

THE STUDY REGARDING THE PROMOTION OF THE TOURISTIC AREA “IRON GATES”

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Abstract:

The paper wants to highlight the importance of promoting the tourism area “Iron Gates”, to prove the opportunity of research in this domain and the necessity of its intensification, being convinced that only in this way the tourist area “Iron Gates” may become a tourist haven, as it deserves and we all want. For noticeable changes the area requires government attention, substantial investment and clear strategies of promotion. Tourist area “Iron Gates” meets all the conditions to define personality together with other areas of the country. To achieve such an objective, no effort, no matter how high and sustained it is not unjustified.

Key words: tourism; tourists; promotion; trends.

1. Introduction

The “Iron Gates” is one of the most important tourist areas in Romania. Position on top of the “top” is due almost exclusively to its tourism potential.

Tourism is an activity which is in an early stage in the Upper Danube area, border localities and regime security rigors imposed discouraging visitors until recently tourism injustices of much value and beauty of the area and the importance of traditions that have remained anonymous.

As a result of the papers with conceptual character, it is shown that most of the Romanian researchers consider the touristic potential as being the fundamental element in an area’s touristic development. The touristic potential contains as fundamental elements: the nature and artificial touristic resource. (Cândea, 2000).

The touristic personality of the area is determined by its natural resources; on the other hand, firstly, it is

determined by the power of attraction of the area’s relief upon the tourists, but also of other elements of the area.

The Danube Gorge is representative for the area, but the symbol image, the most representative sector of Danube is The Large and Small Boilers that were cut in Ciucarul Mare and Stirbatul Mare mountain’s chalk and respectively in Ciucarul Mic and Stirbatul Mic. The view created by the the mountain and Danube is wonderful. The Boilers represent the most scenic sectors from the entire sector for their beauty.

2. Methods and results

We considered as being useful making a marketing research among the visitors tourists of “Iron Gates” that are able to obtain valid and valuable information for getting to some valid conclusions when it comes to its knowledge degree.

The main purpose of the survey was the awareness determination of the tourist area “Iron Gates”.

This research is part of the fundamental research, aimed on the development of marketing theory, based on the analysis of raw data.

After the type of information derived from research, it is a quantitative research, and after the venue, it is a land research. (Plaiaș, 2008).

The marketing research methodology carried out among tourists that visit the tourist area "Iron Gates", pursued exactly the specific steps to a such an approach, respecting the standards accepted in the case of marketing research.

To be able to respond as best as possible to the research objectives was opted for getting information through an interview based on a questionnaire, which was administered by the interviewer.

The information was collected in July - August 2011, being processed, analyzed and interpreted in the next period.

The information, as they were collected from the survey was centralized and the interpretation of the data that were obtained will be presents in further study. The interpretation of the results will be presented highlighting the issues and the most important trends for the purpose by percentage representation of the results.

The analysis of survey results was done for each question that was included in the questionnaire, showing in each case, the determining trend in the behavior of tourists.

Thus, it was found that more than three quarters of the subjects (71,49%) have never visited the tourist area "Iron Gates", while 3,05% of respondents had visited the area more than three times.

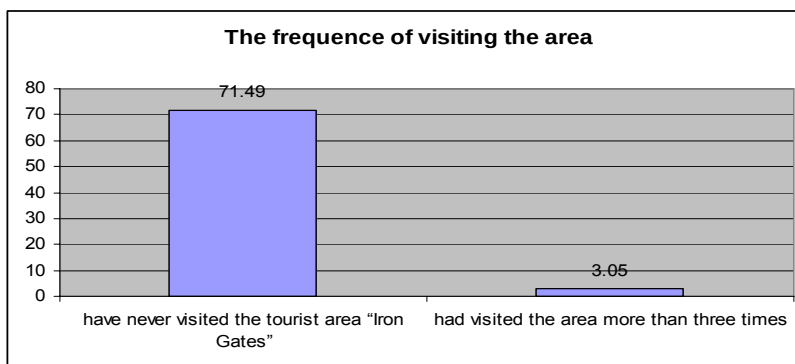


Figure 1. The frequency of visiting the area

Regarding the reason for that the tourists are coming in this area 28,20%, they chose to come here for treatment and spa treatment, and 21,04% of the subjects chose this area for adventure and practicing extreme sports (climbing, biking) being known the fact that the area offers enough opportunities in this way. A very little part of tourists (2,9%) said that they chose the area for cruises on the Danube, thus demonstrating, once more, that this type of tourism is very little practiced in the area because

of the crisis, excessive bureaucracy and the high port charges, according to the representatives of local companies which organize tourist packages in cruise mode, but mostly because of a poor promotion of the area and therefore of this form of tourism.

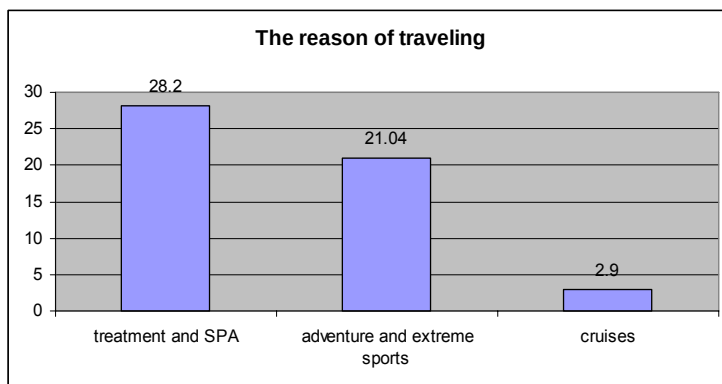


Figure 2. The reason of traveling

Regarding the length of stay, almost half of respondents (45,12%) opted for a stay of more than three nights, 32,32% for a day without overnight and 22,56% of respondents opted for 1-3 nights of accommodation. The interest for a stay over 3 nights

manifested for the elderly, and 92,78% of people aged between 50-59 years. At the opposite, with a rate of 4,12% are people under 30, which prefer in a rate of 90,72% to stay in the area only one day.

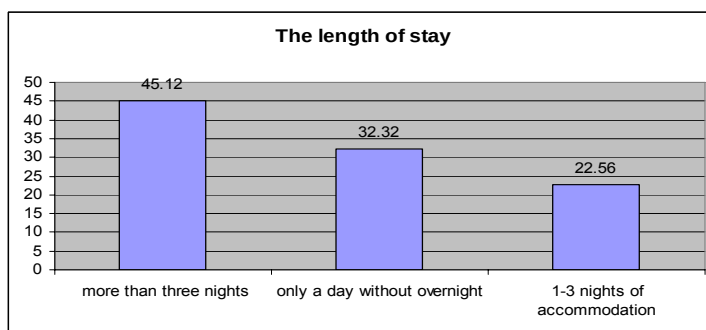


Figure 3. The length of stay

From the showed analyze resulted that during of the stay varies from one to another type of tourism, being big at the curative tourism and decreases to the recreational or cultural one. On a global scale, estimated to the number of practitioners, it's more likely a short stay.

80,03% of those who were interviewed wanted the help of the relatives in choosing the area as a

tourism destination. It proves once more that the decision of the tourist regarding the destination which he will choose is influenced by the recommendations and often subjective information of people from his entourage who "experienced" these touristic products. Only 1,22% of the subjects chose the tourist area "Iron Gates" after the consultation of some leaflets.

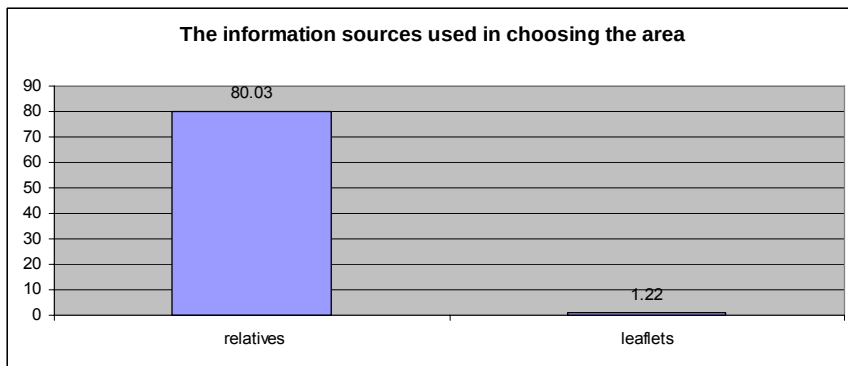


Figure 4. The information sources used in choosing the area

In conclusion, we can say that the most efficient way of the tourism promotion, in general, in Romania, is the advertising realized by the tourists who visited the area and who were satisfied of the tourism sights, but in the same time of the quality of the services which they benefited. Ideally is that the satisfied tourists to recommend to their relatives to visit the area, and also to appeal at this unit of accommodation which rose to the height requirements of those customers.

More than three quarters of respondents (75,92%) were dissatisfied about the advertising from that analyzed area, a certain grade of dissatisfaction regarding to this aspect meeting at only 2,74% of the number of tourists. These results come to reinforce the idea that although the area benefit of an exceptional tourism potential, a thing that is fully confirmed by the consumers tourists owners of the tourist product of the area "Iron Gates", it remains anonymous because of the poor promotion.

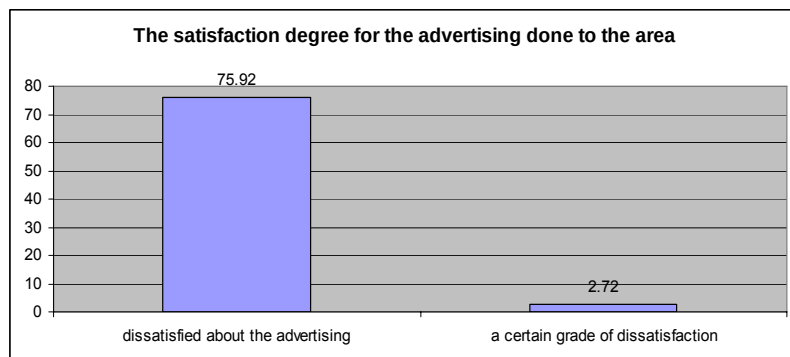


Figure 5. The satisfaction degree for the advertising done to the area

Regarding to the construction of an informative tourist center to provide the visitors information and promotional materials (guides, brochures, atlases, leaflets, booklets, maps, CDs) regarding to the tourist attractions (natural objectives, cultureless etc.), the possible circuits and the possibilities of

accommodation, meal, transport, leisure and tourist area treatment "Iron Gates", 97,91% of subjects consider necessary to have such a centre, while only 2,29% believe that such a centre would not help to inform the tourists about the studied area.

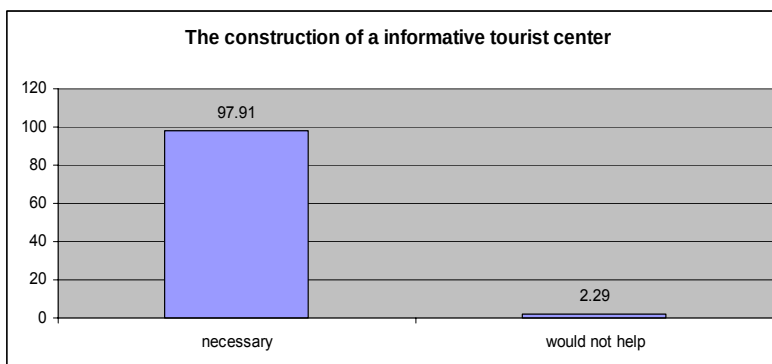


Figure 6. The necessity of construction of an informative tourist center

57,47% of the surveyed tourists are very satisfied about the image of the tourist area “Iron Gates”, while 2,29 have not yet formed an opinion about it.

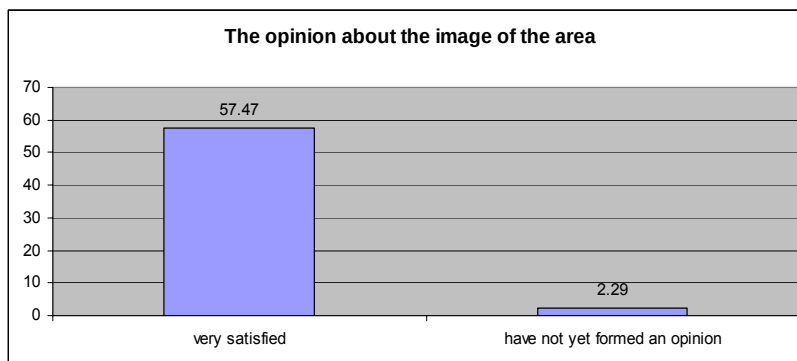


Figure 7. The opinion about the image of the area

In the process of taking a decision of buying, the tourist processes the information regarding at the different destinations, and at the end they can take the effective decision of buying. This image is perceived differently by the consumers, and in the case of the tourist area “Iron Gates” the tendency is to follow a certain image formed by a group of tourists, so-called opinion makers.

Most of the tourists who participated at the sounding (47,87%) accuse the lack of information of the tourists about the tourist potential of the area as a principal difficulty met by the tourists who want to visit the area , followed by the poor state of the roads and the ways of access 28,20%, and the remaining of 23,93% seeing the lack of facilities and the tourist facilities needed being the major problem in this way.

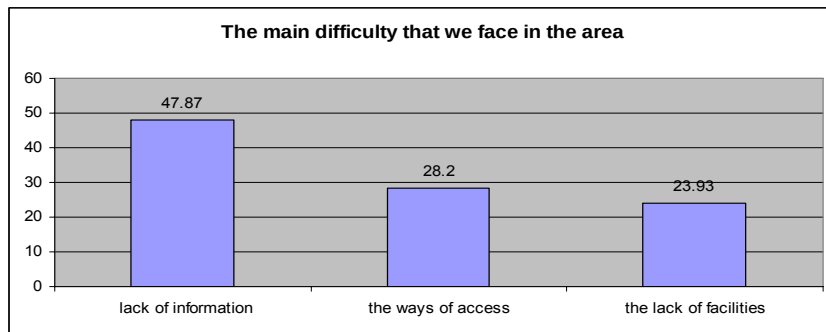


Figure 8. The main difficulty that we face in the area

We can see, once again, that the promotion tasks are grater because the decision of buying the touristic products involves a substantial amount of information, informing the clients about the product and the company that it provides, being one of its objectives of primary importance.

It is remarked therefore , once more , the negative role that is played by the absence of the facilities and the tourist facilities, regarding the number of tourists that are visiting the area with negative influences that are easily determinable in the consumer behavior.

Regarding the future behavior of the surveyed tourists about the touristic product, we can remark a favorable trend in their attitude.

Thus, 69,06 % of the surveyed subjects declared that they will surely return in the future in this area , 25,15% that is possible to return in the area and the number of those who said that they do not know if they will return is extremely reduced, only 5,79%.We can observe from here a positive attitude of the tourists about the analyzed area , which shows a high degree of satisfaction about the potential offered by touristic product which was studied.

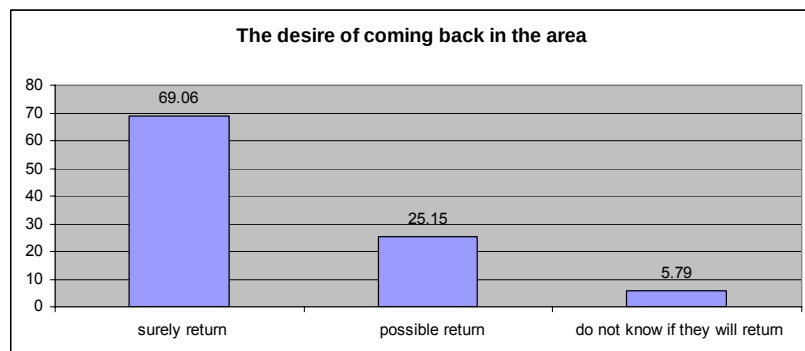


Figure 9. The desire of coming back in the area

More than three quarters of the surveyed tourists (74,24%) would recommend the tourist area "Iron Gates"

to the relatives/friends, while only 0,91 % from the respondents said that they do not know if they would do this thing.

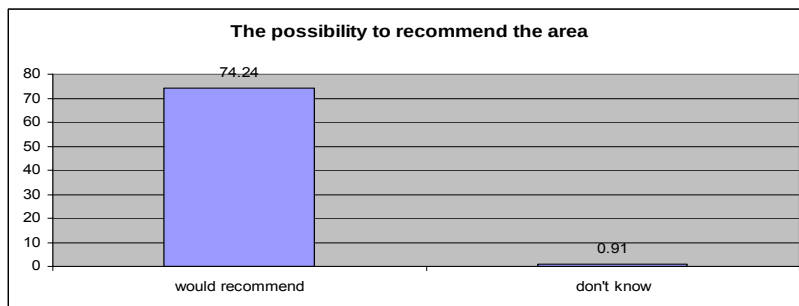


Figure 10. The possibility to recommend the area

Regarding the income, we can remark the predominance of people with low income (under 1000 Ron) among the consumers of the tourist product "Iron Gates", 55,03% of respondents, the number of people with high income (over 3000 Ron) being the lowest (only 1,68%). So, we can say that the tourists with a low income constitute the main market segment of the analyzed product. It is a phenomenon which can be easily explained by the fact that the people with above average income prefer rather more distant destinations (even abroad) with a big variety of services and thus more expensive.

Following this study we found that:

- The distribution by sex tourists is dominated by a higher proportion of women compared with men, trend, generally, in the case of some forms of tourism (respectively spa cure)

- Regarding the age, the preliminary information shows that the area is preferred by the segment of consumers represented by young people, the largest share is held by consumers under 40 years old.

- the awareness of tourists about the tourist area "Iron Gates" is very low, the area being very least promoted in the purpose of attracting a large number of tourists.

The event application and its orientation to a destination or another

were and it is influenced by the elements of natural attractions or anthropogenic which determine the tourists to travel for recreational purposes.

With the purpose of creating a clear and complete opinion about the stud touristic area, beside the presentation of the touristic potential, is also needed SWOT analysis.

The SWOT analysis stays in pointing out the strengths of the area, the weaknesses, but also transforming these measures in opportunities.

Natural and artificial resources make possible to practice more ways of tourism (traffic, transit, cruise. leisure and recreation, spa, mountain hiking, scientific, water sports, fishing and hunting, tourism), although the infrastructure and structure that the visitors receive are not sufficiently developed nor from the point of view of capacity, nor in terms of quality.

Strengths:

- The unique character of the area;
- The great tourist anthropologic and natural potential;
- The satisfying state of the natural reservations;
- The possibility of practicing many forms of tourism;

- The numerous resources and tourist attractions;
- The representation of all the forms of tourist resources;
- The mountains in the area, with their enriched flora and fauna, assure beautiful landscapes that attract people, offering in the same time the possibility of practicing scientific, spelean tourism and also hunting;
- The dams Iron Gates I and II created a series of sea inlets in which people can enjoy nautical sports and fishing;
- The national and international identity of the bathing resort Baile Herculane, known to cure certain illnesses;
- The territorial dispersal of the tourist attractions in all the area makes roving tourism possible;
- The low population density;
- Hermann's turtle, the viper with a horn and four kinds of water birds are the stars of the area, along with the little black scorpion, that is not less dangerous, a characteristic of the mountain area and the Severin plateau;
- The establishment of the touristic area on the international Bucharest- Timisoara railway and the European way E70;
- The interest shown by the private companies for developing tourism in the area

Weaknesses:

- The lack of communication and comprehension between the human communities for building objectives of common interest ; the mentality of some people is to make money in a quick way, rather than offering quality services; the indifference shown by people regarding the environment;
- Techno causeway infrastructure is not suitable;
- Not enough access entries;
- A low offer for activities and services;

- The recreation is not rising at the level of offers from other destinations;
- The administration is held by both Mehedinti and Caras-Severin counties;
- The famine of an action program that is coherent and stable, regarding the development of tourism in Romania;
- The lack of investment funds that are destined to develop, modify and exoneration of the general and specific infrastructure, as a following of the slow and complicated process of privatization, affixation of an inadequate inland revenue, the inexistence of facilities in the bank domain etc.;
- The population comedown regarding shopping and reorganizing priorities;
- The low level of preparation regarding tour guides/branch staff that administrate the housing structures;
- The greenness of the tourism of the area as an additional financial source for the local community;
- The famine of consciousness/education regarding national heritage and its importance in the present day, but especially in the future;
- The affixation of marketing in the area is lessened especially at the local level, that determine a incognizance of its value;
- The blemish of promoting the area inside the country and outside;
- The lack of report materials;
- The famine of touristic information centers;
- The lack of an annual calendar regarding the events in the area;
- The lack of way indicating signs that could make a much easier way of access to the tourist objectives;
- The blemish of an touristic information electric point on the road

Opportunities:

- The recast of the county roads, having a higher priority those that assure the access to the touristic interest points;

- The encouragement of developing new forms of tourism (adventure, cruise);

- The creation of new jobs and the admission of opportunities in the domain of hospitality;

- The improvement of the infrastructure;

- The realization of the bind Danube-Maine-Rhine can make possible its utilization for all the European countries, between the Northern Sea and the Black Sea, and on this route the area of the Iron Gates is the most rich and divert area from all the points of view (flora, fauna, relief, folklore etc);

- The rise of the number of tourists/visitors that have as an motivation the ecotourism;

- The possibilities of training through the EU programs;

- The possibility of information dissemination through the local newspapers;

- The accession of ideas that imply cooperation in the domain of tourism through the co-interest of both partners from Romania and Yugoslavia. In this direction we can denote a perspective of investments from the private sector;

- The cordoning possibility should be studied as common actions that imply the local communities from Danube's both shores (celebrating certain events, common religious holidays, taking into account that the orthodox people are the majority etc). A necessary action is collecting the data from the bucolic communities regarding biodiversity, cultural and religious local traditions;

- Event promoting based on "nature's calendars";

- Identifying the commune cultural values and the resources that

can contribute at the sustainment of the preserving actions;

- The exploration of the collaboration possibilities with the local politic faces and other influent people that could help develop the area;

- The construction of a touristic information center chain in the closeness of the important touristic objectives;

- The compound of a new Ada-Kaleh on the Simian Island;

Threats:

- The rise of competitively between the regions;

- The Danube river is nominated by the International Nature Fund (WWF), as a river which has an existence which is jeopardized by pollution, climate change and banking;

- There is a risk that more than 85% of the Danube to not fulfill the objectives of the Water Directive from the European Union, that envisages the contiguity of ecologic quality for every rivers on the continent until 2015;

- Some negative reactions coming from the inhabitants;

- Every type of program offered by Romania is having a great concurrence on the West - European market;

- The preference of the Romanian people to go on holiday abroad;

- The contender destinations offer a variety of facilities for all tourist categories;

- The comedown of the incomes of the communities from the area as a following to restricting economic activities in the area;

- The inadequacy of the financial resources for modernizing the specific tourist base;

- The decay of the free-time availability;

- The change of preferences regarding the consumers;

- The instability of the governmental policies regarding tourism and Inland Revenue

3. Conclusions

The conclusions presented illustrate a low degree of knowledge of the area to the potential tourists, which, combined with the lack of planning for tourism, lead to the remaining in anonymous of the beautiful area "Iron Gates" with all its reaches and beauty.

For the tourist area "Iron Gates" the near future can not reserve radical changes in terms of investments at the level of the ways of access and that ones with private character of modernization of the accommodation structures are reduced.

For a good promotion of the touristic area "Iron Gates" I consider necessary the following actions:

- the creation of a promotion area organism that would give the possibility for all the tourists who intend to make a voyage in the tourist area "Iron Gates" to get information and to make reservations by calling the services of this centre. In addition, I consider that is beneficial to collaborate with other tourist information centers in Romania for promoting the implementation of circuits that are able to link neighboring tourist areas;

- publishing the informative materials (brochures, tourist maps) that should contain details about the touristic sights and also displaying maps on brighten panels in public places. The informative materials are made to be free distributed in hotels, restaurants, travel agents, fuel distribution stations;

Also, these publications should constitute an informative support for local promotion in participation at local events which allow the tourism promotion of the area "Iron Gates" at national and international level.

- to facilitate informing visitors of the tourist area "Iron Gates" about the attractions locations, I consider it is

indispensable to create a network of tourist alert;

- promoting the area at international level through the relations of partnership and/or cooperation in administrative, educational and economic field;

- the realization of an annual calendar of events (fairs, exhibitions, festivals etc) which should be promoted in order to make permanent these events;

- the participation in national and international tourist fairs in order to ensure the promotion of the area to a more representative level;

A promotional campaign aimed at the tourist area "Iron Gates" as a tourist destination, I consider that is appropriate to take account of the following aspects:

- a tourist will not browse through thousands of kilometers to see something that he can find in his country; as a result, advertising must present something unique, it must arouse the spirit of those who read or see it-an unforgettable image of the tourist destination "Iron Gates";

The most effective way of promoting the tourism, generally in Romania, is the advertising carried out by the tourists who have visited the area and were satisfied by the tourist objectives and by the quality of services they received. Ideal is as the satisfied tourists recommend their relatives to visit the area, respectively, calling at that tourist enterprise that raised at the height requirements of those clients.

- the installation of signposts on the road that facilitate the access to the main sights;

- printing a map of the area on which should be marked tourist trails with different duration, important sights;

- the arrangement of a tourist information centre in order to make available to the visitor information and advertising materials (guides, brochures, flyers, leaflets, cultural objectives etc), the possible circuitry

and possibilities of accommodation, food, transport, leisure, treatment from the tourist area "Iron Gates". These promotional materials must be diversified, should have a graphic and artistic quality and they should be offered free;

- the realization of an electronic street point of tourist information based on an software application in order to promote the tourist area;

This information point will provide the necessary information to any tourists who intend to visit the tourist

area "Iron Gates", in an unusual, simple and with maximum impact, that can focus all the information that are necessary for the tourists.

- the implementation of tourist information points (info-desk indicated by a pointer with the international "I" already known) in the accommodation units. Here the tourist can find out information about the area attractions, the calendar of events, accommodation, meals, recreation, treatment, museums, cultural centers etc.

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