

Tourism Potential of Burgas, Yambol, Haskovo, Kirkklareli and Edirne Regions

“Joint Initiative for promotion of Bulgaria –Turkey cross-border region as an attractive tourism destination” - JOINT TOUR/ CB005.1.22.055

Interreg - IPA CBC
Bulgaria - Turkey
PARTNERSHIP

**Joint Initiative for Promotion of Bulgaria –
Turkey Cross-border region as an Attractive
Tourism Destination- JOINT TOUR,
CB005.1.22.055**



**BOURGAS REGIONAL TOURIST ASSOCIATION (BG)
MINISTRY OF TOURISM (BG)
KIRKLARELI DISTRICT CULTURE AND TOURISM DIRECTORATE (TR)**

This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union through the Interreg-IPA CBC Bulgaria-Turkey Programme, CCI No 2014TC16I5CB005. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the BOURGAS REGIONAL TOURIST ASSOCIATION, Republic of Bulgaria and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union or the Managing Authority of the Programme.

*The project is co-funded by European Union through the Interreg-IPA CBC Bulgaria – Turkey
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TOURISM POTENTIAL OF BOURGAS REGION

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1 Geographical location

The administrative district of Burgas occupies the southeastern part of Bulgaria with an area of 7748.1 sq. km. (6.9% of the area of Bulgaria) and is the second largest after Sofia district. To the east the district has a wide outlet on the Black Sea (224 km), to the south it borders with the Republic of Turkey, to the west with the districts of Yambol and Sliven and to the north - with the districts of Varna and Shumen (Fig. 1). The location of the district on the Black Sea coast has the greatest significance for the development of marine recreational tourism, as well as the development of ports, fishing, maritime transport, water sports, etc. A great advantage is the largest bay on the Black Sea - Burgas bay. The region has a number of salty and freshwater lakes connected to the sea and close to the coast and the beaches – Pomorie, Atanasovsko, Burgas and Mandra lakes, Alepu and Stomoplo swamps.



Picture 1 Geographical location of Burgas District

The crossroad position of the district is a factor for the establishment of international economic relations and for the development of both domestic and international tourism. Transport routes from Europe to the Middle East and Asia, and from Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Western Europe are crossing here. Apart from the Burgas international airport, there are well maintained roads and railways to Sofia (via Plovdiv and Karlovo), Varna, Ruse, Harmanli and Kardzhali (through Elhovo and Topolovgrad). The panorama road Constanta - Varna - Burgas - Malko Tarnovo – Istanbul is heavily utilized during the summer vacation period. The transport

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infrastructure facilitates the organization of holiday trips, excursions, transfers and liaising with the other administrative districts in the country.

The province comprises 13 municipalities, namely Aytos, Burgas, Kameno, Karnobat, Malko Tarnovo, Nesebar, Pomorie, Primorsko, Ruen, Sozopol, Sredets, Sungurlare and Tsarevo (Picture. 2).



Picture 2 Comprising municipalities of Burgas District

2 Socio-economic and demographic characteristics

Burgas is one of the districts, best developed economically in the Republic of Bulgaria. Before the crisis in 2008 the economy of Burgas district experienced rapid development: in 2005 and 2006 the district's GDP per capita outpaced the national average value. In 2008, Burgas had the fourth highest GDP per capita in the country but as the crisis set in, the district's economy faced huge difficulties. Despite the recovery between 2011 and 2013, in 2014 GDP declined sharply and returned to its crisis level of 2009–2010. It fell by 11% and the district went to the ninth place in Bulgaria with 8,687 BGN per capita (vs. 11,574 BGN per capita for the national level). The same tendency was typical of household incomes in the district in 2014. In 2015, however, the annual average income per household member grew to 4,275 BGN (vs. 4,953 BGN for the country). Salaries in Burgas constituted a smaller share of incomes than the country average share (53% in Burgas vs. 57% in Bulgaria), while the share of pensions was 39% (vs. national average of 27%). At the same time salaries in the district had a stable growth probably due to the lasting recovery of employment rates since 2012. Still, salaries stayed about 10% lower than the average in 2014 (Source: Regional profiles: Indicators for development, Institute for Market Economics, 2016. <http://www.regionalprofiles.bg/var/docs/Editions/Regional-Profiles-2016---EN.pdf>).

A high investment activity characterizes the district. It ranks second in the country (after the capital) in its number of nonfinancial enterprises per capita: 69 per 1,000 people vs. 53 per 1,000 people in Bulgaria in 2014. Expenditures on the acquisition of fixed tangible assets remained almost two times higher than the national average, thus again placing Burgas second in the country: 4,471 BGN per capita to 2,786 BGN per capita for the country in 2014. Burgas also ranks second in utilization of EU funds by municipalities. By May 31st, 2016 the value of payments under contracts with municipalities as beneficiaries in operational programs was 1,413.6 BGN per capita, which is twice the country average value of 688.8 BGN per capita. In the district it was the municipality of Sozopol that utilized most funds: 4,773.1 BGN per capita, while that of Tzarevo and Sungurlare utilized least (below 100 BGN per capita) (Source: Regional profiles: Indicators for development, Institute for Market Economics, 2016. <http://www.regionalprofiles.bg/var/docs/Editions/Regional-Profiles-2016---EN.pdf>).

The main part of the added value in the district is created by the services sector, followed by industry and agriculture. The main subfields of industry are: chemical and petrochemical industry, food processing, electronics, machinery, textile, as well as logging and wood processing.

Economic activity in Burgas kept growing and in 2015 it was higher than the national average for the first time: 69.4% vs. 69.3% for the country as a whole. Employment also had a stable growth after 2012 to reach 62.2% compared with 62.9% in the country.

The population of Burgas district in 2015 numbers 413 884 inhabitants (NSI, 2017), which represents about 6% of the population of Bulgaria. It includes 13 municipalities with 257 towns and villages. The distribution of the population in Burgas district is very uneven. Half of the population of the district is concentrated in the town of Burgas, while the other half is unevenly distributed in the area of the district. Municipalities in the southeastern part of the district have the smallest number of residents - Malko Tarnovo, Primorsko and Tzarevo. The most sparsely populated area in the country is also located there - Strandzha - 10 inhabitants/km².

In 2015, Burgas had the lowest negative rate of natural increase in Bulgaria after Sofia and Sliven; still, its value followed the negative tendencies in the country as a whole. The district of Burgas also ranks second in the country (after Sliven) with its most favorable age dependency ratio as a ratio of the population aged over 65 to that aged 0 to 14: 119.6% in Burgas vs. 146.4% in Bulgaria in 2015. In 2015 the net migration rate in the district rose to 2.7‰ and Burgas became the third most attractive settlement destination after the capital and the district of Sofia. A relatively great part of the population of the district lives in towns, and the density of population in urbanized territories is among the highest in the country (Source: Regional

profiles: Indicators for development, Institute for Market Economics, 2016.
<http://www.regionalprofiles.bg/var/docs/Editions/Regional-Profiles-2016---EN.pdf>).

3 Infrastructure and environment

- **Transport infrastructure**

The density of the road and railway network in the district of Burgas is lower than the national average, but thanks to the “Trakia” motorway the share of motorways and first class roads is considerably higher: 25.4% vs. 18.1% for the country in 2014. Yet, in 2015 the quality of road surfaces continued to be lower than the national average, although it showed some improvement compared to the previous year. Almost 40% of the roads in the district have a good quality road surface vs. 40.7% for the country. Internet access and internet use in the district rose in 2015 to overtake the average values for Bulgaria (Source: Regional profiles: Indicators for development, Institute for Market Economics, 2016.
<http://www.regionalprofiles.bg/var/docs/Editions/Regional-Profiles-2016---EN.pdf>).

The region has the advantage of being served by one of the ten international transport corridors - ITC No. 8 in east – west direction (Burgas - Sofia - Skopje - Tirana - Vlora - Barry) in its section on Bulgarian territory (Burgas - Aytos - Karnobat - Sliven - Nova Zagora - Stara Zagora - Chirpan - Plovdiv - Pazardzhik - Sofia - Kyustendil). On the territory of the region the corridor is marked by Burgas border control point and the “Trakia” highway. ITC No. 8 conducts traffic in the direction east - west by converging with ITC No. 4 (10) (in Sofia - Plovdiv section) and intersecting with the ITC No. 9 (Helsinki - Moscow - Bucharest - Alexandroupolis), through which it connects with ITC No. 7 (Black sea - Danube river). In the direction north - south the territory is served by national transport corridors from Duran Kulak and Ruse to Malko Tarnovo.



Picture 3 Geographic map of Bulgaria (source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geography_of_Bulgaria)

Two of the three parallel railway directions of the country – from Sofia to Burgas, via Karlovo and Plovdiv respectively, pass through Burgas district. Both lines serve not only national but also international traffic flows. Three big stations are located in the area of the district. Burgas railway junction, Druzhba station and Karnobat station provide a significant percentage of the freight, travelling on the country's rail network. The railway network is relatively evenly located on the territory of the district with the exception of the southeastern part - Sredetz, Sozopol, Primorsko, Tzarevo and Malko Tarnovo municipalities.

Burgas Airport located 10 km northeast of the town of Burgas is a part of "Fraport Twin and Star". It is the largest in the country and second by intensity, with the biggest number of sunny days. Its specific geographical location - on the border between Europe and Asia, determines its strategic importance and strongly influences the deployment of transport links, tourism and trade relationships between partners from the East and West. The runway for taking off and landing, with length of 3200 m, serves the heaviest aircrafts of the type Boeing 747 Jumbo and An 124 Ruslan. The small airport in Primorsko, built in 2003, is designed for small 10-12 seat aircrafts. The runway of the facility has dimensions 910 m/300 m with asphalt surface layer and is used mainly for private planes, for parachuting and other sports.

Marine transport facilities are also available in the district as 6 of the municipalities in the district have an outlet on the Black Sea. They include 8 public transport ports and 3 special purpose ports. The new Marine Passenger Terminal of the port of Burgas with a capacity of 100

000 passengers annually was opened in 2013 and serves passengers from cruise ships, as well as tourists, who travel to St. Anastasia Island.

- **Energy supply, water supply and heating**

In terms of electrical energy Burgas district falls within the Electricity Transmission District of Burgas. There isn't a single settlement on the territory of Burgas with status of a populated area, which is not electrified. All populated areas are supplied with water. The town of Burgas is the only populated area in the district, which has a central heating system. The service is performed by "Central Heating" Sc of the town of Burgas. The company has 100% state participation.

- **Environmental conditions**

The level of pollution of the air, water and soil in the district is very low. The environment in Burgas district is characterized by relatively low levels of harmful emissions in the atmosphere, as well as with increasing capacity of the treatment plants. In many of the seaside municipalities, which are tourist destinations, the capacity of treatment plants has increased considerably. In the past several years waste water treatment plants in Primorsko, Ravda, Sunny Beach, Pomorie, Sozopol, Tzarevo and other places inside the district were built and expanded. Like in many other areas in the country, villages are mostly affected by the lack of sewerage.

The district is characterized by the availability of large ecologically clean regions. The area is one of the richest in terms of biodiversity in Bulgaria and Europe. It has a good environment monitoring system, as well as adopted programmes for environmental protection policy implementation.

4 Transport accessibility and mobile connections

The existing transport system comprising international airport, marine ports, railway and roads provides easy access to the main tourist sites and attractions in the district. The town of Burgas is the biggest transport centre distributing the tourist flows to the other parts of the region. The international airport operates regular flights and charter programmes. Yacht marinas have been built in the holiday towns, the most attractive are those in Sveti Vlas, Sozopol, Sarafovo and Tsarevo.

The rehabilitated road from Burgas to Malko Tarnovo, which is the main transport link of the area with the Republic of Turkey, plays a positive role for the tourist exchange between the two countries. The rehabilitation of the railway connection to Plovdiv and Sofia will contribute significantly to the improvement of the transport links of the district and the shortening of travel time. The construction of a high-speed road, connecting Burgas and Varna ("Black Sea"

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highway) is also a key infrastructure project, which is expected to have a great influence on the transport links in the district.

Most of the district's area is covered by mobile operators' networks. Burgas district is among the leading in the country in terms of Internet access with a relative share of households with Internet access of more than 63% in 2015 (NSI, Regional Statistics, <http://www.nsi.bg/en/content/11447/district-burgas>) . There are large public zones of free WiFi in the central part of the town of Burgas and partially in the the public transport.

5 Education in tourism

Three Vocational High Schools in Tourism educate staff for the tourism sector in the region. They are located in Burgas, Nesebar and Pomorie. The Bulgarian-German vocational training centre as a state enterprise established in 2011, has a branch in Tsarevo, specialized in hospitality and hotel management, cooking and catering, travel and tourism operations, leisure and entertainment, tourist animation and tour guiding.

At higher education level there are two universities in Burgas district - Burgas Free University (private) and University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" - town of Burgas (state), whereas only the state university has the specialty "Tourism" with degrees "Professional Bachelor", "Bachelor" and "Master". The theoretical and professional students' training for the needs of the tourism industry at under-graduate level ("Professional Bachelor" degree) is provided by the Tourism College (founded in 1967), a separate unit of the above mentioned university. At present the actual number of collage's students is 680.

6 Healthcare in Burgas district

The medical establishments for hospital care in Burgas district are 20 with around 2600 beds, plus an independent dialysis centre, including 9 multi profile hospitals and 8 specialized hospitals for active treatment (Table 1). The concentration of specialized medical care is in the town of Burgas and the lack of sufficient number of specialists in the other municipal centres is a significant problem in Burgas district. The outpatient health establishments are 92 and include diagnostic and consultative centers, medical and dental centers, as well as 45 laboratories.

Emergency medical care is provided by a Centre of Emergency Medical Care with 11 branches. About 80% of the medical establishments for primary medical care are registered in the municipal centres. Registered physician practices for primary medical care are about 250 with a tendency of decreasing, mainly at the expense of those in remote areas with unfavourable conditions. Dental care is provided by about 350 dentist practices, almost all of them being in the municipal centres.

Table 1 Health establishments as of 31.12.2016 in Burgas district

Establishments	Number	Beds
Health establishments for hospital aid, of which:	20	2 584
Multi profile hospitals	9	1 282
Specialized hospitals	8	1 004
Outpatient health establishments	92	144
Diagnostic and consulting centres	6	30
Medical centres	39	102
Dental centres	1	2
Medical-dental centres	1	10
Medical-diagnostical and medical-technical laboratories	45	-
Other health establishments	6	202

Source: NSI, <http://www.nsi.bg/en/content/5578/health-establishments-3112-statistical-regions-and-districts>

7 Analysis of tourism resources

7.1 Natural tourism resources

7.1.1 Relief

The relief of the district is a combination of flat lands, hills and low mountains but the terrain with altitude up to 200 m and hilly lands prevails. The lowland belt is represented mainly by Burgas lowland, Karnobat and Aytos plains. The northern part of the area is occupied by the ridges of Eastern Stara Planina (the Balkan Range), which slightly exceed 1000 m and are not an obstacle for the transport communications with the areas to the north. In the southern part of the district lies the Strandzha Mountain and its highest peak – Gradishte, on the border with Turkey is only 710 m high.

The coastline is deeply indented with numerous capes, cliffs and bays, small islands, nice beaches, lagoons, firths and sand dunes, which favour the development of seaside recreation, the construction of ports and marinas. The largest bay is the one of Burgas and the longest beach of more than 6 km is that of Sunny beach resort complex. In the mountainous parts the forests almost reach the shore providing magnificent environment for recreation.

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7.1.2 Climate

The climatic conditions in Burgas district are determined by its geographical location. In general the climate is identified as transitional continental climate but the influence of the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea is tangible. Thus, the climate in the town of Burgas and the area is characterized as subtropical Mediterranean.

The mean annual air temperature varies from 11.3°C for the municipalities of Ruen and Malko Tarnovo up to 13.3°C for Sozopol, while in Burgas it is 12.7°C. In winter the coldest month is January, when the average monthly temperature is from 0.5°C in Karnobat to 1.8°C in Burgas and up to 3.2°C in Tsarevo. The winter in the district is relatively milder, in the lowland part without snow most days, but in the Balkan Mountains and Strandzha Mountain the snow cover lasts from 20 to 46 days. July and August are the hottest months with maximum daily temperatures above 20°C. The spring is cool and starts later, while autumn is warm and long (Table 2).

Table 2 Climatic data for Burgas, Bulgaria

Indicators	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	Annual
Absolute maximum temperatures (°C)	20,1	23	27,5	32	33	42,8	41,3	42	38	34	26,6	23,9	42,8
Average maximum temperatures (°C)	6,5	8,3	11,3	16	21,2	25,8	28,4	28,2	24,4	19,1	12,9	8,4	17,6
Average temperatures (°C)	2,1	3,2	6,1	10,5	15,6	20,2	22,7	22,4	18,6	13,6	8,2	4,1	12,3
Average Minimum Temperatures (°C)	-1,4	-0,7	1,9	6,1	10,7	15,1	17,4	17,2	13,5	9,1	4,4	0,6	7,9
Absolute minimum temperatures (°C)	-17,8	-14	-15	-6	0	6	10	10	1	-4	-9	-13	-17,8
Average monthly precipitation (mm)	44,3	37	48,2	69,8	49,9	62,1	47,6	28,4	45,5	52,2	67,9	45,1	598

Source: <http://climatebase.ru/station/15655?lang=en>

On the coast the annual rainfall is evenly distributed throughout the four seasons. The annual rainfall in the district varies from 500 l/m² for Sozopol and up to 927 l/m² for Malko Tarnovo. The maximum rainfall in the northern part of the district is in spring (May and June), while in

the region of Strandzha Mountain - in autumn (November and December). The minimum rainfall for the entire area is in August.

Due to the favourable climatic conditions 20 settlements and resorts at the coast and in Strandzha were declared as climatic resorts of national and local importance, presented below:

- **Climatic seaside resorts of national importance - 12**
 - Ahtopol, Tsarevo municipality (1972)
 - Burgas, Burgas Municipality (1953)
 - Dune Holiday Village, Sozopol Municipality (2005)
 - Kiten, Primorsko municipality (1967)
 - "Primorsko International Youth Center" Complex, Primorsko Municipality (2005)
 - Nessebar, Nessebar municipality (1954)
 - Obzor, Nessebar municipality (1967)
 - Pomorie, Pomorie Municipality (1953)
 - Primorsko, Primorsko municipality (1967)
 - Sunny Beach resort, Nessebar municipality (2005).
 - Sozopol, Sozopol municipality (1967)
 - Tsarevo, Tsarevo Municipality (1967)
- **Climatic seaside resorts of local importance - 7**
 - Aheloy, Pomorie municipality (1967)
 - Kuzluka area and the town of Sveti Vlas, Nessebar Municipality (1963)
 - Lozenets village, Tsarevo municipality (1969)
 - Ravda, municipality of Nessebar (1963)
 - The mouth of the Ropotamo River and around the Arkutino lake, Primorsko municipality (1967)
 - Sinemorets, Municipality of Tsarevo (1963)
 - Chernomorets, Sozopol municipality (1963)
- **Balneotherapy resorts of national importance - 1**
 - Bourgas Mineral Baths, Burgas Municipality (1950)
- **Climatic mountain resorts of local importance - 1**
 - The town of Malko Tarnovo, Malko Tarnovo municipality (1981)

Among them worth noting is Sveti Vlas resort, located in the southeast foot of the Balkan Mountains, in immediate proximity to the beach. The specific microclimate of the area has a powerful healing effect on bronchial asthma and chronic lung diseases.

7.1.3 Water

The Black Sea waters are twice less salty (18‰) than the Mediterranean and the sea temperature allows bathing from April to November, making the Southern Black Sea coast very attractive. The rivers are small but some of the river mouths (Ropotamo, Veleka, etc.) are picturesque and attractive for tourist visits.

Burgas is surrounded by three lakes - Atanasovsko, Vaya (Burgas) and Mandra. Together with the Pomorie Lake, they form the largest complex of natural wetlands in the country, with a total area of 9500 hectares. Traditional salt pans in Bulgaria on the Black Sea are preserved only here - those of Atanasovsko and Pomorie lakes. 340 of all 400 bird species, listed for the country, are found in the lakes. Because of their uniqueness the four lakes have been declared Ramsar wetlands of international importance and the wealth of bird species makes them important ornithological areas.

The mineral springs near the town of Burgas have a capacity of 36 l/s and temperature of 41°C. The baths are known for the treatment of diseases of the musculoskeletal system, neurological, gynecological diseases, thrombophlebitis, etc.

The curative mud of Pomorie and Atanasovsko lakes has a favorable effect on joints, skin and gynecological problems, thus making the town of Pomorie famous as a balneo- and spa center. The lye which is formed as a secondary element in the production of salt in the salt pans at Pomorie and Atanasovsko lakes is another natural resource that is used as a painkiller and toning. The lye is known for its healing properties for many years. It is used in balneology and medicine, for it is known to treat over 90 different diseases, including diseases of the musculoskeletal system, peripheral nervous system, disc disease, skin diseases and many more.

The first "Museum of Salt" in Eastern Europe was built at Pomorie Lake. Healing mud is produced in the southern part of the lake for the sanatoria in the town and the northern part is used for traditional salt production, preserved for longer than 2000 years. The lake became a protected area in 2001, it is an important ornithological site of national importance, and Ramsar wetland of international importance since 2002. Several species of the Red Book of Bulgaria are found here, e.g. Trachomitum venetum - the largest find in the country, Tatar spurge and sea wormwood. The lake welcomes the first autumn migratory birds along "Via Pontica" like sea pelicans and storks.

7.1.4 Vegetation and wildlife

About 35% of the total area of the district is covered by forests, of which over 70% are natural forests. Due to the diverse climatic, geological, topographical and hydrological conditions the district of Burgas is very rich in biodiversity well above average standards for the regions in Europe, comprising 64 species of mammals, 298 bird species, 18 species of reptiles, 9 species of

amphibians, 190 species of Black Sea and freshwater fish, approximately 25 000 species of insects and other invertebrates, over 3000 vascular plants and more than 5000 nonvascular plants and fungi. The flora and fauna in the district include a significant number of endemic species and subspecies (5%). Over 290 species of birds, 250 species of plants, 280 species of animals have been declared protected species on the territory of Burgas district. According to the Red Book of Bulgaria 12 species are extinct, 94 are endangered and over 280 are rare.

Based on that the district has a well-developed network of 101 protected areas, including one nature park (Strandzha), one biosphere park (Uzunbodzhak), 5 reserves and 4 maintained reserves. The first reserve in Bulgaria - "Silkosia" (declared in 1933), 53 protected localities and 37 natural landmarks fall within the territory of the district (MOEW, http://pdbase.government.bg/zpo/en/index_search.jsp).

With its area of 1160 km² Strandzha Nature Park is the largest protected area in the country. It has no analogue in the country by the number of natural habitats (120), the most significant of which are Strandzha forests from the Tertiary with laurel-type undergrowth, coastal dense forests, the Strandzha rivers and their estuaries, rare Pontic dunes and numerous caves (which are known for their diversity of many species of bats). The wealth of species in the park is maintained primarily thanks to the clear waters and the old natural deciduous forests, which represent 61% of old forests in the country. Vascular plants in the park are presented by 1666 species which constitute 48 % of the species composition of the Bulgarian flora. Out of them 63 species are relict and 7 species are only found in this part of Europe. The fauna diversity is represented by 41 species of fish, 9 species of amphibians, 23 species of reptiles (70% of these species for the country), 260 species of birds (two-thirds of the Bulgarian avifauna), of which 134 species are nesting in the park, 62 species of mammals (68% of the species composition in the country) and a huge, still insufficiently studied wealth of invertebrates.

The typical for the end of the Tertiary (about 2 million years ago) forests of the moderate climate with evergreen laurel-shaped undergrowth were preserved solely here on the continent. The forests cover 80% of the area of the Park. The centuries-old forests are 30% of the forests in the protected territory – 3 times more than the average for the country! Trees of eastern durmast, oak-tree, eastern beech and Strandzha oak with diameter from 1.5 to 2.0 meters and age of over 500 years are frequently encountered in the natural massifs of old forests – the most valuable habitats of conservation significance.

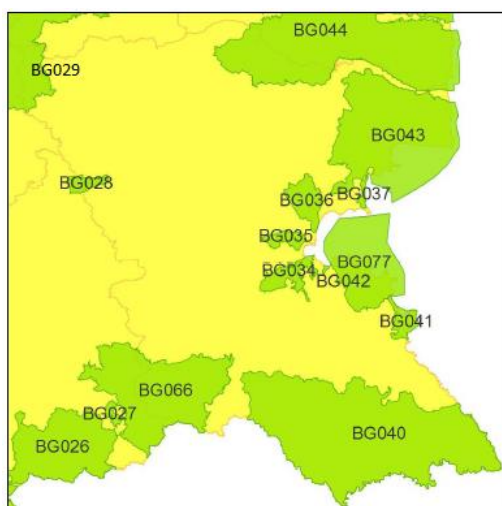
As already mentioned, one of the most valuable wetland complexes in the country - Burgas Lakes, includes four lakes (Atanasovsko, Pomorie, Burgas and Mandra) with a total area of about 9000 km², whereas all or parts of them have been declared protected areas. The other wetland complex - Ropotamo Ramsar wetland (in the municipalities of Sozopol and Primorsko),

includes 7 protected areas different in status, which are particularly important for the preservation of valuable habitats and species found there. The two wetland complexes are included in the List of the International Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar Convention). Bulgaria is one of the first countries, which committed to the conservation of these sites of international importance yet back in 1975. In 2002 the area of Ramsar wetlands in the district was significantly expanded. Other wetlands of conservation importance are the rivers Veleka, Rezovka, Silistar, Dyavolska and the smaller rivers, which flow into the lakes or directly into the Black Sea.

The second largest European migration route - Via Pontica passes along the Black Sea coast of Burgas district, which determines the role of the district for preservation of the European populations of white stork, honey buzzard, common buzzard, etc. All European birds of prey pass over here.

The NATURA 2000 ecological network is very wide in the district comprising altogether 38 protected zones – 9 under the Bird Directive, 25 under the Habitat Directive and 4 under both Directives (MOEW, http://pdbase.government.bg/zpo/en/index_search.jsp). The zones of ornithological significance are altogether 13 and are presented on the map below (Fig. 4)

The unique combination of sea, lakes, mountains and rivers, the exotic vegetation and the diversity of animal and plant species, together with the traditions and the authentic culture and customs, provide various opportunities for the development of tourism all year round.



Picture 4 Zones of ornithological significance (Source: <http://bbf.biodiversity.bg/document-168>)

7.2 Tourism and cultural and historical heritage

Burgas district is characterized by rich cultural and historical heritage. 1361 Thracian tombs and 41 prehistoric settlement mounds are registered on the territory of Burgas district. The earliest traces date back from the Neolithic era. The Thracian sanctuary "Beglik Tash" near Primorsko, the Thracian sites near Malko Tarnovo and Mishkova niva, the numerous prehistoric dolmens in Strandzha (near the villages of Belevren, Gorno Yabalkovo, Granichar, etc.) are of special interest. Four major economic, political and cultural centres, situated along the coast - Mesembria (Nesebar), Anghialo (Pomorie), Debelt and Apolonia (Sozopol) developed in antiquity. Today these are still some of the most picturesque and well-preserved historical places in Bulgaria. The region is rich in remnants from the Roman era and the Byzantine times, as well as from the Medieval period. The village of Brashlyan was declared an architectural and historical reserve in 1982 because of the magnificent examples of old houses from the Bulgarian Revival period. The only active monastery on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast - "St. George", is located in Pomorie.

The list of the Ministry of Culture from 2017 of immovable cultural heritage site of national importance on the territory of Burgas region contains 75 sites - samples of gardening art and landscape architecture, archaeological sites, historical sites, architectural sites, ensembles and complexes. Five group immovable cultural heritage sites are also enlisted (<http://mc.government.bg/page.php?p=58&s=429&sp=430&t=244&z=576>). They include: the old town of Nesebar (in the list of UNESCO since 1983), the old town of Sozopol, the village of Brashlyan, the ancient and medieval town of Deultum – Debelt, and the islands of "St. Ivan" and "St. Peter" near Sozopol.

Some prominent sites from Burgas district are included in the list of 100 National Tourist Sites of Bulgaria, elaborated by the Bulgarian Tourist Union to promote travel within the country and visits to the sites. They are: the Architectural and historical reserve – Nesebar and the archaeological museum of Nesebar, the Museum of salt and Pomorie Lake in the town of Pomorie, the church "St. St. Cyril and Methodius" and the Poda visitor centre in Burgas, the History museum in the town of Malko Tarnovo, the Historic locality "Petrova Niva", and the Archaeological museum in the town of Sozopol (<https://www.btsbg.org/nacionalni-dvizheniya/100-nacionalni-turisticheski-obekta>).

7.3 Religious, archaeological and architectural sites

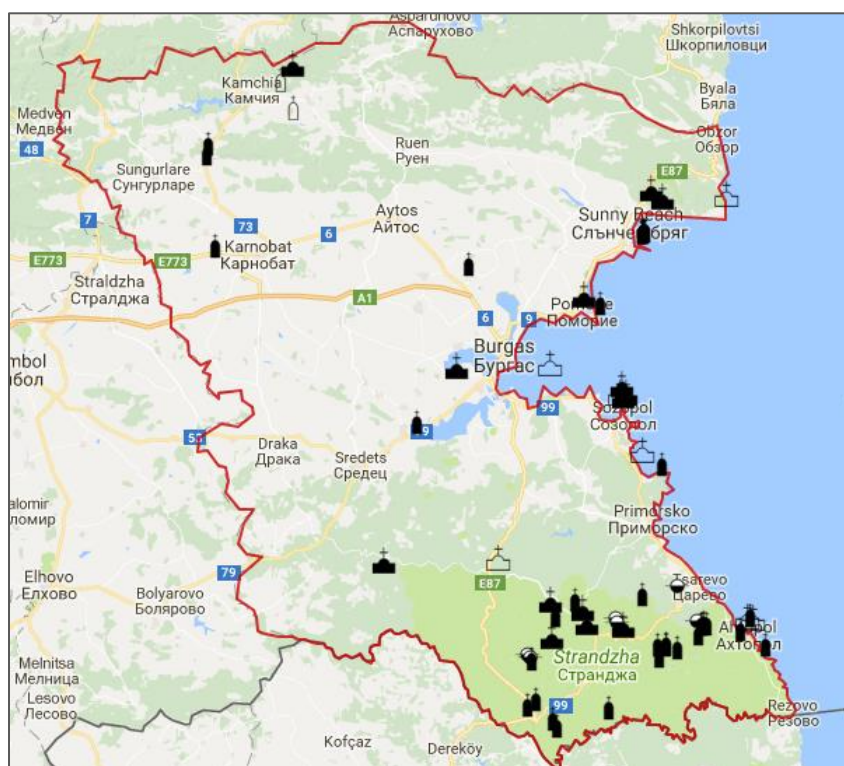
Pursuant to an Ordinance of the Council of Ministers No. 1711 of 22 October 1962, all settlement and burial tombs in Bulgaria were declared monuments of national importance.

The Thracian sanctuary "Beglik Tash" near Primorsko and remains of the megalithic culture of the Thracians in the municipalities of Tzarevo, Malko Turnovo and Sredets are among the most

The project is co-funded by European Union through the Interreg-IPA CBC Bulgaria – Turkey Programme

visited. Of national importance are the dolmen near the village of Belevren, “Zmeyova Kashta” and “Chelyov kapak” dolmens near the village of Gorno Yabalkovo, two dolmens near the village of Granichar, “Zmeyova Kashta” dolmen near the village of Dolno Yabalkovo, a dolmen near the village of Evrenozovo, 3 dolmens near the village of Zabernovo, the “Covered stones” dolment near the village of Kalovo, and “Zmeyova Kashta” dolmen near the town of Primorsko.

The distribution of **sacred and religious sites** on the territory of Burgas district are presented on the map of fig. 5, illustrating their concentration in Strandzha Mountain and at the Black Sea coast.



Picture 5 Distribution of sacred and religious sites in Burgas District (source: <http://svetimesta.com>)

“**St. George**” male monastery in the town of Pomorie was established in the end of XVIII c. although there is a legend telling that in VII c. there already was a temple or monastery, dedicated to St. George the Martyr, in this place. In 1856 a new church was built and the old one still remains to this day under its roof. Together with the new buildings, a 20-meter bell tower was built (1966). Today, many valuable examples of the iconographic art of the XVIII and XIX c. are kept in the monastery. The temple icon was painted by the Anhialo icon-painter Themistocles Diamandopulo.

Golyamo Bukovo monastery "St. Petka" - Life-giving source near the village of Golyamo Bukovo is the only one having survived and active monastery in Strandzha Mountain. The monastery is located in a preserved natural environment. It was founded in XII c. on the foundations of an ancient temple. Later it was destroyed and rebuilt in the period 1873 - 1877, which is when today's church dates back from. The monastery was closed for many years but since 1990 it began to function again. The holy spring "Life-giving source" is located at the altar of the temple, which is believed to cure many diseases.

The most important **archaeological sites** for the development of tourism in Burgas district include the following:

The **Thracian megalithic sanctuary "Beglik Tash"** (Primorsko Municipality) is located 5 km north of the town of Primorsko, at the foot of Strandzha Mountain. It is one of the greatest discoveries from Thracian history on the Southern Black Sea coast and in Strandzha Mountain. It remained unknown to science until 2003. Studies show that yet since the late Bronze Age (XIII c. BC) active human activity had been held here. It is associated with the cult to fertility, the goddess - mother and the Orphic dedication and immortalization of the Hero. The sanctuary consists of a central part and two circles of smaller structures around it with a total area of 6 decares. In 2016 it was declared as an archaeological complex of national importance.

The **Thracian fortress Urdoviza** near Kiten (Primorsko Municipality) has existed since the time of the Trojan War - 12 c. BC. It has been proven that there had been a harbour here, both in antiquity and in the Middle Ages, when the fortress was an important Bulgarian stronghold and a naval base. Since 2016 it is a heritage site of national importance.

The **Cupola Thracian tomb** near Pomorie is from the Roman period and in its construction the Thracian domed vault model was applied. The tomb is located under the embankment of a burial mound, with western corridor 22 m long, a circular chamber with a diameter of 11.60 m and height of 5.50 m. The facility was built from stone and brick, with original vault of the central room. One of the interesting things that strikes at first glance is the central column, in which there is an incised spiral staircase leading to the top of the tomb. It is an architectural monument of culture of national significance since 1965.

The **Roman city of Deultum** (village of Debelt, Sredets Municipality) emerged as a Thracian settlement. About 3000 years ago there was a large Thracian city here - an important harbour and emporium named Dobelt, i.e. "a place between two swamps", because it was reliably protected by marshes instead of by walls. Moreover, it was at crossroads - from the Black Sea to the passages in the Balkan Mountains and from the Danube to Byzantion (currently Istanbul). Debelt was the residence of Philip II of Macedonia for some time, later, in I c. AD. In Roman times it became a colony of veterans of VIIIth Augustus Legion. This is the only medieval

customs in Europe, which has been researched, in which Byzantium paid its annual tribute to Bulgaria. The colony was marked as Deultum on Roman maps. Today it is a declared in 1988 archaeological reserve "Deultum - Debelt" with total area of 85.3 hectares.

The **Antique mineral baths Aquae Khalid** (Burgas Municipality) are 15 km away from Burgas. An ancient and medieval town "Aquae Khalid - Thermopolis" is located between the neighborhoods Vetren and Banevo. It was founded around the hot mineral springs back in Thracian times in I c. BC. The most revered in the antiquity Sanctuary of the three nymphs, patrons of health power of the mineral springs, was here. The archaeological reserve consists of the ancient and medieval baths, the Christian church, the fortress wall and other facilities, belonging to the defense system, a Thracian tomb and other monuments. The bath of Suleyman the Magnificent (XVI c.) is fully renovated preserving its original vision during its restoration, decorated with marble and typical oriental ceramics. It serves as an active museum, where visitors can watch a movie, created on the basis of the 3D mapping technology.

The **Late Antiquity and Medieval fortress in the town of Ahtopol** (Tsarevo Municipality) is located on a small peninsula, on an area of 5-6 decares. The area of the fortress is largely covered by modern buildings. The fortress was mentioned for the first time in IX c. and in some periods it served as a border fortress of the Bulgarian state. It is assumed that the fortress was captured by the Ottoman conquerors in 1453 and burned down in XVII c. It is an archaeological cultural monument since 1965 but in 2015 was declared of national importance.

The **fortified Ruler's house** (in the village of Sinemorets, Tsarevo Municipality) is situated on a natural hill, next to the estuary of Veleka River. It is a Thracian ruler's house, protected by a fence wall and a tower, built in the manner, described by Xenophon and probably occupied during the Late Hellenistic era - II c. BC. A Thracian mound is located about 200 m away from the site, in which one of the richest Hellenistic graves on the territory of Bulgaria was excavated in 2006. A coin treasure of silver tetradrachms buried next to the outer wall of the tower was discovered in 2012 and is now exhibited in the Municipal Historical Museum of Tsarevo. Since 2015 it is on the list of the archaeological sites of national importance.

The **ancient and medieval fortress and port Poros/Foros** (Kraimorie, Burgas Municipality) was founded in the middle of II c. by Roman emperor Antoninus Pius. Initially, the tower on the Foros peninsula by the streit was built (in Latin "Burg"), which had directional functions, helping boats and small ships to enter the Mandra Lake. The fortress of Burgos (Poros) is the predecessor of modern Burgas.

The **Customs of Vasiliko - town of Tsarevo** (Tsarevo Municipality) was uncovered in 2012 during an archaeological research in the area of the church "St. Assumption" in the old town.

The town of Tzarevo is mentioned with the name Vasiliko in different documents from XII to XIX c. but artefacts show that ships moored along this section of the coast yet in I c. BC.

Other archaeological and architectural monuments of national importance are the antique town "Goloe" near the village of Lozarevo (Sungurlare Municipality), the medieval fortress "Rusocastro" (Kameno Municipality), and the Old Bulgarian Frontier Rampart "Erkesiyata" (IX c.) in its preserved sections near the villages of Debelt, Trastikovo, Surnevo and Rusocastro.

Parts of the settlements on the southern Black Sea coast have typical **architecture** from the National Revival. Nesebar, Pomorie, Sozopol, Ahtopol, Primorsko and Tsarevo are extremely attractive. Villages in Strandzha Mountain preserved typical examples of the Eastern and Middle Strandzha residential architecture – in Brashlyan, Bulgari, Golyamo Bukovo, Dolno Yabalkovo, etc. Generally speaking, the village of Brashlyan as an the architectural and historical reserve and the village of Bulgari, known for the living tradition of **bare foot fire dancing**, stand out as the most significant monuments on the territory of Strandzha Mountain.

The **Historical and Architectural Reserve Nesebar** is located in the Old Town of Nesebar on a small peninsula about 850 m long and 350 m wide. The old town was declared an architectural and historical reserve in 1956. In 1983 it was enscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List. Nesebar is one of the most ancient cities in Europe, founded 3200 years ago. In antiquity the city was called Mesambria, in the Middle Ages Mesemvria and later - Nesebar. Throughout its existence the city has always been surrounded by fortress walls, the remains of which have been preserved until today. So far 44 churches from the period from Vth to XIXth c. have been found on the small territory of the old town, many of them still existing. The oldest Early Christian basilicas in Bulgaria are among them.

The **Old Town of Sozopol and the islands "St. Ivan" and "St. Peter"** are also declared reserves, the old town of Sozopol being an architectural and historical reserve since 1974, while the islands are declared as archaeological reserves in 2001. Sozopol was founded in 610 BC by a migrant group of Ionian Greeks. It was called Apollonia Pontica. The most interesting discovery in recent years was made not on the peninsula, in Sozopol itself, but on one of the nearby islands - St. Ivan. The island hosted a big monastery in the Middle Ages dedicated to St. John the Baptist, which served as a summer residence of the Byzantine patriarchs. Archaeologists discovered a small box (reliquary) with particles from the bones of St. John the Baptist under the altar of the ruined basilica from V c. What is even more interesting is that another "roadmap" reliquary was found close to it, in which someone called Thomas brought the relics from Constantinople to the island. Today the precious relic is kept in the church "St. St. Cyril and Methodius" in the town and attracts pilgrims from around the world. Ropotamo River

estuary is located not far to the south. Boat trips along the river and watching interesting birds and plants are offered there.

The **village of Brashlyan** was declared an architectural and historical reserve in 1982. It consists of 76 houses - architectural cultural monuments, 9 of which are of national importance. Of special interest are the church “St. Dimitar” with a church school and the chapel "St. Panteleymon".

St. Anastasia Island is an architectural and historic heritage site of national importance with a church and a monastery building, located in Burgas bay in the Black Sea and has an area of about 9 decares. The former building of the monastery there was converted into an Interactive Museum as the island was transformed into a tourist attraction. The tourist infrastructure includes 5 separate rooms for accommodation, a restaurant and a café, a tourist information centre and souvenir shops. The island is accessible by regular municipal and private transport vessels in all seasons except winter.

The **Castle “In Love with the Wind”** in the village Ravadinovo (Sozopol Municipality) is a newly made attraction. It is the child’s dream made true of an architect, designer and developer who started the construction in 1996. At first glance the castle was designed in the style of the classic Western European castles, but this is not so. The style of the castle is Fairy, Enchanting. This is the secret of its magic impact – a castle existing only in fairy tales made true. It was built completely of 20 000 tons of marble stone, specially extracted from Strandzha Mountain. The castle is also an attractive wedding destination.

7.4 Cultural activities and events, festivities and traditions

Various **cultural performances, festivals and traditions’ manifestations** are organized on the territory of the region of Burgas. Each municipality in the region develops a cultural calendar of events on annual basis which is publicly available on the webpage of every municipalities. Links to the cultural calendars and festivals are provided in table 3. The international, national and summer manifestations which popularize the past, the present and the future of the region may be used by touroperators to enrich their offers for travel to and within the region.

Table 3 Links to the cultural calendars of the municipalities in Burgas district

Municipality	Link
Burgas	https://www.burgas.bg/bg/info/index/1004
Nesebar	http://nessebarinfo.com/culture.php

Pomorie	http://pomorie.bg/културен-календар-2016/
Sozopol	http://www.sozopol.bg/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=8545&Itemid=97
Primorsko	http://primorsko.bg/информация/култура-и-изкуство/
Tsarevo	http://www.tsarevo.net/index.php/kultura-obrazovanie-sport-i-sotzialni-deinosti/kultura/item/1406-kulturen-kalendar-na-obshtina-tsarevo-za-2017-g
Malko Turnovo	http://www.malkotarnovo.org/new/index.php/2013-11-01-12-47-57
Sredets	http://sredets.bg/index.php
Kameno	http://www.kameno.bg/bg/articles/198-Културен%20календар
Karnobat	https://karnobat.acstre.com/currentNews-300-kulturen_kalendar_2015_.html
Aytos	http://aytos.bg/kulturen-kalendar-538.html
Sungurlare	http://www.sungurlare.org/index.php/ezhegodni-sabitiya
Ruen	http://obstinaruen.com/култура-и-изкуство/

Festivals and events

The town of **Burgas** is the most significant cultural center in Southeastern Bulgaria, with cultural traditions of many years in the sphere of music, poetry, theatre and fine arts. The following are the most significant events of interest for the tourists:

- The International Folklore Festival (Burgas Municipality) is held every year during the month of August with the participation of groups from all over the world. The concerts are performed in the housing estates of Meden Rudnik and Slaveykov, on the stage in the open air Ohlyuva, in front of the building of the Municipality of Burgas, the House of Culture of the Oil Chemists, the Flora expo center and in front of the Summer Theater. There are concerts in the Summer Theater of Burgas every evening within the framework of the Festival.
- The Festival of Sand Sculptures (Burgas Municipality) is held every year from July to September in the Lake Park of Burgas. Large-scale sand figures on various topics are elaborated and presented there each year.

The most spectacular international festivals in *Nesebar* Municipality are:

- The International Children’s Festival “Sun – Joy – Beauty” is organized in June in the town of Nessebar every year to enhance creative collective teams of children from Bulgaria and other countries.
- The International Festival “Constellations in Nessebar” is held in the town of Nessebar as a peculiar combination of history and present to support youth creativity and exchange of repertoire.
- The International Festival of Honey in Nessebar is held every year in the end of August and the beginning of September on Mesambriya Square in the Old Town with a number of accompanying events.

Each year during the month of July the Municipality of **Pomorie** and Community Center “Prosveta” organize:

- A National Reading Competition of works of Yavorov within the framework of the Poetical Festivity “Yavorov’s Days”. Amateurs, performers of art speech of all ages participate in the festival.
- Annual feast days “Sea of Wine” with the support of Black Sea Gold JSC winery. As a tradition tasting of the newest products of the winery are offered for all the inhabitants and guests of the town in its center. The feasts are associated by a rich cultural and entertainment program.

Within the traditional **Apollonia Festival of Arts**, at the end of August and at beginning of September the cultural and intellectual elite of Bulgaria gathers in the town of **Sozopol**. It is very attractive also for the tourists who are tempted by theater, the puppetry arts, photography, fine arts, poetry and music.

A **national off-road competition** is held in **Primorsko** every year, as well as an **International folklore festival “Atlimanska ogarlitsa”** (Kiten, Primorsko Municipality) and the **Folklore Gathering** in the village of Yasna Polyana in the beginning of June every year.

In **Tsarevo** the **International Folklore Festival** "Strandzha moya, lyulchina" is held annually in the end of June. It aims to present the folklore music and dances of Bulgaria and other countries in all its genres and ethno-cultural diversity. The **feast “Fire and Sea”** demonstrates the fire dancing tradition in the region, while the **National folklore festival of dance clubs “Horo by the Sea”** aims at encouraging creative performances of amateur folklore clubs and popularizing Bulgarian folklore heritage. The **Festival of creative crafts and arts**, organized in the end of July, provides opportunity for workshops, stands and sales in a creative atmosphere, enhanced by musical and artistic performances.

National **folk wrestling tournaments** are organised annually in **Sredets** and **Ruen** municipalities. The “**Folk Wreath - Bozhura**” **Singing and Instrument Playing Festival** in **Sredets** aims to continue the folklore tradition of Strandzha and Thrace regions, to stimulate the interest and the love for the rich folklore heritage. It features young performers and instrumentalists.

In 2017 the Ministry for Tourism has created a Register of tourist festivals and events (<http://rta.tourism.government.bg/TFRegister.aspx>). Altogether 148 festivals and events held in the district of Burgas are enlisted (Table 4). The search is organized by name, district, municipality or place, period and organizer. Short description is also provided. The greatest number of festivals and events is concentrated in the town of Burgas and some of the municipalities haven't yet publicized the events on their territory (Primorsko, Sredets and Tsarevo).

Table 4 Number of festivals and events in Burgas district, listed in the Register of tourist festivals and events

Municipality	Number of Festivals and Events
Aytos	1
Burgas	47
Kameno	0
Karnobat	5
Malko Turnovo	2
Nesebar	18
Pomorie	28
Primorsko	0
Ruen	1
Sozopol	40
Sredets	0
Sungurlare	6
Tsarevo	0

Source: Register of tourist festivals and events, Ministry for Tourism,
<http://rta.tourism.government.bg/TFRegister.aspx>

Traditions, customs and crafts

The Regional Museum of Burgas every year conducts: Easter national holiday with a ritual table, Easter swings and games, folklore performances, an experimental atelier for traditional crafts; authentic Bulgarian holidays from the summer calendar; St. Nicholas' Day – the holiday of the town of Burgas – a ritual table and folklore performances and other events. Programs for the presentation of cultural heritage and traditional crafts are developed in the Regional Museum, which are implemented in the Municipality of Burgas, Sredets, Sozopol, Malko Tarnovo, Primorsko as follows: Program "Museum Alive" with the realization of exhibitions, all-year-round presentation in Burgas of authentic customs and calendar holidays; organization of common cultural routes - "Sea Monasteries", "Thracian Sanctuaries", and others; organization of summer educational ateliers in Bulgarian crafts and folklore with culmination bazaar and demonstrations during the International Folklore Festival in Burgas.

The Ethnographic Complex of the Regional Museum in Burgas organizes **summer school of interests**. Presentation is made and training in crafts is conducted – pottery, painting on textile and wood carving. Weaving, coppersmith, bellfrying, knitting of mats, spinning, workmanship of jewelry from beads, kerchiefs and scarves, knitting of laces and fishnets could also be demonstrated. Demonstrations and training in folklore dances are also included in the summer educational school.

The Bulgarian traditions and customs are associated with the national life calendar, which is a system of time organization (several life cycles), depending on the natural and economic circles. After the official acceptance of Christian religion and calendar the double seasonal division of the year is made by the holidays in honor of Saint Dimitar and Saint Georgi (George). Thus through Saint Dimitar's Name Day (celebrated on 26 October) and Saint George's Name Day (celebrated on 6 May) the year is differentiated into two relatively closed seasonal and labor cycles. The saying "Saint George brings summer and Saint Dimitar brings winter" is widespread.

The Bulgarian Orthodox Church honors the memory of **Saint Martyr Dimitriy Mirotochets** on 26 October. In the iconography Saint Dimitar is presented as riding a red horse. The holiday is considered as the beginning of winter. It is believed the first snowflakes fall down from the white beard of the Saint. It is the holiday of the town of Aytos.

Archangels' Name Day (8 November). According to the traditional national beliefs Saint Archangel Michael is the angel who descends to the person passing away and takes out his soul with a knife or a sword.

The winter holidays start with ***Saint Nicholas' Name Day*** celebrated on 6 December. A fish dish is cooked for the holiday (usually stuffed carp). It is the holiday of the town of Burgas as this is the holiday of all fishermen and sailors (lately – of bankers as well).

Saint Ignatiy Bogonosets (God Bearer) Name Day – on this day the family expect their first guest. At the entry into the house, he/she should bring matchwood or straw, which he/she puts next to the fireside. He/She blesses the members of the family and they give him/her a “welcome” present.

Nativity of Christ or Christmas, is celebrated for three days - 24, 25 and 26 December. Six weeks before the holidays people fast and it is forbidden to eat meat, milk, cheese, eggs and so on. ***Christmas Eve*** - on the evening of 24th to 25th December, is one of the most important family holidays. It is dedicated to the house, the fireside, but also to the dead forefathers-relatives, who are also considered as a part of the family. In the past the holiday table was arranged on straw on the floor in the southeastern corner of the room under the iconostasis. There should be 7, 9 or 12 dishes on the table. The dishes, however, should be meatless. The table should not be cleared all night long aimed at not chasing luck away. It was believed that when the household fell asleep, the close deceased relatives came to have dinner. When midnight and Christmas came, the carol-singers would come, then Christ would be born but then also according to national beliefs the Dirty Days began.

New Year, also called ***New Year's Tide or Vasil's Name Day*** is celebrated on 1 January. On 31 December in the evening the hostess of the house prepares wound banitsa, made of puff pastry with cheese and eggs, in which wishes are put – budding cornel twig which symbolizes health and fertility and a coin symbolizing the purse with money, i.e. prosperity.

St. Jordan's Name Day is celebrated on 6 January. The holiday is also called Epiphany. A significant moment in it is the faith in the purifying power of water. A procession to the nearest water reservoir – a river, a lake, a dam lake, the sea if the settlement is located at the seaside, is organized headed by a priest. The priest throws a silver cross into the water and the young men compete to take it out.

St. John's Name Day is celebrated on 7 January – the day of Saint John the Baptist. On 8 January (in some areas on 21 January according to the Gregorian calendar) ***Midwives' Day*** is celebrated dedicated to the village midwife or to the woman who helps for bringing up babies.

St. Anthony's Name Day on 17 January is celebrated for protection from diseases. Women make and hand out small round loaves, spread with honey or putty. This celebration is connected with the people's idea of Saint Anthony as the patron Saint of plague and all the diseases in general.

Trifon's Day or Trifon Zarezan, the Winegrowers' Day is celebrated on 14 February. The trimming of vines is made on this day. Recently, most probably as a consequence of the globalization and the mixing of cultures, on 14 February Bulgarian people actively celebrate the Catholic Saint - St. Valentine and respectively the holiday of people in love.

According to the people's calendar real spring begins from the First of March. Nature awakens for new life and rituals for health and fertility are performed. The first day of the month is also called **Baba Marta (Grandmother Marta)**. The oldest woman in the family twists white and red woolen yarn and makes martenitsas (twined white and red threads, symbol of spring and health) which are worn for health both by people and animals.

The **Day of the Forty Holy Martyrs** is celebrated on 9 March – no work is done on this day. Small round loaves and ring-shaped bread are handed out for people's health and for fertility of bees and animals.

Holiday **Annunciation** is celebrated on 25 March. Annunciation is a holiday for all the Christians regardless of the tradition and the church they belong to, and celebrates one of the greatest sacraments in Christianity. According to the Bible on this day Archangel Gavrail brought to Virgin Mary the good news that she would give birth to the Savior and Son of God – Jesus Christ.

The holidays **Last Day before Fasting Term** – the Second Sunday before Lent and the First Sunday before Lent which precede Easter and depending on Easter they are at a different time and always on Sundays, occupy a significant place in the people's calendar. On Saturday before the Second Sunday before Lent is Great All Souls' Day when bread, boiled eggs, wine for the souls of the deceased are handed out. **Saint Todor's Name Day** is on Saturday, prior to the end of this week, also called Horse Easter, because races with horses are organized on this day. The holiday First Sunday before Lent is also known as **Forgiveness Day**. This is one of the most interesting holidays in the Bulgarian tradition which reflected people's wisdom. On this day everyone asks forgiveness from his relatives and friends if he happened to hurt them by chance somehow during the past year.

Palm Sunday (Saint Lazarus' Name Day) is on the last Sunday (Saturday) before Easter. The holiday is related to the spring awakening of nature and youth. On this day young girls who want to get married wear holiday clothes, they hang spring flowers into their hair and go round singing Lazarus songs and playing round dances (horos).

Easter is the end of the Great Lent. The preparations for the holiday start on Thursday when eggs are painted and the first red egg having the magic power to protect from Evil is put away up to next Easter. Ritual sweetened bread (Easter cakes) – "kozunaks" (light dough sweet bread

for Easter) are baked on Friday. Late in the evening – Saturday to Sunday the Easter liturgy starts which is attended by everyone. Exactly at midnight the priest announces the Resurrection with the words “Christ Rose from the Dead”, and the people in the church answer “He Rose from the Dead Indeed”. A procession starts up headed by the priest and everyone goes round the church three times. At the announcement of the Resurrection the priest takes out a lit up candle, a symbol of the heavenly fire, from which all the people present light up their candles, taking them to their homes.

The Day of Saint George the Victorious, **St. George's Day**, is always celebrated on 6 May and together with Easter it is considered as the biggest spring holiday. The holiday is celebrated in three different manners: as a holiday of the shepherds, as a holiday of the courage and soldiers' heroism (i.e. the holiday of the Bulgarian Army) and as a holiday of the Wisdom and Renaissance. It is the holiday of Pomorie.

As compared to the winter and spring rituals and customs, the summer ones are few in number because people are busy working in the fields. Various rituals in different areas against hail and drought are known.

The **Holy Spirit** is celebrated on the fifty-first day after Easter. A sacrificial rite to the church is performed and food is handed out to people.

St. Enyo's Day is celebrated on 24 June when the duration of the day and night is equal. Enyo's Day is the most magical day of the year when magics and spells for love are made. Herbs are picked early in the morning on this day because it is considered that the herbs picked up on Enyo's Day have the greatest healing power.

Peter's fast which lasted for two weeks ends on **Saint Peter's Name Day** - 29 June. Chicken dishes are served on St. Peter's Day.

The Assumption of Virgin Mary is celebrated by the Orthodox and catholic world on 15 August. In Bulgaria this day is the biggest summer Christian holiday. Her death at the age of 64 was so light and blissful that it was like falling asleep.

Autumn holidays and traditions are related to the preparation for the winter, the sowing and the harvesting. **Cross Day** is celebrated on 14 September related mainly to the grape-gathering. The cross is taken out of the church on this day, it is preached and after that the priest sprinkles worshippers with holy water.

Fire Dancing originated in Strandzha and is a well preserved tradition in the villages of Balgari, Kosti, Brodilovo, etc. The rite of fire dancing is one of the oldest Bulgarian folk traditions and was once practiced by ancient Thracians. In 2009, the ritual was included as a **UNESCO World**

Heritage legacy of non-material culture. The dance is performed barefoot on live coals, and this unique rite is now connected with groups whose patron saints are Constantine and Elena (3 June). It originated before Christ as a pagan ritual and according to a number of scholars, the ritual was performed as a Thracian cult that worshipped the sun. After the acceptance of Christianity as the official and only religion, the ritual faded away anathematized by the church as heresy but was preserved in the villages of Strandzha Mountain.

7.5 Museums, galleries, historical landmarks, arts and crafts centres, cultural institutions

Museums and galleries

There exist museums and museum collections in most of the municipal centres of Burgas district. Most of them are historical and/or ethnographic. Some public art galleries are also available. A full list of the above mentioned cultural institutions is provided in Table 5. Additionally museum collections are available in the towns of Aytos and Kableshevo, as well as in the village of Yasna Polyana.

Table 5 List and contact details of museums and galleries in Burgas district

Type	Address	Phone number	E-mail and Director
Museum			
National Center for Underwater Archeology	Sozopol 8130 1 Khan Krum Square	tel. 0550/22405 fax: 22405	e-mail: cuasozopol@mail.bg hangelova@gmail.com Director: Assoc. Prof. Kalin Dimitrov
Regional Museum of History - Burgas	Burgas 8000 69 Slavyanska Str.	tel. 056/842588; 820344 fax: 842588	e-mail: main@burgasmuseums.bg www.burgasmuseums.bg Director: Milen Nikolov
House-museum "Petya Dubarova"	Burgas 8000 68 Gladstone Str.	tel. 056/814110	www.dubarovamuseum.com Director: Elitsa Dubarova
Museum of History in Karnobat	Karnobat 8400 31, Georgi	tel. 0559/27143; 22206; 22135	e-mail: karnobatmuseum@abv.bg Director: Dimcho Momchilov

		Kirkov Str.		
House Museum "Dimitar Polyanov" Karnobat	– in	Karnobat 8400 4 Dimitar Polyanov Str.	tel.: +359 559 22 06	
Museum of History in Malko Tarnovo	of	Malko Tarnovo 8162 1, Konstantin Petkanov Str.	tel. 05952/3664, 2187 fax: 2187	e-mail: histmuzeum_mt@mail.bg Director: Ivelina Ivanova
Museum "Ancient Nessebar"		Nessebar 8230 Messabria Str., 2a, pk. 27	tel. 0554/46018; 46019; 4612, fax: 46018	e-mail: clio_nes@abv.bg e-mail: kiyashkina_p@abv.bg www.ancient-nessebar.com Director: Petya Kiyashkina
Museum History Pomorie	of in	Pomorie 8200 33A Knyaz Boris I Str.	tel. 0596/22008	e-mail: pomoriemuseum@abv.bg Director: Anton Karabashev
Archaeological Museum Sozopol	in	Sozopol 8130 2 Khan Krum Square	tel. 05514/22226 fax 22405	e-mail: sozopol@burgasmuseums.bg Director: Dimitar Nedev
Museum History Sredets	of in	Sredets 8300 3 G. Dimitrov Str.	tel. 056/919957 fax: 960073	e-mail: kr.kostova@mail.bg deultum@mail.bg Director: Krasimira Kostova
Museum History Primorsko	of in	Primorsko 5 Albatros Str.	tel. +359 55 532 359 mobile: +359 88 770 1695	e-mail: museum.primorsko@gmail.com
Museum History Tsarevo	of in	Tsarevo 8260 12 Peneka Str.	tel. 0590/ 52008; mobile:	e-mail: museum_tsarevo@mail.bg

		0884321525	
Museum of viticulture in Sungurlare	Sungurlare		e-mail: sungurlare@burgasmuseums.bg
House - Museum "Lazar Stanev" in Aytos	Aytos		e-mail: aitos@burgasmuseums.bg
Galleries			
Art Gallery "Petko Zadgorski" in Burgas	Burgas 8000 24 Mitropolit Simeon Str.	tel 056/842803; 842169 fax. 842169	www.bourgass.net/local/ArtGallery/index_en.htm Director: Georgi Dinev
Art Gallery in Sozopol	Sozopol 8130 78 Kiril and Metodiy Str.	tel. 0550/22202	Director: Ivan Bahchevanov

Sources: Ministry of culture, Register of museums - <http://mc.government.bg/page.php?p=58&s=429&sp=471&t=0&z=0>; Regional Historical Museum Burgas - <http://www.burgasmuseums.bg/index.php?page=othermuseums>

There are altogether 14 museums in the region. The following are most attractive from tourist point of view:

The **Regional Museum of History** in the town of **Burgas** has several expositions - archeological, ethnographic, historical and natural and scientific exposition.

The **ethnographic exposition** to the Regional Museum of History – Burgas offers the richest ethnographic collection in Southeastern Bulgaria. The exposition is located in the known in Burgas Brakalov's house, twice Mayor of the town of Burgas. The house was built in 1873 and in conformity with its architectural plan belongs to the type "Balkan" urban house of the 19th century – the only preserved such in the town of Burgas. The most attractive collection of Bulgarian national costumes of the ethnographic groups in the region, inclusive of the Bulgarian migrants from today's Greece and Turkey, is exposed here.

Collections of archeological finds related to ancient Thrace, the Greek colonies along the Black Sea and the time of the Roman Empire are exhibited in the **archeological exposition**. Unique exhibits show the earliest history of navigation in the Black Sea as well as the development of

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the prospering Southern Black Sea ports in Bulgaria during the Middle Ages up to the fall of the country under Ottoman Rule at the end of the 14th – the middle of the 15th century.

The **natural scientific exposition** is the only one of its kind along the Southern Black Sea coast. It presents the geo-historical development and the modern natural diversity of Southeastern Bulgaria and cooperates for the preservation of the unique nature. It provides wide educational programs to young people to get acquainted with the biodiversity of Burgas region.

Original exhibits, photographs and documents from events and personalities related to the history of the town are exhibited in **the historical exposition**. The icon collection presents masterpieces from the Bulgarian Renaissance.

The **Municipal Museum of History** in **Primorsko** is located in the central part of the town. It welcomes tourists from the summer of 2015, presenting exhibits of the archaeological excavations carried out on the territory of the municipality of Primorsko. The exposed artifacts are materials from the fortress wall at the Urdoviza peninsula, the town of Kiten, the tombstone in the Chenger area, the Thracian sanctuary "Beglik Tash" and the dolmens, located in the area of the Ropotamo reserve. The museum also has an ethnographic collection which presents the lifestyle of local people from Black Sea Strandzha during last century.

A permanent **archeological exhibition – “Secrets from the Sea Bottom”**, in the town of **Kiten** was opened in 2006, containing finds from a sunken pre-historical settlement, a sunken ship and anchors. Artefacts from the archeological investigations of Urdoviza fortress wall are shown in the exhibition.

The **Archeological Museum** in **Nessebar** was created in 1956 to present the history of antique Mesambriya and Nessebar of the Middle Ages. The exposition area of the museum comprises a lounge and four halls. The Diploma certifying the entry of Old Nessebar in the List of the Monuments of the World Cultural Heritage occupies a worthy place in it. This happened on 9 December 1983 at the 7th session of the World Heritage Committee held in the city of Florence, Italy.

The Archeological Museum of Sozopol is located in the old part of the town. The museum is located in the building of the temple “St. St. Cyril and Methodius”, as well as in several halls provided by the cultural center of the town of Sozopol. The archeological museum presents the history and the thousand-year old cultural tradition of the town of Sozopol from the end of the 6th millennium before Christ to the 17th century after Christ. The collections of stone and lead anchors and bayonets, ancient Greek painted vases and antique and Middle Age amphoras are the most remarkable objects. The relics of Saint John the Baptist found in 2010 during

archeological excavations on St. John Island are exposed to pilgrims in the church “St. St. Cyril and Methodius”.

The **Municipal Museum of History** in the town of **Tsarevo** was opened in 2012. The mission of the cultural institution is to preserve and popularize the heritage of Strandzha Black Sea coast. It is active on the territory of all 13 settlements in the municipality. Its funds store valuable archeological artifacts and exhibits related to the rituals and traditions of local population and of the Bulgarian migrants from Edirne Thrace in 1913. The museum has three floors of exhibition area - archeology, ethnography and gallery.

Theaters, cultural institutions and cultural community centres

The most important cultural institutions are concentrated in Burgas as a district centre. The **Opera and Philharmonic Society of Burgas** was created by a Decree of the Council of Ministers in 2000. The mixed **choir of Burgas** was formed in 1972 when Burgas Opera House became a state music institute. The choir with the Opera and Philharmonic Society of Burgas participates in the realization of operas, musical and children’s performances. The **Dramatic Theater of Burgas** is one of the brightest symbols of the town. In its long history it provided Bulgaria with a priceless constellation of names of great directors, actors and producers. The **State Puppet Theater - Burgas** is a professional theater for children, founded in 1954. The theater group maintains a repertoire of minimum 20 titles and 4 new productions are created each season.

The **community cultural centres** are typically Bulgarian institutions (chitalishta) actively involved in keeping the Bulgarian traditions and in the organization of the events included in the local cultural calendar. Community cultural centres exist almost in all inhabited areas of the district (Table 6) and their total number in the region is 174.

Table 6 Distribution of community cultural centres in Burgas district

Municipality	Number
Aytos	12
Burgas	31
Kameno	4
Karnobat	25
Malko Turnovo	3

Nesebar	11
Pomorie	15
Primorsko	7
Ruen	20
Sozopol	10
Sredets	13
Sungurlare	18
Tsarevo	5
Total	174

Source: Public register of community cultural centres in Bulgaria (<https://chitalishta.com/?act=regions>)

The most prominent cultural community centres are located in the town of Burgas. Among them those having amateur groups of potential interest for involvement in tourist activities should be considered:

- Probuda Community Centre, created in 1880, is specially recognized for the Atanas Manchev Folklore Dancing Ensemble and the Seasons Club vocal studio;
- Lyuben Karavelov Community Centre, established in 1940, is famous for the Folklore Formation Trakiyche, the Mythical Birds literary studio and the group for old town and popular songs Sea Breeze;
- Asen Zlatarov Community Centre, established in 1940 hosts a modern dances group, a group for authentic folklore, a chamber ensemble for church Slavonic singing John Chrysostom and a vocal group for old urban songs Retro-Burgas;
- Far Community Centre, created in 1946 has its own hall in which at least one event is conducted every week. Two of its clubs are very active – “The Circle of the Bard” for poets with a guitar and “Sea Hedgehogs” for poets and writers of humor and satire;
- Hristo Botev Community Centre, established in 1937, maintains the children vocal folk group Pesachinki;
- St. St. Cyril and Methodius Community Centre, created in 1985, has a literary studio for children Gold Feathers, a vocal group for Russian songs and romances and art classes;
- Paisiy Hilendarski Community Centre (1928), is known for the mummers’ group, traditionally participating in the International Festival of masquerade games “Surva” in Pernik (in the list of UNESCO) and in Simitli, Kalofer, Sredets and almost all the

settlements in the region of Burgas during holidays and celebrations. The children's folklore group Zvanika studies and preserves the authentic Strandzha folklore.

7.6 Facilities for recreation and tourism, tourism infrastructure

The accommodation facilities in the region are located mainly on the Black Sea coast – in the resort complex Sunny Beach, the holiday villages Elenite and Dyuni, the International Youth Center – Primorsko, the vacation settlement Lozenets, the camping sites Yug (South), Oasis, Arapya, Nestinarka, Delphin, Koral, Kavatsite, etc. Small-sized family business predominates in the settlements along the coast and inside the region.

Based on the National Tourist Register of accommodation facilities of the Ministry for Tourism in total 9095 accommodation establishments are categorized in the district (Table 7), of which 55% are concentrated in Nesebar Municipality, 13% in Pomorie Municipality, 11% in Tsarevo Municipality, 10% in Sozopol Municipality and 8% in Primorsko Municipality. The district centre of Burgas has only 3% share in the number of accommodation facilities. No accommodation capacity is available in the municipalities of Kameno and Sungurlare.

Table 7 Distribution of accommodation facilities in Burgas district (03.12.2017)

Municipality	Number of accommodation establishments
Aytos	9
Burgas	229
Kameno	0
Karnobat	6
Malko Turnovo	103
Nesebar	5000
Pomorie	1192
Primorsko	700
Ruen	2
Sozopol	871
Sredets	1
Sungurlare	0

Tsarevo	982

Source: NTR–Accommodation establishments, <http://ntr.tourism.government.bg/CategoryzationAll.nsf/mn.xsp>

The National Statistical Institute provides information about all establishments of more than 10 beds capacity. In 2016 in Burgas district there were 804 establishments of that type (24% of the country) with about 127 thousand beds – 39% of the bed capacity of the country (Table 8).

Table 8 Activity of the resorts in Burgas district, 2016 1,2

Resorts	Accommodation establishments ³ - number	Bed-places - number	Available bed-nights - number	Nights spent - number		Arrivals - number		Revenues from nights spent-BGN	
				Total	Of which by foreigners	Total	Of which by foreigners	Total	Of which by foreigners
Bulgaria	3331	328 264	65 169 474	25 185 996	16 150 666	7 196 397	3 386 932	1 229 073 306	891 829 042
Burgas district	804	127 076	16 779 661	9 261 486	7 246 331	1 579 150	1 088 150	44 4434 233	377 056 873
Dyuni	5	3450	455 799	321 893	293 049	38 769	34 663	18 295 106	16 356 686
International Youth Centre Primorsko	3	1254	130 328	81 507	51 895	10 184	4556	2 376 172	1 776 745
Sunny beach	161	60 849	8 226 414	5 179 797	4 855 644	789 184	715 686	266 001 450	253 308 125
Elenite⁴	7	3513	513 133	107 830	67 993	20 316	10 932	6 125 839	3 923 443

¹ Resorts with national importance defined by decision № 45/25.01.2005 of Council of Ministers.

² Since January 2012 the survey is carried out monthly in compliance with the Regulation 692/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning European statistics on tourism.

³In use

⁴ Deleted from the List of the resorts of national importance by Decision № 9799 of 9.11.2005 of the Supreme Administrative Court.
 NB. 1 EUR=1,95583 BGN fixed rate

Source: NSI, Tourism 2016, <http://www.nsi.bg/en/content/6941/tourism>

About 19% of all bed capacity of the country and 48% of the available bed capacity of Burgas district is concentrated in Sunny beach resort. The district accounts for 22% of all arrivals in accommodation establishments in Bulgaria, 37% of the registered overnights and 36% of the revenue generated. The average length of stay of tourists in the district is 6 nights and the occupation rate of the facilities is more than 55%.

Two spa centres from the region are already registered in the National Tourist Register of the Ministry for Tourism for balneo-, spa and wellness centres – the Barcelo Royal Beach Hotel in Sunny Beach and Penelopa Palace in Pomorie.

The curative mud of Pomorie Lake is medium sulphide mud, with good physical indicators and reserves of 1 448 000 t. The mud is used by the Specialized Rehabilitation Hospital to the Ministry of Health and by the facility of the Military Medical Academy as well as another 4 balneological hotels.

The mud of Atanasovsko Lake is also medium sulphide with reserves of 60 000 t. It is utilized by the Specialized Rehabilitation Hospital in the village of Vetren (Burgas Mineral Baths) and in 3 balneological hotels. The availability of mineral water allows its combination for drinking and external application with mud treatment. The mineral water is suitable for treatment and prophylactics of diseases of the skeletal and muscular system, the peripheral nervous system, chronic gastritis and pyelonephritis. The water has a beneficial effect also for the strengthening of the general condition of the body. The temperature of the thermal water is about 41°C, it is clear and colorless, slightly mineralized with a total flow rate of 36 l/sec.

A specific existing tourist practice are the proposed boat trips along the Ropotamo River, the Veleka River and in Vaya Lake, as well as the boat trips to St. Anastasia island starting from Burgas.

Other kinds of tourist services include horse riding enterprises for amateur riding and routes for horse riding, aqua parks, water attraction and adventure parks, places for observation of wild animals and birds, and hunting grounds.

The tourist attractions for each municipality in the region of Burgas are inscribed in the Register of Tourist Attractions to the Ministry for Tourism (<http://rta.tourism.government.bg/TARregister.aspx>). The total number of included attractions from the district is 233 reflecting the high potential of local natural and cultural heritage (Table 9). They are concentrated mainly in the seaside municipalities – Tsarevo (31%), Sozopol (17%), Nesebar (9%) and Pomorie (9%), but also in Malko Turnovo Municipality in Strandzha Mountain (14%). The full list of local tourist attractions is provided in Appendix № 1.

Table 9 Registered tourist attractions in Burgas district

Municipality	Number Tourist Attractions
Aytos	3
Burgas	16
Kameno	0
Karnobat	4
Malko Turnovo	32
Nesebar	20
Pomorie	20
Primorsko	10
Ruen	6
Sozopol	40
Sredets	9
Sungurlare	1
Tsarevo	72

Source: Register of tourist attractions, Ministry for Tourism, <http://rta.tourism.government.bg/TARegister.aspx>

7.7 Tour operating and travel agency activities

Based on the National Tourist Register of travel agencies of the Ministry for Tourism in total 524 registered travel agencies have their headquarters in Burgas district (Table 10). Most of them are concentrated in the municipalities of Burgas (55%), Nesebar (21%), Pomorie (10%), Sozopol (9%) and Primorsko (3%). In general the municipalities off the coast are not covered by travel agencies' services with the exception of Aytos and Karnobat. 13% of the registered tour operators and travel agencies in the country are located in the region of Burgas. Over 90% of the foreign tour operators' companies working with Bulgaria operate in the region.

Table 10 Registered travel agencies operating in Burgas district (03.12.2017)

Municipality	Number of travel agencies
Aytos	1
Burgas	286
Kameno	0
Karnobat	2
Malko Turnovo	0
Nesebar	110
Pomorie	53
Primorsko	17
Ruen	0
Sozopol	45
Sredets	0
Sungurlare	0
Tsarevo	10

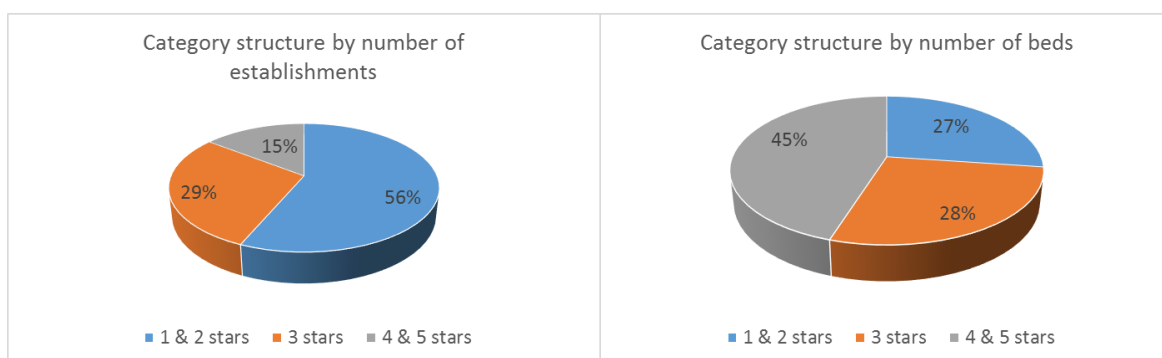
Source: NTR-Travel agencies - <http://ntr.tourism.government.bg/Registration.nsf/alltato.xsp>

7.8 Hotels and restaurants, tourist sites

The accommodation facilities in Burgas district by type are represented by hotels, apartment tourist complexes, holiday villages, villas and villa settlements, family hotels, hostels, boarding houses, holiday homes, guest houses, guest rooms, guest apartments, bungalows and camping sites. The National Tourist Register of the categorized accommodation establishments to the Ministry for Tourism of the Republic of Bulgaria (<http://ntr.tourism.government.bg/CategoryzationAll.nsf/mn.xsp>) provides search by category, type, municipality and settlement, and link for more detailed information, including location.

Table 11 Accommodation establishments by category in Burgas district in 2016

Category	Accommodation establishments - number	Bed-places - number	Available bed-nights - number	Nights spent - number		Arrivals - number		Revenues from nights spent-BGN	
				Total	Of which by foreigners	Total	Of which by foreigners	Total	Of which by foreigners
1 & 2 stars	454	34 581	3 825 424	1 654 815	648 313	313 699	93 585	40 505 795	20 831 822
3 stars	233	35 220	4 541 844	2 306 730	1 864 499	384 498	270 379	96 961 074	80 942 479
4 & 5 stars	117	57 275	8 412 393	5 299 941	4 733 519	880 953	724 186	306 967 364	275 282 572



Picture 6 Category structure of accommodation facilities in Burgas district (NSI, 2016)

The category structure (Table 11, Pic. 6) shows that almost half of bed capacity is allocated in facilities of high quality – 4- and 5-star establishments, although their share in terms of number of establishments is very low – only 15%. The average capacity of the establishments of higher category (hotels mainly) is 490 beds. On the opposite, the establishments of 1 and 2 stars are much smaller in size and capacity – 76 beds. The 4- and 5-star hotels also demonstrate the highest occupation rate (63%) with the highest share in overnights (57%), followed by 3-star establishments – 51% occupation rate and 25% of overnights, and the least demanded are the 1- and 2-star establishments – 43% occupation rate and 18% of overnights.

Various kinds of food and entertainment establishments (independent and associated to accommodation places) - restaurants, fast servicing establishments, drinking establishments, cafés-pastry shops and bars are registered in the region of Burgas. Many of them are seasonal in connection with the summer tourist season. The National Tourist Register to the Ministry for Tourism provides full list of all the categorized food and entertainment establishments (<http://ntr.tourism.government.bg/CategoryzationAll.nsf/mn.xsp>). The search is organized by category, type, municipality and settlement, and links are provided for more detailed

information, including location. The total number of food and entertainment establishment in Burgas district is 4175 (Table 12), of which 43% are concentrated in Nesebar Municipality (due to Sunny beach resort), 14% are in Tsarevo Municipality, 10% both in Burgas and Primorsko municipalities, 9% in Pomorie and 8% in Sozopol municipalities.

Table 12 Food and entertainment facilities in Burgas district (03.12.2017)

Municipality	Number of food and entertainment facilities
Aytos	104
Burgas	427
Kameno	15
Karnobat	23
Malko Turnovo	3
Nesebar	1794
Pomorie	392
Primorsko	414
Ruen	85
Sozopol	316
Sredets	1
Sungurlare	0
Tsarevo	601
Total	4175

Source: NTR, Food and entertainment facilities, <http://ntr.tourism.government.bg/CategoryzationAll.nsf/zhr.xsp>

Along with traditional Bulgarian cuisine, the Bourgas district cuisine is influenced by both sea food and dishes that are typical of nearby Strandzha and Stara Planina Mountains. The region is extremely rich in culinary traditions, and there is nothing strange about it, since every epoch of the historical past has left something of its own. Juicy pastries such as revane (syruped sponge

cake) and Kanafah owe their existence to the Turkish cuisine, while the Greek influence on the Black Sea coast has enriched the cuisine with delicacies such as sarma with raisins, stuffed vegetables and local fish prepared in a variety of ways.

The best-known gourmet food of Strandzha might be the “strandzhansko dyado” or “Strandzha grandpa”, a dried pork sausage flavoured with classic Bulgarian spices like summer savory, paprika and black pepper, and fed into a pork belly casing. Another dish, typical for the region is the local banitsa pastry called “zelnik”.

The main destinations in Burgas Municipality are the town of Burgas (inclusive of the residential areas of Kraymore, Sarafovo and Vetren) and the picturesque park Rosenets.

In the municipality of Nessebar most famous are the resort complex Sunny Beach, the holiday village Elenite, the towns of Nessebar, Obzor and Sveti Vlas and the village of Ravda.

The holiday centres in the municipality of Pomorie are the towns of Pomorie and Aheloy.

The main tourist centers on the territory of the municipality of Sozopol are the town of Sozopol and the town of Chernomorets. Wellknown on the international market is Dyuni holiday village. Sozopol is also known for its camping sites – Kavatsite, Gradina, etc.

The tourist infrastructure in the municipality of Primorsko is concentrated in Primorsko and Kiten. The International Youth Center – Primorsko is located between the two towns.

In the municipality of Tsarevo not only the seaside settlements are developed as tourist destinations – Lozanets, Tsarevo, Ahtopol, Sinemorest, Varvara, Rezovo, but also the villages in Strandzha Mountain – Brodilovo, Balgari, Kostî, and others. In Malko Tarnovo Municipality falling in Strandzha Nature Park many eco-trails and interesting villages attract tourist flows.

In the municipality of Sredets close to the municipal centre is the recreational locality Bozhura, where rest houses, bungalows and chalets are built for short-term recreation, sports camps and hunting tourism.

7.9 Tourist information centers

The provision of information services in the district is organized in a network of tourist information centers (TICs), visitors’ centers for presentation, exposition and interpretation of local natural and cultural heritage.

The **nature conservation centres** are a valuable resource for the development of ecotourism and possibility for diversifying the tourist product, specialized in the investigation and

preservation of rare species, awareness raising for biodiversity and development of tourist routes, as well as implementation of training programs. They include:

- **Poda** nature conservation centre (Burgas Municipality) - located on the main road E 87 Burgas – Sozopol, between Burgas and Mandra Lakes and close to the link of Mandra Lake with the Black sea; facilities are provided for bird watching and for observation and preservation of bird diversity within the region;
- Shelter for observation of birds (Burgas Municipality), located at **Atanasovsko Lake** on the main road Burgas – Sunny Beach;
- Visitors' Centre **Ropotamo** – opened in 2003 on the territory of the protected locality;
- **Museum of Salt** in Pomorie – opened in 2002 and located at Pomorie Lake.
- Information and Visitor Centre of Strandzha Nature Park in **Malko Tarnovo**;
- **Grammatikovo** Visitor Centre of Strandzha Nature Park at the eco-path "In the realm of Rhododendron ponticum", presenting also the caves in the region;
- Information and Visitor Centre "Primorska Strandzha" of Strandzha Nature Park in the town of **Ahtopol**;
- Visitor Information Centre "Sredets" in the town of **Sredets** for nature protection;

The network of tourist information centres comprises centres in settlements at the seaside as well as in Malko Tarnovo. Detailed information is presented in Table 13.

Table 13 Tourist information centres in Burgas district

Tourist Information Centre		Contact details
Tourist Information Centre - Burgas		Address: Burgas, Hristo Botev Str. (subway of Opera House) Tel.: +359 (0)56 825 772; +359 56 841 542 E-mail: info@gotoburgas.com Website: www.gotoburgas.com
Tourist Information Centre - Malko Tarnovo		Address: Malko Tarnovo 8162, Preobrazhenie Square Tel.: +359 (0)5952/ 30 17; +359 (0)886 647 201 Fax: +359 (0)5952/ 31 28 E-mail: tic_mtarnovo@mail.bg Website: www.malkotarnovo.org; www.malkotarnovo.yes.bg
Tourist Information		Address: Nessebar, 10, Mesambriya Str.

The project is co-funded by European Union through the Interreg-IPA CBC Bulgaria – Turkey Programme

Centre - Nessebar	Tel.: +359 (0)554 42-611; +359 (0)554 29-346 Fax: +359 (0)554 29-347 E-mail: visitnessebar@abv.bg; Website: www.visitnessebar.org
Tourist Information Centre - Obzor	Address: Obzor 8250, 2, Ivan Vazov Str. Tel. +359 (0)556/ 35124 E-mail: obzor_info@mail.bg
Tourist Information Centre - Pomorie	Address: Pomorie 8200, Cyril and Methodius Square Tel.: +359 (0)596 2 22 78; E-mail: tourism@pomorie.org
Tourist Information Centre - Sozopol	Address: Sozopol, Republikanska Str, the Square Tel.: 05514/ 3336
Tourist Information Centre - Chernomorets	Address: Chernomorets, 6, St. Nikola Str, Tel.: +359 (0)5510/ 2744
Tourist Information Centre - Primorsko	Address: Primorko, Treti mart Str. – the Square Tel.: +359 (0)5561/ 3076
Tourist Information Centre - Tsarevo	Address: Tsarevo 8260, Krimorska Str. Website: www.tsarevo.info

7.10 Hunting farms and ground

The hunting farms and grounds in Burgas district include the following:

Hunting farm Strandzha is located in Strandzha Mountain on the territory of Zvezdets State Forestry, 40 km from Burgas. Centuries-old forests offer successful hunting of wild boar, buck, deer and a predator – wolf, fox, and jackal.

Hunting lodge Kovach is located in Strandzha Mountain on the bank of Veleka River, 60 km from Burgas. It provides possibility for hunting wild boar, roe, deer, wolf and so on. It has three hunting fields: Smradlov Hill, Orchard and Kalenoto Kladenche. Amateur fishing is also developed.

Hunting farm Byala Reka (White River), forestry Zvezdets is located in Strandzha Mountain, 40 km from Burgas along the new international road to the Republic of Turkey. The game diversity includes wild boar, roe, deer, wolf and other. Apart from hunting, photo-safari or tourist walks with a guide are also offered.

State Hunting Farm Ropotamo is located 45 km to the south of Burgas. The territory of the hunting farm falls in the northeastern part of Strandzha Mountain. The population of the red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) is local from most ancient times. The big weight of the body is characteristic for Strandzha deer – up to 350 kg for male deer, the solid horns, covered with numerous pearls as well as their dark color. The weight of the trophies gets to 14 kg. Wild boar inhabits all over the area of the farm. The eastern Black Sea migration route of the birds Via Pontica passes over the territory of Ropotamo farm. This explains the presence of passages of various wild ducks and geese and in particular of the woodcock – a favorite target for hunting of a lot of foreign tourists visiting the region during the autumn and the winter months.

State Hunting Farm Nessebar is located in the most eastern slopes of the Balkan Mountain (Emine Balkan Mountain). It comprises the territory of the municipalities of Pomorie, Nessebar and a part of Ruen Municipality. The main kinds of game are red deer */Cervus elaphus/*, fallow deer */Cervus dama/*, roe */Capreolus capreolus/*, moufflon */Ovis musimon/*, wild boar */Sus scrofa/*, snipe */Scolopax rusticola/*, quail */Coturnix coturnix/*.

State Forestry Sredets is located on the northwestern slopes of Strandzha Mountain. The area of the farm provides significant game and species diversity – red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), roe, wild boar, hare, partridge, pheasant, etc. The wolf, jackal, fox, wild cat, marten, polecat, brock, weasel are widely spread. The species diversity of the birds is rich, especially during the seasonal migrations – about 380 species of birds are encountered. The Fakiyska River, the Sredetska River, the Gospodarevska River, and the dam lakes located on the territory of the farm offer good conditions for amateur fishing.

7.11 Vineyards and wineries

Viticulture, wine and spirits production is very well developed in the region. Over 20% of the wine industry in Bulgaria is manufactured in Pomorie, Sungurlare and Karnobat.

8 Types of tourism products and offers

The review of available natural and cultural resources and the existing tourist infrastructure outlines the potential for the development of the following type of tourism:

- Sea recreation, camping and water sports
- Balneo-, spa and wellness tourism
- Cultural tourism, festivals and events
- Ecotourism and bird-watching
- Rural/village tourism
- Wine and gastronomy tourism
- Hunting and fishing tourism
- Sports and adventure tourism

9 Border Checkpoints of Burgas region

At the border with Turkey the only operating checkpoint is Malko Tarnovo - Derekyoy, servicing the E87 international road. Three more checkpoint have been discussed and could be planned for opening in the future, respectively Strandzha – Malkoçlar, Belevren – Ahlatla and Rezovo.

The air border is served by the border checkpoint at Burgas airport, while sea border checkpoints operate at the ports of Burgas and Tsarevo.

10 Appendix № 1 REGISTERED TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN BURGAS DISTRICT

Municipality of Aytos – Forest park Slaveeva Reka, Zoo Park – Aytos and an Architectural Ethnographic Complex Genger;

Municipality of Burgas – Tourist complex Akve Kalide, Natural Conservation Center Poda, Eco Zone Vaya, Eco Zone Foros, Festival of Sand Sculptures, Archeological Museum, Museum of History, Ethnographic Museum, Natural Scientific Museum, House-Museum Petya Dubarova, Art Gallery Petko Zadgorski, House-Museum Georgi Baev and Island Saint Anastasia;

Municipality of Karnobat – House-Museum Dimitar Polyakov, Archeological Museum – Karnobat and Middle Ages Fortress Markeli;

Municipality of Malko Tarnovo – Caves and springs in Mladezhka River – village of Mladezhko, Dolmens the village of Kalovo, Chapel Holy Trinity over a cave – the village of Vizitsa, Orthodox Temple Assumption – town of Malko Tarnovo, Fire Dancers' Sanctuary the Big Ayazma and plank beds in the locality of Vlahov Dol – the village of Gramatikovo, Cave Svetilishte (Sanctuary) – the village of Slivarovo, Cult Complex in the locality Mishkova Niva (Mouse Field) – next to Malko Tarnovo, Museum of History Professor Aleksandar Fol – Malko Tarnovo, Peak Golyamo Gradishte – next to Malko Tarnovo, Mound Necropolis in the locality of Propada – a complex of tomb facilities from various epochs – town of Malko Tarnovo, rock sanctuary in the locality of Kamaka (the Stone) – town of Malko Tarnovo, rock consecrated ground in the locality of Indipassha – a sanctuary with a spring – the village of Slivarovo, an architectural reserve village of Brashlyan – 76 houses are architectural monuments of culture – 9 of national significance, the rest – of local such, a church school - the village of Zabernovo, church Saint Dimitar – the village of Brashlyan, church school – the village of Brashlyan, Balyu's house - the village of Brashlyan, Bratan's cave - the village of Brashlyan, Dolmens and Roman sepulchre – the village of Evrenozovo, Centuries-Old Trees – the village of Zabernovo, Eastern Catholic Temple Holy Trinity – town of Malko Tarnovo, Church Holy Forty Martyrs – the village of Gramatikovo, Church Saint Iliya – the village of Stoilovo, Church Saint Athanasius – the village of Zvezdets, Church Holy Trinity – the village of Vizitsa, Church Saint George – the village of Kalovo, Church Saint Luka – the village of Zabernovo, Church Saint Prophet Iliya – the village of Byala Voda, Church Saint Panteleymon – the village of Slivarovo;

Municipality of Nessebar – Church Saint Todor, Church Saint Spas, Church Saint Christ Pantocrator, Church Saint John the Baptist, Church Saint John Aliturgetos, Church Saint Kliment, Church Saint Sophia, protected natural locality Irakli, protected natural locality Kalinata, protected natural locality Ortoto, protected natural locality Smrikite, Church Saint Paraskeva, Church St. St. Michael and Gavrail, Archeological Museum – Nessebar, landmark Cape Emine,

Church Saint Stephen, landmark Sand Dunes Sunny Beach, landmark Sand Dunes Nessebar, Architectural Reserve Ancient Nessebar;

Municipality of Pomorie – Museum of History – Pomorie, Museum of Salt – Pomorie, Pre-Historical Eneolithic Settlement Kozareva Mogila – Kableschkovo, a monument to Peyo Yavorov – Pomorie, House-Museum of Peyo Yavorov – Pomorie, a people's community center Prosveta (Enlightenment) 1888 – Pomorie, a people's community center Svetlina (Light) 1939 - Pomorie, Church Nativity of Blessed Mother of God – Pomorie, Church Transformation of Our Lord – Pomorie, Church Saint Paraskeva of Rome – the village of Kamenar, Friary Saint George, protected locality Chairite village of Goritsa, protected zone Pomorie Lake, natural rock formation Dobrovan's Mushrooms, Antique Dome Tomb, Ensemble Old Pomorie Houses, Speedway village of Poroy, exhibition exposition Traces of the Past – town of Kableschkovo;

Municipality of Primorsko – Paragliding, Yacht trip and a picnic, festival of the extreme sports, aquapark, Thracian sanctuary Beglik tash, permanent archeological exhibition Secrets from the Sea Bottom – town of Kiten, Museum Collection Bulgarian Yasna Polyana – town of Primorsko, reserve Ropotamo, a boat trip along the Ropotamo River, diving;

Municipality of Ruen – Rock formations "The pig's head", "The turtle", "The wonderful rocks" and "The professor", the ethnographic museum collections in the villages of Lyulyakovo and Dobra Polyana;

Municipality of Sozopol – Temple Holy Martyr Mina – village of Atiya, Church Holy Virgin – town of Sozopol, Church Saint George the Victorious – town of Sozopol, Church Saint Zosim – town of Sozopol, Church St. St. Cyril and Methodius – town of Sozopol, Church Saint Nicholas – town of Chernomorets, Temple Saint Iliya – the village of Indzhe Voyvoda, Archeological Museum – Sozopol, Art Gallery (building of the old school) – Sozopol, Ethnographic Collection – Sozopol, House-Museum Aleksandar Mutafov – Sozopol, Chapel Saint Athanasius – Sozopol, Chapel Saint Marina Sozopol, Museum Collection Southern Castle Wall and Tower, Late Antique Fortress in Cape Akin in the locality of Akra, Middle Ages Christian Complex – Sozopol, Museum Collection Saint Nicholas town of Chernomorets, Monastery Saint John the Baptist on the island of Saint John, Temple Complex island of St. St. Kirik and Yulita, Monastery Complex Holy Apostles in Cape Skamniy, Chapel Saint Nicholas – Sozopol, Chapel Saint Nicholas Wonder Worker – Sozopol, Chapel Saint Dimitar – Sozopol, Chapel St. St. Constantine and Helena - Sozopol, Chapel Holy Virgin Magriotisa – Sozopol, Chapel Christ Savior – Sozopol, Chapel Saint John the Baptist – Sozopol, Chapel Saint John of Rila – Sozopol, Chapel Sveta Nedelya (Holy Sunday) Sozopol, Chapel Saint Panteleymon – Chernomorets, House of Marieta Stefanova – Sozopol, House of Kreanolou – Sozopol, House of Todor Zagorov – Sozopol, Chapel Saint

George – Sozopol, House of Kurtidi – a Thracian Khan – Sozopol, House of Dimitar Laskaridis – Sozopol;

Municipality of Sredets – National Archeological site Antique and Medieval Town of Deultum - village of Debelt, Ethnographic complex Karabunar's House – town of Sredets, Megalith Culture Strandzha Thracian sanctuary the Big Stone (natural landmark of 1973) – between the village of Dolno Yabalkovo and the village of Belevren, Dolmen in the locality of Lozyata (the Vineyards) – next to the village of Belevren, Dolmen in the locality Kiryakstoyanov's winter sheep-fold – the village of Belevren, Dolmen in the locality of Kashli (winter sheep-folds) – the village of Belevren, Dolmen in the locality of Korubata, the village of Kirovo, a pair of dolmens in the locality of Kapatsite the village of Granichar, a museum site Bail's House – the town of Sredets;

Municipality of Sungurlare – Museum collection of viticulture and wine;

Municipality of Tsarevo – Orthodox temple Saint Marina the village of Izgrev, fortress wall of Ahtopol, Greek school the town of Ahtopol, a monument the locality of Dalgata Polyana (the Long Meadow) - Tsarevo, field of Caspian pond turtle – locality of Nakovo Kladenche next to Ahtopol, Private ethnographic collection – the village of Balgari, Orthodox Temple Holy Ascension – Ahtopol, Museum History of the Anchor – Ahtopol, Museum of History – Tsarevo, Church Holy Assumption – district of Vasiliko, Tsarevo, the Statue Sea Lighthouse in the port of Michurin, Open Museum Ship Goryanin – Tsarevo, Church Saint Tsar Boris Michael – Tsarevo, Park Fountain – district of Vasiliko, Tsarevo, Monument Preobrazhentsi, town of Tsarevo, Church Saint Pantaleymon the village of Brodilovo, Thracian tomb locality of Holy Virgin, the village of Brodilovo, archeological excavations House of a Thracian Ruler locality of Pevtich, the village of Brodilovo, Chapel Saint Pantaleymon, the village of Brodilovo, Chapel Holy Virgin – at 3 km to the south of the village of Brodilovo, Chapel Saint Petka – the village of Brodilovo, Chapel St. St. Constantine and Helena – the village of Brodilovo, Chapel Saint Yani – at about 1,5 km from the village of Brodilovo in the northern direction, Botanical Garden Serafimovs – the village of Velika, Museum of Fire Dancing – the village of Balgari, reserve Silkosiya – between the villages of Balgari and Kosti, protected locality and eco-pathway Marina Reka – between the villages of Izgrev and Balgari, Big Mound Tumbata – in the locality of Shumyaka, to the south of the village of Balgari, Church St. St. Constantine and Helena – the village of Balgari, Chapel Saint Helena – the village of Balgari, Chapel Saint Iliya – at 1,5 km to the east of the village of Balgari, Chapel Holy Virgin – at 3 km to the north of the village of Balgari, Old Fortress Wall and ruins from basilica Gradishteto – at 4 km to the north of the village of Balgari, waterfall Skokat (the Jump) – at 5 km from the village of Velika, Orthodox Temple Saint Prophet Iliya – the village of Velika, Church St. St. Cyril and Methodius, the village of Kosti, Biosphere Reserve Uzunbodzhak – next to the village of Kosti, Strandzha Oak – locality of Saint Iliya the village of Kosti, cave Maharata – next to the village of Kosti, field of the plant heather – at 4 km to the northeast of

the village of Kosti, protected locality Kalkata – the village of Kosti, southeastern direction, beside the Veleka River (preservation of the nest of a couple of owls), Chapel Saint Petka – at 1 km to the north of the village of Kosti, Chapel Saint Kostadin – at about 1,5 km to the west of the village of Kosti, Chapel Saint Dimitar – at about 1 km to the west of the village of Kosti, Chapel Saint Iliya – at about 2 km to the west of the village of Kosti, Chapel Holy Virgin – at 3 km to the southeastern direction from the village of Kosti, the oldest beech tree in Strandzha 800 years old – the village of Kosti, above the locality of Holy Virgin, reserve Tisovitsa – next to the village of Kondolovo, ruins of fortress Marzovsko Kale – the village of Kondolovo, Chapel Saint Pantaleymon – at 1 km to the north of the village of Kondolovo, Chapel Saint Constantine – the village of Kondolovo, rock formation the Sphinx – the village of Sinemorets, the mouth of the Veleka River, the biggest chapel in Strandzha Sveta Petka – the village of Kondolovo, Orthodox Temple Saint George the village of Kondolovo, Orthodox Temple Saint John the Baptist, the village of Sinemorets, protected locality mouth of the Veleka River – the village of Sinemorets, seaside humid zone Silistar – next to the village of Sinemorets, archeological excavations Hellenistic grave - the village of Sinemorets, treasure of late Hellenistic coins – the village of Sinemorets, archeological excavations Thracian mound necropolis – locality of Selski Dol, the village of Rezovo, remains of fortress Kastritsion in Cape Kastrich – the village of Rezovo, bay Kastrich, Orthodox Temple Saint John the Baptist – the village of Rezovo, remarkable geological sites Popova Skala (Popov's Rock) – the village of Fazanovo, Orthodox Temple Saint Marina – the village of Fazanovo, sea beach Koral (Coral) – the village of Lozenets, architectural landmark the Cross of the fishermen's port in the village of Lozenets, Orthodox Temple Saint George, the village of Lozenets, Orthodox Temple Saint Varvara, the village of Varvara.

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11 Geographical location

Yambol District (NUTS3) involves 5 municipalities - Yambol, Bolyarovo, Elhovo, Straldzha and Tundzha. It is part of the Southeast planning region (NUTS2) in Bulgaria. The district borders with Burgas District, Sliven District, Stara Zagora District and Haskovo District. This creates opportunities for excellent regional cooperation and mutual transport and commercial connections.

The district is situated on a territory 3 335,5 sq. m, which comprises 3,1 % of the total area of the country. The administrative centre of the district is the city of Yambol. The population in the district is 131 447 inhabitants (2011). *It is located along the mid-Tundzha valley. The relief is flat and hilly with an average altitude of 100 – 150 m.*



Picture 7 Map of Yambol District

12 Socio-economic and demographic characteristics

The District includes 109 population centers - 105 villages and 4 towns. The towns of Yambol, Elhovo, Straldzha and Bolyarovo perform the functions of important economic, services, transport and municipal centers, respectively.

The future development of the economy in the District is based on the following advantages:

The project is co-funded by European Union through the Interreg-IPA CBC Bulgaria – Turkey Programme

- Moderate climate with average annual temperature above zero and the biggest number of days with sunshine in Bulgaria;
- Available qualified staff for agriculture and industry;
- Experience in the use of intensive plants-growing technologies;
- Up-to-date equipment for machine building industry;
- The border control point on the border with Turkey;
- Well developed technical infrastructure and clean environment;
- Vacant farming and industrial land and buildings at low prices;
- Recreation sites and historical sights for tourism located nearby.

A leading sector is the production of food and drinks. Large investments have been made in it and it is expected to develop still better in the future. The fixed tangible assets in the sector amount to BGL 41 696 000 - almost one fifth of the assets of the whole economy of the District. The second leading sector in the District economy is agriculture and forestry and the services related to them. 214 economic entities are involved in this sector.

Forthcoming is the implementation of the Strandzha - Sakar program for development of the rural areas in the Southeast Planning Region. The main activities will be organic farming, production of output from certified farming land, development of herb growing, vegetables growing and viniculture. Market-places for agricultural products are planned to be built. Construction is one of the most rapidly developing sectors in the recent years. It generates good profits, as well.

The forth leading sector of the economy in the District is the production of machinery, equipment and household appliances. All economic actors in this sector work at a profit, which illustrates its high efficiency. This sector is expected to acquire still greater importance for the economy of the District due to the relatively large number of persons it employs. There is specialization in the production of hydraulic cylinders and machines.

The largest number of economic entities, 1 431, operate in the retail trade sector. Although their number constitutes 39.5% of all economic actors, they do not have crucial influence on the economy.

13 Infrastructure, environment

On the territory of Yambol District there are 596 km of roads from the national road network: 96 km I class, 89 km II class and 411 km III class. A section of the Trakia Motorway with a length of 50 km was built several years ago.

Reconstructed and electrified is the railway line in the directions Sofia-Yambol-Burgas, which meets the international standards for transit traffic and provides high quality both for transport and tourism on the territory of Yambol region.



Picture 8 Road Network in Yambol District

14 Transport accessibility, mobile connections

Yambol District is crossed by the international transit route along the north-south transport parallel and the Black Sea coast. The road network guarantees access to the Republic of Turkey, the seaport and the civil airport of Bourgas. Trakia motorway passes through the region and links it with Sofia and Bourgas.

The distance from the potential tourist demand centers is 77 km from the Black Sea, south of the Sofia-Bourgas motorway. The distance from Yambol to the capital Sofia is 262 km, to Plovdiv 149 km, to Varna 141 km, to Bourgas 81 km. The nearest airports to Yambol are the airports in Bourgas, Plovdiv and Sofia.

The distance of Yambol to the main mountain resorts is as follows: Pamporovo (176 km), Borovets (240 km), Bansko (259 km).

The distance from the seaside resorts and Yambol is as follows: Sunny Beach (101 km), Golden Sands (155 km), Albena (162 km), Nessebar (102 km), Sozopol (99 km), Sinemorets (131 km), Pomorie (94 km), Primorsko (107 km), Balchik (171 km).

The distance from the spa resorts and Yambol is as follows: Velingrad (212 km), Sandanski (285 km), Hissarya (148 km), Pomorie (94 km), Pavel banya (106 km), Sapareva Banya (266 km), Banya - Plovdiv District (137 km).

The distance of Yambol from other tourist centers is as follows: Veliko Tarnovo (96 km), Kazanlak (91 km).

The external transport accessibility in Yambol area is possible via the road and railway network. The completion of road I-7, which connects with the Trakia motorway is favorable.

The area has a common border with the Republic of Turkey and is close to the Republic of Greece. The border crossing between Bulgaria and Turkey, opened in 2005, between Lesovo village (Elhovo municipality) and the village of Hamzabeyli has also positive influence. The highway south of Elhovo to the village of Granitovo - Lesovo - Turkey becomes part of the strategically important transport corridor, whereby the economic connections with the Yambol and Stara Planina passages (Varbishki, Kotlenski and Vratnik) with the North-East and North Central Planning Regions and between Turkey - Bulgaria - Romania in the direction of first-class road I-7.

The important road connecting the Maritsa River valley /Harmanli with the transport corridor № 9/ and the southern Black Sea coast /via the town of Bolyarovo to Sredets and Bourgas/ passes through the territory of Elhovo municipality and the distance of Route II-79 Elhovo-Burgas is 96 km.

Regarding the internal accessibility in the Yambol area there is developed a road network between the main settlements, the tourist sites and places in process of development.

15 Education in tourism

There are 127 state, municipal and private schools in the area. There are 20 230 students and 2 087 teachers. The current trend of pupils to drop and school closures will continue in the coming years. 40% of students are in technical specialties. Kindergartens are 48 with 3 700 children and 281 pedagogical staff. The building stock of state and municipal schools includes 106 schools with public municipal property and 19 state public ownership. There is no specialised training institution for tourism staff in the district.

16 Healthcare

There are 2 multiprofile hospitals for active treatment with over 500 beds, 7 medical centers, 132 doctors, 105 dental outpatients and 106 individual practices for primary medical care, 12 medical and 3 medical-diagnostic laboratories, 4 branches of the Emergency Medical Center and 64 pharmacies. Also there are District HEI, Home for medical and social care for children, 3 homes for the elderly people and 2 specialised for adults with mental retardation. There are 438 doctors registered in the RC of BMA, which is almost 3 doctors per 1000 inhabitants.

In the area there are traditions and successes in: basketball, sport shooting, boxing, wrestling, sports acrobatics, tennis, orienteering, athletics, sports dances, etc. Over 2 300 are competitors and over 50 are coaches. Diana Sports Hall has more than 2,300 seats and basketball, volleyball and other sports facilities; The sports complex G. Drajev has 7 tennis courts. There are sports facilities in the municipal centers, but they are not being used in full.

On the territory of Yambol municipality there are 34 sports clubs in 16 types of sports, including: weightlifting, volleyball, boxing, basketball, kickboxing, athletic style, athletics, karate, bodybuilding, badminton, tennis on the court, sports dances, hiking, orientation, chess, table tennis. The registered sports clubs in public benefit are 28 and in private benefit 4.

17 Analysis of tourism resources

17.1 Natural tourism resources

17.1.1 Relief

The territory of the area is occupied by the Mid-Tundja valley. The relief is flat-hilly with an altitude of 100-150 m. The predominant relief in the area is flat, with some of the hilly areas - Saint Ilias, the Monastery Heights (peak Gradishte - 600 meters), Bakadzhitsi (Assanbayr-515 meters above sea level) situated in the southern part of the region along the border with the Republic of Turkey - the Dervent Heights (Gurgenbayr - 555 m above sea level) and parts of Strandja.

The relief is mostly plain and semi-mountainous, it covers the Yambol field, the Elhovo field, the Bakadzhitsi hills, part of the Sakar Mountains, the Saint Ilias, the Monastery and the Dervent Heights. The largest river in the region is Tundja. The Malko Sharkovo Dam is built on the Popovska River. There are mineral springs in the village of Stefan Karadjovo, near the town of Straldzha and the village Pravdino.

17.1.2 Climate

The climatic conditions in the area are determined by its geographical location. Several climatic influences are interwoven on its territory, with most of all the transient continental climate typical of the Upper Thracian Plain. To a lesser degree is the influence of the Black Sea and the Mediterranean.

Regarding the temperature regime, the area is one of the warmest in the country. Average temperatures for the coldest month of January are between 0 ° C and 1.5 ° C. For the town of Yambol, the average January temperature is 0.2 oC, and for Elhovo 1.2oC, these differences for the coldest month clearly illustrate the differences between the transient continental and the

trans-Mediterranean climatic regions. The whole area falls to the south of the isotherm of 0 °C, which provides a long non-frost period and normal vegetation.

Summer is relatively hot and carries the scars of the continental climate. The average July temperature for the region is 23°C. The absolute maximum temperature is 44.4 °C. Autumn is prolonged and often warm, with an average temperature above 10°C lasting until 25.10 - 04.11.

The average annual precipitation is between 530mm and 700mm depending on local orography and exposure of the slopes. In recent years, with regard to precipitation, the picture is very unfavorable. Almost all months they are less than the norm, with the driest January and February. After temporary improvement of the rainfall conditions (April and May), there is again a relative drought in the summer.

17.1.3 Water

Water supplies in the area are limited. The fourth largest river in Bulgaria - Tundja - runs through the area. Its larger tributaries are Mochuritsa, Popovska, Kalnitsa. The Tundzha River is the main water resource. The town of Yambol is situated on the two banks of the river, which is divided into sleeves and forms islands. In the Tundzha River regime and its tributaries a common multi-stage phase is formed from November to April, during which 80-90% of the annual volume of runoff flows.

On the Popovska River near the village of Malko Sharkovo was built the second largest in the country dam with earth embankment wall - "Malko Sharkovo".

Mineral springs are located near Stefan Karadzhovo, Straldzha and Pravdino village. The healing qualities of the water near the village of Stefan Karadjovo are similar to those of Karlovy Vary - the Czech Republic and of Kislovodsk - Russia. Its qualities and flow allow the development of balneological tourism. There are two thermal deposits on the territory of the region. One is near the village of Stefan Karadzhovo, where springs of mineral water are pumped at a flow rate of 13 liters / sec. The water is hydro-carbonate (calcium-magnesium) mineralization. There is a balneological sanatorium built there in 1978, with a capacity of 240 beds. A polyclinic has been built next to it, and there are various offices for diagnosis and treatment. The base is not currently in use. The region of Straldzha municipality is rich in mineral waters. Mineral springs are located in Straldzha and Pravdino village. In the area of Straldzha there are 5 drillings with a total flow rate of 24 l / s and temperature of 31 to 71 °C. The mineral waters have proven properties for the treatment of gastrointestinal, liver, bile diseases, gout, diabetes and others. Despite the fact that the waters were discovered in 1967, so far they are not used for the purpose and there is no base for balneotherapy.

In the town of Yambol in the 1930s the discovery of thermal mineral water, which is captured in a shaft well in the bath, was announced. The temperature of the water is measured in the range of 15 ° C - 29 ° C. Water refers to the comparatively rarely used nitrate water class. The question of the presence and importance of mineral water has not found a clear solution. Water contamination with nitrites and ammonia has been identified. It is probably due to the shallow seepage and abundance of septic tanks around the first half of the last century. The attempts made by the former Geological Survey - Yambol with drillings to find a deeper thermomineral manifestation in the beginning of the 70s, have not succeeded.

17.1.4 Vegetation and wildlife

Flora. Forest resources are represented by shrub ecosystems, which are formed from oak, hornbeam, dragon, etc. Floating terraces and coastal lands of the rivers reveal mixed ecosystems of ash, elm, hornbeam, willows and poplars. Along the Tundzha river there are preserved dense river forests, called ormani. The most common wood species in the woods are summer oak, acrostic / lingo / ash and polish elm. Pure plantations of these species are not found. Almost everywhere, the acorn ashes come together with a white willow. The summer oak also occurs with other species, mostly elm, soft maple, single specimens and oak. The most common lianas are a fairy tale and a shelter that cover not only the underworld and make the forest difficult to walk but climb to the tops of tall trees. As a second floor in the forest are the hawthorn, hawthorn, hip, elder, bird, Turkish and common hazel, and often on the second floor there are also the species of mackerel and maple. From the herbaceous plants that form the podole are found snowdrop, lily of the valley, teal teal, blue, turmeric butchery, violet, garbanese onion. In the swampy places in the spring there is also a marsh snowdrop. In the old beds of the Tundzha River and where the water lasts longer, the water vegetation - deciduous and narrow-leaved patrimon, stone, reed, jouka, water claw, marshmallow, verbena is developed.

The forest fund covers 15.5% of the area and is managed by two structures. The state game breeding station Yambol covers the municipalities of Straldzha and Tundzha. The total area of the forest fund, serviced by Yambol State Game Breeding Station, is 22,262 ha, the state is 73.8%, the private is 10.1% and the municipal is 16.1%. Tree species are black pine, black oak, cherry, acacia, hornbeam, poplar. In addition to wood, mushrooms, fruit and herbs are harvested in the forests, in part of them there is grazing of large and small cattle. There are eight hunting complexes. A State game breeding station was established, which will be the basis for the development of the hunting tourism - red deer, deer deer, pheasants, wild boar, Thracian cricket. Elhovo State Forestry comprises the municipalities of Elhovo and Bolyarovo. The municipality of Elhovo covers an area of 70 171,1 ha, of which 13 991,3 ha are forests - 19,9% forestry. Tree species - conifers - black pine, atlas cedar; deciduous-red oak, summer oak, oak, oak, elm, acacia, ailand, walnut, poplar, quinar, lime, etc.

The project is co-funded by European Union through the Interreg-IPA CBC Bulgaria – Turkey Programme

Fauna. The animal world is also diverse. According to the zoogeographical division of the country, the territory falls within the Thracian region of the Southern Geographic Sub-Area and in the hunting economy it is located entirely in the Hunting Region of the Thracian Lowland and the Sub-Balkan Fields. The large area as well as the rich vegetation determine the great diversity of species. The important representatives of the fauna who live permanently or temporarily in the territory and which have a direct or indirect significance for the hunting farm of the mammalian class, the order of the cloven-hoof species are deer fallow, roe deer; from the order of rabbits - rabbit; from predatory predators - jackal, wild cat, fox; of class Birds in the order of cows - Colchic pheasant, partridge, Thracian cedar; in the order of pigeons - pigeon, turtle, turtle; from a variety of mushrooms - mozzarella, winter morsels and summer morsels. The richness of the flora and fauna in the area is the basis for the development of ecological and hunting tourism.

For preservation of the natural resources they are declared reserves - "Gorna Topchia", "Dolna Topchia" and "Balabana". Besides forest, the grassy vegetation is varied. The marsh, which is of great economic importance, is also found in other protected areas - "Ormana", "Blatoto" and others.

Protected areas

- "The Thick Coria" - a land of the village of Tenevo. Declared by Order No. 503 of 08.07.1980 of the CPSP with the Council of Ministers - for the preservation of the natural ash and elliptic forest and the characteristic landscape, with a total area of 29.3 ha.
- "The swamp" - land of the village of Palauzovo. Declared by Order No. 1938 of 03.07.1970 of the Ministry of Transport and Tourism - for preservation of the natural deposit of marsh snowdrop with a total area of 16 ha.
- "Ivanov göl" - "Ormana" area. Declared by Order No. 1938 of 03.07 1970 of the Ministry of Transport and Tourism - for the preservation of the natural deposit of marsh snowdrop with a total area of 30 ha, the municipality of Yambol
- "Tulipa splendens", land of the village of Simeonovo. Declared by Order 425 of 18.05.1987 for the preservation of the only field of shimmering tulip - Bulgarian endemic, in the area of Tetralica with a total area of 16.5 ha, Tundzha Municipality
- "Mrazovets" - "Ormana" area. Declared by Order No. 521 of 20.05. 1985 of the CPSP with the Council of Ministers - for preservation of the natural deposit of a glacier with a total area of 0.8 ha.
- "Veselinovska Gora" - Veselinovo village. Declared by Order No 357 of 09.02.73.
- "The Thick Coria" - a land of the village of Tenevo. Declared by Order No. 503 of 08.07.1980 of the CPSP with the Council of Ministers - for the preservation of the

natural ash and elliptic forest and the characteristic landscape, with a total area of 29.3 ha.

Natural Landmarks - Century Trees:

"Three oaks" - 3 pcs. centuries-old trees of summer oak located in the village of Konevets. Declared a Natural Landmark with Order and No. 754,755 of 19.07.1984 of the CPSP to the Council of Ministers.

Topal /Chatal Kavak/ in the area of Chadarliy - a land of the village of Tenevo, is a tree with impressive dimensions, the height of which is 27 m, the diameter of the chest height is 5.50 m. At an altitude of 5 m the terrain from the trunk comes out 5 branches and hence his name "Chatal Kavak". Each branch has a diameter of 0.50 m.

Reserves

"Gorna Topchia" Reserve is located in the village of Konevets, Tundzha municipality, Yambol district. By Order No. 1171 / 24.11.1951 the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry announced the area of 160.2 ha as a reserve for the purpose of "preserving natural dense forests and habitats of Colchis pheasant". The reserves "Dolna Topchia" and "Gorna Topchia" are bred and preserved from the disappearance of Colchids pheasant (the only natural deposit in the country, located in the Papazova coria locality) and maintain the characteristic vegetation. The appearance of the reserve gives the vegetation typical of the floodplain forests - the dwarfs. They are typical for the eastern part of the Balkan Peninsula. Their communities are built with the participation of a large number of Southwestern, Asian and Mediterranean species. Of the tree species, the largest oak is the participation of mixed oak forests, Polish ash, Polish maple, white poplar and other tree species. Characteristic mark of the dense forests are the lianas, represented in the reserve with 5 species: wild vines, ivy, vetch and the rare southern elements of *Smilax excelsa* and *Periploca graeca*. The shrub vegetation includes black elder, blackberries, blackberries, hips, red hawthorn, common dogwood, dogwood, amorph, etc. The grass cover is extremely varied and includes 113 established species. The population of *Leucojum aestivum* in the past has occupied extensive territory and has developed dynamically, but the species is now considered to be endangered.

Elements of relief, climatic features and the proximity of the Tundja River predispose to rich faunistic diversity. Of the invertebrates, three out of a total of 11 protected insect species have been identified. Big *Saturnia pyri* is the largest of our butterflies and reaches 12 cm. The red ant (*Formica rufa*) reaches 4 cm. length, makes large nests in the woods and destroys a significant number of harmful insects. *Calosoma sycophanta* is one of the rare Bulgarian species. The Herpetofauna is rich - yellowish-brown, big and green toad, tree, snake-eyed, green and

Crimean lizard, ordinary tortoise, tortoiseshell and tortoiseshell, yellow-haired and gray water snake. depending on the season, during migrations and hibernation, many species of high conservation status associated with the Tundja River - gray, big white and night-heron, little greyhound, dumb and penoy swan are here to eat and sleep. 10% of your world threatening population Pygmy Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pygmeus*) wintering in the area. Terns, woodpeckers, cuckoos, shrimps, owls, blueberries, thrushes, larks are breeding. Nowadays, despite the good conditions, the Pheasant Pheasant is rare for the Reserve. Its sharply reduced number is probably due to the intensification of pastoralism and the increased number of predators.

The mammal fauna includes 35 species, of which 20 are included in the Berne Convention for the Conservation of European Wildlife and Flora. In Bulgarian and European Red Books the otter (*Lutra lutra*) is included.

"Dolna Topchia" Reserve is situated along the Tundzha River near the town of Elhovo on an area of about 538 ha. It was announced in 1960. in order to preserve the only colony pheasant field in Bulgaria. In the reserve there is a pheasantry for growing small pheasants, which are then displaced at appropriate places throughout the country. In addition to the Colchid pheasant, several species of herons nest in the reserve: gray, night, grivest, small and white, as well as brilliant ibis and many other species of birds - bones, thrushes, starlings, owls, owls; The mammals meet - fox, jackal, rabbit, wild boar, deer-deer. The combination of a relatively high average annual temperature with high humidity is a prerequisite for shaping a habitat type. The Valley of the Tundja River is a kind of corridor for the penetration of Mederan and Pre-Asian invertebrate species. Protected by the Protected Areas are: the red forest ant, the common caterpillar, the big blue runner, the big night peacock eye. The territory is inhabited by 7 species of amphibians and reptiles. Of these 10 species are protected under the CPA. There are 102 species of birds, 82 of which are protected by the CPA. Here nests a pair of the following protected species: black kite, big hawk, little spotted eagle. During migrations and wintering, the following species are resting, sleeping and eating the following species: Hedgehog, Hawthorn Hawk, Cross Eagle, Little Eagle, Falcon Falcon and Falcon Falcon. With the exception of the localities in Greece and elsewhere in Europe, the Colchian pheasant has crossed with imported pheasants. The mammal fauna includes 35 species, of which 6 species are protected under the Law for protected areas. The otter is included in the Bulgarian Red Book. The group of small and carnivorous mammals are representative of the region's diversity.

The "Balabana" Reserve is a protected site dated 24. 09. 1961, located on an area of 84.7 ha in the centuries-old dense forests near the town of Elhovo. It presents a flood-type lofoten forest, located on the left bank of the Tundzha River. It was designed to preserve the nests of one of the few colonies of a small white-bearded and night-heron. In the "Balabana" reserve nests are

white, grivest, night and red herons. Besides heron nests there are also nests of brilliant ibis and Colchis pheasant. In 1984 a buffer zone of 60 hectares was declared. The Balabana Protected Area has identified 99 species of birds that use the area for nesting, hunting and resting during migrations. Of these, 83 species are protected by the BDA, 18 species are included in the Red Data Book of the Republic of Bulgaria. Of these, 17 are classified as endangered and 1 species falls into a category - rare. The territory of the reserve is inhabited by more than 7 species of amphibians and 13 reptile species. Of these, 10 species are protected by the BDA and all of them are included in the Berne Convention. The mammal fauna includes 35 species, 6 of which are protected by the BDA, and 20 are included in the Berne Convention.

The main conclusion is that the territory of Yambol District is characterized by a great floristic and faunistic diversity. The considerable biodiversity of protected areas represents a serious natural tourism resource for the development of cognitive tourism in the municipality. Specific measures are needed for its rational use.

Opportunities for recreation and healing tourism offer the chalets and complexes of Bakadjik Peak. The air there has been rated as a healing remedy for lung diseases since the Russian doctors more than 150 years ago. Unique are the natural resources in the reserves Balabana, Gorna and Dolna Topchia around Elhovo. The mineral springs in Straldzha (hot water) and Stefan Karadjovo (suitable for sanatorium treatment) are well-known. Hunting tourism is practiced along the Tundja. The river offers opportunities for cross-country boating among rich vegetation and beautiful scenery. Rural tourism is still to be developed.

The Tundzha river provides opportunities for river tourism with 3 routes and passing through the reserves Balabana and Gorna and Dolna Topchia. Ormana area by the Tundja River, 5 km from the city. In the reserve there is a pheasantry and a field of marsh snowdrop.

In Yambol there is no developed traditional tourism, but there are undoubtedly conditions for the development of cultural and specialized, recreational tourism. The area is an ecologically clean area without major pollutants, with favorable natural and anthropogenic tourist resources. Unique are the natural resources in the reserves Balabana, Gorna and Dolna Topchiya around Elhovo - hunting and ecotourism sites. The river offers opportunities for mid-water boating among rich dense vegetation and beautiful scenery. Unique in its picturesque nature is the Srem Gorge, where the Tundzha River separates Strandzha and Sakar Mountains - the Elhovo Municipality and the Tundzha Municipality. Protected areas on the territory of the Yambol region are "Fat Coria", "Mlato", "Ivanov gol" - "Ormana", "Blesting Lale", "Mrazovets" - Ormana, Veselinovska Forest - Dranci hole - Melnitsa village.

- Tundzha River City Park and the Borovets Hill - two natural and beautiful parks in the town of Yambol.

- Ormana area by the Tundja River, 5 km from the city
- the low mountain region of Bakadjitsite - a wonderful tourist destination with deciduous forests, historical sights and healing air as a result of the Aegean currents. The air there has been rated as a healing remedy for lung diseases since the Russian doctors more than 150 years ago.

17.2 Tourism and cultural and historical heritage

17.2.1 Cultural heritage

More than 270 ancient settlements and about 1,000 tombs, most of which are located along the Tundja River and its tributaries, have been found in the region.

The fertile lands of the river valley have been inhabited since ancient times. The earliest remains of urban life are found in the dozens of prehistoric settlement mounds dating back to Neolithic, Eneolithic and Bronze Age. Some of the finds found in them are now stored in the Paris Louvre and the Archaeological Museum of Sofia. However, a huge part of these valuable exhibits are owned by the Historical Museum in Yambol. Extensive discoveries were made by a Bulgarian-German team during the archaeological excavations of the prehistoric mound near the village of Drama (30 km from Yambol). For the first time in Bulgaria, fragments of Mycenaean ceramics and clay stamps were discovered, etc. "linear letter B"

In the region of Yambol, in the area of Sakar Mountain, is the highest concentration of megalithic monuments - dolmens (prehistoric tombs built of huge stone blocks). They can still be seen near the villages of Hlyabovo, Sakarci, Bulgarian meadow and others. The most famous ancient site in the area is the Thracian town of Kabile (near the village of Kabile). More than 30 strongholds from the Antiquity and Middle Ages have been discovered to protect the southern border.

Many historical sites are reminiscent of the struggle for the liberation of the Bulgarian people against Ottoman slavery. After the liberation of Bulgaria in 1878, Yambol and the region remained in Eastern Rumelia, the vassal province of the Ottoman Empire. After the unification of Eastern Rumelia with the Principality of Bulgaria in 1885, the region was completely liberated.

Here are preserved many ancient traditions, rituals and crafts, which can be seen during the many folk festivals, concerts and concerts. Yambol region is also famous for its red wines.

In the outskirts of the modern city of Yambol there was an ancient settlement, and it was supposed that in 293 the Emperor Diocletian, passing through it, gave it the name of Diospolis (the city of Zeus). The first written data about the city dates from the 6th century, and curious

information about it is contained in Byzantine, Arabic and Ottoman chronicles. Part of the impressive fortress walls and towers of medieval Yambol are still preserved.

Yambol is one of the oldest cities not only in Bulgaria but also in Europe. Data about life around the city dates back to the 6th millennium BC. Near the town is the large Thracian settlement named Kabile, which is an important fortress in the state of Philip of Macedon and flourished in Roman times until the invasion of the Goths, which destroyed it in 378. Coins were minted in Kabyle, crafts and trade were developed.

In 293, Roman Emperor Diocletian crossed the valley of the Tundja River and the ancient settlement on the territory of today's Yambol is called Diospolis, the city of Zeus. Its important strategic position makes it always desirable, both by the Bulgarian and the Byzantine rulers.

The medieval chroniclers mention the city with the names of Diapolis, Yampolis, and others. In an inscription from the time of the Bulgarian Tsar Ivan Alexander, the town is called Dabililino. In the Middle Ages Yambol is an important fortress in the Bulgarian state.

In 1373, after a long siege, the medieval Yambol fortress fell under the Ottoman Turks. During the Ottoman domination of the city there was a busy trade in cereals, leather, wool, tallow, honey, cocoons, rice, cheese, cattle that were sent to Edirne and Constantinople. For centuries, in the center of Yambol was built the large covered market "Besistena", for which in 1667 the Turkish voyager Evlia Chelebi said: "There is ... a solid Bezisten with four iron doors. Such a lively and ornate Bezisten in no other country. All precious things are in him in abundance and priceless".

The "Salt Path" passed from Anhialo to Plovdiv. In the Bulgarian neighborhood of Kargona was the big craft and the market. In Kargona are built two church temples "Holy Trinity" and "St.Georgi", to which a bell tower built 36 meters high. Yambol has given many voivods and haidouts who took part in the liberation wars.

Already in 1875 the town was connected to the railway line through Nova Zagora with Zlaty dol and Marichina lowland, and in 1890 the line was continued to Bourgas. It has a positive impact on the economic development of the city for the export of many products through the growing port of Burgas.

In 1884 the city numbered 10 771 inhabitants, in 2003 there were registered 80 315 inhabitants by permanent address. In time Yambol develops as an industrial center, a center of a rich agricultural area, an important transport node, a cultural and educational center. Yambol is permanently present on the cultural map of Bulgaria. Already in 1862 in the town was founded Chitalishte "Saglasie" and a library. In 1921, a theater "Modern Theater" was built. In 1949, the

State Drama Theater was established, bearing today the name of the great Bulgarian actress Nevena Kokanova, and in 1957 the State Puppet Theater. In 1967 Yambol Choir School "Prof. Dimitrov Dimitrov" was established, which celebrated our city all over Europe. In the city are also present the chamber ensemble "Dianopolis", the choir "Gusla", the wind orchestra, the folk ensemble "Tundja"

MONUMENTS OF CULTURE

There are objects of cultural, historical and other significance in the area that would be of interest to organized tourists from the country and abroad and are a very good prerequisite for the development of cultural and cognitive tourism:

Bezistena in Yambol city was built in the second half of 15 c. in the center of today's Yambol city. It is the only building of this type in Bulgaria and is one of the most interesting and well preserved monuments of 15 c. It gives the specific image of Yambol city and is one of its symbols. Bezistena was restored in 1970 - 1973 in an appearance quite similar to the original one and has been adapted to the environment in the modern city;

Eski ("the old") Mosque stands in the center of Yambol city. It was built in the 1420-s and restored in the 1970-s; today Eski Mosque is one of the most impressive buildings in the city. It is operational and one of the largest in Bulgaria.

The Saint Holy Trinity Church is in Kargona suburb. It was built probably in 17 c. and the only material monument evidencing its existence is a silver discus of 1692, which is kept in the Yambol Historical Museum. During the Renaissance a monastery school was opened at the church.

The Saint George church is in Kargona suburb, too. It has been put on fire several times, but restored every time. Today it is impressive with the exquisite iconostasis with several preserved icons of 18 c. and its high belfry. The Saint Nicola church is in the central part of Yambol city. It was built in 1888.

The medieval Yambol fortress is situated in the western part of the city. The fortress wall was built in the late 10 c., and it was several times altered and extended between 12 and 14 c. Nowadays a considerable part of the Yambol medieval fortress has been studied and conserved and is open for visitors. It is the only archeological monument of the Middle Ages.

National Kabile Archeological Reserve - 6 km north of the city. In it are the ruins of the ancient Thracian town of Kabile - economic, cultural and political center of ancient Thrace. The ruins are impressive. Since 1972 regular archeological excavations have been conducted there. The visitors to the reserve can see the ruins of Kabile one of the most significant antique Thracian

cities on the territory of today's Bulgaria; it has a museum of area 960 sq.m showing a standing exhibition with exhibits representing the historical development of the antique city. There is a conference room with 60 seats at the museum, where scientific symposia, conferences and others are held.

Historical museum with nearly 100 000 exhibits - historical and ethnographic materials presenting the history of the region from ancient times to the present day, including the rich coin collections and exhibits from the prehistoric village "Drama".

The **Art gallery**, named after the world-famous Yambol painter George Papazov, has the works of the greatest Bulgarian artists and over 200 unique icons from the past.

Medieval Yambol Fortress, located in the western part of Yambol, in the yard and the area around the Mechanical Engineering School. The fortress wall was built at the end of the 10th century and was repeatedly rebuilt and enlarged in the 12th - 14th centuries. Now a significant part of Yambol's medieval fortress has been studied, preserved and accessible for visitors. It is the only archaeological monument on the territory of the town of Yambol from the Middle Ages and is of interest to all those who are interested in medieval Bulgarian history.

The diverse ethnographic heritage of Elhovo Municipality and the whole Strandzha-Sakar region is studied, preserved and promoted by the Specialized **Ethnographic Museum of Elhovo**.

Bolyarovo Municipality is the crossroad of ancient civilizations, where ethnic-cultural processes have taken place moving from the northwest (the Balkan Peninsula, Middle and Western Europe) towards the southeast (Asia Mina and the Near East) and in the opposite direction. These processes predetermine the specificity, diversity and wealth of the cultural historical heritage in the area. 14 archeological sites have been discovered, as well as 5 ancient churches and 5 fortresses, which are evidences of the long and verified years of history. Other sights are the monument to Stefan Karadzha in Stefan Karadzohovo village; the archeological excavations near Voden village. Traces of Thracian settlements have been discovered in the land of the villages of Kraynovo, Iglia, Popovo, Dennitsa and Kamen Vrah. Remains of ancient mining developments in the Trofalishki Douпки locality exist.

On the Popovska River (a tributary to the Toundzha River) near **Malko Sharkovo** Village is the second largest dam lake in Bulgaria; it has a soil embankment and is of 55 million cubic meters maximum capacity. The nature around Malko Sharkovo Dam Lake is conducive to recreation and tourism, as well as sports fishing with the participation of amateur fishermen every year as a tradition. The rowing facilities have to be recovered. The lodges and resort complexes on the Bakadzhik Mount offer attractive opportunities for recreation and healing. Technical air at this mount was studied and defined as suitable for treatment of lung diseases as early as 150 years

ago by Russian medical doctors. The mineral water in Straldzha and Stefan Stambolovo is quite famous.

Astronomical Observatory and Planetarium – ***the*** only one in Southeastern Bulgaria. He works on curricula that are directly related to the learning process in the natural sciences.

17.2.2 Temples, monasteries, religious and archaeological sites

The monasteries and churches in the area have an old history. Legends speak of the Ustrem (Vaakha) monastery with the Kara-Kolyuvi hoops (known as the center of haidutry in the 18th century), the cave of Indzhe voivoda to the Alexander Nevsky Temple of Bakadzhika, built on the site of the monastery " . Spas. " (The oldest in the city - from the 17th century), St. George (from the middle of the 18th century, with a school of fire burnt down during the retreat of the Turkish troops and restored in 1882) and St. Nicholas the Wonderworker have unique architectural details and iconostases. Object of healing tourism is the Monastery of Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God. The second largest in Bulgaria Eski Mosque, built after the fall of Yambol under Turkish rule (in the summer of 1373), was restored in its original form. There is also a Catholic Church, a Synagogue (now a gallery) and others.

With the reconstruction of the building of the Mineral Bath - a monument of culture, and the relocation of the museum exhibits in it will provide a suitable environment for the historical relics.

17.2.3 Cultural activities and events, festivities - Traditions, customs and crafts

The cultural institutions in the area are of national importance. The Historical Museum and the National Kabile Archeological Reserve store unique objects from the over 700 local and tombstone mounds and over 300 prehistoric sites in the area. The Drama Theater "N. Kokanova "has over 55 years of creative history. The State Puppet Theater hosts the National Puppet Theater Festival "M. Lakatnik ". The ethnographic museum in Elhovo and the engraving collections preserve the beauty and richness of the local lifestyle. In the Art Gallery "G. Papazov "exhibits the works of the most famous Bulgarian artists, the richest collection of decorative works and hundreds of unique icons. Choir School "Prof. G. Dimitrov, Dianopolis Chamber Ensemble and the Tundja Folk Songs and Dance Ensemble have European fame and awards. Chitalishte - a total of 78 in the area, develop public activities and preserve the folklore traditions.

The Yambol choirs and instrumental ensembles, as well as individual performers, occupy a place in the musical treasury of Bulgaria. The Children Choir School was founded 30 years ago and has won international awards from Belgium, Slovenia, France and Turkey. The Musical Theater "Prof. Dragan Kardzhiev "has made 75 premieres in his 75-year history. As a worthy representative of the musical culture can be arranged: Gusla Singing Society, Children's Violin

The project is co-funded by European Union through the Interreg-IPA CBC Bulgaria – Turkey

Programme

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Orchestra, Yambol Brass Orchestra. Since its inception in 1954, the Thracian ensemble has been the winner of the traditional beauty of the Bulgarian folk dance and the Bulgarian folk song.

The annual traditional cultural festivals and festivals of national importance and with international participation are:

- Masquerade Festival - Yambol;
- Children's Feasts "Rodilo was reborn" - a competition for performers of folk songs, instrumentalists, dances, rituals, customs;
- From Cottnitsa to Gergauvden - spring celebration - competitions for authentic custom, costume and ritual bread;
- Contest for individual performers - General Inzovo;
- Celebration of the Thracian folk song and the orchestral folk music in the name of Stoyan Gagov;
- National Puppet Theater Festival "Mihail Lakatnik";
- Contest - Singing "With the songs of Valkana Stoyanova" in Marash, Straldzha;
- Traditional folk fair "Marash Pee" - Straldzha;
- Musical Feasts "Golden Diana";
- National Thracian Christian Fair "Spasov Day" - "Bakadzhik" Area;
- Toundzha Folk Folk Song and Dance - Elhovo;
- Festival of the city of Yambol - "Holy Trinity" People's Council - every year of "Holy Spirit";
- Children's folklore fair "Varbova whistle plays" Bolyarovo;
- Theatrical feasts "Nevena Kokanova" Drama Theater Yambol;
- Thracian rhythms - Festival of amateur art - "Bakadzhik" Forest Park;
- National Thracian Fair "Thracian Memory Day" - a solemn panahid in memory of the tragically died in 1913 Bulgarians from Aegean Thrace;
- International Symposium "Urban life in Thrace" - National Kabile Archeological Reserve;
- Christmas and Survakian Holidays - Yambol.

Cultural Traditions

Trifon Zarezan People's Day - The holiday adheres to established centuries-old folk traditions and begins with a festive procession in the streets of the city with horse-drawn carts celebrated festively. With songs and dances, headed by the newly perfected King of Wine, the participants in the holiday - folk groups, musicians, citizens go to the house of the King of Wine, the ritual "planting a vineyard" takes place. The joyful celebration continues with a program of folklore groups and individual performers, with wine tasting of different farmers from the neighborhood, with festive people.

Todorovden People's Day - Todorovska Kushiya - In the Belyanka area, at the end of the city, attractive horse races are held: horse races, horse racing races, contests for the most beautiful horse, the most attractive rider, and more. The winners in the different categories of the competition are provided with cash and prizes.

People's Day "Lazarovden" - Young ladies, dressed in beautiful folklore costumes and wreaths of flowers on their heads, go to the houses, play the beautiful lasers bouenac, led by their chosen dog, and perform authentic Lazarus songs for the well-being and prosperity of the home has accepted them. The hosts donate them with eggs, with ritual loaves.

Easter Day - An open-air folklore program with the participation of professional or amateur teams and formations from Yambol or specially invited performers from the country is presented in an open square area. The program traditionally ends with a great Easter horo, which captures all participants and spectators to be healthy throughout the year.

People's Day "Gergyovden" - On the right places are tied to St. George's swings, which traditionally the bells swing the girls. The pear-colored leaves and spring greenery swings sway for health and anyone who wants. The festive joy continues with a folklore program and lots of dancing, joy and teaser.

People's Day "Holy Spirit" and Folk Festival "Holy Trinity" - The gathering is an invariable and attractive part of the Day of Yambol, which is always celebrated on the Christian holiday of the Holy Spirit, and has traditionally been held for centuries in the Cargon neighborhood. The main moments of the gathering are the sanctification and distribution of kurban for health, festive folklore program and folk struggles.

Christmas Day "Christmas" - Christmas Eve - Christmas groups from the two neighborhood chitalishte - "Probuda" and "Zora" on Christmas Eve - December 24, visit the homes and with Christmas songs and songs bless the whole family for health and well-being. The hosts donate them with ritual loaves and gifts from their Christmas table.

Day of Yambol - The Day of Yambol is celebrated on the Christian holiday Holy Spirit. For the first time, the celebration of Yambol was celebrated in 1936 with "Host-Week" from May 17th to 24th. It is at the suggestion of the mayor of the town Apostol Petrov, deputy Nikola Savov and prominent cultural figures Kiril Krastev, Nedyalko Meschekov, Lyubomir Brutov and Totyu Brannekov. Their idea is to show Yambol industrial, craft and agricultural production this week, as well as the works of Yambol artists - artists, writers, musicians, scientists.

On June 7, 1993 - Holy Spirit, the year in which the 1700th anniversary of the mention of a written source about the existence of the city is celebrated, the official celebration of the Day

of Yambol is renewed. The Christian Day of the Holy Spirit is chosen as the Day of Yambol in order to observe the centuries-old tradition connected with the temple celebration of the Holy Trinity. On this day for decades, after the mass service in the Holy Trinity Church, the Metropolitan of Sliven opens with a ceremony and a feast the Yambol Council, accompanied by livestock markets, agricultural and light industrial products. Celebrations are accompanied by a lot of music and fun, which are transferred to the city park in the evening. Along with the folk orchestras, there are the city and military wind orchestras, struggles and so on ... This wonderful tradition is kept today, updated and filled with new content.

Masquerade Festival - The Masquerade Festival is linked to the popular Kukerov Day, which is a centuries-old tradition in the Yambol region. The masquerade festival has a competitive character and it includes masquerade groups from all over the country, presenting the diversity of the Bulgarian winter and spring celebrations of the masked games / kukeri, jamali, babueri, old people, brasa and others. With the magical dance they perform, young masked men drive away evil powers and make spells of fertility and well-being.

Children's folklore festival "Born, reborn" - The Children's Folklore Festival "Rodilo, reborn" takes place under the slogan "Singing and Dance Together" and aims children from different ethnic groups to show the cultural wealth of their ethnicity. The festival is of a competitive nature and includes: first stage - exhibiting an exhibition of ethnographic materials, ritual requisition, applied materials made by children, written sources related to the folklore of the ethnic groups; second stage - a competition for performers of folk songs, instrumentalists, dancing, rituals, customs.

National Puppet Theater Festival "Mihail Lakatnik" - The National Puppet Theater Festival "Mihail Lakatnik" with international participation is organized in the town of Yambol by the Ministry of Culture, National Theater Center, Yambol Municipality, Tundja Municipality, Union of Bulgarian Artists, Puppet Theater - Yambol, Writers' Yambol.

The National Puppet Theater Festival "Mihail Lakatnik" aims to create and put on stage new dramatic plays for puppet theater. The festival is held in a year in the last week of April. They have two directions: (i) Literary contest for writing a play - a fairy tale for a puppet theater; (ii) Review of the performances performed in the previous theatrical season.

Fair of tourist entertainment and animations - It is held for the first time in 2010 in the framework of the International Museum Holiday - May 18 and the Council of Europe announced the Night of Museums May 15, jointly by the Yambol Regional History Museum and the Municipality of Yambol. Among the main goals of the fair are the popularization of NAB "Kabile" as an object of cultural tourism, presentation of the capacities of NAB "Kabile" to attract guests and tourists for recreation and entertainment; the participation of teams and

individual performers who create and realize a recreational or cognitive product for tourists as well as direct contact between RIM - Yambol, the representatives of the tourist business and the users of tourist services and products. In 2010, the main highlights are cultural tourism, alternative tourism, musical and artistic performances, folklore appearances and ecotourism. The program includes the free entrance of NAB Kabile, the performances of Chigot Association - Varna and representatives of the Sila - Ancient and Medieval Reconstruction Association - Plovdiv. As part of the attractions, craftsmanship, scissors, tailoring, armor knitting, herbs, etc., as well as the opportunity for visitors to watch and / or participate in a demonstration or archery tournament, shooting with a medieval slingshot, copy, fencing, pulling rope and more. The fair is a great interest and visits (over 2000) at local and regional level with potential for future expansion and popularization.

Musical Feasts "Golden Diana" - The Golden Diana Musical Feasts have been held in Yambol since 1968. Chamber ensembles from Bulgaria and abroad take part in them. Instrumental chamber compositions, chamber orchestras, chamber choirs are presented. Scientific conferences on topical musical themes are held during the holidays. The festivities are of a competitive nature. Celebrations are awarded the Yambol Award for Music, which is awarded a musician or a musical formation that has contributed to the development of the city's musical culture.

Theatrical Feasts "Nevena Kokanova" - The first edition of the theatrical feasts was in 1962 under the name "Yambol Spring". After a few interruptions, the holidays were restored in 2004 as the "Nevena Kokanova" Theatrical Feasts. During the celebrations in Yambol, the best theatrical performances for the creative season from all over the country are celebrated, and in different theatrical competitions, directors, actors, scenographers, creative meetings take place.

Feast of the Thracian Folk Song and Orchestral Folk Music in the Name of Stoyan Gagov - The festival features amateur singing folk formations and folk orchestras from Southeastern Bulgaria.

Folk Thracian Christian Fair "Spasovden"

Contest for performers of folk songs and dances - Amateur groups and individual performers from all over the country participate.

Christmas and Survakar Dances of the Dance Art - Competition for Youth Dance Groups

Contest for performers of folk songs and dances - Amateur groups and individual performers from all over the country participate.

National Christmas Holiday

Contest for ritual, singing, children and dance clubs - Koledari groups from all over the country participate.

17.2.4 Galleries, museums, historical landmarks, arts and crafts centers, cultural institutions

Museums

Historical Museum of Yambol (website: <http://www.yambolmuseum.com/>) - The museum was founded in 1952. It has the following specialized departments: Archeology, Bulgarian lands XV-XIX century, New and new history, Public relations and Restoration. Funds: prehistory - 4,000 exhibits; antiquity - 2,600 exhibits; Middle Ages - 1,600 exhibits; numismatics - 6,200 exhibits; Renaissance - 3 050 exhibits; ethnography - 4,500 exhibits; a new story - 15,000 exhibits; the most recent story - 15 000 exhibits. Expositions: 115 years of musical work and 50 years. Historical Museum - Yambol NAB "Kabile" - Architectural Exhibition

National archaeological reserve "Kabile" - It is located 6 km north of the city. In it are the ruins of the ancient Thracian town of Kabile - economic, cultural and political center of ancient Thrace. The visitors of the reserve can see the ruins of Kabile - one of the most significant ancient Thracian towns on the territory of today's Bulgaria, which existed until the Middle Ages. NAB "Kabile" also has its own museum, where on an area of 960 m² is settled a permanent exhibition, reflecting the historical development of the ancient city. The museum also has a lecture hall with 60 seats for conducting scientific symposia, conferences and congresses in archeology;

Ethnographic museum - the village of Zimnitsa (Straldzha municipality) - The museum was opened in 1994. on the initiative of the local patriot Yordan Banchev and thanks to the support and donations of the inhabitants of the village of Zimnitsa. And it exists under the auspices of Chitalishte "Vazrazhdane" village of Zimnitsa. Expositions: Includes mainly ethnographic exposition: with agricultural equipment, household items and jewelry and costumes from the past of the village of Zimnitsa.

Ethnographic Museum Collection - Bolyarovo (Bolyarovo Municipality) - It was opened on 7.09.1980. The exposition shows the typical country house and courtyard from the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the XX century. Expositions: The bits of the people of the late 19th and early 20th century.

"Stefan Karadzha" Museum House - Stefan Karadjovo Village (Bolyarovo Municipality) - It was established in 1975. It represents the restoration of the local environment of the time that Stefan Karadzha lived. Exposures: farm equipment, weaving loom and domestic environment

Ethnographic Archaeological Museum - Elhovo (Elhovo Municipality) - The museum was established in 1958. Specialized departments: "Agriculture and Livestock", "Transport, Hunting and Fishing", "Clothing and Decorations", "Fabrics and Embroidery", "Housing and Housing", "Traditional Crafts", "spiritual culture, customs and folklore". Fonds: documentary and photoarchives, original documents and photographs related to the development of this end of the Liberation to this day - 8 000 exhibits. More than 20,100 exhibits are stored in the museum's stock, 13,700 of which are the main museum fund. The museum exposition is situated on an area of 244 square meters. in 4 halls, the ethnographic part of the exposition is preceded by a brief introduction to the historical past of Elhovo. The museum is included in the 100 tourist sites of Bulgaria. It has one of the richest ethnographic expositions in the country with examples of the folk crafts and costumes of Bulgarians - immigrants from Belomorska Thrace, Lozengrad and Odrin.

State cultural institutions

Dramatic Theater "Nevena Kokanova" - The theater is housed in the building of the "Saglasie" Chitalishte and has a hall with 333 seats, a stage, a lighting cabin, a sound cab, a wardrobe, a requisition, a warehouse, a rehearsal hall and its own transport. Drama Theater Nevena Kokanova and Dianopolis Chamber Orchestra are organizers of Golden Diana National Holidays.

State Puppet Theater "Mihail Lakatnik" - The puppet theater performs 5 to 7 premieres per season, played in over 250 performances a year.

Municipal cultural institutions

Library "G. S. Rakovski " - The library dates back to 1862. It is primarily a bookstore of the Yambol region with a fund of about 270,000 library materials, archive of Queen literature, and a local press. The library is involved in research work in librarianship, bibliography and edutainment, sociological studies of readers and their interests.

Art Gallery "George Papazov" - The gallery was founded in 1952. The gallery develops collections, research, exhibition, educational, methodological and popularizing activities. The gallery also develops concerts, concerts, premieres of books, performances, celebrations, etc. The Gallery Fund includes more than 3,100 works, over 3,000 research fund units and more than 1,000 volumes of specialized literature. The gallery has the richest collection of decorative

works in the country. There are 20 collections in the Art Gallery, divided into 8 departments: Iconography, Painting, Graphics, Sculpture, Decorative, Child Art, Stefan Bachvarov Fund.

Chamber ensemble "Dianopolis" - Created in 1968. The ensemble produces about 45 concerts annually in front of the audience of Yambol and the country, with a large share of educational concerts for students. Since 1983, the ensemble has performed in Germany every year. He has visited Hungary, Yugoslavia, Greece, Italy and France. The Chamber Ensemble is the organizer and host of the Golden Diana annual music festivals, with distinguished Bulgarian and foreign chamber orchestras, chamber choirs and others. chamber formations.

Youth House "Georgi Bratanov" - Established in 1972 It creates conditions for the development of activities for young people from the municipality.

Choir School "Prof. G. Dimitrov " - Established in 1967, the aim of the company is to unite the efforts to develop the musical education and creativity of children and adults from the town of Yambol and to raise the level of musical creativity in the city. YAHH Prof. G. Dimitrov has an extremely rich creative asset. She has won numerous awards from prestigious international competitions and festivals for Yambol. He is a regular participant in all national choral forums. She has performed successfully in many countries of Europe - Italy, Greece, Turkey, Russia, Finland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Germany, France and others. The school's exhibitions expose over 35 concerts annually, bringing them closer to the professional cultural institutions in the city. Choir School is the initiator and organizer of the Municipal Children's Feast of the Song in May and the South Bulgarian Choral Festival in October.

Community centers (Chitalishte) in Yambol District

In the municipality of Yambol the community centers are three (3), in the municipality of Bliarovo there are six (6), in Tundzha municipality there are thirty-seven (37), the municipality of Straldzha are twenty (20) and Elhovo municipality eleven (11) in the following settlements.

Drama Theater "Nevena Kokanova" - In 1870 the first theatrical performance was played. In 1922 Yambol became the seat of the South Bulgarian theaters. In 1927 a permanent theater company was established. In 1939-1940 the theater was renamed to Yambol Municipal Theater. The Dramatic Theater became a State Cultural Institute in 1949, and in 1952 - State Drama Theater. Since 2001 the theater has been named "Nevena Kokanova". The creative repertoire of the theater (up to 5 premieres and about 100 performances annually) is realized mainly on the stage of the theater in Yambol and on the scenes in the municipalities of the Yambol district and the nearby regional centers in the capital.

Chitalishte "Saglasie" - The Chitalishte was founded in 1862. It began its active activity in 1869 with the first collections of publicly available books and theatrical performances. In 1899 the Statute and the Rules for the Chitalishte Regulation were adopted. Chitalishte "Saglasie" is the central community center of Yambol Municipality and develops a rich cultural mass, library and

artistic activity. It features about 30 artistic formations, clubs and schools. The Chitalishte is the initiator and organizer of the municipal youth competition "Strong not Drusat" / public initiative against the use of drugs and literary contest "Not for my mother".

Chitalishte "Probuda" - Chitalishte "Probuda" was established in 1909 and carries out its activity on the territory of "Cargo". It has made a significant contribution to the preservation of the Bulgarian folklore traditions by organizing various folk festivals and customs: Trifon Zarezan, Todorovden / Todorovska Kushia /, St. George / St. George's Day / Christmas Fair, etc.). The Chitalishte is the initiator of two popular contests: "Yambol Autumn" - for Old Town Songs, and "Thracian Folk Song" and "Orchestral Folk Music" by Stoyan Gagov. There are over 20 artistic formations, clubs and schools in "Probuda" Chitalishte.

Chitalishte "Zora" - Chitalishte "Zora" was established in 1945. Its activity is determined by the peculiarities of the area it serves - inhabited by different ethnic groups. There are over 20 artistic formations, clubs and schools in the chitalishte. The Chitalishte is the initiator and organizer of the children's folklore celebrations "Born, reborn" and helps preserve the traditional folk festivals related to the Bulgarian ritual calendar. The Chitalishte has actively developed projects under different national and European programs and has managed to win a project for the construction of an Internet center. The Internet Center has been operating since February 2003 and provides training courses, offering Internet access and various services.

Youth House "Georgi Bratanov" - The Youth House "Georgi Bratanov" was established in 1972 and is a specific municipal structure that creates conditions for the development of activities for the young people of the municipality. The Home organizes and implements its own initiatives and partners with other organizations to implement: European, national and municipal programs aimed at: youth exchanges and mobility; the professional development of young people - work, training and qualification, preparation for a small own business; cultural activity and artistic creativity; the preservation of Bulgarian traditions and customs; fun-entertainment activities. There are about 30 club forms, schools, courses, ensembles, vocal groups and compositions in different art fields - art, literature, theater, music, dance.

Tourist resources are the main component of the tourist product, which form the tourist supply at the destination level. Their characteristics predetermine the species structure of the tourist product. This determines the necessity to analyze the tourist resources and the possibilities for designing a tourist product at the Yambol destination level.

From the primary analysis of the systemized list of tourist resources on the territory of Yambol region, the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the resources show a profile of a municipality with great potential in the following directions:

- • Cultural-cognitive tourism in its cultural, historical, architectural, ethnographic, festival and culinary varieties.
- • Occupational tourism (festival tourism)
- • Sport-recreation tourism in nature (green tourism)

This indicative formulation of the product palette shows that cultural and cognitive tourism stands out with the greatest potential and prime importance for the development of international tourism, both from qualitative and quantitative indicators (depth of product features).

Event-festivals tourism could be targeted at profiled target market segments of tourists with special interests for both the domestic and international markets.

Sport-recreation tourism can be defined as an alternative for the development of suburban tourism of local and regional importance.

These three main strands can be identified as product features with the highest degree of readiness to offer on the tourism market. The available variety of other tourist - recreational resources have more complementary, auxiliary character and reserve for future differentiation and renovation of the tourist product at the destination level - Yambol and the region.

18 Facilities for recreation and tourism, tourism infrastructure and services

18.1 Hotels and restaurants - tourist sites

In the National Tourist Register of the Ministry of Tourism in Bulgaria there is information about types of accommodation which are categorised in Yambol District.

Elhovo Municipality has categorized 135 dining and entertainment establishments. Of these, 53 are a two star category, the other (82) one star category. 14 establishments are categorised by the Minister of Tourism.

There are no categorized accommodation and accommodation facilities in **Bolyarovo** municipality, There are 14 restaurants, of which three are two stars and the other 11 are one star. No establishments are categorised by the Minister of Tourism.

In the municipality of **Straldzha** are categorized 24 restaurants for entertainment, of which 8 are two stars, the other one is a star. 7 establishments are categorised by the Minister of Tourism.

142 establishments are categorised by the Minister of Tourism. In the municipality of **Yambol** 49 catering and entertainment establishments are categorized. A one-star (34) is dominated by restaurants, with two star categories of 15.

In the municipality of **Tundzha** 79 catering and entertainment establishments are categorized by the Minister of Tourism.

18.2 Gastronomies & restaurants

Many small catering companies house small buildings in which tourists can sit and dine on their specialties. Many of the restaurants in the area offer decent meals, but they are usually attached to one of the area hotels. Hotel restaurants tend to be higher priced. If you can stick to eating at cafes and the catering companies, you'll find it easier on your budget.

18.3 Tourist information centers

The first **Tourist Information Centre** in Yambol District was opened in **Elhovo**. It has a web site <http://elhovo.org/> where tourists can find useful information about accommodation, catering establishments, events, places to visit, etc. Telephone 00359 47 881 073.

In the town of Yambol in the premises of Bezistena was opened Cultural Information Centre. <http://www.bezistena.com/bg/>

18.4 Other kinds of facilities

In Yambol Municipality Consultative Tourist Council was founded on 26.10.2009.

The following local tourist organisations are registered in the National Tourist Register:

- “Tourist organisation Kabile”, Yambol
- “Tourist Centre Elhovo”
- “Tourist organisation Kale”, Straldzha

In the National Tourist Register of the Ministry of Tourism in Bulgaria on 20.09.2017 12 tour operators and travel agencies are registered.

19 Hunting farms

The forestry fund in Yambol district is managed by two structures. State Forestry "Tundja" Yambol covers the municipalities of Straldzha and Tundzha. The total area of the forest fund, serviced by the State Forestry "Tundzha" Yambol is 22 262 ha, the state is 73.8%, the private is 10.1% and the municipal is 16.1%. Tree species are black pine, black oak, cherry, acacia, hornbeam, poplar. In addition to wood, mushrooms, fruit and herbs are harvested in the forests, in part of them there is grazing of large and small cattle. There are eight hunting complexes. A State game breeding station was established, which will be the basis for the development of the hunting tourism - red deer, deer, pheasants, wild boar, Thracian cricket. Elhovo State Forestry comprises the municipalities of Elhovo and Bolyarovo. The municipality of Elhovo covers an area of 70 171,1 ha, of which 13 991,3 ha are forests - 19,9% forestry. Tree species - conifers - black pine, atlas cedar; deciduous oak, red oak, summer oak, oak, oak, elm, acacia, ailand, walnut, poplar, quinar, lime and others.

According to the zoogeographic division of the country, the territory falls into the Thracian region of the southern geographical sub-region, and in the hunting economy it is situated entirely in the Hunting region of the Thracian Lowland and the Sub-Balkan Plains. The large area and the rich vegetation also determine the great variety variety. The important representatives of the fauna who live permanently or temporarily in the territory and which have a direct or indirect significance for the hunting farm of the mammalian class, the order of the cloven-hoof species are deer fallow, roe deer; from the order of rabbits - rabbit; from predatory predators - jackal, wild cat, fox; of class Birds in the order of cows - Colchic pheasant, partridge, Thracian cedar; in the order of pigeons - pigeon, turtle, turtle; from a variety of mushrooms - mozzarella, winter morsels and summer morsels.

20 Wineries

There are several wineries in Yambol region that can be visited by tourists. Some of them are the leading wine producers of the year.

21 Tourism offers - types of tourism and resorts

The tourist potential of Yambol District is evaluated as good. The most important factors for the development of tourism in future are the diverse flora and fauna, clean environment, mineral waters, historic sights/ resources, hospitality and well preserved villages, as well as the value of local products and services. Extremely favourable geographic location, diverse relief, availability of protected areas, rich flora and fauna, museums, unknown history and culture, unique folklore and cultural events, traditions, music, dances, cuisine, etc. are unique characteristics of the tourist product of Yambol District. The area possesses tourist resources which are not well developed at present and can be developed in tourism activities in future in the following

The project is co-funded by European Union through the Interreg-IPA CBC Bulgaria – Turkey Programme

priority types of tourism – cultural, rural tourism, folklore and ethno tourism and eco (green) tourism. Good potential for development in the future have: cultural tourism – sightseeing, folklore, festival and ethnologic tourism, religious tourism (visit of religious places and sights – churches, mosques and other places; rural tourism – visit in a village, agricultural activities and agrotourism; spa tourism (based on existing natural mineral springs); health/ wellness tourism (general) eco (green) tourism, ornithologic tourism mountain tourism – hiking routes and trails, velotourism; hunting and fishing tourism.

For the overall offer of tourist products and services in the region it is necessary to improve the public services (communications, sewerage, environment), update and install signposts, development of new or additional tourist products and packages, provision of incentives for the small and medium-sized enterprises, building capacity for accommodation and catering in the region, preservation of the natural and protected areas and preservation of the local culture and heritage. It is necessary to increase the spectre of tourist services in the both municipalities and introduce new types of service. It is very popular to offer vegetables and fruit that are grown at ecologically clean places. The region has an enormous potential for this. The menus in the catering establishments have to be diversified. Considerable problem for the quality of the tourist product has the competence and skills of the tourism staff. It is necessary to improve the professional skills of the employed people (in the catering establishments, entertainment places, accommodation, museums, etc.) in the following spheres – sales and marketing, foreign languages, information technologies/ work with computer, customer service, reservations, tourist product, legislation and requirements, human resource management, etc. The analysis of the tourist resources shows that Yambol District has potential opportunities for the development of the following types of tourism:

21.1 ECOTOURISM

The extremely rich biodiversity, unique natural resources, unique river beds – it's difficult with a few words to describe how diverse and wonderful is the nature of Yambol District. Here every person who loves beautiful scenes and the proximity of nature may discover his paradise. In the area since several years has started the creation of conditions for ecologically friendly activities – walks, hiking trails, bird watching, observation of animals, plants, visit of natural sightseeings and many others. The most important and leading is the topic for preservation and protection of the environment. Tourist product (good or service) is anything that can be offered at the market with the purpose of attracting the attention, gaining, utilization or consumption, satisfying the wish or need. For the hotelier a product is the hotel room, which is rented for temporary use, as well as the number of services provided to the tourist for his stay in the hotel. For the transport company these are the places in the vehicle and the number of services while transporting the tourist. For the restaurant owner these are the meals that are offered as

well as the service in the catering establishment. Tourist product means different things depending on the point of view: For the tourist company this is the product of labour with the respective value. Represents a bunch of services and goods which are result of the production activity of tourist or other enterprises for which the tourist pays. For the tourists these are goods and services, to which they have interest and which they are ready to buy at definite conditions: transport services, services for accommodation and catering, services for achievement of the aim of the travel (entertainment, education, business activity, etc.), information services, public services, objects for memento (souvenirs) and other goods for successive consumption in the tourist place or the place of residence. While assessing the value of the product or planning the market offer the tourist companies have to review the following levels: (1) real benefit from the product – main benefit, which the client buys. For example the guest in an accommodation place buys „rest and sleeping”. (2) primary product – the basic version of the product or the material prerequisite for their creation. For example the accommodation place presents a building with rooms that are rented for shortterm use. (3) expected product – the conditions which the tourists expect and negotiate while buying the product. For example the guests of every accommodation place expect a clean bed, soap, towels, wardrobe and quietness. (4) additional product – additional services and benefits that make the offer different from that of the competitors. For example the standard product can be supplemented with provision of TV, telephone, shampoo, fresh flowers, express service, etc. (5) potential product – transformations which the product may undergo, i.e. its possible development in future. Tourist product is designed in order to satisfy the wishes and expectations of tourists. The elements of the tourist product on behalf of the tourist are: - Tourist resources – natural and anthropogenic, including different events and activities; - General infrastructure – airports, roads, railways, electricity supply, water supply, sewerage, purification stations, communications, etc. - Tourist infrastructure and tourist services (accommodation, catering, tourist transport, etc.), as well as information provision; - Activities which the tourists may practice during their stay as well as the sightseeings which they can visit; - Image and other characteristics linked with the level of development of the tourist place, the own life cycle of the tourist, its social status, the opinion for himself, fashion, imitation, etc. The tourist product has to offer benefits to a definite group of tourists with similar needs as well as incentives for undertaking tourist travel. There are several prerequisites for the successful realization of the product: - To be commercialized – the availability of resources does not mean that tourists flows will visit the destination, even if there is information. The product should include not only the natural resources but also the basic and additional services with precise price. The material image of the offer is the tourist offer, discounts and incentives. Most often the offer is under the form of a package which unites several services with total price, but it is not in the form of the sum of the single values of each service. - To promote the information about it – to reach in a proper way to the potential customers; - To correspond to the

requirements and expectations of the selected target group on the market; - To be distinguished from similar products; - To be with considerable high quality of all components, to be accessible and not to disappoint the tourists.

21.2 CULTURAL TOURISM

As a region with millennial history and heritage, founded by ancient civilizations, the region has a lot to offer to their visitors who are interested in the sphere of history, culture, ethnography, religion, architecture and arts. On the territory there are unique archaeological discoveries – ancient tombs from the epoch of neolit, Thracian holy places and tombs, remains from Roman towns, Byzantine and medieval fortresses, architectural reserves, ethnographic complexes, churches and monasteries and many others. All municipalities in the district have extremely rich folklore calendar. In it there are many traditions and customs by which the tourist may touch the Bulgarian customs and culture - Surva (St. Vassil Day), St. Jordan Day – Epiphany, St. John Day, St. Anton Day, Trifon Zarezan, Bab Marta (Martenitsi), Sirni zagovezni, Kukerov Day, St. Todor Day, the Annunciat, Easter, St. George's Day, Virgin Mary's day, S. Dimitar Day, All Souls' Day, Christmas. In many villages the ancient traditions and customs are preserved and they are fulfilled nowadays as well. Cultural tourism includes the following types: - Cultural-historic, with interest to the history and linked monuments, sights and places in the visited destination. It includes visit to architectural, art, archaeological, historic and religious monuments, architecture – ethnographic reserves and complexes, museums and galleries (in the open), etc. - Events and festival, with interest to traditional or contemporary restoration of cultural events (celebrations, festivals, events, etc.) as well as participation in them. Very often these events and festivals are based on certain types of art. They may involve also traditional production, visit of fairs, bazaars, as well as different sport events. - Religious, with interest to religion(s) of the visited country, with visit to holy places. It includes the acquaintance with religious canons, rituals, rites and traditions (processions, ceremonies, etc.); sightseeing of religious buildings and monuments with historic, architectural, artistic and cultural value. Places of religious heritage - "... those are visited mainly due to their cultural and historic values but as religious sites." Religious holidays – Easter, Christmas (25 December), St. Nicolas Day (06 December), St. George's Day (06 May); Ramazan, etc.. Archaeologic, with interest to archaeology, visit of archaeological sights, places of excavations, participation in archaeological expeditions, etc.

21.3 RURAL TOURISM

The rural tourism is the best way to know the traditions in Bulgaria. By staying in a rural house the tourists may touch to the traditional way of life and culture of the country. The hospitality of Bulgarian population, unique local cuisine, preserved folklore, traditions and crafts, settlements that are architectural reserves and the wonderful nature turn this type of tourism into a preferred way of spending the vacation. Usually guests are welcome in an authentic

house, part of the visit is the food, which the hosts prepare from ecologically clean products – tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, picked up early in the morning in the garden, or fragrant herbs, collected in the near forests and fields. In the village there are many interesting activities – you may help the hosts to prepare a special dish using an old recipe, to be involved in agricultural work, to hire a horse and go for a walk to the nearby sightseeings, to collect a bunch of fresh herbs and a basket of forest strawberries or mushrooms, to go around the country roads with a mountain bike and many other. Tourists have the opportunity to participate in manual milking and mowing, making yoghurt, production of home-made cheese and yellow cheese, production of preserves, etc. In almost each rural house people make home made rakia and wine. Very attractive are the villages in the area. Tourists may enjoy visit in old mills, riding of a donkey or a horse, travel in a donkey cart. Here the tourists may observe authentic folklore dances and songs, costumes, crafts. The visitors in the big Black sea resorts have the opportunity to visit the close by villages and feel their hospitality.

21.4 HUNTING TOURISM

Hunting and fishing are also popular forms of specialized tourism, although the care of environmentalists and ecologists that these activities are dangerous for the ecosystems. There are hunting reserves, that are under the control of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food.

21.5 RIVER TOURISM –

Along the middle and lower stream of the Toundzha River; Cultural-cognitive tourism - the Kabile archeological reserve, Bezistena in Yambol city, Saint Geogre church in Yambol, the Ethnographic museum in Elhovo.

22 Border Checkpoints of Yambol region

On the territory of Yambol District there is a border checkpoint: Lesovo - Hambazayli Bulgaria - Turkey border crossing, located on the Bulgarian-Turkish border. The point connects Elhovo with Turkish Lapalasha. Thanks to the border crossing point, the main road link between the two Kapitan Andreevo-Kapikule border checkpoints is alleviated and favorable conditions for passenger and truck service are created. The highway south of Elhovo to the village of Granitovo - Lesovo - Turkey becomes part of a strategically important transport corridor, whereby the economic connections with the Yambol and Stara Planina passages (Varbishki, Kotlenski and Vratnik) North-East and North Central Planning Regions and between Turkey - Bulgaria - Romania in the direction of first-class road I-7.

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1. Introduction

The present analysis of Haskovo Region is elaborated by the Ministry of Tourism, Republic of Bulgaria in implementation of project **“Joint Initiative for promotion of Bulgaria – Turkey cross-border region as an attractive tourism destination”** – JOINTTOUR, CB005.1.22.055, financed by the EU through the INTERREG IPA CBC Bulgaria-Turkey Programme. Partners within the project are the following institutions:

1. Bourgas Regional Tourist Association / Lead partner / Republic of Bulgaria;
2. Ministry of Tourism / PP2 / Republic of Bulgaria;
3. Kırklareli District Directorate of Culture and Tourism / PP3 / Republic of Turkey.

The analysis has been elaborated by Mrs Adriana Popova – a tourism expert appointed by the Ministry of Tourism, Republic of Bulgaria. The analysis is developed on the basis of a documentary research and field work, conducted in the period December 2017 – January 2018.

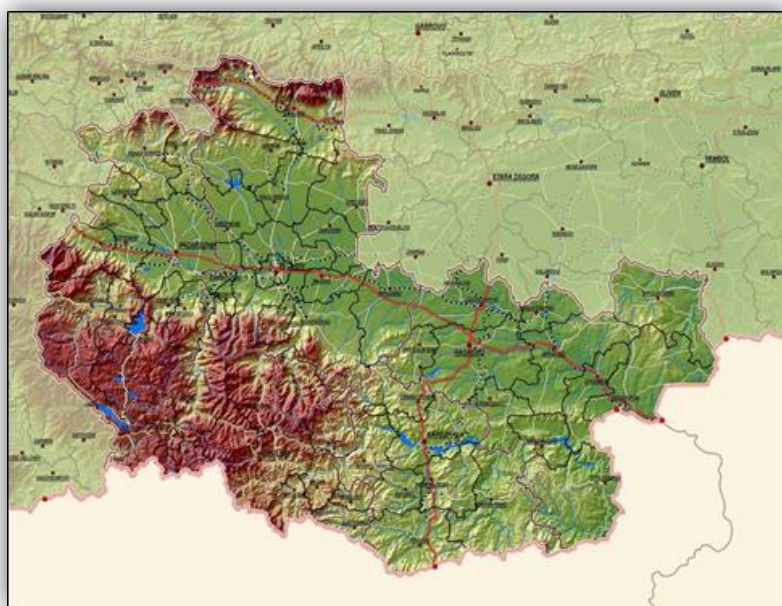
2. Geographical location

The Region of Haskovo is located in the south-eastern part of the South Central region of the Republic of Bulgaria. It is strategically situated between the Rhodopes and Stara Planina mountains. With an area of 5 543 km², the region occupies about 5% of the territory of the country, including parts of the Eastern Rhodopes and the Upper Thracian Plain, as well as part of the Maritsa River valley. The administrative center of the region is the city of Haskovo. The area includes 261 settlements, organized in 11 municipalities - Haskovo, Dimitrovgrad, Svilengrad, Lyubimets, Harmanli, Madzharovo, Simeonovgrad, Ivaylovgrad, Topolovgrad, Mineralni bani and Stambolovo. The following picture illustrates the geographical location of Haskovo region on the map of Republic of Bulgaria:



Picture 9: Map of Haskovo region's location in Republic of Bulgaria

The relief of the area is very varied. The northern and central part is occupied by the Upper Thracian Plain, characterized by the vast lowlands and high ground waters that favor the intensive use of agricultural land. The flat nature of relief and fertile soils has a positive impact on the development of all branches and sub-sectors of agriculture, the construction of irrigation systems and transport arteries. To the south, a wide area of the area is occupied by the low branches of the Eastern Rhodopes and the slopes of the Sakar Mountains. The Eastern Rhodopes are a unique territory characterized by a rich flora and fauna. The relief of Haskovo region could be seen on the following picture:



Picture 10: Relief of Haskovo Region

The useful minerals are represented by fuel-energy resources, non-ferrous ores and non-metalliferous minerals. In Haskovo is located a part of Marish basin in which geological reserves of lignite constitute 18.3% of the country's basin. The region has proven large reserves of non-ore minerals: limestone, marble limestone, andesite, dolomite, rhyolite and gneissitic materials and clays. The biggest importance and reserves are the limestones, which have increased in recent years, both for the needs of the cement industry and as a raw material for the sulfur purification plants at the Maritsa East TPP.

The distance from the town of Haskovo to the capital Sofia is 230 km, to the nearest port - Bourgas is 250 km, and to the Greek and Turkish border is only 60 km. Through the region of Haskovo passes the most direct and quick road connecting Europe with Asia and the Middle East.

A big strategic advantage of Region Haskovo is the fact that it is located very close to the borders of Bulgaria with Turkey and Greece which has a positive effect of the development of the economy and the tourism of the country and the easy movement of people.

3. Socio-economic and demographic characteristics

The population of the region of Haskovo is 233 415 inhabitants towards 31.12.2016 according to data from the National Statistics Institute. As clearly stated in the following table, the population in this area has varied considerably over the years. The historical data shows that since 1934 the population has started to increase until it reached its peak in 1985, after which it dropped drastically.

Haskovo Region – historical data	
Year	Population
1934	263 853
1946	283 619
1956	321 284
1965	331 744
1975	330 123
1985	335 081
1992	306 058
2001	277 478

Table 14: Haskovo Region – historical data

The population of Haskovo district in the last seven years, distributed among cities and villages, is the following: Haskovo Region			
Year	Total	Cities	Villages
2010	253 127	177 883	75 244
2011	243 955	176 099	67 856
2012	241 676	174 895	66 781
2013	239 312	173 471	65 841
2014	237 664	172 259	65 405
2015	236 383	170 267	66 116
2016	233 415	168 526	64 889

Table 15: Population in Haskovo Region in the 2010 – 2016 period

During the period 2010 – 2016, the population of Haskovo district decreases each consecutive year as the difference between 2010 and 2011 is the biggest one in comparison with the variation between the following years:

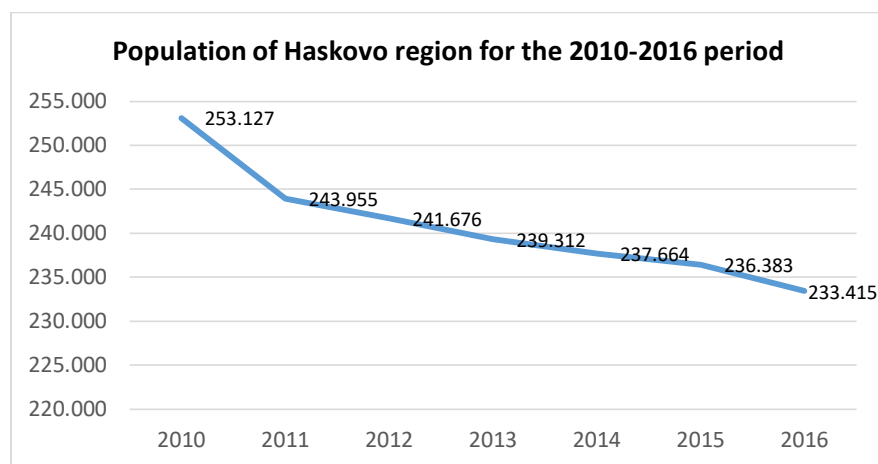


Figure 1: Population of Haskovo district for the 2010-2016 period

With regards to the distribution of the population of the region between the cities and the villages, the inhabitants of the cities predominate the villagers to a high extend, as 72% of the population of Haskovo district occupy the cities and only 28% occupy the villages in 2016:

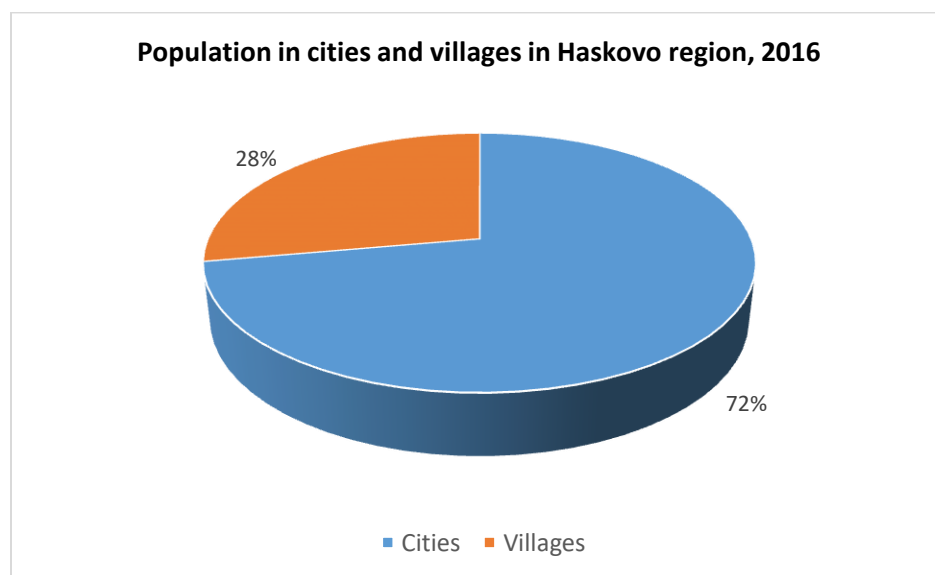


Figure 2: Population in cities and villages in Haskovo district, 2016

In economic terms, Haskovo region is among the first three areas of the South Central Region. Small and medium-sized enterprises in Haskovo have an important role to play in the economic processes acceleration and optimization of the production structure of the regional economy. Most of them are active in the service sector trade, followed by tailors, knitwear, manufacturing of bread and bakery products, meat and dairy shops and others. Agriculture is one of the leading industries for Haskovo region and creates employment of a large part of the population. In the region there are extremely favorable soil and climatic conditions for the development of plant production.

4. Infrastructure and environment

Infrastructure

The density of the road network in Haskovo region remains above average levels for the country. The completion in 2015 of Maritsa highway, which provides connectivity to the Thrace highway, is an important factor for the development of the region, increases the share of highways and first-class roads. The quality of the road pavement is also rising (33.1% of it is in good condition in 2015), but remains below the average country levels.

- **Road infrastructure**

The road network is a major infrastructure element, which determines the level of accessibility to the territory and influences the integration process of the area. The highways and roads that are part of the Pan-European Transport Corridor have the greatest role for the connection of the road network of the area with the national and international road networks. Maritza highway is part of the Pan-European Transport Corridor №4. At the moment, the highway is partially built and is under construction. The completion of the Maritza highway is an important step in the process of the development of Bulgaria's cross-border cooperation of the region of Haskovo with the Republic of Greece and the Republic of Turkey. The final completion of the highway will greatly improve the transport service and is expected to speed up the process integration and economic development of the area.

- **Railway infrastructure**

The railway infrastructure is no less unimportant for the transport service and connectivity of the area. Railways in the direction of the Pan-European Transport Corridors are a second component, complementing them the functions of the corridors and providing opportunities for combined transport.

Haskovo region is served by two main railway lines:

- The first railway line "Kalotina - Sofia - Plovdiv - Svilengrad" is on the route Pan-European Transport Corridor № 4 on the territory of the country, according to the long - international and historical significance "Orient Express".

- IV main railway line "Rousse - Gorna Oryahovitsa - Stara Zagora - Dimitrovgrad - Horseshoe" is part of Pan-European Transport Corridor № 9. Breaking the line to the southern border is not allows for the efficient use of the whole railway line. It is not planned to continue the line to Makaza, but to Svilengrad for Greece.

- **Industry**

In the field of industry, Haskovo region has the potential to develop both traditional textiles, clothing, food and machine industry for the light industry and emerging high-tech industries. Industry is characterized by a well-developed industry structure, well-established market traditions, a skilled workforce and a relatively well-developed small and medium-sized enterprises sector. This region is one of the traditional wine centers in the country.

- **Water and sanitation**

The water network in the area has a total length of 2 175 km, of which 867 km - inlet water mains and 1 308 km of inland water supply network. The energy intensity of water supply is a problem for the region, and in particular for the large cities where there is an increased population density. Concentration of users in high-rise residential complexes requires installing hydropower facilities that add to water. This leads to big differences in both the available water quantities and the cost of drinking water in municipalities and settlements.

- **Energy infrastructure**

On the territory of Haskovo are located one thermoelectric and one hydroelectric power plants. Maritza 3 Thermoelectric Power Plant "Dimitrovgrad" for electricity and heat generation has an installed capacity of 120 MW, the main market of electricity produced by the plant is in Bulgaria. Hydroelectric Power Plant "Ivailovgrad" works with a total installed capacity of 120 MW and is located in the structure of the Hydroelectric Power Plant Group "Rodopi", which maintains the peak loads in the national energy sector system.

Environment

Carbon dioxide emissions to the atmosphere have been decreasing in the last year, but Haskovo remains among the relatively high emission areas - 183.2 t / sq km in 2014. Domestic waste generated in the area is increasing to 392 kg / person in 2014 which remains below the country average. Nearly 72% of the population in the area live in settlements with public sewage (2014). Since 2011, almost half of the population (46.7% in 2014) with access to sewerage has been associated with wastewater treatment plants. At the end of 2010, the treatment plant of the town of Dimitrovgrad was put into operation and in mid-2011 the new wastewater treatment plant of Haskovo was launched, which significantly reduced the pollution of the Maritsa River.

5. Transport accessibility and mobile connections

The project is co-funded by European Union through the Interreg-IPA CBC Bulgaria – Turkey Programme

The administrative center of the region - Haskovo offers convenient city bus services to and from the city's quarters and major firms in the area. The centrally located Haskovo Bus Station offers many connections both within the country and abroad. The Haskovo Train Station is located on the east-end of “Saednenie” Boulevard (approximately 20 minutes walk from the center), and offers both national and international connections.

Haskovo region is served by two Pan-European Transport Corridors:

- Pan-European Transport Corridor № 4: Dresden / Nuremberg – Prague – Vienna / Bratislava – Győr – Budapest – Arad – Constanta / Craiova - Sofia / Thessaloniki – Plovdiv – Istanbul;
- Pan-European Transport Corridor № 9: Helsinki – Saint Petersburg – Moscow / Pskov – Kiev – Bucharest – Rousse – Dimitrovgrad / Alexandroupolis – Svilengrad – Istanbul.

The two corridors pass through the territory of the area, conducting the international transport flows in the west-east direction of the long-established direction Orient Express and towards North-South / Southeast as a connection between the river The Danube and the Aegean Sea. Crossing the Pan-European Transport Corridors (Corridor № 4 and Corridor № 9) on the territory of Haskovo district is a prerequisite for good transport accessibility and connectivity of the area. The development and completion of the transport corridor infrastructure is a priority for the integration of the field at national and international level. Building the highway along the entire route of PETC № 9 on the territory of Bulgaria and the opening of the Makaza border checkpoint, as well as the construction of an intermodal terminal - Rousse and modernization of the railway line in the direction will ensure its full functioning.

6. Education

Pre-primary education in Haskovo district takes place in kindergartens that are full-day, half-day, weekly and for children with special educational needs and with chronic diseases. The age of children in kindergartens is 3-6 years. Prior to first grade, training in a preparatory group or in a preparatory class is mandatory.

In the field, during the period 2007-2011, there is an increase of the children, attending kindergartens, by 7.2% (from 6,457 children in the school year 2007/2008 to 6,924 children in school year 2011/2012); a reduction in kindergarten by 15.4% (from 78 in school year 2007/2008 to 66 kindergartens during the school year 2011/2012) and minimum an increase in the number of pedagogical staff working in kindergartens by 0,9% (from 646 in the school year 2007/2008 to 652 in the school year 2011/2012). Reduced number of kindergartens are largely due to negative demographics characteristics and reduction of children.

The number of schools in Haskovo region is decreasing. From school year 2007/2008 to the school year 2011/2012, 17 educational establishments have been closed. The overall decrease in schools refer to general education schools. The number of specialized schools and vocational high schools are kept constant. The reduced number of schools is largely due to the negative demographics data and the reduction of children.

Professional training of pupils for the whole range of professions from the economy of the district is provided by nine high schools in the towns of Haskovo (7) and Dimitrovgrad (2). High schools in the field of foreign language learning, nature-mathematics and humanities offer good preparation.

With regards to the universities, in this region the number of functioning organizations in the field of research activity is too small and concentrated in the town of Haskovo. The area has Distance Learning Center of UNWE, Medical College of Thracian university and other colleges.

Still the education system in the area is not flexibly enough reformed to respond more fully to local and regional needs of professional and technical staff in the different spheres of the economy. In this direction it is necessary to optimize the network of specialized vocational schools, in order to synchronize the results of its activities with the expectations of the business.

7. Healthcare in Haskovo

In Haskovo District, the healthcare system is relatively well developed as a whole, covers the healthcare needs of the area and runs beyond the district functions. Towards 31.12.2012 there are 11 hospitals on the territory of the area with a capacity of 1036 beds, of which 5 multi-profile hospitals with a capacity of 709 beds, 4 specialized hospitals with a capacity of 185 beds, center for psychiatric diseases with 80 beds and a 10-bed center for skin-venereal diseases.

Healing brought for specialized outpatient care in the area is unevenly distributed. Most State Consultative Center and medical centers are discovered in the town of Haskovo, as well as most of the practitioners' practices. This leads to concentration of specialized medical care in the city and forces patients from other municipalities to travel to Haskovo to carry out specialized research and consultations.

8. Analysis of tourism resources

8.1. Natural tourism resources

In the region of Haskovo, the share of tourism in the regional economy is very modest - below 0.2%. Best of all, its share in the economy of Mineralni bani Municipality is significant - 3.9%. For the other municipalities, tourism is present in local economies with symbolic shares - from 0.03% (Dimitrovgrad), up to 0.57% (Svilengrad). Most often Haskovo city has been a "short stop" of the transit highway streams lately, and a destination to enrich the Black Sea tourist products.

Haskovo has preserved and gradually developed its conditions and resources for tourism:

- Favorable physico-geographic features - mild climate, beautiful and ecologically clean nature, rich flora and fauna with exceptional biodiversity, the presence of many natural landmarks;
- Interesting cultural and historical heritage, including architectural-historical monuments from the antiquity and the Middle Ages, archaeological values, monuments from the Renaissance / monasteries, old houses and churches /, historical places, etc.;
- A well-developed network of accommodation places for major cities and relatively good infrastructure;
- Existence of a rich cultural calendar in the individual municipalities;
- Enhanced tourism sector initiative: revival of traditional tourism crafts, opening new museum collections, improving access to tourist sites, development of a number of projects in the field of tourism and tourism opening tourist information centers, expanding the advertising the region as a tourist destination.

The following forms of tourism could be practiced in the region of Haskovo:

Balneological tourism: Although with relatively modest dimensions, the area has the potential of curative mineral waters and the development of balneological tourism in Bulgaria Haskovo Mineral Baths (a national resort since 1952) and the town of Merichleri. At the moment the state of balneological tourism is critical, due to obsolete material basis and lack of active policy to find investors.

Cultural Cognitive Tourism: The location of the area at a crossroad determines the rich cultural stratification and the presence of many valuable objects artifacts. Historical and archaeological sites are a prerequisite for the development of the cultural and cognitive tourism (so-called "cultural routes").

Hunting tourism: The activity is carried out by the four forest farms in Bulgaria and the state hunting farm in Topolovgrad has three hunting grounds where it is also practicing international hunting tourism. A specific form is photo hunting that is typical for the Eastern Rhodopes Nature Reserve in Madjarovo. The place has conditions for ornithological and amateur observations of Griffon and Egyptian vulture, a maple and a white stork.

The tourism potential of the region of Haskovo is preserved and transferred to the new strategy for regional development of the district as an essential resource for development. Development aimed at all forms of tourism - balneological (Haskovo and Merichleri), cultural (Haskovo, Ivaylovgrad, Dimitrovgrad), route-cognitive, hunting, fishing, rural.

- **Climate**

The southern geographical location of this region and its proximity to the Aegean Sea, which separates it from the relatively low slopes of the Eastern Rhodopes, as well as the easy penetration of warmer air in the valley of the Maritsa River, determine the transitional climate between the continental influence from the North and the Mediterranean, coming from the south. The average annual temperature of the East Rhodope footpath is 12,6 ° C. Farmers do not bathe the feast in February, because early warmth lures up the early blooming almonds, apricots, cherries, and more.

- **Water**

Surface water

In the northern part of the region, from the west to the east, along the border with the Dimitrovgrad municipality, a part of the average course of the Maritsa River runs along 6 km. The main water artery in the region is the Harmanliyska river (90 km). The river enters the Haskovo municipality from the northwest of the village of Nikolovo, pouring its waters into the large Thracian dam. After flowing out of the dam, it turns to the east and the village of Malevo flows in a narrow and shallow valley through the Haskovo hill area. After Malevo continued to the northeast, and after the village of Stoykovo again in the east, it surrounded the Huhla ridge from the northwest and north in a valley with right steep and left sloping slopes. 3 km northeast of the village of Bryagovo leaves the territory of the municipality of Haskovo and enters the municipality of Harmanli and flows right into the Maritsa River. The area of its catchment area is 956 km², which represents 1.8% of the Maritsa River Basin.

Groundwater

There are 9 underground water bodies in Haskovo region. The majority of them are in poor condition chemical status - 6, and only 2 are in good chemical status.

- **Vegetation and wildlife**

There are 1,950 plant species of 122 families, 350 species of butterflies, 21 species fish species, 10 amphibian species, 26 reptile species, 273 bird species and 59 mammalian species. The predominant flora elements are sub-Mediterranean and Euro-Asian, followed by the Mederans. The endemic floral element is represented by 85 Balkan, 20 Bulgarian and 7 Rhodope endemic species of plants. There are 28 relict species distributed. There are 25 species of the country's only habitats, 23 are included in the European list of rare, threatened and endemic species, 12 are globally rare European species, 37 species are listed in Annex 2 of the Washington Convention (CITES), 5 species - in the Berne Convention.

The project is co-funded by European Union through the Interreg-IPA CBC Bulgaria – Turkey

From the 17 species of amphibians for Bulgaria, 10 have been established in the region, of which 7 are protected, 4 included in the Berne Convention and 2 species in the World Red Data Sheet International Union for the Protection of Nature. Birds are represented by 273 species such as 241 are protected, 77 included in the Red Book of Bulgaria, 261 in the Berne Convention, 7 species are globally threatened.

Mammals are the most endangered species in the world. Out of 59 species found in the Eastern Rhodopes, 23 are included in the World Red List International Union for the Protection of Nature, 12 in the category "vulnerable" and 11 species in the "half-threatened" category.

Along with the Rhodope Mountains, on the territory of the Haskovo region is located a part of Sakar mountain, where about 600 species of higher plants are found, of which 44 are included The Red Book of Bulgaria. In Sakar, the protected areas cover ornithologically important sites of global conservation importance and those of high importance conservation value. They are of utmost importance for the preservation of the world endangered Imperial Eagle.

8.2. Tourism and cultural and historical heritage

The city of Haskovo celebrated its 1000th anniversary in 1985. To mark the event, a new clock tower was erected in the center of the town. In Medieval years it was known for the nearby Uzundzhovo fair, famous in whole Bulgaria. The first settlements on these lands were organized by the Thracian tribes in the late Bronze Age. Archaeological excavations show remnants of fortified settlements dating back to the 5th century BC. from the era of the Thracian kingdom. In the 1st century the area was under the control of the Roman Empire. At the end of the 4th century, after the division of land ownership of the Roman Empire, the area passed to the Eastern Roman Empire. In the 8th century the area was conquered by the First Bulgarian State and Haskovo was built; a city that ought to have fortification functions, and at the same time to secure the main road that passes through the area. The city was part of the fortified fortresses of the Empire. Most Bulgarians began to settle in Haskovo at the beginning of the nineteenth century. At this time, the settlement was a trading center for merchants from Edirne, Enos, and Istanbul. Slowly, the area acquired a strong reputation for producing cotton materials, silk fabrics, and carpets. After the liberation in 1878 Haskovo became a center of high-quality tobacco region (Bulgaria's largest cigarette manufacturing facilities are based in the town).

Haskovo and its surroundings enjoy a rich cultural and historical heritage. In the area are located the Medieval fortress Hissarya – Haskovo, the Assen's fortress - Klokotnitsa village, architectural monuments from the antiquity and the Middle Ages, archaeological monuments, monuments from the Renaissance (fortresses, monasteries, old houses and churches), historical places and museums. An important element for the development of tourism is the specific lifestyle, traditions, customs and crafts of the local population.

Along with the traditional forms of mass tourism, the region is also a perspective for development of some new forms of tourism: specialized wine tourism; hobby tourism (bicycle sports, fishing); urban tourism based on the architectural heritage of cities; religious tourism related to the visit of churches, holy places and the presence of religious holidays; exploratory tourism, on the basis of the creation of dedicated routes and attractions at places not developed to date; active tourism, including various opportunities for combining recreation with active sport (horse riding, climbing, cycling); alternative and recreational tourism.

8.3. Temples, monasteries, religious and archeological sites

Perperikon

The ancient Thracian city of Perperikon (also Perpericon; Bulgarian: Перперикон, Greek: Περπερικόν) is located in the Eastern Rhodopes, 15 km northeast of the present-day town of Kardzhali, Bulgaria, on a 470 m high rocky hill, which is thought to have been a sacred place. The village of Gorna Krepost ("Upper Fortress") is located at the foot of the hill and the gold-bearing Perpereshka River flows near it. Perperikon is the largest megalith ensemble in the Balkans. A church pulpit was found by Bulgarian archeologists at the peak of the Thracian rock sanctuary on 10 September 2005. It is thought to be the first finding of the kind in Bulgaria. The pulpit was probably built at the end of the 4th century AD or the early 5th century during the reign of Byzantine Arcadius and coincided with the period of the christening of the Thracians in the Rhodopes area.



Picture 11: Perperikon

It has the form of a single nave basilica of 16.5 m length, which is the most typical form of an early Christian religious temple. The pulpit, which is almost untouched by time, is richly decorated with stone-carved ornaments. An eagle with widespread wings is clearly seen on the rock. It also bears five inscriptions in Greek, which are yet to be explained but which archaeologists suppose are liturgical writings. One hypothesis suggests the church existed until the 14th century when it was levelled by the Ottoman invaders. At about that time it was probably sealed up and abandoned.

Monument of the Holy Mother of God



Picture 12: Monument of the Holy Mother of God

The Monument of the Holy Mother of God is dedicated to Mary, the mother of Jesus and was unveiled in 2003. Standing at a total height of 31 meters or 102 feet (of which the statue itself is 14 m or 46 ft.), the monument has been certified by the Guinness Book of World Records as the tallest statue of the Virgin Mary with the Infant Jesus in the world. However, despite certification Guinness Book of Records, this statue does not exceed height at Monument Lady of Peace in Trujillo, Venezuela. The Virgin Mary is the traditional patron saint of the city of Haskovo. The Bulgarian National Revival-time Church of the Holy Mother of God, built from 1832 to 1837, was the first cathedral to be built in Haskovo in modern times. The feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God on 8 September has been celebrated as one of the most important holidays of that city. The earliest record of an organized celebration dates from 1896 and the feast was officially proclaimed the Day of Haskovo in 1993.

The construction of the Monument of the Holy Mother of God was approved by the Haskovo municipal council in September 2002. The required funding of 300,000 BGN (€ 150,000) was secured thanks to donations by the citizens of Haskovo. 10,000 postcards were printed with the image of the future monument and were sold for 5 BGN (€ 2.50) each, with the entire collected sum going for the construction. The Yamacha hill southwest of the city center was chosen as the construction site so that the monument would be visible from the entire city even at night. The entire monument measures 80 tons in weight, while the statue itself weighs 20 tons. The monument's pedestal includes the small Bulgarian Orthodox Chapel of the Nativity of the Mother of God, the interior of which resembles an ancient church and features a stone altar. A large Christian cross relief on the front side of the pedestal points to the chapel entrance. The Monument of the Holy Mother of God was unveiled on 8 September 2003 and consecrated by Arsenius, Metropolitan Bishop of Plovdiv. The monument's Guinness Book of World Records application was accepted and it was included in the 2004 edition of the book, as well as later editions. The monument quickly became one of the symbols of Haskovo, along with the medieval key on its coat of arms. Since 2009, it has also been included as #72 among the 100 Tourist Sites of Bulgaria. In 2010 a bell tower was constructed next to the statue of the Virgin Mary. With its height of close 30 meters, it is one of the highest bell tower on the Balkan Peninsula. 8 bells of varying sizes grace its belfry. The bell tower is open for tourists and its highest point allows a magnificent view of the town.

Deaf stones



Picture 13: Deaf stones

Deaf stones are one of the largest rock cult complexes in the Eastern Rhodopes. The sanctuary is situated on four rocky massifs separated by deep gorges. It is situated in the highest parts of the East-Rhodope Mountains at the altitude of 500 - 560 meters above sea level in the village of Valche pole. It is located within the Municipality of Lyubimets (district of Haskovo), near the village of Efrem, Madzharovo Municipality (district of Haskovo). In the 1970s, the hypothesis emerged that it originated in the early Iron Age, and certainly functioned in antiquity and the Middle Ages. The sacred site was used by the Drentherian tribes inhabiting the area, but the trapezoid niches and the zoomorphic and anthropomorphic rock profiles indicate its origin in Eneolitha. It is a complex of over 200 trapezium niches, which are carved on a monolithic rock block, carved in the rock two tombs and a stair leading to a reservoir and a Thracian settlement existed south of the rock. As an example of the respect of the population to this place and the continuity between the religions here was built a church in 5-6th century, a monastic cloister, which is probably destroyed and robbed by the soldiers of the Third Crusade. The site was declared a natural landmark at the end of 1972.

The fortress "Holy Spirit"

The fortress "Holy Spirit" is located on the hill St. Spirit in Mineralni Bani Municipality. It is a fortress that survived 4 construction periods: Roman, Late Roman, Early Byzantine and Medieval. The fortress has an irregular multilateral form. Its walls are preserved in places up to 3.5 m high, 2 m thick and surround an area of about 2 decares. The fortress is entered through a main entrance from the south or through two small porters (doors) to the west and east walls. The defense is reinforced by 4 large rectangular towers which in the Middle Ages were converted into homes. Inside the fortress walls there are rows of residential, business and barracks in which dozens of clay pots, agricultural cannons, coins, weapons, and other objects are found. During the archaeological excavations in the fortress were found over 120 copper, silver and gold coins and one lead seal. In the "Holy Spirit" fortress, in the 12th century, after its destruction, a medieval necropolis emerged, during which excavations revealed a significant amount of rich jewelry works. In the historical literature, the fortress and settlement in Mineralni Bani Municipality are identified with Toplitsa, which is mentioned by the Byzantine historian Mikhail Attalat and the successor of Skilitza (XI century) in connection with the pechenegian attacks in the middle of the 11th century, when the fortress was probably destroyed.

8.4. Cultural activities and events, festivities – traditions, customs and crafts

Haskovo is a town with rich cultural inheritance and significant achievements in science and art. For three decades already in April debutants in the poetry and prose from all the country have met, attracted by the traditional literature days "Southern Spring". Each year in May the famous park Kenana near Haskovo turns into a scene of another traditional local show – the local art fair "Kitna Trakya (Colorful Thracia) singing and dancing". Amateur groups from all the folk areas of Bulgaria compete in singing and dancing.

The project is co-funded by European Union through the Interreg-IPA CBC Bulgaria – Turkey Programme

The music days, called after the prominent Haskovo violinist Nedyalka Simenova, have attracted young musicians of classical music for many years now. The competition for instrumental players at the end of October is accompanied with many performances of the local Symphony Orchestra and famous guest musicians and formations.

Haskovo is a hospitable town to the Republican Championship in Sports Dances, the traditional Week of the Community and Library Centers, starting on 1st November, the Christmas Folklore Festival, presenting authentic national customs and songs.

8.5. Galleries, museums, historical landmarks, arts and crafts centers, cultural institutions

The regional history museum – Haskovo

The Haskovo Regional History Museum treasures more than 120 000 pieces and artifacts of the historical cultural heritage, many of which have an exceptionally high value. Unique collections of prehistoric, antique and medieval artifacts made of ceramics, stone, iron and glass contribute to part of the rich museum collection. Among the most interesting exhibits are two rarely found on the Bulgarian lands goblets, “Troy type”, dating back to 1st c. B.C., one of which became the symbol of the museum. The museum also hosts a remarkable collection of extremely high value consisting of more than 22 000 antique and medieval coins.

Over the years the Regional History Museum has performed collecting, research and methodological activity in 11 municipalities of today’s Haskovo district. It has restored more than 30 cultural monuments.

The museum holds one of the best ethnographic collections. Department funds have nearly 15,000 units. The museum houses collections of articles of bronze, folk costumes, fabrics, jewelry, agricultural and craft implements, pieces of folk art, ritual props and many other.

Penyo Penev Home-Museum

The Penyo Penev Home-Museum in Dimitrovgrad is an act of gratitude and gratitude to one of the most dramatic and provocative personalities in the Bulgarian poetry of the 1950s - Penyo Penev. The museum keeps the memory of him, tells his story, popularizes his poems. In 1964, the exhibition "Penyo Penev" was opened at the "Museum of Socialist Construction" in Dimitrovgrad, which grew into a permanent exhibition. Since 1970 it has moved to "D. Blagoev" 9 in the home where the poet lived. In 1980 the exhibition was renamed in the Penyo Penev House Museum - Dimitrovgrad.

The museum house stores over 1,200 museum units in its fund. Among the more interesting museum exhibits are manuscripts of his works and notes with notes, letters, personal belongings, a portrait of Penyo Penev painted by his son - the painter Vladimir Penev. The museum has an audiovisual system that allows to record the original performances of Penyo Penev on his own works. Visitors also include films dedicated to the poet's life and creativity. The museum is the organizer of exhibitions, competitions, literary meetings, worship, discussions, scientific conferences, performances, anniversaries, etc. The P. Penev House Museum is a co-organizer of the Dimitrovgrad Days of Penyo Penev poetry, which takes place every two years at the beginning of May, when Penyo Penev's birthday is on May 7th. In the framework of poetic feasts, the National Literary Prize "Penyo Penev" is awarded for high creative achievements in poetry.

Lyutitsa



Picture 14: Lyutitsa

Lyutitsa is one of the largest and best preserved castles in the easternmost part of the Eastern Rhodopes, located 3.5 hours' walk south-west of Ivaylovgrad, in southernmost Bulgaria. It is also known as the "Marble City" because its walls are made of white marble. The fortress occupies an area of 26,000 m² (280,000 sq. ft.) and has 12 towers of which eight have been preserved. The walls are up to 10 meters (33 ft.) high. The ruins of two churches have been excavated as well as a necropolis with 15 graves. Among the numerous archaeological finds are rare coins, ceramics from Preslav, jewelry and tools.

Alexandrovska tomb



Picture 15: Alexandrovka tomb

In December 2000, a team of archaeologists led by Dr. Georgi Kitov (1943-2008) opened a unique Thracian tomb from the 4th century BC in the Roshavata Chuka mound near Aleksandrovo village, Haskovo Municipality. The mound is located in the immediate vicinity of the village and stands out in the background as a beautiful hill. From its eastern periphery begins a corridor that runs consecutively into a rectangular and round room. The purpose of the tomb was to give the last shelter to one of the Thracian rulers whose name remains a secret for us. With its frescoes and architecture, it is one of the pearls of the Thracian cultural heritage in our lands and ranks among the largest facilities of its kind found so far. The unique murals of the Thracian tomb are without parallel and have an exceptional artistic value. Painting is an invaluable source of information about Thracian reality. In May 2009 the Thracian Art Center in the Eastern Rhodopes Museum opened with a copy of the nearby tomb Alexandrovka. The cultural heritage of the Thracians in the regional sphere is represented by movable monuments of culture from the late Iron Age (VI-1 BC). Visitors can also get acquainted with the most remarkable archaeological monuments in the Eastern Rhodopes, the Sakar Mountains and the Maritsa River valley. Here, a golden treasure dating back to 4500-4000 BC can be seen here. The jewels of the golden treasure, analogous to the objects of the Varna necropolis, are the oldest processed gold in the world.

8.6. Facilities for recreation and tourism, tourism infrastructure and services

All forms of mass tourism are very well developed in the area of Haskovo district. In the last few years, many new luxury hotels and dining establishments have been built in the cities of Haskovo, Dimitrovgrad, Harmanli and Svilengrad, which can meet the requirements of modern business tourism. The increase in visits related to business trips, meetings, seminars, cultural and sports events from the country and with international character give confidence about the future of this type of tourism in the region. Traditionally important for the region, and practically all municipalities, is transit tourism thanks to the transcontinental corridors passing through it. Wonderful conditions for summer and winter family recreation are created in the recreation facilities of the village of Mineralni bani at the foot of the Rhodopes and in the village Borislavtsi on the coast of lake Ivailovgrad. It is also noted the revival of healing tourism in the area. Recently, a number of new hotels and rest facilities have been built in the spa complex of the Mineralni bani village, and the majority of the old ones have been modernized. Great opportunities for the development of this type of tourism have the city of Merichleri, which is also famous for its excellent mineral water. Haskovo region is not lagging behind in the development of alternative tourism - more and more popular with the tourism of the new century. The first steps in rural tourism have become numerous settlements in the municipalities of Stambolovo, Topolovgrad, Ivaylovgrad, Lyubimets and Madzharovo. The pure nature, the preserved rural life and the traditions of the villages in the area suggest its development in the other municipalities.

8.7. Hotels and restaurants – tourist sites

There is a variety of luxury hotels with excellent service (most of them in Haskovo) in which you can stay, also the administrative center of the region, offers different types of restaurants respectively for different tastes.

9. Tourist information centers

The Tourist Information Center of Haskovo offers to its guests detailed information about the opportunities for recreation and entertainment - museums and historical monuments, natural landmarks, cultural and sporting events, hotels, entertaining and dining establishments. The Tourist Information Center Haskovo is located in the administrative center of the region – Haskovo.

Contacts:

Address: Rakovski 1A boulevard, town of Haskovo, Republic of Bulgaria

Telephone: 00359 38 666 444

E-mail: tourism.haskovo@gmail.com ; info@haskovo-bulgaria.com

Website: www.haskovo-bulgaria.com

10. Hunting farms

The forestry activity in the area is concentrated in three divisions - state forestry Haskovo, Svilengrad and Ivaylovgrad and one state-owned Topolovgrad estate. Their business encompasses territory of the whole area.

State hunting farm "Topolovgrad"

The State Hunting Enterprise "Topolovgrad" manages 25300 ha of forest area, as including 7817 industrial areas. The afforested area of state hunting economy "Topolovgrad" is 20143.5 ha, which is 80.9% of its total area. The forests are mostly deciduous, represented by bumblebees, oak, winter oak, hornbeam, lime, acacia and others. it is significant the area of coniferous black pine, white pine, acacia, red oak and others. created primarily in accessible pools and near human active sites activity.

On the territory of a state hunting economy there are good conditions for the development of hunting and fishing:

- The hunting complex "Sakar" has an area of 6306 hectares and covers the central part and the northern slopes of the Sakar Mountains, situated in the middle deciduous forests;
- The hunting complex "Knyazhevo" with an area of 1511 ha is located in close to the Tundja River. The deciduous, coniferous and mixed forests prevail.
- The hunting complex "Sakar" covers an area of 2365 hectares and covers the southern slopes of the Sakar Mountains, situated among deciduous forests.

11. Wineries

In the antiquity, people knew about 150 varieties of grapes. Pliny lists 91 of them but thinks their number is over 400! Roman agronomist Columella explains this diversity with the fact that vines of different varieties of the same sort give different grapes in quality. In any case, the vine growers of this age knew well the different varieties and their ability to grow under different conditions - climate, soils, etc. It was normal practice to cultivate the vine through grafting. Thracians often let the vines wrap themselves on trees planted specifically for the purpose, hanging them like garlands between them. For a good yield from a vineyard that first gave grapes, it was the one who provided a hundred amphorae of wine from one jugger. In modern measures, this amounts to 1050 liters per hectare. At the Seneca estate of the same area, they received 1680 liters of wine. Columella recommends the vineyards to be grubbed up to 630 liters per hectare. By the 1st century AC, relying on the experience of the ancient Greeks, Thracians and other peoples who lived before them, the Romans laid the wine-making on a modern basis. In conclusion, we can add that the tradition of our ancestors is alive - in the Haskovo region there are dozens of cellars that preserve and develop the lessons learned by the ancient Thracians.

12. Border Checkpoints of Haskovo region

On the territory of Haskovo region are located two border checkpoints: Kapitan Andreevo – Kapikulewhich connects Bulgaria with Turkey and Kapitan Petko Voyvoda - Ormenion which connects Bulgaria with Greece.

TOURISM POTENTIAL OF KIRKLARELI REGION

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1. Geographical Location

Kırklareli is located in south Thrace, part of the Marmara Region of Turkey. Kırklareli is a border province where is located between Istanca and Ergene in Thrace part of Marmara district. Kırklareli is stated between 41°44' – 42°00' north latitude and 26°53' – 41°44' east longitude. The area in which Kırklareli lies is bordered on the north by Bulgaria and on the east by the Black Sea. İstanbul is located at the South of the city, Tekirdağ is stated at the South of the city and Edirne is located at the west of the city. It lies in the foothills of the Yıldız (Istanca) Mountains. The altitude of the city centre is 266 metres and surface area of the city is 6650 square kilometre.

Districts of Kırklareli: Lüleburgaz, Pınarhisar, Babaeski, Vize, Demirköy, Pehlivan köy and Kofçaz.



2. Socio-Economic And Demographic Characteristics

Kırklareli is one of the important centers that carry the traces of history as well as the natural beauties, starting from Thracians to the Ottomans.

Table: Population by Years in Kırklareli

Kırklareli (Province)	Central District (Kırklareli)			Towns/Villages			Total			Exchange Ratio (Annual)
	Man	Woman	Total	Man	Woman	Total	Man	Woman	Total	
1965	14.833	9.957	24.790	19.760	19.681	39.441	34.593	29.638	64.231	
1970	16.088	11.343	27.431	17.678	18.067	35.745	33.766	29.410	63.176	-0,33%
1975	20.959	12.306	33.265	17.722	17.174	34.896	38.681	29.480	68.161	1,58%
1980	21.534	14.762	36.296	17.515	17.318	34.833	39.049	32.080	71.129	0,87%
1985	23.915	16.966	40.881	17.581	16.828	34.409	41.496	33.794	75.290	1,17%
1990	23.835	19.182	43.017	17.951	16.207	34.158	41.786	35.389	77.175	0,50%
2000	28.614	24.607	53.221	14.267	13.242	27.509	42.881	37.849	80.730	0,46%
2007	31.042	28.928	59.970	11.924	11.484	23.408	42.966	40.412	83.378	0,47%
2008	32.672	29.208	61.880	11.626	11.362	22.988	44.298	40.570	84.868	1,79%
2009	34.515	29.750	64.265	11.332	11.066	22.398	45.847	40.816	86.663	2,12%
2010	31.693	30.459	62.152	11.085	10.848	21.933	42.778	41.307	84.085	-2,97%
2011	35.121	31.105	66.226	11.005	10.567	21.572	46.126	41.672	87.798	4,42%
2012	34.804	32.556	67.360	10.929	10.667	21.596	45.733	43.223	88.956	1,32%
2013	34.355	33.649	68.004	11.287	10.218	21.505	45.642	43.867	89.509	0,62%
2014	35.414	34.747	70.161	12.257	10.096	22.353	47.671	44.843	92.514	3,36%
2015	36.944	36.573	73.517	11.979	9.778	21.757	48.923	46.351	95.274	2,98%
2016	37.759	37.227	74.986	11.675	10.965	22.640	49.434	48.192	97.626	2,47%

Table: Visitor Data for Kırklareli and Edirne in 2015

Arrival Numbers of Foreign Visitors				Departure Numbers of Foreign Visitors			
Province	Customs Gate	Way of Arrival	Visitor	Province	Customs Gate	Way of Departure	Visitor
<u>Kırklareli</u>	<u>Provincial Sum</u>		367.785	<u>Kırklareli</u>	<u>Provincial Sum</u>		363.343
		Highway	367.785			Highway	363.343
	<u>Dereköy</u>	Highway	367.785		<u>Dereköy</u>	Highway	363.343
<u>Edirne</u>	<u>Provincial Sum</u>		3.162.945	<u>Edirne</u>	<u>Provincial Sum</u>		3.120.968
		Railway	7.368			Railway	7.771
		Highway	3.155.577			Highway	3.113.197
	<u>Kapıkule</u>	Railway	7.368		<u>Kapıkule</u>	Railway	7.771
	<u>İpsala</u>	Highway	688.552		<u>İpsala</u>	Highway	656.401
	<u>Kapıkule</u>	Highway	1.791.918		<u>Kapıkule</u>	Highway	1.779.051
	<u>Pazarkule</u>	Highway	258.638		<u>Pazarkule</u>	Highway	278.335
	<u>Hamzabeyli</u>	Highway	416.469		<u>Hamzabeyli</u>	Highway	399.410

The most important source of income for those living in Kırklareli is agriculture and livestock breeding. However, income from agriculture and livestock are gradually decreasing every year, the amount of land per farmer is falling and most of the villagers are separated from the soil because of the difficulty of subsistence.

The project is co-funded by European Union through the Interreg-IPA CBC Bulgaria – Turkey Programme

3. Infrastructure, environment

Forest and sea are the leading natural beauties of the province. The most important forest area of the province is Dereköy, Kofçaz, Demirköy and Vize. İğneada and Kıyıköy have natural beaches. Dereköy Bucak Center on Kırklareli-Bulgaria tourist road, Kocakaynaklar (13km north of Dereköy), Dolapdere (7km north of Dereköy), Koçyazı and Asker Çeşmesi in Kofçaz county, Velika Creek in Demirköy district are the picnic areas with abundant water and trout.

It passes through the majestic and dense forests of the Istranca (Yıldız) Mountains and reaches Dereköy Border Gate, which opens to Bulgaria after 44km. Although there are no national parks in Kırklareli, there are areas in the forests where respond people's demand for rest and recreation in the open air. In addition, Kırklareli has the world-wide biological diversity of Demirköy District Subasar Forests, Saka Lake Deep Spot Nature Reserve and Kastros Bay Nature Reserve.

4. Transport accessibility, mobile connections

Kırklareli is a province which can benefit from highway, railways and marine transportation. Highway is the most effective means of transport for the province. Almost a 50km part of international E-5 highway is within the borders of Kırklareli. The city center is located in the to the north of this road and the districts of Babaeski and Lüleburgaz are located on this road. Kırklareli is connected to Bulgaria via highway. The city benefits from a sufficient network of well developed transportation network. A daily bus service is available every day from Kırklareli to İstanbul, Çorlu, Lüleburgaz, Babaeski, Edirne, Pınarhisar, Vize and Demirköy.

Kırklareli city center is 62km away from Edirne, 210km away from İstanbul, 118km away from Tekirdağ and 234km away from Çanakkale. There are no airports within the provincial borders of Kırklareli. But Çorlu Airport is 125km away from Kırklareli. Airports flights to İstanbul, İzmir, Antalya and Ankara are made from this airport. Charter flights to Russia are also organized.

5. Education in tourism

The literacy rate in Kırklareli is 97,5 percent above Turkey's average.

Universities

- Kırklareli University; was established in 2007. There are 10 faculties, 3 Institution, 7 Vocational School, 3 Graduate School, 14 Application and Research Center. 655 academic personnel in total work in the faculties and academies giving education and about 27000 students receive education. Kırklareli University has two units about tourism education. (Tourism Faculty and Pınarhisar Vocational High School). Kırklareli university Tourism Faculty was established in 2009. There are two departments actively under the supervision of the Faculty; 1.Tourism Management 2. Travel Management and Tour Guiding. In addition graduate education (master's degree) is given in Tourism Management field in Kırklareli University Social Sciences Enstitution.

High schools

- Kırklareli Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School; The school is engaged in educating the qualified personnel in the tourism sector and educating the generations that accept the duty of owning them by preserving the richness of historical and natural tourism. The school was established in 1996 under the name of Kırklareli Anatolian Hotel and Tourism Vocational High School.

6. Healthcare in Kırklareli

There are 8 hospitals, 5 of them are public, 3 are private, 2 healthcare centers, 46 cottage hospitals, 55 village healthcare houses, 3 tuberculosis dispensaries, 2 family planning centers, 2 public health laboratories and 10 112 emergency and rescue stations in the province.

7. Analysis of tourism resources

Kırklareli has a high tourism potential with its green areas, forests, sea, recreation areas, parks, historical and cultural values.

7.1. Natural tourism resources

The Istranca Mountains are described as one of the 5 most important areas in Central and Eastern Europe in terms of protection of the European natural heritage at an international level. In addition, nearly half of the (194 species) Turkey bird species (454) can be seen in İğneada yearly. In İğneada, especially Mert and Erikli lakes are important wetlands for water birds in terms of nutrition, sheltering, accommodation and nesting. İğneada wetlands and the surrounding

area can be visited in four seasons by those who want to do bird and butterfly watching. There are 4 caves attracting attention and carrying out activities for tourism in terms of their natural features. These are Dupnisa Cave, Yenesu Cave, Domuzdere Cave and Kıyıköy Cave. The most important of these is the Dupnisa Cave.

İğneada Floodplain Forests National Park

It is a national park located within Kırklareli Province in Marmara Region of Turkey. The national park covers an area of 3,155 ha (7,800 acres) and is located at İğneada town on the Turkish-Bulgarian border at 25 km (16 mi) far from Demirköy district of Kırklareli Province. Streams running down from the Strandzha Mountain range towards Black Sea formed alluvium on the shore, where floodplain occurred due to seasonal floodings. The national park is a rare ecosystem, which consists of marsh, swamp, lakes and coastal sand dunes. The Strandzha mountain range is situated in the south and west. There are five lakes with aquatic plant. Lake Erikli covering 43 ha (110 acres) is a lagoon, which gets separated from the sea in the summer months as a result of drought. Lake Mert of 266 ha (660 acres) area is formed by Çavuşdere creek at its mouth. Lake Saka is a small lake of 5 ha (12 acres) situated in the south of the national park between the floodplain and the dunes. The two other lakes are Lake Hamam of size 19 ha (47 acres) and Lake Pedina of 10 ha (25 acres). The sand dunes are situated on both sides of İğneada town. İğneada Floodplain Forests National Park can be reached by public transportation from Istanbul via Silivri, Çorlu, Lüleburgaz, Pınarhisar, Demirköy and İğneada.

Kastros Bay Nature Conservation Area

This area is the only area with the larch forest in the natural state in Thrace. It has a natural characteristic suitable for the “Mediterranean seal”. The province of Kırklareli is located 48 kilometers away from the city of Vize and is between Kıyıköy town and Tekirdağ province. Bahçeköy Stream, which flows from Kastros Bay to the Black Sea, brings the provincial border of İstanbul-Kırklareli. In this part of the sea, a lagoon is formed.

Lake Saka Nature Reserve

This area is a nature reserve at Sivrilir Village of Demirköy District in Kırklareli. It is 26km away from Demirköy. The site is on a floodplain of a river that flows into the Black Sea, and seasonally floods thus rendering it a unique and one of the very few remaining floodplain forests in all of Europe. The fauna of the protected area consists of the mammals: deer, roe deer, fox, gray wolf, hare, wild boar, wildcat and the birds swan, mallard, greylag goose, woodcock and common wood pigeon. The nature reserve is habitat for the reptiles such as viper, slow-worm and water snake. The lake is home to the fish species of carp, red seabream, bass as well as to crustaceans like crayfish. In addition to the main flora of alder, elm and ash, trees such as oak, hornbeam, beech, black poplar, white poplar, willow, linden and walnut are found in the nature reserve.

Dupnisa Cavern

There are many caves in the province of Kırklareli. The most important one of these is the Dupnisa cavern, the second largest cave in Thrace, about 6 miles south of Sarpdere Village in Demirköy District, about 50km north of Kırklareli. Dupnisa cavern is a large underground system that has continued its formation and development since about 4 million years. 250 meters dry cave part of Dupnisa cavern, covered with giant stalactites, stalagmites and columns, and 200 meters watery main cave part were opened to tourism in 2003. On the other hand, a large part of the cave (a large part of the formation where dripstones are present and where the bat colonies live) has been excluded from the visit to protect its nature and its creatures. Dupnisa, Thrace's first and only cave opened for tourism, is located in a zone with wild view in Rezve Stream which forms Turkey-Bulgaria border and where the Strandzha Mountains are deeply plowed.

The Dupnisa Cave, located on the skirts of Mount Mahya, the highest peak of the Strandzha Mountains with a height of 1031 meters, has a history of 180 million. Dupnisa Cave has two floors and consists of three caverns: Dry Cave, Girl Cave and Watery Cave. Its total length is 2720 meters and it is one of the longest caves of Turkey. The underground river is one of the impressive features of Dupnisa Cave.

Istrancalar (Yıldız Mountains); The Istranca Mountains are located within the borders of Kırklareli. It is an important nature protection area thanks to its biodiversity. Strands are the

subject of many nature researches with its covered vegetation and nature structure and it is in the interest of those who deal with science. Thanks to its unique nature, it is well suited for nature walks, cycling, camping and nature photography.

İğneada; It is located in the Demirköy district of Kırklareli. It has an uninterrupted, wide beach of 20 kilometers long to start from the westernmost point of the Black Sea. It has found favour in terms of its features by those who are interested in camping and various nature activities and nature photographers.

Limanköy; Limanköy is connected to Kırklareli's İğneada area. It has a very impressive nature. Having a history of 150 years, Limanköy has an interesting story of foundation. According to this story; a community migrating from Romania 150 years ago was here. And those days there was only one person living here who was interested in the flare. This man persuaded this community to live here who migrated from Romania and together they founded Limanköy. İğneada Longoz Forests, one of the 3 longoz forests in the world, are very close here.

Demirköy; Demirköy; It is a town of Kırklareli and is located in the mountains of Yıldız Mountain. It lies in forests at an altitude of 400 meters. With its unique landscape, it has become a popular destination for nature photographers for all seasons. Fatih Dökümhane, which was built during the Ottoman period, is located here. Fatih Dökümhanesi is the place where the balls used in the conquest of Istanbul were molded. Demirköy also hosted the Thracian Tribes in ancient times. Wild strawberry, trout and forest honey are also famous and delicious products of the region.

Kıyıköy; It is 40km away from the Vizedistrict of Kırklareli. Kıyıköy, located on the Black Sea coast of Thrace; it is a charming holiday village with its preserved nature, unique view and delicious fishes. It was founded by the Lydians in 500 BC. Throughout history, it has been home to civilizations such as Thracian, Persian, Scythian, Medlar and Genoese. In Kıyıköy, which is located on a high hill, the people make their living from fishing, agriculture, animal husbandry and forestry. The entrance to the city is provided by a gateway from the Byzantine dating. There are rocks and caves formed by sea waves along the shore.

Beğendik Village; Beğendik village is located in Demirköy district of Kırklareli. This village, located in the western part of Turkey, on the border with Bulgaria, has a very clean and almost uncontaminated sea. It is not possible to make long holidays in this village because there is no lay-by, but it will purify your soul for a day.

7.1.1. Climate

Kırklareli climate varies according to the region. The continental climate is dominant in the center of Kırklareli. In the north-facing sections of the Yıldız Mountains, the Black Sea climate is seen. As a result, summers are cool, winters are cold. Inland from the sea, the continental climate is seen. Summers are hot, winters are cold and occasionally snowy.

Climate data for Kırklareli													
Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Record high °C (°F)	18.6 (65.5)	21.0 (69.8)	25.7 (78.3)	30.5 (86.9)	36.0 (96.8)	39.8 (103.6)	42.5 (108.5)	40.4 (104.7)	37.0 (98.6)	37.4 (99.3)	33.4 (92.1)	21.6 (70.9)	42.5 (108.5)
Average high °C (°F)	6.6 (43.9)	8.3 (46.9)	11.9 (53.4)	17.7 (63.9)	23.4 (74.1)	27.9 (82.2)	30.5 (86.9)	30.4 (86.7)	26.0 (78.8)	19.7 (67.5)	13.6 (56.5)	8.6 (47.5)	18.7 (65.7)
Daily mean °C (°F)	2.9 (37.2)	4.0 (39.2)	6.9 (44.4)	12.0 (53.6)	17.3 (63.1)	21.6 (70.9)	23.9 (75)	23.4 (74.1)	19.2 (66.6)	13.9 (57)	9.0 (48.2)	5.0 (41)	13.2 (55.8)
Average low °C (°F)	0.0 (32)	0.7 (33.3)	2.8 (37)	7.1 (44.8)	11.6 (52.9)	15.4 (59.7)	17.7 (63.9)	17.5 (63.5)	13.9 (57)	9.7 (49.5)	5.7 (42.3)	2.1 (35.8)	8.6 (47.5)
Record low °C (°F)	−15.8 (3.6)	−15.0 (5)	−11.8 (10.8)	−3.0 (26.6)	1.4 (34.5)	5.8 (42.4)	8.8 (47.8)	8.7 (47.7)	3.0 (37.4)	−3.4 (25.9)	−7.2 (19)	−11.1 (12)	−15.8 (3.6)
Average precipitation mm (inches)	60.0 (2.362)	50.1 (1.972)	47.1 (1.854)	44.9 (1.768)	49.0 (1.929)	48.3 (1.902)	25.0 (0.984)	21.4 (0.843)	34.4 (1.354)	53 (2.09)	66.2 (2.606)	70.7 (2.783)	570.1 (22.447)
Average rainy days	11.1	9.1	9.1	10.4	9.9	8.5	4.8	3.7	4.8	7.1	8.6	11.4	98.5
Mean monthly sunshine hours	89.9	109.2	164.3	204.0	272.8	282.0	322.4	319.3	240.0	167.4	114.0	68.2	2,353.5
Mean daily sunshine hours	2.3	3.2	4.4	5.5	8.3	9.6	10.0	9.5	7.2	4.5	3.3	2.2	5.83

7.1.2. Water

Streams and Lakes: Kırklareli and its environs have a large number of rivers, natural lakes, ponds, dams and wetlands. The Ergene river is born from the Yıldız Mountains and merges with Meriç. Mert Lake, located in the town of Demirköy, is a lagoon. Environment of Mert Lake submerge due to abundant rains in spring and autumn. With this feature, the forest area shows the feature of longoz here. The Cehennem Falls and Çifte Kaynaklar, located in the Vize district, are one of the most worthseeing touristic areas in Kırklareli provincial borders.

There are seven lakes named Erikli, Mert, Hamam, Pedina, Saka, Sülüklü and Ramana in İğneada. The lakes around İğneada and its surroundings are areas where many recreational activities can be done, especially picnic, sportif line-fishing and camping.

Sea: you can go swimming on the shore of İğneada and Kıyıköy in the region. June, July and August are the best months to enter the sea. The sea is generally rolling and windy. İğneada is located 25km away from Demirköy and 97km away from Kırklareli.

7.1.3. Vegetation and wildlife

57 per cent of the Kırklareli lands are covered with forests and bushes, 35 per cent with cultivated and planted areas, 7 per cent with meadows and meadows and 1 per cent with irrigation. Kırklareli vegetation generally shows forest and step features. There are beech forests on the northern slopes of the Strandzha Mountains and oak forests on the south and west slopes of Strandzha Mountains. The forests of the valleys near the sea and the surroundings of Lake Saka are rich in tree diversity. The only big larch forest in Thrace is located in Kırklareli, west of Kastro Bay.

The Black Sea in the east of the province and the forests of the Istranca mountain range in the north and north-east give the unique beauty to Kırklareli. The fresh waters reach up to the Black Sea and the forests flowing through the creeks contain various wild animals. A significant part of these natural richness are protected by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism as “natural protected area”. Demirköy and Kıyıköy Natural Sites, Kastros Bay Nature Reserve, Dingiloğlu Park, Pınarhisar Ali Özer Park, forested area around Dereköy-Bulgaria, Kaynarca Pekmezdere Cave and Alpullu Sugar Factory are registered natural protected area and they are among the natural wonders worth seeing.

7.2. Tourism and Cultural and Historical Heritage

Kırklareli has been called by different names throughout its history. In antiquity, it was referred to as Virisium, Verisse and Nerisse. The Byzantines called it “Saranta Ekklesies” (forty churches) before it was conquered by the Turks in the 14th century, when the name was changed to “Kırkkilise” (also meaning forty churches). During the early Republican period, when the

Ottoman districts became provinces, Kırkkilise was renamed “Kırklareli” on 20th December 1924.

Kırklareli is one of the provinces with rich cultural heritage in terms of historical structures. These include mosques, baths, fountains, martyrs, bridge, ottoman social complex and mausoleum. Most of the tumulus group in our country is located within the borders of Kırklareli, especially in the province of Vize. In addition many dolmens are located in Kırklareli. The remains of the castle and the tower also increase the cultural richness of Kırklareli. The excavations continue at the mound and tumulus. These excavations reveal new information about Kırklareli’s earlier unknown periods. The excavation at Çömlektepe (Vize) brought the only antique theater known in Thrace to the present.

Kırklareli Museum; It was built as a municipality building in 1894 by Mutasarrıf Neşet Pasha and Hacı Mestan Efendi, the mayor of that period. The building which was actually used until 1962 by the municipality was allocated to the Ministry of Culture in order to be transformed into an museum in 1970. The building which was started to repair in 1983 was opened in 1994 as a museum. The Archeology and Ethnography sections are located on the top floor and the Culture and Nature Exhibition Hall is located on the ground floor. In the culture and nature hall, the creatures under the threat of extinction or extinction are exhibited with their natural appearance. You can find 102 different kinds of creature examples from 76 species.

Yayla Neighborhood and Historical Houses; Kırklareli Yayla Neighborhood, it is a place with Bulgarian, Greek and Jewish populations. It is an open-air museum where houses are found reflecting Turkish architecture. Historical houses in Yayla neighborhood are thought to have been built in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Today it has been declared as an urban protected area.

Demirköy Fatih Foundry; Fatih Dökümhane, which was built during the Ottoman period, is located here. Fatih Dökümhanesi is the place where the balls used in the conquest of Istanbul were molded. Demirköy also hosted the Thracian Tribes in ancient times. Some of the cannons used during the conquest of İstanbul by the Turks were manufactured in Foundry, located in the district of Demirköy. The excavations made here will reveal a great civilization.

İğneada Lighthouse; İğneada Lighthouse known as Limanköy Lighthouse is located in İğneada district of Demirköy in Kırklareli. It was also known as “French Lighthouse” because it was built by the French during the reign of Sultan Abdülmecit in 1866. İğneada Lighthouse has two role as border lighthouse and route lighthouse. In the absence of electrical installations, the lighthouse, which was installed with a cradle and illuminated the sea, can be seen from 20 miles even today thanks to 100 halogen bulbs and plastic reflectors.

Vize Castle (Slow City Vize); Vize is the first slow city of Thrace and the eighth slow city of Turkey. Vize received the title “Slow City” with the application made in 2012 to the Association of International Slow Cities (Cittaslow). Vize Castle is located in the Vize district of Kırklareli province and carries the name of its place. The Vize Castle consists of two castles; an inner castle and an outer castle. The Vize Castle and its walls are based on the Roman period.

Vize Ancient Theater; Vize Antique Theater is located in the center of Vize, Kırklareli. It dates back to the 2nd century AD and has a capacity of 4000 spectators. The steps of seating and walking are made of marble. The antique theater that emerged as a result of excavations in the 1990s, is the only Roman period theater known up to the present.

Babaeski Bridge; located in the Babaeski district of Kırklareli, built in 1633 during the period of Murad IV. It is part of D-100 international highway and is still in use.

Hızırbey Turkish Bath; also known as Çifte Bath, is a part of Hızırbey Complex and is located in Kırklareli center. Because there is a double entrance for men and women in the bath, it is called "Çifte Bath". In 1383 Köse Mihalzade Hızırbey was made it done according to traditional Ottoman architecture. It was built adjacent to Ottoman bazaar.

Kırk Şehitler Monument; was built by Kırklareli Reconstruction Association in 1960. The Forty-Martyrs Monument was built to commemorate the Forty Raider who was martyred in the battle to get the city of Kırklareli from the Byzantine state in 1363.

Kırklareli Train Station; The Kırklareli Station and the train line were built by an Austrian construction company in order to reach the Edirne-Istanbul line in Alpullu and to connect Kırklareli to Istanbul. However, the French company had been operating the line. The station is

currently unavailable and has become one of the most beautiful recreational areas in the city, with various entertainment areas around it.

Seyfioğlu Redoubt and Taş Redoubt; Seyfioğlu Redoubt is located 3km North-east of Kırklareli city center and Taş Redoubt is located 3km North-west of Kırklareli. Seyfioğlu Redoubt and Taş Redoubt were built for security purposes after the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-1878. The construction of the redoubts against the enemy attacks started in 1879 and the construction was completed in 1890.

Aşağı Pınar Mound; is 3 km from the center of Kırklareli. The mound, which had a very old age, was first noticed in 1980. When it was discovered, it was put on the record with the name "Salhana". Historical remains obtained as a result of excavation works, it was learned that the region was used as a settlement in the Neolithic Age. Aşağı Pınar Mound is the oldest farm-village settlement in Trakya. Located on an area of 3000 square meters, the Aşağı Pınar Mound is the largest archeological excavation site in Kırklareli.

Kanlı Geçit Mound; Kanlıgeçit Höyüğü is located to the south of the province center of Kırklareli. Kanlıgeçit Mound which is a historical mound is located at a distance of 300 meters from Aşağı Pınar Mound. Historical background of it is based on 3000 B.C. It is the oldest urban settlement known in the Balkans and is the settlement of the Anatolian colony belonging to the first and only Bronze Age in Thrace. The first archaeological excavations were carried out in 1994 at Kanlıgeçit Mound. Various excavation works are continuing at Kanlıgeçit Mound.

7.3. Temples, monasteries, religious and archaeological sites

The oldest mosque in the city of Kırklareli is the Hızırbey Mosque, built in 1383. The mosque complex includes a bazaar. Nearby stands a hamam also built under the patronage of Hızırbey. The 14th century Kırklar Memorial with its 18 impressive columns stands on Kırklar Hill honoring the site where 40 soldiers lost their lives when the Ottomans conquered this area under the command of Murat I. The Archaeological Museum exhibits finds from local excavations.

Vize is an important Byzantine center, houses the Küçük Ayasofya Church along with a castle, both dating from the Byzantine period.

The Sokullu Mosque in Lüleburgaz, on the Edirne-İstanbul road, is an exquisite work of Sinan that dates from 1570. The neighboring town of Babaeski also boasts a Sinan building in the Cedit Ali Paşa Mosque.

Sokullu Mehmet Paşa Social Complex; The Sokullu Mehmet Paşa Complex is located in the Lüleburgaz district of Kırklareli. It was built in 1569 by Mimar Sinan. The complex consists of a mosque, a madrasa, a caravanserai, a tabhane, imaret, an ottoman bazaar, prayer dome, hazire, ottoman elementary-primary school, double bath, bridge, fountain, waterways and cistern. Only the mosque, madrasa, ottoman bazaar and bath could be protected from these structures. The most important structure of this complex is Sokullu Mehmet Paşa Mosque. Since it is one of the most important mosques of Lüleburgaz, the building is constantly open for worship throughout the day.

Hızır Bey Social Complex and Hızırbey Mosque; Hızırbey Complex is located in Kırklareli center. Hızırbey complex consist of Hızırbey Mosque, double bath, arasta (Ottoman bazaar) and fountain. Hızırbey Mosque, also known as Great Mosque, was built in 1383. Nowadays, it is open for worship.

Cedit Ali Paşa Mosque; Cedit Ali Pasha Mosque is a small model of the Selimiye Mosque in Edirne. It is located in Babaeski district of Kırklareli. It is covered with a large dome covered with lead. It was built in 1555 by Mimar Sinan.

Small Hagia Sophia Church (Gazi Süleyman Paşa Mosque); Küçük Ayasofya Church, also known as Gazi Süleyman Paşa Mosque; it is located in the Kale neighborhood of the Vize district of Kırklareli. The church was built in the 6th century during the period of the Jewish. It was started to be used in the 14th century and it is also used today. Despite being transformed into a mosque, church air is dominant in the building.

Hagia Nicola Monastery; The Hagia Nicola Monastery is located in Kıyıköy town, which is connected to the Vize District of Kırklareli. It is 700 meters away from Kıyıköy. It is one of the most beautiful examples of rock monasteries belonging to 6-9th century. In addition, the monastery has cells obtained by carving rocks.

Cave Monastery; Cave Monastery, also known as Asma Kaya Cave Monastery, is located in the Vize district of Kırklareli province. It is located in Asma Kaya. Asma Kaya is a rocky formation valley, in which there are carved places made by both by natural and human. One of these carved places is the Cave Monastery.

7.4. Cultural activities and events, festivities- Traditions, Customs and Crafts

Kırklareli Handicrafts; are very valuable thanks to their local motifs. Especially the hand weavings belonging to the village of Poyralı of Kırklareli are famous. Due to the widespread animal breeding in Kırklareli and its vicinity, there is no problem about raw materials and in this case it provides widespread weaving. Kırklareli weaving, which has a history dating back to 8000 B.C., still continues today with the prayer rugs, saddlebags, bags and runway weaving made of wool yarn in horizontal wooden countertops. Textile such as carpet, rug etc. which is produced here can be purchased from Poyralı Culture House. Poyralı Culture House is a kind of village ethnography museum.

Festivities;

Kakava; is a celebration event of Romani people. Its place of origin is Egypt and Front Asia. According to Gypsy/Rom mythology and belief, Kakava is the transformation of miraculous events to “a belief” based on oppression towards another society in times of ancient Egypt God-King pharaoh living together with Kopt people. In Turkey's western cities of Edirne and Kırklareli, Kakava is celebrated joyfully. After lighting the fire and jumping over it, music playing and dancing is performed. Various exhibitions are opened in the festival area. It is known as Kırklareli Karagöz Culture-Art and Kakava Festival. Some of the other festivals are Strawberry Festival (May/ Demirköy), Kaynarca Culture and Water Festival (May/ Kaynarca), Karahıdır Cherry Festivals (June/ Kırklareli), Big Oil Wrestling Tournament (May/Babaeski), Agriculture Festival (August/ Babaeski).

7.5. Facilities for recreation and tourism, tourism infrastructure and services

Kofçaz Paragliding; The area in the Elmacık village of Kofçaz district is suitable for the parachute sport. Take off areas are prepared in hamasi hill, küçük baba hill and koca bayır hill.

With the departure area more than one point, it is possible to take departure in every direction for those who want to fly in the region.

The Longoz Forests National Park (Su Basar Forests); It is located in Kıyıköy district of Kırklareli, İğneada area. In 2007, it reached the status of “natural park”. Longoz Forests, which cover an area of 3155 hectares, are also known as Subasar Forests. Longoz Forests have a unique ecosystem; these forests are the largest longoz forests ecosystem of Turkey and the second largest longoz forests ecosystem of Europe. There are only three examples in the world. Soils are very rich in terms of organic substances. It also houses 184 species of birds. Nature photography and nature is very convenient in terms of tourism.

7.6. Hotels and restaurants- tourist sites

İğneada, 98km east of Kırklareli, is squeezed between its sandy shores and the Yıldız Mountains. Kıyıköy (Midye) is another holiday resort town with good accommodation and picturesque dwellings from the Middle Age. The town and its walls date from the Byzantine period. There is also a monastery to St. Nicholas.

In Kırklareli, the hotels are concentrated in İğneada, Kıyıköy, Vize and Lüleburgaz districts as well as the Kırklareli city center.

7.7. Gastronomies & Restaurants

Kırklareli is a very rich city in terms of local food. The source of local cuisine is agricultural products, meat products and seafood. Agricultural products such as wheat, sunflower, sugar beet, seed pumpkin, potato, corn, dried beans, barley, grape, tomato, pepper grown in the region are the main food items of local cuisine. It is famous for meat dishes and meatballs. The Black Sea Coast of Kırklareli is another place to enjoy beaches and good fish restaurants.

Most popular gastronomic values of Kırklareli:

Hardaliye; It is a local drink specific to Thrace that prepared using vine leaves, mustard seeds and grapes. It is aimed to become a national drink by getting patent of this drink. You may come across in Edirne with Hardaliye. It is consumed as a vitamin deposit because of its blood pressure balancing, appetizing, roborant, immunomodulator and circulatory system regulatory

effects. Carefully selected papazkarası grapes are crushed to break the crust of the mustard to have a darker color, and then mustard seeds covered with vine leaf covered with crushed tofu to crumble to prevent it from turning into wine and nuts. When it thickens, it is made ready to drink by draining. Although it is found in almost all seasons, the most delicious time of Kalkan is in January, February and March.

Kırklareli Cheese; Kırklareli's cheese is famous. It is produced using the milk of milch animals that is grown in this area. Since both livestock and cattle breeding are done in the region, many kinds of cheese can be produced and natural yeasts are used in cheese production.

Turbot and Seasonal Fish Varieties; Turbot is a kind of fish living in the depth of 20 to 70 meters in Mediterranean, Aegean Sea, Marmara Sea and Black Sea. They are fed with small fishes, small sea animals and crabs living in the sea bottom. It is widely consumed in the Kıyıköy settlement located on the Black Sea coast of Thrace. Kıyıköy is a famous town with Kalkan fish and many people comes here from surrounding provinces to eat fish. The Kalkan is usually cooked in a pan and the buttons in the skin should be removed before eating. It is a type of fish preferred by most people because it does not have a very fatty flesh.

İğneada, which is located in Demirköy district of Kırklareli, is a very rich town in terms of fish variety. It has a rich fish flavor such as carp, red betle, perch and mullet thanks to its seven protected lake. İğneada has a fishing port and fresh fish of the season can be found at very economical prices. If you happen to pass by İğneada, you do not return without tasting grilled and fried grey mullet and fried mussels.

Demirköy Honey; Demirköy honey is produced by Thracian bees as a special strain. Thracian bee has recently been protected in order to preserve its pure race. Demirköy honey is produced by these bees in Strandzha forests in Kırklareli. This honey has a sharp aroma and a dark color. Demirköy honey, which differs as taste and color from other flower honeys, has become a brand of Kırklareli. This honey is very popular because of the healing of many diseases.

Poyralı Molasses; Poyralı molasses is a kind of beet molasses peculiar to Kırklareli. Kırklareli has a very good clay and soil structure for sugar beet production. Poyralı molasses, produced in

Poyralı Village, which is connected to the Pınarhisar district of Kırklareli province, has a darker consistency and a sharper aroma than the other molasses.

Pumpkin Dessert in Lime; A sauce prepared with lime is added to make the lime and the outer part of the pumpkin crunchy. In this way, with crunchy outside and mellow inside pumpkin dessert is obtained. The limestone pumpkin dessert, which has a fairly light flavor, is beginning to be consumed very much by the opening of the pumpkin season at the end of October.

Kırklareli Meatball; Kırklareli meatball is placed near the top among local food of the province. Edirne is also famous for its meatball but the taste of all of them (both Kırklareli meatball and Edirne meatball) is idiosyncratic and diversified. In making this meatball, the meat of the animals grown in Strandzha located in Kırklareli is used. Meatballs cooked on the grill are served on a separate plate with tomato sauce and pepper sauce, and preferably with yoghurt. The portion (average 140gr mincemeat) consists of 8 meatball.

Kid Chawarma; It is a meal indigenous to Kırklareli and is inherent to April-May. Famous kid chawarma restaurants serve only in April-May as a season of the kid. The front legs and hind legs of the kid are lashed together and put a large salt into it. Kid is put into a sieve of wood and cooked for about three hours in tandouri. It is served on grease-proof paper instead of plates, with bowl of yoghurt, scallion and onions.

Thracian Curly Lambs; Thracian curly lambs are so delicious because they grow in the natural environment. Curly lambs are fed with all natural products like clover, wheat, thyme, corn and barley. They are cut when their weight reaches 40 kilograms and are made ready for fresh consumption of their meat.

Boza; Boza is a considerably produced and consumed winter beverage especially in the province of Kırklareli throughout the Thrace region. It is consumed as an effective preservative and energizer beverage during cold winter days. In the making polenta, sugar and water are used. There is a high amount of minerals and vitamins in its content. Boza is in the category of high value and healthy beverages. It contains the nutrients that the body needs like iron, phosphorus, zinc, calcium and vitamin A. Depending on the preference, roasted chickpea, cinnamon or hazelnut can be used when serving. It has become a brand with Kırklareli.

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Water Buffalo Yoghurt; Water buffalo yoghurt is quite famous in Kıyıköy settlement of Kırklareli. It is a kind of yoghurt with milk obtained from water buffalo. The buffalo farming, which is quite common in the past, is only in the northeastern part of Trakya region in recent years. Buffalo farming is generally carried out in Saray town of Tekirdağ and in Kırklareli. The water buffalo yoghurt and the water buffalo yoghurt skin are produced using the milk obtained from water buffalos raised here. You can taste here the most natural state of yoghurt because water buffalo farming is done intensely in Kıyıköy.

Kırklareli Cherry; Kırklareli Cherry became a symbol of Kırklareli in time, and the province recently started to be known as "Cherry Town". Festivals are organized every year since 2013. The most beautiful cherries are exhibited and various competitions are organized in “Karahıdır Cherry Festivals” every year. Kırklareli cherry which has become a brand over time is very popular with its taste.

Horticultural Crops; Throughout history, Kırklareli has been known for its vineyards and beverages derived from its vineyard products. Thracian Region, especially Tekirdağ and Kırklareli are located in the zone, which is suitable for viniculture. Grapes cultivated in Kırklareli are fermented to obtain beverage products. These drinks, which have become a culture of Thrace, are exported to many countries in the world. Kırklareli is one of the most important regions of Turkey in the production of grapes and therefore in the production of beverage products.

8. Tourist information centres:

* **Local Tourism Department of Government** (İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü), Karakaş Mahallesi, İstasyon Caddesi, 39000 Kırklareli. Tel: (0288) 214 19 47.

9. Other kinds of facilities

Palivor Çiftliği; Palivor Ranch is a ranch in Demirköy district of Kırklareli province. It was established 300 years ago in the Istranca Forests. In 2011 the farm has been implemented again. The ranch is a private farm established near the border of Bulgaria. Organic farming and

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ecotourism are being done in the farm. If you would like to visit the farm, or if you want to buy a house in the farm visit: www.palivor.com. If you want to buy organic food like cheese, honey, jam, smoked meat etc. visit: <https://palivorciftligi.com>



10. Hunting farms;

Kırklareli is located in a region that is important for both land and water hunting. Due to its natural structure and being on the migration route, it enables the survival of various animal species. Demirköy-Vize Karamanbayırı, Demirköy Sislioba, Kofçaz Kocayazı, Vize Kıyıköy State hunting ground, Babaeski Ergene, Lüleburgaz Ahmetbey, Kırklareli Kayalı hunting ground and Çukurpınar sample hunting ground are hunting areas in Kırklareli as approved. As it can be hunted these areas, it is possible to hunt in state forests located within the provincial borders, soil conservation and reforestation areas, state agricultural enterprises, dam lakes, lakes, lagoons, swamps and reed fields in province borders.

11. Tourism offers - types of tourism and resorts

Alternative tourism activities that can be done within the scope of ecotourism in Istranca Mountains and around;

Nature photography, cave tourism, bicycle tourism, water sports tourism, paragliding, sportive line fishing, camp tourism, cultural tourism, trekking, mushroom picking tourism, orienteering, picnic areas and recreation areas, bird watching tourism, butterfly watching tourism, wildlife observation tourism, botanical tourism, eco-gastronomy.

12. Border Checkpoints of Kırklareli

Dereköy (Aziziye) Border Checkpoint: There are 1 checkpoint on the border: Dereköy-Malko Tarnovo. The border gate in Kırklareli can be reached by road E87. The border crossing point

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lies 11km north west of the village centre of Dereköy. (Dereköy is located in Strandzha mountains, 20km north of the center of Kırklareli.) The Bulgarian counterpart is Malko Tarnovo. It was opened in 1970.

TOURISM POTENTIAL OF EDIRNE PROVINCE

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1. Geographical location

Edirne is a city found in Turkey. It is located 41.68 latitude and 26.56 longitude and it is situated at elevation 62 meters above sea level. With a population of roughly 165,000, this is a historic city in Turkey that is well worth visiting. It is the north-western end of Turkey, which serves as a passage from the Middle East and Asia to the rest of Europe. The city is located in the European part of Turkey, called Thrace, or Eastern Thrace, more precisely.



Edirne is a gateway of Turkey opening to western world in Thrace, the first stopover for newcomers from Europe. Situated between the Greek, Bulgarian and Turkish borders, this beautiful city is famed for its many mosques, the elegant domes and minarets which dominate the panoramic appearance of the province. It was the capital of the Ottoman Empire from 1365 until the conquest of Istanbul by Mehmet II in 1453.

Today, it is a popular tourist spot for history and culture lovers, along with bargain hunters who frequent the local markets. A gateway to Asia with a European flair, you'll discover striking architecture and rich local cuisine. With its mosques, religious complexes, bridges, old bazaars, caravanserais and palaces, Edirne is a living museum. The sights in Edirne can be roughly grouped into those that are in downtown, those in northwestern neighbourhoods (Sarayıçi, and Yeniimaret) across the Tundzha River, and those in southwestern neighbourhood (Karaağaç) across the Tundzha and the Maritsa Rivers. A good number of medieval bridges span these rivers.

2. Socio-economic and demographic characteristics

Edirne's economy largely depends on agriculture. 73% of the working population work in agriculture, fishing, forests, hunting. There are lots of things that are cultivated here. Its lowlands are productive. The field crop cultivation has developed so much here. Corn, sugarbeet and sunflower are the first. Melon, watermelon and viniculture are advanced. For the last decade, the agricultural products have doubled. Corn, rice, sunflower, sugarbeet, tomato, eggplant, melon, watermelon, grape are cultivated so much. The through highway with an important role in global transport that connects Europe to Middle East and Anatolian to Istanbul passes through Edirne.

3. Transport accessibility, mobile connections

By plane

Of the nearby airports, the most convenient is Atatürk International in Istanbul, which has flights from all inhabited continents and a metro line providing an easy connection to main bus station (otogar).

By bus

The easiest way to reach Edirne is by bus from Istanbul. Departures are at various times with a fare of 40 Turkish Lira and a duration of 2h 40m (without the inevitable Istanbul gridlock), although stiff competition between the bus companies may sometimes result in fares as low as 10 TL (€5) pp. The bus station (otogar) in Edirne is located way out of the city but free service minibuses will take you to the city center (final stop is near Selimiye Mosque where city offices

of the bus companies are located). A local buse (1A or 3B) will take you back to the otogar for 2 Liras

There are no direct buses to Bulgaria. It is, however, possible to take a taxi to Kapikule on the Bulgarian border. From there one can sometimes wave over a bus traveling on to Plovdiv and Sofia. Another approach could be to walk across the border and take a bus or train from Kapitan Andreevo on the Bulgarian side of the border.

Note: The Metro Turizm bus company offers tickets from Edirne to Bulgaria on the line Istanbul-Sofia with stops in Haskovo and Plovdiv from Edirne, but the only stops at Arslanli Tesisleri (hotel and gas station, not far from the border). Taxi costs around 30 Lira from the center and 60 lira from the otogar.

By train

In July 2016 the regional train service to Istanbul resumed. A single train per day leaves Kapikule, 18 km away at the Bulgarian border, around 7 am, stopping at Edirne at 7.30, and reaching Istanbul Halkali around 11.30. The return train leaves Halkali at 6 pm, reaching Edirne around 10 pm and Kapikule by 10.30. Use local transport (eg dolmus) between Halkali and Istanbul city centre. The daily train to and from western Europe stops at Kapikule in the early hours. So from Edirne it is possible to connect with this train without doubling back via Istanbul, but it will likely involve a long taxi ride and a long weary wait on the platform.

By car

The city is on the main highways linking Turkey and Europe (road numbers: toll-free D100 and toll-road/motorway O-3/E80). A drive takes no more than two hours from Istanbul (224 km away) to Edirne on the motorway, even less if you drive very fast. The main European-Turkish border post Kapikule/Kapitan Andreevo (between Turkey and Bulgaria, SE of Svilengrad) is about 15-20 km away from the city, while less significant Pazarkule border post (between Turkey and Greece, north of Orestiada) is even nearer. Also, there is a newer border post Hamzabeyli/Lesovo (opened in 20016) in the north of Lalapaşa, easily reachable through D 535

highway linked to E80 (the toll-road connecting Istanbul to Edirne and Europe). Hamzabeyli border crossing has relatively less traffic than Kapıkule, most frequently used by trucks.

By boat

While it's theoretically possible for even large ships to enter the Maritsa River from the Aegean Sea and navigate upriver up to Edirne (which was indeed common during the time of Romans), the intense border area through which the river flows makes any use of any kind of water transportation impractical.

4. Education

Edirne is known to be a highly educated city with a literacy rate above 99%. According to the municipality data, the city has 180 primary schools, 20 high schools, 15 vocational high schools, 3 private schools, 2 private and 94 public pre-schools.

The education indicators of the city are also quite positive, having 14-15 students per teacher by 2014, which is below 18-19 or the average of Turkey. Moreover, the city has a public university, namely Trakya University, which has approximately 40.000 Associate's, Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral students.

Besides its historical sites, Edirne is an important cultural centre and there are a lot of individuals who grew up in this rich education and science centre. Among these individuals, there are a lot of important names such as Kemalpaşazade Şemseddin Ahmed, Ahmet Şemseddin Efendi, Şeyhülislam Mehmed Emin Efendi (chief religious officials in the Ottoman Empire), Şeyh Hasan Sezai-yi Gülşeni (leader of the Gülşeni dervishes), Celâleddin ve Cemâleddin Çelebi (founders of lodges used by mevlevi dervishes in the reign of Murad II), Hacı İvazpaşazade Atâî (the poet in the reign of Fatih), Hekim Sinanoğlu Atâî (the poet in the reign of Selim II), Sehi (owner of biography collections), Mecdi (interpreter), Kesbi (official author), Oruç Bey (Historian), Abdurrahman Hibri, Çevri İbrahim and Örfi Mahmud Ağa (experts on the history of Edirne).

Universities

- Trakya University, which is linked with Loerrach University through the Erasmus programme of the EU.

High schools

- Beykent Educational Institutions
- 80th Year of Republic Anatolian High School (80. Yıl Cumhuriyet Anadolu Lisesi in Turkish)
- Edirne Anatolian Teacher Training High School (Edirne Anadolu Öğretmen Lisesi in Turkish: It has been transformed into Edirne Social Sciences High School)
- Edirne Anatolian Technical High School (Edirne Anadolu Teknik Lisesi in Turkish)
- Edirne Beykent High School of Science (Özel Edirne Beykent Fen Lisesi)
- Edirne Beykent High School of Anatolian (Özel Edirne Beykent Anadolu Lisesi)
- Edirne High School (Anatolian High School) (Edirne Lisesi in Turkish)
- Edirne İlhami Ertem High School (Edirne İlhami Ertem Lisesi in Turkish)
- Edirne Industrial Vocational High School (Edirne Endüstri Meslek Lisesi in Turkish)
- Edirne Milli Piyango Trade Profession High School (Edirne Milli Piyango Ticaret Meslek Lisesi)
- Edirne Suleyman Demirel Science & Maths High School (Edirne Fen Lisesi in Turkish)
- Edirne Yıldırım Anatolian High School (Edirne Anadolu Lisesi- Yıldırım Anadolu Lisesi in Turkish)
- Edirne Fine Arts High School (Edirne Güzel Sanatlar Lisesi in Turkish)

5. Healthcare in Edirne

According to the Governorship of Edirne, the city is among the cities with best healthcare conditions in Turkey. The quality of life indicators put the city in the 11th place in Turkey, limited to the healthcare services. There are 7 hospitals in Edirne, 3 of which are directly connected to the Turkish Ministry of Health, 1 of which belongs to the university as a training&research hospital, and 3 of which are private. The number of beds per 10.000 of population is 47,4 and this is almost twice the average of Turkey, which is 26,4. There are 51

family healthcare centers in the city, along with 115 family practice centers. In addition to those, there are 3 mother and child care and family planning centers, 1 tuberculosis control dispensary and 1 oral and dental health center. 17 Emergency Healthcare Centers also operate within the premises of the city.

6. Natural tourism resources

The Koru Mountains are one of the three most important races of Thrace and have the characteristic of being the most important geography in Trakya after the wildlife and the Yıldız Mountains. It is an important geography for wildlife in Thrace after Yıldız Mountains. Many wild animals live in there for example deer, wolf, fox, wild boar, rabbit, partridge and pheasant. Forest structure consists of corn, pine and oak communities.

İpsala Koyun Tepe is located 140 km from Edirne city center and 26 km from İpsala town center. Three sides of the village of Koyuntepe, which is laid on a flat surface, is surrounded by water and oval. Koyuntepe Village, which has a history of 120 years, is confronted with Oratepe, Hisar Dagi with its former name. A part of the hill which has a historical feature was declared as a protected area in 1999 and protected.

7. Climate

Edirne has a humid subtropical climate (Köppen climate classification: Cfa) with long, hot summers and cold and occasionally snowy winters.

Climate data for Edirne													
Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Record high °C (°F)	19.3 (66.7)	23.2 (73.8)	28.0 (82.4)	32.4 (90.3)	37.1 (98.8)	42.6 (108.7)	44.1 (111.4)	41.0 (107.4)	39.9 (103.8)	35.8 (96.4)	28.0 (82.4)	22.8 (73)	44.1 (111.4)
Average high °C (°F)	6.6 (43.9)	9.2 (48.6)	13.1 (55.6)	19.1 (66.4)	24.7 (76.5)	29.1 (84.4)	31.7 (89.1)	31.7 (89.1)	27.2 (81)	20.4 (68.7)	13.9 (57)	8.4 (47.1)	19.59 (67.28)
Daily mean °C (°F)	2.7 (36.9)	4.4 (39.9)	7.6 (45.7)	12.8 (55)	18.1 (64.6)	22.4 (72.3)	24.7 (76.5)	24.4 (75.9)	19.9 (67.8)	14.2 (57.6)	9.1 (48.4)	4.6 (40.3)	13.74 (56.74)
Average low °C (°F)	-0.6 (30.9)	0.4 (32.7)	2.8 (37)	7.1 (44.8)	11.6 (52.9)	15.4 (59.7)	17.3 (63.1)	17.1 (62.8)	13.3 (55.9)	9.1 (48.4)	5.0 (41)	1.3 (34.3)	8.32 (46.98)
Record low °C (°F)	-19.5 (-3.1)	-19.0 (-2.2)	-12.0 (10.4)	-4.1 (24.6)	0.7 (33.3)	6.0 (42.8)	9.3 (48.7)	9.1 (48.4)	1.3 (34.3)	-3.7 (25.3)	-9.4 (15.1)	-14.9 (5.2)	-19.5 (-3.1)
Average precipitation mm (inches)	64.1 (2.524)	51.7 (2.035)	51.9 (2.043)	47.0 (1.85)	52.9 (2.083)	46.2 (1.819)	31.7 (1.248)	23.0 (0.906)	38.0 (1.496)	56.9 (2.24)	68.6 (2.701)	70.4 (2.772)	602.4 (23.717)
Average rainy days	12.9	9.9	10.0	10.5	10.3	8.6	5.5	4.2	4.8	7.9	11.0	13.6	109.2
Mean monthly sunshine hours	74.4	103.6	142.6	192.0	263.5	294.0	328.6	310.0	234.0	161.2	99.0	68.2	2,271.1
Mean daily sunshine hours	2.2	3.4	4.3	6.1	7.6	9.2	10.2	9.4	7.3	5.1	3.2	2.2	5.85

Source: Turkish State Meteorological Service

A humid subtropical climate or humid temperate climate is a zone of climate characterised by hot and humid summers where tropical air masses dominate, and mild winters. Under the Köppen climate classification, Cfa and Cwa climates are either described as humid subtropical climates or mild temperate climates. These climates normally lie on the southeast side of all continents, generally between latitudes 25° and 35° and are adjacent to tropical climates to the south. This climate features mean temperatures in the coldest month between 0 °C (32 °F) and 18 °C (64 °F) and mean temperatures in the warmest month 22 °C (72 °F) or higher.

8. Waters

Edirne has several historic arch bridges crossing over the rivers **Meriç** and **Tundzha**, which flow around west and south of the city.

Tundzha is a river in Bulgaria and Turkey and the most significant tributary of Meriç, emptying into it on Turkish territory near Edirne. The river takes its source from the central parts of Stara

Planina north of Kalofer, it then flows east and makes a sharp turn to the south before Yambol, in which direction it flows until it reaches Meriç. Tunca's length on Bulgarian territory is 350 km. It has about 50 tributaries.

Meriç (Maritsa or Evros) is, with a length of 480 km, the longest river that runs solely in the interior of the Balkans. It has its origin in the Rila Mountains in Western Bulgaria, flowing southeast between the Balkan and Rhodope Mountains, past Plovdiv and Parvomay to Edirne. A small section of the northern branch of the river runs entirely in

Turkey; it was handed to Turkey in order to prevent the town of Edirne from facing a Greek bank. The rest of the river to the sea flows along the border, near Kastanies, from where it turns south to enter the Aegean Sea near Enez, where it forms a delta. The Tunca is its chief tributary, Arda is another one. The lower course of the Meriç forms part of the Bulgarian-Greek border and most of the Greek-Turkish border.

Enez, further to south on the shore of Aegean Sea is a popular town among the Edirneans to spend the summer, which features long sandy beaches and a Byzantine citadel. Also the town of Enez is located on the southern shore of the river Meriç, where its estuary broadens to meet the Aegean Sea in the Gulf of Saros. Enez occupies a ridge of rock surrounded by broad marshes. Its festivals and clear beaches make it famous.

Erikli, 2.5 km from Erikli Village, a village connected to the Keşan district, is a blue-flagged beach in Saros Gulf. Erikli Beach is located on the Aegean Sea coastline in Thrace. The waters are pretty clean.

Mecidiye – Uzunkum, located in Mecidiye Village, which is connected to Keşan district, is a beach suitable for swimming. Mecidiye beaches that protect nature because of lack of settlements in the coastal area are the areas where sea tourism is the most comfortable place to live in the region. In addition to these beaches is also extremely convenient for handline fishing and diving.

Lake Gala National Park: The national park covers an area consisting of Lake Pamuklu and Lake Küçük Gala within the boundaries of İpsala and Enez districts. The protected area is

administered by the Directorate-General of Nature Protection and National Parks (Doğa Koruma ve Milli Parklar Genel Müdürlüğü) of the Ministry of Environment and Forest. The park is quite rich of bird genera. Some 163 bird species are observed in the area, of which 46 are resident, 27 winter migratory and 90 summer migratory birds. Best time to observe most of the bird species all together is between April and May in the spring, and September and October in the fall. The two lakes are home to 16 fish genera, including European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*, L.), pike perch (*Stizostedion lucioperca* L.), common carp (*Cyprinus carpio* L.) and northern pike (*Esox lucius*), which are of high economic value.

Danishment Natural Park: Edirne is 25 km away from Keşan and 40 km from Enez. The seaside park was built in 1988 as a recreational area for the public. The 1311 hectare area of the park is 10115 hectares of which is a camp site and 3075 hectares is a daily use area. 72 tent units and 90 auto camping units with a total of 162 units, the park has a capacity of 810 people per day. The daily use area has a capacity of 260 people and can serve 1072 people in total.

Gökçetepe Nature Park: Gökçetepe is a village connected to Edirne's Keşan district. It is suitable for accommodation with tent, caravan and bungalow.

Ibrice Harbour: The two coves which form the natural harbour of Ibrice near the village of Mecidiye are ideal for diving. Tiny fishing harbour now has a diving centre offering courses, fish restaurants, shops and guest houses catering for the many people who come here to dive during the summer months in particular.

9. Tourism and Cultural and historical heritage

One of the most important monuments in this ancient province is the **Selimiye Mosque**, built in the 16th century by the Turkey's greatest architect, Mimar Sinan. Carrying the name of the sultan reigning in that era, this mosque magnificently represents Turkish marble handicrafts and architecture, and it is covered with valuable tiles and fine paintings. In June 2011 the Selimiye Mosque Complex has been accepted under the list of UNESCO's World Heritage List.

Besides the mosques, there are visitor attractions in Edirne, all reflecting its rich past. The most prominent place being the **Edirne Palace** (Ottoman Turkish: Saray-ı Cedid-i Amire for "New Imperial Palace") in Sarayıçi quarter, built during the reign of **Murad II** (r. 1421–1444).

The project is co-funded by European Union through the Interreg-IPA CBC Bulgaria – Turkey Programme

Although the buildings of the palace and its bath (Kum Kasrı Hamamı) are in ruined form, the palace gate and the palace kitchen facility are restored.

Justice Castle ("**The *Kasr-ı Adalet*** "), built as part of the palace complex, stands intact next to the small Fatih Bridge over the Tunca river. Justice Pavilion in the Sarayıçi area and it was added to the Edirne Palace at the time of Sultan Suleiman, the Magnificent. It is said that Suleiman's laws were written here. There are two stones in front of the window of the first floor. From these, the one of the right, "seng-i arz", is the stone that left their petitions of requests. On the left, the "seng-i ibret", the heads of those who were sentenced to death by decapitation were exhibited.

Another notable building in the area is the **Trakya University's Bayezid II Külliye Health Museum**, an important monument with its complex construction comprising many facilities used in those times. There are caravansaries, like the **Rustem Pasha** and **Ekmekcioglu Ahmet Pasha caravansaries**, which were designed to host travelers, in the 16th century. Rüstempaşa Caravansarai was built in 1554 by the order of Damat Rüstem Pasha, who was married with one of the daughters of Kanuni Sultan Süleyman (Suleyman the Magnificent). Renovated in 1970, the building is still used as a hotel. Ekmekçizade Caravansarai, About a 10-minute walk to Rüstempaşa Caravansarai, Ekmekçizade Caravansarai was built in 1610 by the chief architect of the period, Sedefkar Mehmet Ağa. Also referred to as the Ayşe Kadın Caravansarai due to its location called Ayşekadın, the caravansarai was built by the order of the chief provincial treasurer Ekmekçizade Ahmed Pasha.

The historic **Karaağaç** railway station hosts today, after redevelopment, **the Trakya University's Faculty of Fine Arts** in Karaağaç suburb of Edirne. Karaağaç has an atmosphere more of a town rather than a city neighbourhood, with some charming mansions scattered around its grid plan. At the southwestern end of Karaağaç is the historical building in late Ottoman style of the Presidency of Trakya University (Trakya Üniversitesi Rektörlüğü), placed in a pleasant garden (free admission). The building, which dates back to the final years of 19th century, was originally built as the main train station of the city as the steam locomotive at the backyard still attests, and had that service for years until 1970s when it was abandoned after a new railway straight to the city was laid, due to the increasingly inconvenient operation of former railtracks

crisscrossing Turkish-Greek border as the relations between two nations deteriorate. The university took over in 1998. At the side of the building is **Lausanne Monument** (Lozan Anıtı), a metallic structure of three columns symbolizing Turkey (the longest one symbolizes Asian Turkey, the middle-sized symbolizes Eastern Thrace (European Turkey), while the shortest symbolizes Karaağaç itself, being the only Turkish soil west of Maritsa River, in other words west of Eastern Thrace) with a lady in the middle holding a sheet of paper, presumably symbolizing Treaty of Lausanne, in which major western powers recognized newly founded Turkish Republic in 1923. Behind the monument, in the shades of a pine woods is an open air sculpture exhibition (free admission) which contains marble statues chipped in situ by sculptors from neighbouring countries.

Saraclar Caddesi: A pedestrianized shopping street with pleasant cafés on sides. The old shop buildings on this street has a distinctively neoclassical architecture and the lively bazaars of "Bedesten" and "Arasta" make the province colorful and bring back the ancient times. Several bridges exist which have stood for centuries, adorning the land with their old but fine appearances.

Ali Pasha Bazaar: The Ali Pasha Bazaar in Edirne is a covered market designed by Mimar Sinan in 1569. Decorated with red and white stone arches, there's six different gates into the bazaar. Similar to the Grand Bazaar in Istanbul, this atmospheric market is much smaller in size, but no less fun to explore with over 130 vendors selling everything from knock-off Nikes, to underwear, dishes, etc. It's just one of three such bazaars in the city where you'll find a wealth of locally produced and imported goods available.

Uzunkopru — literally "the long bridge", this town 66 km south of Edirne was named after a 15th century stone bridge of 174 arches, spanning a length of about 1500 m (4500 feet) across the River Ergene, a tributary of Maritsa, and the marshy meadows along its banks. Purportedly one of the longest medieval bridges in the world, the bridge just north of the town is still in use by the modern traffic, connecting the town to the highway D550/E87, linking Edirne with various locations south.

Gazi Mihal Bridge (Gazi Mihal Köprüsü), a long arch bridge built during Byzantine period and then repaired in 1420 that spans the Tundzha and lies just next to the main highway to Kapıkule border post from city centre, and the adjacent Gazi Mihal Mosque (Gazi Mihal Camii), built by Gazi Mihal Pasha, an Ottoman commander of Bulgarian origin.

9.1. Gastronomies & Restaurants

Mixing Ottoman and Greek influences on a plate, Edirne offers a plethora of unique sweets which highlight the best of both cuisines. Especially, liver (ciger) is a definitely must-try for non-vegetarians. It is prepared in a unique local way (whole pieces, not puree, of liver, covered in flour, are deep fried inside a cauldron full of boiling vegetable oil) and served with an infernally hot dried and crunchy pepper. If you are one of those who don't like liver because of its distinct smell, you can be pretty sure you won't sense it in Edirne liver. Best to be eaten with ayran, a salty yogurt drink because it's one of two things (the other is bread, which fortunately is served free of charge at liver restaurants) that can suppress the fire the dried pepper leaves on your palate.

One of the best things to do in Edirne Turkey is experience authentic Ottoman cuisine at **Tulipa Cafe and Restaurant**. Situated in a beautifully restored historic mansion, the restaurant's mission is to preserve local Turkish traditions through their refined culinary offerings.

Edirne is well known for the local dish "**ciğer tava**" (breaded and deep-fried liver) served often with cacık, diluted yogurt with chopped cucumber. The dish typically consists of very thinly sliced and fried cow's liver, accompanied by fresh tomatoes, onions and fried chili peppers. It is served in a standard portion, but it is also possible to order 1,5 portions in a single plate.

Edirne Meatballs, Those are typical meatballs, but their size is a big larger than the average meatball in Turkey, In one portion, one normally has 6 meatballs, and depending on the place, the meatballs may be served with tomatoes, onions and rice. The meat is of beef, and in the mixture of minced meat, bread and spices are added. All the restaurants that sell meatball in Edirne serve it with a special chili sauce, which makes it special for Edirne.

Almond Paste (badem ezmesi) is a local, soft cookie-like dessert which is made of bitter almond. This local flavor, which has a very high tourist value, is very popular for souvenirs for gifts.

The “Kavala Cookie” is a traditional sweet cookie made with the purest and most wholesome ingredients such as flour, butter and almonds. This cookie is well known worldwide for its wonderful taste.

Trilece is a traditional dessert in Balcans. Trilece is a dessert prepared with milk syrup in Edirne where three dairy mixes are used. It is served with caramel sauce.

White cheese of Edirne is famous all over Turkey. It is one of the most famous products of Edirne. White cheese on the markets has been called as ‘Edirne Cheese’ for many years. Milk in the region is abundant and quality and with the staying of processed milk as cheese in ice houses for a long time. Edirne cheese gets famous as a full-fat and delicious all over the world.

İpsala’s Rice: İpsala’s famous baldo is the most preferred rice variety of rice dishes. 60% of Turkey’s rice production is provided from Meriç Delta and Ergene Plain; 90% of the rice production in Trakya is provided from Edirne. For Edirne, rice is very important in terms of economics.

Keşan’s Taste Satır Et: Satır Et has discovered in 90s in Kesan. The main feature of Satır Et, that differs from the other meat styles, is its delicateness and taste. Satır is made from special type of sheep, weighs about 40 kgs grown in the region of South Trakya. All those sheep are feeded in the free range of natural environment. The meat that is used to make Satır Et has stored in the refrigerator about 2 days at the degree of 4 celcius. After that, that meat has processed by a special knife on a wooden stuck. There is only 5 gram of salt added to the 1 kg of satır meat. There is nothing included other than that salt in the satır et. 180 gram of satır et has grilled with a two sided barbeque and served as it is.

Eel fish, is a taste to seek from Enez. One of the rare breeding grounds in our country Enez Lagoon or the Snakefish that grows in the Dalyan Lakes.

9.2. Temples, monasteries, religious sites

The city's history can be explored in museums such as the Edirne Turkish & Islamic Art Museum, housed in the Selimiye Mosque's courtyard house, and Edirne Archaeology and Ethnography Museum.

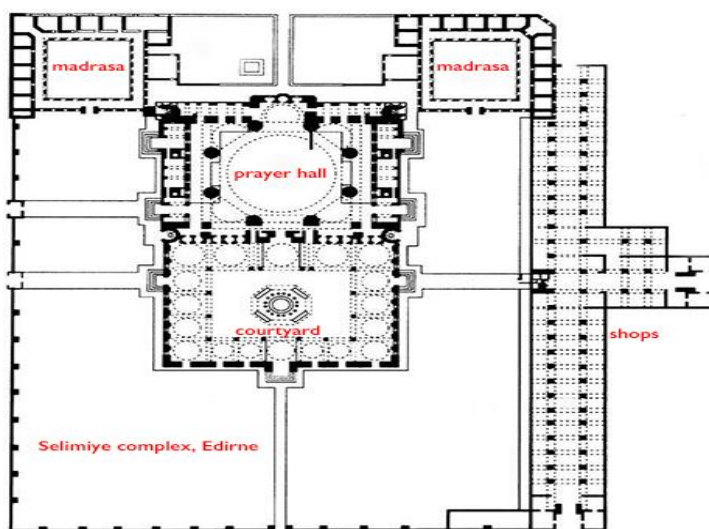
Selimiye Mosque (Selimiye Camii), (at the central square). That mosque which dominates the skyline of the city, built on a slightly higher hill than its surroundings, although a play on dimensions makes the exterior sight of the building smaller as you get closer to it. A grandiose piece of art by Sinan, the Ottoman architect of 16th century, Selimiye is usually considered the zenith of Ottoman architecture and has been listed as a World Heritage site by UNESCO in 2011. Sinan himself considered this building as his best work. The dome of the building, which hangs high over main hall, encloses a huge space which gives the place an expansive atmosphere, had the largest diameter (31.28 mt) of all domes in the world for several centuries. And its minarets (towers) are the second highest minarets (70.89 mt) in whole world, surpassed only by Qutb Minar (72.50 mt) in Delhi, India. The mosque has 999 windows in total, which according to its architect Sinan, symbolize the perfectness of God. The dome and interior walls are decorated with calligraphy and geometrical designs, most of which are painted in hues of pink and blue.



Selimiye Mosque, Edirne

The upside down tulips, which are some sort of symbol of Edirne have their origin in a tulip illustration engraved on a marble in the fountain right under the central dome of Selimiye.

The modern designs of the Selimiye complex overshadowed Edirne's more traditional



architecture. It is believed to symbolize the landlord of the tulip garden on which the mosque

Selimiye Complex, Edirne was built, who was said to be reluctant to give over his garden. There is a small museum in the courtyard with no admission fee. Very interesting knick-knacks can be seen there.

Edirne Palace

The construction of the palace started in 1450 and ended in 1475, since the process halted due to the death of Sultan Murad II. During the Russo-Turkish War, the palace was blown up by an Ottoman Pasha to avoid a potential capture of the palace. Nowadays, the palace is being renovated, but there is still much work to do.

Sultan Beyazıt II Mosque Complex

The complex was commissioned by Sultan Beyazıt II and was built between 1484 and 1488. This complex, or külliye, is based on an Ottoman architectural design where a number of buildings

The project is co-funded by European Union through the Interreg-IPA CBC Bulgaria – Turkey Programme

are constructed around a mosque, with the mosque being at the heart of the complex. This particular mosque complex contains a travellers' hostel, asylum, medical school, and hospital. In 1997, the former hospital complex was transformed into a health museum, dedicated to the history of medicine. This museum's the only of its kind in Turkey and is the second most visited attraction in Edirne, after Selimiye Mosque. You can walk into the various rooms surrounding the courtyard and take a peek at some of the ancient medical practices.

Old Mosque (Eski Cami), (at the central square, across the street from Selimiye). The smallest—and the oldest—one of three nearby, imperial mosques in downtown Edirne, it's known for its calligraphic inscriptions on its interior walls with a small central dome atop.

Uc Serefeli Mosque (Uc Serefeli Cami), (just north of Old Mosque, close to Selimiye). This mosque is easily recognizable, having four distinctive minarets that all have very different designs, uncommon during the 15th century, one of which has three balconies, giving it its name which literally means "three balconied". Long undergoing restoration, interior of the mosque, which features a colourfully decorated central dome, smaller surrounding domes of varying sizes each featuring a different colour pattern, and very stately columns supporting them, has recently been re-opened to visits. The overall experience of this colourful mosque is perhaps best summarized as "joyful".

The Muradiye Mosque (Muradiye Camii) is a 15th-century Ottoman mosque in Edirne, Turkey. The building is noted for the tiles that decorate the mihrab and the walls of the prayer hall. The complex included a soup kitchen (imaret) and an elementary school (mekteb) but these buildings have not survived. The mosque has a T-shaped plan with a five bay portico and an entrance hall with a domed room on either side. The prayer hall is separated from the entrance hall by a solid arch. The building has been heavily repaired after suffering earthquake damage. The single stone minaret has been rebuilt several times; the present structure dates from 1957.

Grand Synagogue of Edirne: There once was a thriving Jewish community in Edirne, numbering around 20,000 people. They worshipped in this Moorish revival styled synagogue that was able to accommodate up to 1,200 people (900 men and 300 women). It was Europe's

third largest temple and the biggest temple in all of Turkey. Sadly, the temple was abandoned in 1983, as the Jewish population dwindled to nothing due to an increased amount of anti-semitism in the area. Most fled to Istanbul or left Turkey altogether. Reopened in 2015 as part of a US \$2.5 million restoration project, the synagogue now functions as a museum, a space for weddings, and a place of worship for the few local Jewish people in the area. Restoration efforts included painstakingly decorating the ceiling with thousands of hand-painted stars.

Saints Constantine and Helena, is a Bulgarian Orthodox church in Edirne. It was built in 1869 in less than seven months and is a prime example of the Eastern Orthodox church architecture of the period. The church was heavily renovated in 2008 after long years of abandonment.

Ioannes Prodromos Church, built by Greeks who were living in the neighborhood during the same period, as an example of XIX. century structure. The church which has a basilical plan feature is undamaged generally. Some restoration and conservations are required.

9.3. Cultural activities and events, festivities - Traditions, customs and crafts

Kirkpınar Westling: A specialty of Edirne is to be a center for grease-wrestling (yaglı güreş in Turkish), which is the national sport of Turkey. The championships are held here every year by the end of July, for more than 650 years on Kirkpınar island, a forested area between the Meriç and Tunca rivers. These traditional occasions comprise many entertaining activities, and the province is filled with spectators. The name of Edirne can be identified with the traditional wrestling sport. The places where wrestling sports were performed outside the palaces were the fairs. The most important fair wrestling was **Kirkpınar**. The wrestling competitions which are still held in Edirne's Sarayıçi district maintain the old tradition. According to the tales, in the reign of Osman Bey, 40 veteran soldiers who went to Rumelia with prince Süleyman Pasha wrestled there and the history began with this event. Normally, while light weight wrestlers perform on the first two days, middleweight and heavyweight wrestlers do so on the last day. Before each bout, the wrestlers pour olive oil over their entire bodies, and the matches take place in an open, grassy field, with the contestants naked except for trousers made of leather, which extend to just above the knee. The champion is awarded with a golden belt and the

one who holds the wrestling championship successively for three years owns the gold belt for his entire life. One of the important characters of the Kırkpınar Oil Wrestling tournament is the announcers called 'cazgır' in Turkish. They introduce the wrestlers and pray for them. Announcers (cazgır) are mostly old wrestlers.



Kirkpinar Westling, Edirne 2017

Kakava Festivals: Kakava is a celebration event of Romani people. Its place of origin is Egypt and Front Asia. According to Gypsy/Roma mythology and belief, Kakava is the transformation of miraculous events to “a belief” based on oppression towards another society in times of ancient Egypt God-King pharaoh living together with Kopt people.

In Turkey's western cities of Edirne and Kırklareli, Kakava is celebrated joyfully. Kakava celebration in Edirne took nowadays the form of an international festival, which is also supported by the governor and the mayor of Edirne. The official part of the Kakava festival takes place in Sarayıçi, the place where traditional Kırkpınar oil-wrestling tournament is held each year. After lighting the fire and jumping over it, music playing and dancing is performed. The official part ends after the distribution of rice dish pilaf to the around 5,000 attendees. The celebration continues in the dawn of the next day at the bank of Tunca River. The festivities start by the lighting of the traditional Kakava fire and continue round the clock with music and dances.

Tourists from all over the country and from abroad take part in the different events. Separately on May 6 in Edirne the international festival “Hıdırellez” is held. At the same time in Edirne the capture of the city is celebrated.

Fruit-Shaped Soaps

Edirne is famous for its fruit-shaped soaps. They are not used for cleaning (although they can clean as well as other soaps do) but for decoration. Also, known for its *peynir* (white cheese), the city also produces cotton and woolens, and leather goods. The surrounding agricultural area produces wheat, rice, rye, and fruits.



Fruit-shaped soaps, Edirne

9.4 Galleries, museums, historical landmarks, arts and crafts centres, cultural institutions

Edirne always attracted a large population of craftsmen, including leather workers, saddlers, harness makers, felt makers, shoe makers, weavers, spinners, silk thread makers and tailors. There were also large numbers of cook shops, kebab shops, grocers, bakers and butchers. Their shops were mainly on the ground floors of two or three storey buildings facing the streets, and in some cases consisted of rows of shops with upper storeys.

The project is co-funded by European Union through the Interreg-IPA CBC Bulgaria – Turkey Programme

Handicrafts: In its history, Edirne attracted a large population of craftsmen. One of the crafts that made Edirne famous was making **brooms**. Today, there are still a couple of craftsmen making brooms by traditional methods, resisting the tide of time and technology that has brought mass production to even this old-fashioned domestic article. And bridal broom – smaller or bigger broom, decorated with small mirrors and pink, green, yellow or blue ribbons- is one of the most popular souvenir from Edirne.

Between the 14.th and 19.th centuries in Ottoman Empire, there was a decoration technique named as "**Edirnekâri**" or "**Edirne işi**". This technique which was firstly seen in Edirne was later used in Istanbul, Bursa and in many regions in Anatolia. Edirnekâri was used especially on railings, wardrobe or cupboard doors, drawers, ceilings, candlesticks and other wood materials even on book covers. The ceilings are the most significant characteristics of Edirne houses and rococo style was used on them after the 14 century. Botanical patterns were also used on the ceilings. Unfortunately, the unique examples of these edirnekâri ceilings on Edirne Palace, Cihannuma Summer Palace and Kum Summer Palace do not exist today, but there are many summer houses, mansions and other wooden houses with attractive “Edirnekari” woodwork in Kaleici.

Macedonian Tower (Makedonya Kulesi), (just across the side street from Uc Serefeli). The sole still intact tower of Edirne’s city walls, named as such perhaps because it roughly watches the direction of Macedonia, or because of the former definition of "Macedonia" which extends all the way to Edirne. A round and robust tower, not unlike Thessaloniki's White Tower except its colour, and next to it is the last visible section of city walls, now surrounded by a nicely landscaped park. It’s possible to enter the tower itself, but impossible to climb upstairs. It’s located in a back alley, so while you are near the Üç Şerefeli, look around on the top of buildings to see the flag on a tower made of red-brick if you can’t exactly locate it. The tower also served as a clock tower until 1953, when the upper part of the tower was demolished because of the danger of collapse. Free. edit

Museum of Archaeology (Arkeoloji Müzesi), An original prehistoric dolmen moved from its original setting and a reconstructed Thracian hut—typical of those used by the ancient folk of the region—is among the displayed in the garden of the museum.

Museum of Islamic Arts (İslam Eserleri Müzesi): The museum was established in 1925 in a medrese of the Selimiye Mosque. Although it was originally planned as an archaeology museum, it also contained many ethnographic items. On 25 November 1936 (the 13th anniversary of the liberation of Edirne following the Turkish War of Independence) a second medrese building was added to the museum. On 13 June 1971 the museum was moved to the new museum building which was built next to former building. The architect of the new building was İhsan Kıyıcı. (The medrese building was redesigned as an Islamic art museum. *The archaeology section:* The first displays are about the Paleontology. Bones of elephant, rhinoceros and horse are displayed (currently elephant and rhinoceros are extinct from Turkey). Among the archaeological displays there are some remains from the Chalcolithic age. But the Majority of the items are from the Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine Empire ages. Especially the terra-cotta Aphrodite figurines are notable. There are also funerary steles of Thracians. *The ethnography section:* This section includes mostly items from the Turkish age, including the carpets in the bride and circumcision rooms, closets and various clothing. There are special sections for the hamam ("Turkish bath") and the living room of a typical old Edirne house.

Old quarter: Locally named Kaleiçi, i.e. "walled city", this is the oldest part of the city although the city walls and gates have vanished a long time ago. Built in a grid plan after it suffered from a big fire in late 19th century, the main artery of this part is Maarif Caddesi, which lies two blocks west of Saraçlar Caddesi. Along the side streets and Maarif itself line a number of elaborate wooden houses, the walls of which are with highly delicate handwork, though some are derelict. At one end of the street is the Jewish Synagogue, the biggest one in Turkey and the whole Balkans, but is slowly decaying now. Almost all of its wooden sections (roof, windows) has collapsed in one way or the other after it suffered from a storm in 1997, but some of its stone walls (especially the front façade) are sound enough to show its former grandeur. Entry is sensibly forbidden. In one of the side alleys of Kaleiçi lie a small stone church, used to be where

Catholic congregation of the city held masses, though a part of a local primary school (İstiklal İlköğretim Okulu) nowadays. Numerous small Ottoman mosques are also scattered around Kaleiçi and elsewhere in downtown.

Şükrü Pasha Memorial and Balkan Wars Museum (Şükrü Paşa Anıtı ve Balkan Savaşları Müzesi), (just next to city cemetery, on the highest hill of the city, where that large flag is located). This is a monument dedicated to Rüştü Pasha, the commander of the defending forces of the city during the Balkan Wars. Next to it is a small museum with various weapons (such as a small cannon) used during the war. While the place is slightly away from the downtown and is off the usual trail between the main sights, it occupies the highest hill in the city and offers a large overlooking view of the city and the forests surrounding the rivers behind. The Balkan Wars Memorial Cemetery is located close to the Edirne Palace, with an unknown soldier monument featuring an Ottoman soldier in front of its entrance.

Medical Museum (Sağlık Müzesi): Museum is a part of the complex of Sultan Bayezid II. This museum, which was awarded “European Museum of the Year” in early 2000s, was essentially a mental institution used during Ottoman times, part of Beyazıt Complex (Beyazıt Külliyesi). It was notable for its “progressive” / “alternative” approach towards its patients. Instead of locking them into cells with shackles, which was widespread during that time, methods such as meditative music or flower gardens were tried in this institution. Today, many Ottoman miniatures from medical schoolbooks and elsewhere and models of patients are among the displayed.

Sand Pavilion Baths (Kum Hamam) within the Edirne Palace complex is the hamam built in the time of Mehmed II, which is a simple bath consisting of three small domes, a cold room, a hot room, a belly stone and another space with a dome called ‘eyvan’. Excavation and cleaning works were carried out in and around the Sand Pavilion Baths in the year 2000.

Balkan Martyrs Memorial (Balkan Şehitliği) in Edirne: This was built in memory of the people lost in the Balkan War between Ottoman Empire and the Balkanic nations. Situated on the west bank of the Tunca north of Edirne, the memorial cemetery is laid out over 858 m².

Mayors Place in Edirne, (Edirne Belediye Sarayı): It is a historic building from the Ottoman times.

The monument to Sinan, This is the statue of the famous engineer and architect of the Ottoman Empire in Edirne. The world famous Turkish architect, lived from 1490 to 1588. There are many buildings in Edirne built by Mimar Sinan: Turkish baths, Rüstem Paşa Kervansaray, Ali Paşa Kapalı Çarşısı, Yalnızgöz and Saray bridges. The monument is located in front of Selimiye Mosque, Sinan's masterpiece at the age of 80.

Chicken Forest – A Reminiscent from the Sultan's Gardens: It is known that the Second Palace (Edirne Palace) had very large hunting grounds and forests and a Palace Garden (Hadika-i Hassa). Today, only 58 hectares of the Chicken Forest in Tunca Island remains on this area. According to a myth, this field was used as a place where thousands of chickens were grown in the past years and the obtained eggs were mixed into the harvest of the year. Later, the meat from the chickens were sent to military units.

Hunting (Bulbul) Pavilion in the Chicken Forest: It was built by Sultan Mehmed IV (Mehmed the Hunter) in 1671 as a part of Edirne Palace and it was restored by the Municipality of Edirne in 2002. The pavilion is also called Bulbul Köşkü.

The Monument of Liberty (Özgürlük Anıtı) It is the democracy monument erected in memory of the reenactment of the Ottoman Constitution that's one of the milestones of the history of the Turkish democracy. With the redeclaration of the Constitution (Kanun-i Esasi) on 23 July 1908, the Ottoman Empire's regime was changed from absolute monarchy to parliamentary regime and started an unprecedented era of freedom in the whole Empire. Uzunkopru didn't stay idle to these new political changes and the Liberty Monument was erected at the right side of the bridge's entry in such a political atmosphere to celebrate this great event with the contributions of the District Governor and Ottoman intellectual Mazhar Müfit Kansu and the Mayor Hafız İsmail Yayalar on 11 December 1908.

9.5. Facilities for recreation and tourism, tourism infrastructure and services

Fayton: One of the most interesting activities in Edirne you can engage in is riding in a coach – fayton. For just a couple of liras, the coachman will ride you through the whole city center and across the famous stone bridges over both Meriç and Tunca rivers, to the other side and back.

Night Life:

Compared with most cities of its size in Turkey, Edirne is full of birahanes and restaurants that serve alcohol. There are some particularly nice ones by the river on the road to Karaagac. “Fasıl” can be heard in some of the bars.

City Center, fanning out from a central square, the downtown area is where you will find the most famous trio of Selimiye, Üç Şerefeli, and Old Mosques, and the Old Quarter or Kaleiçi.

Sarayici, this area north of the city center is the former home of the sultans, along with their hunting grounds. The Justice Tower or Adalet Kasrı is the only completely intact portion of the old Imperial Palace.

Riverside, the leafy areas along the Meriç and Turca Rivers are home to cafes and restaurants with scenic views of the rivers and the elegant stone bridges built during the Ottoman era.

9.6. Tourist information centres;

Edirne's tourist office (turizm bürosu) is on Hürriyet Meydanı, the main square, near the town's main intersection of Talat Paşa Caddesi and Saraçlar/Hükümet Caddesi.

- **Local Tourism Department of Government** (İl Turizm Müdürlüğü), Talatpaşa Asfaltı 76 (100 mt away from the corner of Saraçlar Caddesi), ☎ +90 284 225-30-29 (fax: +90 284 213-30-76).
- **Tourism Information Office** (Turizm Danışma Bürosu), Hürriyet Meydanı 17, ☎ +90 284 213-92-08 (edirnetourisminformation@gmail.com, fax: +90 284 213-92-08).

10. Wineries;

Thrace Wine Route; The area around the city is home to several highly regarded wineries, including the Arcadia Vineyards.

11. Border Checkpoints in Edirne

As a city which borders two different countries, Edirne has four border checkpoints, two of which connect Turkey to Greece (İpsala and Pazarkule), and the other two connecting the country to Bulgaria (Kapıkule and Hamzabeyli).

Hamzabeyli Border Checkpoint: Originally meant for the trucks going to Eastern or Northern Europe, Hamzabeyli Border Checkpoint is about 20 kilometers from Edirne city center to the north. The checkpoint recorded 115.000 entries from Bulgaria and 104.000 exits to Bulgaria in 2015.

Pazarkule Border Checkpoint: Pazarkule Border Checkpoint is the closest one to the city center of Edirne and it is used by passengers, cars and tour buses only to go to / come from Greece. Heavy trucks are not allowed in this border checkpoint. According to the statistics, Pazarkule checkpoint recorded 106.000 entries from Greece and 117.000 exits to Greece in 2015.

İpsala Border Checkpoint: İpsala Border Checkpoint is the main one to Greece. Heavy and commercial trucks are also allowed along with passengers, cars and tour buses. Therefore, it is the busiest border checkpoint between Turkey and Greece. İpsala recorded 209.000 entries from Greece and 205.000 exits to Greece in the year of 2015.

Kapıkule Border Checkpoint: Kapıkule Border Checkpoint is by the far the busiest one in Edirne and in whole Turkey. It opens to Bulgaria, having the nearest Bulgarian city as Svilengrad, but the importance of Kapıkule Border Checkpoint is that this is the one that you take if you want to go to Berlin, Paris, Amsterdam, even London. Therefore, Kapıkule recorded 555.000 entries from Bulgaria and 536.000 exits to Bulgaria in 2015.