

NEW ROMANIAN GOVERNMENT FORGETS TO APPOINT MINISTER FOR TOURISM



It might have been a honest mistake, but also a sign that the freshly formed Romanian government, led by former EU commissioner Dacian Cioloș, has no interest in the country's tourist industry. Whichever the case, the fact remains: none of the departments of the new government seem to be responsible for tourism. Until not long ago tourism was overseen by the Ministry of Economy of the country, but now the ministry has a new name – and, without a doubt, a new "job description" – without any mention of tourism in it.

Romania is a country worth visiting for its numerous natural wonders. It has vast mountains riddled with caves and mines, covered in lush green vegetation as far as you can see. Its valleys often hide tarns with water as clear as it can possibly be, and springs of mineral water that are famous throughout Europe. The Danube Delta, the second largest river delta in Europe, is also a well known [Romanian tourism](#) destination, and so is its Black Sea shoreline. But, apparently, it is not regarded as an industry with a huge potential – its contribution to the country's GDP was an estimated 5.4% in 2014.

Romania is a gateway between the Balkans and Europe. Its neighbours include Bulgaria and Serbia to the South, Ukraine and Moldova to the North and North–East, and Hungary to the West. It combines the traditions and hospitality of Eastern Europe with the liberal laws of the European Union. You can find traditional foods in local restaurants and traditional patterns on markets. Romania has the potential to become a regional hub not just for transportation, but also for tourism and leisure. It has a vast potential – thermal springs, mineral waters, fauna – which is, unfortunately, inadequately utilized by both the government and the local businessmen.

2015 was a great year for the Romanian tourist industry, with a series of legal changes implemented in its favor. The list includes the introduction of vacation vouchers for business owners to offer their employees, the reduction of VAT on catering services to 9% (instead of the previous 24%). The Federation of Romanian Tourist Businesses is concerned about tourism not being included in the name of any Romanian ministries – they fear that this represents the new government's lack of interest in this industry.

"We consider that this industry deserves, if not an independent ministry of its own, but at least to be included in the names of an existing ministry, just like it was until today," a statement from the Federation reads. The organization is worried that tourism might lose its momentum gained with all the positive developments this year, which they consider the best one for the tourism industry in the country's recent history.

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