

CROSS-BORDER TOURISM IN BUKOVINA

Zhanna Ivanivna **BUCHKO**

Chernivtsi National University, Chernivtsi, Ukraine

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Abstract:

This article provides a short review and analysis of tourism statistics in Ukraine in 2010-s, in particular, that of the tourist flow between Ukraine and Romania in the trans-border region of Bukovina. After several years of steady growth, all tourism-related indicators fell sharply in 2014. In the following years, private tourism has essentially recovered, whereas organized and business tourism remains in decline. One of the strategies of improving the situation is via dedicated trans-border collaboration programs sponsored by governments and international organizations. We list several of such programs that were active in Bukovina in the last decade focusing on the particular program “Historical and ethnographic heritage – part of the sustainable development of tourism in Bukovina.”

INTRODUCTION

Trans-border collaboration is common in modern international relations; in particular it is an important part of state policies of Ukraine. Tourism-related partnership between Ukraine and Romania is growing steadily, calling for detailed and systemic analysis of tourism market tendencies that arise within this trans-border interaction.

Cross-border collaboration between Ukraine and Romania collaboration occurs within four distinct Euro-regions: the Carpathian region (Ukraine-Poland-Slovakia-Hungary-Romania-Moldova), the Upper Prut Region (Ukraine-Romania-Moldova), the Lower Danube region (Ukraine-Romania-Moldova), and the Black Sea region (Ukraine-Romania-Russia-Azerbaijan-Turkey-Greece-Bulgaria-Armenia-Georgia-Moldova). A Euro-region is defined by Puryc as a territorial entity with the highest level of institutionalization in the inter-state collaboration [Puric 2007]. Recent research on the functioning of Euro regions supports the hypothesis of effectiveness of such territorial entities. An overview published by M. I. Dolishny Institute of Regional Research of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) of Ukraine reports that the highest level of trans-border collaboration is seen in the area of tourism, in particular, in a number of dedicated trans-border tourism projects [Kravtsiv 2016]. Further details on implementing such projects can be found in works of Efros, Buchko, Rudenko for Bukovina [2015] and Kyfiak for the Upper Prut region [2008].

Cross-border tourism is indicated as a high priority development direction in a range of state and municipal planning documents in Ukraine, including “Strategy of Chernivtsi region development through 2020”, “Integrated concept of Chernivtsi city center development”, and “Development strategy of tourism in Bukovina-Bessarabia trans-border subregion through 2020”.

The goal of presented study is to determined market tendencies in Ukrainian-Romanian cross-border tourism in the historical region Bukovina from statistical analysis of tourist flows

between the two countries. We briefly review the geography of the region, discuss official tourism statistics, and describe the trans-border collaboration programs in Bukovina.

PRESENTATION OF THE RESEARCH MATERIAL

Bukovina region

Bukovina (Ukr. Буковина) is a historically and ethnographically defined territory in the trans-border part of Ukraine (Northern Bukovina) and Romania (Southern Bukovina) roughly outlined by the border with Moldova on the East, Upper Dniester on the north, and the High Carpathians from the west (Figure 1). Northern Bukovina forms the bulk of Chernivtsi administrative region (8100 km²). Southern Bukovina is a part of Suceava povit in Romania (8600 km²). The length of the inter state border within Bukovina is 226.4 km. Characteristic Bukovina landscapes include mountains and hills of the Carpathians and flatter land between Prut and Dniester rivers. The largest cities in Bukovina and Chernivtsi and Suceava on Ukrainian and Romanian sides respectively, however, the majority of population of the region lives in densely scattered villages and small towns. Bukovina includes parts of the Carpathian and the Upper Prut Euro regions.

Tourism is an important component in the trans-border partnership between Romania and Ukraine. Romania has created a number of efficient tourism-related policies. Their execution mechanisms rely on appropriate legal and foundational support and foster positive dynamics of tourism-related incomes. We focus on tourism-related statistics collected on the Ukrainian side of the border.



Figure 1. Bukovina, a historical territory in the trans-border territory of Ukraine and Romania. (Map created by N. Buchko and Y. Skrypnyk. Chernivtsi National University Map laboratory).

Inbound tourism

All tourism-related statistics provided henceforth are derived from the National Bureau of Statistics of Ukraine.

For more than ten consecutive years, the number of incoming tourists in Ukraine has been growing steadily. State statistics services of Ukraine reports that in 2008 the country was visited by 25.4M foreigners. In 2009, the number of tourists fell by 23% relative to 2008 because of the Great Recession. Within a year, the situation stabilized and the inbound tourist flow started to grow again: by 1-2% in 2010-2011 and by 7% in 2012 (the year when Ukraine co-hosted the Football Euro-Cup) and in 2013. Political instability and war with Russia caused a 51% drop in the number of incoming tourists in 2014 and an additional 2% drop in 2015. Absolute numbers of visitors in Ukraine since 2000 are shown in Figure 2.

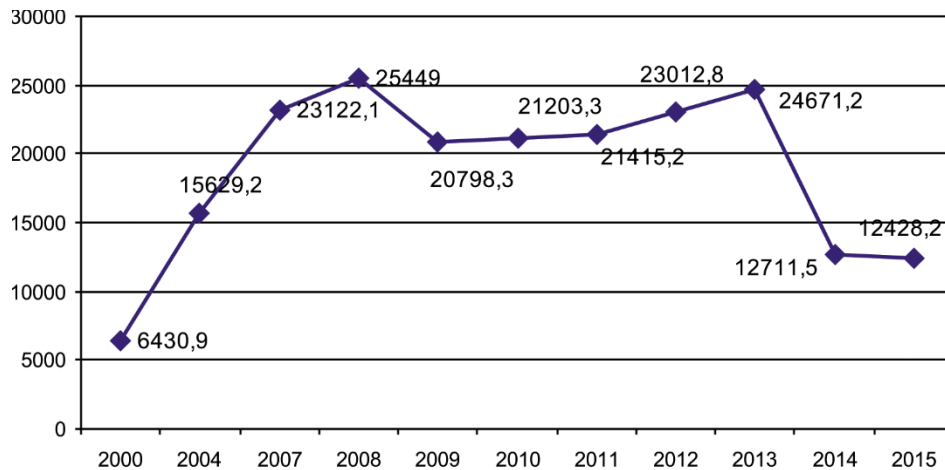


Figure 2. Dynamics of in-bound tourist visitors in Ukraine, state statistics data.

Source: Here and below, all plots are generated by the author using the data retrieved from the official website of State Statistics Service of Ukraine (SSSU) [7]. Only the data source will be indicated in all subsequent figure and table captions.

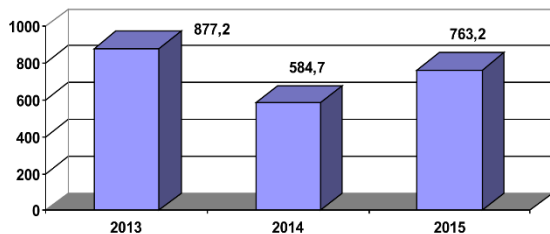


Figure 3. Number of tourists and other visitors from Romania to Ukraine, state statistics data.

Data Source: SSSU [7]

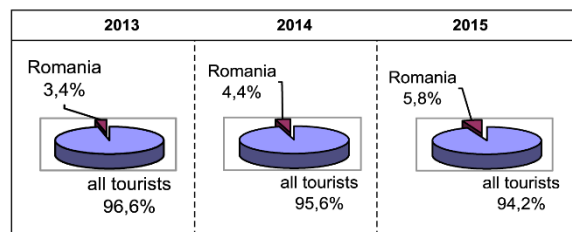


Figure 4. Fraction of Romanian tourists in Ukraine relative to all international visitors, state statistics data.

Data Source: SSSU [7]

Table 1. Tourists and visitors from Romania to Ukraine, state statistics data.

Type of travel	2013 (persons)	2014 (persons)	13 to 14 % change	2015 (persons)	14 to 15 % change
Business and government	398	145	-64	42	-71
Organized	758	112	-85	n/a	-
Private	401344	351825	-12	753174	114
Exchange: culture, sport, religion, etc.	474734	232692	-51	10012	-96

Source: SSSU [7].

When focusing only on visitors from Romania, one can observe that tourist flow trends in the last three years were somewhat different from the ones for all destination countries: the relative drop in 2014 was only 33%, and the numbers almost recovered in 2015 with a 31% increase, as described in Figure 3. (This discrepancy between the country-averaged and Romania-specific numbers is most likely caused by the fact that the most significant source of incoming tourists prior to 2014 was Russia.) The fraction of Romanian tourists in the total tourist flow in Ukraine, although small, has been growing recently from 3.4% in 2013 to almost 6% in 2015, Figure 4.

Dynamics of incoming tourists by trip purpose are provided in Table 1. All types of visits decreased in 2014, whereas in 2015, accompanied by further decrease in business and organized tourism, private visited rebounded with more than a two-fold increase.

Outbound tourism

The outbound tourist dynamics in Ukraine is shown in Figure 5. We can observe a steady increase in the number of Ukrainians visiting other countries since 2000, with a slight two-year depression in 2008-2009 related to the global economic recession and an even smaller dip caused by instabilities of 2014. The outbound tourist dynamics specific to Romania mostly reproduces the same trends: a decrease in 2014 followed by an increase in 2015, though still insufficient to match 2013, as seen in Figure 6.

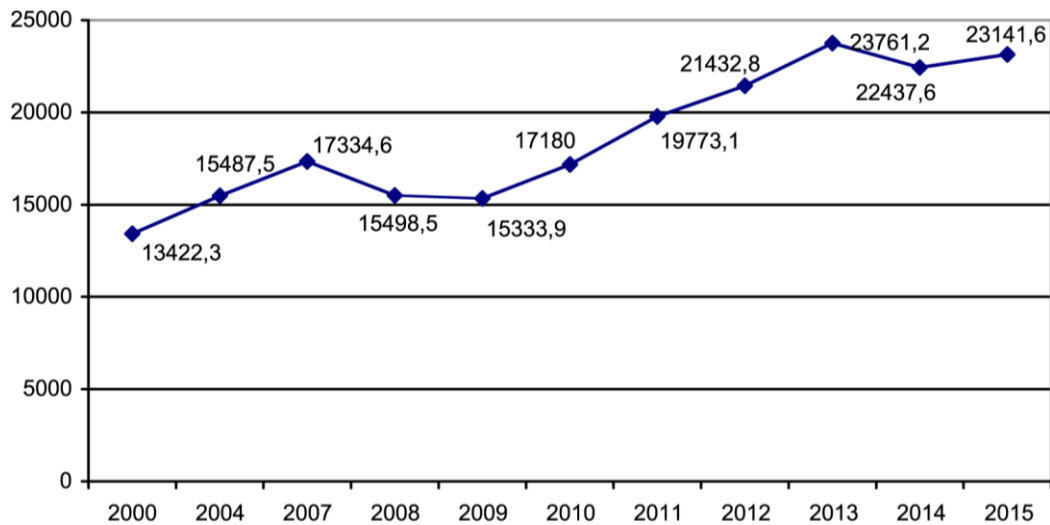


Figure 5. Number of Ukrainian tourists traveling abroad, state statistics data.
Data Source: SSSU [7]

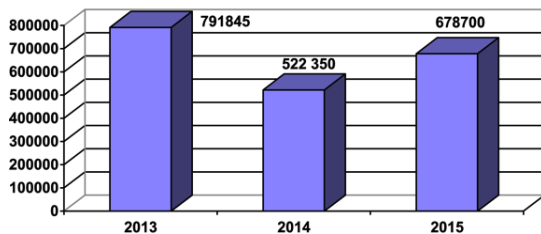


Figure 6. Number of tourists and other visitors from Ukraine to Romania, state statistics data.
Data Source: SSSU [7]

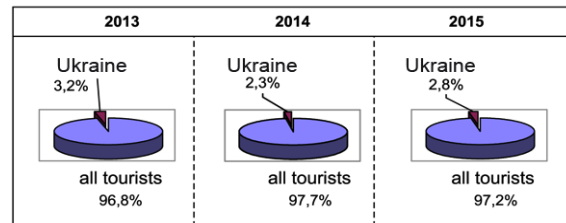


Figure 7. Fraction of Ukrainian tourists in Romania relative to all international visitors, state statistics data.
Data Source: SSSU [7]

Romania has been a relatively unpopular tourist destination for Ukrainians, the fraction of Ukrainian tourists visiting Romania is changing near about 3% of the total outbound tourism as shown in Figure 7. Tourist dynamics grouped by the trip purpose is explained in Table 2.

Table 2. Tourists and visitors from Ukraine to Romania, state statistics data.

Type of travel	2013 (persons)	2014 (persons)	13 to 14 % change	2015 (persons)	14 to 15 % change
Business and government	709	2504	253	34386	54

Organized	9311	5245	-44	1426	-73
Private	781875	514601	-34	673428	31

Source: SSSU [7].

Trans-border collaborations

The above statistics clearly indicate that cross-border tourism between Ukraine and Romania and tourism industry in Ukraine in general are in a critical state. Both inbound and outbound tourist flows are in decline while the global tourist market is growing more competitive every year. The combination of these factors increases the gap between Ukraine and leading tourist destinations, moving our country to the periphery of international tourism. In an attempt to reverse this situation, a number of special programs that target cross border tourism between Ukraine and Romania have been instigated in the recent years [Buchko 2015].

The European Eastern Partnership (EaP) program of trans-border collaboration Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine was conducted in 2007-2013 along the borders with these EU countries. The program was activated in September 2008 upon approval by the European Commission. The €68.6M seven-year budget of the program was provided by the EaP.

Several trans-border collaboration programs have been implemented within the Joint Operation Program “Romania-Ukraine-Moldova Republic” European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) / Cross Border Collaboration (CBC) 2007-2013. Among these programs, three were specific to Bukovina: “Joint cultural heritage”, “Development of a network of even tourism”, “Eco-Bukovina”, and “Historical and ethnographic heritage – part of the sustainable development of tourism in Bukovina”. These Ukrainian-Romanian-Moldovan projects connected scientists, artists, and culture workers in a joint effort to popularize historical and cultural attractions of the region with the aim to help organized tourism.

In the past, our group was an integral part of the “Historical and ethnographic heritage – part of the sustainable development of tourism in Bukovina” program. Some of the results delivered by the program include:

- Two visitor information centers were set up to improve tourist experiences, one in Chernivtsi and one in Suceava.
- Historical-ethnographic museum was organized in Chernivtsi and an archeological exhibit was organized in Suceava.
- Advertising booklets, photo albums, and DVDs for tourists were issued in three languages (Ukrainian, Romanian, English).
- Several tourist route guides and maps were issues, including those for two tourist routes in Bukovina designed and presented by the current program.
- A dedicated tourist magazine “Tourist Bukovina” was started.
- Training sessions were offered to focus groups on tourism development.
- The project website was designed and launched.
- International folk ethno-festival was organized in Chernivtsi in 2015.

Overall, the cross-border partnership within “Program of trans-border collaboration Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine” 2007-2015 and “Romania-Ukraine-Moldova Republic 2007-2013” resulted in over 50 joint projects. Fourteen of those are in the area of active and research tourism, financially supported by international technical assistance at the budget of €4.3M.

CONCLUSIONS

Analysis of tourism-related statistics in Ukraine in 2014-15 exhibit significant decline in the number of inbound tourists and minimal decline in the number of outbound tourists. For Ukraine-Romania transborder tourism, sharp decline is seen in all forms of organized tourism whereas the flow of private tourists appears to be relatively stable. The fraction of tourist flow between these two countries relative to the total number of international visitors in Ukraine is low but steadily growing. Development of Ukraine-Romania tourism is likely to benefit from creation of the Euro-regions and from establishments of dedicated trans-border projects. The latter are most widely adopted in Bukovina. Further growth and activization of Ukraine-Romania cross-border tourism requires systematization and further research into strategic opportunities and potential threats to the trans-boarder collaboration.

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