

## Financial crisis boosts leisure tourism in Bucharest

Written by Administrator

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*The financial crisis has attracted not only the decline of the occupancy rates in the hotels, but also development opportunities for the leisure tourism, weakly represented in Bucharest. If the number of business trips has gone down significantly this year, the leisure segment proved more dynamic than the business segment, in the case of some hotels and has managed to reduce the losses registered on the accommodation. The leisure tourism was boosted, in the case of NH Hoteles Romania, not through rate cuts, but through some tourism packages that include, besides the hotel services, information and the facilitation of access to the cultural objectives and clubs in Bucharest, the general director of NH Hoteles Romania, Elena Dumitrescu, stated for Bucharest Herald.*

**BH: What was the evolution of the demand in the NH Hoteles Bucharest and NH Hoteles Timisoara, during the financial crisis?**

**Dna Elena Dumitrescu:** Our hotels focus mainly on the business segment, but the leisure segment also has an important share. During the crisis the customer structure has generally maintained constant, with changes related to the substitution of some corporate customers from more affected business areas, such as real estate and construction, with clients from more stable sectors, like food industry and light industry. The leisure segment, although it has a lower share in the revenues proved more dynamic this year, due to the tourism packages that integrate our hotel services with complementary tourism attractions. These are packages created to boost the sales.

**BH: What do these packages include?**

**Elena Dumitrescu:** These are two promotional packages. The “Bucharest Nightlife Experience” package includes accommodation, discounts and information about the schedules of the most important night clubs in Bucharest, with the events organized in these clubs, based on the idea that the night life is intense in Bucharest. This is a package we promote especially at weekends and during the low season. Another package, “Bucharest History and Culture is focused on the cultural side of the Capital. We are offering to the customers who chose this package a blotter with information about the cultural objectives in Bucharest and a free ticket to the National History Museum. Both packages include 10 per cent discount to the F&B products of the hotel.

**BH: Bucharest is mainly a business destination. What are, in your perspective, the advantages that should be exploited to develop the leisure tourism segment as well?**

**Elena Dumitrescu:** Bucharest offers many possibilities for the development of the leisure tourism. The Historical Center under rehabilitation is like an unpolished diamond, which, when is ready, will attract many Romanian and foreign tourists. The Parliament Palace is a unique building in the world, that surprises through size and which many foreign tourists want to visit. The buildings raised during the interwar period and the “brancovenesc” architectural style, unique in Europe, are also remarkable.

**BH: What are the results in terms of occupancy degree and revenues of NH Hoteles Romania this year, against 2008?**

**Elena Dumitrescu :** Both the financial crisis and the entrance of some new players on the market, have lead to a decline of the occupancy degree and of the revenues of our hotels. But

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there were also positive effects, because we are witnessing a quality increase of the hotel services, at the market level. Those players who proved to be professionals and were able to manage this situation became remarkable. Yet if we look at the results of September, compared with the previous months of 2009, we notice some signs of recovery on the market. On the other hand, against September 2008, the results were lower. We are expecting the slight ascendent trend to continue in November as well.

### **BH: What were the most affected hotels by the crisis and how did the players on the marker react to the negative results?**

**Elena Dumitrescu:** There were two distinct phenomenon on the market, following the financial crisis. On the one hand many five star hotels cut the rack rates, which determined the four star hotels to act similar, due to the difference in the services and facilities provided. On the other hand there were individual four star hotels, which, under the pressure of the demand decline on the market, decided to reduce the tarriffs to increase the occupancy degree. The clients speculated this phenomenon to negotiate the prices. These tarriff differences were present in the case of the three star hotels as well. As far as we are concerned, we are focusing on creating more complex offers, that include integrated services, closer to the budgets of our customers.

### **BH: How has the F&B segment contributed to the consolidation of NH Hoteles' position on the Romanian market?**

**Elena Dumitrescu:** Within the hotels in Bucharest and in Timisoara we have two restaurants with capacities of 45 and 70 seats, in which we offer healthy dishes and we try to introduce some Spanish specialities from the Spanish cuisine as well. Most of our foreign customers in Bucharest are Spanish and this is a good way to attract them and turn them into faithful clients.

### **BH: What kind of events are you preparing for the winter holidays?**

**Elena Dumitrescu :** Like in the previous years, we are organizing Christmas parties for companies and the offers this year will especially take into account the limited budgets allotted for such events. We will also organize a special party for our business partners.

### ***NH Hoteles Chain :***

NH Hoteles ([www.nh-hotels.com](http://www.nh-hotels.com)) is the third hotel group in terms of size of the business hotels category in Europe, owing at present 349 hotels with a total of 52,676 rooms in 22 countries in Europe, Latin America and Africa. The company will add soon another 51 units, reaching 400 hotels in the world, after the signing of the agreement with Hesperia group, in Zaragosa, on 14 September 2009. Under development there are another 54 new NH Hoteles projects, which will bring over 8,000 rooms on the market.

**Elena Dumitrescu:** She has been the general director of NH Hoteles Romania since 2005. She has a 10 years experience in top management, in the hotel industry. She has both local and international experience in the area. "A good manager should be very well trained, stress

resistent, should have excellent communication skills and put passion in his or her work.” says the general director of NH Hoteles Romania.

### **Criza financiara a impulsinat turismul de leisure in Bucuresti**

***Criza financiara a atras nu doar declinul gradului de ocupare in hoteluri, ci si oportunitati de dezvoltare pentru turismul de leisure, slab reprezentat in Bucuresti. Daca numarul calatoriilor de afaceri s-a redus semnificativ anul acesta, segmentul de leisure s-a dovedit mai dinamic decat segmentul de business in cazul anumitor hoteluri si a reusit sa reduca din pierderile inregistrate pe partea de cazare. Turismul de leisure a fost impulsinat, in cazul NH Hoteles Romania, nu prin reducerea tarifelor, ci prin crearea unor pachete turistice care includ, pe langa serviciile hoteliere, informatii si facilitarea accesului catre obiectivele culturale si cluburile din Bucuresti, a declarat pentru Bucharest Herald Elena Dumitrescu, directorul general al NH Hoteles Romania.***

**BH: Care a fost evolutia cererii in hotelurile NH din Bucuresti si din Timisoara, in perioada crizei financiare?**

**Dna Elena Dumitrescu:** Hotelurile noastre sunt concentrate in principal pe segmentul business, insa o pondere importanta o are si segmentul leisure. In conditiile crizei, structura clientelei se mentine in linii generale constanta, modificarile avand loc numai in sensul substituirii unor clienti corporate din domenii mai puternic afectate (real estate si constructii) cu clienti din domenii mai stabile (industria usoara si alimentara). Segmentul leisure, desi are o pondere mai mica in venituri s-a dovedit mai dinamic anul acesta, datorita pachetelor turistice care integreaza serviciile noastre hoteliere cu atractii turistice complementare. Acestea sunt niste pachete create special pentru a impulsiona vanzarile.

**BH: Ce includ aceste pachete?**

**Elena Dumitrescu:** Este vorba despre doua pachete promotionale. Pachetul “Bucharest Nightlife Experience” include cazare, discounturi si informatii despre programele celor mai importante cluburi de noapte din Bucuresti, cu evenimentele care se organizeaza la aceste cluburi, pornind de la ideea ca viata de noapte este intensa in Bucuresti. Este un pachet pe care il promovam in special in weekend si in perioada de low season. Un alt pachet, “Bucharest History and Culture” este concentrat pe latura culturala a Capitalei. Clientilor care au optat pentru acest pachet le oferim la check in o mapa cu informatii despre obiectivele culturale din Bucuresti si un bilet gratuit la Muzeul National de Istorie. Ambele pachete includ reduceri de 10 la suta la produsele F&B ale hotelului.

**BH: Bucurestiul este preponderant o destinatie de business. Care sunt, in perspectiva dumneavoastra, avantajele care ar trebui exploatare pentru a dezvolta si latura de turism de leisure?**

**Elena Dumitrescu:** Bucurestiul ofera multe posibilitati pentru dezvoltarea turismului de leisure. Centrul Istoric, aflat in proces de renovare, este un diamant neslefuit, care in momentul in care va fi gata va atrage foarte multi turisti romani si straini. Palatul Parlamentului este o cladire unica in lume, care surprinde prin dimensiuni si pe care multi turisti straini vor sa o viziteze.

Remarcabile sunt si cladirile construite in perioada interbelica si stilul arhitectonic brancovenesc, unic in Europa.

### **BH: Care sunt rezultatele in ceea ce priveste gradul de ocupare si veniturile NH Hoteles Romania, comparativ cu 2008?**

**Elena Dumitrescu :** Atat criza financiara cat si aparitia unor jucatori noi pe piata, au condus la o scadere a gradului de ocupare si a veniturilor hotelurilor noastre. Au existat insa si aspecte pozitive, pentru ca asistam la o crestere a calitatii serviciilor hoteliere la nivelul pietei. S-au remarcat in piata acei jucatori care au dat dovada de profesionalism si au stiut sa gestioneze aceasta situatie. Cu toate acestea, daca privim rezultatele lunii septembrie, comparativ cu alte luni ale anului 2009, observam cateva semne de revenire a pietei. Pe de alta parte, comparativ cu septembrie 2008, rezultatele au fost mai slabe. Ne asteptam la o continuare a trendului usor ascendent in luna noiembrie.

### **BH: Care au fost hotelurile cele mai afectate de criza financiara si cum au reactionat jucatorii din piata la rezultatele negative?**

**Elena Dumitrescu:** In piata s-au manifestat 2 fenomene distincte, ca urmare a crizei financiare. Pe de o parte, multe hoteluri de 5 stele au actionat prin scaderea tarifelor, ceea ce a determinat hotelurile de 4 stele sa actioneze similar, prin prisma diferentelor de servicii si facilitati oferite. Pe de alta parte, au existat hoteluri individuale de 4 stele care, sub impulsul reducerii cererii de pe piata, au decis reducerea tarifelor pentru cresterea gradului de ocupare. Clientii au speculat aceste fenomene in scopul negocierii tarifelelor. Aceste decalaje de tarife au avut loc si in cazul hotelurilor de trei stele. In ceea ce ne priveste, noi ne concentram pe crearea unor oferte mai complexe, care includ servicii integrate si mai apropiate de bugetele clientilor nostri.

### **BH: Cum poate contribui segmentul F&B la consolidarea pozitiei NH Hoteles pe piata din Romania?**

**Elena Dumitrescu:** In cadrul hotelurilor din Bucuresti si din Timisoara avem doua restaurante cu capacitati de 45 si respectiv 70 de locuri, in care oferim produse culinare sanatoase si incercam sa introducem cateva specialitati din bucataria spaniola. Majoritatea clientilor nostri straini din Bucuresti sunt spanioli si este o metoda buna de a-i atrage si a-i fideliza.

### **BH: Ce evenimente pregatiti pentru sarbatorile de iarna?**

**Elena Dumitrescu :** Ca si in anii anteriori, organizam petreceri de Craciun pentru companii, iar ofertele pe acest segment vor tine cont anul acesta, in mod special, de bugetele limitate alocate pentru astfel de evenimente. Vom organiza si o petrecere speciala dedicata partenerilor nostri de afaceri.

**Lantul NH Hoteles :**

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NH Hoteles ([www.nh-hotels.com](http://www.nh-hotels.com)) este al treilea grup hotelier ca marime din categoria hotelurilor de afaceri din Europa, detinand in prezent 349 hoteluri cu un total de 52.676 camere in 22 de tari din Europa, America Latina si Africa. Prin semnarea acordului cu grupul Hesperia care a avut loc in Zaragosa, la data de 14 Septembrie 2009, compania va adauga in curand alte 51 de unitati, totalizand astfel 400 de hoteluri. In faza de dezvoltare se afla alte 54 de noi proiecte NH la nivel mondial, care vor adauga pe piata peste 8000 de camere.

***Elena Dumitrescu:*** Ocupa pozitia de director general NH Hoteles Romania din anul 2005. Are o experienta de 10 ani in top management, in industria hoteliera. Cumuleaza atat experienta locala cat si internationala in domeniu. "Un bun manager trebuie sa fie foarte bine pregatit, rezistent la stres, sa aiba abilitati de comunicare excelente si sa puna pasiune in munca pe care o face." spune directorul general al NH Hoteles Romania.