Promoting Dobrogea region as a constituent part of the “Silk Road” – an engine for socio–economic and cultural cooperation in the globalization context

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Abstract. Cultural tourism has experienced a rapid growth, along with a comparable diversification of cultural patterns. The potential of development for this economy sector can be huge. There are specific patterns for every culture and that is why cultural tourism is an inexhaustible source of tourism resources. Cultural tourism represents, along with trade, a vector of knowledge, exchange and tempering for the relations between nations. In this sense the “Silk Road” program promoted by UNESCO represents an example of cooperation and intercultural exchange, being also an engine of growth for the regions included in the program. Dobrogea, as a land situated at the junction of great empires, subject to social, economic, political and even geological changes can offer us, at the beginning of the third millennium, important disclosures for the world history.

The purpose of this paper is to militate for including Dobrogea in the UNESCO program of preserving and promoting the “Silk Road” tourism product. Even if now Dobrogea is not part of the “Silk Road” destinations, available evidence support our proposition on the necessity of a more thorough research in order to find new information to support this theory.

Our research examines the manner in which promoting Dobrogea as part of the “Silk Road” destination can be a value for the UNESCO program and also for the local economy. This can represent a resource worth developing through a public - private partnership between the tourism industry, largely privatized and the Ministry of Culture. Through a medium and long term strategy, a sustained promotional campaign, this hypothesis could be proven if a part of the revenue generated from tourism would be invested in culture.

This paper is an exploratory research, based on data and studies on the importance of promoting Dobrogea region as part of UNESCO “Silk Road” program.

Keywords: cultural tourism, tourism product, tourist region, Silk Road

JEL Codes: L83, M31

1. Introduction

Cultural tourism, since its coming out as a concept, in 1945, has undergone a large debate both at the level of worldwide organisms which promoted it (the Worldwide Bank, UNESCO – The United Nations Organisation for Education, Science and Culture, OMT – the Worldwide Organisation of tourism, ICOMOS – The International Council of Monuments and Sites, the UNESCO organism, responsible with the propositions for the Worldwide Patrimony List) and at the professional and political level (Saskia Cousin, 2008).

Its meaning and reaching has developed together with the understanding and definition of another concept which has caught the attention of the international organisms. We are referring to the notion of culture. As an answer to the UNESCO request, the American anthropologists A.L. Kroeber and C. Kluckhohn have made an inventory, in 1952 of more than 200 significances of the term culture. The two anthropologists have elaborated a definition that intended to get rid of the confusions and emphasized the difference between culture and civilization. The two anthropologists’ definition: “Culture consists of

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patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other hand as conditioning elements of further action” (A. L. KROEBER, Clyde KLUCKHOHN, 1952), is intended to eliminate the confusion and emphasize the specific difference between culture and civilization. In 1982, at the Worldwide Conference on economic politics, which took place in Mexico City under the UNESCO guidance, the term culture was defined: the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs (Declaration on Cultural Policies, 1982).

There has been more than a century since the first recorded definition of the concept of culture, in 1871, given by Edward Taylor: “CULTURE or Civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (Edward Tylor, 1871) until the 2010’s Geert Hofstede: “Culture is the collective programming of the mind distinguishing the members of one group or category of people from others” (Geert Hofstede, Gert Jan Hofstede, Michael Minkov, 2010), still the preoccupation for defining this term has not ceased.

Why has this definition of the concept been the main target of the international organisms? As the academy member M. Malita noted in A Thousand Cultures, One Single Civilisation: to the Geomodernity of the 21st century, the way in which this concept has been understood, in various nations, has turned out to be an armed conflict – and he gave the example of Germany and France. As it has been already seen, globalization is not a recent notion, it has its roots in the development of the international organisms, which have been making efforts to elaborate a universally accepted definition of the meanings of certain words which, by their differentiating as sense and meaning, have become a reason for conflict. It has been known for long that the definition of a notion is a priority; the Gospel of John is very concise about this: “In the beginning there was the Word”.

The concept of cultural tourism has had various definitions. In the article “L’Unesco et la doctrine culturale”, published in 2008, Saskia Cousin makes an X-ray of this concept. In the context of paradigm change after the Second World War and of the New World Order, the accent has been placed on the mutual advantage doctrine, on the exchange of economic values for cultural ones, on accepting and promoting cultural diversity (Saskia Cousin, 2008).

“Cultural tourism is that form of tourism whose object is, among other aims, the discovery of monuments and sites. It exerts on them a very positive effect insofar as it contributes - to satisfy its own ends - to their maintenance and protection. This form of tourism justifies in fact the efforts which said maintenance and protection demand of the human community because of the socio-cultural and economic benefits which they bestow on all the populations concerned” (ICOMOS, 1976).

“Cultural tourism may be defined as that movement which involves people in the exploration or the experience of the diverse ways of life of other people, reflecting all the social customs, religious traditions, or intellectual ideas of their cultural heritage” (János Csapó).

According to UNESCO, cultural tourism is the area with the most rapid international growth of industrial tourism. Even if it has been very difficult to find the data about the dimension of the cultural tourism market, OCDE and OMT have reported that, in 2007 cultural tourism has represented 40% of the international tourism market. Thus, out of 898 million of reported arrivals in 2007 in international tourism, 359 million represented the cultural voyages, an increase compared to 1995, when, out of the total number of 538 million, 199 million were cultural voyages (OCDE, 2009).

This growth was rendered also by the intense promotion of numerous projects on cultural tourism by international organisms such as OMT, UNESCO, the European Commission. One of these programmes, launched in 1993 by OMT is also the Silk Road. Starting from a number of 19 states which signed the Samarkand, Uzbekistan declaration, the programme now includes (March, 2012) 28 states.
2. Short historical report of the program “Silk Road”

Since its coming forth until the present, this programme has acknowledged a continuous development; many important meetings, activities and events have taken place.

The objectives of „Silk Road” programme are:
1. The Silk Road will be an internationally renowned, seamless travel experience.
2. The tourism sector will be prosperous across all Silk Road destinations, stimulating ongoing investment.
3. Silk Road stakeholders will work closely together for mutual benefit.
4. Tourism will drive improved cultural and environmental management.
5. Silk Road tourism will act a vehicle for fostering peace and cultural understanding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Activities name</th>
<th>Locations</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>States/ Observations</th>
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<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Silk Road Project General Assembly</td>
<td>Bali, Republic of Indonesia</td>
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<td>1994</td>
<td>First International Silk Road Meeting Silk Road Events 1994/95: World Travel Market London and at ITB Berlin</td>
<td>Samarkand, Republic of Uzbekistan</td>
<td>Samarkand Declaration/ Adoption of the SilkRoad Logotype</td>
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<td>Xi’an, People’s Republic of China</td>
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<td>Second Silk Road Travel Forum</td>
<td>Nara, Japan</td>
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<td>Second International Silk Road Meeting</td>
<td>Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran</td>
<td>-Creation of a Silk Road Website -Establishment of an annual Silk Road Tourism Day and a Motor Rally event -Adoption of a Silk Road Anthem</td>
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<td>Year</td>
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| 1998 | Third Silk Road Travel Forum | Kyoto, Japan | -Urging national tourism administrations to appeal to their governments regarding Visa Facilitation along the Silk Road and the exploration of a possible Silk Road tourist visa for all countries  
-Silk Road countries should begin promotion in Japanese market gradually, in order to establish substantial business links with Japanese counterparts  
-The targeting of seniors in the Japanese market as an affluent age group for tourism  
-Appeal to aviation authorities for further improvements in facilitating charter flights for multi-national tours |
| 1999 | Silk Road Tour Operators Workshop | Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan | |
| 1999 | Third International Silk Road Meeting | Tbilisi, Georgia | -Identification of visa restrictions as most serious impediment to the project, calling upon tourism administrations to appeal to their governments regarding visa and frontier formalities  
-Establishment of business links with the aviation industry of the region |
| 1999 | WTO/UNESCO Tourism and Culture Seminar | Khiva, Republic of Uzbekistan | -Support the aims of the proclamation of the year 2000 - “International Year for a Culture of Peace” - as stated in Resolution 52/15 of the UN General Assembly  
-Call for the adoption of the WTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism by 2000 |
| 2002 | Fourth International Silk Road Meeting | Bukhara, Republic of Uzbekistan | Bukhara Declaration  
-Establishment of a “Silk Road Support Office” in Samarkand |
| 2003 | UNWTO General Assembly Workshop | Beijing, People’s Republic of China | |
| 2004 | The Silk Road Initiative (SRI) | |
| 2004 | The UN Silk Road City Awards | |
3. China and the Central and South-East Europe: common development, as tradition and continuation (China Embassy in Romania, 5 July 2012)

As his Excellency, Wen Jiaboo, the Prime-minister of the Chinese Popular Republic, pointed out on the occasion of the Economic and Commercial Forum about China and the European Central and South Eastern countries, held in Budapest, on the 25th of June 2011, the Silk Road has drawn us closer in the last 2000 years (The Economist, 4 July 2011).

According to the Prime-minister’s declarations the commercial exchanges between China and the European Central and Eastern countries amounted in 2000 to USD 3 billion, reaching in 2010 the amount of USD 40 billion. Concerning the tourism, it has been obvious that in 2010, 200,000 tourists from the Central and the East European countries visited China, and more than 60,000 Chinese tourists have visited the Central and East European countries (The Economist, 4 July 2011).

Concerning Romania, the bilateral exchanges with China meant USD 4.2 billion in 2011, a growth in comparison with the year 2010 – 36.27% of the Romanian exports and 8.24% of the imports (Vioreanu Valentin, 4 April 2012).

According to the Chinese statistics, the Romanian exports represented USD 948 billion, a growth by 26% compared with 2010, and the Romanian imports from China were of USD 3.454 billion, a growing figure by 15% compared with 2010. The commercial balance between the two countries has grown by USD 265 billion in 2011, 11.1% bigger than 2010 (UK Government, March, 2012).

According to the Business Guide-book, published by BPCE, Beijing, in 2011 there were great differences between the statistics data of the countries, mostly in the Romanian exports record; this fact is partially explained by the way of exports records in the two countries (FOB in Romanian, CIF in China) and by the fact that many Romanian products reach the Chinese market via certain companies from other countries (the case of the multinational companies that work in Romania), and their exports are not recorded as exports in the People’s Republic of China (UK Government, March, 2012).

Helmut Uhlig mentioned back in time in the Silk Road, quoting two Chinese chronicles Ts’ien Han schu and Hou Han schu: “during the times of internal anarchy and threatening, there existed, at the Chinese court, high officials, who had the duty of recording and who had to put down without any hesitation, falsification or adorning all the events” (Helmut Uhlig, 2008).

The Silk Road is a century-old notion, imposed by the German geologist Ferdinand baron von Richthofen, in his introductory volume of his work about China; the first scientist who introduced the West to China on the basis of his own expeditions (Helmut Uhlig, 2008).

In his introduction to the Silk Road, Helmut Uhlig uses the notion “the ways of the silk” – “because we know there existed more than one, but a net of ways between East and West, like between North and
South, a kind of coordinated system with multilateral connections between towns, states and nations, which served to peaceful commerce, but often to the most atrocious sage of force” (Helmut Uhlig, 2008).

As Helmut Uhlig asserts, “it was believed, not long ago, that there was one way of access between China and the West”, saying that “an older way, about which we have no knowledge when it started being accessed for the first time as a commercial one, began from Gansu, in the Northern part of Mount Celest, in the so-called forested area in the South of Asian Russia and farther up to the Don’s mouth in the Azov Sea”. This way, which turned the territory from the North of Black Sea into a flourishing and rich land, on a span of almost 1000 years (the flourishing Pontic culture) has lost its economic importance at the birth of the South Silk Road (Helmut Uhlig, 2008).

Helmut Uhlig is still the one who mentions that, for this Northern way (the oldest) of the Silk, archaeological proofs have been discovered in the Scythian graves – the so-called cairns – where traces of silk have been found along with objects made of precious metals and Chinese jewellery (Helmut Uhlig, 2008). On the present territory of Dobrogea and on the rest of the Romanian territory one can find numerous such graves, which have not yet been searched and which can offer a great number of surprises and material proofs of the cultural and populations that lived on these territories.

This Scythian people had, according to Helmut Uhlig, the oldest and most intensive liaisons, even if not always peaceful with the Chinese people (Helmut Uhlig, 2008).

These archaeological discoveries are a proof of the commercial exchange in both directions of the Silk Road; the silk and the jade jewellery came from China and the precious metal objects were exported to China.

Another proof that Dobrogea represented an important knot in the East-West commerce is also the fact that the great empires that have been established along the tumultuous history of Europe and Asia made extraordinary efforts to possess this territory, and it was part of all these empires (Maps 1, 2, 3, 4).

In this sense, Dobrogea may be considered part of the Silk Road, considering the specialists’ opinion that this commercial road between East and West was represented by more commercial ways. In the German specialists’ opinion, who analyzed this road, a way that connected China to the West has always existed, even in ancient times and this was the Northern Silk. Not so many proofs have been revealed about it, but they may be discovered in the barrows spread all over this territory and which lie still unsearched into on the Romanian territory, with Dobrogea as an integrant part. Research has not been done due to the tumultuous history of this land and to the lack of funds, quite great in itself, funds that have been proved as necessary to the undergoing of research. The fact that Romania belongs to Europe and it is also a UNESCO country might draw both these funds in order to develop this Dobrogea region from the touristic point of view, by specific programmes and activities, and the necessary funds for this research work. This fact might contribute to both economic development of the region and of Europe implicitly, and to the cultural enrichment through new archaeological discoveries.

### 4. The inventory of Dobrogea tourism resources

In order to militate for Romania to be considered a Silk Road country, we also need to analyze the list of our most important tourist resources that can be appealing for the Silk Road traveler.

One of the first steps to this program will be to compile an inventory of Silk Road tourism resources for our country. The aim of this inventory is to familiarize the potential tourist with the immense variety and high quality of the Silk Road tourism resources which can be located in our country.

Resources will be identified in the province which forms part of the Silk Road Regional program and not for the entire country. In our case, this province is Dobrogea.

A brief description of the Dobrogea region should be made.

Dobrogea is the historical and geographical territory situated between the Danube and the Black Sea, which is part of Romania and Bulgaria. The region was known in its history as the Scythia Minor. From the
The most was fought particular thanks to hundred years ago the city of Romania and in Bulgaria - Dobrich and Silistra. In our country Dobrogea is limited to the north by the Danube Delta and the Macin Mountains, to the east by the Black Sea and to the west by the lower Danube.

The main cities are Constanța, Tulcea, Medgidia and Mangalia, to which we can add numerous holiday and spa resorts: Mamaia, Eforie North, South Eforie, Costinesti, 23 August, and the whole chain of resorts: Neptun, Saturn, Olimpus, Jupiter, Venus and Aurora, Vama Veche and 2 Mai. Numerous holiday villages can be found on the shore (Histria, Ovid, Teceghiul) or at the Danube.

The history of Dobrogea covers a period of more than 2,500 documented years. More than 2,800 years ago, Greek ships carrying families of merchants, craftsmen, soldiers and sailors, entered the sea called Sciti Axaina (dark blue) and named it Pontos Euxineos. Many settlers that came from the Aegean Sea and from the south coast of the Black Sea, settled there due to commercial opportunities. They founded several cities - ports, such as: Odessa (Varna), Apollonia, Callatis, Tomis, Histria Argamum and on the Danube shore, Aegyssos (Tulcea) and Axiopolis (Cernavoda). On Dobrogea territory were discovered traces of Thracian civilization. As Herodotus mentions in his history, in 514, since the expedition of Darius, Dobrogea was largely inhabited by Geto-Dacian tribes. Dobrogea had a special place in the history and progress of the Dacians, significantly influencing the trade between the Sea and Dacia.

Due to geographical position and impressive history of Dobrogea, the two of its counties, Constanța and Tulcea, are among the richest counties in terms of number of archaeological sites.

Dobrogea's main tourist attractions are:

- **the Danube Delta**
  The Delta has a surface of 3446 km² and is the largest and best preserved of European deltas. It was declared an UNESCO World Heritage in 1991 as a reservation of biosphere. It has over 320 species of birds and 45 freshwater fish species in its numerous lakes. This is where millions of birds from different areas of the globe (Europe, Asia, Africa, the Mediterranean) come to nest.
- **the Romanian seaside**
  It extends from the border with Ukraine (North) to the border of Bulgaria (South), a length of 245 km and consist of the Danube Delta and coastal lakes, which account for a total length of 163 km, and coastal beaches on more than 82 km. Here we can find many resorts that attract many tourists every year from Romania and abroad. Some of the resorts are: Mamaia, Eforie North and South, Costinesti, Neptun - Olimp, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn, Mangalia and Vama Veche.
- **Capidava Roman Camp**
  The Roman fortress was built in the late 3rd century A.D., when the whole Danubian limes was rebuilt, the process ended is the time of Emperor Constantine. Among the most important monuments found at Capidava, there are the epigraphic ones, sculptures and ceramics such as vases, amphorae, clay buckets, vessels and lamps. Metal objects, bone, glass, stones and coins were also discovered. They discovered funerary monuments and sanctuaries.
- **Histria**
  On the Sinoe Lake, in the northern part of the current Istria peninsula, rose more than two thousand six hundred years ago the city of Histria, founded by the Greek sailors and merchants who settled in the hospitable golf once, in order to do trade with the native Geto-Dacians. Olive oil, wine, Greek ornaments were exchanged for grain, honey, beeswax, cattle skins, salted fish, offered by local tribes. Even today you can see on the hystrian Acropolis, in the sacred area of the city, the ruins of a great temple of Zeus. Here, other altars were also found dedicated to Greek gods such as Athena, Hermes, Aphrodite or Dionysios.
- **Adamclisi**
  Adamclisi City, located in the south of Constanța, attracts tourists due to its historical significance, in particular thanks to the valuable sights, grouped in the museum complex near the village. Here a final battle was fought in the Daco-Roman War in the winter of 101-102 A.D., with heavy losses on both sides, and the
result was a truce between Traianus and Decebalus. After the conquest of Dacia in the war of 105 and 106 A.D., Traianus built here the Adamclisi Tropaeum Traiani monument in 109 A.D.

- Aegyssus Fortress
  The fortress is situated on Monument Hill in the east of Tulcea. Greek and Getic ceramics (warehouse of amphorae) were found in the archaeological site, dating the building of the city at the end of the 4th century B.C. and the beginning of the 3rd century B.C. After 12-13 years battles, the city was conquered by the Romans. In the 11th century the city is almost entirely destroyed, rebuilding strated at the foot of Hora (now Hill Monument), it was inhabited throughout the entire Ottoman rule.

- Museum of Archaeology of Constanta
  Constanta Museum of Archaeology presents the most outstanding values of material and spiritual culture of ancient Tomis and numerous other findings in Dobrogea. In the halls of the museum remarkable pieces of the Gumelnita and Hamangia Neolithic cultures can be seen, many agricultural items from the slave-owning period, Greek and Roman amphorae, coins, items used in trade.

- Roman wall enclosure
  The ancient city was located on the peninsular part, 15-30m high above sea level, where is protected from surprise attacks by sea. To have a better protection, both in the north and the north-west, the Romans built in the third century a strong defense wall. An important portion of the wall was unveiled with a round-shaped tower defense (Butchers’ Tower).

- Museum of History and Archaeology from Tulcea
- Museum of Art from Tulcea
- Museum of Ethnography and Folk Art
- Natural Science Museum “Danube Delta”
- The Great Mosque of Constanta
- The Church with Clock from Tulcea
- Constanta Aquarium
- Constanta Casino
- Constanta Aquarium
- Constanta Planetarium
- Genovese Lighthouse

Regarding the accessibility to our country, Romania’s transport system, comprising civil aviation, railways, highways and water transport is not the most advanced one.

According to statistics published on the website of the Ministry of Transport, in 2010 our country had 332 km highways, 3.4% more than in 2009 and 18.1% more than in 2008 and 6188 km of European roads, 0.12% more than in 2009 and 1.76% more than in 2008.

Air transportation in Romania takes place between major cities. Passenger traffic is small compared to other European countries, namely 10.13 million passengers in 2010, of which 14.5% in domestic services (1,476,000 passengers) and 85.5% in international flights (8,652,000 passengers). According to Airports Association in Romania, there are 15 international airports in our country.

In Dobrogea region, access by air can be made through the international airport "Delta Dunarii" in Tulcea and the international airport "Mihail Kogalniceanu" in Constanta.

Regarding the railway service, the number of passengers traveling by train was of 64.3 million in 2010, down 8.6% from 2009 and down 17.8% from 2008. Of these, passengers that travel inside the country cover a share of 99.3%. For international transport two stations are available: Tulcea and Constanta.

The transport in Romania is a weakness for the Romanian tourism, the lack of national roads and highways and lack of sufficient air routes between Romania and Asia can be an impediment to facilitate access of foreign tourists in Dobrogea.
There are travel agencies in all the important cities of Romania able to provide a complete array of tourist services, including:
- transportation, sight-seeing, lodging, shopping, entertainment and tourist guides;
- handling entry, exit and visa procedures with the authorization of prospective tourists;
- booking air, boat, and train tickets, and providing luggage service for tourists.

According to the list of licensed travel agencies published on the official website of the Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism, today there are 3,306 travel agencies, of which 214 agencies in Constanta county and 29 in Tulcea county.

Since 2007 Romania has experienced a steady decline in the number of arrivals of foreign tourists until 2009, when it reached 1.3 million people, to increase in 2010 by 5.5%. (table no 2)

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
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<td>50091</td>
<td>15888</td>
<td>127559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>47720</td>
<td>14208</td>
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Source: (Data published on National Institute of Statistics site, https://statistici.insse.ro/shop)

Regarding the international tourist arrivals in Constanta and Tulcea counties, you can see a slight increase in 2000, and a decrease during 2007 - 2010. (Figure no. 1)

![Fig. 1: Arrivals in Constanta and Tulcea counties during 2006 – 2010](image)

Year 2010 experiences, compared with 2007, a significant decrease in the number of international tourist arrivals: 42.7 percentage points for Constanta county and 30.5 percentage points for Tulcea county. These statistics reinforce once again the importance of joining a project as important as the "Silk Road" and thereby, the recovery of tourism in an area of great cultural importance like Dobrogea region.

5. How to promote Dobrogea region as part of the „Silk Road” on the Japanese travel market
Japan is, according to the WTO/UNESCO/APTEC Silk Road Travel Forum from 21 February 1998, Kyoto, one of the major tourist generating countries in the world. Also, it is the main source market that generates large number of tourists to the Silk Road countries.

According to the Global Youth Bureau of Japan, Japanese people love to go abroad and experience new adventures in foreign lands.

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the Asia-Pacific Tourism Exchange Center (APTEC), which extend active support to the WTO Regional Support Office in Osaka, have been working together since 1998 to penetrate the Japanese market for the benefit of the Silk Road countries. The Forum aimed to increase awareness of the Silk Road in Japan and to establish long-lasting and co-operative relations with the Japanese tour operators and the Silk Road countries.

In promoting Romania, but mostly Dobrogea region as a must-see tourist destination of the Silk Road to the Japanese travelers, we must think of the proper ways to inform them about our tourist product, using the most efficient channels.

The first logical step is to take action toward including Romania in the Silk Road countries. This should be an initiative of the Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism that should see the great advantages this project can have for the Romanian economy, and most of all, for Romanian tourism. Then, they should put together an investment plan for a more detailed research into the history of Dobrogea region. The aim of this research will be to find good arguments and solid proof that can support our theory that Dobrogea was a part of the Silk Road.

Moreover, The Ministry has to open a dialogue with UNWTO on this matter, to learn more about the ways our country can express the interest in joining the Silk Road countries.

We should also be active and manifest our desire of participating in events organized by UNWTO, like the EHL strategy Challenge from 2012, coordinated by UNWTO and Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne (EHL) for the Silk Road. The EHL Strategy Challenge aim is to produce the outline for a 5-10 year strategic plan on how each country can best position itself within the Silk Road. The strategies will focus on the areas of marketing/promotion and capacity building/destination management.

Once Romania is on the list of Silk Road countries, it can benefit from UNWTO support in promoting the Dobrogea region. It can also benefit from help on assisting the Government in developing our Silk Road tourism products.

Regarding the Japanese tourists, the fundamental issues regarding Silk Road destinations, presented by the International Tourism Development of Japan, are:

- safety of the tourist;
- proper tour guides at the destination;
- good variety of local cuisine;
- comfortable accommodation;
- a wide selection of good quality souvenirs.

In conclusion, to make sure all the necessities of Japanese tourists are covered, we should provide safe tours, with good Japanese-speaking guides and detailed brochures and guidebooks available both in Japanese and English. We should also make sure to offer them the best variety of local cuisine, with detailed information about every course, comfortable accommodation and also allow time for taking the tourists to souvenirs shops.

For the Japanese, the main obstacles obstrcting overseas travel regard food, language and safety. Once removed these obstacles, Romania can become an accessible country for them.

We should also consider improving traffic signs, providing more frequent and cleaner bathroom facilities on the roadside service area, refreshment and shopping facilities. It is also important to upgrade the service level of tourism employees. Quality and attractive souvenirs must be available for purchase, as well as
diversified tourist attractions using the local art. Taking into consideration the fact that museums can be a focal point of the tour, they must be renovated at least by improving the content of the expositions, the lighting within and descriptions of the exhibits should be in more international languages.

Our main target market segment for promoting Dobrogea region should be senior citizens from Japan for two good reasons:

Firstly, they are the ones that have more time and more money to spend. The Japanese people live long lives and retired people enjoy good health and benefit from a pension system as well as from a retirement fee from their companies.

Secondly they have more depth of knowledge and history. Although young travelers make a very strong sector of the Japanese outbound market, the senior citizen outbound market should find Silk Road tourism more appealing. Silk Road is of great historical importance because it was the way in which two great civilizations, Chinese and Roman, pursued their cultural, economic and political exchanges on an international scale with an enormous effect on those regions in between.

A particular aspect that we have to take into account when promoting our Silk Road product is the fact that Japan is not an easy market to promote in. It takes a longer time to make productive, long-lasting contacts, but once created, they are for the long run. So when we decide to implement such a project of attracting Japanese tourists we have to make sure it can be sustained for long periods of time.

Once Romania is declared a part of the Silk Road, it can be included in the „Experience the Silk Road” promotional clip. It can also participate together with UNWTO in the exclusive Silk Road stands in all major international fairs (ITB Berlin, WTM London, FITUR Madrid) and use this opportunity to promote all the beautiful places Romania has to offer.

6. Conclusions

The "Silk Road" international program wants to ensure through its objectives a seamless travel experience that stimulates investment in the area, creating mutual benefits that will improve cultural and environmental management, as a vehicle for promoting peace and intercultural cooperation.

Continuous trading ties with the Far East took place in both directions leaving its footprint both on material and technical development and also on the religious and cultural evolution.

Although the nations participating thousands of years ago in the Silk Road came out from the crucible of history in another form and composition, traces of their historical connections are present throughout the entire route, especially in the south, as the most recent. Regarding the northern part of the Silk Road we have to seek and find new evidence. The “Silk Road” program launched by the World Tourism Organization is only a beginning in trying to find out what united us and can represent a basis for further development of cultural tourism in Romania.

In this sense, Dobrogea, ah ancient land coveted by all the great empires because of its strategic position, where it crosses both land and sea trade routes, has much to offer and lacks only the highlight spot. Due to its geographical position and impressive history, Dobrogea is among the richest regions in Romania in terms of number of archaeological sites. Its two counties, Constanta and Tulcea, have many tourism resources of great international importance value.

Following the analysis of these important tourist attractions can conclude that the Dobrogea region, and through it, Romania, can be of great value for an international tourism product such as the "Silk Road". Even though Romania does not have the most performing domestic and international transportation system, we believe that its inclusion among the Silk Road countries could represent an important step for both the “Silk Road” tourism product and for the recovery of the Romanian tourism.
7. References


[4] „Experience the Silk Road” promotional clip, Available at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4eCXaCowsCM


[10] OCDE, 2009, The Impact of Culture on Tourism


Appendix 1

Map 1: Dacia’s map – the Persian Empire during Darius I
Map 2: Dacia’s map – the economic map of the Roman Empire in the 2nd century A.D.

Map 3: Dacia’s map – the economic centres and the commercial roads in the Europe of the 6th century

Map 4: Dacia's map – During the Byzantine Empire