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**“Stimulating cross-border cooperation through mutual strategic planning of  
cultural and historic tourism development”**  
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**STRATEGY**  
**STIMULATING CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION THROUGH**  
**MUTUAL STRATEGIC PLANNING OF CULTURAL AND**  
**HISTORIC TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**  
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**Sveti Nikole - Kyustendil**

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## I. Introduction

The strategy is worked out in co-operation with local partners from the nine municipalities in Kyustendil district (Bobovdol, Boboshevo, Dupnitsa, Kocherinovo, Kyustendil, Nevestino, Rila, Sapareva banya and Treklyano) as well as the municipalities of Kriva Palanka, Rankovitse, Kratovo, Probistip, Vinitsa, Delchevo, Kochani, Sveti Nikole and Berovo in Macedonia, part of the cross border region.

The necessity of its working out is determined by:

- The possibilities for implementing into practice the concept for “territorial cohesion” of European Union, the accession of Bulgaria to which was on 01.01.2007, and Macedonia is a candidate for full-right member.
- The existing social and economic problems in the cross border region and insufficient degree of its tourist potential mobilization and utilization.
- Demand for ensuring of conditions for investments’ invitation and increasing of employment in sector and branches, based on local resources, including in the tourist sector.
- The need for solving the common problems from both sides of the border region through expanding and deepening the cross border co-operation between both countries.

The strategy implementation will allow for new cross border co-operation opportunities to be found, for economic growth, unemployment decrease and social prosperity in the region. The studies for condition and potential for development of tourism, done within the project execution course, bring to more distinct outlining of existing problems and prospectives in the region, which makes it possible the priorities, strategic objectives and specific measures and activities’ system to be marked, objectiveing more efficient utilization of opportunities for the development of alternative, or the so called “mild” forms of tourism in the cross border region.

Tourism in particular is one of the sources of economic growth for a number of settlements and regions in Bulgaria and Macedonia, including in the region’s boundaries. Development of tourism benefits not only more effective protection of cultural and historical heritage and natural advantages, but leads to new jobs creation, provides a market for goods and services, offered by local companies, ensures additional tax incomes, increases the level of business activity. The understanding of these and other benefits from tourism development stimulates different civil society structures as business, NGOs, social partners, state and local authorities to search for the place of these settlements and municipalities at the tourist market, both within the limits of the corresponding country and outside them.

Market relations transformation in the last 10-15 years brought to some changes in the conditions for administrative-territorial units’ functioning in both countries, to relative expansion of their independence and to increase of responsibilities for the results from their activity. Sources for increased complexity in their management are the external environment’s indefiniteness, competition increase, lack of financial resources etc. The intensifying global economic crisis in the second half of 2008 is expected to

influence both countries, as the exact parameters of its consequences have been not clear yet. Under such circumstances, the concentration of efforts on working out programs for development of tourism with traditional approach and methods of operating management, and therefore short-term planning is not enough. As the experience of most-well developed countries in the sphere of tourism shows, in times of strong competition between tourist markets, the role of strategic planning in the tourist sector increases.

It is the strategic planning, which allows the creation of conditions for perspective development of tourism, since it helps for taking concrete decisions, oriented to long-term objectives and turns into main instrument for consolidation of administration and society efforts for solving the existing problems.

At the present moment, the strategic planning for development of tourism in Bulgaria and Macedonia find more and more broad practical application – strategic documents have been prepared and are in a process of working out at different territorial levels (national, regional/district, municipal, settlement). They have been worked out in accordance with the norms and regulations for development of tourist sector in both countries. For Bulgaria these are the National strategy for development of tourism (2006)<sup>1</sup>, branch strategies for development of tourism (eco tourism and cultural tourism), Strategy for development of stable tourism<sup>2</sup> (2008), strategic documents for regional and local development (plans for development of the six planning regions, district strategies and municipal plans for development) etc. For Macedonia it is mainly the National strategy for development of tourism (2008-2012), worked out with UNDP assistance and in co-operation with the World tourist organization (UNWTO), which outlines the main strategic directions for the sector's development<sup>3</sup>. During the present strategy working out, the above mentioned documents' basic ideas were taken into consideration. At the same time, however, it shall be considered, that working with this documents shows that in both countries there are lots of unsolved problems, of terminology, theoretical-methodological, legal, economic, social-psychological and organizational nature. Different aspects of strategic planning for development of tourism and the existing approaches are subjected to broad discussions in specialized literature, but lots of issues have not been clarified yet. This fact frequently provokes discussions and sometimes ambiguous interpretations of terminology concepts and definitions in tourist sector. Still insufficient practical experience in strategic planning of tourism makes the researches in this field of knowledge and practice more up-to date. That is why within the scope of work under the present strategy it was important the possible approaches to strategic planning to be specified, the accumulated experience from different programs and projects in the cross border region to be estimated,

<sup>1</sup> See. State Tourist Agency and PHARE program – “Strategy for development of Bulgarian tourism for the period 2006-2009: Strategy for product development, Marketing strategy, Quality strategy, Institution strategy” vol 1/3, Strategic plan for development of Bulgarian tourism (Summary) <sup>2</sup> Still at the stage of project document <sup>3</sup> PROJECT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF FYR MACEDONIA: *PREPARATION OF THE NATIONAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2008-2012*

the approaches in working out and substantiating the priorities and strategic objectives for development of tourism in the region to be defined.

The methodological working scheme for the elaboration of the strategic document is based on standard conceptual framework of strategic planning and includes the following main stages and activities:

- collecting of the necessary source information
- analysis of the information
- definition of strategic framework, vision, priorities and strategic targets of economic development and action plan working out

The analysis of gathered experience in strategic planning for development of tourism provides the grounds for outlining three main approaches:

**The first approach** infers in the fact that regional and local policy in some economic sectors, including in tourism very often is not implemented individually, but integrated in other economic sectors' policy. Districts, municipalities and some towns include plans/programs for development of tourism as part of their strategies and plans for regional and local development. There are several reasons for that:

- First, the tourist organizations are irrevocable part of the total economic and social system of territorial units. The crediting condition, level of "neighbouring" (related to tourism) economic branches, economic activities fro service sphere etc have a powerful influence on tourism.
- Second, tourist sector's development needs concentration of considerable financing and in most of the cases supposes the availability of significant number of participants both at the stage of forming the investment portfolio, construction and reconstruction of tourist equipment and facilities and infrastructure and at the stage of concrete tourist organization functioning.
- Third, as practice shows, the highest results for invested capital returns are achieved upon generation of competitive complex tourist product, which imposes the availability of well developed accompanying infrastructure and specialization at all stages of tourist services' creation and realization.

**The second approach** is based on the fact that for territories, characterized by high tourist attractiveness and developed tourist sector, separate strategies for development of tourism are worked out. This approach is suitable in cases, where it is expected that development of tourism will assist the dynamic and balanced development of administrative and territorial units, since the strategy (or plan) is directed towards the main issue (in this case development of tourist sector only) for increasing the competitiveness a given territory.

**The third approach** renders the circumstance that very often the sights, attractive for tourist lie at the boundary or occupy more than one administrative and territorial unit, which requires their tight interaction and co-operation. This co-operation may foresee the usage of common infrastructure (water supply, sewage, roads, communications etc.). The development of tourism under this approach presupposes coordinated

activities of local authority with the state authorities at district, regional and national level. This is especially valid for municipalities with limited financial possibilities. Strengthening of such co-operation considerably benefits the development of tourism, since the common effect will be larger, compared to the one if each municipality positions separately. In this sense a program for co-operation should include:

- Creating and offering of attractive image for tourists and tourist business of all municipalities, included in the region with common advertising and information activity;
- Development of infrastructure and tourist facilities;
- Creating and offering of common tourist product;
- Creating of conditions for tourist development of different settlement;
- Upgrading the tourist management structure;
- Personnel training;
- Informational and scientific and methodological provision of tourist organization activities.

During the elaboration of the present strategic document, an assessment of tourist potential has been done first (natural and anthropogenic resources, tourist equipment and facilities, tourist organizations, human resources etc), on the basis of which the strategic tourist localizations (zones and sites) in the cross border region have been identified in territorial cross section. On the other hand, tourist market situation is analyzed (tourist demand and tourist flows, market capacity) and strategic markets of tourist products and services in accordance with their importance for the development of tourism in the region have been identified. The potential consumers of tourist services, offered at a given tourist localization may be studied through the analysis of tourist flows, and considering the purpose of tourist visits it may be found where the tourist flows are generated, what is the tourist localization's accessibility and attractiveness; strategic segments of tourist market may be defined, as well as its capacity. The scope of tourist products and services in every important tourist localization in the cross border region is determined on this basis. Furthermore, based on these analytical and evaluation procedures, the strategy for development of tourism and action plan have been worked out.

Table

Tourist potential assessment	Analysis of tourist flows
Identification of strategic tourist zones and sites	Tourist market capacity determination
Defining of tourist products and services	Assessment of existing tourist markets strategic importance
Strategic planning of development of tourism	Defining of concrete measures and activities (Action plan)

**Analytical and evaluation procedures for working out the strategy for development of tourism in the cross border region**

An important peculiarity of the worked Strategy is that it is opened for amendments and corrections, depending on the variable conditions of environment for its implementation. It was presumed until recently in the regional development of strategic planning, that each strategy shall be compulsory implemented, without taking under

consideration the variable character of the conditions for its realization. New understanding of regional development strategic planning is based on the contemporary world dynamics – future is to high extent unpredictable, there are not absolutely true forecasts, long-term targets shall be “movable”, depending on the external conditions. That is why the development of “universal” strategies, “fitting” to any condition is not possible to be developed and even less possible to be compulsory and totally implemented. the contemporary understanding is that strategy for development shall be “opened” for corrections and amendments in accordance with the forthcoming changes in environment conditions. This means, that the secret of successful strategy is not the correct forecast of the future, but the creation of mechanism for activating the economic development even under the conditions of unpredictable future. That is why, the worked Strategy gives only the general direction for development of tourism in the cross border region in long-term planning.

Strategic planning, however is just one of the components of strategic management. The strategic management cycle consists of strategic planning within which the vision, objectives and priorities are defined, SWOT analysis<sup>4</sup> elaboration, working out the strategy and the ways of its implementation (concrete measures and activities) and strategic control. (1-SWOT, English term for. – strength, weakness, opportunities and threads). After the strategy is worked out and accepted, it is implemented and the obtained results are controlled, after that the strategic planning cycle starts again. Single implementation of strategic planning cycle is not enough; even the most adequate strategy to be achieved, due to this fact the strategic planning cycle of the local economic development is an open and continuous process. That is why strategies are not created to be strictly followed, but to serve as an instrument for successful management, adapting the capacities for development of tourism to the constantly changing environment conditions.

<sup>4</sup>SWOT, in English. – сила (strength), слабость (weakness), възможности (opportunities) и заплахи (threats)

Another important special feature of the worked Strategy for the cross border region’s economic development is that it can not be considered isolated from the other administrative, economic and social mechanisms and instruments for influence on the total development of cross border region and its municipalities by the state and local authorities (district management in the town of Kyustendil and municipal administrations from both sides of the border). In this regard, the priorities, targets, measures and projects incorporated in the Strategy are to high extent linked to the basic stipulations, formulated in other documents with strategic character, referring to the cross border region development (district strategy for regional development of Kyustendil district, plans and strategies for development at both sides of the borderline at municipal level, as well as other plans, programs and projects directly or indirectly affecting the territory of the cross border region). The present strategy as far as the contents is concerned, consists from essence (strategic) part and applications (analysis and maps). In the strategic part, on the basis of SWOT – analysis results, vision and strategic targets for development of tourism in the cross border region are formulated and action plan with concrete measures, activities and projects for obtaining the stipulated targets. Items, connected to organization, coordination

of activities and strategy implementation's monitoring and control system are reviewed in the strategic part. Basic factors for development of tourism, together with some important concepts from tourist field are clarified in the enclosed analyses, natural and anthropogenic resources, updated situation of tourist sector in the cross border region, tourist markets (tourist demand and supply), basic and specialized tourist infrastructure, ecologic conditions, advertisement, marketing, tourist products and services, tourist organizations, human resources and other important aspects for development of tourism. Information, generated with the help of Geographic information system (GIS) is used, both for visualizing and analysis of important features and peculiarities of municipal territories in the cross border region

## II. SWOT-analysis

### SWOT analysis of tourism in the cross border region

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>1. Favorable transport – geographic position of the region – relatively fast and fluent transport access from the main resource centers of tourist demands (the target markets) from the two capitals and the bigger cities in South-West Bulgaria and Macedonia (Sofia, Skopje, Pernik, Blagoevgrad, Kumanovo, Štip, etc.).</p> <p>2. Presence of various natural tourist resources for development of eco tourism, week-long relaxation trips, balneology and SPA tourism, winter sports, fishing and hunting tourism, speleo-tourism, extreme sports (rock climbing, rafting, paragliding), etc.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ well-built network of protected wild territories from different categories and with a different regime of protection, with considerable biological and landscape diversity;</li> <li>➤ remarkable rock phenomena (caves and abysses, picturesque gorges, glacial shapes of relief, etc.);</li> <li>➤ numerous natural and artificial water basins and rivers;</li> <li>➤ considerable share of forest territories with varied game in the hunting preserves.</li> </ul> <p>3. Rich cultural – historic heritage and well-organized cultural life, which favors the development of cultural – informative, rural, religious and other kinds of specialized tourism:</p>	<p>1. Major part of the cross border region serves mainly as a transit territory and a hinterland, which supports the tourist development of the advanced tourist destinations in both countries.</p> <p>2. Relative remoteness from the international airports in Sofia and in Skopje, restricted transport accessibility as a result of the bad condition of transport communications between settlements (especially during winter) and impeded access to public transport.</p> <p>3. Not enough developed urban environment and to a large extent, badly maintained basic infrastructure (roads, parking lots, communications, sewerage, poor water supply in some localities, public lighting, collecting of garbage and mainly in villages, cleaning the snow, internal and interstate transport, health attendance in the area of the most popular tourist sights, etc.).</p> <p>4. Presence of territory's disproportions in the available potential for development of tourism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ in the region the municipalities Kyustendil, Sapareva banya, Rila, Kriva Palanka, Kochani, Probishtip have the most significant potential to develop a competitive tourist branch, as in the other municipalities it is quite insignificant or is not adopted at all;</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ archaeological, historical and architectural-ethnographic places, churches and monasteries and museums (presence of unique cultural monuments such as the Rila monastery, the monastery of “St. Yoakim Osogovski” and many other).</li> <li>➤ preserved popular customs, traditions and crafts;</li> <li>➤ delicious local cuisine and wines from the region;</li> <li>➤ significant periodic activities and fests in the cultural calendar.</li> </ul> <p>4. Presence of various accommodation resources with different capacity and type:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ renovated hotels with improved standards of service;</li> <li>➤ small family hotels, authentic houses and villas with individual service;</li> <li>➤ holiday lodges, tourist and hunting rest-houses.</li> </ul> <p>5. There are new investments in the past few years for expansion and improvement of the existing facilities for tourism, which comply with the higher standards.</p> <p>6. Presence of tourist attractions and opportunities for entertainment.</p> <p>7. Satisfactory common condition of the environment in the cross border region:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Insufficient potential for development of tourism, interior periphery and bad infrastructure availability in some municipalities such as Treklyano, Bobov dol, Rankovitse, Vinitsa, etc., as long as they haven’t established support economical centers or the stress of the economical growth is on other business sectors.</li> </ul> <p>5. Considering capacity and quality, a huge part of equipment and facilities for development of tourism does not correspond to the contemporary demands for comfort of local and foreign visitors, inadequate running and managing of tourist sites and places for accommodation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ in some municipalities there is an outdated and badly maintained tourist infrastructure (labeling, indicative signs, entertainment and sport facilities, etc.);</li> <li>➤ remoteness of the places for accommodation from the resource regions with insufficient transport connection; lack of appropriate shelter places in most municipal centers;</li> <li>➤ problems with standardization and quality of the tourist service;</li> <li>➤ some owners don’t have enough motivation to improve the quality and the diversity of the tourist services they offer;</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ significant part of territories and sites, which are relevant to the ecologically threatened regions in both countries;</li> <li>➤ decrease of harmful emissions of substances which pollute the atmosphere in the past few years (excluding Bobovdol municipality) from industrial combustion and production processes;</li> <li>➤ Certain improvement in the quality characteristics of water in the water basins and in the river streams;</li> <li>➤ there is no data ascertaining worsening in the radiation condition of the region.</li> </ul> <p>8. Presence of highway and railway connections with the interior of the two countries.</p> <p>9. Relatively well-developed energetic infrastructure.</p> <p>10. Built up wastewater treatment plants in some municipalities and project readiness for commencing the construction of wastewater treatment plants in other municipalities.</p> <p>11. The regional and local authorities consider and apprehend the necessity of renovation of basic and tourist infrastructure.</p> <p>12. Tourism (mainly ecological, balneological, cultural and rural) is among the declared priorities in the strategic documents for regional and local development, which is supported by the positive attitude of the local communities (business representatives, non-governmental organizations, social partners and other community representatives).</p> <p>13. Active participation of the private sector in tourism and presence of organizations, devoted to the local tourist industry and to the policy in certain municipalities.</p>	<p>6. Personnel problems in managing the matter and in servicing the tourists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ lack of local experts, working in the field of tourism;</li> <li>➤ not enough prepared managers of the tourist sites;</li> <li>➤ as a whole, low quality of manpower in the tourist service;</li> <li>➤ inadequately used opportunities for professional qualification and training in tourism.</li> </ul> <p>7. Insufficient development and application of the contemporary information technologies, used in the field of tourism.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ lack of information data base about the tourist supply and demand in most municipalities of the region;</li> <li>➤ lack of accessible and purposeful program for information service of tourists and not well organized system for reservations.</li> </ul> <p>8. As a whole, the offered tourist product is undeveloped and with a low quality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ the abundant tourist potential is not used adequately, because of the absence of general tourist product for the region and the slight interest of the tour operator companies in these significant tourist sites;</li> <li>➤ Preservation, socializing and commercializing of cultural and historical heritage and natural resources are not provided in financial aspect by tourism;</li> </ul>
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14. Established contacts with tour operators and tour agencies.

15. As a whole, the cross border region is a “safe destination” with competitive prices.

16. Absence of language and cultural barriers for the fulfillment of common initiatives at both sides of the border.

- some of the most attractive tourist sites are not adapted to be visited by a large number of tourists;
- ☒bad interpretation of the cultural-historic and natural heritage;
- ☒scanty provision and bad organization of additional services and entertainments.

9. Insufficient activity for popularization of the tourist product:

- ☒the image of the region as an integral tourist destination that offers opportunities for alternative (“mild”) tourism has not been built yet (there is no “identified brand”);
- ☒☒the cross border region shall participate in the two national and in the international tourist markets by taking part in national tourist trade, by sending advertising materials to international tourist exhibitions, by direct marketing, etc., which generally presents the region;
- ☒insufficiently effective advertising and promotional campaigns.

10. Not enough developed interaction between the parties concerned with tourism in the region:

- absence of an integral strategy for development of tourism and vague or “not well” established image of tourism in the region as a unified destination (lack of adequate information);
- in most municipalities there is underdevelopment of the concomitant elements and services of the sectors that interact with tourism;
- spatial planning for using the territory of the region for the objectives of tourism;
- not well developed public-private partnerships;
- clumsy procedures and bureaucratic obstacles, which impede the normal functioning of the tourist activities and the cooperation between the parties;
- advanced partnership and cooperation between the tourist organizations and the authorities, however insufficient joint activities for stabilizing the achieved results;
- there is no initiation for conducting consultative councils for tourist development in some municipalities, the activity of the tourist organizations concerning the coordination between all interested parties is not effective enough, insufficient cooperation and unity of action between the non-governmental organizations, which are involved directly or indirectly in tourist development, etc.;

- . poor interaction and coordination between the municipalities for realization of common initiatives in the tourist sector;
- some municipalities don't have elaborated strategic documents for development of tourism and in particular for alternative tourism.

11. Insufficiently developed tourist market:

- in most municipalities it is relied mainly on the internal tourist market, which is generally low solvent; .
- not enough motivation in some businessmen for going out on the international tourist market by paid participation in different forums;
- . unwillingness of a large number of businessmen to take into consideration the market principles and the valid legislation;
- many tourist organizations do not maintain effective relations with the tour operators;
- . chaotic price formation in the accommodation facilities (especially in family hotels, houses and villas), unfavorable correlation between price-quality of the tourist product in the bigger accommodation spots.

12. Not accomplished system for monitoring the indicators for stable development of tourism and its impacts.

## **Opportunities**

1. The close proximity of the huge tourist market of the mountain resorts in Rila, Pirin, as well as the relative nearness to the Ohrid lake and other destinations which have established their reputation on the popular tourist market, allow the cross border municipalities to be embraced by a common regional tourist product with accent on the cultural-historic, ecological, balneological and rural tourism.

2. Expanding and improving the status of the basic and specialized tourist infrastructure by attracting public and private investments shall stimulate the development of the cross border region as a tourist destination.

3. Improvement in their integrity of capacity and quality of accommodation facilities, catering establishments and tourist entertainments.

4. After additional researches it is possible the number/range of the protected territories to be expanded, as well as to be fulfilled new categorization of some of the present protected territories and proclamation of new ones which have a potential for developing eco tourism.

5. Realization of the priorities, the long-term purposes, the measures and the projects in the field of tourism and stable development, which are set into the plans and strategies for regional and local development.

## **Threats**

1. Pollution of the environment, aggravation of the virtues of natural and social environment as a result of the tourist growth, indiscriminately cutting down the forests, adverse consequences from the climate changes.

2. Shortage of finance resources and/or insufficient administrative and project capacity for the realization of projects in the area of infrastructure, environment preservation, human resources development, etc.

3. Deterioration of the investment climate in both countries, in the cross border region and in the separate municipalities as a result of the expanding global economical crisis, shrinking of the national tourist markets in both countries and restricted access to the international markets, unfavorable business climate for development of the branch (international relations, legislation, tax, credit policy, etc.), ineffective state policy of both countries in the field of regional and local development.

4. Intensified competition with other regions which offer similar product, but with a higher quality and more diverse tourist services, as well as internal disloyal competition between the municipalities in the region.

5. Prior significance of the development of many expensive and aggressive for the environment types of tourism, which have a controversial chance for success.



6. Completion of privatization process in tourism (especially in the Macedonian part of the region) and intensified investors' interest in some municipalities in the region, which have a favorable investment environment.

7. Effective manipulation of the available facilities and elaboration of methods for providing target support to tourism in the municipalities by means of tourist fees.

8. Accelerated rates and favorable prospects for development of international and internal tourism in both countries, unrealized potential of the "internal" client, increasing opportunities for entering new markets of tourist products and services concerning the new provisions of the Bulgarian membership in the European Union and the status of Macedonia as a candidate for membership.

9. Elaboration and implementation of long-term program in the municipalities from the Bulgarian part of the region for increasing the capacity for assimilation of the resources provided by the EU structure funds under the operative programs (OP "Regional development", OP "Development of human resources", "Competitive power", etc.).

10. Strategic planning, directed to preservation of the environment (the so called "soft" means of tourism) on the basis of diversification of the provided tourist products and services.

6. Unsettled relations between public and municipal authorities – on one hand, and private sector – on the other, under different issues concerning the common cooperation in tourist activities on the territory of the region, reluctance to undertake joint actions on international, regional and local level in the field of tourism.

7. Restrained profit for the municipalities, as a result of the predominant presence of companies from other regions (lack of tax revenues in the municipal budget).

8. Absence of prospects and/or reluctance for development of human resources in the tourist sector and reluctance on behalf of businessmen to increase the qualification of the personnel.

9. Unviable projects after the withdrawal of external financing, absence of alternative finance resources, slender interest or scarce avenues of tourist organizations to ensure the necessary amounts for the fulfillment of their activity.

10. Lack of progress in providing precise and timely statistic information for the tourist development, for analyses and attraction of investments on national and local level.

11. Uncontrolled development of different types of tourism, without monitoring the efficiency and the impact on different fields (ecology, economics, infrastructure, employment, unemployment, etc.).

11. Elaboration and realization of a marketing strategy for development of tourism in the cross border region, which ensures the formation of a “brand” tourist product, positive “image” and “recognition” of the region on the tourist market, creation of specific municipal tourist products.

12. Aggressive advertising campaign of the municipalities in the region as a tourist destination that offers a specific kind of tourism (cultural-historic, ecological, balnoological, rural) and creation of opportunities for rousing interest in big tourist agents and potential investors.

13. Elaboration and implementation of projects for “valorizing” the diverse natural and cultural-historic heritage in the region, for including in the national cultural calendar of both countries some additional cultural events from the cross border region, for elaboration and implementation of projects aimed to popularize the attractive natural sites and cultural traditions of the region in both counties and abroad, for converting them into a competitive tourist product.

14. Development of the concomitant tourist services (transport, hotel, entertainment, etc.) in accordance with the international standards, in order to satisfy the diverse requirements of the Bulgarian, Macedonian and foreign visitors, and general improvement of the quality of the tourist service by extending and advancing the qualification and the abilities of the personnel in tourism.

12. The development of tourism in the cross border region would also experience in future the unfavorable impact of the powerful competitive tourist destinations in other parts of the two countries, as well as the impact of neighboring countries with well-developed popular tourism.

15. Founding of a regional tourist association which unites the efforts of all organizations and institutions interested in the development of tourism in the cross border region.

16. Unification and mobilization of the efforts of all concerned parties in the municipalities by creating partnership networks among international, Bulgarian and Macedonian tourist organizations.

17. Cooperation between municipalities concerning the development of tourism (between municipalities which complement one another in the resource field and generally about the common tourist marketing in the cross border region).

18. Improvement and expansion of the business contacts with tour operators and tourist agencies, especially with these who operate on the foreign market.

19. The realization of projects for introducing the contemporary information technologies (specialized information systems in tourism, internet based systems for reservation, etc.) shall improve the acquired information of the potential visitors and the general information service for tourists.

20. Improving the ecological background, the urban environment, and solving the public utilities' problems of settlements shall contribute to the attraction of investments in tourism and shall bring more tourists.

21. Working out a digital cadastre, current territory regulation plans and GIS (geographic information system) – data base for the entire territory of the cross border region and for the settlements in it, shall enable more effective management of tourism and the economical activities related to it.

### III. Strategy for development of tourism in the cross border region

#### 1. Conceptual framework

The Strategy for development of tourism in the target region for cross border co-operation (Kyustendil district from Bulgarian side and municipalities Kriva Palanka, Rankovtse, Kratovo, Probistip, Vinitza, Delchevo, Kochani, Sveti Nikole and Berovo from Macedonian side) represents target strategic document, formulating the vision for development of tourism in the region, priorities, objectives and measures, necessary for obtaining not only desirable, but also realistic level of branch development in cross border context. It has to outline the basic directions for development of tourism as an opportunity for cross border co-operation in medium and long-term plan, bearing the marks of stability and perspectives and at the same time to be used as a basis for development of contemporary and profitable joint cross border product.

This document objectives intensification of development of tourism at both sides of the borderline as an element of efficient and mutually beneficial cross border co-operation. In this regard the present strategy steps on the basis of all strategies, policies, programs at both side of the border, worked till the present moment, influencing the regional development as a whole, as well as different spheres of social and economic life in the target region. Only the achievement of total functional and spatial integration of cross border tourist policy with the economic, social, cultural, infrastructural, ecological, urbanistic and agrarian policies, may lead to creation of stable and profitable joint cross border tourist product, which can expose and value the available natural and cultural resources. The efforts, expressed by the strategic document are directed to creating of conditions for complex tourist products, worked out on the basis of available recreation potential, adequate tourist infrastructure and personnel, effective and active marketing and management and the last, but not least – on the basis of pragmatic and efficient cross border co-operation.

#### Grounds for strategy working out

The need for working out the present **strategy** is imposed by the following main reasons:

- Cross border co-operation has to be considered as innovative tool for intensification of regional and local development, and tourism may turn into powerful accelerator for that;
- Concentration and coordination of regional and local authorities' efforts is necessary, as well as of the rest of interested parties in the region in priority tourist trends, guaranteeing the effectiveness and prosperity of tourist sector;

- Main strategic documents at both sides of the border, referred to regional and local development require development of ideas, stipulated in definite target trends and the present strategy is precisely such kind of document;
- Comparative advantages of the region and the opportunities it offers for the development of successful and profitable tourism have to be positioned successfully at both countries domestic markets and at the international market as a whole;
- Bulgaria is already EU full-right member, which fact provides considerable opportunities for access to resources, as well as for public investments and financing of public and private commercial initiatives. In order to achieve the above mentioned, however, specific tools are necessary, namely strategies, plans, programs and projects;
- Need of document, placing into one frame of reference the ideas, efforts and activities of state and local authorities at both sides of the borderline, private tourist sector and non governmental organizations the formation of common, recognizable and successful cross border regional tourist product.

### **Concept for development of tourism in the cross border region**

The concept, on which the present strategy for development of tourism in the cross border target region is based, includes the following main issues:

- As the performed analysis's for the conditions and potential for development of tourism in the region data show, the results, achieved in sector "Tourism" in most of the municipalities are rather symbolic and do not comply with its serious recreation potential. The opportunities, it offers are enough for potential's considerable increase, although, at first time the presence of tourism in economy's structure shall be considered more likely a step for creation of positive image and assisting the other sectors, a compensator and source for additional growth. In not so near future, the development of tourist product and offering of tourist services may become significant part of its economic development and to turn into powerful source of revenues and opportunity for increase the local population's prosperity.
- The integrated tourist product creation in the near future should replace the current "isolated" offering for sightseeing and tourist "news". The reorientation of local tourist policies and practices towards creation of opportunities and increasing the readiness for keeping the general criteria for creating, support and development of high-quality joint tourist product is of major significance. Practically, this means to reject the imitation and mechanical transfer of ready schemes and models of popular tourism, but orientation towards clear and concrete features of local advantages, differences and achievements

- The territorial community in general shall be the subject of the present strategy impact and most of all the system from social links and relations, established between local subjects, not only the interested parties in the sphere of tourism. Management activities, stimulating the neighbourhood relations with number of social and economic branches, close to tourism shall be performed and public support for the strategy implementation shall be provided as part of attaining the common interests in the cross border region. This priority has integral character and leading significance in achievement of long-term objectives of local policy regarding the development of tourism.
- With the development of “tourist centers” tourists will be attracted to the corresponding settlement, with enough accommodation facilities available and other infrastructure. The center is used as a basic point, visits to surrounding places are advertised, but always with return to the basic center. The necessary prerequisite for that are numerous sufficient tourist attractions so that the concentration of tourist to be maintained there.
- With the development of “tourist passages” main flows of tourist activities are performed within the “zone”, covered by the passage. It is developed by advertising separate attractive sites and activities at both sides of the passage. The available resources and attractive sites (along and at the passage sides) are developed, advertised and used as a gathering point for tourists to spend additional day or overnight or several hours during the day (for daytime visits). In such way the available local resources and sites are developed as a basis for additional tourist activity.
- “Tourist chains” refer to a given number of well-known tourist sights, which can be linked “artificially”, in order to form “close chain” for traveling of tourists, who enter through one chain’s point and exit through another. Creation of such chains in the cross border region may be very useful, because the tourist may cross a given region without the need to come back, following one and the same route. The chain’s length shall be enough to be covered (usually by car) within two or three days and it is most frequently used for trips during the weekend (i.e. for short-term weekly rest)
- As far as time aspect is concerned, the first results from the implementation of strategy’s activities may be expected at the end of the period of its implementation. For the targets of tourist activity’s geographical distribution, the better utilization of the region’s proximity to the capital cities of Sofia and Skopije, mountain resorts in Bulgaria (Borovets, Bankso, Panichishte), Aegean Sea coast and Ohrid is of strategic importance.

## 2. Strategic framework

The strategic framework is determined by the principles, approaches and basic trends by which the objectives and measures for the development of tourism in the target region are formulated

### **Principles**

Leading principles in working out the present strategy for development of tourism in the cross border cooperation are as follows

- **Realism** – realistic aims should be formulated, which means that they have to comply not only with the available potential for development, but with factors like institutional environment tendencies in development of tourist business, level of employees training; providing for financing and others, which may play a role of holding (limiting) factor for its potential effective usage.
- **Stability** – the strategy shall not contain tasks, actions and concrete activities whose solving has an isolated, campaign character, with short-term and not lasting “fading” effect on the execution of the objectives, formulated in the strategy.
- **Continuity** – the elaboration of the present strategy for development of tourism shall not start from “nothing” – a continuity should be provided with the available scientifically-based documents in similar type (for example with the “*Concept for stable development of cultural tourism in the district of Kyustendil*”, Kystendil, 1999, worked out by a group of authors)
- **Partnership** – the strategy for development of tourism should be a result from the joint efforts of the interested parties (representatives of state and municipal authorities on both side of the border, tourist business, cultural institutions, non – governmental sector etc)

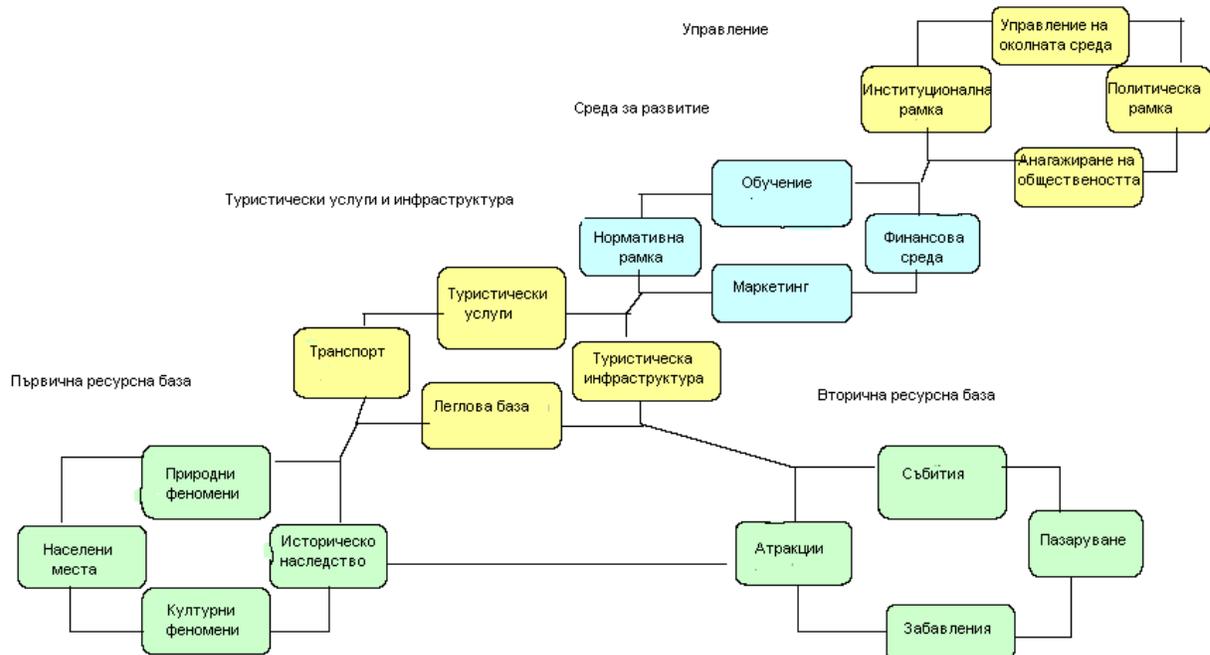
### **Approaches**

The present strategy elaboration is based on two main strategic approaches, on which the analytical and strategic parts of the Strategic document are based:

- System approach
- Geographic approach, based on special determination, unique and combination of resources, infrastructure and tourist services

The application of system approach in the strategy working out is based on the understanding that tourist sector in the cross border region shall be considered as **a system** comprising five main interrelated components, towards which the

objectives and measures, stipulated in the present strategy for development of tourism are directed (fig.1):



### Management

- Environmental management
- Institutional framework
- Political framework
- Society engagement

### Environment for development

- Training
- Norms and regulations
- Financial medium
- Marketing

### Tourist services and infrastructure

- Tourist services
- Transport
- Tourist infrastructure
- Accommodation facilities

### Primary tourist base

- Natural phenomena
- Settlements
- Historical heritage

### Secondary tourist base

- Events
- Attractions
- Shopping
- Entertainments

### Tourist sector structure

The above mentioned components of the tourist sector may be presented in the following way:

- **Primary resource base** – includes natural and cultural-historical sites and phenomena in the region’s territory, which could eventually be utilized for the aims of development of tourism.
- **Secondary resource base** – includes organized tourist attractions and offered tourist products, i.e. the elements of primary resource base, transformed into tourist supply.
- **Tourist services and infrastructure** – except tourist infrastructure and tourist services they include transport infrastructure and accommodation facilities (places for accommodation), which are used not only for tourist purposes, of course.
- **Environment for Development** – including marketing, investment, training and legislative environment;
- **Management** – considered in the sense of suitable institutional structures, cross border sector policy, public engagements and management of environment.

The interrelations and interdependence between these five components (sub systems) is of fundamental significance for the development of tourist sector in the region and the sector’s potential in the economy of both countries is determined to a large extent by the degree of their development.

**Spatial approach** is based on the purposeful consideration of regional territory as a spatial composition of recreation resources and the special features of different parts of cross border cooperation territory, their recreation potential, tourist infrastructure and services they might offer.

### 3. Vision, priorities, strategic objectives and measures

#### ***Vision for development of tourism in the cross border region***

The strategic framework of the present Strategy outlines the intentions for attaining the desired condition of cross border region in the field of tourism to the parameters of strategic planning, outlined by the document itself (2009-2013). An important component of strategic framework is the **vision** for development of tourism in the region, which defines in general the common view of interested parties in the sphere of tourism: managers, experts, business representatives, non-profit organizations representatives, local communities at both sides of the borderline, how in their opinion tourism in the target region should look like in long-term plan. The vision answers several questions in a synthesized manner: «Where are we now?», «Where we would like to be?», «What do we like to reach?», «How do we know we have reached there?». We understand from the vision, how we would like to “see” tourism in the region in its ideal form after several years (10 in this particular case).

The vision for development of tourism in the target region for CBC is formulated in the following way:

***Complete image of the cross border region to be created and maintained as a tourist destination of high quality, with stable development and supply of alternative tourism products.***

Vision's specific elements are:

- Creating of powerful and competitive tourist industry in the region, productive for local economies and local communities.
- Development and support of quality tourist supply in the region in all aspects – product, people, services, information, experience.
- Creating of tourist supply of integrated cross border tourist products and services, combining elements from the uniqueness of cultural-historical heritage and various natural and biologic resources.
- Investments invitation in tourism, as means for economic growth assistance in the territories at both sides of the border.
- Supporting the stability of local economic development through mobilization and incorporation of communities in tourist activities.

The vision implementation shall be accomplish under the conditions of close interrelation and partnership between the local communities at both sides of the border as a whole, business representatives, civil society structures, state and local authorities. It has to be realized on the basis of well-planned strategic objectives, priorities, measures and specific actions, directed to efficient utilization of CBC opportunities as effective and innovation tool for regional development, utilization of local potential and gaining funds from different national and European programs and funds.

The main principles, which the strategic framework for development of tourism is based on, are:

- Partnership between all institutions, parties concerned and civil society structures in the process of implementation of strategic intentions;
- Coordination inside the management structures and between the structures themselves at all levels in order the expected condition of development of tourism in the region to planning horizon to be obtained;
- Concentration of efforts, human resources and financial funds for obtaining the aims, stipulated in the strategy
- Tight connections and interrelations of activities, stipulated by the different priorities and actions for obtaining a complex social and economic effect and enhance of positive influences from development of tourism in the region;
- Constant monitoring and assessment for strategy components' implementation, provision of immediate feedback and accomplishing the necessary corrections and changes in the process of the strategy realization.

- accessibility for supplements and the adaptivity of strategic intentions and objectives to fast-changing conditions of the environment for strategy implementation.

We see the level for development of tourism, in the target region for CBC in 2019 as:

- Modern, dynamically developing sector with important cross border significance and place in social and economic development of the region;
- Sector, attractive for investors with favourable business environment and stable rates of economic growth;
- Preserved and well protected clean environment, in which local communities use efficiently the available natural resources for development of specialized kinds of tourism;
- Well developed and convenient for tourism urbanized environment and well-maintained basic infrastructure, meeting the tourist's demands;
- Destination without territorial disproportions in utilization of its potential for development of tourism;
- Very well-developed capacity and high quality of greater share of facilities and equipment for development of tourism, complying with the contemporary requirements for tourists' comfort;
- Destination with well-developed information and communication technologies, used in the field of tourism;
- Well-segmented, worked out and offered tourist products and services with high quality;
- Completely created image of the target region as complete tourist destination, offering products of the so called alternative ("mild") tourism, with its own "identification brand";
- Established mechanism and regulation of interaction between state and local authorities at both sides of the borderline, performing different tourist activities;
- Stability of results, obtained from the joint programs and projects implementation in the region's territory;
- Created and effectively working cross border regional tourist association, joining the efforts of all organizations and institutions, interested in development of tourism in the target region for CBC.

### **Priorities**

Based on the above mentioned leading principles and vision of the strategy for development of tourism and on the basis of situation analysis in the sector at both sides of the borderline, the main priorities for development of tourism have been outlined. They are as follows

➤ **Creating of conditions for establishing effective partnerships between authorities at both sides of the borderline, civil society structures and tourist business.**

At first place this is related to the overcoming of all problems and difficulties in the interaction between cross border territories, as a prerequisite for creation of conditions for implementation of efficient and stable cross border co-operation. All strategies, policies, programs and operation plans, worked at district and municipal level till the present moment play a definite role in this regard, as well as number of proposed programs and projects in different fields: economy, social sphere, employment, culture, ecology, tourism, infrastructure, urban and rural development, agrarian sector etc.

➤ **Attaining of balance and stability in development of tourism in the cross border territories as an element from efficient cross border co-operation.**

Territorial community as a whole shall be the subject of the present strategy impact, but most of all the system of social links and relations, existing between all local individuals and interested parties, not only the representatives of local and state authorities.

➤ **Improvement of human resources and capacity for supply of integrated tourist product.**

This priority outlines the necessity in increasing the level and quality of human resources among the representatives of tourist business as well as among the representatives of local and state structures at both sides of the borderline. In such way only, the desirable level of potential joint tourist products' competitiveness may be reached as well as higher level of utilization of cross border co-operation opportunities as an innovative tool for intensification development of tourism in the target region.

➤ **Creation of positive image of cross border region as unified and attractive tourist destination.**

This priority is directed to the creation of effective strategy for advertisement and marketing of joint tourist products and the region as a whole. Without these elements' presence it is practically impossible to realize neither of the efficient cross border initiatives in the tourist sector.

➤ **Other important priorities are:**

- Local and regional authorities' administrative capacity
- Personnel policy and personnel provision of tourism
- General and specialized tourist infrastructure
- Tourist products in compliance with the region's potential

## **Strategic objectives and measures**

Attaining the vision in general and regarding the stipulated priorities shall be carried out through realization and execution of the following strategic objectives and corresponding measures:

**Objective 1. Positive and attractive image of cross border region to be created as preferable and desirable tourist destination.**

*Measure 1. Working out a concept about the essence and specific features of the offered tourist product.*

*Measure 2. Positioning of cross border region's place and role in the entire development of tourism Bulgaria and Macedonia.*

*Measure 3. Expanding of marketing and advertisement and introduction of overall communication program for popularization of tourist product in the region.*

**Objective 2. To develop the capacity and improve the tourist sector's place within the region's economy, not only in terms of growth, but of solving the existing and newly emerged problems**

*Measure 1. Supporting the stable growth of economy in the region by tourism, providing fair refunding, social value added and benefits for all cross border region's residents*

*Measure 2. Constant growth of incomes from tourism in the region.*

*Measure 3. Tourist infrastructure development and improvement of the access to and in the region.*

**Objective 3. To support the process of quality improvement, development and supply of tourist product in the cross border region.**

*Measure 1. Creating, regulating and constantly increasing the standards for tourist products, services and operating characteristics of employees, engaged in tourist sector in the region..*

*Measure 2. Stimulating the stable utilization of cultural and historical heritage and natural sights in the region, aiming permanent expansion and enrichment of the offered tourist product.*

*Measure 3. Assisting the process of development and offering of tourist product in the region.*

**Objective 4. To facilitate and support the process of utilization of tourist resources and means and to use the existing opportunities for financing the development of tourism by different financial sources by the interested parties and local community.**

*Measure 1. Procurement of investments.*

*Measure 2. Using the opportunities, provided by operating programs and other donor programs.*

*Measure 3. Creating a network from public-private partnerships for development of tourism in the region.*

**Objective 5. To stimulate the development process of local community and human resources, engaged in tourist branch in the cross border region.**

*Measure 1. Increasing the offering of employment in tourist branch.*

*Measure 2. Development of tourist entrepreneurship in the region.*

*Measure 3. Training and qualification.*

**Objective 6. Permanent improvement and upgrade of management, planning, coordination and institutional development of tourism in the cross border region.**

*Measure 1. Strengthening of administrative and project capacity of local administration, non governmental organizations and companies, working in the tourist sphere.*

*Measure 2. Institutional development.*

*Measure 3. Improvement of access to information and introducing new information technologies (IT ).*

#### **4. Mechanism for strategic objectives' achievement**

Each strategic objective's achievement presupposes the implementation of different approaches and measures upon keeping the Strategy's general direction. This fact imposes following of definite logic in reaching the outlined aims. The present strategy will be implemented in dynamically developing social and economic environment. Therefore the stability in follow-up and achievement of different aims shall play a leading part in its effectiveness.

The successful Strategy implementation presupposes making of subsequent efforts in considerable period of time upon good coordination of plans and activities, realized by different state and municipal institutions and organizations, in active partnership with non-economic sector organizations, in dialogue with private economic initiative representatives and mass media in the region of cross border co-operation. This makes dynamic the role of administrative structures at both sides of the border, engaged in the coordination and management of the present Strategy. Similar approach requires an increase in their administrative and expert capacity, most of all of municipal authorities. Achievement of effectiveness and stability in regard to the development of cross border co-operation process may become a fact only in case of good coordination and interaction within the range of effectively working environment, including representatives from all interested parties in the region under the dominant role of municipal administration's representatives. The reform in public administration, implemented in both countries include expansion to the access of decision-taking processes and possibilities for civil control over them, which in their matter of course are efficient means for increasing the confidence in public policy, and therefore in strategy implementation effectiveness for development of cross border co-operation in the region.

Achievement of each concrete and specific aim shall be considered in the context of improvement of stable development opportunity. Changing in the starting point is due to the understanding that the implementation of strategy and measures "upside – down" leads to considerable over expense of resources upon real risk

of discrepancies' multiplication between strategic aims and concrete situation in regional and local context. Starting point for reaching the Strategy aims is approved to be the scale of influence, maximum close to everyday life of individuals, and the territorial range and intensity of its purposeful impact is expanded at each next step of its implementation after the corresponding evaluation of results.

Another considerable determinant for effective approach in Strategy implementation is the time interval for achievement of its aims. The realistic term in which the first positive changes are possible, compared to the present situation of cross border region – subject of the present Strategy is between one and two years. The choice of approach determines the necessity from synchronizing the achievement of aims of cross border co-operation Strategy in the region with implementation of municipal and district plans for development.

Risk assessment shall be included in the approach for Strategy implementation and its aims achievement. Its implementation would not be possible isolated from a number of other measures and specific policies, realized within the sphere of social and economic development of the cross border region. For that particular reason it is necessary each of the measures, stipulated as means for achievement of common and specific Strategy aims, to be assessed from point of view of risks, determined from the existing condition and prospective for development of the region and for both countries in total.

#### ***4.1. Range and scale of application***

The above stated aims' implementation requires the necessity of reaching a new level of concreteness in local policy regarding the development of cross border co-operation. Acceptance of stable development paradigm as adequate scale for estimation and efficient intervention in solving the problems for tourism in the region, presupposes the need for acceptance of definite range and scale of application:

- bringing the activities under this strategy to municipal and local level by existing documents in the sphere of regional and local development;
- directing to determined groups, organizations and institutions – representatives of interested parties in general, to natural structures, engaged with the process of cross border co-operation in the region, having intermediary character in regard to the strategy implementation;
- effectiveness in selection of participants and groups for execution the variety of activities, generated from the strategy;

The approach, offered by the present Strategy draws particular attention to the understanding of cross border region's social capital and more precisely the development of system from stable links, relations and partnerships, appeared as a result of implementation of opportunities, provided by the Program for cross border co-operation between people, institutions and organizations.

#### **4.2. Concomitant changes, supposed to lead to effectiveness increase in the implementation of measures under this Strategy:**

- Imposing obligatory requirements for preliminary analysis of feasibility of corresponding activities and measures. Assessment of impact regarding integral and system factors, acting on regional cross border level.
- Guaranteeing of high degree of transparency for monitoring and evaluation, for coordination of interested parties' activities at regional cross border level as means for efficient counteraction to formation of "local and inter-state monopolies" in regard to the access to this Strategy financing.
- Creation of real conditions for effective participation in decision-taking process and control over decisions' implementation on behalf of all interested parties' representatives, as well as the rest of the members of local entities in the region.
  - Provision of confidence in the stability of managing authorities' will to achieve sterling and irreversible change in the status of cross border co-operation between municipalities in the region;
  - Institutionalizing the prevention mechanisms and conflicts' overcoming in the process of implementation of Strategy activities.

#### **4.3. Risk assessment**

The analysis of risk factors, which may lead to difficulties or deviation from the Strategy implementation's direction may be presented in the following groups:

- opposition from the existing networks of local entities' representatives in the region, who "see" only negative influences and consequences from development and implementation of possibilities for the Program for cross border co-operation;
- existing negative attitude in peoples minds regarding the used means from other implemented programs and projects (wide-spread corruption amongst donors, financing projects, "dirty money laundry" through projects realization etc), which may bring to confrontation to the spirit and possibilities of the Cross border co-operation Program in the region;
- Existing deficit in the Strategy management organization and capacity, namely the state/municipal administrations in the region, which may lead to poor coordination, delay in some of the planned activities for strategy implementation and consequently - to generate pressure and doubtness among the representatives of local entities.

#### **Strategy management and monitoring**

Strategy management and monitoring are inherent parts of activities, oriented to the increase of opportunities for cross border cooperation Program's utilization for social and economic development. Management and monitoring shall be done at each stage of design process, application and improvement of measures and policies, included in similar strategy.

**The main target** of Strategy management shall be oriented to the effective distribution and usage of the means for obtaining maximum possible economic and social results by high degree of coordination of the activities of separate organizations and institutions from the cross border region.

The present strategy implementation in a given institutional medium as a continuation and expansion of management approaches and measures for overcoming the problems, facing the cross border co-operation in the region, imposes attaining of higher degree of compatibility and sequence. Essential part from the difficulties, registered in the held investigation and expert assessments of the pursued policy is connected with doubling of activities and inadequate utilization of existing resources, caused by lack of good coordination between different institutions and organizations, which have been engaged or have to be engaged with the present Strategy implementation. For this reason, the priority in defining the main target of Strategy management and monitoring is given to the problem for coordination and envisaged measures' efficiency.

**Main indices**, which have to be followed as parameters for effectiveness include quantitative and qualitative measures, followed in their dynamics and disaggregated to the lowest possible territorial level. These indices may be either direct or indirect. Such indices are:

\* **Range**

- number of people – direct beneficiaries, included by the cross border co-operation program, as a relative share from the total aggregate, as well as from the population of the concrete municipality or settlement;
- number of organizations and institutions (state, municipal, non-profitable, business etc), working under the cross border co-operation program, as a relative share from the total aggregate, as well as from collective individuals from the concrete municipality or settlement;
- number of partnerships, established under the cross border co-operation Strategy, as a relative share from the total aggregate, as well as from the possible partnerships in the concrete municipality or settlement;

\* **Value**

- costs for implementation of different projects, as a total value compared to the rest of the expenses, implemented by the Strategy and as costs for participant, included in the Strategy measures and activities;
- costs for achievement of definite results, as a total value compared to the rest of the expenses, implemented by the Strategy and as costs for each particular participant.

\* **Results**

- number of participants as a whole, included in the measures and activities for Strategy implementation (total and for given projects);

- number of participants, who have changed their way of living (left the system for social assistance and included in the employment system, started their own business etc), as a consequence of participation in Strategy measures and activities;
- number of sites with improved infrastructure as a result of Strategy activities, estimated in comparison to the existing infrastructure in the corresponding settlement or in the municipality in total;
- number of discussions, held about the problems of local community and decisions taken, as a relative share from the population of the corresponding settlement or in the municipality in total;
- number of innovations, technologies and know-how, implemented into tourist sector, as a relative share from the population of the corresponding settlement or in the municipality in total.

The former experience shows that in managing of strategies with similar range and complexity, building up of relatively stable team, having the required competence and resources for measures effective management is necessary, as well as capacity for operative evaluation and control of attained results. For this reason, the selection of organizations and institutions, directly engaged with Strategy management is of major importance, as well as the choice of optimal management level for effective coordination and management of the resources, intended for achievement of the present Strategy aims.

**Main institutions**, that shall implement the Strategy management are Municipal administrations, since the major difficulties, facing the former participation of the region in cross border cooperation Program are identified within the sphere of their specific competence, as well as the real opportunities for gaining results with permanent impact on local community.

In details, the algorithm for Strategy management includes the following stages:

- Approval of political decision for Strategy implementation – through municipal administrations' decision in the corresponding municipalities;
- Formation of Strategy management team, comprising
  - a) municipal mayors at both sides of the borderline
  - b) experts from corresponding departments of municipal administrations, engaged solely and only with the present Strategy management;
  - c) civil society and business representatives;

- Training of the team, managing the implementation of Strategy in accordance with its main aims and possible ways of implementation;
- Formation of permanent commissions, assigned to Municipal Council of corresponding municipalities, bearing the responsibility for determining the priority spheres and cooperation forms, that shall be initialized at the municipal
- Training of these Municipal Council permanent commissions' members in acquiring skills, related to Strategy effective management;
- Training of institutional representatives, dealing with organization and realization of monitoring on efficiency and expedience of Strategy actions;
- Initializing of Strategy's local initiatives
- Preparation and presenting of periodical report and analysis of results from Strategy implementation.

#### **IV. Plan for strategy implementation**

##### **Objective 1 - contents**

**Objective 1. Positive and attractive image of cross border region to be created as preferable and desirable tourist destination.**

*Measure 1. Working out a concept about the essence and specific features of the offered tourist product.*

**Term: 2009 .**

**Activity 1:** Implementation of complex program for studies in the tourist sector at regional and local level for identification of the essence and specific features of tourist product.

##### **Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district;
- District administration
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch

##### **Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts

Municipal budget and non budget funds and accounts

External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc)

Financial means, provided from business units

**Activity 2:** Organizing of public dialog and public discussions with the active participation of local community about the future of tourism in the region and specific features of offered tourist product by municipalities.

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district;
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch
- Key figures in different civil society sectors

**Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts

Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts

External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc)

**Activity 3:** Defining and outlining of tourist centers, tourist passages and tourist chains in the cross border region and their characteristics

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district;
- District administration
- Municipal administrations
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch
- Key figures in different civil society sectors

**Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc)  
Non profit organizations' financial resources  
Funding from business units

**Activity 4:** Drawing of specialized territorial structure plan and map for potential development of offered tourist product in the region.

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district;
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch
- Key figures in different civil society sectors

**Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc)

*Measure 2. Positioning of cross border region's place and role in the entire development of tourism Bulgaria and Macedonia.*

**Term: 2009-2010**

**Activity 1:** Increasing the activity, broadening the participation and accomplishing permanent exchange of information between organizations and structures, dealing with tourism at both sides of the border and parties concerned in Bulgaria and Macedonia – branch and product organizations, regional/local organizations, non-profit and civil formations.

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district;
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives

- Non profit organizations

### **Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
 External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
 Non profit organizations' financial resources  
 Funding from business units

**Activity 2:** Development and implementing the idea, stipulated by strategic documents for regional and local development in the cross border region for creating of integrated regional tourist product.

### **Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district;
- District administration
- Municipal administrations
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch
- Key figures in different civil society sectors

### **Sources of funding**

Republic budget and non budget funds  
 District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
 Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
 External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
 Non profit organizations' financial resources  
 Funding from business units

**Activity 3:** Working out a project for “identifying tourist brand” of the cross border region

### **Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district;

- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch
- Key figures in different civil society sectors

### **Sources of funding**

Republic budget and non budget funds  
 District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
 Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
 External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
 Non profit organizations' financial resources  
 Funding from business units

**Activity 4:** Stimulation and maintaining of existing municipal models and successful practices in the sphere of tourism.

### **Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district;
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch

### **Sources of funding**

Republic budget and non budget funds  
 District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
 Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
 External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
 Non profit organizations' financial resources  
 Funding from business units

*Measure 3. Expanding of marketing and advertisement and introduction of overall communication program for popularization of tourist product in the region*

**Term: current**

**Activity 1:** Working out marketing, advertising and communication program for geographic expansion of tourism in the region.

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district;
- District administration
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch
- Key figures in different civil society sectors

**Sources of funding**

Republic budget and non budget funds  
District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
Non profit organizations' financial resources  
Funding from business units

**Activity 2:** Development of public-private partnerships for professional and aggressive marketing and advertisement for the offered tourist products in the cross border region

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district;
- District administration
- Municipal administrations
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch
- Key figures in different civil society sectors

### **Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
Non profit organizations' financial resources  
Funding from business units

**Activity 3:** Expanding the possibilities for internet advertising through creation of specialized internet site for promotion of region's tourist product.

### **Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district;
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch

### **Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
Non profit organizations' financial resources  
Funding from business units

**Activity 4:** Establishing a network and working out a program for co-operation between local organizations and structures and Bulgarian and Macedonian tourist agencies and tour operators and these counties ones

### **Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district;
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch

### **Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
Non profit organizations' financial resources  
Funding from business units etc

**Activity 5:** Developing of specialized advertising campaigns for presenting of selected tourist products from the region to the national and foreign markets.

### **Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district;
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch

### **Sources of funding**

Republic budget and non budget funds  
District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
Non profit organizations' financial resources  
Funding from business units

### **Objective 2 - contents.**

**Objective 2. To develop the capacity and improve the tourist sector's place within the region's economy, not only in terms of growth, but of solving the existing and newly emerged problems**

*Measure 1. Supporting the stable growth of economy in the region by tourism, providing fair refunding, social value added and benefits for all cross border region's residents*

***Term: current***

**Activity 1:** Working out a special program for the segment “stable development” of tourism in the cross border region.

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district;
  - District administration
  - Municipal administrations
  - District tourist council
  - Municipal tourist councils
  - Tourist industry representatives
  - Non profit organizations
  - Experts and consultants in tourist branch
- Key figures in different civil society sectors

**Financing sources:**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
Non profit organizations' financial resources  
Funding from business units

**Activity 2:** Improvement and development of vertical and horizontal links between tourism and the other branches of economy in the national sectors of cross border region.

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District administration
- Municipal administrations
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Representatives of different sectors in the economic development of the district
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in economic development

**Financing sources:**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts

Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts

External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc

Non profit organizations' financial resources

Funding from business units

**Activity 3:** Working out and introducing specialized regional schemes for relieved crediting and financial support for local communities and business units, developing alternative tourism in the region.

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district;
- District administration
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in economic development
- Banks and funds

**Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts

Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts

External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc

Non profit organizations' financial resources

Funding from business units

*Measure 2. Constant growth of incomes from tourism in the region.*

**Term: current**

**Activity 1:** Introducing new technologies for increasing the competitiveness of tourist sector within the region's economy.

**Implementing institution/organization:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district;
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils

- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch

### **Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
 Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
 External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
 Non profit organizations' financial resources  
 Funding from business units

**Activity 2:** Stimulating the activity of small and medium enterprises, working in tourist sphere in the cross border region and increasing their profitability.

### **Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district;
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch

### **Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
 Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
 External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
 Funding from business units

**Activity 3:** Working out plans for economic utilization of buffer zones, surrounding the large tourist sites and establishing updated and landscape friendly commercial objects in them

### **Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district;
- District administration

- Municipal administrations
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch

### **Sources of funding**

Republic budget and non budget funds  
 District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
 Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
 External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
 Non profit organizations' financial resources  
 Funding from business units

*Measure 3. Tourist infrastructure development and improvement of the access to and in the region*

### **Term: current**

**Activity 1:** Working out a specialized program for tourist infrastructure development and facilitating the access to tourist sites in the region

### **Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district;
- District administration
- Municipal administration
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch

### **Sources of funding**

Republic budget and non budget funds  
 District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
 Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
 External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances

from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc

Non profit organizations' financial resources

Funding from business units

**Activity 2:** Tourist facilities and equipment inventory in the cross border region and working out a program for its renovation and development

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district;
- District administration
- Municipal administrations
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch

**Sources of funding**

Republic budget and non budget funds

District budget and non budget funds and accounts

Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts

External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc

Non profit organizations' financial resources

Funding from business units

**Activity 3:** Working out a program for overcoming the territorial disproportions in utilization of available potential for development of tourism in the region.

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district;
- District administration
- Municipal administration
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch
- Key figures in different civil society sectors

### **Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
Non profit organizations' financial resources  
Funding from business units

**Activity 4:** Working out a program for priority improvement and development of urban environment and basis infrastructure around tourist sites in the cross border region.

### **Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district;
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch

### **Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
Non profit organizations' financial resources  
Funding from business units

### **Objective 3 - contents**

**Objective 3. To support the process of quality improvement, development and supply of tourist product in the cross border region.**

*Measure 1. Creating, regulating and constantly increasing the standards for tourist products, services and operating characteristics of employees, engaged in tourist sector in the region..*

***Term: current***

**Activity 1:** Working out a system for management and monitoring of tourist services' quality at local and regional level.

**Implementing institution/organization:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch
- Key figures in different civil society sectors

**Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
Non profit organizations' financial resources  
Funding from business units

**Activity 2:** Implementation of quality standards in tourist product's elaboration and labour characteristics of employed in tourist sphere in cross border region.

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch

**Sources of funding**

External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
Non profit organizations' financial resources  
Funding from business units

**Activity 3:** Quality certification of supplied tourist products and services in the region.

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch

**Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
Non profit organizations' financial resources  
Funding from business units

**Activity 4:** Working out a system for stimulation organizations and individuals, created and implemented quality tourist products at the market.

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district;
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations

**Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
Non profit organizations' financial resources  
Funding from business units

*Measure 2. Stimulating the stable utilization of cultural and historical heritage and natural sights in the region, aiming permanent expansion and enrichment of the offered tourist product.*

**Term: current**

**Activity 1:** Creating a concept and working out a program for introducing complete integrated tourist products and services at the market

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch

**Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
Non profit organizations' financial resources  
Funding from business units

**Activity 2:** Creating complex natural and cultural routes in the territory of the cross border region, as part of longer routes, traced in both national territories.

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District administration
- Municipal administration
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch
- Key figures in different civil society sectors
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**Sources of funding**

Republic budget and non budget funds  
District budget and non budget funds and accounts

Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts

External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc

Non profit organizations' financial resources

Funding from business units

**Activity 3:** Restoration, protection, recovery and permanent exposure of rich cultural and historical heritage in the cross border region and expanding tourist supply through creation of new tourist sites and defined tourist zones.

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch
- Key figures in different civil society sectors

**Sources of funding**

Republic budget and non budget funds

District budget and non budget funds and accounts

Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts

External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc

Non profit organizations' financial resources

Funding from business units

**Activity 4:** Utilization of local cultural and natural resources for stable tourism development

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District administration
- Municipal administration
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives

- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch
- Key figures in different civil society sectors

### **Sources of funding**

Republic budget and non budget funds  
 District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
 Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
 External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
 Non profit organizations' financial resources  
 Funding from business units

*Measure 3. Assisting the process of development and offering of tourist product in the region.*

***Term: current***

**Activity 1:** Creating of target program for development of mild forms of tourism in the region

### **Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district;
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch

### **Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
 Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
 External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
 Non profit organizations' financial resources  
 Funding from business units

**Activity 2:** Capacity evaluation of sensitive zones and tourist zones and sites with high probable concentration of visitors and working out of specific programs for their management and development.

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch

**Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts

Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts

External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc

Non profit organizations' financial resources

Funding from business units

**Activity 3:** Creating a system for assurance of spare and safe utilization of natural and anthropogenic tourist resources in the most visited tourist localizations.

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District administration
- Municipal administration
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch
- Key figures in different civil society sectors

**Sources of funding**

Republic budget and non budget funds

District budget and non budget funds and accounts

Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts

External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc

Non profit organizations' financial resources

Funding from business units

**Activity 4:** Development of joint tourist products with neighbouring regions and countries, directed to both national markets and the international market.

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District administration
- Municipal administration
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch
- Key figures in different civil society sectors

**Sources of funding**

Republic budget and non budget funds

District budget and non budget funds and accounts

Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts

External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc

Non profit organizations' financial resources

Funding from business units

**Activity 5:** Working out of guidebooks for specialized tourist products, offered in the cross border region.

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch

- Key figures in different civil society sectors

### **Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
 Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
 External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
 Non profit organizations' financial resources  
 Funding from business units

**Activity 6:** Creating of pilot networks, offering specialized products of mild tourism only ("eco hotels", "photo-safari" etc).

### **Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch

### **Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
 Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
 External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
 Non profit organizations' financial resources  
 Funding from business units

### **Objective 4 - contents**

**Objective 4. To facilitate and support the process of utilization of tourist resources and means and to use the existing opportunities for financing the development of tourism by different financial sources by the interested parties and local community.**

*Measure 1. Procurement of investments.*

**Term: current**

**Activity 1:** Working out district and municipal programs and special measures for attracting local and foreign investments in tourist sphere.

### **Implementing institution**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District administration
- Municipal administration
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch

### **Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts

Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts

External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc

Non profit organizations' financial resources

Funding from business units

**Activity 2:** Working out a flexible mechanism for financing resource provision, maintenance and renovation of tourist sites, related to historical, cultural and natural inheritance in the cross border region.

### **Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch

### **Sources of funding**

Republic budget and non budget funds

District budget and non budget funds and accounts

Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts

External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc

Non profit organizations' financial resources

Funding from business units a

*Measure 2. Using the opportunities, provided by operating programs and other donor programs.*

**Term: current**

**Activity 1:** Stimulating the process of working out, applying, execution and monitoring of projects for development of tourism in the region.

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch
- Key figures in different civil society sectors

**Sources of funding**

Republic budget and non budget funds

District budget and non budget funds and accounts

Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts

External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc

Non profit organizations' financial resources

Funding from business units

**Activity 2:** Working out of municipal programs for training the interested parties representatives in the filed of projects' elaboration, lobbying, identification and invitation of potential donors.

**Implementing institution/organization:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District administration
- Municipal administration
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch
- Key figures in different civil society sectors

### **Sources of funding**

- Republic budget and non budget funds
- District budget and non budget funds and accounts
- Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts
- External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc
- Non profit organizations' financial resources
- Funding from business units

*Measure 3. Creating a network from public-private partnerships for development of tourism in the region.*

**Term: 2010 – 2012**

**Activity 1:** Improvement of coordination between all concerned parties' representatives in the cross border region, working in the field of tourism: private tourist sector, non profit tourist organizations, public sector and citizens.

### **Implementing institution/organization:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch
- Key figures in different civil society sectors

### **Sources of funding**

- District budget and non budget funds and accounts
- \*Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts
- External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc
- Non profit organizations' financial resources
- Funding from business units

**Activity 2:** Municipal tourist representatives' enlisting in regional, national and international tourist networks and organizations

### **Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district;
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch

### **Sources of funding**

Republic budget and non budget funds  
 District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
 Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
 External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
 Non profit organizations' financial resources  
 Funding from business units

**Activity 3:** Creation of public – private partnerships for resolving specific problems of tourism in municipalities

### **Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District administration
- Municipal administrations
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch
- Key figures in different civil society sectors

### **Sources of funding**

Republic budget and non budget funds  
 District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
 Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
 External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
 Non profit organizations' financial resources

Funding from business units

### **Objective 5 - contents**

**Objective 5. To stimulate the development process of local community and human resources, engaged in tourist branch in the cross border region.**

*Measure 1. Increasing the offering of employment in tourist branch.*

**Term: current**

**Activity 1:** Carrying out periodic researches of labour market' condition in the field of tourism in municipalities.

#### **Implementing institution/organization:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch
- Key figures in different civil society sectors
- National employment agency ("Local employment offices")

#### **Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts

Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts

External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc

Non profit organizations' financial resources

Funding from business units

**Activity 2:** Development of special measures for stimulation of hiring quality labour force by employers, supplying tourist services in the region.

#### **Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch

### **Sources of funding**

Republic budget and non budget funds  
District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
Non profit organizations' financial resources  
Funding from business units

**Activity 3:** Coordination and synchronizing the programs for training in tourism and professional education with the demands and requirements of local tourist industry.

### **Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch
- Key figures in different civil society sectors

### **Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
Non profit organizations' financial resources  
Funding from business units

**Activity 4:** Elaboration of volunteers program for work at tourist sites, related to natural and cultural and historical heritage in the region.

### **Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District administration
- Municipal administration
- District tourist council

- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch
- Key figures in different civil society sectors

### **Sources of funding**

Republic budget and non budget funds  
 District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
 Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
 External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
 Non profit organizations' financial resources  
 Funding from business units

*Measure 2. Development of tourist entrepreneurship in the region.*

**Term: current**

**Activity 1:** Increasing the capacity of entrepreneurs, supplying tourist services in the region.

### **Implementing institution/organization:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch

### **Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
 Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
 External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
 Non profit organizations' financial resources  
 Funding from business units

**Activity 2:** Development of clusters or networks from key business initiatives in tourist sector in the cross border region.

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch

**Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts

Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts

External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc

Non profit organizations' financial resources

Funding from business units

**Activity 3:** Development of program for starting of tourist business and future entrepreneurs' training.

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch

**Sources of funding**

Republic budget and non budget funds

District budget and non budget funds and accounts

Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts

External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc

Non profit organizations' financial resources

Funding from business units

**Activity 4:** Elaboration of special program for work with local community for support and incorporation in the processes of development of tourism in each municipality.

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch

**Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
Non profit organizations' financial resources  
Funding from business units

**Activity 5:** Working out a guidebook for presenting good practices and cases of efficient tourist entrepreneurship in the cross border region.

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district;
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch

**Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
Non profit organizations' financial resources  
Funding from business units

**Activity 6:** Creating a special program for support and assistance of small and medium enterprises in the field of tourism in the municipalities.

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District administration
- Municipal administration
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch
- Key figures in different civil society sectors

**Sources of funding**

Republic budget and non budget funds  
District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
Non profit organizations' financial resources  
Funding from business units

*Measure 3. Training and qualification*

**Term: current**

**Activity 1:** Carrying out of special research, related to problems' inventory and demands' identification for increasing the qualification, training and professional growth of people, employed in the field of tourism in the region.

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch

**Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts

External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc

Non profit organizations' financial resources

Funding from business units

**Activity 2:** Elaboration of differentiated programs for training and professional qualification of people, employed in the field of tourism, in accordance with their needs, interests and deficits.

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch

**Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts

Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts

External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc

Non profit organizations' financial resources

Funding from business units

**Activity 3:** Coordination of training programs with the requirements and expectations of local tourist business and tourist industry as a whole.

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District administration
- Municipal administration
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch
- Key figures in different civil society sectors

### **Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
Non profit organizations' financial resources  
Funding from business units

### **Objective 6 - contents**

**Objective 6. Permanent improvement and upgrade of management, planning, coordination and institutional development of tourism in the cross border region.**

*Measure 1. Strengthening of administrative and project capacity of local administration, non governmental organizations and companies, working in the tourist sphere.*

### **Term: 2009 - 2013**

**Activity 1:** Expanding the activity of local tourist council and improvement of the coordination with municipal tourist councils, local and state authorities, representatives of tourist business and non profit organizations in the field of tourism.

### **Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations

### **Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
Non profit organizations' financial resources  
Funding from business units

**Activity 2:** Increasing the capacity and drawing up individual plans for training experts in tourism in the local and municipal administrations.

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District administration
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch

**Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts

External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc

Non profit organizations' financial resources

**Activity 3:** training and assistance of tourist experts the local and municipal administrations for participation in national and European programs and events.

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District administration
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils

**Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts

Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts

External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc

Non profit organizations' financial resources

Funding from business units

**Activity 4:** Working out programs in the state and municipal administrations for decreasing the bureaucracy, connected with tourism.

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District administration
- Municipal administration
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch

**Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts

External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc

Non profit organizations' financial resources

**Activity 5:** Supporting the processes of integrating the programs for development of tourism into municipal plans and district strategy for development.

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District administration
- Municipal administration
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch
- Key figures in different civil society sectors

**Sources of funding**

Republic budget and non budget funds

District budget and non budget funds and accounts

Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts

External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc

Non profit organizations' financial resources

Funding from business units

*Measure 2. Institutional development.*

**Term: current**

**Activity 1:** Analysis of euro integration process's influence on planning, development, policies and financing of tourism at regional and local level.

**Implementing institution/organization:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District administration
- Municipal administration
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch
- Key figures in different civil society sectors

**Sources of funding**

Republic budget and non budget funds  
District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
Non profit organizations' financial resources  
Funding from business units

**Activity 2:** Working out programs for using the operating programs' opportunities for utilization of EU structural funds in the field of tourism.

**Implementing institution/organization:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district;
- District administration
- Municipal administration
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch
- Key figures in different civil society sectors

### **Sources of funding**

External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc

Non profit organizations' financial resources

Funding from business units

**Activity 3:** Organizing and carrying out joint forums, events and celebrities, related to tourism at cross border regional level.

### **Implementing institution/organization:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District administration
- Municipal administration
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch

### **Sources of funding**

Republic budget and non budget funds

District budget and non budget funds and accounts

Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts

External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc

Non profit organizations' financial resources

Funding from business units

**Activity 4:** Increasing the capacity of community centers and other cultural institutions for tourist product offering, based on the local cultural and historical heritage.

### **Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district;
- District administration
- Municipal administration
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils

- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch
- Key figures in different civil society sectors

### **Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
 Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
 External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
 Non profit organizations' financial resources  
 Funding from business units

**Activity 5:** Working out and implementation of program for publishing activities, connected with tourism and tourist sites in the region.

### **Implementing institution/organization:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District administration
- Municipal administration
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch

### **Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
 Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
 External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
 Non profit organizations' financial resources  
 Funding from business units

**Activity 6:** Execution of constant monitoring and update process of the strategy for development of tourism in the cross border region.

### **Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district;
- District administration
- Municipal administration
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch
- Key figures in different civil society sectors

### **Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
 Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
 External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
 Non profit organizations' financial resources  
 Funding from business units

### **Activity 7: Register and support of local and regional tourist associations**

#### **Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District administration
- Municipal administration
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch
- Key figures in different civil society sectors

### **Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
 Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
 External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
 Non profit organizations' financial resources  
 Funding from business units

**Activity 8:** provision of consultancy services for development of tourism in the cross border region.

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch
- Key figures in different civil society sectors

**Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
Non profit organizations' financial resources  
Funding from business units

*Measure 3. Improvement of access to information and introducing new information technologies (IT ).*

**Term: 2010 - 2015**

**Activity 1:** Creation of system for information management in the field of tourism at local and regional level.

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District administration
- Municipal administration
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch
- Key figures in different civil society sectors

**Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
Non profit organizations' financial resources  
Funding from business units

**Activity 2:** Information, training, socializing and including the local community in public campaigns for presenting the condition, successes, problems and perspectives for development of tourist sector in the cross border region.

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch

**Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
Non profit organizations' financial resources  
Funding from business units

**Activity 3:** Creating of complete, constantly renovating system for increasing the public awareness and updated information about tourist supply in different settlements and municipalities in the region.

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch
- Key figures in different civil society sectors

### **Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
Non profit organizations' financial resources  
Funding from business units

**Activity 4:** Creation of complete updating information and advertisement package for tourist supply in the cross border region.

### **Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch
- Key figures in different civil society sectors

### **Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
Non profit organizations' financial resources  
Funding from business units

**Activity 5** Compilation of information data base for tourism in the region, in accordance with the standards and requirements of national statistics institutes and Euro stat.

### **Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives

- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in the field of statistics in tourism

### **Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
 Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
 District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
 Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
 External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
 Non profit organizations' financial resources  
 Funding from business units

**Activity 6.** Application of information technologies and geographic information systems /GIS/ in planning and development of tourism in the separate municipalities and the region as a whole.

### **Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch
- Key figures in different civil society sectors

### **Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts  
 Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts  
 External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc  
 Non profit organizations' financial resources  
 Funding from business units

**Activity 7.** Compilation of electronic library /catalogue/ with digital maps, photos, videos and other important visual information for tourist sites and routes in the cross border region's territory.

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch
- Key figures in different civil society sectors

**Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts

Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts

External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc

Non profit organizations' financial resources

Funding from business units

**Activity 8:** Expanding the scope of tourist information centers /TIC/ by creating TIC network with unified system for updated tourist information for the entire region.

**Implementing institution:**

- Consultative council for development of tourism in the district
- District tourist council
- Municipal tourist councils
- Tourist industry representatives
- Non profit organizations
- Experts and consultants in tourist branch

**Sources of funding**

District budget and non budget funds and accounts

Municipal budgets and non budget funds and accounts

External sources (donations, applications with project proposals to centralized EU programs, different operating programs for obtaining finances from EU structural funds; World bank, different programs for international development etc

Non profit organizations' financial resources

Funding from business units

## V. Applications (situation analysis)

### 1. Essence and general characteristics of tourist industry

Tourism is complex and varied human activity, related to traveling of people, who satisfy their cognitive and entertainment needs. Number of specialist forecast future tightening of competitiveness not only between different destinations, but also between companies, offering different type of tourist services. This forecast is based on increasing trend from consumers' side to search actively the best deal and price as one of most important components. This fact, on its hand shall imply searching of destinations, offering alternative forms of tourism at alternative prices. Contemporary tourists characterize with low "loyalty" to destination or tourist product. More and more often the main motif appears to be the desire to buy the most profitable tourist package (for example – high-class category hotel, free additional services, combined with cheap transportation etc). The motives for individual trip are characterized mostly with the tourists' anxiety for unique experience. They have high expectations in two directions:

- well developed infrastructure to the destination, guaranteeing a fluent access to tourist sights and attractions;
- well developed destination information services;

More and more important in choosing destination, not only among the older tourists, is the searching of authentic experiences, based on the local culture and nature. Willingness for healthy way of life is increasing. Travels become more frequent on the account of their duration.

The possibilities for village and eco tourism in the cross border region are not very popular. But the number of "individuals" from all age groups is increasing – striving for untraditional, new experiences, combined with "unusual" vacation in unknown territory; the younger generation (25-45 years old) if not married, prefers to be with. Main sources of information for the cross border region and factor for taking decisions are: previous experience, tourist agency, recommendation from friends and relatives and the Internet. Basic factors for choice of vacation in the cross border region are: advantageous prices, interest in beautiful nature, followed by cultural and historical heritage of the cross border region, previous visit and persona interest (hobby).

Some of the opportunities for increasing the cross border cooperation in the tourist branch in the region are:

- tourism represents favourable environment for formation of "clusters" (interrelated productions and economic activities);
- centralizing of the information about programs, training courses, offered tourist services etc, and its distribution, so that it can be easily accessed;
- carrying out of regular work meetings at expert level with participation of municipal administration's representatives, tourist associations and non

- governmental organizations aiming exchange of information, coordination and co-operation in solving priority problems with essential significance;
- creation of internet forums for exchanging information and facilitation of communications between experts;
  - facilitation of formalities for traveling within the zone of direct border contact (the so called local borderline traffic).

Tourist industry is one of the most dynamic and interesting within the economy's structure. This fact predetermines the specific features of tourist branch from advertising point of view. Tourist service has its specific feature, expressed in the fact that "for consumption to be accomplished, it is not the good, approaching the consumer, but the consumer – tourist accomplishes the consumption at the tourist site, i.e. the tourist travels and in order to do this, he stops his traditional way of life and bears extraordinary expenses<sup>5</sup>." Because of the exceptionally high significance of the advertisement for the development of tourism in the cross border region, a draft scheme for planning and regulation of advertisement in tourism is presented below, including the following stages:

5 Source: Dunov, Iv. Economy of tourism

6 Source: the above mentioned

1. *Determination of advertising purposes.* The determination of the contents and the structure of the advertising purposes on macro-, medium - and micro level represent a key element in the entire tourist agency marketing.

2. *Establishment of the responsibilities.* There are two types of agencies which are engaged with the advertising campaigns of the tourist companies: agencies for complex (full) service and agencies with limited functions – range scale and topical cycle.

3. *Determination of the advertising budget.* The following principles shall be followed in advertising budget calculation for a tourist company:

- The basic reference point for determining the volume, the structure, the purpose organization and the "temporary lag" of the resources for advertisement should be the average statistic index for this factor in national, regional and global scale;
- The tourist company should have its own specific and adequate advertising policy;
- Upon advertising in tourism rules shall be followed, which are unusual for the other branches of economy. This is caused by the fact that the tourists think and act completely different from the seller or the buyer of ordinary goods and services.

4. *Working out the campaign's theme and the mechanism.* The tourist companies on the territory of the target region should consider more and incessantly the motivation of their real and potential clients.

5. *Selection of the advertising methods*, respectively the ways for their realization

6. *Creating an adequate advertising message*

7. *Determining the timeframe and the intensity of the advertisement campaign*

8. *Analysis of the efforts which have been put for the conduction of the advertisement campaign*

9. *Assessment of the results from the advertisement campaign*

Other important issue for the development of tourism in the cross border region is public relations. The system of "Public Relations" is widely used for different purposes and fulfills a wide range of functions in the marketing of the tourist industry. Public relations could be accomplished by the mass media (television, radio, printed editions and etc.), by the means for individual influence (meetings, conversations, advertising tours, accompaniment of popular public persons to tourist places, etc.), and through sponsorship (sport events, cultural and educational, etc.).

## **2. Tourist potential of the cross border region**

### ***Tourist resources (tourist supply)***

Tourist resources are classified under different indications. Considering their origin, they are divided into natural and anthropogenic; according to their shape and location - spot, linear and surface ones; according to their importance – universal, national, regional and local; according to their settlement localization – settlement and outside settlement; according to the kind of ownership – private and public; according to the accessibility – resources with difficult walking accessibility, resources accessible only for specialized tourist transport and resources accessible for public transport as well, etc.

It should be stated that the tourist supply also depends (as well as the tourist demand) on the established social regulations, value systems, culture, traditions and policy. Tourist supply inevitably contains the elements of the public – political and social – economical system, the social structure of society, the behavior attitudes during work and during the free time. Most tourist services have non-material character (observation, visits, etc.), but there are services such as food offering, for example, which have material character. In this regard, tourist services offering may be divided into two types:

- *Primary* – offering natural phenomena and anthropogenic resources in a definite tourist destination, i.e. in the place, towards which tourist flows are directed to.
- *Secondary* – offering hotel and restaurant services, the personnel servicing the tourists and others. Now, the secondary tourist offering determines the great share of incomes from tourism, as well as the

attractiveness of a definite tourist destination. The expenses for advertisement and maintenance, connected with the primary tourist offering are calculated in the prices of the tourist services from the secondary type.

Cultural – informative and balneological tourism could be accepted as a basic tourist product in the cross border region the on the basis of the rich cultural – historic inheritance and natural resources, and eco- and rural tourism are with high prospect and with an opportunity for development. Their offering could be diversified by developing of other kinds of additional tourist services, by combining the present resources. Hunting and fishing tourism and extreme sports as well are also prospect for the cross border region.

### ***Natural tourist resources***

According to the acquired terminology, natural tourist resources are all these special features of the natural components, which could satisfy at the moment or in the near future the tourists' demands, originated in a given territory. Contemporary researches of the motivation and the preferences in the eco-tourist trips show that they are undertaken as a part of a tourist holiday amongst nature<sup>7</sup>. The most important elements of an eco-tourist travel are: staying among nature, observation of wild animals and plants in their natural inhabitation, as well as peculiar natural shapes, visiting national and natural parks. The cultural component is of great importance as well, since nature and culture are closely related. A motive for eco-tourist trips can be the meetings with the local people, experiencing cultural traditions and native way of life, acquaintance with native products and cuisine. As a part of motivation for tourist trips undertaking among nature are different sport events and hiking activities. The common feature of all tourists – consumers of eco-tourist packages, is that they are inclined to pay a higher price, but they expect high quality activities and services. This wide range of motives presumes that it would not be a true reflection of the present reality if it is spoken not for one product of ecotourism, but rather of a certain range of products related with a stay in a preserved natural environment. From many clients' point of view, eco-tourist routes should not be entirely dominated by eco-activities, but on the contrary – to be combined with cultural and sport activities.

7 Source: Asenova, M. et al. Strategy and action plan for development of tourism in Tsarevo municipality 2006

Several groups of programs are outlined, which include various ecotourism tourist products, suitable for the cross border region:

- Hiking tours and other types of mountain tourism
- Excursions for observation of wild nature, flora and fauna
- Specialized trips for the interested in ornithology, in protected natural sites with permitted access;

- Tourist excursions based on combined programs, where together with the contacts with nature sport activities, cultural activities are offered, or they are combined with rural tourism.;

The analysis of the motivation and the expectations of the potential eco-tourists, as well as offered tourist products, shows that it is recommended separate modules to be worked out with natural and eco-tourist components within the frames of the traditional vacation travels, as this could increase the ecotourism market, acquaint more people with the natural resources and the cultural riches of the respective tourist destination, bringing sense of care for their preservation.

### ***Anthropogenic tourist resources***

Under definition, anthropogenic tourist resources represent all elements of material and intellectual culture which are intended to satisfy tourists' necessities and are attractive for tourists. The main peculiarities of anthropogenic tourist resources are:

- Short time for acquaintance from tourists
- Anthropogenic resources usually are visited by tourists with complex motives for their visit. For example, when the tourists set off for a cultural monument, on their way they usually meet other attractive objects and phenomena made by nature or by man. In this connection, the ATR are the base for development of informative, cultural, walking and other kinds of tourism.
- Usually the ATR are combined with tourist accommodation facilities – hotels, chalets, holiday houses, etc.
- ATR have predominantly informative effect on tourists;
- ATR are not visited by large number of people, as the natural ones are, and are known by the fact that they are visited by a definite circle of tourists;.
- ATR are distinguished for their high stability under the pressure of the tourist visits;
- ATR have a strong educational effect;
- They particularly require a higher cultural level of the tourists who visit them;

### ***Tourist (natural and anthropogenic) resources in the cross border region's territory.***

#### **Tourist resources in Bulgarian part of the region**

##### **Kyustendil district**

The district of Kyustendil is situated in the west part of the region. It borders with the district of Pernik to the north, the district of Sofia – to the east, the district of Blagoevgrad – to the south and with Macedonia and Serbia – to the west. The district's geographic situation makes it important from border and transport point

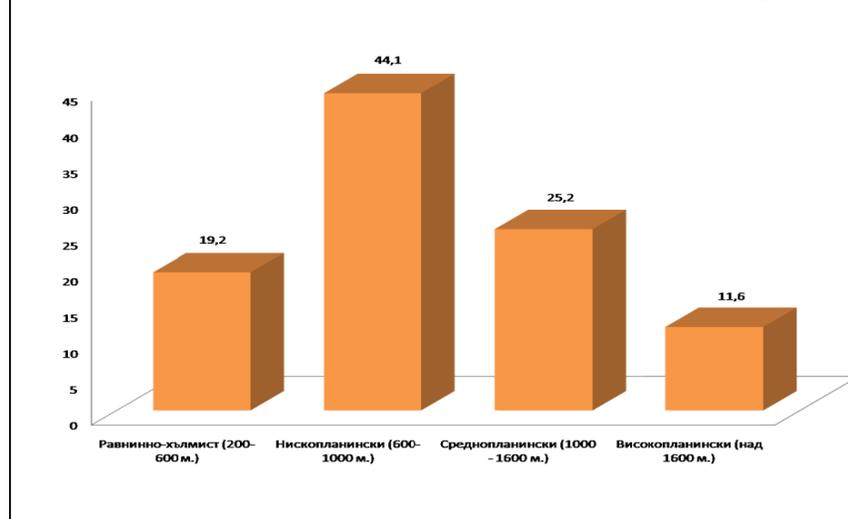
of view. The boundaries of three countries gather here - Bulgaria, Macedonia and Serbia, where two CBCO are functioning – near Gyueshevo (with Macedonia) and Oltomanci (with Serbia). Parts of pan-European transport corridors' routes pass via the district territory (IV and VIII), whose elements are E-79 (I-1) road from Vidin/Kalafat (Romania) via Sofia and Dupnitsa for CBCO Kulata/Promahonas (Greece) E-871 (I-6) road from Kriva Palanka (Macedonia) and CBCO Gyueshevo via Kyustendil to Pernik and Sofia, as well as Sofia – Kulata railway (junction to Bobovdol in Dupnitsa) and Radomir-Kyustendil-Gyueshevo railway. II-62 road is important as well (from Kyustendil via Dupnitsa to Samokov) in west-east direction, providing the connection between both transport corridors with II-82 road (Samokov - Sofia) and “Trakia” motorway.

The area of district's territory is 3 052 km<sup>2</sup>, representing 2,7 % from the country's territory and 15,0 % from that of the region. The district ranks third in the region under this index and 20-th in the country. 9 municipalities lie within its range (Bobovdol, Boboshevo, Dupnitsa, Kocherinovo, Kyustendil, Nevestiino, Rila, Sapareva banya and Treklyano) and 182 settlements, 7 of them are towns. The largest territory has the municipality of Kyustendil and the smallest – the municipality of Boboshevo.

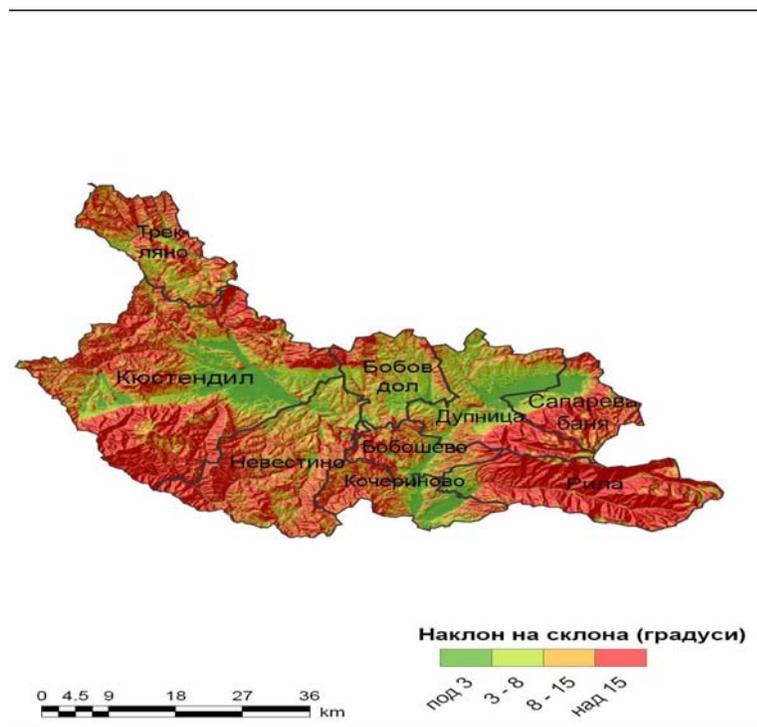
The territory's relief represents a mosaic, consisting of hollows, valleys, hills and mountains of different height. In the district's northern periphery the mountains Chudinska (Aramlia peak, 1497 m), Lisets (Vrashnik peak, 1500 m), Zemenska (Tichak peak, 1295 m), Konyavska (Viden, 1487 m) and Verila (Goliam Debelets peak, 1415 m) are situated. They are part of Kraishte, together with the hollows Kamenishka, Kystendilska and Dupnishka. North – eastern parts of Osogovo mountain raise to the west, as well as the most northern parts of Vlahina mountain eastern foot, which belong to Osogovo – Belasitsa mountain group. Osogovo mountain is fourth in height in Bulgaria, its highest peak is Ruen (2252 m alt). It is separated from Kraishte mountains by Velbuzhd saddle-type valley to the north and from Vlahina mountain by Chernata skala (The Black rock) – to the south. Rila (Musala peak, 2925 m) rises in the eastern part of the district – the highest mountain in Bulgaria and on the Balkan Peninsula. The greater share of Northeastern (Malyovitsa) part of Rila lies within the district's scope, in which high parts there are lots of cirques and glacial lakes, glacial trough, moraines, etc. Some picturesque gorges are formed along the Struma river valley – Zemen, Skrin and Belo pole gorges and the famous Stob pyramids are located in Kocherinovo municipality. The relief in hollow fields and mountain feet favours the development of agriculture, settlements and technical infrastructure. Mountain relief hampers the development of mechanized agriculture and transportation, but together with mineral springs, great biovariety and rich cultural-historical heritage is an important prerequisite for development of tourism. The district ranks third in the country in average altitude (992 m) and average slope surfaces' inclination (12,6°) (after the districts of Smolyan and Blagoevgrad). The average vertical

dismemberment is 261 m/km<sup>2</sup>, and the average horizontal one - 2 m/km<sup>2</sup>. The highest point in the district is Cherna Poliana peak (2716 m) in Rila.

### Relative share of hypsometric zones in the region (%)



### Slopes inclination



Various mineral resources can be found in the district. Bobovdol coal basin is with greatest economic importance, as half of the brown coal deposits in the country are concentrated there. There is another coal field – near the village of Katrishte (Kyustendil municipality). Lead and Zink and polimetal ore deposits are found in Osogovo mountain, gold deposits near the village of Cheshliantsi (Treklyano

municipality) and small deposits of silver, platinum and molybdenum ores – near the village of Resovo (Kyustendil municipality).

Parts of temperate continental and transient continental (in the territories below 1000 m) as well as mountain climatic zones (in the territories above 1000 m) cover the district's territory, and as a consequence, the elements of climate vary in relatively broad limits. The average annual temperature is 10,7 °C in non mountain parts (Kyustendil, 510 m); the lowest average monthly temperature is registered in January (-0,7 °C), and the highest one – in July (20,9 °C). The average temperature in January for the mountain zone is -3,0 °C, and in July – 14,6 °C. In the highest parts of Rila mountain the average annual temperature is around and below 0 °C. The annual precipitation amount in the hollow fields (the town of Kyustendil) is 582 mm, and in Osogovo and Rila mountains' high parts - over 1000 mm, as  $\frac{3}{4}$  from this quantity is snow.

The river Struma is the longest river (78,0 km<sup>8</sup>), whose river valley lies in West – Aegean draining zone of the country. Its bigger tributaries are the rivers Treklyanska, Dragovishtitsa, Bistritsa, Eleshnitsa, Dzherman, Rilska etc. Rivers' high waters within the district's limits are in May and low waters – in September. The average water flow modulus in Struma river valley is between 4,5 and 7,1 l/sec/km<sup>2</sup>, and near the valleys of its mountain tributaries, the values of this index are much higher (between 8,0 and 29,0 l/sec/km<sup>2</sup>). Numerous glacial lakes are found in Rila cirques, the most famous are the Seven Rila lakes. Considerable volumes of ground waters are accumulated in the river terraces and deposit cones in the mountain feet. The mineral springs near the towns of Kyustendil and Sapareva banya are localizing factor for the development of balneo recreation; mineral water near the village of Nevestino is bottled.

<sup>8</sup> Within the district boundaries

Deep and fertile soils are predominant for the hollow fields' soil coverage – alluvial meadow, maroon forest and black clay soils, suitable for growing of various agricultural crops (cereals, fruits, fodder crops etc). The soils in mountain regions are mostly shallow, erosional with lower natural fertility. In the mountain feet and lower mountain zones they are suitable for growing fruits, potatoes, tobacco etc, while in the higher ones - for development of forestry and meadow stock breeding. Protected natural territories' network in the district covers 8851,1 ha from „Rila” national park (total area of 81046,0 ha), one natural park – „Rila monastery” (in Rila municipality with an area of 27370,7 ha), 3 natural reserves – „Rila monastery forest” (in Rila municipality with an area of 3676,5 ha), „Skakavitsa” (in Sapareva banya municipality with an area of 70,8 ha) and „Crna reka” (in Kyustendil municipality with an area of 197,0 ha), one reserve under preservation – „Gabra” (in Nevestino municipality with an area of 89,6 ha), one protected location – „Century-old beech forest ” (in Kyustendil municipality with an area of 1,3 ha) and 11 natural sights – “Goritsa waterfall” (in Sapareva banya municipality), “St. Anna waterfall” (in Nevestino municipality), “Skakavitsa waterfall” (in Kyustendil municipality), “Sequoia group” (in Kyustendil

municipality), “Zamen rocks” (in Treklyano municipality), “Koriyata” (in Treklyano municipality), “Turkish hazelbush location” (in Boboshevo municipality), “Ridinata cave” (in Nevestino municipality), “Stob pyramids” (in Kocherinovo municipality), „Pobit kamak” (in Treklyano municipality) and „Chernata skala (Black rock)” (in Kocherinovo municipality).

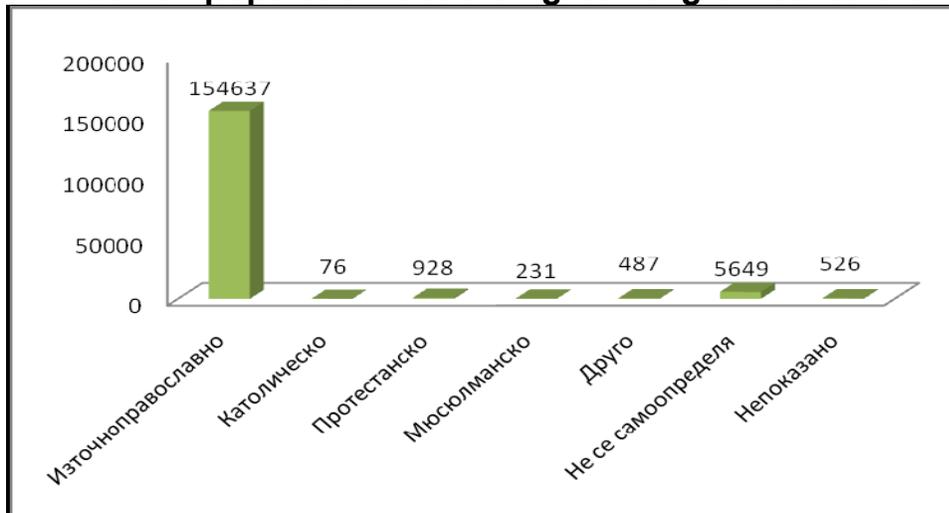
The relative share of territories for protection of natural habitats and wild flora and fauna, included in “Nature 2000”<sup>9</sup> ecologic network is 41,51 % from the district area; as it ranks 6<sup>th</sup> in the country under this index.

<sup>9</sup> under Directive 92/43/EEC (<http://www.natura2000bg.org/natura/bg/index1.php>)

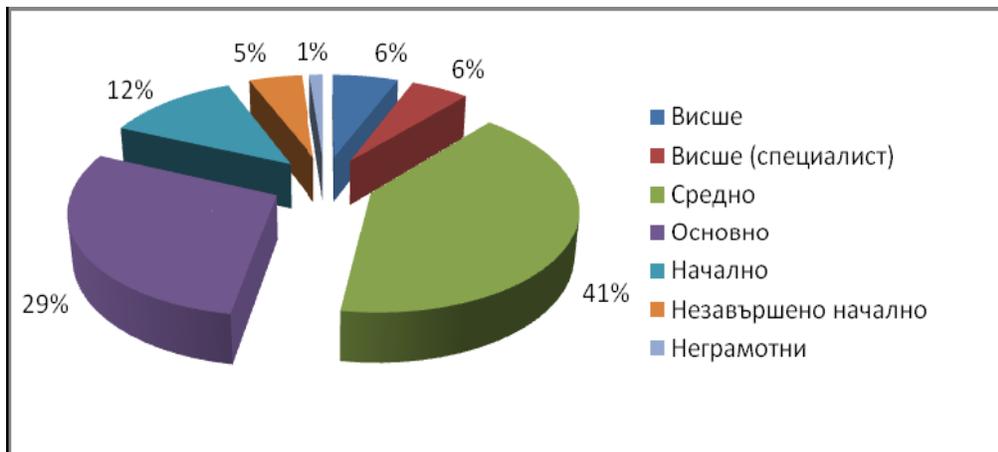
The district ranks third in the region (after Sofia and Blagoevgrad districts) in area of agricultural lands according to the data from 2007 and 23<sup>rd</sup> in the country. It is 4<sup>th</sup> in the region and 24<sup>th</sup> in the country as far as the utilized agricultural land is concerned. The municipality of Kystendil has the largest areas of agricultural land and the municipality of Sapareva banya – the smallest. Agricultural lands occupy the biggest share from Bobovdol municipality’s territory, and the smallest one – from Rila municipality’s territory. The district ranks third in the region for forest territories and 12<sup>th</sup> in the country. Rila municipality ranks first in relative share of forest territories, and Bobovdol municipality – the last.

The number of population in Kyustendil district as to the 31<sup>st</sup> of December, 2007, is 149 187 people. On the basis of this criterion, it ranks forth among the south-western planning districts. During the recent years a permanent tendency of decreasing the number of the population has been observed. The geographic density of the population is 48,55 people per sq. m. and according to this criterion it ranks forth. Regarding the sex structure of the population, males are less than females – respectively 48,55 % и 51,45 %, as this trend has spread both in towns and in villages. The percentage proportion among born alive is 53,04 % 46,96 % in favor of boys. There is a permanent tendency to ageing of the population in the district. The number of marriages during 2007 is 412, and the marriage rate - 3,4 ‰. The number of divorces is 259, and the divorce rate - 1,7 ‰, as in virtue of these factors the district ranks third in the south-western planning districts.

**Number of population according to religion as to the 1<sup>st</sup> of March, 2001**



Orthodox  
 Catholic  
 Protestant  
 Muslim  
 Other  
 Not stated  
 Not shown



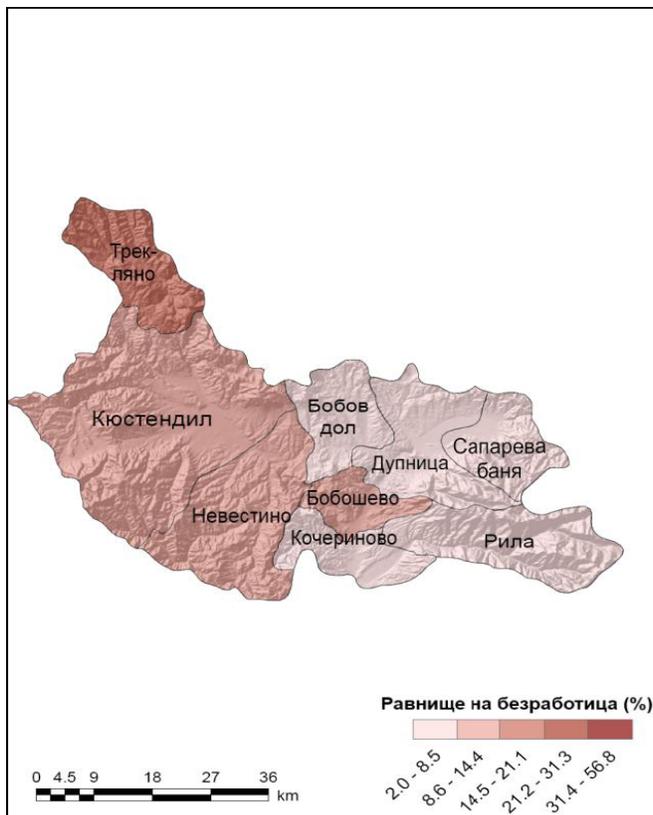
Higher  
 Higher /specialty/  
 Secondary  
 Primary  
 Elementary  
 Elementary – not finished  
 Illiterate

## **Number of population according to education as to the 1<sup>st</sup> of March, 2001**

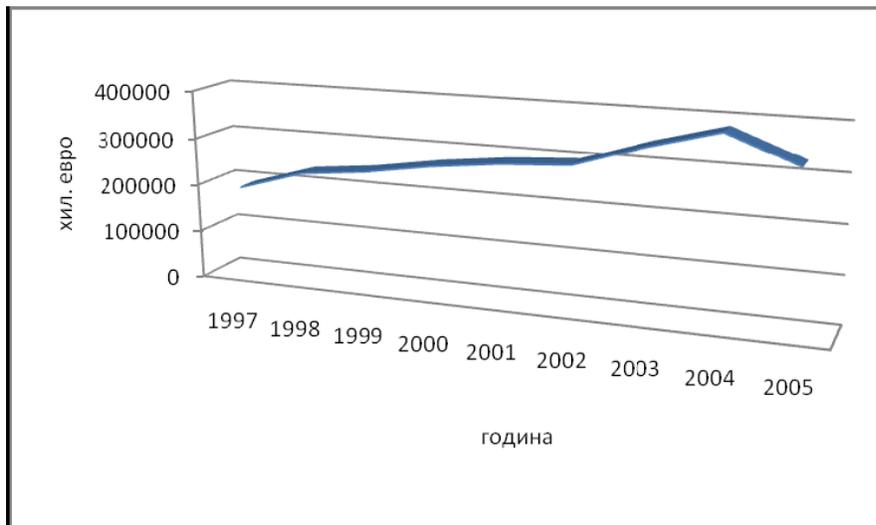
In 2007 the number of born alive is 1 201, and the total birth rate is – 8 ‰, and regarding this factor the district takes the fourth place among the districts in the region. The municipalities Dupnitsa and Kyustendil have the highest birth rate, and the municipalities Treklyano and Nevestino – the lowest one. The number of the dead in 2007 is 2 644, and the total death rate – 17,6 ‰, as this is the highest level of this factor in the planning region. The municipalities Nevestino and Treklyano have the highest death rate, and the municipalities Dupnitsa and Bobov dol - the lowest one. Infant mortality comes up to 5 ‰, and according to this factor it is ranked on the last but one place in the region. Population's natural growth is - 9.6 ‰, which ranks the district second in the planning region. The municipalities Dupnitsa and Kyustendil have the highest natural growth of the population, and the municipalities Nevestino and Treklyano – the lowest one. Concerning the migration mobility of the population, it is acknowledged a negative artificial growth, as women stand out with a higher mobility. The negative values of the natural and the artificial growth result in decreasing the total number of the population, which trend is going to be retained in future.

The manpower in Kyustendil district during 2007 comprises of 73 521 people and on the basis of this factor it occupies the fourth place in the planning region and the 21<sup>st</sup> place in the country. The coefficients of economical activity and employment are respectively 51,9 % and 49,5 %, and according to this the district ranks tenth and 8<sup>th</sup> - in the country. 6 131 free job positions are announced in the district during 2007, as the number of the unemployed per one working place is 12 people, compared with the average number for the country – 11 people. The average annual number of the unemployed registered in 2007 is 6 082, which puts the district on the 26<sup>th</sup> place in the country. 1 195 people of the above mentioned are at an age up to 29 inclusive, or 19,6 %. The level of unemployment is 8,3 %, as according to this factor the district ranks 19<sup>th</sup> in the country and the second place in the planning region. During 2007 the number of unemployed with primary or lower education is 3 235, which represents 53,2 % of all unemployed, and concerning this factor the district takes the 25<sup>th</sup> place in the country. The municipalities Treklyano, Nevestino and Boboshevo distinguish with the highest levels of unemployment, as Rila and Bobov dol – with the lowest ones.

## **Unemployment rate up to the 31<sup>st</sup> of December, 2007**



The gross domestic product (GDP) created in Kyustendil district during 2005 is at the amount of EUR 326 million, which ranks the district on the 19<sup>th</sup> place in the country and on the fourth place in the planning region. Generally, within the period 1997-2005 the GDP created in the district has increased 1,7 times under 7,5 % average annual growth rate, which puts the district on the 24<sup>th</sup> place in the country. During 2005 GDP per person was EUR 2 136, and concerning this factor Kyustendil district occupies the 14<sup>th</sup> place in the country



## GDP Growth rate in the district within the period 1997-2005 (in thousand Euros)

During 2006 the direct foreign investments in the non-financial enterprises of Kyustendil district were amounting USD 7 106 thousands, which represents only 0,1 % of the total investments in the country. During 2005 the amount of the gross added value (GAD) in the district is EUR 268 millions. Structurally, it is distributed among the three sectors of economy as follows: agricultural – EUR 46 millions (or 17,1 %), industry – EUR 91 millions (or 33,8 %) and services – EUR 132 millions (or 49,1 %). The main economical activities in Kyustendil district are tourism, light industry, food and wine and tobacco industries.

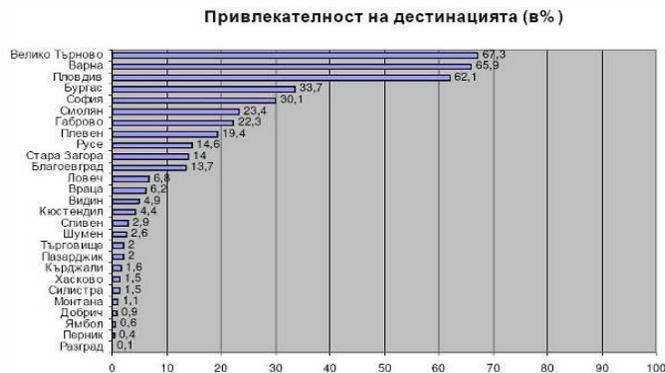
## Accommodation facilities' activity in 2006<sup>10</sup>

Districts	Accommodation	Beds	Beds/night	Nights spent		No. of people		Incomes from accommodation	
				Total	Incl. foreigners	Total	Incl. foreigners	Total	Incl. foreigners
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2 887</b>	<b>252 305</b>	<b>52 298 489</b>	<b>17427 519</b>	<b>11960 168</b>	<b>4286 442</b>	<b>2054 123</b>	<b>578 845</b>	<b>439 266</b>
BLAGOEVGRAD	95	6 596	2 145 864	366 159	188 379	158 343	64 709	9 157 205	4 771 943
BOURGAS	1 016	94 671	13 507 785	6 053 394	4 952 336	823 647	603 495	183 936 229	159 819 975
VARNA	615	64 084	11 927 039	5 005 937	4 145 227	826 428	561 902	152 961 822	131 799 179
VELIKO TURNOVO	50	3 250	1 146 619	218 527	44 495	132 671	26 304	5 420 396	1 416 981
VIDIN	21	559	196 887	25 885	3 309	19 963	2 920	506 720	84 772
VRATSA	20	890	272 646	53 575	8 773	20 944	2 222	1 181 229	298 626
GABROVO	27	1 773	606 632	122 079	16 136	65 644	10 472	2 967 762	700 698
DOBRICH	128	23 934	3 772 781	1 274 001	1 029 436	197 999	127 477	39 031 997	33 072 362
KARDZHALI	17	844	283 218	45 314	9 880	27 932	5 024	995 960	420 996
<b>KYSTENDIL</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>2 100</b>	<b>668 013</b>	<b>88 162</b>	<b>9 149</b>	<b>45 445</b>	<b>5 207</b>	<b>1 562 092</b>	<b>304 007</b>
LOVECH	56	3 648	1 049 747	190 260	17 991	96 172	6 383	4 355 017	705 050
MONTANA	19	884	321 142	58 425	4 813	22 819	2 651	840 305	143 379
PAZARDZHIK	35	3 196	1 139 110	297 927	18 772	111 682	6 795	7 632 869	882 781
PERNIK	12	786	286 890	58 916	7 257	13 331	1 685	713 457	122 714
PLEVEN	8	754	275 210	60 874	10 490	37 747	4 893	1 724 945	589 150
PLOVDIV	163	7 723	2 536 538	593 114	166 296	315 818	81 231	20 529 407	7 650 521
RAZGRAD	10	452	164 980	22 899	2 322	14 991	1 234	619 979	82 636
RUSSE	33	1 313	455 576	105 079	27 577	67 352	14 274	3 706 485	1 341 165
SILISTRA	14	432	131 425	26 369	4 917	19 391	2 427	921 202	372 071
SLIVEN	45	1 585	538 367	70 143	11 394	36 064	4 656	2 108 884	729 826
SMOLYAN	181	8 652	2 607 879	485 021	147 447	178 345	34 911	17 844 447	8 219 195
SOFIA CAPITAL	135	11 889	4 190 623	1 283 983	781 821	698 596	390 447	97 671 860	76 463 360
SOFIA	49	6 022	1 938 849	430 066	255 604	129 806	50 715	9 907 863	5 620 243
STARA ZAGORA	33	2 618	867 826	277 535	35 934	102 303	15 970	6 346 804	1 486 611
TARGOVITSE	16	523	190 895	46 765	24 854	15 397	3 178	1 177 944	689 213
HASKOVO	29	1 556	533 443	82 407	16 796	50 280	11 420	2 222 251	625 656
SHOUMEN	17	1 117	387 072	56 969	10 640	42 712	8 328	1 892 252	534 428
YAMBOL	12	454	155 433	27 734	8 123	14 620	3 193	907 764	318 999

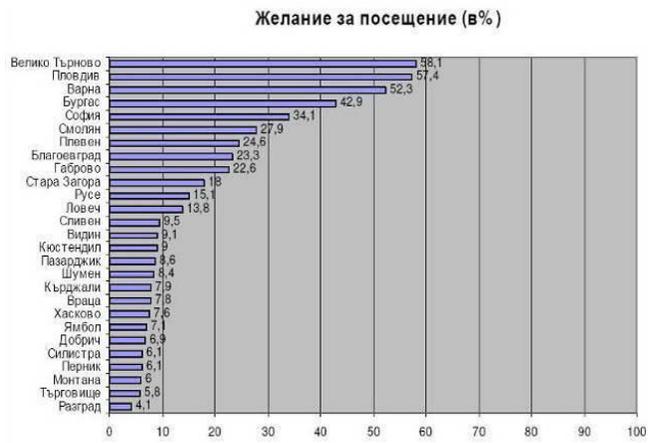
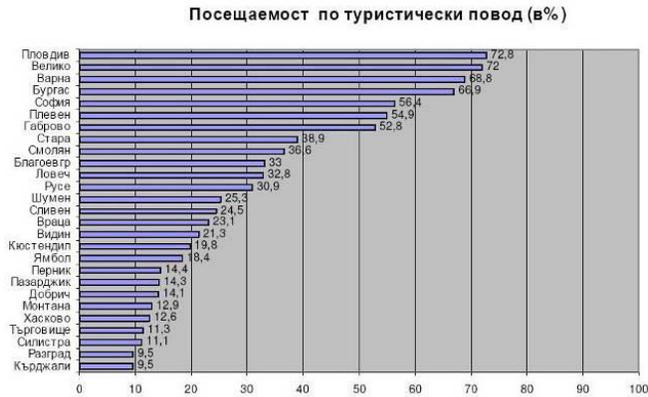
<sup>10</sup> Source: NSI

# Results from carried out representative research of public opinion in Republic of Bulgaria<sup>11</sup> about the assessment of areas in the country as tourist destinations:

## Destination attractiveness (%) Total number of visits in district towns (%)

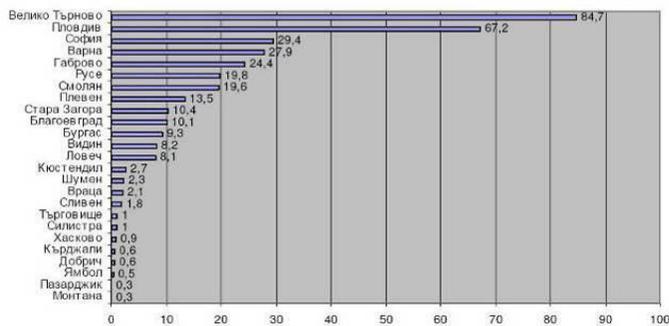


## Visits for tourism (%) Initiative for visit (%)

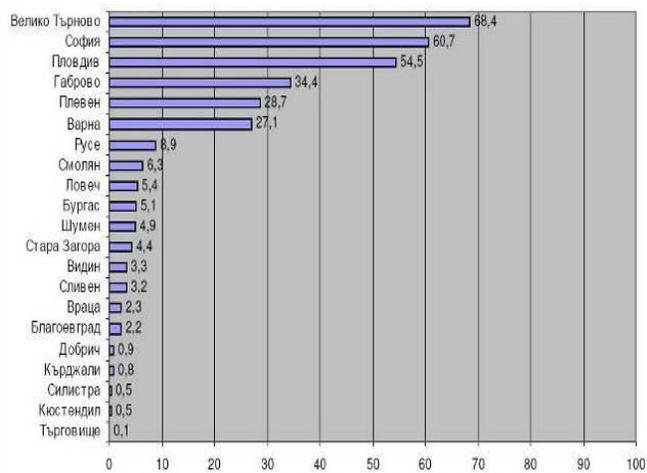


## Most attractive towns for ARCHITECTURE (%) Most attractive towns for MUSEUMS (%)

Най-привлекателни градове като АРХИТЕКТУРА (в%)

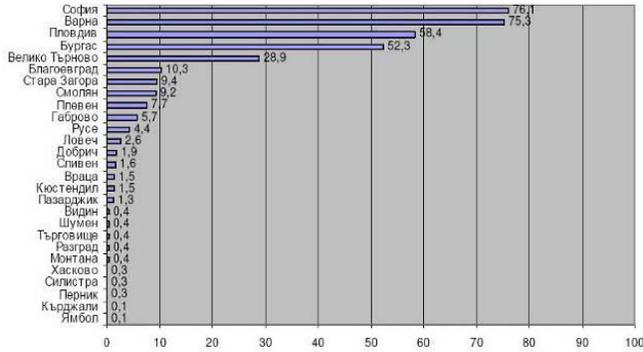


Най-привлекателни градове като МУЗЕИ (в%)

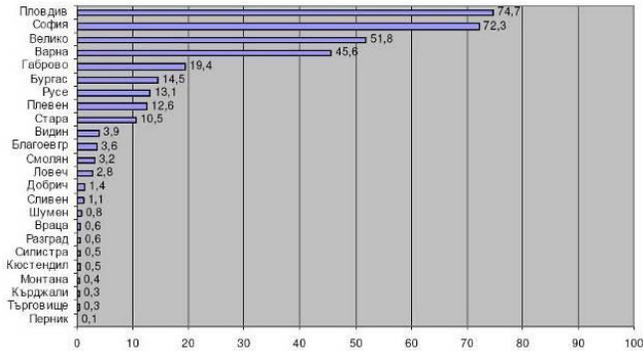


**Most attractive towns for ENTERTAINMENT (%)    Most attractive towns for CULTURE (%)**

**Най-привлекателни градове като РАЗВЛЕЧЕНИЕ  
(в%)**

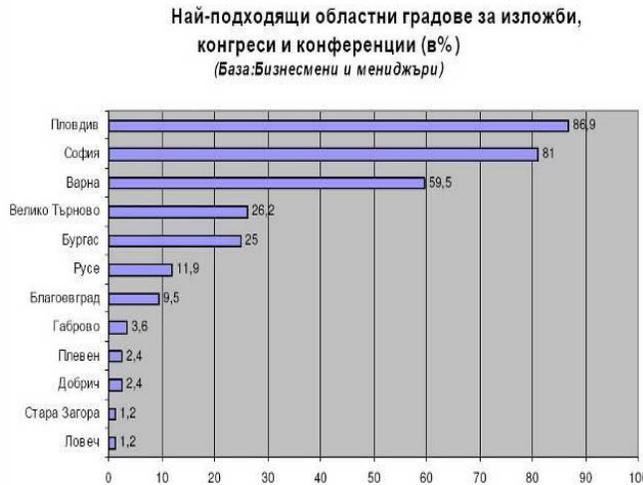
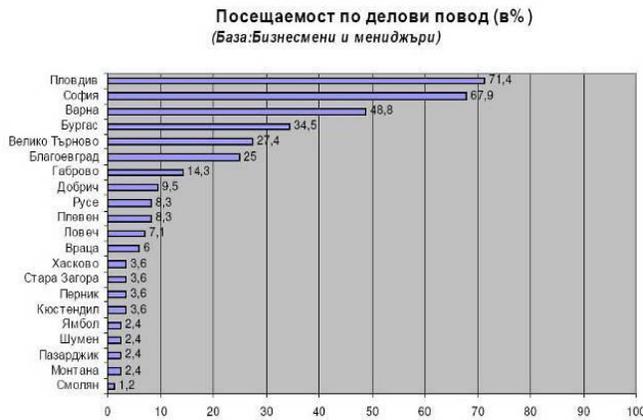


**Най-привлекателни градове като КУЛТУРА (в%)**



**Business trips (%) – (Businessmen and managers)**

**Most convenient district towns for conventions and conferences (%) – (Businessmen and managers)**



11 Source: Strategy and plan for development of tourism in Plovdiv Municipality 2007-2013.

**Kyustendil municipality** spreads over some parts of Osogovo Mountain, Konyavska Mountain and Kyustendil valley. On the west, the municipality borders on the Republic of Serbia, and there is situated the CBCO “Oltomantsi”, and on the Republic of Macedonia (CBCO of “Gyueshevo”). The route of the international corridor No. 8 passes through the municipality. The economy of the municipality is represented by textile and tailoring industry, production of kitchenware, condensers, transformers, tourism, etc.

The number of the population in the municipality as to the 31<sup>st</sup> of December, 2007 is 64343 people. Women prevail. The total birth rate is 8.6 ‰, and the total death rate is 16.7 ‰. The natural growth of the population on the territory of the municipality is -8.1 ‰, and the artificial growth is negative as well. In a short-term period it is expected that the population of the municipality would continue to decrease.

Kyustendil is an ancient town. It is well-known since I-VI c. with the name of Pautalia, during the Middle Ages as Velbazhd, and later on as Kyustendil

(modified from the name of Konstantin, Konstantin's bath). The town is a national balneological resort with approximately 40 mineral springs with temperature 73°C. They cure rheumatic diseases, diseases of the periphery nervous system and spinal cord, gynecological diseases.

Tourist sights are:

Pautalia asclepieion (II-III c.) – former marvelous Roman hydro-therapeutic site and temple of the God of health Asclepius;

Pirkova tower (XIV-XV c.);

Historical museum, which is situated in “Ahmed Bey” mosque (1575);

“St. George” church (XI c.);

“St. Michael archangel” church;

“St. Nikola” church;

“Assumption of Virgin Mary” church;

“St. Luka” monastery;

“Virgin Mary” church (1816);

“St. Mina” church;

“Vladimir Dimitrov – the Master” art gallery;

Houses – architectural monuments (Maistorska and Emfiedzhieva); house-museum of Ilyo Voyvoda and D. Kalyashki (Zhilintsi village), T. Angelov (Bozhanata), memorials of Ilyo Voyvoda, D. Kalyashki, D. Blagoev, Vladimir Dimitrov – the Master, Z. Grigorov; “Dimitar Peshev” house-museum; Alay Banya; Roman thermal springs; Dervish Banya; “Fetih Mehmed” mosque; Chifte Banya.

To the south of Kyustendil raises “Hisarlaka” hill-park with ruins of a Roman fortress – acropolis from III-IV c. The fortress has the shape of a polygon with length of 230m and width of 125m, and it was crowned with many towers. The feudal lord Konstantin Dragaš (the town is named after him) built his own palace here during the XIV c., which was destroyed by the Turks during the XV c. Not far from the town, over the Struma River and near Nevestino village is located the famous granite five-arched Kadin Bridge, which was built within 1469-1470.

The following natural tourist resources are situated on the municipality's territory :

"Hisarlaka",

“Venerable beech forest” Protected area,

"Zelenia Rid",

“Redwood group – Yuchbunar” Protected area,

“Crna Reka” reserve.

The thickest oak tree on the territory of Bulgaria – 9.20m is situated in the locality of Ahmatov grob.

**Osogovo State Game Breeding Station** –deer, wild boar and wild rabbit, wolf, fox, wild cat, partridge and quail could be found here. The station provides horses for horse riding and hunting.

In the village of Gyueshevo, which is also a border checkpoint, a church-mausoleum and an ossuary of 1500 perished soldiers in the wars within 1912-1918 are situated.

**“The Shroud of God’s Mother” Resilovo monastery** is situated in the proximity of Resilovo village (Kyustendil district). It was founded in 1932. The monastery is a convent. Accommodation and food are not provided.

**Nevestino municipality** is the second largest one in the area of Kyustendil district. It is situated in the southern part of Kyustendil district and spreads over some parts of Osogovo Mountain and Kyustendil valley. The territory of the municipality is drained by the river system of Struma River. The economic view of the municipality is determined by agriculture (fruit-growing, tobacco planting, cattle breeding, etc.) and by wood industry.

The number of the population in the municipality as to the 31<sup>st</sup> of December, 2007 is 3533 people, and women prevail. The total birth rate is 1.6 ‰, and the total death rate is 41 ‰. The natural growth of the population on the territory of the municipality is - 39.3 ‰, and the artificial growth is positive.

In a short-term period it is expected that the population of the municipality would continue to decrease.

Tourist sights:

Kadin Bridge (1469 - 1470);

“St. Ivan” church (XVI – XVII c., Pastuh village);

“St. Virgin Mary” church;

Graveyard church;

“St. Ana” Monastery;

“St. Trinity” church.

The following natural tourist resources are situated on the municipality’s territory :

“Gabra” Natural reserve,

“Manolovoto” Protected area,

“The cave in the locality of Ridinata”, “St. Ana” Natural zone.

**Treklyano municipality** is a peripheral municipality, situated in the west part of Kyustendil district. The west border of the municipality coincides with the state bordeline with the Republic of Serbia. The local economy is poorly developed, specialized in extensive agriculture and wood industry. The municipality has a potential to develop hunting, fishing and eco tourism.

The number of the population in the municipality up to the 31<sup>st</sup> of December, 2007 is 1111 people. Males prevail. The total birth rate is 0.9 ‰, and the total death rate is 31.5 ‰. The natural growth of the population in the territory of the municipality is - 30.6 ‰, and the artificial growth is positive. In a short-term period it is expected that the population of the municipality would continue to decrease.

“Assumption of Virgin Mary” church is preserved in Treklyano, which is dated as of 1860 and treasures precious icons.

The following natural tourist resources are situated on the municipality’s territory:

“The Zemen rocks” natural zone – Zlogosh village,

"Koriyata",

"Pobit kamak".

**Dupnitsa municipality** is the fourth largest one in Kyustendil district, which spreads over the biggest part of the valley with the same name, as well as over parts of Rila Mountain. The municipality stands out for its favorable transport-geographical location, as long as the road-bed of the international highway E-79 gathers with the parallel railway on its territory, with a detour for the town of Samokov and “Trakia” highway. Other route important for the district connects the town of Dupnitsa with the district center of Kyustendil. The local economy is well developed and specialized in pharmacy, mechanical engineering and metal industry, electrical industry, tailoring, etc. To the north of the town of Dupnitsa one of the biggest markets for used vehicles in the country is located.

The number of the population in the municipality as to the 31<sup>st</sup> of December, 2007 is 48463 people. Women prevail. The total birth rate is 9.1 ‰, and the total death rate is 15.4 ‰. The natural growth of the population on the territory of the municipality is -6.3 ‰, and the artificial growth is negative. In a short-term period it is expected that the population of the municipality would continue to decrease.

**Dupnitsa** is a successor of the ancient Roman town Germania, the name of which is given after German river. Tourist sights are: Stanke Dimitrov house-museum, architectural memorials from the Bulgarian national revival – clock tower, churches and other. The town is the birth place of the cultural figure from the Bulgarian national revival Georgi Ikonov (1822-1865). Dupnitsa is a starting point for Rila Mountain and for Sapareva banya mineral spring.

Dzherman sandstone pyramids – they are situated in the locality of the village of German. They reach the height of 10 m.

**Rila municipality** is the third largest one within the borders of the district. Rila municipality occupies the south-eastern part of the district. Its territory includes some parts of south-western Rila Mountain and Kocherinovo field. Within the framework of the local economy tourism, trade and agriculture, specialized in tobacco planting have a significant role.

The number of the population in the municipality as to the 31<sup>st</sup> of December, 2007 is 3649 people. Women prevail. The total birth rate is 7.4 ‰, and the total death rate is 19.4 ‰. The natural growth of the population on the territory of the municipality is -12 ‰, and the artificial growth is positive. In a short-term period it is expected that the population of the municipality would continue to decrease.

**Rila** is a town since 1969. It is a climate resort with local significance.

Tourist sights are:

Smeltery (smithy) – XV-XVIII c.;

“St. Michael archangel” church (XII - XIII c.);

Orlitsa convent with the church “St. Peter and Paul” (XIV c.);

Pchelino convent with “Assumption of Virgin Mary” church.

Ethnographic complex of houses from the Bulgarian national revival – “Babinska mahala”. The following natural tourist resources are situated on the territory of the municipality:

“Rila monastery” national park,

“Rila monastery forest” reserve.

**“St. Ivan Rilski” Rila monastery** is situated in the vicinity of the town of Rila, in “Rila monastery” natural park. It is a national historical monument and is entered in the UNESCO book for the world heritage. It was founded during the X c. by successors of the hermit Ivan Rilski. His relics are laid in the main church. With its present appearance the monastery complex has existed since XIX c.

The Cross of Rafail, the Krupnik Gospel, the first Bulgarian geographic globe, etc. are preserved in the museum. In the monastery there is an art gallery, ethnographic exhibition, fascinating guest rooms, and library. Food and accommodation are offered.

**Boboshevo municipality** is the smallest one within Kyustendil district. It is located in the south-eastern part of Kyustendil district. Its territory is drained by the rivers Dzherman and Struma. The municipality gathers parts of the Skakavitsa region of Rila Mountain, Vlahina Mountain and the Boboshevo region of Ruen Mountain. The municipal territory is crossed by the submeridional international route and the railway track Sofia-Kulata-Thessaloniki. Agriculture has a leading role as far as specialized structure of municipal economy is concerned.

The number of the population in the municipality as to the 31<sup>st</sup> of December, 2007 is 3325 people. Women prevail. The total birth rate is 4.2 ‰, and the total death rate is 29.2 ‰. The natural growth of the population on the territory of the municipality is -25 ‰, and the artificial growth is positive. In a short-term period it is expected that the population of the municipality would continue to decrease.

**Boboshevo** is a town since 1981. In the town and within its surroundings the monasteries – “St. Dimitar” and “St. Ivan Rilski”, as well as the churches – “St. Iliya”, “St. Todor”, “St. Atanasius”, “St. Nikolai” and “St. Petka” (Vukovo village) are situated. “St. Dimitar” Boboshevo monastery - founded during the X c. “St. Ivan Rilski” Ruen monastery – situated near the town of Boboshevo, Skrino village. The monastery was built in 2002. Food and accommodation are not offered. The natural reserve “Field of Turkish hazel bush” turns to have more significant role than the other natural tourist resources.

**Bobov dol municipality** covers some parts of Konyavska Mountain and Dupnitsa valley. The transport network consists of a railway track and the highway Dupnitsa – Bobov dol, etc. The local economy is monostructural, with developed industry, represented by coal mining and electric power production in “Bobov dol” thermo-electric power station. Other activities are connected with power supply repairs and shoes industry.

A distinctive feature of the municipal economy is the well developed industry. The number of the population in the municipality as to the 31<sup>st</sup> of December, 2007 is 10240 people. Male prevail. The total birth rate is 6.4 ‰, and the total death rate is 16.9 ‰. The natural growth of the population on the territory of the municipality is -10.5 ‰, and the artificial growth is negative. In a short-term period it is expected that the population of the municipality would continue to decrease.

The tourist resources are presented by several cultural-historic sights (memorials of cultural – historic heritage of local importance) such as the rocky Thracian niches in the area of Babinska reka village, the remains of the mediaeval fortifications from the 12<sup>th</sup> c. situated on the Kolosh upland, museum collection, dedicated to coal mining, “St. Nikolai” church and others, as well as the magnificent nature of Konyavska mountain.

**Kocherinovo municipality** is located in the middle part of the river valley of Struma in the south-western part of Bulgaria, and also represents a part of the southern periphery of Kyustendil district. The greatest importance for the development of the municipality has E79 international highway from Sofia – Kulata to Thessalonica and Athens which passes through its territory, as well as the parallel railway track and infrastructure systems. On the territory of the municipality work several tailoring departments, which operate with materials supplied by the client.

The number of the population in the municipality as to the 31<sup>st</sup> of December, 2007 is 6302 people. Women prevail. The total birth rate is 4.9 ‰, and the total death rate is 24.4 ‰. The natural growth of the population on the territory of the municipality is -19.5 ‰, and the artificial growth is positive. In a short-term period it is expected that the population of the municipality would continue to decrease.

**Kocherinovo** is a town since 1974. There are houses, declared for architectural-historic sights on the town’s territory and a church declared to be a memorial for the Bulgarian national revival, as well as a memory plate of N. Vaptsarov.

**Stob** is a village in Kocherinovo municipality. “St. Procopius” church is situated in the village, which is dated as of 1873 and preserves a precious iconostasis and frescoes, as well as several houses from the period of the Bulgarian national revival. Stob pyramids are in close proximity (preserved natural landmark).

**Sapareva banya municipality** is situated in the eastern periphery of Kyustendil district. Its territory is distinguished by the favorable transport-geographic location. The road network is developed mainly in the northern half of the

municipality, as the general road connection for the municipality is the highway II-62 Dupnitsa - Samokov. The local economy is specialized in the area of tourism, trade and agriculture.

The number of the population in the municipality as to the 31<sup>st</sup> of December, 2007 is 8221 people. Women prevail. The total birth rate is 7.1 ‰, and the total death rate is 17.6 ‰. The natural growth of the population on the territory of the municipality is -10.5 ‰, and the artificial growth is positive. In a short-term period it is expected that the population of the municipality would continue to decrease.

**Sapareva banya** is a town since 1974. It is an old settlement and its origin could be found in ancient times, since it has abundant and hot mineral springs (the hottest in the country – 103,4°C and the only geyser in our country and on the Balkan peninsula, the hottest one in continental Europe). The town is a balneological resort, functionally connected with the mountain resort Panichishte, which is 10 km away from it to the south. The Seven Rila lakes could be reached through Sapareva Banya.

Tourist sights are:

Churches - „St. Nikola”(XII – XIII c.), „St. Michael archangel”, „St. Nikolai”, „St. Georgi”, „St. Yoan Bogoslov”, „Ss. Forty Martyrs”;

chapels – „St. Georgi” and „St. Virgin Mary”;

monasteries – „The shroud of God’s Mother” and „St. Stefan”.

**Ovcharts (Forest) waterfall** is the highest waterfall in Rila (39m). It is located near the village of Ovcharts, Sapareva Banya municipality.

### **Accommodation facilities, catering facilities and specialized tourist infrastructure in Bulgarian part of the region**

“Mishel” Hotel - \*\*\* is situated in the town of Kocherinovo. It disposes with 10 beds, a restaurant and a barbeque.

“Pastra” Restaurant – it is situated on the way to the Rila Monastery. Capacity- 40 places.

“Valentino” House – it is situated in the city of Kyustendil. It disposes with 8 beds.

SHR – NC EAD – specialized hospitals for rehabilitation – national resort complex. It is situated in the town of Kyustendil and disposes with 197 beds and a SPA center.

DAP tourist base – situated in Trite buka locality and disposes with 90 places.

““Balkan” Hotel - \*\*\* is situated in the town of Kyustendil. Disposes with 20 beds.

“Bulgaria” Hotel - \*\*\* is situated in the town of Kyustendil. It has 65 beds at disposal and a SPA center.

“Velbazhd” Hotel - \*\*\* is situated in the city of Kyustendil. It disposes with 257 beds and a SPA center.

“Lavega” Hotel is situated in the city of Kyustendil and disposes with 30 beds and a SPA center.

“Lobos” Hotel is situated in the city of Kyustendil and disposes with 12 beds

“Osogovo” Hotel is situated in the city of Kyustendil and disposes with a SPA center.

“Pautalia” Hotel - \*\* is situated in the city of Kyustendil and disposes with 100 beds.

“Ray” Hotel is situated in the city of Kyustendil and disposes with 20 beds.

“Sekvoja” Hotel - \*\* is situated in the city of Kyustendil and disposes with 22 beds.

“Sport palace” Hotel - \*\* is situated in the city of Kyustendil and disposes with 112 beds.

“Hisarlak” Hotel - \*\* is situated in the forest park of Hisarlaka and disposes with 40 beds.

“Tri buki” Hotel disposes with a modern sport – tourist complex with swimming pool, football playground, tennis court, playground for beach volleyball, and other sport facilities.

“Iglika” Mountain lodge represents a modern tourist site.

“Osogovo” Mountain lodge is the oldest tourist site in the Osogovo Mountain.

“Zhabokrek” Villa is situated in the town of Rila and disposes with 10 beds.

“Fantasia” Complex is situated in the town of Rila and disposes with 30 beds.

“Zhabokrek” Motel is situated in the town of Rila and disposes with 24 beds.

“Rila” Hotel - \*\* is situated in the town of Rila and disposes with 100 beds. “Rilets” Complex is situated near the Rila Monastery and disposes with 180 beds.

“Tsarev vrah” Hotel Complex - \*\*\* is situated near the Rila Monastery and disposes with 130 beds.

“Energo” Holiday House - \*\* is situated in the town of Dupnitsa and disposes with 50 beds.

“Rila” Hotel Complex - \*\*\* is situated in the town of Dupnitsa and disposes with 108 beds and a SPA center.

“Lazovi” Guest House is situated in the town of Sapareva banya and is located over the Geyser. It disposes with 3 double rooms, 1 triple room and 1 apartment (bedroom, living-room with a fireplace, for 2+1 persons).

“Popov” Villa \*\* - situated in the town of Sapareva banya, disposes with 12 beds, barbecue, shop and tavern, and SPA center.

“Verila” Villa Settlement \*\* is situated in the town of Sapareva banya, located in the vicinity of the ancient town of Germaneya (the mineral baths). It disposes with 100 beds and a SPA center, a fitness center, room for quiet dames, open pool, parking, its own beach, and telephone in the hotel, thermal waters and summer garden.

“Bistritsa” Hotel \*\* is situated in the town of Sapareva banya, disposes with 12 beds. The rooms are with separate sanitary junction. There is a parking lot.

“Germaneya” Hotel \*\*\* is situated in the town of Sapareva banya, disposes with 72 beds, lobby bar, covered pool, fitness room, massage room and rooms for balneologic procedures.

CRRC “Panichishte” \*\* it has 130 beds, restaurant, cocktail bar, café- pastry shop, restaurant-garden, SPA center, medical center, sauna, Jacuzzi and solarium, summer garden, parking lot, safe on reception, fitness center, etc, Physiotherapy, massage, cosmetic services and rehabilitation are provided.

“Bojur” Hotel \*\*\* - is situated in the town of Sapareva banya, disposes with 50 beds. For the guests are available: fitness center; guarded and not guarded parking lot, snack-bar, balneo-medical procedures, restaurant with summer garden and a swimming pool with mineral water.

“Geysera” Restaurant is situated in the town of Sapareva banya, disposes of 80 places and life band.

“Princess” Restaurant is situated in the town of Sapareva banya, there is a possibility for organization of family celebrations, company and business activities, etc.

Panichishte Resort provides the most favorable conditions for physical training of sportsmen from all kinds of sports (1300m – 1600m above-sea level).

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The terrains of the “Dry Lake” provide excellent conditions for preparation of football, basketball and other teams. On the territory of the resort there are conditions for swimming trainings and tennis court trainings as well. Panichishte also offers perfect conditions for training of sportsmen of winter sports.

Up to the present moment, the resort disposes with the following tracks:

- “Bekyara” – Alpine ski 470 m, equipped with a rope-line with capacity of 280 persons/per hour;
- “Ajdena” – children’s ski-ground equipped with “baby” rope-line and a track 400 m with rope-line with capacity of 250 persons/per hour;
- Children’s track 200 m in front of Pionerska Hostel;
- Long running track 5 000 m, for which facilities for biathlon are going to be constructed soon;
- Pionerska Chalet – ski track 400 m with rope-line with capacity of 350 persons/per hour; esteemed track for sledge driving on natural track 1130 m, which is the only one in Bulgaria covering the international standards.
- The Seven Lakes Chalet – ski track 300 m with rope-line with capacity of 250 persons/per hour;
- Rila Lakes Chalet - ski track 950 m with rope-line with capacity of 700 persons/per hour;

There is ski equipment provided for rent and paid ski-trainers in the resort’s territory. The double-seated travel rope-way from Pionerska chalet to Rila Lakes chalet is going to be started soon; it would have length of 2200 m and capacity of 960 persons/per hour.

The accommodation facilities include:

“Panichishte Holiday Club” – it disposes with 26 double rooms, 20 triple, 6 quadruple, 10 apartments and one tourist sleeping room. The restaurant has a

capacity of 120 persons. There are also two halls which gather respectively 60 and 100 persons.

“Balkan Pharma” Hotel has a capacity for more than 180 persons, including 10 apartments. For the guests of the hotel there are available 2 conference rooms with 40 and 100 places respectively, bar, café, sauna, Jacuzzi and fitness room.

“Konteks” Hotel disposes with place for 80 persons. In the hotel there are 11 furnished apartments, conference hall for 50 persons, restaurant, bar, fitness.

“Panturs” Hotel has 52 beds, including 6 apartments, restaurant, night bar, fitness and sauna.

“Energoremont” Hotel is with a capacity of 65 beds. The hotel disposes with 6 apartments, restaurant, bar, café, swimming pool, fitness room and sauna. Each room has a television and a telephone.

“Stil” Hostel disposes with 27 places for accommodation.

“Lira” Hotel is with a capacity of 100 beds. It disposes with ski equipment wardrobe, tennis board; it organizes trips and picnics with mountain guide.

“Gorna zemia” Hotel is situated in the Zeleni Preslep – the entrance to the Rila National park.

“Elenite” Restaurant, which is the oldest in Panichishte, is situated near the track “Bekyara” and offers Bulgarian national cuisine.

“Edelweiss” Hotel \*\*\* - disposes with 24 beds, bar in a hunting style with a fireplace, daily bar, sauna and parking lot.

The three-star Hotel “Mountain lakes” is situated near the track “Bekyara” and disposes with 66 beds. A restaurant with 160 places, conference hall for 80 persons, lobby bar, sauna, ski equipment wardrobe and parking are available for the guests of the hotel.

“Gyundera” health – rehabilitation base \*\* disposes with 40 beds. In the rooms there are satellite television, mini-bar and a separate sanitary junction. For the guests of the complex there are available: billiard, room for quiet games, local heating, summer garden, parking, TV saloon, sauna, solarium, fitness center, kindergarten, children’s playground, massage, rehabilitation, ski equipment wardrobe, physiotherapy.

“Panichishte” Health House \*\* has a capacity of 170 beds.

“Panorama” Holiday House \*\* provides 80 beds

One of the newest hotels in the “Panichishte” Resort is the tree-star “Temenuga”. It disposes with 3 apartments and 12 double rooms.

“Bulgarian Public Railways” Prophylactics \*\* disposes with 146 beds.

“Bor” Hotel \*\* has 80 beds. For the guests of the complex there are available: ski track with a rope-line, bagatelle saloon, daily bar, restaurant, children’s pool, room for quiet games, etc.

“Dartreid” Hotel \*\*\* disposes with 50 beds, cocktail bar, shop, restaurant, restaurant-garden.

“Doroteya” Hotel \*\* is with a capacity of 39 beds.

The two-star hotel “Elektron” is with a capacity of 78 beds.

“Energoremont Bobov dol” Hotel \*\* disposes with 79 beds.

“Zdravets” Hotel \*\* has 60 beds. There are some opportunities for organizing “green” and “white” schools.

“Melnitsata” Hotel \* has 26 beds.

“Musala” Hotel \*\* disposes with 22 beds.

“Cherni vrah” Hotel \*\* has a capacity of 42 beds.

One of the eventual future investments and the corresponding expansion of the potential of Panichishte resort for development of balneological and winter tourism are connected with the project for tourist and ski center “Panichishte-The lakes-Kabul”. The investment amounts approximately 30 million Euro and shall be accomplished through cooperation between “Rila sport” and the local authorities of Sapareva Banya. Bed capacity will be increased by about 5600 beds. The project foresees the construction of 80 km tracks, allocated into 14 alpine routes. They will have a capacity for 4600 skiers. Eight-seated cabin lift will be constructed as well, which will lift the tourists from Sapareva Banya up to Kabul peak with an intermediate station in Panichishte. Facilities for all alpine, northern and running disciplines, both for popular sport and for competitions from the highest class shall be provided in the ski center according to the project. . The center for running disciplines expects 30 tracks for 10 teams for relay biathlon. It is also foreseen that a huge healing complex would be built in Sapareva Banya on 8 decares around the geyser. In order to expand the offered tourist services, a golf playground and an indoor aqua-park could be constructed. Reconstruction of the roads on the territory of the municipality is also necessary. “Super Panichishte”project is evaluated ambiguously by the society – for the local population it would create an opportunity for increasing the employment and would bring more revenues for the municipal economy, for ecologists the realization of the project threatens the ecological balance in Rila and represents an example for overbuilding with negative consequences for nature.

### **Tourist resources in the Macedonian part of the region**

**The territory of the Republic of Macedonia** is divided into eight regions, as the capital of Skopije has a separate status. Each region is divided into a certain number of groups of municipalities, which further consist of separate municipalities.

The eight regions are: Pelagonia, Vardar, North-Eastern, South-Western, Skopie, South-Eastern, Polog and Eastern region.

The cross border region includes nine municipalities, which belong to two regions - North-Eastern and Eastern.

Eight municipalities comprise the *North-Eastern region*: Kratovo, Kriva Palanka, Rankovtse, Klechevtse, Kumanovo, Lipkovo, Orashac and Staro Nagorichane, **three municipalities** from them belong to the area of the cross border region – *Kratovo, Kriva Palanka and Rankovtse*.

Seventeen municipalities comprise the *Eastern region*: Berovo, Pehčevo, Blatets, Vinitsa, Delchevo, Makedonska Kamenitsa, Zrnovtsi, Kochani, Obleshevo, Orizari, Chesinovo, Zletovo, Probistip, Lozovo, Sveti Nikole, Karbintsi, and Štip, **six municipalities** from them belong to the area of the cross border region – *Berovo, Vinitsa, Delchevo, Kochani, Probistip and Sveti Nikole*

## **KRIVA PALANKA**

The municipality of Kriva Palanka is located in the North-Eastern part of the Republic of Macedonia, its height above sea level varying from 450 to 2252 meters (Ruen, the peak of the Osogovo Mountain). Municipality of Kriva Palanka is located on two border lines, north with Republic of Serbia and north-east with Republic of Bulgaria. Centuries ago a significant passage goes through this municipality, connecting the southern part of Balkan Peninsula with Asia Minor, today known as Corridor E-8. Kriva Palanka occupies 481 square km and has 20820 inhabitants.

The municipality is consists of 34 populated areas: B's, Bashtevo, Borovo, Varovishte, Gabar, Golema Crchorija, Gradec, Dlabochica, Dobrovnica, Drenak, Drenje, Duracha Reka, Zidilovo, Kiselica, Konopnica, Kostur, Koshari, Kriva Palanka, Krklja, Krstov Dol, Lozanovo, Luke, Mala Crchorija, Martinica, Metezevo, Mozdivnjak, Nerav, Ogut, Osiche, Podrzi Konj, Stanci, T'Iminci, Trnovo and Uzem.

On south-west, Kriva Palanka is connected with city of Kumanovo (64km) and the capital of Republic of Macedonia, Skopje (99km), with a modern highway.

On south, through the route Catal, it is connected with Kratovo (45km), on north-east through Deve Bair with Kjustendil (37km) in Republic of Bulgaria. The city of Kriva Palanka (Egri Dere) was founded in 1634, during the rule of the Turkish vizier Bajram - Pasha. The Turks built a fortress preserving the safety of the caravans from Skopje, Thessalonica and Dubrovnik and other cities which used to pass through the region of Kriva Palanka.

Besides, this important corridor has been used by the troops of the first Macedonian tzar Samuil in the X century, the army of the Serbian king Stefan Dechanski, the armies of the Turkish sultan Murat I on his way to Kosovo pole (1389) and of Mehmed II "Conqueror" on his way to Bosnia.

This city experiences industrial, cultural and administrative ascent after World War II. Today this municipality has a lot of monuments from historical and cultural past. These locations are suitable for monastic, mountain, fishing and other alternative types of selective tourism.

Municipality of Kriva Palanka has moderate-continental climate with moderate cold winters, moderate hot summers, fresh springs and relatively warm autumns impacted by the geographic disposition and Aegean influences through the river of Kriva Reka.

The higher parts of Osogovo region are under the influence of steppe climate. Average annual temperature is 10.2°C. During the year the warmest month is July with average temperature of 20.0°C and the coldest month is January with average temperature of -0.3°C

The Osogovo region is rich with springs, streams and rivers. This richness is due to its relatively high altitude and its geological content. Kriva Reka rises from a strong spring on an altitude of 1800m, with total length of 69km and steep of 2.5%. In the center of municipality Duracka Reka flows into Kriva Reka. Duracka Reka is formed from three smaller rivers: Stanecka, Kozja and Duracka. Total length of the river is 15km.

So far two accumulations were built on the territory of these municipalities: Bazjacko Brdo with 14.100 cubic meters of water and Vlashki Kolibi with 6.200 cubic meters of water, located on Kalin Kamen with altitude of 1.590m above sea level.

The size and the structure of the forests is one of the most important natural potentials of Kriva Palanka. The forests are 36.47% of total area of the municipality. The forests cover 17.527.5 hectares, which represents 0.54% of forests in the country. 60% of the forest area is high trees the rest are low trees.

The animal life in Osogovija consists of: wolves, foxes, rabbits, does, wild boars, hedgehogs and turtles. Also there can be found: badgers, martens and otters, but in smaller amounts. The reptiles that can be found here are: the lizards and the snakes (water and grass). The birds that are present in this area are: sparrows, crows, black birds, larks, nightingales, cuckoos, magpies, wild doves and owls. In the higher parts these predators can be found: hawks, falcons and eagles.

31% of the territory is arable ground and has a great potential for profitable investments in this branch.

Total arable ground is 14906.8 hectares:

- Fields - 11881.5 hectares (24.7%)
- Gardens - 45.9 hectares (0,09%)
- Orchards - 630.9 hectares (1.31%)
- Vineyards - 53.6 hectares (0.11%)
- Meadows - 2294 hectares (4.77%).

## **Cultural and historical markings:**

### **St. Joakim Osogovski Monastery**

According to the hagiography of this solitary person during the ruling of the King of Byzantium Manojlo Komnen (1143-1180) the priest Teodor from Ovche Pole with his monarchical name Teofan founded the monastery. He buried the relics of Joakim Osogovski in the church. According to the historic data the monastery was mentioned for the first time in the period of the Bulgarian King Kalojan (1196-1207). It can be found out from the Karlovacki Chronicles that the King Milutin built a church dedicated to St. Joakim Osogovski. In 1330 Mrs. Stefan Dechanski visited this monastery before the battle in Velbuzd (Kjustendil). Also the Turkish Sultan Mehmed II in 1436 came to this monastery on the way to conquering Bosnia. Then in 1847 with the help of Hachi Stefan Beglikcija from Kriva Palanka the building of the big church dedicated to St. Joakim Osogovski began. In 1851 it was built and consecrated.

This monastery has a hospice with capacity of 120 beds and its own kitchen for the visitors. The monastery is located in the middle of a thick forest and in clean ecological environment.

### **The Church Nativity of St. Virgin**

Is supposed to have been built in the end of the 11th century and renovated in the period of Milutin. It is possible that after the fire in the Turkish period (the 14th century) it had been renovated mostly in the upper parts of the walls and the dome and that the chapel in the southeast part of the cross. The characteristic building opus gives the impression of the Byzantium temples, and the newest reconstructions tend to keep it that way. From the oldest icon-paintings there is only ornament fragments kept on the north wall in the altar space.

### **The Church St. Dimitrie, Kriva Palanka**

The Church was built in 1833, which can be seen on the inscription above the west entrance door from the outside. Its architecture is the one of a three vessel basilica with an open porch on the west and northwest side and low semicircular apse on the east side.. The most characteristic feature of this temple is the inside organization of the space. Namely, on the west side a gallery was built on the second floor in a form of the Cyrillic letter P and the decoration of the inside balcony reminds of the decoration of the rich city houses from the 18th and 19th century, especially present in the area of Kostur.

The icons of the front part called naos (the altar is not painted with icons) were painted in 1887.

#### **The Church St. Nikola, Village Trnovo**

The church belongs to the type of monastery churches built in the period of the domination of the Turks on the Balkan. There are dilemmas in the science regarding the exact reading of the year of building. Namely, the older researchers have decided that the year is 1505 while the newer thought that the year is 1605 the exact year of the church building.

#### **The Church St. Nikola, Village Gradec**

The church is relatively big one vessel building built in the 19th century, with an open porch on the west and partially on the south side. One big wooden iconostasis was kept with royal's doors which are with shallow carving and gold-plated. According to the writing on the icon of St. Gjorgi the icons on the iconostasis were made in 1869 by Evgenij Kuzmanovich from Debar. There are 51 icons recorded.

#### **The Church St. Teodor Tiron, Village Konopnica**

This church regarding the architectonic shape is a solid building built with trimmed stones. It was built in 1885, and the chapel was covered with roof tiles. There are 47 icons recorded.

#### **The Church St. Ilija, Village Luke**

This church was built in 1936 according to the inscription on the south facade. There are no icon-paintings inside except the iconostasis. There is one icon recorded.

If we start with the Neolithic Period the archeological traces will lead us to the locality of the villages of the new municipality Rankovce, starting with the village called Otoshnica, Ginovci and ending with the village Rankovce with the most important locality called Mal Kamlesh which is dating from between 5000 and 3500 BC and is at the same time the oldest locality in the area Krivopalanechko. As we continue through the historic epoch, the neolith settlements and houses follow, which are not enough exploited and were not so present in Krivopalanechko and after this period the stone made settlements, fortifications and necropolis follow, which were spread on the whole territory of Eastern Macedonia, the native country of the famous people called Pajonci and their north tribes

called Lajaite and Argijadite which are still not sufficiently exploited by our archeological science.

**The Citatdel Kriva Palanka** - the military fortification built in the period of the Turkish Vizier Bajram – pasha in 1633, which shows the beginning of the existence of Kriva Palanka as one urban place. The Citadel was built mostly for protection of the caravans and passengers that were passing the important road along the valley of Kriva Palanka. The city core was developed from the citadel and the city neighborhoods, the town centre, alleys and sacral places were fortified. The Citadel had square shape with towers on the corners and on the west side of the Citadel according to the travelers that visited the town there was a big Caravan called Saraj. The Citadel is a Culture Monument protected by the Law.

**The Old Town Center** – the old town centre or mostly known in the past as Dolna Charshija, was built between 18th and 19th century and was located in the old part of the town. It is featured by the row of houses built in typical, Macedonian old-fashioned architecture style with balconies and verandas overhanging on girders with tall and frequent windows as well as shops in the lower parts closed in that period with hatches. It is part of the Culture Monuments protected by the Law.

**The Old Tannery-** a house with typical Macedonian architecture in the 19th century which was a workshop for leather production in the past and because of this was called Old Tannery. This house is in desperate condition today despite the fact that it is a Culture Monument and is protected by the Law.

**The Monument Ossuary** – In the ossuary there are remaining from the Serbian soldiers who died in the First Balkan War on the battles that took place on the territory of Kriva Palanka and the surrounding areas. The ossuary was built after the First World War and the formation of the Serbian Administration in Macedonia, i.e. around 1918 and 1925.

**The Monument of the deceased soldiers in the war for national liberation** – the monument of the deceased soldiers in the War for National Liberation, was built in the memory of the victims who died fighting in Kriva Palanka and around it for liberation of the area and Macedonia.

**The Monument - Chupino Brdo** - this monument was built as a memory of the two important battles for liberation in which the soldiers from Kriva Palanka took part in together with The Third Macedonian Brigade which helped them.

**The Monument of WNL - Krklja** - the monument built in the memory of the deceased soldiers in the first battle of the newly formed battle unit in Kriva Palanka in 1944.

#### **Natural-anthropogenic locations:**

**The Mountain Tourist Centre “Kalin Kamen”** - is situated 10km. southeast from Kriva Palanka, above the monastery St. Joakim Osogovski. There is a place for rest and recreation in it, small sport terrain and accommodation building for small tourist groups. The place is pleasant for recreational activities, walks around the centre and to the peak called Kalin Kamen, the lake Kalin Kamen, the locality called Vlashka Koliba and the sheepfold called Vlashka Mandra as well as the peak Carev Vrv (2085m.).

**The village Stanci / the village Duracka Reka** – is 6km. southeast of Kriva Palanka. The two villages are pleasant places with beautiful ethno atmosphere with houses built with traditional architecture. In the villages there are still fulling-mill and water-mill working. The older inhabitants still wear traditional folk costumes and live in traditional way. The tourist can taste traditional food (cheese past – a kind of pie baked in cast-iron convex, polenta, homemade yogurt) prepared in traditional way and can stay in the houses of the hospitable village people.

**The village Trnovo** - 15km northeast from Kriva Palanka. There is an old church St. Nikola in the village dating from the 16th century, near which the Parish house is that offers accommodation for guests. There are two more objects in the complex which are the old school and the joint home which can be used for tourism with some adaptations. Also here the guests can taste traditional meals made in the traditional way.

**The village Gradec – The Hermitage of St. Joakim** – is 7km north of Kriva Palanka in the area of the village Gradec. According the legend the saint Joakim Osogovski in this place worked before going to the area called Babin Dol where even now his monastery can be found. Near the hermitage there is an archeological locality called Gradishte with remaining from the late antique period and the middle Ages. Also there is a church St. Nikola in the village from the 19th century and near the church there is an old school which was readapted for accommodation of tourists.

Other recreational places on the territory of Kriva Palanka are: “Chupino Brdo” (25km from Kriva Palanka, rich and colorful landscapes, thick beech forests and springs), “Studenec” - village Metezevo (22km from Kriva Palanka, rich flora and fauna, cold mountain springs, organic manufactured food), “Stanecki Vodopadi” - village Stanci (9km from Kriva Palanka, waterfalls on river Kozja Reka, one of them 9m tall the other 11m, surrounded by 50m high cliffs), locality “Cepen Kamen” (11km from Kriva Palanka, fishpond, river strings, forest vegetation with forest fruits and herbs), “Bela Voda” (20km from Kriva Palanka, rich forest vegetation, mountain springs, healthy food manufacturing, attractive for picnics and recreation), fishpond “Dabo” on regional highway to Republic of Bulgaria.

### **Accommodation capacity of Kriva Palanka**

**The Hotel Turist** – is in the town centre and is a B-category hotel. There are 30 rooms and 80 beds as well as a restaurant for 250 guests with good accommodation, catering and food selection.

**The Motel Macedonia** – is one kilometer from the town centre at the end of the road towards Bulgaria on the place where the street Marsal Tito joins with the motorway M2. The motel is of category B. It has 14 rooms with 30 beds.

**The monastery St. Joakim Osogovski** - is three kilometers east from the town centre. It has many lodgings for guest accommodation and over 120 beds as well as 6 apartments with central heating for the accommodation in the winter period. In the monastery complex there is also a restaurant.

**The boarding school Boro Menkov** - is 700 meters away from the town centre in the settlement called Duracka Reka. There are 32 rooms (2 double bed rooms and 30 triple bed rooms) with total of 94 beds as well as a kitchen and a canteen with a capacity of welcoming up to 100 guests with a wide range of home cooked food.

**The hunting lodge** - The hunters’ Club “Osogovo” offers possibilities for accommodation in the hunting lodges called: “Kalin Kamen” and “Bela Voda” in the Osogovo Mountains and “Bilino” in the Mountain Bilino. There is a decent road mostly asphalted going to the houses, each of them have electricity supply and water supply and can offer good accommodation to the guests. They are suitable for small tourist

groups.

**The mountaineering Cottage** - The Mountaineering sport club “Ruen” offers possibilities for accommodation in its mountaineering cottages called: “Kalin Kamen”, “Drenak” and “Sokol” in the Osogovo Mountains. There is a decent road mostly asphalted going to the houses, each of them have electricity supply and water supply and can offer good accommodation to the guests. They are suitable for small tourist groups.

**The Parish House village Trnovo** – is 15 km east from the town. It offers possibilities for accommodation of the guests. The road that goes to the house is asphalted; there is electricity and water supply and a bathroom. It is suitable for accommodation of small tourist groups.

**The old school village Gradec** – is 6km from the town centre in the area of the village Gradec. There is a decent road mostly asphalted going to the school. There are 6 rooms with 14 beds as well as a kitchen and a bathroom. It is suitable for accommodation of bigger tourist groups.

## **RANKOVCE**

The territory of municipality Rankovce is located on the north-eastern part of Republic of Macedonia. It belongs in the group of average-big municipalities and it borders with municipalities of Kriva Palanka, Kratovo, Klechovce, Staro Nagorichane and on north with the municipality Trgovishte - Republic of Serbia. It has a significant geo-strategic position because on north it borders with Republic of Serbia and indirectly, just 30km, through Kriva Palanka it borders with Republic of Bulgaria. A very significant roadway passes through this municipality, which connects southern Balkan with Istanbul and Minor Asia, today known as corridor east-west.

The municipality is connected with Kumanovo (50km) and Skoje (80km) through south-west highway, east through Kriva Palanka (20km) and border crossing Deve Bair with Kjustendil - Republic of Bulgaria (60km) and south with Kratovo (25km). So we can conclude that its position is very satisfying.

Municipality of Rankovce represents a natural, geographic and economic integrity with 18 settlements: 3 of them are plain-type, 9 are hill-type and 6 are mountain-type. It occupies 242.55km<sup>2</sup>; the municipal center is located in Rankovce.

This municipality is composed of the following settlements: Baratlija, Vrzogrnici, Vetunica, Ginovci, German, Gulinci, Krivi Kamen, Ljubinci, Milutinca, Odreno, Opila, Otoshnica, Pklishite, Petralica, Psacha, Radibush, Rankovce and Stanča.

Population of Rankovce is 4.144.

Municipality of Rankovce lies on Slavishko Pole, and on north and south is surrounded by mountain massives. These geographic characteristics influence the forming of special local climate. The climate is moderate-continental, impacted by the geographic disposition and certain influences from Aegean Sea through the river of Kriva Reka. The higher parts of mountains of Osogovo and German are under mountain climate. The average temperature is 10.2°C and is 1.6°C lower than the average temperature in Kumanovo, and 2.6°C lower than Skopje. Through the year, the warmest month is July with average temperature of 20.0°C, while the coldest month is January with average temperature of 0.3°C. The average temperature is lower than Kumanovo and Skopje, because of the higher altitude above sea level. Highest maximum temperature (37.3°C) was recorded on July 25<sup>th</sup>, 1987.

The soil of this area is very heterogeneous. The creation of this versatile soil was influenced by: geologic structure, relief, climate and hydrologic conditions as well as flora and fauna. Especially for the quality of the soil affected the human factor.

The differences in the relief, geological compound, altitude, climate and forests are the main factors for significant differences in this mountainous area.

The mountainous area of German and Osogovo is rich with springs, streams and rivers. This is due to relatively high altitude and geological compound. These springs are prevalent in the areas of crystal slates. The most powerful is Turanic spring with altitude of 1.800m. Also the springs of Carev Vrv (Kriva Reka), Bela Voda and Kalin Kamen are very powerful.

Kriva Reka takes rise in the foot of Carev Vrv by a powerful spring with altitude of 1.800m, is 85km long with average steep of 186‰ and pours in Pčinja by the village of Klečovce at altitude of 295m. The whole territory of Rankovce and Kriva Palanka represents a drainage-basin of Kriva Reka. Other smaller (Kiselichka, Kriljanska and Durachka) pours in the river of Kriva Reka. From its spring to the village Psacha it has a crevasse basin.

## **Cultural and historical markings:**

The municipality of Rankovce lies on a several significant archeological sites, dating from late antic period. The most significant archeological sites are:

1. Archeological site (Blidesh and Lutavchina) in village Vrzogrci  
This site dates from late antic period.
2. Archeological site (Anishte, Gradishte, Liske, Magila) in village Otoshnica.
3. Archeological site (Gramadi) in village Vetunica.
4. Archeological site (Shtrkovica) in village Opila.

There are many churches and monasteries on the territory of municipality Rankovce that have cultural and historical meaning. The most important churches are:

1. Church of St. Gjorgji in village Petralica. This church is from 17<sup>th</sup> century, but it is declared in 19<sup>th</sup> century. Interesting about this church is that the Royal Doors are taken in the guest room of the Republic Institute for Protection of Monuments.
2. Church of St. Jovan in village Otoshnica. This church dates from 19<sup>th</sup> century.
3. Church St. Nikola in village Opila. This church dates from 19<sup>th</sup> century. Characteristic for this church is that the stairs of the entrance are unique.
4. Church St. Nikola in village Ginovci. This church is from 17<sup>th</sup> century, but it is declared in 19<sup>th</sup> century.
5. Monastery church St. Nikola in village Psacha. This church was built during the rule of autocrat Vlatko, nobleman of tzar Dushan. Characteristic for this church is "The Bronze Horos", which is now located in the Museum of Republic of Macedonia and it is of great historical significance.
6. Church St. Troica in village German. Dating of this church is unknown.
7. Monastery St. Bogorodica in village Rankovce. This church dates from 19<sup>th</sup> century.
8. Church St. Paraskeva in village Radibush. This church dates from 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Natural-anthropogenic locations:**

We can mention a few of the natural-anthropogenic locations in municipality of Rankovce, which are natural rarities. It is about couple of natural recreational locations and a couple of anthropogenic recreational locations.

The most visited recreational locations in this municipality are:

1. Picnic location Ezerce in village Petralica. This location has a pond, restaurant with traditional cuisine, surrounding natural beauties, forest and recreational spots. It is most visited by tourists during the summer period of the year.
2. Dam Otoshnica in village Otoshnica. This dam has a picnic area with a pond. Small investments are required to achieve mass tourist visits.
3. Picnic location Gogomont in village Rankovce. This location has a pond, restaurant with traditional cuisine, surrounding natural beauties, forest and recreational spots. It is most visited by tourists during the summer period of the year.
4. Picnic location Park in village Ginovci. This location has a pond, restaurant with traditional cuisine, surrounding natural beauties, forest and recreational spots. This complex also has a mini zoo and a church for visitors. It is most visited by tourists during the summer period of the year.

### **KRATOVO**

Municipality of Kratovo is located in the north-east part of Republic of Macedonia between the municipalities of Kriva Palanka, Probishtip, Sveti Nikole, Kumanovo and Kochani. Two bigger rivers (Zletovska Reka and Kriva Reka) run through its territory. The city of Kratovo is one of the older cities in Macedonia and the Balkans. The city is located in the crater of a dormant volcano in Osogovo Mountains and it is spread on the banks of three small rivers. The municipality is located between 42° and 42°1' northern latitude and 22° and 22°27' eastern longitude, with average altitude of 1000m above sea level. The whole municipality consists of diverse configuration of the terrain: low fields and high mountains, which conducts the living conditions and economic activities.

The municipality of Kratovo borders with the following municipalities: Kumanovo, Kriva palanka, Sveti Nikole, Probishtip and Kochani and it belongs in the group of smaller

municipalities in Republic of Macedonia with approx. population of 10.500 and area of 376km<sup>2</sup>.

Municipality of Kratovo consists of the city itself and 31 settlements: Shlegovo, Prikovci, Zeleznica, Turalevo, Zivalevo, Filipovci, Sakulica, Vakav, Shopsko Rudari, Tatomir, Konjuh, Pendakj, Stracin, Trnovac, Krilatica, Talashmanci, Kuklica, Ketenovo, Topolovikj, Gorno Kratovo, Nezilovo, Kavrak, Knezevo, Emirica, Kojkovo, Mushkovo, Kunovo, Lukovo and Blizanci.

From total area of 37.623 hectares, 22.227 hectares are agricultural, from which 8.986 hectares are arable, mostly in the highlands. The structure of the land is:

1. Forests - approx. 1.065 hectares
2. Meadows - approx. 3.034 hectares
3. Arable ground approx. 1.734 hectares

The land of the municipality of Kratovo has an average productive potential, the banks of Kriva Reka have a high fertile potential, and the mountainous grounds have even higher fertile potential for production of ecologic potatoes, beans etc. The steeps and valleys of Kriva Reka are suitable for agronomy and gardening, fruit plantations, vineyards etc.

The mountainous areas, besides for production of healthy agronomic and garden products, offers a productive meadows for breeding of big and small livestock.

Three small rivers flow through the city of Kratovo: Kratovska Reka, Bab Karina and Manceva Reka. They have small flows, with total length of 15km and average annual flow of 0.42 cubic meters per second, and they don't have a significant economic meaning except for watering of the gardens. The more significant are Zletovska Reka and Kriva Reka, for their water potential. Zletovska Reka flows in the mountainous areas, and it has an average annual flow of 1.98 cubic meters per second and total length of 48km. To exploit its water potentials, a building of hydro-energetic system "Zletovica" is in progress, important for tourism development.

Municipality of Kratovo has an average-continental and mountainous climate with average warm summers and average cold and moist winters.

The temperature of the air varies in the summer period relating to the winter period, depending of the altitude of the terrain, because the altitude varies between 350 and 2.000m above sea level. The maximum temperature in the summer is 38.5°C and minimal temperature in the winter is -16.5°C. Average annual temperature is 11.3°C.

## **Cultural and historical markings:**

Kratovo is one of the oldest settlements on the Balkan. With centuries although small by size and by number of population, it was an attractive place to live and work. The records show that there were settlements from the prehistoric age and from the beginning of the civilization. The records also show proof of civilization and mining activities in this area in the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. from the time of Peons. The Peons situated here stood ethnical and political until the Romans came. They had advanced mining, metallurgy and coinage. From the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C., Macedonian kings ruled this area up until the year of 162 B.C., when Macedonia fell under Roman Empire. The Romans that ruled up until 476 A.D., revived the exploitation of the mines, opened new mines, forged the minerals and they had a forge in Kratovo. There are found material evidence like ceramics, metal weapons and coins of Roman emperors dating from that period.

Kratovo from the year of 476 until 986 was a part of Byzantine, and from 986 until 1014 was a part of the first state of Macedonian Slavic - Samoil's State. From 1014 until 1282 again falls under Byzantine and from 1282 until 1394 becomes a part of Serbian feudal State. In this period the coming of the miners Sasi is important, because they improved the mining. Then the trade with Dubrovnik was developed, development of handicraft has started, building of religious objects and spreading of literacy, when the famous Kratovo transcription school operated, as a prominent Middle Age literal centre.

In 1394 Kratovo falls under the Ottoman Empire. In 1389, before the battle of Kosovo, the Turkish Sultan Murat I visited Kratovo to see the beauty and the development of the city. Under the Ottoman Empire the mining, metallurgy, coinage, handicraft and trade expanded, especially in the 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century.

From all this periods through the history, there are a lot of cultural monuments left, although a lot of them are not preserved. The name Kratovo originate from the word crater and the city was also called Krater, Kratis, Kratiskara, Koritos and Koriton depending of the rulers. Kratovo is the only city in Macedonia known after the old architecture of towers and bridges. They were probably built in the time of Turkish rulers. There were many towers, but only six are left:

1. "Saat Kula" - the height of this tower is 6.76m. The first storey has no window openings and its entrance is on southeast side. This story was used to store the precious ore. The tower has three storeys, each with its own history.

2. "Simikjeva Kula" - the biggest and the most beautiful tower in Kratovo, located in Dolna Maala. Built in 1370 by the ruler of Kratovo, Kostadin Dejanov. The tower is built on square base.
3. "Emin-begova Kula" - located 9m north from "Krsteva Kula". Its height is 12.74m. The base is square and it is 6.10m wide. This tower has three storeys. It was named by its last owner who was important person in the city in 16<sup>th</sup> century.
4. "Hadzi-Kostova Kula" - located 10m from "Emin-begova Kula". Next to this tower were the palaces of the rulers and "Emin-beg's palace", who was famous by his fortune.  
According to the legend, in this tower was the military headquarters of the famous duke Karposh. The tower cracked in the time of his uprising during the street fights between the Austrians and the rebels on one side and the Turks on the other side (1689-1690). To revenge, the Turkish army demolished half of the tower.
5. "Zlatkova Kula" - this tower was built in 1365 and is located in Carina Maale, between Simikjeva Kula and Saat Kula. According to the history the tower was bought by Djordji Zlatkov from Asan Efendija and there for it is called Zlatkova Kula. The tower has three storeys and the construction is separated with oak rafters. It is assumed that this tower is one of the oldest in the city.
6. "Krsteva Kula" - built in the period of 1375 - 1380. It is a modern and beautiful tower, 16.10m high. The roof of this tower was built from stone panes which are probably brought from Lisec.

Underground passages were built alongside the construction of the towers. Those passages were carved in the stones that lay underneath Kratovo. The passages were used to connect the towers, and it is assumed that they were built by Konstantin Dejanov to defend the city from the Turkish army. The story of the treasure of King Konstantin and Queen Elena hidden in one of the passage still attracts the gold hunters. From the total of 12 old bridges that were built the same time with the towers, the most famous is "Radin Most", built 1833, today completely restored. Also other famous bridges are: "Charshiski Most", "Jorkshenski Most", "Svinski Most" etc., while some of them today are just rubble. From a large number of mosques, the most famous were "Sultan-Muratova Dzamija", "Fetis Dzamija", "Mustafova Dzamija" etc., but unfortunately none of them remained. From the old architecture the most famous are the old individual

houses with typical old-Macedonian architecture (“Saraj Kukja”, Bidik’s house etc.), “Ajdučka Charshija”, Old Turkish bathhouse, Turkish prison etc.

One of the most famous locations in Kratovo is the site “Kameni Kukli” (Stone Dolls). Those are eroded rocks that in time created interesting stone figures, evoking respect by people. The ambient and dramatic location of the stones makes us feel and think about a special life and an image of historic events that took place in the past.

Between the villages of Shopsko Rudari and Konjuh is a natural rarity called Cocov Kamen. It is a cliff with a prehistoric observatory and caves which on every visitor leaves a mark about the life in the past.

Near the region Chatal is a reservation for Rock Art. There can be seen a large number of engraved rocks that witness the long history and the beginnings of literacy. The locality of Golemo Gradishte represents a fortified settlement from the late-antic period and Middle Age. The settlement is located on a hill right next to the river of Kriva Reka. In the acropolis, a large number of rooms carved in stone, a tank and a south wall were found. In the earliest time, this location was also a Church center proved by a number of churches found there.

From over 20 churches that existed during the time when the Turks ruled, today there are only three left:

- The Church of “St. Nikola-the miracle maker” in “Carina maala” (17<sup>th</sup> century), restored 1848. The Church for the first time was mentioned in 1666 as a “Soborna Crkva” in Kratovo. According to the records this church is very old, before the coming of the Turks. It was demolished and rebuilt several times. The murals are very old and have a special meaning. There are icons from 16<sup>th</sup> century, which are well preserved.
- The Church of “St. Jovan Pretecha” - in “Sredna Maala”, restored 1836. This church has rich murals, well kept and in good condition. The iconostasis gives an impression of old times, with a lot of ornaments. Also there is an icon of St. Bogorodica, dating from 1636.
- The Church of “St. Djordji Kratovski” - located in the old cemetery, built 1925. This church was dedicated to the only martyr, declared for a patron of Kratovo - St. Djordji Kratovski in 16<sup>th</sup> century, who was burned alive in 1514 in Sofia for his faith in Christianity. In his honour and glory and in the honour of the entering in the third Christianity millennium, the council of municipality of Kratovo declared the holiday of “St. Djordji Kratovski” as an patron holiday of the city, which is

celebrated on February 24<sup>th</sup>, and the saint Djordji Kratovski is considered as a protector of the city and the municipality.

In the House of Culture “Lazar Sofijanov” in Kratovo there are exhibitions from the “Kratovo Art Colony” which are held for the last 10 years. There are also exhibitions of other artists and art colonies from Macedonia. The Museum of town history is a part of this House of Culture. Also, there is a movie theatre and a library. Near the city are the famous monasteries of “St. Joakim Osogovski” and “St. Gavril Iesnovski”, which concluded the tourist offer of the city.

### **Accommodation capacity of Kratovo**

Hotel “Krativ” is a B category hotel and is located in the center of the city. It has 28 rooms on four floors, 60 beds and 2 apartments. The hotel has 2 big lounge rooms with capacity for 250 guests and an open atrium. The restaurant of the hotel offers traditional cuisine and specialties.

Other restaurants in Kratovo are: restaurant “Aleksandar”, with capacity for 100 guests and traditional cuisine, restaurant “Kanu” - built to resemble the old Turkish restaurants, restaurant “Solun” and tavern “Zlatko” in the center of Kratovo.

### **PROBISHTIP**

Probishtip is a small mining city located in southwest base of Osogovo Mountain. The city was named after feudal lord Ivanko Probishtipovikj who middle Ages owned a property in this area. Because this area was rich with minerals, its colonization can be traced through history.

The old Irish tribes Peons lived here, then the Romans built their mining villages and after that the Macedonians, Macedo-Romans and the mining tribe Sasi colonized the region.

The history of Probishtip comprise the building and existence of the monastery of Iesnovo, today known as one of the most valuable cultural monuments and spiritual centers in Macedonia.

- Area of municipality of Probishtip: 325,57km<sup>2</sup>;
- Population density: 49,74 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>;
- Population: 16,193 inhabitants;
- Number of settlements: 36

- Settlements: city of Probishtip and the villages: Bunesh, Buchishte, Gajranci, Gorni Stubol, Gorno Barbarevo, Grizilevci, Gujnovci, Dobrevo, Dolni Stubol, Dolno Barbarevo, Dreveno, Drenok, Zarepinci, Zelengrad, Zletovo, Jamishte, Kalnishte, Kukovo, Kundino, Lezovo, Lesново, Marchino, Neokazi, Pestrshino, Petrishino, Pishica, Pleshanci, Puzderci, Ratavica, Strisovci, Strmosh, Tripatanci, Troolo, Tursko Rudari and Shtalkovica.

This area is placed in the South part of the Northern temperate zone between areas which have influences of Mediterranean climate (The Kocanska valley and Ovce field) and the Osogovski massif that has an expressed mountainous climate. The climate in this geographical location is characterized with elements of temperate continental, changed-Mediterranean and mountainous climate.

There are two climate districts in this area according to the relief:  
 -district of temperate climate, with elements of changed-Mediterranean climate and  
 - mountainous climate district.

The first district comprises the Zletovska area south of Zletovo, or Zletovosko field. By the Valley of Zletovska River this field is opened to Mediterranean influences. The second climate district comprises the area that's spreading on north from Zletovo to the highest peaks of the area. As mountainous area it's characterized by cool summer, cold spring and autumn, and cold and snow winter.

The middle yearly air temperature amounts about 13 Celsius degrees, while the middle temperature in winter moves from 1 to 30 Celsius degrees, and in summer it moves from 21 to 25 Celsius degrees. The yearly rain quantity amounts from about 600 to 650 mm.

As it can be seen from the previous exposure, the basic characteristics of the climate in this region, or the Zletovsko field are the following: the winter is not very cold, and it does not last long; the snow falls seldom, and when it falls its melting fast so that's why in this period of the year there's a green grass.

The spring is temperate warm and less rainy then the winter.

The summer is very warm and dry, and because of the mountainous climate the evenings and the mornings are cool.

The autumn is long, temperate warm and rather rainy. The vegetation period is long and it lasts almost 10 months. According to these climate characteristics this territory is good for growing agricultural products not only from the temperate but also from the subtropical climate zone.

## **Cultural and historical markings:**

The old architecture, part of the material culture of the so called “sopluk” has its own marks. Probistip is placed nearby the core of the so called “sopluk”.

The villages were of “breakable” type, grouped in parts with tightly non asphalted streets and village fountains. Zletovo as settlement of semi-urban type kept a part of the traditional architecture. Most of the houses are ordered on the both sides, 5-6 meters far from the wide street, which stretches parallel to the Zletovska River.

Towards the houses that are placed behind this street lead short, tight and twisted lanes. Mostly in all villages are predominating houses on floor, constructed from beam or stone. The foundation is rectangular, mainly squared. The first floor is mainly made of stone, and the basement and the corridor are placed there. Two or three rooms are placed on the floor, kitchens and the terrace which is mostly opened. The roof construction, particular the old was consisted of heavy stone plates. Today the stones on the roof are replaced by shingles.

**Old crumby house in Zletovo** - in property of Kire Aleksov (with origin from Turkish time). The family that possessed it lived in this house until 1985. Otherwise, this house was a municipality house in the period after the Turkish time, and it was a wheat barn in the period of the collectivism. The house is protected by law, but unfortunately that house is collapsing, because nothing has been done about its restoration.

The Mineralogical collection that was possessed by the former mine of lead and zinc, in 2004 was digressed in possession of the local self government in Probistip. An ethnological recess with exponent characteristic for our territory is formed at the “Zletovski Rudar” House of culture. We believe that these bases in future will grow into mineralogy-ethnological museum that will allow more visitation of our place.

The House of Culture is combined culture- educational institution, which realizes program contents: activity of librarianship and publication; art-gallery activities; musical and scene-artistic activities; theatre’s activity; educational activity, through courses.

The library as form and opportunity for direct culture-educational enhancement of the inhabitants in Probistip was present far back, from the beginning of its establishment, in the World War II, when the new town of Probistip was born and established. The first more organized placement of the Library was in 1949. The library was placed in the “Vila” building, till autumn 1951. After that it was moved at the new object in the House of

Culture (The “Rudar” cinema). The Library worked actively and successfully in this object, in two different rooms, with constantly increasing the book fund and the number of readers until 1975. After that according to the organizational transformation in the composition of the House of Culture the library was moved in the new constructed building of the House of Culture, where it’s still working today.

### **Registered monuments of culture:**

1. The Monastery “St. Gavril Lesnovski” (the church, the hospices and the church inventory) (c.r. 438) - Lesново village;
2. The Church “Uspetie Bogorodicno” (c.r. 439)-Zletovo;
3. The Church “St.Trifun-Pirog” (c.r. 475) - Zletovo, (today is ruined).

### **Monuments and monumental marks:**

1. Memorial plate dedicated to B. Kocev Jordanovski, Gajranci village;
2. Memorial plate dedicated to B. Stoilkov Serafimovski, Gujnovci village;
3. Monument in honour of the third Macedonian-Kumanovska hock brigade, Dobrevo village;
4. Memorial plate dedicated to the died fighters in the attack of “Zletovo” mines, Dobrevo village;
5. Memorial plate dedicated to the died fighters in the People’s Liberation War, Dolni Stubol village;
6. Memorial plate dedicated to the died fighters, Kalnishte village;
7. Memorial tomb of the died fighters in the People’s Liberation War, Kundino village;
8. Memorial plate dedicated to Jakim Spirovski, Neokazi village;
9. Memorial plate dedicated to S. Kocev Tomev, Pleshenci village;
10. Memorial plate dedicated to the died fighters in the People’s Liberation War; it’s placed in the yard of “Zletovo” mine –Probistip;
11. Memorial plate dedicated to the attack of “Zletovo” mine, Probistip;
12. Memorial plate dedicated to Nada Mihajlova, Probistip;
13. Memorial plate dedicated to M. Jadrev Zlatko, Strmos village;
14. Memorial plate dedicated to the died fighters (village fountain), Bunesh village;
15. Memorial plate dedicated to J. Ristov Gichevski, Dreveno village;
16. Memorial plate dedicated to the died fighters (it’s on the building of the Post office), Zletovo;

17. Memorial plate dedicated to the died fighters, Jamiste village;
18. Memorial plate dedicated to the died fighters, Lesново village;
19. Memorial plate dedicated to S. Eftimov Vasilev, Ratavica village;
20. Memorial plate dedicated to V. Nikolov Atanasov, Tripatanci village;
21. Memorial plate dedicated to the dead fighters in the People's Liberation War, Tursko Rudari village.

### **Evidenced monuments of the nature:**

The only monument of the nature in the municipality of Probistip is the Lesnovski crater, which is a result of the volcanic activity in the Kratovsko-Zletovskata volcanic area. It's one of the most kept and also the most characteristic craters in this area, which is declared as monument of the nature and it's has a place on the list of the geological rarities at the Institute for protection of natural rarities of the Republic of Macedonia.

The folk costume also belongs to the material culture of the municipality of Probistip. For greater part of the villages, especially those that gravitate towards the Ovce field and on south towards Zletovska River is characteristic the so called "koterska" costume.

### **Recreational sites:**

- **Crni Vrv (Black Peak);**
- **Lesново monastery** (accommodation of 30 beds);
- **Globica;**
- **Ponikva;**
- **Fishpond of Zletovska River**, offers trout and carp, Macedonian cuisine, with capacity of 100 seats with a tendency to expand to 200.
- **Recreational sports and tourist centre "Ponikva"** - offers winter/ski tourism. Ponikva is spread on 1600m altitude above sea level. It is 130km from the capital of the State. At the moment it offers modest ski possibilities: mountaineering paths, rope railways and cross-country tracks. Also at the moment Ponikva has a capacity of 300 beds, divided in several facilities. There are a number of restaurants for tourists, as a part of the complex.

The town has at its disposal 2 hotels, 2 restaurants, 1 motel and other entertainment objects.

1. **The “Sent Nikol” hotel** has an accommodation capacity of 25 rooms with two beds and four apartments. The hotel restaurant has a capacity of 350 seats and kitchen with Macedonian food.

2. **The “Cresovo topce” hotel** has an accommodation capacity of 16 two bed rooms and one apartment. The hotel restaurant has a capacity of 400 seats and Macedonian food.

3. **The boarding school “Done Bozinov”** is also an object with accommodation capacity of 129 beds for tourists and an opportunity for guest service. Unfortunately this object is very little used by pupils during the school year (only 30 %), so it is available in any time for bigger group of visitors.

## **SVETI NIKOLE**

There are several legends about the origin of Sveti Nikole. Its name is connected with the church of St. Nikola which is located high above the city and this saint is a patron and protector of the city. It is considered that there was a small byzantine village where the city is located today, because of the old coins, pots and bricks found. When King Milutin conquered Ovche Pole in 1282 there was a small church dedicated to St. Nikola. Stefan Dechanski, as a gratitude rebuilt this church because, by the folklore tale, St. Nikola restored his vision. Around this church a settlement has built and was named Sveti Nikole. Later on, the Turks named the city “Kliseli”, which means church. Evlija Chelebija, in his travelogues, mentions the village where he stayed overnight in 1669.

The valley of Ovche Pole was populated from the prehistoric era. The oldest traces of life are from the Neolithic period, confirmed by archeological researches. There are indications that Ovche Pole was a centre of Peonic State with its capital city “Bilazora”, located in Ovche Pole on “Gradishte” site - Knezje village. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the road Solun went through Sveti Nikole, the town was one of the important economic cities on the left side of the river Vardar.

The building of the Vardar railway in 1873 had a negative impact of Sveti Nikole and when this railway connected with Moravska railway in 1888, this impact was even bigger. It is hard to say about the origin of Sveti Nikole due to lack of information, but it

is considered that it was an old Peonic settlement dating from 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. It was located in the southern base of “Sivri Tepe” hill, northeast from the church St. Stefan. Because of the swamp ground and the living conditions, it was moved on the right bank of the river Potok, in the regions of “Rudina”, “Sveti Spas” and “Recko Maalo”. The settlement in this period was named “Probaton” until the 7<sup>th</sup> century when it was renamed to Ovche Pole (meaning: “the valley of the sheeps”). In 1292 a church was built in the settlement, dedicated to St. Nikola, where by the legend St. Nikola restored the vision of Stefan Dechanski. In the next century the village expands around the church. In the “Tapu” registers in 1570 the city was registered as l-s-v-i-N-i-k-o-l-a with two neighborhoods (“Golemo Maalo” and “Malo Maalo”) and a separate village “Sveti Nikole”. Both neighborhoods and the village had a total of 317 households, 8 widows and 120 single men. If a family had a average of 5 members, Sveti Nikole than had approx. 1600 inhabitants. In 19<sup>th</sup> century the city was a prominent economic centre of the area. It had a grain market (“Tereke Pazar”) and a cattle market (“Ajvan Pazar”) located on “Govedishte”. From here the cattle was transferred in Kumanovo, where it was bought by merchants from Sofia and Edrene. The grain was transferred in Veles, and from there by rafts on the Vardar River was taken to Solun. In that time besides the markets in Sveti Nikole there were markets in other villages of Ovche Pole. These settlements started economic war - which one of them will prevail as an economic centre. Father Krsto, who was a priest in Nemanjici village, insisted his village to be economic centre of Ovche Pole. But Sveti Nikole was an administrative centre and a guildhall of mudur Mahmud Aga, who was against father Krsto and didn't want to give up on the market. Father Krsto was murdered. Then the merchants from Sveti Nikole asked Sveti Nikole to be declared as a city. From 1845 Sveti Nikole economically developed until 1864 when it economically crashed due to a plague brought by cattle from Bulgaria.

The territory of municipality of Sveti Nikole occupies the biggest part of Ovche Pole that belongs to the drainage-basin of Sveti Nikolska River (“Azmak”), right confluent of Bregalnica River. As a middle part of Ovche Pole it borders with several municipalities: Probishtip, Kratovo, Orashac, Kumanovo, Petrovec, Veles, Lozovo, Shtip and Karbinici.

The Ovche Pole valley is specific for its morphologic structure. Its surface is not entirely flat, there for its altitude is between 200 and 400m above sea level. The highest altitude is less than 900m. The higher points are: Gjurishte - 856m, Gradishki Rid above Pavleshenci village - 789m, Bogoslovec - 756m, Mangovica - 741m, Goren Osoj -

734m, Bilo above Stanjevci village - 684m etc. Ovche Pole with its configuration geographic location is exposed to continental and Mediterranean climate influences. The area of municipality of Sveti Nikole is 480km<sup>2</sup> and it is one of the biggest municipalities in the country. But its population density is not that big, only 38.5 per 1km<sup>2</sup>.

The municipality consists of 32 settlements including Sveti Nikole: Alakince, Amzabegovo, Arbasanci, Bogoslovec, Burilovci, Gorno Djudjance, Dolno Djudjance, Gorno Crnilishte, Gorobinci, Dolno Crnilishte, Erdzelija, Kadrifakovo, Knezhje, Krushica, Makresh, Malino, Mechkuevci, Mustafino, Nemanjica, Orel, Pavleshenci, Patetino, Peshirovo, Preod, Ranchenci, Sopot, Stanulovci, Stanjevci, Stroimanci and Trstenik, and 2 decolonized settlements (Stara Mezdra and Nova Mezdra). The villages in Sveti Nikole are in this advantage regarding the population. In 1994 twenty seven villages were small, with less than 300 inhabitants and 22 of them had less than 100. Only two villages are mid-sized and two settlements are big with more than 800 settlements, which mean that this municipality needs a population revitalization of the villages. Regarding the relief structure of the municipality, 17 villages are plain-type, 14 are hill-type and none are mountain-type villages.

The municipality of Sveti Nikole has 18.528 inhabitants; most of them lives in the city of Sveti Nikole (13.292 inhabitants) and the rest of them live in the villages (5.236 inhabitants).

The city of Sveti Nikole is located in the centre of the municipality and it is connected with municipalities of Kumanovo (43km), Shtip (25km) and Veles (34km) through regional highways. With the capital of Macedonia it is connected through Kumanovo (76km) and Veles (86km). It has a train station, 9km from the city and it is connected with Shtip and Veles through a railway.

From hydrological aspect the rivers of Ovche Pole belong to the drainage basin of Bregalnica River. The biggest one is Svetinikolska River. It is formed of four rivers: Mavrovica, Karakash, Crn Kamen and Perish. The spring of Mavrovica is located near Makresh village on altitude of 727m above sea level. The river Karatash is formed near the village Pavleshenci on altitude of 389m above sea level. The spring of river Perish is near villages of Malino and Alakinci and on altitude of 380m above sea level. These three rivers gather in the central part of the valley near Sveti Nikole and they form Svetinikolska River which flows in meridian direction. There is no natural lake in the

valley. An artificial water accumulation is built on river Mavrovica near the site Alin Dol. It has a 7km<sup>2</sup> surface and 2.700.000 cubic meters. It is used for water supply of Sveti Nikole.

There are no researches for mineral and thermo-mineral waters in Ovche pole. There are indications for possible mineral waters near Bogoslovec village, Strojmanci village and Mechkuevci village. It is assumed that thermo-mineral waters can be found near Djuzumelci village and Gorno Djudjanci village.

The most significant natural resources are the minerals, besides the forests and the rivers. The presence of minerals is determined by tectonic evolution of the valley. But mining explorations in the valley are not yet completed. Some of them are energetic resources, others are metals and none-metals and some of them are used for constructing material.

In the group of minerals are: carbon, paraffin slates and nuclear raw material. There are coal (lignite) locations in the valley, which is directly connected with evolution of the lake segments. So far the traces of coal are found near the villages: Peshirovo, Crnilishte, Ranchenci and Stanjevci.

### **Cultural and historical markings:**

Registered monuments of culture:

1. Church of St. Djordji - Djuzumelci village (dating from 16<sup>th</sup> century or 1594). The church is located 6km from the city of Sveti Nikole. Characteristic for this church are the first schools of Macedonian nationality.
2. Church of St. Nikolaj - Sveti Nikole (dating from 1847). In 1990 a new church was built here. Characteristic for this church is "Saat Kula" (Clock Tower).
3. Church of St. Nikola - Borilovci village (dating from 16<sup>th</sup> century or 1594). Characteristic for this church is that it is a monument of culture protected by law.
4. Church of St. Jovan Bogoslov - Bogoslovec village (dating from 19<sup>th</sup> century). The church is located 13km from Sveti Nikole.
5. Church St. Petka - Malino village (the church was restored recently).

6. The church and monastery complex of “The birth of Holy Virgin” - Djurishte village (dating from 14<sup>th</sup> century). Characteristic for this church is the tomb of Marija Pareolog, during the ruling of Tzar Dushan. The monastery has accommodation rooms with bathrooms and kitchen.
7. Church St. Stefan - Sveti Nikole.
8. “Djavolski Dzid” (Devil’s Wall) - Bogoslovec village (cultural marking located 15km from the city of Sveti Nikole).

The less known Macedonian rarity (Djavolski Dzid) is located 15km south from Sveti Nikole, on the south side of mountain Bogoslovec, on the right bank of Bregalnica River. It is 7km from the highway Veles-Shtip, and macadam and dirt road leads to it. It requires an off-road vehicle and a good physical condition for a 1km walking. But the magnificent view is rewarding for the trouble. The walls’ pale white color, the turquoise waters of Bregalnica River and the distant gray mountains create a beautiful and mystical view. There are a few theses about the origin of this monument.

Some scientists claim that it is a natural phenomenon and that the wall was made by erosion of the terrain. The height of the wall is 12m and it is 2m wide. Other scientists claim that it is human made and not a natural phenomenon. As a proof, they point to the facts that the stones in the wall cannot be found nearby, the incredible building skills and existence of the red bonding material in the wall. But at the same time, due to inaccessible location and the transportation of the stones that weight more than 4 tons each, makes the construction of the wall almost impossible. That’s what makes this wall mystical.

9. “Govedarov Kamen” - Erdzelija village

Govedarov kamen, which is several meters high stands above flat Ovche Pole field. This rock offers a magnificent view of the field, that can’t be found nearby. Interesting thing about this rock, besides its height is that, according to the legend, cures infertility.

10. National Museum - Sveti Nikole (located in the town center). Dating from 1924-1926. In the year of 2002 it was completely restored. The museum is also a monument of culture. There are a lot of valuable historical markings, archeological items found in the region, old artwork and other cultural-historical items.

There is a site “Gradishte” - Slavkov Dol in the municipality of Sveti Nikole, near Knezhje village, dating from 7-2 century BC. Characteristic for this locality was the living of Peons

and Antic Macedonians and their kings-rulers. The capital of Peonia at that time was Bilazora.

The municipality of Sveti Nikole is also known for several cultural international manifestations: “Todorica” and “Sveti Nikole - patron of the city”.

### **Natural-anthropogenic locations:**

There are two natural-anthropogenic locations in municipality of Sveti Nikole that can be described as exotic locations intended for picnic. One of them is natural recreational location and the other is anthropogenic recreational location:

1. Recreational location Gjurishte in Gjurishte village. It has natural beauties, forests suitable for hunting and development of hunting tourism and recreational spots. Visited by domestic and foreign hunters. The site is on 856m above sea level and it is 12km from the city of Sveti Nikole by asphalt road.
2. Accumulation Mavrovica in Nemanjici village. Built in 1983 as a hydro accumulation. It is a artificial lake characteristic by remains of Neolithic culture and early Christianity.

### **Accommodation capacity in Sveti Nikole**

Hotel Ovche Pole is B category hotel and it is located on the regional highway Sveti Nikole - Shtip. It has 8 rooms on 4 floors, 60 beds and 3 apartments. The hotel also has a meeting hall with capacity for 50 guests, two restaurants (one with capacity for 260 guests and the other for 250 guests) and one smaller restaurant with capacity for 100 guests. The restaurants serve traditional cuisine and specialties.

Hotel Lotos in the centre of the city has 10 double-bed rooms and a meeting hall.

Hotel Senator, also located in the centre of the city has 7 rooms, 1 apartment and a meeting hall.

In the villages there are several houses that offer private accommodation, especially in Bogoslovec village where the historical marking “Djavolski Dzik” is located.

The restaurants in Sveti Nikole are: “Lotos” restaurant with capacity for 200 guests and traditional cuisine, “Palo” restaurant, “Lea” restaurant and other smaller restaurant in the city. All these restaurants offer traditional Macedonian cuisine.

## **KOCHANI**

Kochani is located 120km from Skopje in the eastern part of Republic of Macedonia and occupies the northern part of Kochanska valley. The city is south on the base of Osogovo Mountains (2.252m). At 8km south Kochanska valley is surrounded by Plachkovica Mountain (1.754m) and the city is on 450m above sea level.

The city is connected with Shtip (30km) and Veles (70km) by a highway, which is connected to the Skoje - Gevgelija highway that links the city with central Macedonia. Kochani is a crossroad of several regional highways and it is connected with Vinica (10km), Makedonska Kamenica (30km), Delchevo (55km), Berovo (60km), Bulgarian border (65km), Probishtip (36km) and Kratovo (48km). A railway that was built in 1926 connects the city with Shtip - Veles - Skopje.

Municipality of Kochani is 382km<sup>2</sup> with 38.092 inhabitants and 28 settlements (by the 2002 census) and it is third regional centre in the eastern part of Macedonia.

1984 - 6.657 inhabitants

1994 - 26.364 inhabitants

2002 - 38.092 inhabitants

The climate is moderate-continental with changed-Mediterranean-sea climate along the river of Bregalnica. Average annual temperature is 19.2° C with average rainfall of 358mm.

### **Cultural and historical markings:**

Because of the suitable geographic position and good natural characteristics, the territory of Kochani was settled in antic period by Peons, the Medi tribe and Thracians, and in the late seventh century it was colonized by Slavic tribe of Smojlani. When the Saints Cyril and Methodius, the founding fathers of Slavic literacy, dwelled in "Morodviz" (area of Bregalnica) from 845 until 855, they started to preach Christianity in Slavic language.

The name Kochani for the first time was found in 1337 in documents, although the settlement existed even before. By the end of 14<sup>th</sup> century Kochani was under the reign of the Ottoman Empire. Evlija Chelebija in his travelogues from 1662 mentions Kochani

as a village of 600 houses and 15 stores. The city expanded in 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, after the construction of railway in 1926.

The area of Kochanska valley has a lot of cultural values from archeology, ethnology, architecture etc that witness the rich cultural past of the region.

Besides the cultural legacy, Kochani also has present cultural values; the “live” culture is satisfying the cultural needs of the citizens.

To evident the cultural treasure of the municipality a brochure “A guide through cultural values of Kochani” is printed.

List of cultural locations and objects in municipality of Kochani

Archeological locations:

1. “Tekeshinski lozja” - an iron necropolis dating from 8<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> century BC.
2. “Kasarnski krug” - a necropolis with remains of prehistoric settlement and antic necropolis from 2 - 4<sup>th</sup> century BC.
3. “Grobche” - middle age necropolis from 11 - 13<sup>th</sup> century AD.
4. “Dolni Gradche” - late antic fortification with remains of walls and early-Christian objects.
5. “Ciganski Rid” - middle age necropolis from 11 - 13<sup>th</sup> century AD.

#### **Cultural and historical monuments:**

1. Monument of freedom - a monument located on a dominant spot of the city. The location of the monument offers a wide panoramic view of Kochanska valley. It represents one of the biggest mosaics in this part of Europe. The author of the mosaic, the artist Gligor Chemerski was awarded of this monument.
2. Monastery complex St. Pantelejmon - located on the south-west side of Osogovo Mountains surrounded by meadows and oak and beech woods. It is 12km from Kochani by asphalt road. The complex has two churches:
  - The big monastery church “St. Pantelejmon, built in 1885, and the icons were painted in 1888 by the icon painter Dimitrie Andonov Papradishki.
  - The small church “St. Bogorodica”, built in 1871, and the icons were painted in 1872 by the icon painter Zaharie Dimitriev Samokovec.

The area of Kochani also has ten more Christian churches, one mosque, two middle age towers and other cultural monuments:

1. Church of St. Nikola (Trkanje village) - vivid icons painted by Isaia Dzikov from Osoj (restoration and conservation required).
2. Collection of icons from the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century by several icon painters located in the church of St. Djordji in Kochani (gallery required).
3. Middle age tower in Kochani - dating from 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century. Declared for monument of culture in 1956 (restoration and conservation required).
4. Middle age tower in Dolni Podlog village - restoration and conservation required.
5. Rich folklore (songs, dances, customs etc.) - research, notation and publication required.
6. Several collections and showpieces from different segments of culture (opening of a museum in Kochani required).

**Cultural events:**

- Amateur dramatic festival - traditionally holds for over 30 years in Kochani, starting as “National amateur dramatic reviews”, later renamed as “Festival of amateur and alternative theatre” and in the last few years it is renamed to its original name. This festival is the only festival in Macedonia from this kind and besides the adult programme, it offers theatrical place for children. A famous theatre troops from Macedonia take part in this festival, and in the past when it was more financially stabile foreign theatrical troops also took part and the festival was international.
- “Days of rice in Kochani” - holds 14 years and it is dedicated to the most characteristic marking of the city - the rice. Traditionally, they start with the old way of harvesting, with presentation of traditional costumes, songs and dances from the region. They have multicultural character and include art exhibits, theatrical plays, poetic declamations and bicycle races. From this year in the scheduled programme also is included “Kochani art colony” and it is expected to be international with artists from other states.

**Natural-anthropogenic locations and accommodation capacities:**

The biggest tourist and recreational centre in Kochani is Osogovo Mountain’s peak “Ruen” (2.252m). Osogovo Mountains have several tourist and recreational facilities:

## Tourist capacities:

- Motel “Sharena Cheshma” - 15km from the city by regional asphalt road.
  - Capacity: 10 two-bed rooms and restaurant for 250 guests.
  - Cuisine: diverse, with menu (contemporary and traditional). No foreign languages on the menu.
  - Specialties: Osogovo game and traditional Osogovo pies.

The motel has a beautiful view surrounded by larch and beech forests.

- Motel “Izgrej” - built in authentic mountain style with rustic elements and suitable place for development of winter and summer tourism. It is 20km from Kochani on Osogovo Mountains at 1.580m above sea level. There is a small airplane runway for smaller tourist planes 1km from the motel.
  - Capacity: the motel has 45 beds divided in 16 rooms and 2 apartments and 2 multifunctional halls. Each room has a bathroom and central heating during the winter and solar energy during the summer.
  - Cuisine: a diverse cuisine with characteristic specialties: “Osogovo zelnik”, “Osogovo pan”, “Osogovo wild boar goulash”, “forest mushroom specialties”.

The menu also has sheep dairy products (Osogovo sheep cheese, sour cream, yellow cheese etc) from the three sheepfolds surrounding the motel. The menu is translated on English. By request often a roasted lamb in Osogovo way is prepared and the guests take part in the preparation.

The motel has two ski terrains, two ski-lifts, a biathlon track and track maintenance machine. The motel also rents ski equipment.

- Motel “Mice” - it is on 1.585km above sea level, surrounded by spruce, pine and beech forests. The motel is 300m from the asphalt road.
  - Capacity: 20 beds divided in two-bed and three-bed rooms. It also has a hall for 120 guests.
  - Cuisine: traditional - national cuisine.
  - The motel has one ski terrain and a ski-lift.
  - The motel offers ski lessons for its guests.
- The children’s resort “Ponikva”.
  - Capacity: 220 beds.
  - Own kitchen.
  - Ski terrain and ski-lift.
  - Basketball court, volleyball court, handball court and rooms for ping-pong,

chess and other cultural-recreational activities.

All the facilities are 3-5km apart and the guests can enjoy in the natural beauties in Osogovo Mountains: thick beech and pine forests, mountain meadows, forest fruits (strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, cranberries etc) and many tea herbals.

- Motel “Brana Gratche” - 6km north from Kochani on the artificial lake Gratche. B category.  
Capacity: 22 rooms, 3 apartments and hall for 320 guests.  
Cuisine: reach and diverse. The menu is also on English.  
Specialty: fresh fish, caught from the nearby fishpond just before the cooking.
- Hotel “Nacional” - located on the west entrance of the city on the highway Shtip-Kochani. A relatively new hotel, started working on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004.  
Capacity: the hotel was built by the newest standards and it has 50 beds divided in one-bed rooms, two-bed rooms and apartments.
- Cuisine: contemporary with reach menu and diverse choice of drinks. For the guests that stay for more than one day, combined tours are arranged with the motel “Sharena Cheshma” because both objects belong to one owner.  
Recreational facilities: ski terrains, sleigh tracks and ski-lifts. The ski terrains are near the hotel and they can be used any time.
- Hunting reservation “Osogovo”.  
It offers trophy game and it has its own hunting lodge for accommodation of hunters during the no-hunting seasons. It has four rooms with eight beds, a kitchen and a TV room.  
The reservation can be used by tourists and hunters but they have to register first. There is a shooting range near the reservation.
- Paragliding terrains - located on 10km from Kochani and can be used at any time with no limitations.
- Hiking tracks - all the tourist locations in Osogovo Mountains are surrounded by suitable terrains for recreational trekking. Steep hills with beautiful grass offer the tourists a pleasant trekking and to enjoy the natural beauties of Osogovo.

## VINICA

According to the geographic position municipality of Vinica is located in eastern Macedonia. It occupies south-east part of Vinichko-Kochanska valley and part of Plachkovica Mountain. Municipality of Vinica is 432km<sup>2</sup>, and on altitude between 368m and 1.754m above sea level. It has a suitable geographic location and is 130km from Skopje. A regional highway Kochani-Berovo goes through this municipality connecting it with these neighboring municipalities. International highway to Bulgaria goes through Vinica and Delchevo, and through Kochani, Shtip and Veles the municipality is connected with the highway Skopje-Gevgelija. Besides the city of Vinica, the municipality consists of the following 16 settlements: Blatec, Istibanja, Jakimovo, Leski, Gradec, Lipec, Laki, Dragobrashte, Pekljani, Trsino, Trstija, Krushevo, Kalimanci, Grljani, Vinichka Krshla i Crn Kamen.

According to the geographic position Vinica is exposed to combined influence of sub-Mediterranean and east-continental climate. Vinichko-Kochanska valley is protected from direct northern winds by Osogovo Mountain and from direct southern winds by Plachkovica Mountain. Average annual temperature is 13° C and average summer temperature is 22.5° C. Average annual minimal temperature is 6.3° C and the lowest minimal temperature was 25.4° C below zero in January, 1954.

Relative low temperatures in the winters are the result of the lowering of the cold air from Plachkovica Mountain, covered with snow during the winter and sometimes even in late spring.

In the summer this area has extremely high air temperature. Average annual maximum temperature is 18.6° C and the highest maximal temperature was 41.2° C on July 6<sup>th</sup>, 1988. There are 119 summer and 52 tropical days during a year.

On territory of municipality of Vinica 90% of the showers is rain and the other 10% is snow and sometimes hail. Average annual shower is 538mm. Average sunny period is 2.222 hours per year or 6 hours per day. The maximum is in June (average 302 hours), and the minimum is December (average 89 hours).

The winds are common in Vinica region. The most frequent is the south-west wind, with average speed of 2.5m/sec. and maximum speed of 16m/sec. The second most

frequent wind is the north-east wind, with average speed of 2.4m/sec. and maximum speed of 16m/sec.

Plachkovica Mountain is rich with forests. In the lower region there are small forests of hazel, acacia and hornbeam, in the middle region there are beech, oak and poplar forests (1.600m above sea level). Above this region there are black pine, white pine, spruce and juniper forests.

The suitable climate dominating Vinica region provides cultivation of different types of agricultural cereals, fruits and vines. Characteristically for the city is a part of the town called "Topolovi nasadi" (poplar plants). The meadows are located near the river flows, in the plains. The hill meadows are located in the oak regions and can be used during the year.

Traditionally municipality of Vinica is known by its agriculture, especially rice, tobacco, vegetables, fruits and flowers. Most of the arable area is rich.

The hydrography of Vinica is composed of: rivers, artificial water accumulation and natural springs and mineral wells. The biggest river in the municipality is Bregalnica River, located 3.5km north from the city. It rises from Maleshevo Mountains at 1.720m, with total length of 225km and average flow of 28m/sec. It belongs to the Aegean drainage-basin and it is a left confluent of river Vardar.

It is important to accentuate that municipality of Vinica is rich with geothermal and thermo mineral waters. By the chemical analysis, the geothermal waters contain soda, sodium and carbon-hydrates, and hyper-thermal water is rich with sulfur, hydrogen and iron. The well near Istibanja village has a capacity of 5l/sec. or average of 432.000 liters per day with temperature of 68° C. The chemical structure of the water clearly indicates its curative character but its capacity has not been used effectively. So far it is used for to warm up the vegetable and flower glasshouses. As registered in the document of the Ottoman Empire there used to be a bathhouse, but after a strong earthquake in the beginning of XX century, its water was lost. Thanks to the modern technology, in 1982 the water was brought to surface.

Municipality of Vinica has a lot of minerals (metals and non-metals) bonded with rocks of different age and genesis. The most known are: pre-Cambrian, Paleozoic, Mesozoic, Cenozoic and intrusive rocks (granite). The most researched are: quartz, feldspar, clay

(kaolin, fireproof and masonry clay), quartz sand, carbonate, asbestos, iron and vermiculite.

### **Cultural and historical markings:**

The first traces of settlements in Vinica date from Iron Age (XII - VI century BC). The first traces of human life forms are found near Vinichka Krshla village (Gradishte 2), where rare ceramic fragments from Stone Age were found. Remains from Roman period are registered near "Gradishta" and "Kalinja". These localities are on inaccessible hills. The Romans choose these locations because they offer good defenses. Roman settlements were located in: Oreovo - near Leski village, Crkvenec - Gradishte - near Lipec village, Rashka - near Pekljani village and Kale and Gorica - near city of Vinica. There are several bigger localities: Oreovo (with a nearby partial Roman aqueduct), Crkvenec - Gradishte, Chukarski and Rashka (found goldmines exploited during the early Roman period).

The big and powerful tribe Peons populated the eastern part of Macedonia several centuries BC. They lived in the region of Vinica, near the rivers Struma and Vardar. According to the historical evidences, the tribe Peons belonged to the ethnical group Illyrians. When this region was attacked by Persians, it was damaged very much. But later it was rebuilt and the Peons strengthened their economy. In 358 BC this tribe was conquered by the Macedonian Emperor Philip the second and later by his son Alexander the Great. After his death, the Peons restored their independence and prosperity.

With the collapse of the Roman Empire some of the settlements disappeared. When the Slavic people colonized the region they found destroyed Antic settlements and they populated them. Vinica is a Slavic name.

The Ottoman domination starts from 1385 - 1395 and as a result Vinica becomes a crossroad for Turkish soldiers. A new ownership system was established and was kept until the end of their domination in Macedonia.

At the beginning of the WWI, this region was involved in military actions. In 1912 there were battles between Turkish and Bulgarian army. During the Second Balkan War in 1913 there were battles between Bulgarian and Serbian army. After the war Vinica becomes a part of Kochani region, which consisted 11 municipalities and Vinica was its centre.

During the WWII, the Serbian establishment left the area and the region was in total anarchy. The Bulgarians tried to assimilate the Macedonian population and this region was economically stagnant.

After the liberation in 1946, the municipality of Vinica is active. In April, 1952 municipality of Vinica is officialy formed and consisted of: Gradec, Istibanja, Jakimovo and Crn Kamen. In 1955, municipalities of Blatec and Grljani with their villages merged with Vinica.

The early Christian objects (St. Spas basilica - Dragobashte village and the monastery in Grljani village) are the most known. Smaller churches from the Middle Age can be found in Leski village, at St. Atanas location. There are also churches in Laki village, on "Crkvata" locality and a church in Vinica, on "Kale" location.

In the category of regional monuments the most important are "Kale" and "Gorica" located in the city of Vinica and "Crkvishte" in Blatec village.

The roots of Christianity are found in Vinica (terracotta icons, found in "Vinichko Kale"). These icons are the most authentic archeological discoveries and are part of Christian heritage.

The most famous archeological locality is "Vinichko Kale" with its unique and original terracotta icons. They are discovered during 1986-1989 and are most exclusive discoveries from the early-Christian art in Macedonia. Although they were not known for a long time, today these icons are the most sensational archeological discoveries on the Balkan and are symbol of the complex dimension of early Christian art in Macedonia. The ceramic relief from Vinica is the most valuable art from the period of early Christianity. On the locality of "Vinichko Kale" there are remains of several buildings and one early Christian church. This church, occupying the south-west part of the locality, was built in the first half of IV century. The most famous motifs from the collection "Vinichka" are: "The Victory Cross" - symbol of Christianity, "Jesus of Navi stopping the sun above the city of Gavaon", "The miracle of St. Elise", "The healing of Tovit", "David's psalms", "The lion from the tribe Judas", "St. Archangel Mikhail", "St. Jove - demon conqueror", "St. Theodor - demon conqueror" and "St. Christopher".

Around the church a number of archeological artifacts: columns, bases, capitals, floor tiles, ceramic dishes, bronze, iron and bone objects, jewelry, coins and etc. Also a

female tomb from 12<sup>th</sup> century was found full of: nine glass and four bronze gold-plated bracelets, eleven bronze rings (some of them gold-plated) and a bone needle. These terracotta reliefs are themed with Christian and Latin liturgy. They are from V-VI century and they probably served as an application on the tomb walls in the late Antic period. Terracotta icons discovered by the archeologist Cone Krstevski, represent unique type of priceless wealth of archeological, artistic and theological value. These icons are presented in more than twenty cities in twelve European countries.

The culture is a significant part of the long history of Vinica. There are cultural manifestations held in different locations like House of Culture “Tosho Arsov” and the city library “Vancho Prke”.

The most popular cultural event is International Annual Folk Festival of Traditional Dances “Istibansko Zdravozhivo”, held in September by folk ensemble “Kitka” from Istibanja, sponsored by municipality of Vinica.

The House of Culture “Tosho Arsov” - Vinica works more than 50 years and contributes the development of cultural life in the city. This institution covers all the cultural segments and represents a centre of all cultural events.

The City Library in Vinica was found 1946 as the only institution of this kind on the territory of municipality of Vinica. Total number of books in the library of Vinica, along with the books from the local libraries is 47.000. The inventory, technically and professionally is elaborated according to the international library standards and the users have an access to the books through adequate informative catalogue. This library also contains the oldest icon in the world.

In the municipality of Vinica, a Museum of Vinica “Terakota” was opened in 2006. The museum has a collection of old objects and terracotta icons found in Vinichko Kale.

### **Natural-anthropogenic locations and accommodation capacities in Vinica:**

Picnic sites in Vinica are “Obozna” on the highway to Berovo (20km from Vinica) and “Sveti Krst” near the weather station in Vinica.

On Plachkovica Mountain, near the place called “Mal Lisec” is a site built for the needs of Secretary for Defense and there are plans for building a location for winter tourism north-west from here.

The restaurants are near the city besides the road from Kochani to Vinica and they are: Hotel "Sliv", Hotel "Centro Biznis" and Hotel "Shagal". All three objects have modern restaurants, apartments and sleeping rooms and offer quality services.

The city also has a number of stores, boutiques, bars and a night club and several restaurants and pizzerias where the citizens and the tourists can spend their time.

## **DELICHEVO**

Municipality of Delchevo is 423km<sup>2</sup> and has 22 settlements: Bigla, Vetren, Virche, Vratislavci, Gabrovo, Grad, Dramche, Dzvegor, Iliovo, Kiselica, Kosovo Dabje, Nov Istevnik, Ochipala, Poletto, Razlovci, Selnik, Stamer, Star Istevnik, Trabatovishte, Turija and Chivlik.

This municipality has 17.713 inhabitants, 10.454 of them live in the city. Relative humidity: 93%, atmospheric pressure: 1.026,1 millibars.

The city of Delchevo is on 590 - 660m above sea level. Until 1996 municipality of Delchevo was one of 34 municipalities in Macedonia. In 1990 the municipality had 26.315 inhabitants or 1.2% of the total population in Macedonia. At that time the population was divided in 30 settlements including the city of Delchevo. The city had 34% of the total population in the municipality, and the rest of the population was in rural settlements and one mixed type settlement (Makedonska Kamenica). With the new territorial division of Macedonia that formed 123 municipalities, the municipality of Makedonska Kamenica was separated from Delchevo, and Delchevo today is 423km<sup>2</sup> with 2/3 of the old municipality population. Besides the city of Delchevo, the municipality has 21 rural settlements.

The municipality of Delchevo has continental east-European climate with modified pluviometric regime. Average annual temperature in Delchevo is 10.7° C, with absolute minimum of -26° C and absolute maximum of 37° C, while in the mountains average annual temperature drops to 3.5° C. Hottest month is August and coldest month is January. The spring is always colder than autumn. Sunny and clear weather dominates through the year. Average annual rainfalls in Delchevo are 548mm, and 1.000mm in the mountains above 1.600m. Although the rainfalls are low, they take above 50% of total

annual showers, in the vegetation period (April - September). The vegetation period with temperature above 10° C lasts for 191 days during the year. These conditions provide suitable climate for vegetation and good natural condition for tourism development in the region.

By analyzing the demographic condition in the rural part of the municipality, number of family members and age structure of the population, we can see the perspective and survival of certain rural villages, especially those that are spread type villages (several neighborhoods distant from the central part of the rural village). This type of settlements is mostly located in the hills and the mountains, where arable grounds are of low quality and the survival of the population is based on exploitation of meadows and forests.

Municipality of Delchevo has 5 rural settlements with total population of 3.256 inhabitants (45.4 of rural inhabitants) that have average of 3.75 members per family. A work capable inhabitants and inhabitant below 17 years dominate these settlements, while the percentage of the elders is normal. In these settlements, besides the farming and orcharding, the processing capacities need to be developed. By doing this, the migration of the population in the municipality centre and in other cities in the country, will be lowered.

The education in Delchevo is important, but unfortunately in the past it was used for assimilation. For the first time the Macedonian language was used in schools in the summer of 1944. Today the educational work is performed at two primary and one secondary governmental school.

### **Cultural and historical markings:**

The archeological sites in this region are mostly from Antic period. Near the villages Virche, Vetren and Bigla are found several necropolises - tumuli from the Roman period. These forms of burial mounds are typical for Iron Age, but were found 7-8 centuries later.

So far 15 archeological sites were explored near Delchevo.

The Roman civilization slowly and hardly reached this region. Important roads crossed the area, and there were also strategic points protecting the roads. Small Roman tumuli were used to bury the road keepers. A lot of male tombs with weapons and parts of military equipment were found. This region is very significant, but so far only the surface

has been scratched. It takes new excavations in the sites where people lived continuously from the Eneolithic Period until today.

Eneolithic locality “Gradishte”, near the Grad village - this settlement is from Eneolithic period (2200 B.C). The prehistoric houses were built strong.

Fragments of ceramics were found here: figurines, sacramental tables, different tools made from antlers and knives made from flint stones. Pottery was made from quality clay that can be found even today.

The locality is 9km from the city of Delchevo.

Other cultural and historical markings in municipality of Delchevo:

1. Middle Age tower in Kula settlement - dating from Middle Age and is 3km from the city of Delchevo.
2. Archeological locality “Mogila” (Pijanec settlement) - on this locality was found a unique burial bronze ritual chariot from the time of Alexander the Great.
3. Paleontological locality “Stamer” (Stamer village) - dating from 10 million years ago. An oldest mass animal tomb in Europe was found here (gazelle, giraffe, rhinoceros etc). The locality is still exploring.
4. Archeological locality “Gramadi” (Razlovci village) - archeological excavations were made in 2004 and old building material characteristic for Middle Age was found.
5. Memorial Centre “ASNOM” (center of the city).
6. City mosque “Sultan Fatih Mehmed II” (central city area).
7. Church of “St. Archangel Mikhail” (Dramche village) - the church is 10km from the city of Delchevo.
8. Monastery of “St. Bogorodica - Baraklija” (a place called Manastirski Endek) - restored in 1998. “Pijanechko-Maleshevska wedding” is held in this monastery.
9. Church of “Konstantin and Jelena” (Razlovci village) - this church has the only mural of an immortal. The church dates from the time when Tzar Konstantin ruled.
10. Church of “St. Petka” (Selnik village) - dating from 13<sup>th</sup> century, but it was declared in 16<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Natural-anthropogenic locations and accommodation capacities:**

The most significant picnic area in municipality of Delchevo is “Ezerce”. This picnic area is located 5km from the city of Delchevo. Here, there are possibilities for development of fishing and hunting. This site is rich with green meadows and thick vegetation.

Locality “Kukuljeto” is located in Nov Istevnik village. The locality is full of thick pine and oak forests, natural springs and drinking water. It is a natural rarity.

Locality “Ilin Kamen” is located in Dzvegor village. It is a rock marked as a holy rock. According to the legend this rock had curative properties, especially for impregnation of women. There is also a rock like this in Sveti Nikole.

Golak Mountain is protected by law of preservation of natural rarities. This mountain has a remarkable vegetation, natural beauties, clean air and ecologic zones. A park - forest “Goce Delchev”, is located here and it is protected by law. On this mountain there is also a children resort “Golak”, at 1.500m above sea level. This resort has enough accommodation capacities. An investor is required to make this resort work in its full glory.

The city of Delchevo has a number of restaurants and other similar facilities for the tourists.

Hotel/restaurant “Makedonija” is one of the bigger accommodation capacities in the city. The restaurant has a capacity for 400 guests.

### **BEROVO**

According to the legend, the name “Maleshevo” has an Illyrian origin and came from the word “mal” (mountain) and the word “males” (mountain area). Some scientist claim that the words “Malesh”, “Maleshevo” and “Malesevo” came from the old Slavonic phrase “mal les”, meaning small forest, small mountain. In 4<sup>th</sup> century Maleshevo was part of the state of Philip and Alexander the Great. After the collapse of their empire Macedonia and Maleshevo was part of the Roman province Macedonia. In 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century this territory was populated by Slavs. Konstantin Filosof composed the Cyrillic alphabet on

the territory of Maleshevo. With the collapse of Macedonian Kingdom of Tzar Samoil, Maleshevo was under Byzantine.

The name Maleshevo for the first time is mentioned in the books of "Gramota" (Russian school) of Byzantine Emperor Vasilij II in 20.05.1920, where he wrote about the number and the structure of the Eparchies of Ohrid Archiepiscopcy. A hundred years later, Maleshevo was mentioned by the Arabic travelogue writer Idrisi.

Maleshevo in 1334 is part of the Middle Age Serbian State, and it is assumed that in 1394 the city of Malesh is destroyed by the Turks. After the World War I Maleshevo is part of the Kingdom of SHS (Serbians, Croatians and Slovenians).

Today Maleshevo is 80.560m<sup>2</sup> and it is composed of two municipalities: Berovo (the city of Berovo and Rusinovo, Vladimirovo, Ratevo, Dvorishte, Smojmirovo, Machevo, Budinarci and Mitrashinci villages) and Pehchevo.

The municipality of Berovo is 595km<sup>2</sup> and is in the east part of the Republic of Macedonia. Berovo valley is in the most eastern part of Macedonia between 41°06' and 41°53' latitude and between 23°12' and 22°37' longitude. In the south municipality of Berovo borders with the municipalities of Novo Selo, Bosilovo and Vasilevo, in the west with Radovish and Vinica, in the north with Delchevo and Pehchevo and in the east is the state border with the Republic of Bulgaria. The total area of municipality of Berovo is 595km<sup>2</sup> and average elevation of 800m. The relief is predominantly mountainous and flat areas are situated around the Bregalnica riverbed.

The municipality of Berovo is located on the edge of Maleshevo valley.

This area has moderate continental climate with a certain changes into mountain-continental climate.

You can arrive in Berovo using the east highway road through Kochani and Vinica and from the border crossing Pehchevo, Delchevo and Strumica.

Berovo municipality has 13.941 citizens, 95.65% of them are Macedonians and the rest of them are Roma, Turks, Serbs and other.

Maleshevo is located between the rivers Vardar and Struma. It is surrounded by high mountains that prevent the influence of the sea winds along the rivers. In this region the most common are northern and north-western winds, less common are southern winds

and least common are eastern winds. Average annual cloudiness is 52%, meaning that the sky is cloudy for more than half a year. The cloudiest months are November (68%), January (66%) and December (63%). The least cloudy months are August (26%), July (32%) and September (33%).

The sunny period is average of 2.375 hours per year. The sunniest months are August (342 hours) and July (236 hours) and the least sunny month is December (95 hours).

Average annual rainfalls are 677 mm/m<sup>2</sup> in Vladimirovo village, 724mm/m<sup>2</sup> in Mitrashinci village and 789mm/m<sup>2</sup> in Crnik village.

The rainfalls are most common in May, June and November and the driest months are July, August and September. The snow falls in December, January and February.

Average annual humidity is 76%.

The most common are pine forests, oak forests and beech forests. As a result of the exploitation of the forests, new seedlings are planted with different density. Beech forests are mostly in the mountain areas. The highland beech forests are well preserved and are significant for the forest economy.

A versatile fauna can be found in Maleshevo: hare, deer, wolf, wild boar, fox, bobcat, marten, badger, otter, weasel, partridge, pheasant, dove, turtledove, wild goose, hawk, magpie, raven, crow, eagle etc.

Endangered species in the region are: "Kamenjarka" partridge, deer and hare.

### **Cultural and historical markings:**

There are several cultural and historical markings in municipality of Berovo: Berovo Museum, House of Culture "Dimitar Berovski, Malesh room, "Petlec" peak and the Monastery "St. Archangel Mikhail".

#### **The Berovo Museum**

This object has a sentimental value for the citizens of Berovo because it is one of the most recognizable elements of the city. From the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when it was built, until the eighties this building was used for administrative purposes: school, court and library. After that the structure decayed and it was unpleasant view and a hazardous area for the pedestrians and it was a matter of time when the building will collapse.

Today, the museum is completely restored and it is part of the chain for tourism

development in this municipality. In the museum we can find traces of the rich history and the ethnological and archeological treasure of the region.

Besides the monastery “St. Archangel Mikhail”, dating from 1818, there is also a monastery of “St. Presveta Bogorodica baraklija” and several churches: “Nativity of Venerable Virgin Mary” in Berovo, “St. Petka” in Rusinovo village, “St. Apostoli” in Ratevo village, “St. Spas” in Vladimirovo village, “St. Assumption of the Virgin Mary” in Smojmirovo village, “St. Atanas” in Machevo village, “St. Djordji” in Budinarci village, “St. Ilija” in Mitrashinci village and “Venerable Virgin Mary” in Dvorishte village.

### **Natural-anthropogenic locations:**

Maleshevo has a huge tourist potential, not fully used, although in the last few years a progress has been noted.

Visitors in Berovo and the local villages usually stay for the weekends, New Year holidays, Easter and Labor Day (1<sup>st</sup> of May), and during the summer period for 4-7 days.

Most of the tourists are from Macedonia, but in the last two year the number of foreign tourists is rising (mostly foreigners on a mission in Macedonia). The visitors mostly show interest in the clean air, peaceful and quiet environment and possibilities for rest and relaxation, including the mountain hikes. Visitors also come in Berovo for medical reasons.

### **Accommodation capacities:**

With a panoramic view of the town and only 350m from the town centre is the motel “Loven Dom”. Its location and beside the scenic view, provides with sports activities such as hiking and walking in the near forest. The object has an earthen tennis playground and an open spacious terrace. In the restaurant, which is part of the object, one can get all kinds of food. The motel has two apartments and two double-bed rooms with a television and a telephone.

The renovated house “MRS”, dating from 1900, is in the central town area. It has 12 beds and every room has its own bathroom, television and wireless internet. Next to the house there is a restaurant dating from 1968 and whose menu is abundant in grill specialties, pizza and traditional issues.

Near the bus station on the quay on the river Bregalnica is “Penzioner”. It has 9 three-bed rooms each with a separate bathroom, placed on the first and second floor. In the same building there is a restaurant “Keki” where one can find all kinds of food. The object which is near the town centre enables you to experience the life in Berovo and to enjoy the gurgling of the river Bregalnica.

At only 100m from the town centre in a peaceful and quiet street, there are boarding rooms in the house “Roza”. The house has 7 beds with a shared kitchen, living room, bathroom and telephone. The rooms are on the second floor. The house has a garage and a big yard.

At only 50m from the town centre, just opposite the restaurant “MRS” there are boarding rooms in the house “Toki”. The house has one four-bed bedroom and three-bed bedroom, living room with a TV, shared kitchen and a shared bathroom that are on the second floor.

The house “Centar - Majore” is in the centre of the town and has 8 beds placed on the first floor. It has a well equipped shared mini kitchen, shared bathroom and a television in every room. All more significant objects that would make the stay of you and your family more pleasant are in the immediate vicinity of the house.

At only 100m from the town square and at the same distance from the hill Juovec in the old part of the town you can find “Stara Kukja” with a beautiful and spacious yard. The house has 3 three-bed rooms with a shared mini kitchen, bathroom, big porch and a furnace in case you want to prepare your own specialties. The house has a beautiful view and an opportunity for a relaxed and pleasant stay.

At only 3km from Berovo in the tourist settlement Ablanica you can find the villa “Ablanichka Dolina”. The villa has 6 beds placed on the first and the second floor, shared kitchen, living room and a bathroom. This villa is the ideal place for relaxed holiday and recreation, and the spacious yard provides you with unforgettable moments of relaxation.

Typical hunting house “Futi” that would provide the guests with a pleasant stay in the settlement Ablanica. It has capacity of 4 beds and is equipped with a TV set, shared kitchen and a terrace with porch. Here you can fill the spirit of Nature and you can awaken your senses.

Villa “Ljuba” is located at only 3km away from Berovo in the tourist settlement Ablanica. It is an ideal place for a pleasant holiday and recreation. The area itself offers you an encounter with a great number of remedial and aromatic herbs. The villa has 6 beds, placed at the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, shared kitchen, living room, bathroom and a sauna. The furnace and a covered summer resting place that are in the spacious yard provide with the opportunity and a chance to prepare a great number of local specialties.

At only 3km from Berovo in the tourist settlement Ablanica you can find villa “Srna” with 8 beds placed on 2 floors. The villa has a shared but well equipped kitchen, living room, shared bathroom, television and a satellite antenna for TV and radio. The villa offers you a wonderful yard for parties and a big summer terrace that provide you with a pleasant holiday and relaxation.

The tourist locality “Brana” is only 5km far from Berovo, on the Berovo Lake coast and 1.000m above the sea level. Situated in the breasts of centennial pine, beech and oak trees caress of sunshine, thanks of natural climate conditions, this environmental place present really “air bath”. Longwise the lake are placed many villas, wonderful terrains for picnic, recreation and sport activities.

At only 7km from Berovo near the Berovo Lake is the modern villa “Lina 1” that offers you accommodation for eight people. The villa has a living room, kitchen, television and bathroom. In front of the villa there is a beautiful yard and a big terrace that offer you pleasant and unforgettable moments.

At only 7km from Berovo near the Berovo Lake the villa “Lina 2” offers accommodation for 10 people. In front of the villa is the lake and beautiful pine forest. This modern villa has a fireplace, mini bar, kitchen, TV, outdoor kitchen (summer kitchen) with a furnace. The spacious yard, the terrace and the clean air offers a pleasant holiday and relaxation for the whole family.

Villa “Marija” is located at the locality Feta in the immediate vicinity of Berovo Lake. As a part of the villa there is a dairy farm. The villa has 8 beds on the second floor with a shared kitchen, bathroom and terrace. The surrounding forest and the clean air provide a perfect place for pleasant and unforgettable walks.

Bathed in clean air and natural beauty, the villa “Chipalakova Koliba” is a unique place where instead of cars and noise you will experience amazing peace and magnificent

surroundings. The villa is ideal for four-member family. It has three double bed rooms with a living room, satellite antenna for TV and radio, kitchen and a bathroom. It has a furnace, fireplace and a grill and you can prepare local specialties. If you enjoy walking the Berovo Lake at only five to ten minutes walking from the villa and it offers an unforgettable view.

Only 500 meters from Berovo Lake placed in the pine forest you can find villa Ranch "Feta" that offer you unforgettable holiday. The villa offers accommodation for seven people or one three-bed room and two double-bed rooms on the first and second floor. The shared kitchen and the furnace enable you to prepare local specialties that you can enjoy in the peaceful surrounding and the clean air.

In the immediate vicinity of Berovo Lake villa "Trnkovski" gives you an opportunity to go fishing and to recreate in many other ways. It has four double-bed rooms or totally eight beds on the second and the third floor. Each floor has a shared kitchen with a living room and a bathroom.

A beautiful villa "Vakane" with its beautiful view on Berovo Lake is only at 6.5 kilometers from Berovo. It has two double-bed rooms, two bedrooms, shared kitchen and living room, bathroom on the first and second floor. The vicinity of the lake provides you with an opportunity for fishing and other leisure activities.

Hidden in the thick pine forest which is typical for the area around Berovo lake and crossed with numerous paths that would provide you with pleasant and long walks, villa "Chichak" offers accommodation for thirteen people. The roominess of the villa and the big terrace offer comfortable accommodation and unforgettable rest. The vicinity of the lake is an opportunity for fishing and some other leisure activities.

Fifteen kilometers from Berovo near the border crossing Klepalo hidden in thick beech forest is the villa "Klepalo". The villa has capacity of thirteen beds, living room, kitchen and bathroom. The spacious yard, the clean air and the pool offer you a pleasant rest and recreation. The kitchen and the furnace give you an opportunity to prepare local specialties.

At only 6 kilometers from Berovo there is an ideal place for pleasant holiday and recreation. Hidden in the thick pine forest, with a view on Berovo Lake, with capacity of eight beds, modern living room, fireplace, kitchen, bathroom and beautiful terrace is the

offer of villa “Marija”. The vicinity of the lake gives you an opportunity to go fishing or relax in other ways.

Villa “Zora” is located in the area Feta as part of the dairy farm owned by Piponski Mihail. The villa is a three-floor object with seventeen beds. There are two kitchens and here you can prepare food produced at the farm such as: milk, eggs and fresh meat. Most of the rooms are three-bed rooms, each with a toilet and a shared bathroom. The location of this villa is particularly attractive in autumn when the surrounding wood is in picturesque colors.

The hotel “Aurora” is still under construction and it is located above the Berovo Lake dam, at 1.100m above sea level. It includes the following objects: Presidential villa - a separate 190m<sup>2</sup> object composed of two apartments (each with a living room, kitchen, dining room and two bedrooms) and one shared room with a fireplace and area of 43m<sup>2</sup> for meetings and associations of the guests from the apartments. The complex will have four residential villas, each with four suites (one 36m<sup>2</sup> room on two levels with sleeping area and sitting area), three villas with four standard rooms, equipped by five star hotel category, and one villa with two 45m<sup>2</sup> apartments (each with one living room and one bedroom).

### **3. Main problems connected with the utilization of cultural and historic heritage in the cross border region as a tourist resource**

The cross border region is characterized by great variety of cultural and historical heritage. Its utilization, however is related with the need of resolving number of problems. Main problems are linked with:

- *Material preservation.* A characteristic feature of the target region is the constant treasure – hunters’ attacks over archeological objects and bad tourist culture and upbringing of some cultural and historical monuments’ visitors.
- *Information.* The allocation of the responsibilities of the administration connected with the cultural inheritance raises a number of problems concerning the information about it. The citizens and the different organizations practically do not have free access to this information, neither to the information contained, for example, in the Registry of the National museum fund, led by the NCMGAW (Bulgaria), which contains data for all movable monuments of culture. The problem with the lack of information has another measurement as well – for some sites there are no publications with a scientific character, and the sites for which there is some tourist information of any kind are about 5-10 % from all sites. Plenty of sites are not shown on

tourist maps, they are not mentioned in different tourist materials which are published. The tour operators and the related organizations do not have such information available as well.

- *Socialization.* The problems connected with the socialization of the cultural heritage in the cross border region are similar to the problems in the remaining part of both countries. In the first place, it is the bad transport accessibility to the landed monuments of culture and the lack of suitable infrastructure, which could allow the monuments to be socialized and included in the tourist activities. For the movable monuments of culture, it is the absence of expository area and the bad management of the museum funds in the region. Bad socialization results come from different factors, including the lack of particular activities for the socialization of the monuments such as preservation and restoration, the lack of sufficient funding for large scaled archeological investigations and restoration activities, the lack of information, the lack of required projects under international programs oriented towards these problems, etc.
- *Human factor.* The personnel capacity of specialists in the target region is low, especially concerning archeologists, museum workers, experts of preservation and restoration, educated specialists of cultural tourism. A part of available personnel is in retirement age. Basically, the cadres' potential is concentrated in the district centers, and in the municipalities, developed in the field of tourism

The basic economic potential of the cultural heritage is related with the sphere of tourism, as well as with given accompanying branches such as accomplishment of construction works, production and trading with souvenirs, printing and distribution of tourist materials, etc. On a second place, the movable cultural heritage within the close few years (the movable monuments of culture – property of physical or legal persons) shall become a subject of the provisions for trading with the specified by the European Union “cultural valuables”

Cultural tourism has a particular significance for the cross border region. The alternative approach is the creation and the operation of routes which shall include sites of the region and shall also be connected with operating well developed neighboring resorts. It should be noticed that the potential of cultural heritage in the cross border region contributes to the development of mild forms of tourism in which both cultural and natural landmarks are visited. This complex approach – using hybrid forms combining ecotourism and cultural tourism – will increase the region's attractiveness

In order enough attractive destinations for tourism to be provided, as well as the potential of the cross border region in the area of the cultural – historic heritage to be increased, the activities connected with the archeological excavations, preservation and restoration of landed and movable monuments should be stimulated. For that purpose, it is necessary the adjacent infrastructure to be built and maintained, and physical security for the landed monuments and archeological objects to be provided.

Consequently, the necessary adjacent infrastructure should be built for each perspective object, as well as for the ones that will be determined as such in the future. For each site the information, collected in advance shall be used or new pictures and evaluations should be made. The elements of the adjacent infrastructure, which shall be constructed, are determined for each individual site. As a whole, they include roads, pathways, staircases, parapets, signs, marking, toilets, bus stops, visitors' centers, securing equipment, protective systems, cameras, etc

The next step is socialized objects' including in tourist packages. The sites prepared for visits shall be included in tourist packages of a different range. Considering the specific character of the cross border region, the main accent should be put on services in which groups are brought from other regions or from big resorts for the purpose of visiting specific sites. This shall not be applied for some specific kinds of tourism for which packages could be worked out including only the cross border region. Packages for group and individual tours shall be prepared. Each package shall be provided with advertising materials, including digital presentations of the cultural - historic sites, the museum collections, etc

The packages shall suit the available accommodation facilities and shall include the use of already worked out tourist guides into western languages. The packages shall be offered to national and foreign tour operators, and shall be advertised at regional, national and international meetings and fairs, tourist exchange markets as well.

### **National and international tourist exhibitions**

<b>National tourist exhibitions</b>	<b>International tourist exhibitions</b>
➤ "Vacation" Sofia	➤ International tourist exhibition Vakantie Utrecht
➤ "Tourism and leisure activities fair" Varna	➤ International tourist exhibition Reiseliv Oslo
➤ "Cultural tourism" Veliko Turnovo	➤ International tourist exhibition Ferien Vienna
➤ Along the sun road	➤ International tourist exhibition CMT Stuttgart
➤ "Mountains in Bulgaria"	➤ International tourist exhibition MATKA Helsinki
➤ "Your vacation" – Tourist market Bourgas	➤ International tourist exhibition Slovakiatour Bratislava
➤ "Weekend tourism" Rousse	➤ International tourist exhibition FERIE Copenhagen
➤ Contact market "Four seasons vacation in Elena Balkan"	➤ International tourist exhibition FITUR Madrid

➤	➤ International tourist exhibition IMTM Tel Aviv
➤	➤ International tourist exhibition ITB Berlin
➤	➤ International tourist exhibition ITM Moscow
➤	➤ International tourist exhibition MITT Moscow
➤	➤ International tourist exhibition UITT Kiev
➤	➤ International tourist exhibition KITF, Alma Ati Kazakhstan
➤	➤ International tourist exhibition TUR Gothenburg
➤	➤ International tourist exhibition Salon Mondial Du Tourisme Paris
➤	➤ International tourist exhibition SALON DES VACANCES, Brussels
➤	➤ International tourist exhibition TNT Bucurest
➤	➤ International tourist exhibition UTAZAS, Budapest
➤	➤ International tourist exhibition IFT, Belgrade
➤	➤ International tourist exhibition SITC Barcelona
➤	➤ International tourist exhibition ATM Dubai
➤	➤ International tourist exhibition TOURISM. LEISURE.HOTEL, Kisineu, Moldova
➤	➤ International tourist exhibition “Отдых без границ. Лето-осень, St Petersburg, Russia
➤	➤ International tourist exhibition TOURSIB, Novosibirsk, Russia ➤
➤	➤ International tourist exhibition LEISURE, Minsk, Belorussia
➤	➤ International tourist exhibition KOTFA, Seoul, Korea

Concerning the development of cultural tourism, it is perspective for the cross border region to take part in purposefully organized tourist market with the participation of companies from the countries with the greatest intensity of tourist flows towards both countries; it shall be thematic and devoted to cultural tourism. This activity would allow the elaboration of international packages, and also would stimulate the contacts between tour operators. In this direction, they are perspective for the other kinds of alternative tourism as well

Furthermore, visitors centers have to be built in the cross border region, as well as tourist offices and offices for training of personnel. In order the tourist potential to be increased, which is connected with the cultural – historic values, the tourist flow towards the respective sites should be secured by providing enough information and services for the tourists. This particularly refers to the individual tourists who do not visit the cross border region in an organized manner. Consequently, the information for the cultural – historic sites should be broadly presented in the region's tourist offices. Furthermore, visitors centers for each important site shall be built, where people could use the services of qualified guides, could buy souvenirs, etc. It is possible such centers to be created either in the respective sites, or in the near settlements. The last but not least, it is important for the tour operators, local authorities and civil organizations engaged in tourism, to be provided with personnel. For that purpose training shall be carried out in which specialists from universities shall be involved, teaching subjects such as Tourism, Cultural tourism, Eco tourism etc.

#### **4. New image and brand of the tourism in the cross border region – main issues**

Tourism in the cross border region still looks like a “white spot on the map of the Balkan peninsula”, with a few exceptions. There are some initial steps for creation of a constant image of the cross border region, but they are not effective enough, and as a result of that they could not be remembered yet. Sometimes they are constantly changing, non-homogenous and contradictory. The coherent and attractive images bring some social and political benefits. They operate simultaneously inside, i.e. on a regional level, and meanwhile on an international level. One positive image contributes for the creation of a sense for solidarity between the residents of a particular territory (the cross border region), and in this regard it establishes conditions for investment of efforts in this territory. Meanwhile, this image has its significance for the cross border region's participation on the international stage. The knowledge about one territory could contribute to favourable political and economic results. Actually, the image transforms in an economic capital, it brings profits, while the negative one only

accumulates losses. The remembering and well-kept in time image helps the attraction of foreign capitals, simultaneously with the appearance of the tourist product at the international markets. From the standpoint of economy and social area development in the cross border region, it is necessary a trade mark of the target region to be created. Creating a trade mark presumes that the region has been introduced as a tourist product for sale and a “lifestyle”. The process of investment in such initiative is quite long in time, but it contributes to the creation of image strategies. In this way, the presentation of the cross border region turns into an aware effort and coordinated managing of such message. It has a clear addressee and an easy to remember graphic mark. In order such mark to be created, it is necessary for the cross border region to identify its own resources (nature, anthropogenic and human), projects and to invest in this image. For such undertaking the values, reflecting in the best way the present and the future specifics of the territory have to be identified. It is necessary the positive visions for the target region to be identified, but the fact that the creation of a trade mark in the tourist branch does not cover this process should not be ignored. New managing mechanisms are required, which shall guarantee the coordination of the delivered messages, as well as professionalism in the presentation. It is particularly important for them to have a strategic character. It is necessary for the trade mark to be entered among the new cultural values adopted by the European and world society. It is also of essential importance that the efforts of all interested parties in the tourist development branch in the region to be directed towards one and the same purpose, and not the efforts to be dissipated.

There are several essential problems for the image of the cross border region in the tourism branch. The more important ones could be formulated in the following way:

- Inadequately broadcasted images. They are non-efficient because of the fact that that do not turn the region into a popular and a well-known one for the tourists. They do not comply with the contemporary conditions as well, as they are traditional and old-fashioned to a certain extent. The truth is that a model has been used which consolidated in the 60-70 years of the XX<sup>th</sup> c., and actually does not represent the modern society formed after 1989.
- The attempts which are made for the creation of a contemporary image are partial and imitative. The new values and realities in the cross border region are not shown. It is still relied on old messages from which the ones coming before the beginning of transition period are obliterated. The presentation of the cross border region’s image is made by people with entirely different views for the development of tourism on this territory. In this way non-homogenous and non-coordinated presentation of the region is achieved.
- The cross border region submits a clear message that it provides conditions for development of cultural and eco-tourism, but as a part of the general tourism of the two countries (many of the other cross border regions have similar opportunities).

The matter is what distinguishes it from the others and makes it a specific tourist destination.

The image which is characteristic for a certain territory is not a static one, but it changes in the light of the surrounding reality. Due to this fact, the interested parties in the tourist branch in the cross border region should ask themselves the question – “Which is the characteristic image of the region in XXI<sup>st</sup> c.?” They should focus their efforts on discovering the specific, the different and the unique for this territory. For that purpose several tasks should be fulfilled:

- Defining the addressee of the cross border region’s image. According to us, the first addressees should be Bulgaria and Macedonia. The image should be nationally distinguished. There comes the second addressee – the European Union and respectively the third – the world. It should be directed to young people, as they are the potential tourists in the next 20-30 years.
- The image which is going to be created should be visible even from one-day visit in the cross border region.
- A contemporary and updated look shall be given to it.
- Unique resources shall be offered in daily practices, which simultaneously shall provide interesting and remembering experiences.

***Which are the accents in creating a positive image of the cross border region?***

- It disposes of beautiful nature and rich cultural heritage. As we mentioned, it is necessary to be attracted tourists from the younger age groups. They more easily accept the challenges of the modern world and enter it. They have a positive image for the tourist attractions, they are the ones who could present the region as a modern one and subsequently to draw the vision for its future development. They more and more identify themselves with the European way of life, which is typical for the developed European countries, but at the same time they preserve their national identity and specific culture. This actually could characterize the society as a whole. Of course, this shall not be assumed as a confrontation of the generations
- The cross border region’s image should be related to the remaining part both countries, Europe and the world. For example, the world experience has proved that the electronic music based on ethno-folklore elements is more easily accepted and comprehended by the wide range of individuals, rather than a performance of authentic folklore (which of course should not be belittled). The cultural events carried out on the region’s territory should be part of the cultural events, characteristic for both countries’ territory. This would show that the interesting things

happen exactly there. The region is presented in many foreign texts (on the base of history – fortresses, battles, events), so it could play successfully with the images pervaded the consciousness of the foreigners.

- The presentation of the cultural heritage in a contemporary and modern way is of particular importance. It should be demonstrated in live, in order to leave lasting memories. Reconstitution of rituals, battles, etc., even buildings constructed during the communist period represents a part of the cultural heritage of the region. Attention should be paid not only to the entirely Bulgarian or Macedonian cultural monuments, but also to the ones remaining from the times of the Roman, Byzantine and the Ottoman empires, to the culture and the monuments of the ethnic minorities inhabiting the cross border region.
- On the basis of the local folklore, the uniqueness and difference of the cross border region can be outlined. In this way they could be preserved for the future generations. The presentation of a given folklore tradition shall be made in a way which is easy for reproduction by the tourists themselves. However, these traditions and customs shall not be the accent in the entire image of the cross border region, but only a part of it.
- Other positive emotions' carrier is the beautiful nature of the cross border region, suitable for practicing eco-tourism and some extreme sports (rafting, rock climbing, paragliding etc).
- The world's experience has proven that product is the best trade mark. In that sense, the region shall direct all its efforts not in broadcasting the image of the trade mark, but in its constant presence at both national markets, in Europe and the world..

It is important a non-government organization to be created, involving representatives from both sides of the borderline, which shall be engaged in creating the image and the brand of the cross border region, and meanwhile shall be the integrator for all interested parties in the tourism branch in the region. Its purpose shall be the cross border region's popularization not only at the European, but at the international tourist market as well.

### ***5. Basic challenges facing the development of tourism in the cross border region***

Since tourism is considered traditionally profitable branch with high potential for development, it has been defined as a priority branch for both countries at governmental level. On this basis and considering the fact that the cross border region has a lot of natural and anthropogenic tourist sites, it could be concluded that this branch of economy should have a priority for the development of the

region. The main challenges for the development of tourism in this respect could be summarized in the following way:

- Infrastructure improvement –in some municipalities it is still not appropriate for development of tourism (this includes also road network, water supply and sewerage, information labels for the tourist sites and sights, road signs in Latin alphabet, etc);
- Creation of conditions for all-year tourism – appropriate marketing of more tourist products and attractions could prolong the tourist season;
- Improvement of the service quality – the service quality is still not on the required level, and the image of some of the tourist sites suffers from anomalies such as “paid toilets”, etc. In many tourist sites there is no information (including menus, pricelists) in English, as well as personnel who speaks a foreign language;
- Uniqueness determination – “uniqueness” right determining and communication represents a serious challenge on national and local level, and it is a decisive issue for the opportunities of the cross border region to attract tourists (Bulgarian and foreign).Very often the available natural resources, climate and geographic position do not represent by themselves an unique tourist product (for example, compared with the provisions in other regions from the Balkan Peninsula). They should be combined and offered to the tourists in an appropriate manner. The marketing of the tourist products is not always good enough as well;
- Inventory of the tourist products – there is a lack of comprehensive information for many tourist sites, and for large amount of the landmarks and the attractions it is difficult to access. There is no unified list with such information, there are no (or they are hard to reach) advertising and information brochures, cards, reference books for many of the sites