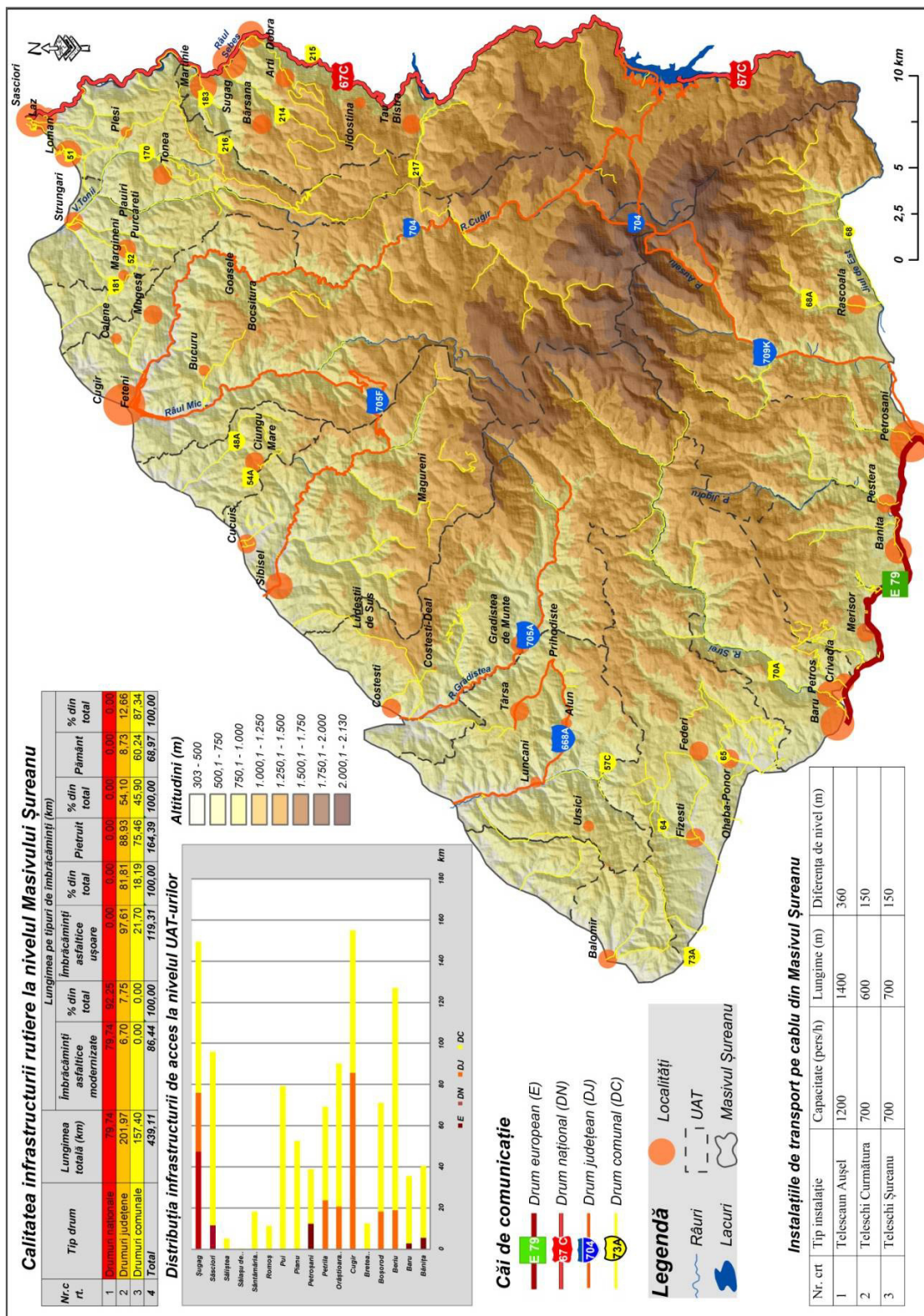


Figure 52. Access infrastructure in the Șureanu Massif

### 4.3 Recreational and therapy infrastructure

The recreational and therapy infrastructure is represented during the winter season by the ski slopes. Inside the Șureanu skiing area, there are 10 ski slopes of various difficulty, with a length of more than 10 km. Mountain hiking on the 24 existing trails is the main attraction during the summer period. Only 6 of these trails are homologated, marked and flagged appropriately.

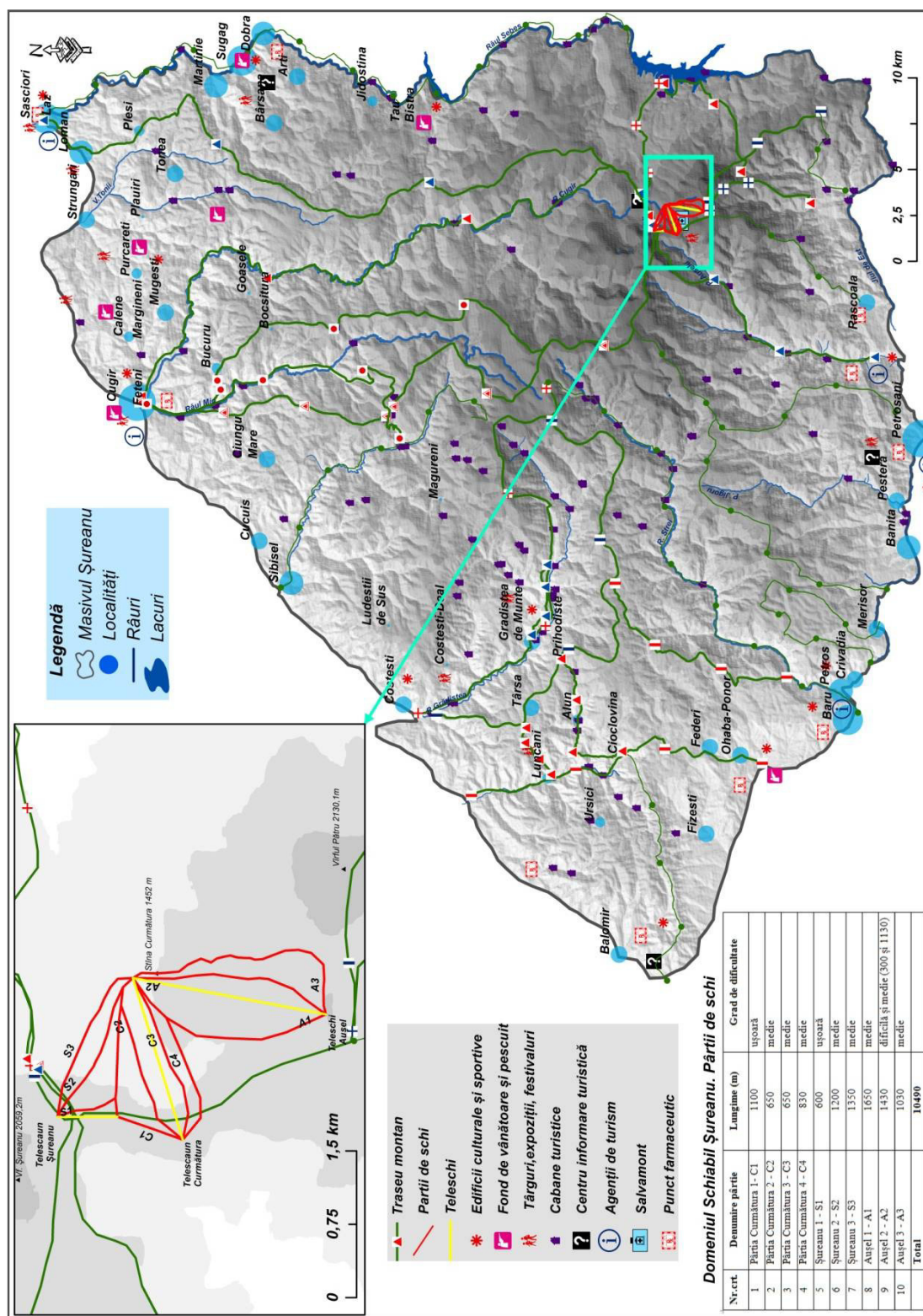


Figure 56. the Șureanu Massif. Recreational and tourism services infrastructure

#### 4.4 Facilities for tourist information and tourist services

The analysis of facilities for tourist guidance and information (social, cultural and economic facilities as well as facilities that serve tourists during their travel and stay) has revealed a lack of signs, of appropriate content and insufficient numbers.

## **5 VISITOR FLOW**

The analysis of visitor flow and the trend of the tourist market, in terms of indicators such as dynamics, general dimension, intensity and seasonality of the visitor flow, is essential in the process of tourist facilities development and management in the Șureanu Massif, due to the possibility of presenting the tourist phenomenon in numbers. The visitor flow, closely related to the existing tourist offer and the quality of the services offered, is deficient at the regional level, except for the well-known tourist areas of the region (Șureanu Skiing Area, Orăștioara de Sus - Costești, Petroșani town area, Oașa Monastery).

## **6 PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN THE ȘUREANU MASSIF**

### **6.1 Assessment and quantification of the touristic potential of the Șureanu Massif**

Tourism planning and development in the Șureanu Massif cannot be imagined without ‘achieving a quantitative and qualitative estimation of inventory resources’ (Cocean P., Dezsi Ș., 2009). Thus, based on the evaluation methods detailed in the chapter dedicated to the theoretical and methodological basis of the present study, we carried out the evaluation of the touristic potential of the Șureanu Massif using our own analysis method, which corresponds to the objectives of the scientific approach chosen and highlights the tourist valences of the Șureanu Massif. The method uses basic criteria and sub-criteria, and the assignment of value points is done by weighting to a total cumulative of 100 points. The main assessment criteria considered were: the natural touristic potential, the anthropogenic touristic potential, the specific tourist infrastructure and the accessibility of the tourist sites to the transport networks. Each of these four main criteria was awarded a maximum score of 25 points so that the maximum total amount possible would be 100 points.

The existence of a unique methodology for calculating the touristic potential of the Șureanu Massif offers the possibility of capturing distinct categories of values, on the basis of which, in real knowledge, recommendations can be made for the prioritisation of tourist facilities development and management and for the integration of different tourist areas into functional tours. Particular points can also be captured by the factorial dominance of the tourist offer, according to which the direction(s) of tourism development and planning and the appropriate forms of practicing tourism can be established.



A separate component analysis revealed the strengths or sensitivities of each analysed ATU. Thus, high-value tourism-related ATUs are emerging but are deficient in accessibility and tourism infrastructure (Șugag, Orastioara de Sus, Cugir) or ATUs that have high-quality tourist and communication infrastructure but are poor in tourist attractions (Beriu, Bretea Română).

## 6.2 Typology and characteristics of mountain tourism planning

The main mountain tourism planning forms within the Șureanu Massif consist of the following tourist resorts: Șureanu Ski Resort, Luncile Prigoanei and Poarta Raiului. For the analysis of the existing tourist infrastructures, 7 main themes of analysis were considered, which deal with the main elements of the tourism infrastructure specific to facilities management and a part regarding the proposals for the development of the existing tourist facilities.

Table 51. Quantification of tourist facilities

	Șureanu Skiing Area	Points
<b>1</b>	<b>Accommodation</b>	<b>6.09</b>
a	Structure	2.5
b	Degree of comfort	1.09
c	Size	2.5
<b>2</b>	<b>Catering</b>	<b>8.75</b>
a	Structure	0.5
b	Degree of comfort of food service units	1.25
c	Size	6.5
d	Profile and specificity of food service units	0.5
<b>3</b>	<b>Recreation and free time activities</b>	<b>18</b>
a	Structure	9.5
b	Skiing area	7.5
c	Ski lifts	1
d	Seaside and beaches	0
<b>4</b>	<b>Conference venues</b>	<b>0.75</b>
	Meeting and conference venue	0.75
<b>5</b>	<b>Tourism services and information</b>	<b>3.5</b>
	Facilities for tourist information and services	3.5
	<b>Value of tourist facilities</b>	<b>37.09</b>

It is noted that, apart from the presence of the ski slopes and the generous natural touristic potential, the shortcomings of tourist infrastructure are visible at all levels, from accommodation to information and services for tourists. The natural touristic potential is therefore not used efficiently through tourism infrastructure. However, the situation can be corrected with the right initiatives.

## 7 FRAMEWORK AND SPATIAL NUCLEI OF TOURISM PLANNING

### 7.1 A SWOT analysis of the suitability of tourism planning in the Șureanu Massif

The attributes of a territory suitable for tourism planning and development are met from the perspective of elements such as the wealth of tourism potential, accessibility, existing tourist infrastructures, the presence of the skiing area, all of which make the Șureanu Massif a complex and functional destination for tourism. The results of the SWOT analysis and the conclusions identified at the level of the analysed components confirm the value of the Șureanu Massif.

### 7.2 Delimitation of touristic areas depending on the territorial division of resources

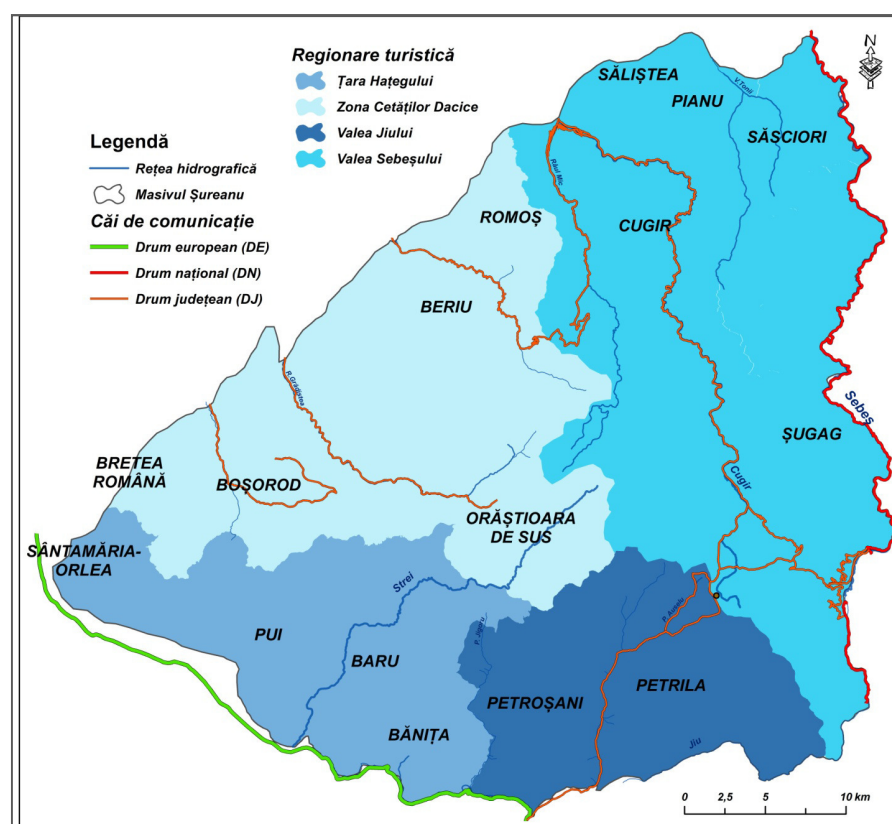


Figure 73. Touristic zoning of the Șureanu Massif

Based on the types of tourism encountered in the territory, a profile and a touristic zoning of the Șureanu Massif were identified, for the tourist development of the areas based on the forms of tourism practiced. The process was carried out starting from the tourist fund and it was facilitated by the administrative boundaries of the administrative-territorial units. Thus, four tourist areas were identified: the Sebeș River Valley, the Dacian Fortresses Area, the Hațeg Country and the Jiu River Valley. Each area is individualized by specific elements that give it a certain unity and identity both at a physical and mental level.





With a view to a superior capitalisation and the introduction of attractive resources in the social-economic circuit, we have made several proposals for tourism development, such as:

- Development of thematic touristic routes to help raise the awareness of the natural and anthropogenic tourism potential of the Șureanu Massif (*Karst in the Șureanu Mountains and Following in the Footsteps of the Geto-Dacians*);
- The planning and development of the caves, three-way action: simple tourist facilities, facilities for speological tourism and complex tourist facilities;
- Facilities for practicing recreational tourism, consisting in punctual developments ensuring safe mountain trekking;
- Building specially designed routes for cyclotourism. These currently take place on the existing communication infrastructure;
- Development of the steeps, gorges and caves for mountain climbing, as in the Șureanu Massif these activities are only at the beginning;
- The building of tourist routes that offer opportunities for development of areas less known and less frequented by tourists, but which possess valuable resources, likely to attract the interest of tourists.

## CONCLUSIONS

The Șureanu Massif, a physical and geographical entity that is part of the Carpathian Meridional System, is distinctive from the touristic point of view through its particularities highlighted at the level of the existing tourism potential and its disposal in the territory, as well as in the ways of developing and improving a balanced tourism approach.

The planning and development of tourism in the Șureanu Massif aims at optimising the touristic potential by developing tourism planning strategies that will include all the necessary initiatives for sustainable development. A synthesis of the natural touristic potential is given by the beauty of the landscape and its implications for touristic activities.

The degree of capitalisation of anthropogenic sights is far from what is deserved if we consider the historical importance or qualities such as uniqueness and beauty of scenic landscapes. We are witnesses of the indifference, lack of care and of funds always brought up as excuses by the authorities. There is also a lack of responsibility of many tourists, thus leading to the destruction of the treasure that our forefathers had so valuably preserved.

Landforms give support to the tourist infrastructure, from accommodation and catering facilities, to communication routes, leisure infrastructure and various tourist facilities. Guesthouses and chalets are the most frequent types of accommodation, concentrated in three main areas: Șugag -

Cugir - Petrila, Orăștioara de Sus - Costești villages, Grădiștea de Munte and Petroșani depression. Food services are provided predominantly within these units in the high mountain area, and as we approach the extremities of the massif, we find more and more independent food serving units.

Regarding access to the mountain area, the massif is surrounded by major traffic arteries: to the north, there is motorway A1 (Deva - Orăștie – Sebeș sections), with its secondary axes: the European road E79 Petroșani-Simeria (to the west and south), continued eastward with the national road DN 7A, Petroșani - Obârșia Lotrului – Voineasa. The peripheral road ring is closed to the east by the national road DN 67C, Sebeș - Obârșia Lotrului. Out of these, in concentric circles, come secondary roads, which overlap the main valleys, penetrate into the massif and play an essential role for tourism (such as county roads DJ 704, DJ 668A and DJ 705A).

The recreational infrastructure takes on very complex forms and functions, and it is frequently associated with accommodation units. Nevertheless, it can also be a distinct entity within tourist resorts, used by tourists and locals alike. Its role in completing and extending the existing touristic offer, by providing the opportunity for sports and contributing to a healthy life, to relaxation, to recovery from illness, by diversifying the range of services offered (Cocean P., 2009b) is reduced because of the poor condition of the equipment, the insufficient quality and quantity, as well as the uninspired location of this infrastructure.

An analysis of the visitor flow and of the tourist market trends was essential in the process of developing and planning tourism in the Șureanu Massif, as they showed numbers. The visitor flow, closely related to the existing tourist offer and the quality of the services offered, is deficient at a regional level, except for the well-known tourist areas of the region (Șureanu Skiing Area, Orăștioara de Sus - Costești, town of Petroșani area, Oașa Monastery). The seasonality of the visitor flow in the area, through the two periods of tourist activity - summer and winter seasons, highlights the incomplete use of the technical-material base and of the labour force, with negative influences on the quality and cost of services, as well as on the return on investments. The diversification of the tourist offers and the proposals for tourism development will allow the capitalisation of those areas with insufficiently promoted touristic potential and the reduction of tourism amplitude.

The tourist facilities in the Șureanu Massif are insufficient if we consider the tourism development prospects and are not remarkable in a sustainable way of approach. Therefore, the tourist activity is practiced on a smaller scale and even in the absence of qualitative facility developments (guesthouses, cottages, hotels). New facilities are in need to serve several purposes: developments for a better capitalisation of tourist attractions, the application of

sustainable conservation and protection policies for the touristic potential, large-scale developments of point-based objectives (the skiing area), and their correlation with accommodation and food service infrastructure.

Among the forms of tourism currently present in the Șureanu Massif, the most representative are winter sports and mountain hiking. The area contains over 10 kilometres of ski slopes of various difficulty, situated at a remarkable altitude in Romania (second place after Sinaia resort). Mountain hiking is favoured by the existence of a high number of tourist routes, whose diversity of lengths and difficulty levels generates a wide range of addressability. With a view to promote these forms of tourism, sporting competitions and meetings have a particularly important role, with a large number of participants, visitors and spectators involved or present in the area. Other well-represented forms are speological tourism, cultural tourism, educational tourism, extreme sports (mountain or rock climbing), ecotourism, and other forms of recreational, cultural, curative or mixed tourism.

The present research has demonstrated the need for tourism planning and development initiatives in the Șureanu Massif, processes with direct influence on the tourist development of the mountain area. In order to function as a complex and authentic tourist destination on the domestic and international market, there is a need for a systemic approach that considers imperatives such as local initiatives, territorial and tourism planning, involvement and education of local communities.