

A project for promoting cycling and cycling tours through the development and the exploitation of the abandoned railway track and facilities found in the Arieşului Valley

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Abstract

Due to the increase in traffic, the safe geographical space offered for cycling has now decreased, and also the interest for cycling diminished as well. In the Eastern countries cycling has been sustained and promoted and the infrastructure has been improved to support it. In Romania the facilities are underdeveloped.

The study area is located in the Apuseni Mountains, the Occidental Carpathians, in the counties of Cluj and Alba, on the side of the Aries River. The Aries River Valley is a crossroads of the national road DN75, the Aries River and the small railway between Turda and Abrud. The increase of traffic has led to a decrease in railway profits and finally to railway closure.

This study is trying to promote cycling and cycle tours in Arieşului Valley, by constructing a cycle route on the abandoned railway track between Turda and Abrud.

The conversion of the railway to a cycling route used for cycling and cycle tourism is facilitated by: the certainty that the land is owned by the state, the route is consolidated and lies above inundation limits and the slope is light.

Besides the big impact that this cycle route will have on the health of people of all ages that will use it, it will also attract new investments, create new work places, and develop tourism even further in this beautiful tourist area.

To support cycling tourism, we can use as arguments: the mountain roads that facilitate bike access to tourist attractions in the Apuseni Mountains, the varied and rich natural resources, and the relief that imposes itself through the beauty of its scenery.

The paper concludes that developing the *Aries Valley cycling tourism system* is opportune and that the model, once implemented, could be extended in other mountain areas in Romania, areas that have similar infrastructures which could become a bicycle route heaven.

Keywords: cycling tours, strategy, health, sight-seeing, cycle route.