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**NEED TO CHANGE IN TOURISM GEOGRAPHY AT
UNIVERSITY**

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Abstract

The number of tourists travelling to spend their free time elsewhere than in their country of residence has exceeded 1.2 billion, which means that one in six people on the planet travel for tourism purposes. The world economy at the moment undergoes two revolutions, one in the field of IT, and the other in the field of tourism. Tourism is a factor of economic growth; it creates and maintains workplaces, every 11th employee on the planet works in a field from the travel and hospitality industry. Tourism is a factor of social transformation, facilitating an unprecedented closeness between cultures and civilizations in history, people travelling to increasingly remote places compared to their own location, meeting other people, discovering other food, other music, other habits, and instant and always peaceful cultural exchanges take place within this cultural process. In this context, the **world crisis in education** determines the increase of the demand for education (despite the financial humiliations from the national education system)

The establishment of the need to change in the practice of teaching, learning and evaluation of tourism geography is supported by the developments recorded by the specialized university education, by the ecological trend (launching optional subjects as well) and by the methodological enrichment, which have produced the transfer of geography from the category of natural sciences into that of social, economic, analytical, statistical sciences, shaping even “a new geography” in line with the geopolitical changes.

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Keywords: University; education; sustainability; crisis; geography.

1. Introduction

Tourism development has a number of consequences on the use of human resources in terms of creating new workplaces, determining a high level of professional training in professional structures and positions. The specificity of tourism activity, its complexity, given by the variety and the multitude of

components, leave their mark on the staffing needs and its structure, on its requirements in terms of selection and training, on the efficiency of using the labour force (Mazilu, Mitroi, 2010). In their totality, the labour peculiarities in tourism directly affect the dynamics and the number of workers, the labour productivity level, their structure, the incentive systems and, consequently, the recruitment and selection policies, the professional training structure. In tourism, human resources play an important role in activating the demand, achieving an atmosphere of relaxation, expressing the decision to purchase, to form and maintain the sympathy, the interest for a specific tourism product or the holiday destination, hotel or catering unit, the recreation form or the transport means and, respectively, the triggering of tourist returns (Mazilu, 2012). An objective analysis on the labour market in Romania emphasizes a generally positive picture compared to previous years, thus the unemployment rate has remained broadly stable, slightly below 7% and well below the EU average of 9.5%. It is expected to decline even further by 2017, as a result of strong economic growth. (http://www.cdep.ro/afaceri_europene/CE/2016/SWD_2016_91_RO_DOCUMENTDETRAVAIL_f.doc)

Unfortunately, we must mention the poor access and management of structural funds and European investments (The ministry reported that, during 2007-2015, 337 projects aiming at the increase of the quality in education and the initial and continuous vocational education were implemented. The total value of these projects was of approximately EUR 261.5 million). Also, the tertiary education graduation rate has increased steadily over the last decade, reaching 25% in 2014 and almost reaching the national target of 26.7% set forth within the Europe 2020 strategy (Fig.1). The employment rate for graduates of tertiary education remains a concern, being decreased by more than 7 percentage points in the past three years, suggesting that universities are insufficiently responsive to the developments on the labour market. According to **the Romania Country Report for 2016**, including a comprehensive review on the prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances, conducted by *The European Commission in February 2016, for the analyzed domain level of Romania - the education - despite the investment in skills and training in sectors with a high added value, challenges persist regarding the skills offer. The lack of qualified staff is extremely acute in the healthcare, the construction, the hotel services and the ITC sectors. There are differences between the types of studies offered. There are plans to better match the education curricula with the needs of employers, to connect educational databases with the ones from the labour market and to improve the operation of the centers of assessment and validation of competences*” (WORK DOCUMENT OF COMMISSION SERVICES The Romania Country report for 2016, including the comprehensive review on the prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances, Brussels, 26.02.2016 SWD (2016) European Commission) (Fig.1 and Fig.2).

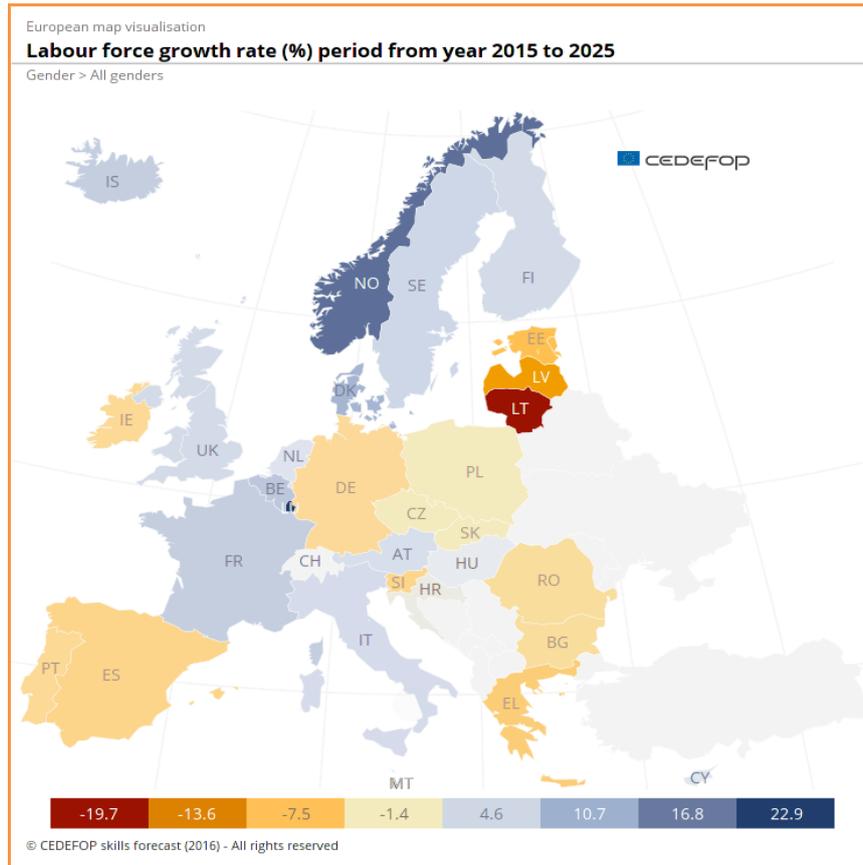


Fig. 1. Labour force growth rate% period from year 2015-2025
 (source: European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training-CEDEFOP)

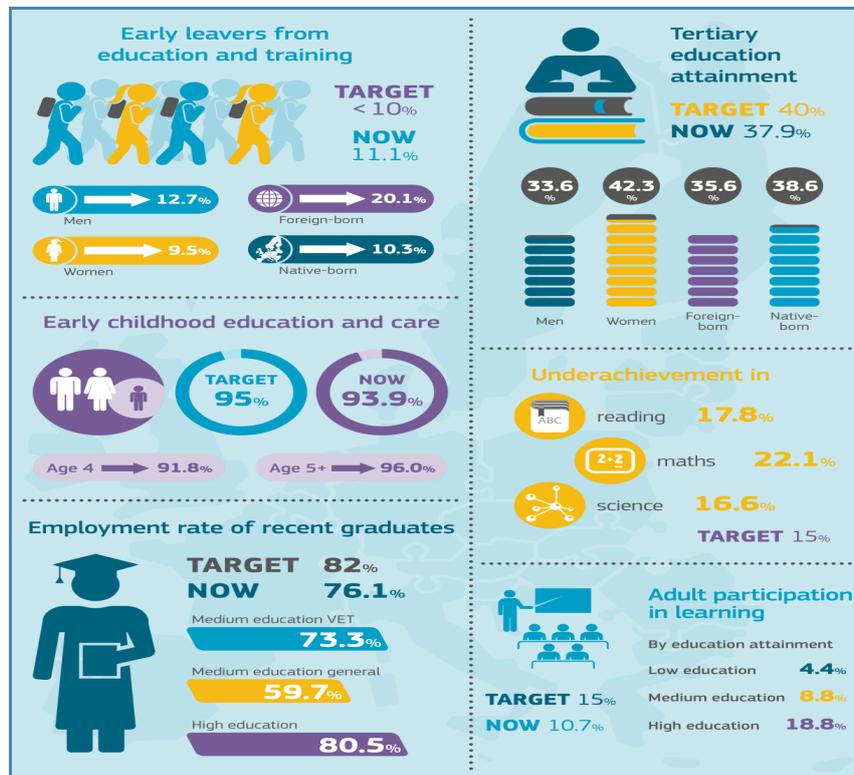


Fig. 2. EU targets for 2020 in education (source: Education and Training Monitor 2015)

2. Discussion

The share of people in tertiary education in Romania has grown steadily in recent years. The Romanian government adopted a strategy for tertiary education, which has two general objectives: increasing the relevance of higher education by better harmonising it with the labour market needs and improving accessibility to higher education for disadvantaged groups. The tertiary education strategy adopted in July 2015 (Government decision no. 565 from 15.07.2015) aims to make higher education more relevant to labour market needs and more accessible to disadvantaged groups. At the same time, a database integrated in the management systems from 50 public universities has been completed, to allow the monitoring of the employment of graduates of higher education. The work to harmonise the occupational standards with the labour market requirements and to update the educational offer has continued, 36 new standards being developed. It is expected that all universities shall establish guidance and counselling centres in 2015-2016. The latest policy developments in higher education include: permission to access non-university programs for pupils who have not passed the baccalaureate examination; provision by all universities of professional counselling services through a university counselling centre; the consolidation of mandatory six-month internships in enterprises for all college graduates. After a longue period we note an expansion of books, academic articles and texts on the subject of tourism education, ranging from general texts such as Cooper et al. (1994), curriculum studies such as Lloyd Stear (1981), and reviews of tourism education programs such as Parsons (1991).

Table 1. The evolution of the population with a tertiary education level

Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
The evolution expressed in % of the population with a tertiary education level from the 30-34 years age group/total population	8,88	8,89	10,29	11,42	12,37	13,94	15,96	16,78	18,1	20,4	21,8	22,8
The annual growth rate expressed in %		0,01	1,4	1,13	0,95	1,57	2,02	0,82	1,32	2,30	1,40	1,00

Source: http://gov.ro/fisiere/subpagini_fisiere/NF_HG_211-2015.docx

There are also currently three important journals in this field: Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Education, Journal of Teaching in Travel and Tourism, Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport, and Tourism Education, or Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality and Tourism, Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism. The Tourism Education Futures Initiative: Activating change in tourism education- (TEFI) is the collective effort of a group of innovative, thoughtful and committed scholars and industry leaders seeking to provide vision, knowledge, and a framework for tourism education programs that promote global citizenship and optimism for a better world. Romania complied with the requirement of having a higher education divided on cycles, according to the BOLOGNA Trial, concluding the transition period from the old education system imposed by the Law on Education no. 84/1995, republished, to the

current system, and from the point of view of the values set forth for the indicator on the tertiary education for the 30-34 years age group, its value places us at the lowest values within the EU member states. Thus, the table no. 1 according to GD 327/2014 on the approval of the total number of student places for the state pre-university and higher education during the 2014-2015 academic year .

The prognosis analyses determined that Romania could set forth a target of 26.74% for the indicator on the tertiary education for the 30-34 years age group. The estimated values for the period 2011-2020 are comprised in table no. 2 and Fig. no. 3 and are achievable by meeting the following conditions:

the progressive increase of the number of student places, by introducing the study grants, set forth for the Bachelor studies during the period 2013-2016, and by maintaining them until 2020 and *the restructuring of the Bachelor studies* according to the labour market and by diversifying the number of Master studies allowing the increase of their relevance under guaranteed quality conditions and a better insertion of the graduates on the labour market.

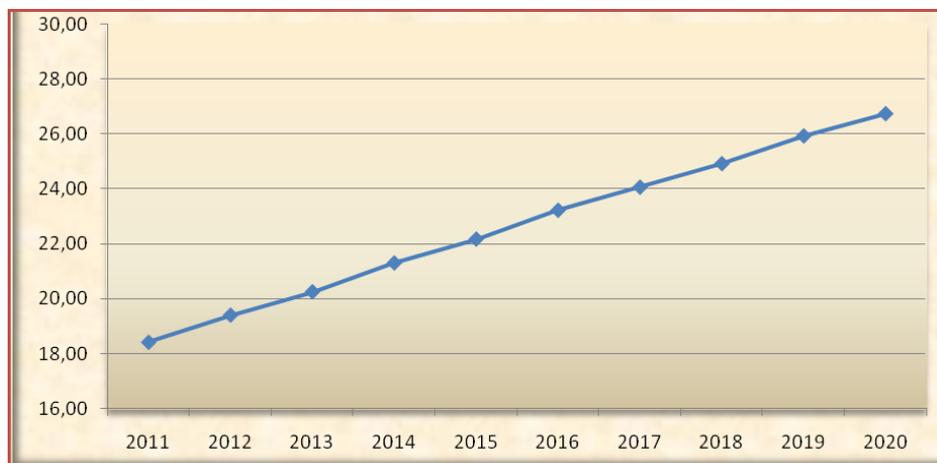


Fig. 2. The evolution expressed in % of the population with a tertiary education level from the 30-34 years age group/total population (source: http://gov.ro/fisiere/subpagini_fisiere/NF_HG_211-2015.docx)

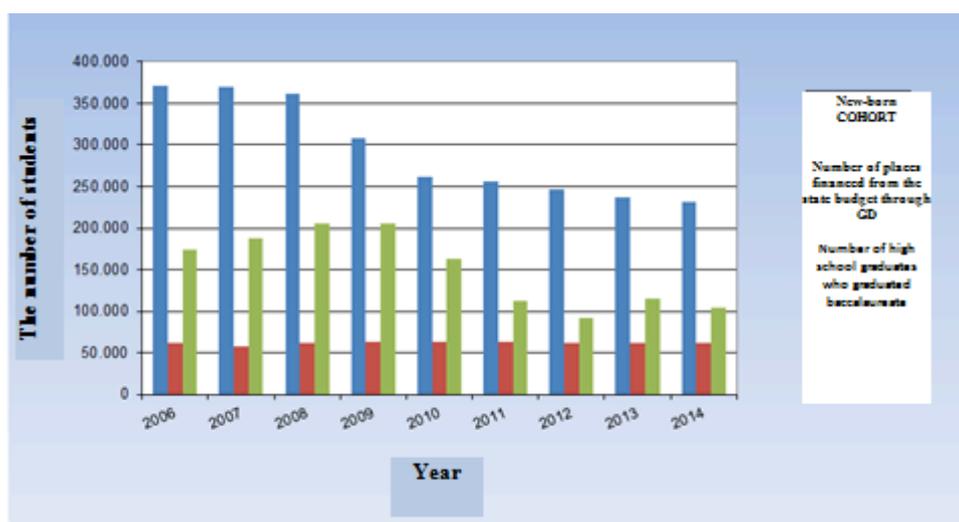


Fig. 3. The number of baccalaureate graduates and the number of places for higher education (Source: http://gov.ro/fisiere/subpagini_fisiere/NF_HG_211-2015.docx)

For the 2015-2016 academic year, a number of student places covered by a number of 62.400 study grants for Bachelor studies shall be proposed, being allocated, according to the schooling capacity compliance requirements, through the order of the Minister of Education and Science(Fig.no4). The study grants shall be awarded for the entire study cycle. We mention that the proposed total number of student places for the 2015-2016 academic year shall be classified within the finance approved for the 2015 financial year and shall comply with the budget estimate for the 2015 and 2016 financial years. At the same time, the compliance with the target undertaken in the Europa 2000 Strategy is considered, regarding the registration level within the tertiary education system. Figure no. 5 shows the evolution of the number of students registered for Bachelor studies during the period 2006-2015. For the Master studies, a number of 35,600 study grants is set forth, according to the provisions of Law no. 288/2004 on the organisation of the higher education system, as subsequently amended and supplemented, and of Law no. 1/2011, as subsequently amended and supplemented, in order to ensure at least half of the number of study grants allocated for the Bachelor studies.

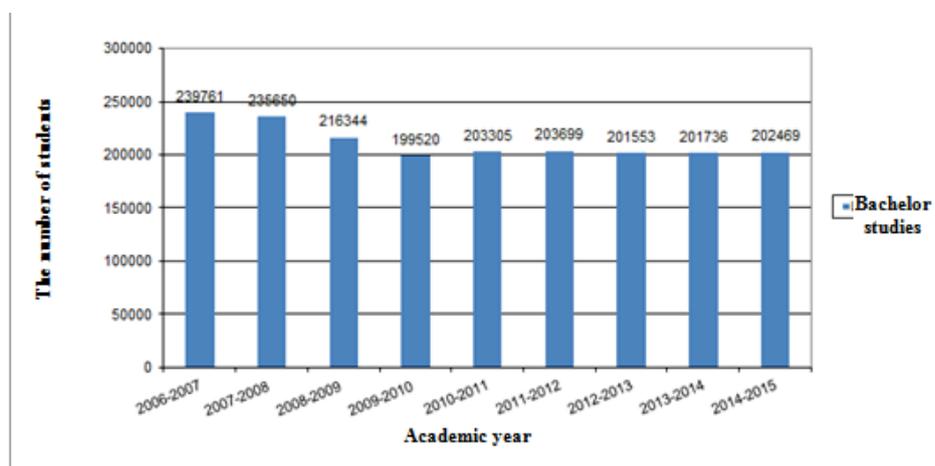


Fig. 4. The evolution of the number of students during the period 2006-2015
(Sursa:http://gov.ro/fisiere/subpagini_fisiere/NF_HG_211-2015.docx)

Figure 6 shows the evolution of the number of students registered for Master studies during the period 2006-2015.

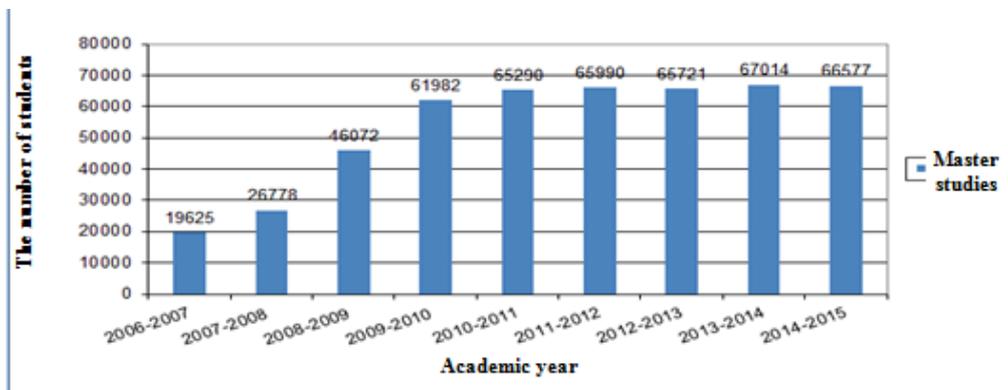


Fig. 5. The evolution of the number of students registered in the Master studies for the period 2006-2015 (Source: http://gov.ro/fisiere/subpagini_fisiere/NF_HG_211-2015.docx)

For the Doctoral studies, the proposed number of student places for the 2015-2016 academic year is of 3,000 study grants. Therefore, we may consider that, through this decision, the Ministry of Education and Science aims at the increase of the scientific potential of the highly qualified work force in order to implement the decisions undertaken by Romania through the Lisbon Agenda of transforming the EU member state societies into knowledge and technological progress societies, which have been continued through the Partnership Agreement proposed by Romania for the period 2014-2020. The evolutions of the number of PhD students registered in the day courses and the number of PhD students registered in the low attendance courses for the period 2006-2015, financed by the state budget, are shown in figure no. 7. (Mazilu, Gheorgheci, 2016).

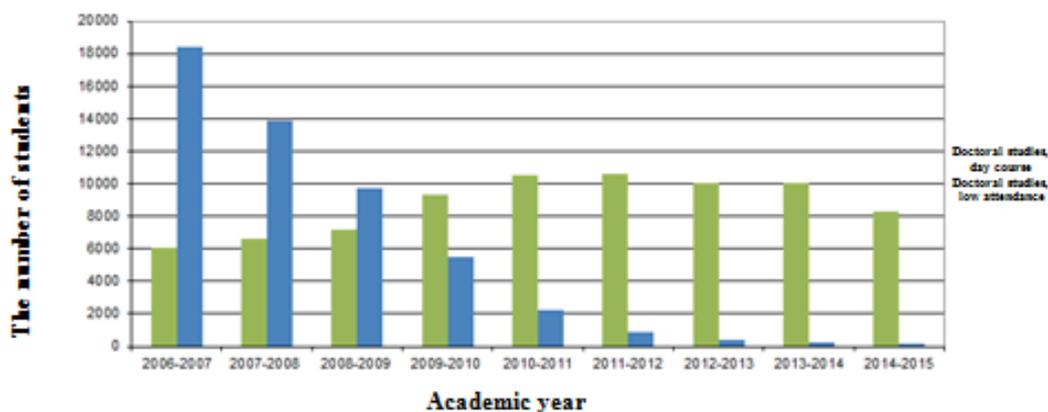


Fig. 6. The evolution of the number of students financed by the state budget for doctoral studies - 2006-2015 (Source: http://gov.ro/fisiere/subpagini_fisiere/NF_HG_211-2015.docx)

The target segment: *The travelling students* represent a segment that should not be neglected these representing at the moment 1/5 from the total number of the tourists, unanimously considered a very interesting niche, these permanently wanting to experiment more in their travels than spending time in

various clubs, including their percentage at the world level of approximately 20% of the tourists. They capture our attention and focus on this valuable segment in the context of current tourism. A recent report drawn up by Skift on this subject, emphasises that these travel now with a purpose and tend to remain more in the place they visit to improve their linguistic abilities, for authenticity, to make new friends, to visit historical, archaeological sites, etc. These shall be the future entrepreneurs, the future business people. The statistics are conclusive: from 15% of the global tourism in the '90s, to 20% in the 2000s, the travelling students' number is expected to grow to 25% of the global tourism in the near future, changing the patterns of tourist destinations, the experiments shall take the place of local tourist objectives, the online information shall rule. A real estimate for this recently shaped market foresees over 300 million arrivals at the beginning of the 2020s, having a contribution in the market of over USD 320 billion.

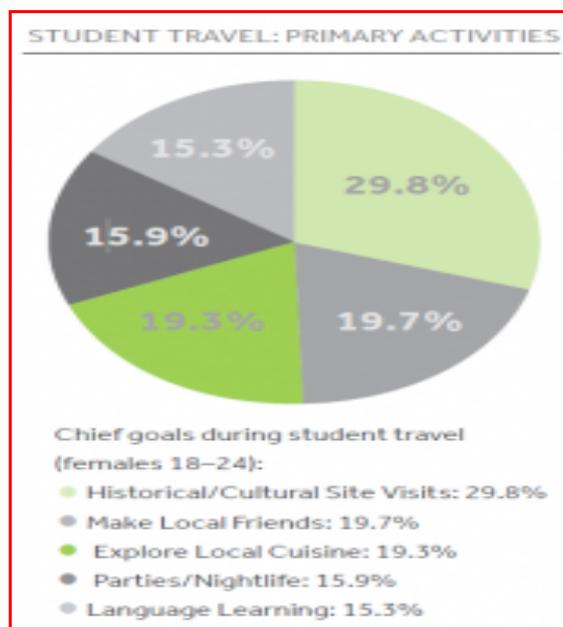


Fig. 7. Chief goals during students travel
 (Photo: <http://www.turismmarket.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/student-traveler.png>)

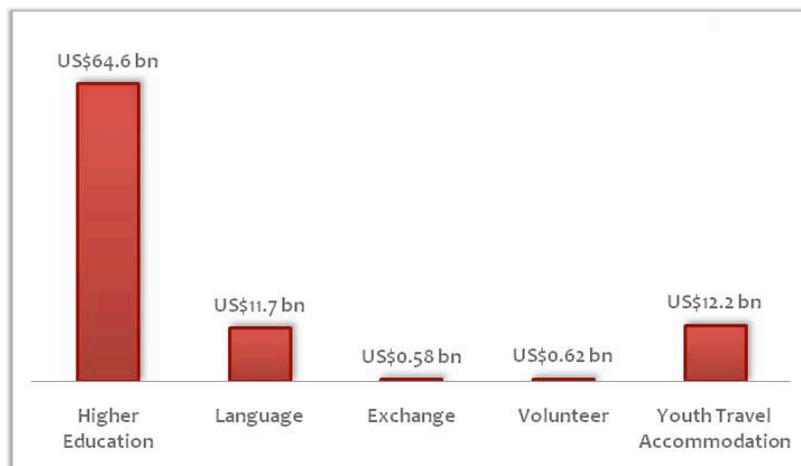


Fig. 8. The percentage contribution of the student travel to the tourist market
 (source: <http://www.student-market.com/0>)

Regarding the presence on the global specialised tourist market, Romania, fortunately, forms part of the selected countries, having a number of 200-300 educational tour-operating agencies, Serbia filling

a lower place with 50-100 places, while the first place is filled by the following group of countries: Brazil, France, Germany and China. Among the possible occupations according to the Classification of Occupations in Romania: the occupations for the Bachelor studies of Tourism Geography are: Risk manager, Hotel manager, Hostel Manager, Tourism agent, Tour-operator tourism agent, External transport agent. We have chosen Tourism agent, Pre-university teacher, and Tourism analyst, for the Bachelor studies. For the Master studies – Tourism and sustainable development, within the University of Craiova, the occupations shall be: Tour-operator tourism agent, Tourism activity organiser (higher education), Tourism analyst. Tourism, Science (Fig. 10, Fig. 11).

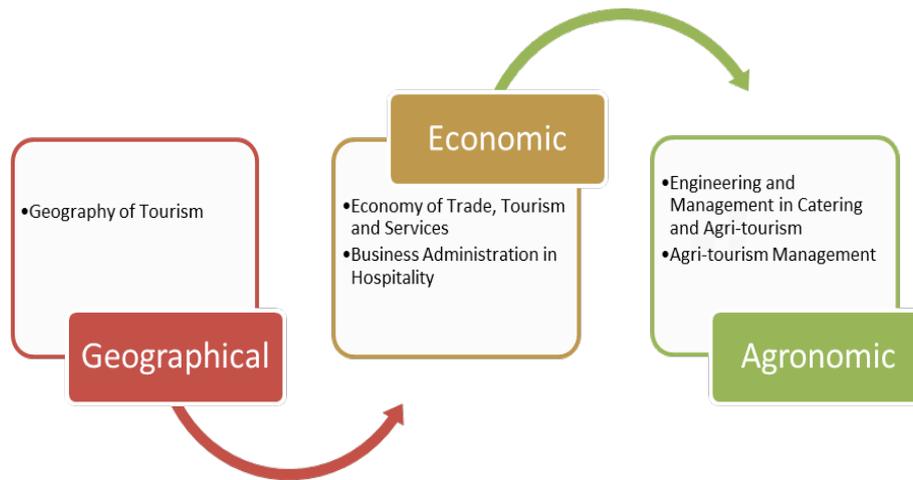


Fig. 9. Interference fields in Geography of Tourism

HE tourism studies in Romania appeared in the late 80', firstly only as simple programs attached to some economic curriculum (commercial, services), the first tourism related individual bachelor program was launched in 1991 at Sibiu (Geography of Tourism) by a private university and in 1994 appeared the first public university program at the University of Bucharest (Geography of Tourism) and others in Suceava, Iași, Craiova, Oradea, Cluj, Sibiu, etc. My didactic experience of over 30 years in the field of geography of tourism and of didactics, as creator of a doctoral school in tourism, I believe that in the future these aspects and skills that students must learn will outline new analysis issues of the tourism phenomenon, considered itself as a polyvalent phenomenon, while generating an efficient academic environment.

Nowadays, there are 89 tourism undergraduate programs in the Romanian universities. 53 economical tourism studies, 22 geographical tourism studies and 20 agronomic tourism studies, addressing new skills, new values in higher tourism education.

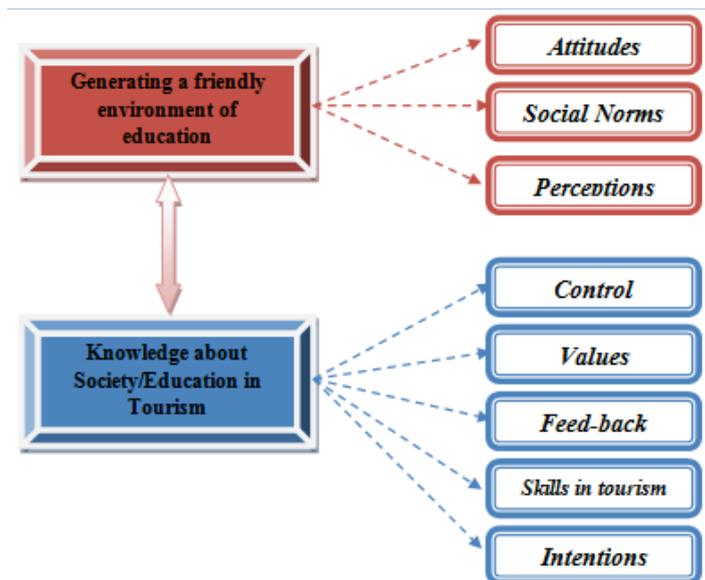


Fig. 10. New Values in Tourism Higher Education

Even if there are a lot of differences between the curricula of the 3 main approaches in HE tourism studies, we can observe that some topics are covered by all of them: tourism management, tourism marketing, economy of tourism, tourism statistics, ecotourism/rural tourism/agri-tourism, and economic geography/geography of resources.

3. Conclusions

The tourist sector of Romania generated 205,000 work places in 2014, number estimated to increase with 0.6% this year. Regarding the direct contribution of tourism to the work force employment, this is only 2.3% in Romania (193,000 work places), compared to 5.4% the world average, 13.1% in Croatia, 5.8% in Hungary, respectively 3.8% in Bulgaria. Unfortunately, tourism education in Romania is often purely theoretical, most tourism training courses don't rely on shaping practical skills; while quality depend on the curricula, syllabi and the qualification of the teaching staff., or the new education must to provide vision, knowledge and a framework for tourism educations programs, to promote global citizenship and a better world (Dinu, & Pășcuț, 2011). Syllabi underlying tourism degree curricula often comprise a very low amount of practical training classes and these are more often than not poorly organized. In present, tourism is much more than an economic sector, it is also an educational, social, cultural, political, and environmental force that drives societal change and the new educators in tourism play a crucial role in the formation of the younger generation, the future tourism stakeholders and managers, anyway businessmen with strong knowledge in this beautiful field or area.

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