

# SPA TOURISM IN ROMANIA - THE ANALYSIS OF A CONTRADICTORY PHENOMENON

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**Abstract:** Romania holds one third of Europe's spa resources. However, the Romanian spa tourism is declining, after the glory that it witnessed in the 70s and 90s of the last century, and the country has disappeared from the top of the international spa resorts. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the current situation of spa tourism, taking into account the Master Plan for the Development of Balneary Tourism, proposed by the Government. At the same time, it shows interest in the way it aligns with the new trends in the world market - health tourism, wellness tourism, spa tourism and anti-aging tourism. The Romanian spa resorts, once the real "pearls of Europe", are in a process of continuous transformation. Their revitalization according to current standards will bring Romania to the international tourism map.

**Keywords:** Spa tourism, master plan, S.W.O.T. analysis, T.A.L.C. model, wellness tourism, anti-aging tourism

## I. Introduction

### 1.1. The situation of the Romanian spa tourism

The current situation of tourism in Romania is far from improved despite the rich and valuable natural potential, as well as the efforts made by the authorities to promote the country as a tourist destination internationally. This state of affairs is confirmed by the statistical data published by different empowered institutions. Thus, the balance of payments for tourism remains negative for the period 2015-2017, and the deficit almost tripled in 2017 to EUR 837 million (see Table 1):

**Table 1.** Balance of payments for tourism in the period 2015-2017 (EUR million):

Year	Expenses (EUR million)	Revenues (EUR million)	Result (EUR million)
2015	1855	1542	-313
2016	1930	1568	-362
2017	3074	2237	-837

Source: Balance of Payments 2015-2016 / Balance of Payments 2016-2017, National Bank of Romania, Bucharest, 2019

The overall characteristics of the Romanian spa tourism for 2017 are as follows (see table 2):

**Table 2.** Situation of spa tourism in 2017:

Nr. Crt.	Indicators	2017
1.	Types of tourist reception facilities (no.)	407
2.	Indices of net use of tourist accommodation capacity in operation (%)	43,3
3.	Arrivals in the tourist accommodation establishments (number of arrivals)	<b>Total: 742571</b>
		Romanians: 702301
		Aliens:40270
4.	Overnights in accommodation establishments (overnights)	<b>Total: 3158878</b>
		Romanians: 3016173
		Aliens: 142705
5.	Accommodation capacity (places-days)	7299168

Source: "Statistical information", series "Tourism statistics", National Institute of Statistics, Bucharest, no. 3/2017

From the presented data it is noticed that the Romanian tourists predominate, whose presence in the tourist reception facilities in the spa resorts exceeds 90%. Moreover, their stay was short-lasting, representing 2.3 days for Romanian tourists and 1.9 days for foreign tourists<sup>1</sup>.

### 1.2. Theoretical aspects related to balneary tourism

Spa tourism, as well as tourism in general, is a constantly changing phenomenon. As a result of its evolution, new forms of tourism emerged and some theoretical aspects related to the structure and contents of the spa tourism have changed, aspects that are in the attention of specialists in the field.

Thus, in addition to the spa tourism, subsidiary forms of tourism appeared, whose conceptual delimitation forced efforts from the specialists, efforts aimed at improving the understanding of their content: health tourism, medical tourism, wellness tourism, tourism spa (Stăncioiu, et al., 2014). In this context, works of specialists in the modeling of health tourism

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1 Source: Press release no. 25/2 February 2018, National Institute of Statistics, Bucharest

(Langvinienė, 2014), (Szymanska, 2015), and its contribution to the dynamics of territorial systems with tourist functionality (Drăghici, et al., 2016).

Initially, spa tourism included a single form of tourism, namely treatment tourism, considered to be a specific form of leisure tourism. Wellness tourism is related to the change of lifestyle, the achievement of the harmony between the mental, physical and spiritual health of the tourist, being oriented towards prevention. Spa tourism is a form of wellness tourism, designed for prophylactic purposes (Stăncioiu, et al., 2014).

In turn, medical tourism is a form of tourism in which individuals cross the national border to obtain a certain type of medical treatment at destination. Health tourism is the journey organized by a person outside his or her daily environment to maintain, increase or revive his mental and physical well-being<sup>2</sup>.

To simplify things, we consider that the spa tourism includes any form of tourism that uses as a tourism resource the spa potential of an area, region or country. Since the overall purpose of spa tourism is to maintain and improve people's health, it can be considered to be equivalent to health tourism. All other forms of tourism mentioned above, including anti-aging tourism, can be considered as components of tourism.

## **II. Analysis of balneary tourism concerns**

### **2.1. Master Plan for Balneary Tourism**

In his desire to revive Romanian tourism in general and balneary tourism in particular, the National Tourism Authority concluded with S.C. Détente Consultants S.R.L. a public procurement contract<sup>3</sup> for consultancy services offered by this firm to update the master plan in the sphere of spa tourism in August 2015. The initial version of the document was developed in 2009 by the same firm.

According to data published on the Internet<sup>4</sup>, Détente Consultants Central & Eastern Europe is "a consulting company specializing in leisure-tourism, leisure, culture, sports and hospitality." Over time, the company has developed tourism projects on marketing, planning, concept, project management and financial analysis. The main markets on which the company operates are those in Romania, Central and Eastern Europe,

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<sup>2</sup> Source: [shtourism.eu/ro/turism-sanatate.html](http://shtourism.eu/ro/turism-sanatate.html)

<sup>3</sup> Source: <https://m.ziuaconstantia.ro/stiri/apel-la-transparenta-autoritata-nationala-pentru-turism-a-achizitionat-de-la-sc-detente-consultants-srl-servicii-de...>

<sup>4</sup> Source: [www.traiersteromaneste.ro](http://www.traiersteromaneste.ro)

France, North Africa and the Middle East. Among the beneficiaries of the company are private companies - hotel chains, tour operators, real estate developers, public authorities (governments and local authorities), as well as international organizations and agencies, The World Bank and the European Commission. In 2011, the parent company<sup>5</sup> in France was bought by the Artelia group.

Only a part of the Initial Master Plan<sup>6</sup> (Phase 2) and separately, "The Balneary Tourism Action Plan" is published on the internet. The updated document<sup>7</sup> is also published on the Internet, being popularized by the media in various articles, including on-line. This is a bulky document (contains 207 pages), it is quite difficult to handle and consult.

The two documents have obvious similarities and differences:

- Their structure is similar: Phase 1, Phase 2 and Action Plan;
- The Action Plan is accompanied by the deployment plan (called "Implementation Planning") in the original version (2009) but missing in the updated document (2015);
- The strategy initially conceived had two objectives, namely:
  1. Restoring trust in the whole range of health tourism;
  2. Developing product / market priority combinations;
- The initial action plan was structured on 7 working themes and included 14 actions to be implemented;
- In theme 5 of this plan, entitled "Rehabilitation of the social spa sector", there are missing the actions that should be implemented;
- For the initial action plan, some "intervention principles" have been specified;
- The duration of actions is between 1-3 years;
- The updated strategy has a single main objective, namely "Improvement and Promotion of the Offer";
- The updated action plan is structured on 4 themes of work, comprising 9 actions to be implemented;
- However, their implementation plan is missing;
- For each action foreseen in the Action Plan, the implementation deadline (short / medium / long), the budget, the actors involved and the monitoring of the implementation, respectively indicators, are foreseen (at least formally), irrespective of the version of the document under consideration.

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5 Source: <https://www.cbanque.com/actu/23832/ingenierie-artelia-acquier-detente-consultants>

6 Source: [www.mie.ro/turism/studii\\_strategii/plan\\_actiune\\_turism\\_balnear.pdf](http://www.mie.ro/turism/studii_strategii/plan_actiune_turism_balnear.pdf)

7 Source: <http://turism.gov.ro/web/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/MASTER-PLAN-PENTRU-DEZVOLTAREA-TURISMULUI-BALNEAR.pdf>

- As regards the themes of work included in the Action Plans, they present differences from several points of view, namely:
  - The number of actions proposed for each theme;
  - The content of the proposed themes;
  - The deadline for their achievement;
  - The proposed budget;
  - The actors involved;
  - Monitoring of implementation, and indicators used.

The following table summarizes the elements of each action plan (initially or updated) (see Table 3).

It is noted that most of the proposed actions, both in the initial plan and in the updated plan, are proposed in the short term. Some of them can be continued in the medium and long term. On the other hand, there are actions whose budget has not been specified, and for some of them the sources of possible funding have been indicated.

The initial Master plan attaches great importance to the training of general practitioners, balneary specialists and hotel staff in spa resorts. Here is also the idea of setting up an association of thermal cities and developing a brand of "thermal cities".

The updated Master Plan contains relevant information on spa resources and the training of medical and hotel staff. Another chapter presents the situation of the spa tourism in the period 2010-2014, by analyzing it at the national level, respectively by development regions, focusing on the existing spa resorts.

The following actors are briefly characterized: the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labor, the National Health Insurance House, the National House of Public Pensions, the National Authority for Tourism, the National Agency for Mineral Resources, the National Institute for Recovery, Physical Medicine and Balneology, Balneary Tourism Employers Organization. Newer actors are missing from the list, such as the City Hall Association, the Federation of Tourism Promotion Associations, the National Association of Spa and Balneary Resorts in Romania and SPA Romania Association respectively.

Another chapter deals with the legislative situation in the field of spa tourism, emphasizing the normative acts regulating the existence of spa and balneary resorts in the country, namely: H.G.R. no. 1016/2011, H.G.R. no. 367/2013, H.G.R. no. 1072/2013 and O.G.R. no. 109/2000 and the Law no. 343/2002, H.G.R. no. 1154/2004.

Directive 2011/24/U.E. on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare initiates and regulates medical tourism at the level

of the European Union. This European document is presented in another chapter of the master plan, medical tourism being considered an opportunity for the spa tourism in Romania.

Within the updated document, a separate chapter is dedicated to the financing sources identified for the development of spa tourism, namely:

- Regional Operational Program;
- The National Rural Development Program;
- The Human Capital Operational Program;
- Cross-border programs for the period 2014-2020, between Romania and the neighboring countries (Hungary, Serbia and Bulgaria).

Phase 1 of the document ends with a S.W.O.T. summary of the Romanian spa sector. Phase 2 of the document refers to the positioning of Romanian spa resorts within the first chapter. Here is a presentation of the development opportunities for spa tourism, identified by the consultancy firm's experts and described in the next chapter. These are green balneary tourism, immersion in the woods, homeopathic products and anti-aging treatments.

As future directions for action, foreign experts recommend setting up a Destination Management Organization for health tourism at national level as well as creating clusters. The updated Master Plan attaches great importance to this in order to facilitate the implementation of Directive 2011/24 / EU and to attract foreign patients to Romanian spa resorts, supporting the development of this form of tourism.

In both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the updated document, are given some examples of benchmarking for products and facilities for the spa sector in the Western European countries (France, Belgium, Germany, Austria) and anti-aging treatments (France and Europe).

If we discuss the Master Plan, it contains a presentation of the choices proposed by the consultancy company for the Romanian spa tourism, namely:

- The concept of "thermal cities";
- Anti-aging treatment stations;
- The traditional spa sector (to be rehabilitated and diversified);
- Spa and fitness centers.

It is worth mentioning that anti-aging tourism passes through the two documents as a red thread, either in the form of anti-aging treatment centers or in the form of treatments that can be carried out within these resorts.

Another idea that constantly appears in the two documents is that of creating clusters. If the Master Plan refers to an anti-aging cluster, the

updated document speaks of a national spa-cluster. Other ideas common to the two documents are the animation of spa resorts, by creating a new profession, that of "resort animator", respectively the urban and tourist planning of the resorts.

## **2.2. The core program "Romanian Tourism in European Context"**

In the period between the two master plans for spa tourism, the National Institute for Research and Development in Tourism (I.N.C.D.T.) carried out the core program "Romanian Tourism in a European Context", whose completion report for the period 2009-2015 was presented in January 2016. Initially, the program was run for three years, after which it continued with additional contracts for another four years.

The purpose of the program was to look for ways to diversify and improve the Romanian tourist product in order to adapt it to the characteristics and trends of the world tourist market. The program was structured on three major objectives, in which 14 projects were carried out. These objectives have been put forward as follows (Core Program, 2016):

- Valorization of tourism potential (Objective 1);
- Tourism and related services (Objective 2);
- Climate impact and global socio-economic development on tourism development (Objective 3).

Projects related to spa tourism were presented under Objective 1 and Objective 3. In the program completion report, that all three of the proposed objectives have been fully met.

The first project was titled "Complex rehabilitation project and introduction of some places with valuable balneary potential in Romania". Organized in four phases, the project aimed at identifying some spa resorts where new spa resorts could be developed by exploiting mineral resources with therapeutic value and attracting investment. Among the expected effects of this project, the report lists the following:

- Identifying good international practices regarding the sustainable valorization of mineral resources with therapeutic value;
- Expanding the application of wellness and spa concepts in the Romanian spa tourism;
- Development of thermal hotel networks in Romania;
- To highlight some aspects related to the rigorous application of quality standards.

The second project was titled "Comparative analysis of competition on forms of tourism and the positioning of the Romanian tourist offer compared to that of the main competitors", being organized in three phases.

The project considered balneary tourism, seaside tourism and mountain tourism. Among the expected effects presented in the report are:

- Identification of tourism development solutions in the competition offer, which can be adapted in Romania in the form of a set of recommendations;
- Quantitative analysis of demand and supply by calculating market shares and specific graphical representations.

The users of the projects mentioned were the Ministry of Tourism, local public administrations, private investors and tourism economic agents.

Under this program, the institute has participated in international collaborations. Thus, through the Calypso Program of the European Union, the project "Heal Tour- Health Tourism Exchange Program" was realized in 2012, its total value being of 177561 EUR. The partners of the project were Hungarian and Spanish organizations.

**Table 3.** Structure of the Initial Action Plan (2009) and updated (2015):

Nr. Crt.	Working Theme	Nr. of actions	Deadline			Budget	Actors involved	Monitoring
			Short	Medium	Long			
	Legal and Regulatory Framework (*)	1	x	---	---	No	Yes	Yes
	Vocational training	4	x	x	x	Yes/No (action 3)	Yes	Yes
	Therapeutic value of treatments	1	---	x	x	No	Yes	Yes
	Development of a tourist center "Thermal cities"	3	x	x	---	Yes/No (action 9)	Yes	Yes
	Rehabilitation of the social sphere	---	---	x	---	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Creating pilot resorts in the anti-aging sector	2	x	x	---	Yes/No (action 11)	Yes	Yes
	Provide support for diversification of the spa sector	3	x	---	---	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Implementing an innovative approach and a public-private partnership (**)	1	x	---	---	Yes	Yes	No

Supporting the development of medical tourism	1	x	---	---	Yes	Yes	Yes
An innovative positioning on a new product "green balneary tourism"	4	x	x	x	Yes/No (action 6)	Yes	Yes
Developing treatments in the anti-aging sector	3	---	---	---	Yes/No (actions 7 and 9)	Yes	Yes

(\*) Source: [www.mie.ro>turism>studii\\_strategii>plan\\_actiune\\_turism\\_balnear.pdf](http://www.mie.ro>turism>studii_strategii>plan_actiune_turism_balnear.pdf)

(\*\*) Source: <http://turism.gov.ro/web/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/MASTER-PLAN-PENTRU-DEZVOLTAREA-TURISMULUI-BALNEAR.pdf>

### III. The SWOT analysis of the Romanian spa sector

In the updated version of the Master Plan for the development of the Romanian spa tourism, the S.W.O.T. analysis is briefly presented on an A4 page. On the other hand, the results of the analysis carried out in the two projects related to the spa tourism included in the core program were not made public. As a result, in the S.W.O.T. analysis from the following pages, I used as sources of information the opinions presented by various factors of responsibility in the spa tourism and published in the country's media (Crânguş, 2011), (Chipăilă, 2017), (Onea, 2018). I have tried to summarize the positive and negative aspects of the opportunities and threats identified in these sources (see the following tables).

**Table 4.** Strengths of Romanian spa tourism:

Strengths	Details
<b>1. Romania's spa resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Represents one third of Europe's mineral and thermal waters</li> <li>• Recognized internationally</li> <li>• Extraordinary natural frame, gentle climate, ozone air</li> <li>• It has begun since antiquity</li> </ul>
<b>2. Great spa tradition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The second balneology institute in the world</li> <li>• The first institute of geriatrics and gerontology in the world</li> <li>• Balneology physicians and employees with related occupations</li> </ul>
<b>3. Human resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differentiation and loyalty element for tourists</li> <li>• Conversion of places in spa hotels</li> </ul>
<b>4. Spa tourism exchange</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting these hotels</li> </ul>

<p><b>5. Government funding</b></p> <p><b>6. Brand "Dr. Ana Aslan"</b></p> <p><b>7. Guide to spa resorts in Romania</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yearly, itinerant performance</li> <li>• Included in the W.T.O. and ESPA calendar</li> <li>• It is the third European regional event, after those from Spain and Turkey</li> <li>• Investment projects in tourism and treatment infrastructure</li> <li>• Types of different investment objectives</li> <li>• Prophylaxis and therapy of aging</li> <li>• The Gerovital H3 and Aslavital ranges of Romanian products</li> <li>• Specific information about approved resorts</li> <li>• Spas available</li> <li>• Treated conditions</li> <li>• Tourist services offered</li> </ul>
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**Table 5.** Weaknesses of the Romanian spa tourism:

Weakness	Details
<p><b>1. Resorts that depend almost entirely on the treatment ticket system</b></p> <p><b>2. Social programs for spa tourism</b></p> <p><b>3. Low number of foreign tourists</b></p> <p><b>4. Human resources</b></p> <p><b>5. Work in institutions related to spa tourism</b></p> <p><b>6. Spa tourism offer</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They fail to make investments in infrastructure renovation</li> <li>• Does not create new spa products</li> <li>• Provides accommodation, meals and spa treatments in the off-season</li> <li>• Increases social tourism</li> <li>• Low competitiveness of tourism products on foreign market</li> <li>• Staff in wellness and spa facilities require better professional training</li> <li>• Missing medical staff in treatment baseless</li> <li>• Teamwork is missing</li> <li>• Cooperation between public and private actors should be mediated</li> <li>• De-bureaucracy of tourism activity</li> <li>• Insufficient use of spa resources</li> <li>• Lack of tourism agencies specializing exclusively on spa tourism</li> <li>• Lack of Europe Spa Med and Europe Spa Wellness</li> <li>• Lack of consistent and coherent promotion</li> <li>• The need for far higher investments than current ones (about 1 billion EUR)</li> </ul>

<p><b>7. Lack of studies on spa resort development according to T.A.L.C. model<sup>8</sup></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The stage of development of the Romanian spa resorts is unknown</li> <li>• An exception is made by Sângeorz-Băi resort<sup>9</sup></li> </ul>
<p><b>8. Institutional organization of spa tourism</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It has implications for resource management</li> <li>• It is fragmented, which favors the lack of communication between associations and organizations</li> </ul>
<p><b>9. Legislative framework</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The most influential is O.P.T.B.R. (The Romanian Balneary Tourism Employers Organization)</li> <li>• Significant involvement on multiple levels</li> <li>• Development of the spa tourism law</li> <li>• Promoting favorable legislation in the field</li> <li>• Stimulation and development of major investments</li> </ul>

The opportunities and threats to be made by Romanian spa tourism are presented in the following tables:

**Table 6.** Opportunities for Romanian spa tourism:

Application of the 2011/24 / E.U. Directive	Tax Facilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attracting foreign tourists through the development of medical tourism</li> <li>• Certification of natural factors and treatment procedures in spa resorts</li> <li>• Recognition and acceptance by the Insurance and Retirement Houses of the European Union</li> <li>• Implementation of recognized quality standards at European level</li> <li>• Alignment to the spa-wellness and wellness standard system promoted by ESPA; e.g. Europe Spa Med and Europe Spa Wellness</li> <li>• Modernization of tourism infrastructure, spa and recreation through the European structural funds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction of T.V.A. to 5% for travel agencies selling tourist packages in spa resorts</li> <li>• Removing the royalty for the use of thermal and geothermal water</li> <li>• Positive consequences: increased investment, increased service quality, reduced accommodation rates</li> </ul>

<sup>8</sup> Source: Butler, R.W. - "The Concept of a Tourist Area Cycle of Evolution: Implications for Management of Resources", Canadian Geographer, XXIV, 1, 1980

<sup>9</sup> Sursa: Cocean, R. - «Declinul turistic al stațiunii Sângeorz-Băi », Geographia Napocensis, Anul X, nr. 2, 2016

**Table 7.** Threats to the Romanian spa tourism:

Threat	Details
<p><b>1. Stereotypes (preconceived ideas)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spa resorts are intended only for the elderly</li> <li>• Spa tourism is associated with social tourism due to social programs and treatment tickets</li> <li>• It is limited to medical and recovery sector</li> <li>• Poor administrative capacity</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. The difficulty of local public authorities to access European structural funds for the spa sector</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Few resources available for co-financing</li> <li>• Making public-private partnerships difficult</li> <li>• Lack of ownership of the spa infrastructure</li> <li>• Introducing the dual system into specialized education</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. The need for labor force</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hungary has concentrated its national promotion campaign on spa tourism for at least 7 years</li> <li>• Bulgaria - the state invests heavily in spa resorts</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. The emergence of strong international competitors</b></p>	

#### IV. Directions for action for the future of the Romanian spa tourism

In order to put Romania on the map of the spa tourism destinations, it is necessary to act on certain directions, specified in the updated Master Plan, identified and discussed by the professionals in the field. One of these directions is to *transform the balneary tourism* of its old form, in which the social component predominates in a new form that contains other new and modern components - wellness tourism, spa tourism, anti-aging tourism and health tourism. If global wellness tourism<sup>10</sup> has increased exponentially since 2012, reaching \$ 639 billion in 2017, the situation in Romania<sup>11</sup> is completely different. The relaxation services market is at a relatively low level, equal to EUR 24.4 million, of which EUR 15.6 million was access to the spa, and EUR 8.8 million in spa treatments. The first national project,

10 Source: “Global Wellness Economy Monitor”, Global Wellness Institute, 2018

11 Source: Bădulescu, T. - «România poate concura cu destinații celebre pentru turismul balnear. De ce nu se întâmplă acest lucru », 6 noiembrie 2018

aimed at promoting Romania as a wellness destination, was launched only on 1 November 2018 under the name "Romania - wellness destination".

Another direction of action is *anti-aging tourism*, in which Romania has a tradition of several decades. It is necessary to revitalize it, and the spa resorts to a younger clientele, as well as to the 50-65-year-olds segment, which is increasingly experiencing spa resorts. To this end, the creation of pilot resorts and the development of anti-aging treatments were foreseen by the use of Gerovital H3 and Aslavital products.

*Establishment of the Destination Management Organization* required to apply Directive 2011/24/EU is possible due to the previous establishment of the interdepartmental balneary group, at the initiative<sup>12</sup> of O.P.T.B.R. It brings together specialists from the main institutions involved in the spa tourism activity and has the role of following and solving the various issues identified during the course of its activity.

*Alignment with European quality standards* requires accommodation units, infrastructure, facilities and accommodation to be certified and accredited according to international requirements. Several European countries, members of ESPA, have certified spa facilities with the Europe Spa Med and Europe Spa Wellness logo. Unfortunately, there is only one accredited hotel in Romania, namely "International" (4 \*) from Băile Felix resort.

*Putting the concept of "thermal cities"* into the form of a network of these cities offers another perspective on spa tourism. One step forward was the establishment of the National Association of Spa and Balneary Resorts in Romania.

*The creation of the green balneary-tourism cluster*, envisaged in the updated version of the Master Plan, aims at the development and promotion of Romanian spa tourism products and ecotourism on the international market. The cluster has the role of making coherent the development of green spa tourism, helping spa resorts to find reliable private partners as well as the necessary funding. The establishment of this cluster, as well as the Destination Management Organization, is absolutely necessary because the implementation of many of the measures proposed in the Master Plan depends on their existence.

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12 Sursa: Rădulescu, N.- « Turismul balnear românesc- Direcții de dezvoltare în contextul european actual », 2011

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