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MARKETING PLAN ON CROSSBORDER DESTINATION MARKETING

Prepared by the participants at the Training on Destination Marketing, held from 25th until the 28th of October 2017 at the Hall of complex Fantazia, Kenana Park in Haskovo

Tourism is an extremely important sector for the development of each region's economy. The tourism industry can change the appearance of a region and the standard of living of the people in the region, and this is indicative of the areas with developed infrastructure, facilities and well-advertised product. The natural, cultural and historical features of Haskovo and Edirne make them a promising tourist destination in the cross-border region of Bulgaria - Turkey.

In the preparation of the Marketing Plan on Destination Marketing for Haskovo and Edirne – area of Uzunköprü were considered the trends and analyzes for the development of tourism in the world, the statistical data and surveys of the Bulgarian and Turkish tourist product, the profile of the foreign and the Bulgarian and Turkish tourists towards competitive markets in 2014-2015

The Marketing Plan contributes to the development of tourism in these two regions, by focusing on the consumer, it provides the best opportunities for increasing sales and consumption and achieving a stable competitive advantage in the long run. A key concept for the success of the marketing plan is the focus on customer satisfaction and the configuration and development of tourism products in the cross-border region.

The tourist destination includes common sites for both regions in Bulgaria and Turkey. Existing tourist attractions, newly created attractions and opportunities for cultural, wine, spa, rural and eco tourism and other types of tourism are being explored.

Destination marketing is a set of not only physical attributes (geography, nature, architectural environment, attractions, accommodation and transport) but also of social and cultural assets.

PURPOSE:

The sustainable development of Haskovo District and Edirne province as year-round tourist destinations with a focus on cultural and historical tourism united with the specific types of tourism for the given tourist region.

Through partnership in the two cross-border regions shall be developed, marketed and promoted the common destination in cooperation with the Bulgaria-Turkey cross-border program.

ANALYSIS OF THE TOURIST POTENTIAL OF THE CROSS-BORDER REGION HASKOVO – EDIRNE



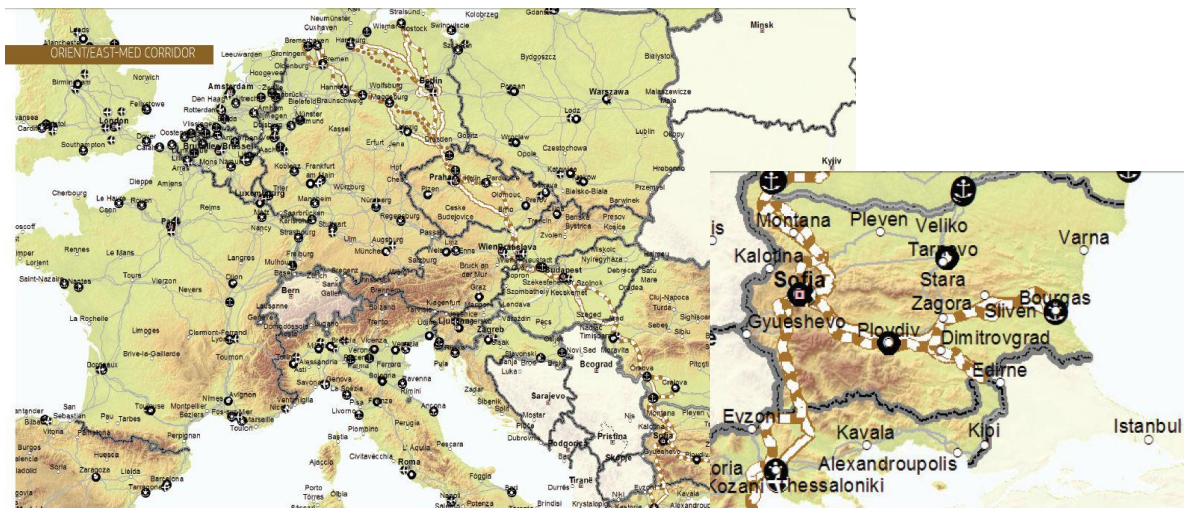
Profile of the cross-border region Haskovo - Edirne

The cross-border region of Haskovo-Edirne is located in southeastern Europe, located on a total area of 11,822 sq km. with a population of 637,944 people for 2014.

One of the main trans-European corridors – the European Corridor No IV (Orient / East-Med Corridor) - Dresden - Prague - Bratislava - Gyor - Budapest - Arad - Craiova - Sofia - Plovdiv - Istanbul/Burgas with a turn-off Sofia - Kulata - Thessaloniki is a road connecting the countries of Central Europe (North and Baltic Sea) with the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea (Port of Thessaloniki), which allows the optimization of the use of the respective ports and of the motorways of the sea.

This creates relatively good prerequisites for its development as a transport, commercial and tourist center with a wide range of services. The international transport exchange on the territory of the Haskovo-Edirne cross-border region is carried out through Capitan Andreevo / Kapikule border checkpoint, on the border with the Republic of Turkey, which is an external border for the European Union. In addition, the international exchange between the Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of Greece takes place via the Kapitan Petko Voyvoda / Ormenion border checkpoint, Makaza / Nimfea border checkpoint and Ivaylovgrad / Kyprinos border checkpoint. The international exchange between Turkey and the Republic of Greece takes place via the Kastanias / Pazarkoule and Kipi / Ipsala border checkpoints and the Uzunköprü border checkpoint via the railway connecting Turkey and Greece.

The number of border crossing checkpoints also affects the degree of accessibility and connectivity to the neighboring transport networks, the opportunities for transit traffic and the development of cross-border cooperation.



Haskovo District is situated in the south-eastern part of the South Central Region of the Republic of Bulgaria. It is located on an area of 5 543 km², which represents 4.99% of the country's territory. To the west it borders with Plovdiv region, southwest with Kardjali region, to the north with Stara Zagora region, northeast with Yambol region and to the south with R. Turkey.

It includes 261 settlements, organized in 11 municipalities: Haskovo, Dimitrovgrad, Harmanli, Simeonovgrad, Svilengrad, Madjarovo, Ivaylovgrad, Lyubimets, Mineralni bani, Stambolovo and Topolovgrad with common administrative center of the district in Haskovo.



Edirne Province is located in the East Thrace region of Turkey, also known as European Turkey, one of only three provinces entirely within continental Europe. Edirne Province is bordered by Tekirdağ Province and Kırklareli Province to the east, the Gallipoli peninsula of Çanakkale Province to the south-east, and international borders with Bulgaria to the north and Greece to the west. It covers an area of 6,279 km². Edirne province is divided into 9 districts: Edirne, Enez, Havsa, İpsala, Keşan, Lalapaşa, Meriç, Süloğlu and Uzunköprü.

Transport Infrastructure: Regarding infrastructure, account should be taken of the fact that there is a well-built road infrastructure linking Haskovo district and the region of Uzunköprü. One of the main problems of the road transport infrastructure is the quality and deterioration of the low-class local roads, which are an obstacle to the economic development of tourism in the region of Haskovo - Uzunköprü. It should be kept in mind that access to tourist attractions outside of populated areas is mainly done on local roads and their condition has a negative influence on the attendance and the time of stay.

Relief: The relief of the region is very diverse. The northern and central part is occupied by the Upper Thracian Lowland, characterized by the extensive lowland riverbeds and high groundwater that favor the intensive use of agricultural land. The flat nature of relief and the fertile soils have 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, the low branches of the Eastern Rhodopes and the slopes of the Sakar Mountains occupy a vast area of the region. The Eastern Rhodopes are a unique territory characterized by a rich flora and fauna. The strong Mediterranean influence, the geological past of the mountain and the peculiarities of local life and culture have helped to form and preserve diverse habitats, which has led to extremely high biodiversity.

Air: a moderate continental character with elements of Mediterranean influence characterizes the climate in the cross-border region of Haskovo - Edirne. The average annual air temperature is 12 ° C, at an average temperature in January positive 0.5 ° C and in July at 23.2 ° C. Precipitation is moderate - about 600 mm per annum, snow is light to moderate, humidity is moderate - 73% per year. Therefore, as well as due to the open horizon, the duration of sunshine is too high - over 2100 hours per year.

Waters: The water resources are mainly formed at the expense of the Maritsa River and its tributaries - Harmanlijska, Varbitsa and Byala Reka. This water swelling represents 5.8% of the river flow of the country without the Danube River. Another source of water-resource potential is the underground ground water, which accounts for 7.3% of their total volume for the country. On the territory of the region, there are several mineral springs in the villages of Mineralni bani, the town of Merichleri, the village of Troyan, municipality of Simeonovgrad and others. In the Edirne Province, the Maritsa River and the Ergene River form water resources.

Demographic structure: The demographic development of Haskovo District is similar to the average for the country. The population decline is due to unfavorable demographic processes, such as rising mortality rates and declining birth rates. One of the main problems of the region is depopulation in the municipality of Ivailovgrad as well as in the southern parts. As a result of the map of the area, entire rural areas disappear, especially in the border villages.



At the same time, the absolute number of persons under working age is reduced, which creates a certain threat for the future reproduction of the population with the observed long-term trend of population aging - 26% of the population in Haskovo District is over working age. The observed negative processes in the population's development in the future shall create risks of diminishing the demographic vitality and difficulties in providing the necessary human resources to absorb the potential of the territory itself. This is especially characteristic of the development of forms of tourism based on the use of mainly natural resources - ecological, cognitive, hunting, etc.

Unlike Haskovo District, the population of the Edirne Province shows an increase. The natural growth of the population as well as in the country is increasing.

Tourism trends: The cross-border region of Haskovo - Edirne has significant potential for development of various forms of tourism - mineral springs, numerous monuments of cultural and historical heritage, cultural and entertainment sites in big cities, natural resources and landmarks, traditional crafts. Their full use will make it possible to diversify the tourist product and to include more parts of the territory of the region. Achieving a unified tourist identity will be the basis for developing innovation and creating a positive image of the region.

Criteria for tourist sites selection

This analysis aims at defining criteria for the selection of tourist sites that have the potential to form sustainable cross-border tourist products.

The expected trends in the development of the tourist behavior are reflected in:

- increasing the requirements of the tourists for the quality, specificity, attractiveness and diversity of the offered tourist services; the provision of specific services according to the interest and needs of the people;
- Increasing the requirements of the tourists related to the quality of the country's technical infrastructure, resorts and the material and technical base of tourism;
- Tourists' preference to destinations and countries guaranteeing security and peace and to the specific forms of tourism - cultural and historical tourism, extreme tourism, etc .;
- Increase in the share of children and youth trips for participation in cultural and educational tourism, training trips, etc .;
- Expanding the role of information and communication systems in the hotel and tour operator activities in terms of travel demand, planning and realization;
- Increasing trips of people of the third age;

Bulgaria as a member of the European Union is becoming a "close" and easily accessible tourist destination offering a sense of stability and reliability. Facilitated border and customs controls, free movement of people, capital, goods and services innovations are advantages for Bulgaria after our accession to the European Union.

The rich tourist potential of the country, based on the combination of beautiful and diverse nature, natural phenomena, excellent climatic conditions, mineral springs, millennial cultural and historical heritage, authentic crafts and customs, delicious food and excellent wines, hospitality and geographical proximity to major emitting markets were a prerequisite for creating attractive tourist products attracting the attention of different target groups. Among them and the partners in the industry, Bulgaria has established its image of a destination offering a good price / quality ratio of the offered tourist product, the main groups being families with children. Other products with growing interest are cultural, spa / balneo, adventure tourism.



Turkey's tourism sector is in the process of serious reforms to improve the efficiency and competitiveness of the sector, the development of regional tourism brands, and the sustainable development of tourism through the development of policies and strategies to protect the surrounding environment.

Good potential to develop in the cross-border regional are:

- ✓ **Cultural tourism** – folklore, festival and ethnological tourism, religious tourism (Visits of religious sites - churches / mosques and other places and sites);
- ✓ **Rural tourism** – village visits, agricultural activities and agro tourism;
- ✓ **SPA tourism** (*based on the existing natural thermal springs*); health / wellness tourism (*general*);
- ✓ **Eco (green) tourism**, ornithological tourism;
- ✓ **Mountain tourism** – hiking, cycling;
- ✓ **Wine tourism**.

SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
<p>Both regions is rich in terms of historical and cultural heritage</p> <p>Communication between local folks is strong</p> <p>Traditional foods can attract new tourist and gourmets</p> <p>Region still has unharmed locations from evolving world which can attract tourist that are interested</p> <p>Traveling between regions is easy</p> <p>There are enough border checkpoints for tourism</p>	<p>Alternative tourism trend is getting stronger</p> <p>Haskovo and Uzunkopru is only 2 hours away from each other</p> <p>In the region both Bulgarian and Turkish signs can be seen</p> <p>Region has a long history beginning from approximately 2000 B.C</p> <p>Strategically location of the region, which binds Europe to Asia and Asia to Europe</p> <p>Signs of traditional life</p> <p>Local folks are enthusiastic towards tourism sector</p>
WEAKNESSES	THREATS
<p>Tourism is undeveloped between both countries</p> <p>Settled areas are far from each other</p> <p>There isn't any joint tourism institution in the region</p> <p>Products with a brand name are low.</p> <p>Marketing network is weak</p> <p>Educational inefficiency of the local folks towards tourism</p> <p>There isn't any strategic plan prepared by local government institutions towards tourism</p>	<p>Immigration</p> <p>Potential economic recession throughout the world</p> <p>Low competition power against other touristic centers</p> <p>Underdeveloped infrastructure</p>

TARGET GROUPS



Bulgaria and Turkey have a relatively broad target group. This is mainly due to the similar core product of both countries - cultural and historical, wine tourism and spa tourism, which usually attract people from all ages, as well as people with different levels of education and income. This creates favorable conditions for the future development of a new area of cooperation, namely the presentation of a common tourist product between the regions of Haskovo and Edirne, which will depend on quality development of projects and ideas, which will unconditionally provide additional financial resources for the development of tourism in both the regional and the national aspect.

Target groups are adults or young single travelers or couples, families, business visitors. Visitors to social programs traveling for rehabilitation, treatment and recovery. Visitors seeking an alternative type of tourism to visit wine cellars trying authentic recipes and customs.

MARKETING TECHNIQUES

In order to increase the economic and social impacts of tourism and generate higher profits from local communities and businesses, it is necessary to create and promote the development of a cross-border product to help the tourism sector in the border regions of Turkey. Favorable conditions for this product are offered by the regions of Haskovo and Edirne, whose cross-border tourist product can lead to the economic and social development of these cross-border regions.

The marketing plan recommends integrated development and the sustainable use of natural, cultural, historical and geographic resources in order to enhance the attractiveness of the cross-border regions of Haskovo and Edirne and to facilitate the development of alternative types of tourism and mass-market products.

Mouth-to-mouth marketing is most accessible and used very often in the past centuries - right at dawn of private business. It can even be said that it was a basic and favorite marketing technique. Then when business people viewed their clients as their own friends and as an important part of their lives. In this regard, this marketing technique is best suited to popularize tourist sites and services in the regions of Haskovo and Edirne.

Direct marketing and its channels – Most of the merchants and tourist sites in the cross-border region sell their products from little or own / rented shops, stalls, places of accommodation and eating. Direct sale is also considered important for both local sales and tourists. If the seller is the owner himself, this gives the opportunity for direct contact with the customer, provides the opportunity for feedback and at best leads to the development of a new product, according to the client's requirements, until the negotiation of the price. Direct sales of tourist products, packages and services on the Internet, especially for international tourism, are also possible. This type of technique is increasingly important, as a large number of tourists use the Internet when choosing a tourist destination.

Retail – Specialized souvenir shops, handmade products and gifts are also an important channel for local retail products as part of the tourist services in the region. Specialized shops for jewelry, leather goods, ceramics, art galleries, tourist souvenir shops, museums, specialty patisseries, jagger and meatballs restaurants (Edirne) are the main channel for these goods.

Smart marketing – Tourist companies and restaurant owners presenting tourist products and services are important, but creating a new product and marketing for it requires a solid



investment from just one entrepreneur. In this sense, co-operation between entrepreneurs in the same industry, networking, clusters with partners from one or a different industry, the use of joint external marketing services is needed. Etc. "Guerrilla marketing" allows for remarkable results with small investments and "more brain". The essence of the method is the study of the lifestyle and professional identity of the client and the connection to the design and production process. "Guerrillas" most often focus on small target groups and pre-select their target groups. Marketing involves a range of methods, usually free of charge. Several marketing methods combine to make a connection with the user, and this is usually done by one person. For example, the production of T-shirts produced by hand via screen-printing. The products are well known and appreciated by a number of Bulgarian and European partners. It uses technology to print company logos, t-shirts for advertising campaigns festivals, souvenir t-shirts, t-shirts with printed photofeed, according to the taste, the desire and the needs of the clients.

Advertising printed materials (printed advertising, audio-visual advertising, object and spatial advertising) representing the cross-border region as an attractive tourist destination such as brochures, magnets, crafts catalogue etc.

Internet marketing: the process of enforcing a brand with the help of the internet. It encompasses all business activities that take place on the Internet in order to attract new consumers, keep existing consumers and better enforce the brand on the market. The difference between internet marketing and traditional marketing is precisely the fact that Internet marketing is accessible to everyone and with the right knowledge can achieve a high return on investment. eMarketing uses all available technology solutions to promote a product or service. As social networks can use to reach the maximum number of users within a particular target group, e-mail campaigns can also be used to reach an exactly different group of users. Also, creating paid banner ads is completely in its sphere. In recent years, it has even focused heavily on forums, blogs, and Internet newspaper publications. Everything is allowed as long as it is not in the category of viral marketing, which can only bring with itself negatives.

International events

Participation in international tourism fairs to promote the common cross-border destination

EXPECTED RESULTS:

Conducting consistent and planned marketing activities will help build a clear and sustainable cross-border product, Haskovo-Edirne, to be promoted in all communication channels through a unified new vision.

Through marketing activities, the cross-border region of Haskovo-Edirne is to be considered as a year-round destination with rich cultural and historical heritage and offering opportunities for various forms of tourism.

Successful implementation of the plan will have a positive impact on the development of tourism services and the recognition of Bulgaria and Turkey on an international level. The implementation of the project is expected to motivate more foreign, Turkish and Bulgarian tourists. It is essential to achieve, besides establishing a clearly recognizable brand, One Destination Two Countries, also creating and consolidating strong regional brands.



An important result is an increase in the share of domestic tourism by increasing visitor awareness of tourism opportunities in Haskovo and Edirne, tourist sites and routes, specialized forms of tourism, as well as poorly known destinations in the cross-border region.

Increased awareness of the target groups on the opportunities for tourism and recreation is one of the most important results of the tourism advertising activities of Haskovo-Edirne region.

CONCLUSION

The presence of a border has long prevented Bulgaria - Turkey from being considered as a territory for tourist trips. All analyzes carried out for the region emphasize and identify the main problems that start from the infrastructure and reach the quality of services in the tourism industry.

Theoretically, efforts to promote tourism are mainly directed to disseminating more information about the destination and its attractions in an attempt to make it more known to the increasingly competitive international tourism market. This is particularly true for regions that are remote from the main tourist areas. In view of the increasing competition in the tourism industry, the saturation and globalization of markets, it is necessary to develop a marketing approach for the positioning of the cross-border region.

The Marketing Plan on Destination Marketing - the cross-border region of Haskovo and Edirne is a common, purposeful and coordinated marketing policy in the field of tourism. Despite the rich natural and cultural-historical heritage, the cross-border region has not yet developed a single image to identify as a tourist destination. The major tourist products are mainly concentrated on several sites of high importance, but there are no integrated products based on common tourism resources. The development of tourism is still separated from the border between the Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of Turkey, and there are no clear and visible steps towards building the image of the cross-border region as a single destination.

The main target markets are: the domestic markets for the region (Bulgarian and Turkish) and the European market.

The marketing plan for tourism development in the Haskovo District and Edirne Province provides the main directions for this development. It is also necessary to identify the relevant institutions to be responsible for the implementation of this document. Coordinating role can be played by NGOs in the regions - the Haskovo Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzunköprü. Identifying the region and its presence in tourist distribution networks requires a strategic and commercially oriented marketing approach. Implementation and achievement of this goal should be considered and requires co-operation between the main parties in the planning and implementation of activities related to the development of tourism in the cross-border region.

The Haskovo-Edirne region needs recognition and identification by travel agents as a common destination, evolving according to a certain philosophy. This imposes the requirement of positioning the tourist product by defining the parameters for successful positioning of the offered products and services in the ideas of the actual and potential tourists.



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