

## **MICE – The Valorization Vector of Local Communities’ Resources Case Study - ROMANIA**

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*Abstract.* MICE (Meeting, Incentives, Conferencing, Exhibitions / Events) is an industry that currently is in a continuous economic expansion worldwide. MICE is the most profitable segment of the tourism industry, so the industry of conferences and events is constantly changing globally, so appeared these type of associations - Convention Bureau, which include specialists from all sectors dedicated to the industry: conference organization, congresses, seminars, fairs, specialized exhibitions, namely: tour operator agencies, business centers, hotels with conference and meeting events facilities, service and equipment providers.

Romania is a unique destination with unspoiled natural, cultural and historical values, ideally placed in Europe and easily accessible by air from the most world capitals. In Romania, tourism, as a social and economic phenomenon, is integrated into the unified country's economy, constituting a major coordinated civilization of our society. We note that the infrastructure in Romania is in the process of modernization, people's hospitality is present in the hospitality industry, especially the professional capacity of Romanian companies for organizing large-scale meetings in business centers chains, lead to the valorization of local communities.

This paper aims to be a national case study on the three historical regions: Transylvania, Valahia and Moldova in terms of MICE industry. The methodology used is lecture review that will evaluate, explore, identify and analyze literature, also we will use and analyze the content of surveys, official analyzes and economic national reports made by public and private research institutions in the studied field.

Obtaining optimal ratio between quality and price is the main objective of the strategy of the event manufacturer in MICE industry in Romania.

*Keywords:* MICE, business tourism, economic development, the valorization of communities’ resources, regional tourism.

### **Introduction**

Tourism, in its contemporary expression and in the countless forms and aspects it sums up, beyond distances, statistics, strategies, social valences and economic and ethnic impacts, is a globalized phenomenon that influences and transforms systems and people, whether they are hosts or visitors. Tourism is one of the most surprising ways of knowing, exploring, discovering and fulfilling. At the same time, it is a perfect way to express the generosity, goodness, professionalism, openness and hospitality of every nation. Thus, tourism beyond figures is about people, beyond statistics tourism brings nations closer to making the world better and more beautiful. (Pearce, 2011)

Tourism has occupied a special place in the economies of developed countries since ancient times and travels have not only the purpose of visiting objectives, but also a lucrative and entertaining purpose.

(Davidson R., Cope B., 2003). Romania as a country located in Eastern Europe could be visited after 1989 and also benefited from membership in various international bodies for the development of infrastructure, economy and civilization.

The MICE industry and business tourism are two growing segments in Romania for the past 20 years, but especially in the last decade since our country joined the European Union. Undoubtedly, the meeting industry, a term whose concept covers the international MICE industry concept (meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions), is now the most efficient and most profitable component in tourism, both globally and in Romania. There are many reasons, but they can be summed up in three words: money, image, success; for business, for the state and for local communities, nationally and internationally.

In 2017, the travel and tourism industry continues to make a real difference in the lives of millions of people, stimulating economic growth, creating jobs, reducing poverty and stimulating growth and tolerance.

MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions) are an industry that is currently in continuous economic expansion. This has resulted in associations such as: The Convention Bureau, which includes specialists from all sectors dedicated to industry: organizing conferences, seminars, fairs, specialized exhibitions, travel agencies, business centres, hotels with conference and meeting facilities, service providers and equipment. (Carvalho P, Márquez M.A., Díaz M., 2016)

The professional organization of events involves travel arrangements for professional and business purposes, characterized by the consumption of a wide range of services, both common with traditional tourism (accommodation, catering, local transfers and transport, tours) and specific: strategic planning and management events, conference location and facilities rental, rental of audio-video equipment and necessary technical assistance, conference interpreters, hostesses, social programs organization, production of personalized promotional objects and means, printing brochures, catalogues, maps and volume scientific papers of the conference or technical meeting.

The present research aims to be a national case study on the three Romanian historical regions: Transylvania, Romanian Country / Wallachia and Moldova regarding the MIC industry component as a vector for the development of these communities. The methodology used is a lecture review by which we will evaluate, explore, identify and analyse the literature, as well as analyse the content of surveys, official analyses and national economic reports by public or private research institutions on the field studied.

### **MICE (meetings, incentive, conferences and exhibitions) - Description**

Events that are part of the MICE industry are events and activities involving participants who reach a community where they use specific services to carry out the activity for which they meet. The venue has to be a well-appointed place that offers the necessary facilities to meet the needs of those attending the meeting.

The acronym **MICE** refers to:

**M** = Meetings (corporate / business)

**I** = Incentives

**C** = Conventions (congresses and conferences)

**E** = Exhibitions (fairs)

We will describe these events one at a time, which are a source of development for communities where they occur. Thus, if we refer to meetings, they gather people in one place for the purpose of sharing information, discussing and solving problems. *The meeting* can range from ten to thousands people. During a meeting, participants will usually be served with food and beverages. Meeting times vary depending on the type of meeting. Most of the times, the meetings refer to corporate meetings that are held by large companies. According to Chloe Lau, (2011) these are of the following types:

“• Council meetings are attended by corporate directors and are usually held annually;

- Board meetings, where managers from different regions of a corporation meet when needed to make decisions for corporations;
- Shareholder meetings, involving investors holding a share in a company and usually held quarterly;
- Training sessions, in which case companies organize sessions for employees when necessary;
- Meetings with partners, suppliers and customers, their purpose is to discuss business transactions, usually held after a timely announcement of the agenda;
- Product launches, these are the type of meeting with customers, the public and journalists, reporters when new products are launched on the market;
- Strategic planning, these meetings take place between managers and employees to discuss the company's future;
- Retreats is the term used for meeting the entire staff of a company that spends a day or two together to participate in team building activities, training sessions, and strategic planning sessions.”

The MICE industry has a very important economic and social component and it is an incentive. *Incentive* tourism is a management tool for rewarding and motivating sales representatives, dealers, distributors, production workers, support staff and, in some cases, customers. The company rewards sales representatives reaching the target by sending them on trips. Most of the time, the incentive trip comes with hotel stays, tourist packages and planned activities, such as festive dinners, parties and games. Practically, stimulus trips have nothing to do with business as an activity. The market for incentive travel is recognized especially in the U.S. and Asia, but has been developing for a number of years in Europe as well.

Chloe Lau, (2013) identified the following factors behind incentive decisions:

“• The stimulus budget economy, how powerful is the economy of the country where the sponsor group has its headquarters?

- Purchasing power, represented by the exchange rate force in countries considered as destination for travel;
- The political climate, as travel alerts for destinations with political turbulence may affect the choice of destination;
- Safety and security, an increasingly common problem across the globe, such as terrorist alert levels after the US incident – 9th of September, 2001;
- Value of facilities and services with other destination options;
- Uniqueness of the experience / destination to consider whether these participants have experienced this type of journey before.”

Another component of the MICE industry that brings major profits to the development of the communities where it is taking place is represented by conventions / conferences. They are similar to meetings, *conventions* are meetings of people with common goals, organized to exchange ideas, opinions and information of common interest to the group or field. An organization, usually an association, will hold a convention each year with a theme on the organization profile. Those interested in registering for the convention may pay the association a registration fee for all sessions, discussions, food and drinks, festive meals and on-site visits. In particular, conventions consist of a variety of events: congresses (large-scale regular business meetings), conferences (small-scale meetings for information exchange), confexes (conferences with small exhibitions attached) and events from one to one (networking). All conventions can be organized at: international, national, regional level.

The specific characteristics of the conventions are according to Chloe Lau (2013):

- “• A big event that lasts a few days and involves a social program;
- Organized by associations such as: professional and commercial, voluntary, charity and political parties;
- The period when it takes place is once a year;
- Generates revenue for the organizing association;
- The convention place is selected long before the convention takes place.”

*Exhibitions and fairs*, these events are organized to present new products, services and information to people who are interested to them, such as prospective customers or buyers. The company that presents its new products, the exhibit, usually rents an area / stand from the organizer and creates a space to meet potential buyers, for example B2B. Buyers or visitor audiences need an invitation or ticket to be admitted to the exhibition or fair.

The purpose of these events is varied depending on the manifestation, to gain new opportunities for the participants, to introduce a new product or to build a network for influential contacts. At the fairs there is an opportunity to gather the latest information about the competitors, but also to build the image of the company according to market demand in the field.

Participants are industry associations or companies in the field where the event takes place.

According to Chloe Lau, (2013) exhibitions are ranked according to size:

“• For the public-to-consumer (B2C): to display / show - car parks or fair / exhibition – book or equipment exhibition;

• For business buyers, namely business-to-business (B2B): commercial show or trade fair for the purpose of exporting the presented products;

• A mixed event - an exhibition that combines trade and the public together and is open to both business and public audiences. Most of these mixed events have a specific visit time specific to each group of participants.”

As a conclusion, the M.I.C.E. helps to promote tourism, increase the attractiveness of tourist destinations, differentiate products, increase product quality, restructure and improve the image of the destination, support local, create new areas of activity, and attract support for infrastructure in the region. In terms of development, it is generally considered to be a growing sector in many countries, even if economic conditions deteriorate in the region, maintaining the position of the ICC. Tourism activities are favored for many areas of activity in the regions where they are organized and are favored in support of many different areas and as a form of tourism supported by the importance of the country's image and the development of regional potential.

### **The tourism context of Romania**

It is estimated that the tourism industry in Romania will develop in the coming years, considering the tourists growth who will choose this country as destination. Romania has a very high tourist potential and if the leisure part has begun to develop over the last years on the MICE side, the evolution is constant and older and the infrastructure is ready for a long time. The main city with event infrastructure is Bucharest, the capital of Romania, but it is followed by other major cities: Cluj, Sibiu, Timisoara, Constanta, Oradea, Iasi, and last but not least Brasov. At the moment, according to the National Institute of Statistics, there are 788 3-star hotels, 290 4-star hotels and 34 5-star hotels. Most of 3 star hotels are in Bucharest: over 10,000. The airport infrastructure of Romania is also very developed. The Bucharest National Airport Company recorded in 2016, at the two airports of Bucharest - Henri Coanda International Airport Bucharest and Bucharest International Airport Baneasa-Aurel Vlaicu, a record number of 10.99 million passengers and 120.7 thousand aircraft movements landings and take-offs. Compared to 2015, the number of passengers who crossed Bucharest's airports in 2016 registered a substantial increase of 18.3%. In a country with 16,433,576 passenger air traffic in 2016 and 13,323,606 million passengers in 2015, we have 16 international airports, so a very high density, spread all over the country. If we relate to the total airports, not just international and civil, Romania ranks the 88th place in the world, with 54 airports out of a total of 235 countries that have airplane tracks. Out of these, airports with paved runways are: over 3 km - 4, between 2.4 km and 3 km - 11, between 1.5 km and 2.4 km - 10, respectively below 0.9 km - 1.

Also in Romania there are specialized services providers for the MICE industry, tour operators and DMC, some of them representing international brands, the world's leading business travel exponents.

Romania is connected to the international MICE market, both through its membership in international organizations and through the local presence of many international structures.

Romania is a country which has 7 objectives included in UNESCO World Heritage: the painted monasteries of Bucovina, the Dacian Fortresses in the Orastie Mountains (where Sarmizegetusa Regia is a true Stonehenge of Romania), the Historic Center of Sighisoara, the Horezu Monastery, the villages with fortified churches from Transylvania, the wooden churches in Maramures and the Biosphere Reserve of the Danube Delta. All this represents a magical place for tourists crossing the country.

Romania is gaining more and more "land" in the classic event competition, relying on a number of advantages such as:

- A unique destination with unaltered natural, cultural and historical values, ideally placed in European space and easily accessible by air links with most capitals;
- Political and civil stability and NATO and EU membership;
- Dedicated infrastructure for hosting conferences and exhibitions, in a process of modernization, diversification and rapid expansion, with encouraging investment dynamics and opportunities for capital input;
- The most famous hotel chains and multinational companies, already present in Romania and with obvious appetite for expansion;
- The professional specialization of more and more Romanian companies that have the ability to take over the entire process of strategic planning and organization of various meetings.

## **The potential of the MICE industry in the main regions of Romania - case study**

### ***Methodology***

This paper aims to be a national case study on the three historical regions: Transylvania, Valahia and Moldova in terms of MICE industry. The methodology used is lecture review that will evaluate, explore, identify and analyze literature, also we will use and analyze the content of surveys, official analyzes and economic national reports made by public and private research institutions in the studied field. Each region was analyzed from the perspective of tourism potential and event hosting capacity in the MICE industry. For the study of these regions a decisive factor in organizing business events is its air connections and the cities where you can fly. That's why cities with airport and 4 and 5\* hotels have been identified and evaluate it. The data from appendices were collected with the help of the Ministry of Tourism and aren't public; the following indicators of the MICE industry were analyzed in appendices: for 5, 4\* hotels – number of rooms, number of conference rooms and their conference room capacity; for polyvalent halls, chambers of commerce and industry, cinemas, theaters, opera halls and stadiums – number of conferences rooms and their capacity as places. This case study is the first of its kind in the field of business tourism in Romania. Each city in the three regions was evaluated from the point of view of tourism interest, events organized with international promotion, airlines connections with other countries, the ability to organize MICE events and the leisure time that a business tourist spends after participating in the event. The purpose of the research is to assess the current capacity and potential of the MICE industry in Romania in the way Romania can become the first MICE destination in Eastern Europe.

### ***Case study***

The **Transylvanian region** is best known as the mysterious realm of "vampires thirsty for blood and wicked wolves". Some may think it is fictitious, but this central region of Romania is a real and special place. Surrounded to the east by the Carpathian Mountains, "the land beyond the woods" still feels undetected. Transylvania is one of the regions loved by Prince Charles and declared by Lonely

Planet as "the number one tourist region in the world in 2016". Transfagarașan was named by Jeremy Clarkson, the top performer of the British Broadcasting Show, "as the most amazing road in the world," built as a military route in the 1970s by Ceausescu's order, and revolves around the Fagaraș Mountains. The road goes down a sterile valley to Lake Balea and through a 900-meter tunnel before continuing through the forests of the Wallachian region.

The cities of Transylvania that benefit MICE industry are: Cluj-Napoca, Oradea, Baia-Mare, Targu-Mures, Sibiu, Timisoara, Satu-Mare and last but not least Brasov. We will analyze in this paper the potential for development of the cities of Cluj-Napoca, Oradea, Sibiu, Brasov from the perspective of the potential of the MICE industry. In **Appendix 1**, one can identify the hosting capacity of MICE industry events in the region and major cities with the airport presented in the following description from a resource point of view. The total capacity of seats on the region for organizing MICE events is 286.338.

**Cluj-Napoca**, the second largest city in Romania, is the "Heart of Transylvania" and one of the most active academic, medical and IT centers. It hosts one of the largest and most popular music festivals (Untold) and film (TIFF) in this part of Europe. With over 80,000 students each year, a vibrant nightlife and a dynamic cultural environment, the city held the title of European Youth Capital in 2015. A place of diversity and multiculturalism, Cluj-Napoca is the city where past, present and future are reflected in local identity and characteristics. Cluj people speak different languages, know how to live in harmony, accept and respect the values of each. As a result, the most valuable and sustainable wealth of this city is the dynamics of leisure together, which is why Eurostat chose "Cluj-Napoca, the most friendly city in Europe". Air connections are a very important criterion in the choice of destination for a MICE event, so the second largest airport in Romania after Henri Coanda International Airport in Bucharest, Avram Iancu International Airport operates international flights in over 40 destinations: Charleroi, Larnaca, Billund, Basel Mulhouse Freiburg, Dubai, Paris, Nice, Berlin, Dortmund, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Karlsruhe, Cologne, Memmingen, Munich, Nuremberg, Dublin, Tel Aviv, Bari, Bergamo, Bologna, Treviso, Malta, Birmingham, Doncaster / Sheffield, Liverpool, London, Eindhoven, Warsaw, Bratislava, Alicante, Barcelona, Madrid, Malaga, Palma de Mallorca, Valencia, Zaragoza, Malmö, Stockholm, Istanbul and Budapest. Cluj is linked to the whole of Europe and continues to expand annually with access to new airlines.

For business travelers, there is a variety of tourist attractions that the city and its surroundings provide: First place in Business Insider's "coolest underground places in the world" is the Turda Salt, at a depth of over 100 meters and less than half an hour from Cluj. The salt mine has been declared a historic monument and, following recent modernization, it offers an oasis of relaxation and plenty of activities. These can be addressed to climbers who will find the Turzii Valley at 30 km of Cluj, about 50-60 caves, arcades (the remains of the crashed caves) or creeks. The ideal place for tourists practicing sports such as fishing, water skiing, jets, swimming or boat trips is Lake Tarnita, an arc dam located 60 km from Cluj.

The events that have an international impact and which lead to the development of this city from the economic and especially tourist point of view are the following: "Transylvania International Film Festival (TIFF)". Founded in Cluj-Napoca 15 years ago, over the years, TIFF has become a genuine "brand of Cluj", recognized both in the country and abroad. It takes place every year in June. Another event is the "Untold Festival", which has been nominated since the first edition of the "Best Major European Festival" and transforms the city for a few days in a magical realm. At this moment, it is the biggest music festival in Romania and takes place every year in August. It brings together over 300,000 people, many of whom are foreigners and tourists coming from all over the country, including 30,000 foreign citizens. Event tourism is also present near Cluj through another established international event, "Electric Castle" is the first festival in the country that has moved live and electronic music from clubs to the open air scenes of a historical monument, Banffy Castle from Bontida. He was nominated for the European Festival Awards at the Best Medium Sized Festival, each year since then. This event has developed a village from a simple peasant village in an attractive

location for tourists, 2016 through this festival brought 97,000 people, 15% of those coming from countries such as Germany, Hungary and Great Britain.

**Oradea** is a true outdoor architectural museum, being included in the Art Nouveau city network, alongside Barcelona, Budapest, Vienna, Brussels and Helsinki. Most hotels in Oradea have spa and wellness centers. Here we find the newest aqua park in Romania, Nymphaea Aquaparc, which completes the relaxation offer for tourists, the Oradea Fortress being the most important point of the cultural offer. The airport is located 10 minutes from the city center, offering regular domestic flights and international flights to destinations such as London, Barcelona, Eindhoven, Memmingen, Antalya, Larnaca, Turin and Milan. Two hours' drive from Oradea opens the Apuseni Mountains with the highest concentration of visiting caves in Romania. Here you can find a rich offer of active tourism services (rafting, climbing, railway, tourist routes, natural parks) and a very colorful and present rural culture tradition. Near the city only 7 km away you can practice balneal tourism in Baile Felix, the ideal place for relaxation in this area. The largest permanent spa resort in Romania offering hotel and spa services at 5 \* level.

For 5 days in July, Oradea has a different air than the usual one, a medieval one. In order to provide a medieval atmosphere, more than 150 people dressed in medieval costumes year after year will walk in the Oradea Fortress, and a drummer announces the arrival of the festival in several locations in the city. Thus, tourists are invited to relive the history of the medieval fortress.

**Sibiu** is situated at the foot of the Carpathian Mountains, being a trademark cultural destination in southern Transylvania due to its rich cultural heritage, internationally renowned museums and a variety of events. International theater and film festivals, music and dance, gastronomic and sporting events animate the city all year round. Since 2007, when Sibiu held the title of "European Cultural Capital", the tourist infrastructure has developed on a permanent basis. There are currently 5 international hotel chains with conference rooms, and the leisure offer has diversified. The restaurants are creatively exploring old recipes and local products in preparation for 2019, when Sibiu will be the European Gastronomic Region. In addition to domestic flights, Sibiu International Airport offers flights to the following destinations: Dortmund, Munich, Memmingen, Milan, Vienna, Stuttgart, Madrid and Nurnberg. Not at 100 km. of Sibiu, the Medieval Fortress Sighisoara, a UNESCO objective since 1999, is one of the most beautiful and remarkable medieval fortresses in Europe, being one of the few medieval fortresses still inhabited in Europe and the only one of its kind in Romania. A visit to the clock tower gives you the opportunity to look at Sighisoara from a height and to see the figurines that pass in front of the clock dial, still functional of the Middle Ages. No matter what your favorite sport, in Sibiu the fun is "at home": hiking trails in the Cindrel and Fagaras Mountains, skiing and snowboarding in Paltinis and Gura Raului, extreme sports (paragliding, motodeltaplan, parachuting), Enduro and ATV (you know one of the toughest Enduro competitions in the world, RedBull Romaniacs, takes place every summer in Sibiu?). The International Theater Festival in Sibiu is part of the largest art festivals in the world. For many years he was third, after the festivals in Avignon and Edinburgh.

**Brasov** brings together a wide variety of landscapes, geological and palaeontological formations, flora and fauna, as well as a variety of tourist attractions that are excellent for stays or weekend parties. Surrounded by the heights of the Postavaru Massif, Brasov, one of the most visited cities in Romania, combines the harsh air of the mountains with the medieval citadel, the Gothic and Baroque architecture, but also plenty of bars and cafes. The old town, founded by the Teutonic Knights in the 13th century, first known as Kronstadt (Crown City), is one of the best preserved in Europe. As in other cities in Transylvania, the architecture of the city was influenced by centuries of coexistence of Romanians, Germans, Hungarians and Jews.

The Poiana Brasov resort is situated near Brasov, being one of the best equipped ski resorts in Romania, with long and varied slopes of very good quality. With accommodation, dining and recreation at Western standards, the resort offers tourists a wide variety of activities during the summer. The most popular are hiking that, taking footpaths, allows you to discover extraordinary

mountain landscapes. The destination has the ability to host events for 5000 people. Bran Castle has become known all over the world due to the association with the legend of Count Dracula, being built in the 14th century by the merchants of Brasov on the site of a fortification of the Knights Templar, on an old Transcarpathian commercial road. The largest tyrolean in the country is found here and measures over 147 meters, being suspended at 137 meters between the walls of the Rasnavei Keys. One of the most popular and frequented mountain trails in this area is the Babele - Sfinxul - Cross of Caraiman. The Sphinx in the Bucegi Mountains is a megalith (prehistoric monument) located at 2,216 meters altitude. The Cross of the Heroes of Heaven on Mount Caraiman is unique in Europe both through the altitude of its location and its size. Tourists attending MICE events have enough to fill their free time after conferences. Every spring the old Romanian community in Brasov perpetuates its ancient customs through the June Schedules in Shei, which take place during Easter and reveals ancestral customs, expressed through rituals, music and costumes that seem odd from the times of myth and legend.

Another historical region is **Moldova**, located in Eastern Romania. It is distinguished through its folcloric immaterial wealth and cultural attractions, its beautiful scenery and its tumultuous history. Linked to the rest of Europe via three international airports – Iași, Suceava and Bacău, Romania's North-East offers tourists from around the world balneary resorts, mountain resorts, medieval fortresses, ancient vestiges and religious establishments. In what follows, we will look into the cities with the greatest potential for business tourism – Iași, Suceava and Bacău. **Appendix 2** presents a breakdown of MICE capacity by region and major city. The total capacity of seats on the region for organizing MICE events is 63.746.

The main city in North-Eastern Romania, **Iași**, has been since ancient times an important trade, cultural and academic centre. The main industries present in the city are metalurgy, medicines, textiles and food processing. In the last few years, banking and IT have grown considerably, with several banks and IT companies setting shop in the city. Beside domestic destinations, the airport offers flights to London, Madrid, Munich, Rome, Bologna, Torino, Tel Aviv, Paris, Barcelona, Bruxelles, Cologne, Milan, Venice, Larnaca, Catania and Vienna. The Culture Palace in Iași is a distinguished landmark, due to its beautiful blend of neogothic, romantic and neobaroque architecture. The building boasts modern equipments and installations. The region around Iasi can offer tours and wine tastings, including festive dinner at Cotnari, where the tourist can sample the exquisite quality of the local wine. The International Theatre for Youth Festival is a diverse and complex festival, aimed at understanding youth as a state of mind, as an attitude and as an openness to culture and innovation. Over 400 artists from 17 countries present their work every October in Iasi.

For over two centuries, **Suceava** has been the main trade and political centre of the region. The city boasts a wide variety of economic and industrial activities and the region ranks highly on tourism due to its cultural, historical and natural riches, as an area of serenity, relaxation and enjoyment of the traditional simple way of living in the countryside. Beside the domestic destinations the Ștefan cel Mare International Airport offers flights to Athens, London, Dublin, Madrid, Barcelona, Bruxelles, Budapest, Milan, Torino, Rome, Verona, Vienna, Frankfurt, Venice, Istanbul, Warsaw, Charleroi, Paris, Larnaca, Malaga, Zaragoza and Berlin. Suceava's Voyevod Citadel is a medieval fortress that has seen many fights throughout history. The interior has been partly renovated to enable a insight into the court life of the temporary residence of Moldova's princes. The monasteries of Moldovița, Humor, Voroneț, Probota, as well as „Saint John the New” in Suceava are but a small part of the UNESCO-acclaimed jewels of Romania.

Moldova's main industrial city, **Bacau**, has the advantage of the position and the natural environment that favored the rapid development of the settlement. It is an important intersection of the main commercial thoroughfares in the western central part of Moldova. Bacau is renowned for the existence of ancestral customs and customs, especially of winter traditions, admirable preserved, especially on the Trotuș Valley. The George Enescu International Airport offers international flights to Dublin, Liverpool, London, Brussels, Madrid, Torino, Milan, Bologna, Rome and Catania. An-hour drive away from Bacau there are two spa resorts. Slănic Moldova's potential comes from the quality and



quantity of its highly therapeutic waters, while Târgu Ocna hosts Salina - Mina Trotuș. This is the deepest salt mine in Romania with a depth of 240 meters, and inside it is the only church made almost entirely of salt in Europe.

The third region that has a meaning for the formation of Romania is **Wallachia**, where Vlad Tepes, a particularly controversial personality of his time, reigned in the past. An authoritarian and blood-thirsty ruler who often resorted to cruel punishments, being especially known for impaling the convicts or war prisoners, a method of execution of special cruelty, even by the standards of the Middle Age. In what follows, we will analyze the tourist potential of the cities: Timișoara, Arad, Constanța and Tulcea. The total capacity of seats on the region for organizing MICE events is 286.658.

**Timisoara**, "Little Vienna" or "the city of flowers", received the title of "European Capital of Culture" for 2021 this year, being one of the cities with the richest architectural and cultural heritage in Romania and also an important historical, economic, financial and academic center.

Timișoara was the first city in Europe with electrically-lit streets (1884) and the first electric tram in Romania (1899) circulated here. It is the city with the largest area of protected historical monuments in Romania, as well as the only European city in which three theaters operate in three different languages within the same building. The year 2016 brought Timișoara for the second time in a row and for the third time in history the title of the best city for business in Romania by Forbes magazine. Traian Vuia Airport offers, in addition to domestic flights, flights to: Paris, Dortmund, Düsseldorf Weeze, Munich, Frankfurt Hahn, Memmingen, Berlin, Brussels Charleroi, Milano-Bergamo, Bologna, Rome, Treviso, Bari, London, Eindhoven, Barcelona, Madrid and Valencia. A walk in the city center allows you to walk in the footsteps of princes, princesses and kings by touring the numerous palaces: Palace of Culture, Lloyd Palace, Neuhauz Palace, Marbl Palace, Palace of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dăuierbach Palace, Löffler Palace, Hilt-Vogel Palace, Szechenyi Palace and Weiss Palace. Their predominant style is the Baroque Viennese, Neo-Byzantine and Art Nouveau.

The proximity to the most important pan-European routes, the well-prepared human resource, the potential for innovation and technology, the existence of investment preferences, free economic zones and development priority areas in the region are just a few arguments to choose **Arad** as a favorite MICE destination. In 2015, the Europe Business Assembly in London has designated Arad as "Excellent Business Destination". The cultural and historical value of Arad County reveals the richness and diversity of the architectural heritage, through numerous fortresses, castles, and places of worship. The Arad Administrative Palace is a building with significant features of eclectic architecture. The plan of the building is U-shaped, and the clock tower, brought from Switzerland, has a mechanism that at the fixed hour plays Ludwig van Beethoven's Ode to Joy. The fortress of Arad was placed on an island surrounded by an arm of Mureș, giving the possibility of the three rows of underground casemates and several rows of ditches, if necessary, to be slightly flooded. Its shape, six-pointed star, lends it uniqueness.

**Constanța**, the most important Romanian seaside town has a particular dynamic, as it combines millenary history with modernism, being the meeting point of two worlds: the East and the West. In size it is the second city of Romania, after Bucharest and the largest Black Sea commercial port. Together with the Romanian seaside, it benefits from about 250,000 accommodation places in the hotels, villas and boarding houses of the 12 resorts that make up 82 kilometers of the beach: Năvodari, Mamaia, Eforie Nord, Eforie Sud, Techirghiol, Costinești, Olimp, Neptune, Jupiter, Cap Aurora, Venus, Saturn, Mangalia, plus May 2 and Vama Veche. This is where over 40% of the tourist accommodation capacity of Romania is concentrated. Mihail Kogalniceanu International Airport offers in addition to internal flights, international flights to: Rome, Paris, Milan, Brussels, London, Istanbul and Varna. Histria fortress is attested as the oldest settlement on the present territory of Romania. The construction was carried out by the Greeks around the year 650 BC. The casino in Constanța, the emblem of the city, is an imposing building, over 130 years old, which still emanates the air of its glorious times and is a must in every tourist's holiday pictures. Here, huge amounts of

money were gambled, fortunes were made and wealth was blown away. It is a representative symbol of the city.

**Tulcea**, the city of the 7 hills and the 14 ethnicities, is the administrative capital of the only county in Romania you can reach by sea, the Danube and land. It is a modern city, a port for passenger ships and freighters, especially raw materials and sea-going fishing vessels. The port city of Tulcea or the city of the Gates of the Danube Delta is an important industrial center with a focus on shipbuilding and repair. At the same time, it boasts a reed cultivation center, and some of the area's economy has grown around tourism. Danube Delta Airport offers flights to Sardinia, Frankfurt, Munich, Milan and Genova. The UNESCO-listed Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve comprises 30 types of ecosystems and over 7,400 species of plants and animals that are waiting to be discovered by tourists.

The Letea Forest, a real treasure of Romania, is one of the last places in Europe where more than 3,000 wild horses enjoy freedom. Appendix 3 presents a breakdown of MICE capacity for Wallachia.

### ***Bucharest and its MICE potential***

The capital of Romania is one of the most important and oldest cities in Europe, an important cultural, historical and economic center of Eastern Europe. It has been mentioned in history since 1459 and currently spreads over an area of 238 sq. Km, with a population of about two million inhabitants. In the early 1900s, Bucharest was considered one of the jewels of Europe, developing at the same time as Paris and being very similar in architecture and lifestyle. That is why it is also called Little Paris. In a big park in the center of the capital lies the imposing House of People, currently The Parliament Palace, commissioned during the leadership of Nicolae Ceausescu. The edifice was built between 1984 and 1990, replacing an old villa neighborhood, and ranks second among the largest buildings in the world (380,000sqm) after the Pentagon. Today, when we talk about the Palace of Parliament building, we mention terms like "democracy" or "democratic institutions". Mentioning the word "openness" is not accidental, because the International Center of Conferences is the pillar that provides this window. Meeting the standards required in the field of conference organization has granted it membership of the International Association of Congressional Palaces (AIPC) in 1997. The AIPC has awarded the International Conference Center "Excellent Management Award" annually. The International Conference Center also initiated and maintained contacts with ICCA (International Association of Congresses and Conferences), EFCT (European Federation of Conference Cities) and AIVFC (International Association of Conference Francophone Cities). For the organization of events, there is an area of 10 000 square meters, divided in 10 conference rooms, with a total capacity of 6160 people. The center has halls and galleries, two main entrances and an exhibition space with technical and administrative facilities. The Romanian Athenaeum, also called "the heart of Romanian culture", was built in the heart of the capital 120 years ago with money from a public subscription, following the organization of a national lottery (500,000 tickets worth 1 leu each) and became the architectural and spiritual exponent, not just of a city, but of a nation. The capacity of the concert hall is 794 seats, and the small hall of 99 seats, the impressive marble foyer encompasses the 12 Doric columns supporting the concert hall and can accommodate events of over 1000 people. This building houses the George Enescu Philharmonic, and since 1958 the "Headquarters" of the George Enescu International Festivals.

The Palace Hall has the opportunity to arrange exhibition spaces with its own facilities and staff, the location has soon become an important competitor, both as a host of events and in the international market, by participating in various exhibitions and fairs. The Palace Hall has a total exhibition area of 2,500 sqm, and can build with its own resources about 1,000 sqm of exhibition stands. Featuring a showroom of more than 4,000 seats, the building is also equipped with various other adjacent rooms - reception rooms, protocol saloons, press conference rooms. Thus, the average annual number of concerts held at the Palace Hall is close to 100. It hosted over the years several important conferences such as the one organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the World Congress for Population, the World Congress for the Energy and World Congress of the Red Cross.

Moreover, the Palace Hall is, once every two years, the main host of the George Enescu International Festival, a space for the main section of this prestigious festival, "Grand Orchestras".

Romexpo, also known as the city within the city, is Romania's largest exhibition centre, with an area of 100,000 sq. metres hosting 11 pavilions with over 2,000 parking places and 10 conference rooms with a total capacity of 1,020 seats. The 11 pavilions, including the Central Pavilion (Dome) – a symbol of modern architecture from the 1960s, are available year round for any type of event: fair and exhibitions, congresses, concerts, sporting events, shows, festivals, courses, private parties and also business meetings and conventions.

Bucharest's Old Town is home to a land of paradoxes, populated by bars and clubs with a vivid life, cozy restaurants and cafes and a cosmopolitan fun-seeking crowd. One can find venues ranging from elegant bars to Irish pubs and from hedonist clubs to steamy strip shows. In the **appendix 3** we found that the capacity of MICE industry for the capital of Romania is 193.187 seats, almost as an analyzed region.

## Conclusion

Romania has great tourist potential, as well as a good infrastructure for conferences and events. But above all, the human factor is very important. Most Romanians in tourism, services and other fields can easily speak at least one foreign language. The main foreign languages known in Romania are English, French, German, Italian and Spanish.

According to the latest report of the World Tourism Council, tourism generated 197,500 jobs in Romania, or 2.4% of the total. For 2017, the number of jobs in tourism is estimated to increase to 203,000, and in 2027 to 219,000. On the other hand, tourism directly and indirectly supports 513,000 jobs (including events) and 6.2% of all employees. (WTTC, 2017)

The 4/5-star hotel staff, especially that in the cities described, as well as the event industry staff are qualified to international standards. On the other hand, it is important to underline that the quality-price ratio in Romania is very good, with lower costs than in Western Europe. Each location has leisure opportunities nearby, and each city and tourist resort has attractions that are worth visiting during leisure.

This paper presents the multiplier effect of the resources of the cities in the three regions of Romania, which is related to the development of the communities through the intermediary of the MICE industry. With 636.742 seats for hosting the MICE industry events, we strongly believe that Romania may become, in a few years, the prime destination in Eastern Europe from the perspective of business tourism.

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## Appendix 1

TRANSILVANIA	CLUJ	ORADEA	BAIA MARE	SATU MARE	BRASOV	SIBIU	TARGU-MURES	ARAD	TIMISOARA	Total
<b>Hoteluri 5 stele</b>	4	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	8
Număr de camere	412	0	0	0	200	114	77	0	10	813
Număr săli de conferințe	10	0	0	0	3	5	4	0	0	22
Capacitate săli de conferințe	2378	0	0	0	600	800	445	0	0	4223
<b>Hoteluri 4 stele</b>	10	2	1	3	7	8	5	5	22	63
Număr de camere	665	324	94	107	1251	665	282	510	1714	5612
Număr săli de conferințe	26	3	1	5	50	29	11	11	28	164
Capacitate săli de conferințe	4415	590	70	530	9752	3236	920	1255	1900	22668
<b>Centre de conferințe / expoziții</b>	2	1	3	2	1	1	0	1	4	15
Număr săli de conferință	6	3	4	2	3	1	0	2	10	31
Capacitate săli de conferințe	1500	400	300	116	152	1000	0	950	1615	6033
<b>Sală polivalentă</b>	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	8
Capacitate	10000	2500	2060	0	1570	1812	2000	1500	1400	22842
Capacitate săli de conferințe	200	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	200
<b>Camera de comerț și industrie</b>	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
Număr săli de conferință	1	3	3	3	1	1	2	4	8	26
Capacitate săli de conferințe	200	135	305	110	100	30	100	151	2300	3431
<b>Cinema</b>	3	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	15
Număr de săli	19	12	11	1	8	1	9	11	20	92
Capacitate	4182	1588	1151	70	1470	250	1715	828	3480	14734
<b>Teatru</b>	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	3	13
Număr de săli	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	3	7	18
Capacitate	1000	670	300	800	1000	330	600	530	1100	6330
<b>Operă</b>	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	0	1	7
Număr de săli	1	0	0	1	2	1	2	0	1	8
Capacitate	1000	0	0	400	660	460	900	0	6900	10320
<b>Stadion</b>	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	11
Număr săli de conferințe	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Capacitate săli de conferințe	220	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	220
Capacitate stadion	53701	18000	16000	24000	8800	14200	8200	12500	33000	188401

## Appendix 2

	MOLDOVA	SUCEAVA	IAȘI	BACĂU	Total
<b>Hoteluri 5 stele</b>		0	1	0	1
<i>Număr de camere</i>		0	120	0	120
<i>Număr săli de conferințe</i>		0	4	0	4
<i>Capacitate săli de conferințe</i>		0	550	0	550
<b>Hoteluri 4 stele</b>		6	15	2	23
<i>Număr de camere</i>		537	1262	344	2143
<i>Număr săli de conferințe</i>		6	38	6	50
<i>Capacitate săli de conferințe</i>		1480	2680	320	4480
<b>Centre de conferințe / expoziții</b>		0	1	1	2
<i>Număr săli de conferință</i>		0	3	4	7
<i>Capacitate săli de conferințe</i>		0	1420	550	1970
<b>Sală polivalentă</b>		0	0	1	1
<i>Capacitate</i>		0	0	1500	1500
<b>Camera de comerț și industrie</b>		1	1	1	3
<i>Număr săli de conferință</i>		5	3	9	17
<i>Capacitate săli de conferințe</i>		430	160	1320	1910
<b>Cinema</b>		1	3	1	5
<i>Număr de săli</i>		8	7	8	23
<i>Capacitate</i>		1346	2600	1324	5270
<b>Teatru</b>		1	2	1	4
<i>Număr de săli</i>		1	6	1	8
<i>Capacitate</i>		300	1650	1500	3450
<b>Operă</b>		0	1	0	1
<i>Număr de săli</i>		0	1	0	1
<i>Capacitate</i>		0	750	0	750
<b>Stadion</b>		1	1	1	3
<i>Capacitate</i>		12500	11500	17500	41500

## Appendix 3

	VALAHIA	CONSTANTA	TULCEA	CRAIOVA	BUCUAREȘTI	TOTAL
<b>Hoteluri 5 stele</b>		4	1	0	9	14
<i>Număr de camere</i>		744	60	0	1697	4942
<i>Număr săli de conferințe</i>		7	1	0	66	74
<i>Capacitate săli de conferințe</i>		860	60	0	4915	5835
<b>Hoteluri 4 stele</b>		35	3	3	21	62
<i>Număr de camere</i>		7556	324	151	2703	10734
<i>Număr săli de conferințe</i>		64	13	4	126	207
<i>Capacitate săli de conferințe</i>		6611	1399	580	9651	18241
<b>Centre de conferințe / expoziții</b>		1	0	1	1	3
<i>Număr săli de conferință</i>		1	0	6	10	17
<i>Capacitate săli de conferințe</i>		300	0	2169	1020	3489
<b>Sală polivalentă</b>		1	1	1	1	4
<i>Capacitate</i>		1500	1200	4215	5300	12215
<b>Camera de comerț și industrie</b>		1	1	1	1	4
<i>Număr săli de conferință</i>		4	3	3	14	24
<i>Capacitate săli de conferințe</i>		195	100	210	1515	2020
<b>Cinema</b>		3	1	4	21	29
<i>Număr de săli</i>		22	2	16	113	153
<i>Capacitate</i>		1040	212	1645	26000	28897
<b>Teatru</b>		3	1	1	13	18
<i>Număr de săli</i>		3	1	1	23	28
<i>Capacitate</i>		852	324	650	6200	8026
<b>Operă</b>		0	0	1	1	2
<i>Număr de săli</i>		0	0	1	1	2
<i>Capacitate</i>		0	0	350	952	1302
<b>Stadion</b>		1	1	1	5	8
<i>Capacitate</i>		15500	12000	30000	132808	190308