

**STUDY ABOUT THE MAIN CULTURAL,
HISTORICAL AND NATURAL VALUE OF
KIYIKOY AND KIRKLARELI REGION**

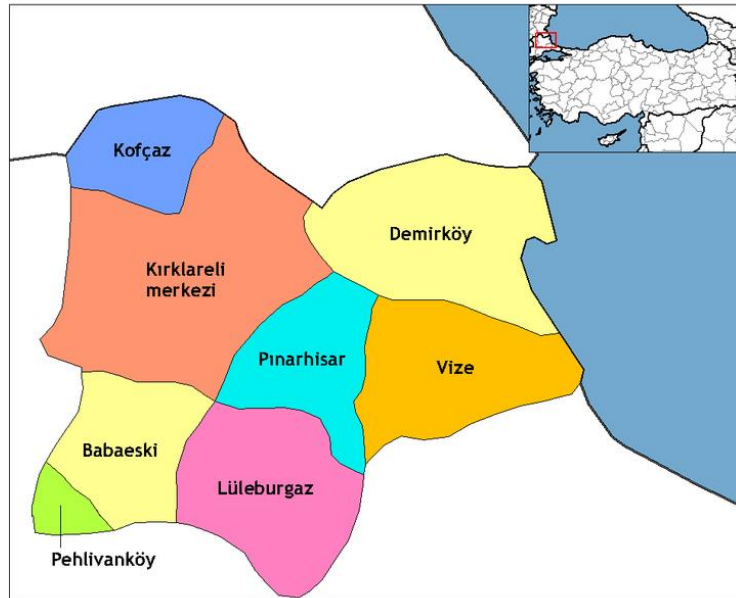
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I. GENERAL INFORMATION FOR KIRKLARELI DISTRICT

Kirklareli region is situating in the European part of Turkey, bordering on North with Republic of Bulgaria. Kirklareli District is one of the three districts covering the Eastern part of the Thrace: Kirklareli, Edirne and Tekirdag.



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The total size of the district is 6550 km² land area, including the fertile soils of the Thracian lowland and the natural beauties of Yıldız / Strandzha Mountain. 48% of the province's territory is surrounded by mountains and there are also a number of rivers born from Kirklareli and the small arms of the Ergene River. Some of them are poured into the sea from the Black Sea coast while others are poured into the Aegean Sea, as the Ergene river, poured in Merich River and then in the Aegean Sea.

The population of the district according to the statistical data for 2016 is 351 684 people, with reported increase from 1.36% according to the 2015.

The altitude of the district is 203 metres above the sea level, dominated by the continental climate, along with Black Sea climate at some places, containing the unique beauty of Longos forests and various types of plants, as well as its lakes and pure clean flowing streams.

The summers are long, hot and humid whilst winters are cool and damp. Snowfall is quite common between the months of December and March, snowing for a week or two.

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Its written history goes back to Bronze Age and the province has witnessed many invasions throughout this long past especially during Roman and Byzantine periods. It was captured by the Ottoman sultan Murat I in the 14th century.

Kirklareli has an important location at the sphere of logistic and transportation, close to Bulgaria and to Istanbul its location offers privilege in terms of geographical location.

Kirklareli is a province of natural beauty, adorned with forests and plateaus. Derekoy, Kofcaz, Demirkoy and Vize are the most densely forested areas of the district, located within the mountain system of Strandzha/Yildiz - Sakar.

The land is suitable for hunting and fishing, in its forests and rivers.

The Yildiz/Strandzha Mountains offer opportunities also for camping and picnicking in a sea of forest with various sport opportunities. Here, near Saka lake at Igneada, the Longos forests are declared as a national park in 2007.



II. TOURISM SECTOR AND SWOT ANALYSES OF THE TOURISM SITUATION OF KIRKLARELI REGION

2.1. Tourism sector in Kirklareli

Kirklareli is a district where the nature and history meets each other on the border of Bulgaria. Kirklareli contains important tourism values with its antique cities, caves, rocks with doors and with its rich green forests.

The natural beauties surrounded by forests and plateaus are only some of the richness of the district to visit. Drekoj, Kofcaz, Vize and Demirkoy areas has the most forests area of the district.

Some of the richness and values that the nature gives to this district are; Yildiz Mountains and it's green large forests, Caves like Dupnisa, longest golden beaches of Igneada and the lakes surrounded around, Longoz forests with their rich biodiversity, Kiyikoy which was visited by Empire Neron during his governorship of the city for a holiday vacation and it's beautiful bays are only some of the places that makes this region preferred destination by the tourists.

Kirklareli having the most important antique settlements of the Thrace presented in Vize and Kiyikoy, where has quite rich archaeological ruins and monuments and historical artefacts.

Most of the accommodation facilities in Kirklareli are located in downtime and in Igneada and Kiyiköy - two seacoast towns of the region, covered by the National Tourism Strategy and planned to be developed as Tourism Cities.

In both towns during the recent years, a considerable increase, thanks to the newly opened hotels, has taken place in accommodation supply capacity and tourism demand.

Despite the increase in accommodation places Kirklareli Center is mostly visited by daily tourists. For example the Bulgarian tourists use the city center for shopping.

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The list of the accommodation places with licence for tourism in Kirklareli Distict:

<i>Accommodation places with tourism license</i>			
Category	Name	Address	Phone 0090 288
3 Stars Hotel	Kaya Palas Hotel	Rauf Denктаş Bulvarı No:4 KIRKLARELİ (Merkez)	214 40 20
3 Starts Hotel	Lozengrad Hotel	Karakaş Mah. Mutlu Sok. KIRKLARELİ (Merkez)	212 35 00
3 Stars Hotel	Royal Bilgiç Hotel	Karakaş Mah. Sırt Bağlar Mevkii Kavaklı Yolu KIRKLARELİ (Merkez)	214 45 00
2 Stars Hotel	Akkuş Kaya Hotel	Karacaibrahim Mah. Arpalı Aşağıpınar	214 12 31

		Turist Yolu KIRKLARELİ (Merkez)	214 40 20
	İğneada Resort Hotel	İğneada Köyiçi Mevkii	692 20 20
5 Stars Hotel			
5 Stars Hotel	Limanköy Hotel	Limanköy Koru Arkası	
5 Stars Vacancy Village	İğneada Doğa Tatil Köyü	İğneada Liman Mevkii	692 20 20
3 Stars Hotel	İğneada Parlak Hotel	İğneada / DEMİRKÖY	692 20 30
3 Stars Hotel	İzer Hotel	Gündoğdu Mah. LÜLEBURGAZ	417 07 98
4 Stars Hotel	Grand Yaman Palace	Lüleburgaz / Sarıcaali Köyü Mevkii	431 46 46
Boutique Hotel	Bakucha Vineyard Hotel SPA	Hamitabad Köyü / Lüleburgaz	0.533.514 1490 473 44 17- 18
-	Korkusuz Ezgi Hotel	Dere Mah. Yeni Yol Radar Mevkii LÜLEBURGAZ	417 67 77 417 50 21
3 Stars Hotel	Lüleburgaz Yaman Hotel (Not: Geçici süreliğine kapalı)	Kurtuluş Mah. İstanbul Asfaltı Mevkii LÜLEBURGAZ	427 36 13 417 16 13
4 Stars Hotel	Hotel Mahya Pera Hotel	Kıyıköy Mah. VİZE Kocasinan Mah. Luleburgaz	417 17 75

Source: www.kirklarelikulturturizm.gov.tr

The district of Kırklareli has significant potential in which many of alternative tourism activities, such as cultural tourism preferably, ecotourism, rural tourism, coastal tourism and speleological tourism, can be achieved concurrently.

Kırklareli has very rich history and ongoing archeological excavations in the city support the claim that the area was the location of one of the first organized settlements on the European continent, with artefacts from the Paleolithic and Neolithic periods. Also, Kırklareli is a land of many monuments, mounds, tumuli, dolmens, rock monasteries, mosques, baths, stone bridges and many other cultural and historical assets. These rich values are a prerequisite for the development of ecotourism, cave tourism, hunting tourism, botanical tourism, bird watching, cultural tourism and coastal tourism in the region.

2.2. Swot Analyses of the Tourism Situation in Kırklareli District:

Strengths:

- Rich of History: Kırklareli, especially Vize Municipality and Kiyikoy is full of history from Thracians, Roman, Byzantium, Ottomans. Demirkoy is a rich of natural beauties and these three municipalities are very suitable for rural, eco-tourism, cultural and archeological tourism.
- Nature: nearly 40% of the district is covered by forests of Yildiz Mountain. Here is located one of the most important forests in the Europe – Igneada Longoz Floodplain Forests.
- Good location: placed in European part of Turkey, bordering with Bulgaria in North and with Istanbul region in South. Also, the new Turkish airport that will be the European biggest airport will be placed very near to Kırklareli region at one hour distance.
- Well educated workforce: Kırklareli is one of the first districts in Turkey popular with its high educated population. This young and well educated workforce hell to improve service quality of the industry.
- Close to biggest markets as Istanbul Metropolitan: almost 70% of tourist coming from Istanbul.

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Weakness

- The quality of the tourism services as accommodation and beverage sector is still not on the requested level. The tourism information activities currently being provided should be developed both in terms of working hours and in terms of the services provided. In addition English, French and German, Bulgarian and Greek speaking personnel are required to be appointed.
- There is a need from more promotion and diversification of promotional materials.
- For most foreign tourists, Kırklareli is not a final destination but only a transit city. In most cases, foreign tourists visit the city only for a few hours and do not get accommodations there.
- Bulgarian people from Varna and Burgas cross the border on daily basis, do shopping for their household consumption and return to Bulgaria in the same day.
- District center and the municipalities are very rich in terms of the products it can offer (meat and dairy products, hardaliye drink, honey, beet molasses, noodles, beans and

halva). However, most of these products are not recognized and sold by the producers due to the lack of packaging, presentation and promotion.

- The number of visitor centers, ethnographical houses, archeological and historical museum is still very low. Also the number of local event, festivals and panairs is not enough or the local events are not so popular
- No planning: Although according to the National Tourism Strategy 2023 the Igneada – Kiyikoy is planned to be developed as Tourism Cities there is no any investment incentives or planes for the development of the two important Black sea cost's towns as tourism cities.
- Insufficient experience and infrastructures in tourism the sector as well as historical monuments and archaeological sites on both sides of the border not adequately maintained and sometimes abandoned
- Natural resources not yet recognized as a potential source of income
- Low level of foreign investment
- Migration of qualified work force to big cities

Opportunities

- Providing importance to the tourism sector by the local authorities: during the last year in Kirklareli district center and its historical quarter Yayla Mahallesi were done very good investments in the sphere of culture and tourism by the local authority. These important investments will stimulate private investments in the area and will stimulate increasing the number of the local boutique houses for accommodation.
- Alternative tourism: The region has an opportunity to present four season's tourism as rural, eco-tourism, cultural, archeological and historical. Development of Thrace corridor as preferred destination by the tourists visiting Istanbul, or Bulgarian and Greek visitors will increase the tourists' number in Kirklareli district too.
- Opportunities for restoration and reconstruction of the many cultural and archeological monuments and their socialization,
- Opportunities to local authorities and NGOs to develop and participate in cross-border projects aiming increasing the tourism potential of the region.
- Good synergy and partnership between Turkish and Bulgarian authorities in domain of popularization of the cross-border area as preferred destination, which provides opportunity to visit in one day two countries.

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- Increasing the number of visitor centers in the rural areas as Hamdibey and Sislioba villages and integration of the local citizens in the tourism sector, providing to the visitors and tourists local products and dishes.
- Building new airports: New Istanbul airport has positive effect for Turkish tourism industry and to the increasing of the visitors of Thrace, because the location of the new airport.

Threats

- There is a threat for the development of the sustainable eco-tourism in Strandzha / Yildiz Mountain from the high level of investments in mining sector.
- Lack of tourism scenarios in local and regional level,
- Tourism infrastructure is still not on the required position,
- Because of the war in the southern neighbor country and the bomb attacks before two years in Turkey, tourism sector is still under its best period before two years (2015 – the number of tourists in Turkey is 36.2 million).
- New destinations in Mediterranean coast: New destinations in Mediterranean region like Croatia or Montenegro can be attractive for tourist.

III. LIST OF LOCAL CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL MONUMENTS IN KIRKLARELI DISTRICT

3.1. Kirklareli Municipality:

- **Hızırbey Kulliye (Center):** The kulliye - religious complex, which is constructed in 1383 by Kösemihalzade Hızır Bey, is composed of hamam, mosque and arasta. It is also known as Büyük Mosque. Its body is demolished during Balkans War, and repaired in 1937.



- **Yayla Quarter and its Cultural Houses**

Yayla is a neighborhood, which is in the center of Kirklareli, and during the Ottoman Empire was a home for multicultural people (Greek, Bulgarian, Jewish). Since many years this quarter was left on his destiny, but during the last years many private investors and public authorities realized the importance of the preservation and protection of the local houses and institutional-buildings located in the quarter.

Yayla now is a new cultural and art center, with good infrastructure, small boutiques and restored houses, gourmet restaurants and painted walls.



- Ataturk's House in Yayla Quarter, Kırklareli



The building is a copy of the house in which was born the great leader and creator of the Republic of Turkey – Mustafa Kemal ATATURK. The house was opened in the beginning of

2018 and presents a good opportunity to local people, who could not have a chance to visit the original house of Ataturk in Thessaloniki, Greece.

The cultural house museum presents some original objects of the great leader.

- **Culture and Art House – Kirklareli İl Özel İdaresi – Eski Türk Ocagi Building**

Culture and art house was opened in 2017 after restoration of the building in Yayla Mah. under the cross-border cooperation project between Turkey and Bulgaria, realized in 2012-2013. The house-museum presents the culture and everyday life of the local people after his independence on November 10, 1922.



- **City's Cultural House of Kirklareli – Ali Rıza Efendi**

In the end of 2017 another cultural house opened its doors in Yayla Quarter – named on the name of the father of the great leader Mustafa Kemal ATATÜRK – Ali Rıza Efendi.

The house presents the culture and folklore of Turks, Bulgarian, Greek and Montenegrin people and symbolizing the partnership between these nations.

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- **Kirklareli Museum**

This historical building of the museum is built in 1894 year and after restoration in 1994 was opened as historical museum. Actually the museum has several departments: historical, ethnographical, archeological, nature section.

Unfortunately the museum's capacity for exhibiting and store the artifacts is limited, so the opening of other museums in the local municipalities will be also very suitable and right step for the diversification of the tourism services in the region.



- **Kanlıgeçit and Asagipinar excavation areas**

Dating back to 3rd Millennium B.C. to the Bronze Age, Kanlıgeçit is the oldest settlement in the Balkans and the first Bronze Age Anatolian colony settlement in Thrace.

Starting in 3200 B.C., the settlement in Kanlıgeçit continued until 2400 B.C. as a sizeable village with wooden architecture as it had been in other parts of Thrace and the Balkans. It is the oldest example, the formation of which had started in the Early Bronze Age; a later

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example is the caravan route known also as Kültepe-Kaniş-Karum. Aşağıpınar Tumulus: As the oldest peasant village in Thrace, Aşağıpınar is an important excavation point that displays how the "Neolithic Revolution", a lifestyle based on food production, was transferred to Europe from Anatolia. The culture discovered in Aşağıpınar represents the process in which the foundations of the European civilization were laid.



- Seyfioğlu Bastion in Kırklareli

This stone bastion is located at 3 km from Kırklareli town and is a bastion used during the Balkan Wars. The bastion was built after Ottoman-Russian War in 1877-1878, with aim ensuring safety against new attacks. The bastion has 45 rooms.



- **Tumulus**

Tumulus; There are over 200 tumulus in Kirklareli and nearly half of them are registers as archeological monuments.



- **Dolmens:**

Dolmens of Kirklareli; dolmens from 1300 B.C. are mostly located on the foot of the mountains and plateaus on the north and northwest of the city center



3.2. Demirkoy Municipality:

- Dupnisa Cave;

This cave is located 6 km away from Sarpdere Village and has a length of 3200 meters and it is one of the longest caves of the world. The Cave is the first one opened in 2003 for the tourism in Thrace and attracts each year thousands of visitors.

It was formed around 180 million years ago and is a home of population of bats. In 2015-2016 the area around the cave was reconstructed and socialized for the visits, so it takes very important place in the eco- tourism sector of Kirklareli.



Photo: Dupnisa Cave, Sarpdere Village, Demirkoy/Kirklareli

- Demirkoy Fatih Sultan Mehmet Iron Foundry

The archaeological site is situated 3.8 km southeast of the **Demirköy town**. An **iron** metalworking center was established at this location in the 15th century during the Ottoman Empire due to the rich **iron** ore deposits in the region.

The excavation works in the archeological complex was finalized last year and now the complex is waiting for any restoration and restitution works.



- Igneada Longoz Forests National Park

The protection of the habitat of these forests has crucial importance for the biodiversity of the region, because the Longoz Forests are completely covered with water during winter and spring and presents an important area for the ecosystem.

The area is defined as a National Park on 2007 and covers forests with seven lakes, home of many fish species, determined as species in need of protection. Igneada is located on the very important bird migration paths as Via Pontica and its lakes can also be defined as accommodation points for many migrating birds.



- Igneada Sandy Beach – the longest beaches on the Black Sea side

Igneada has the longest sandy beach of the Black sea costs – there is golden sandy cost long more than 10 km, passing virgin bays and estuaries of rivers.



Photo with the view to Igneada and Limankoy nose, January 2018.

- **Igneada Town**

The town is small coastal town, with population of nearly 2000 people in the winter and more than 50.000 in the summer's season.

Here the tourist could accommodate in five stars hotel or to stay in a camping area as many of the visitor preferred. Threcking in Longoz forests, visiting the near Limankoy village and to drink good Turkish coffee or to pitch tent ... these are the few of the things that can be done here.



- **Hamdibey village visitor center**

Hamdibey village is old Greek village inhabited by Balkan's resettles from Bulgaria and Bosna.

The village is very famous with its Bosnian dishes. In 2016 some of the village's houses and the streets were reconstructed and there was opened one visitors center in the village. The

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center was equipped with all needful kitchen equipment and there was provided a chance to the local women to cook and sell their Bosnian dishes. Now, the village is visited from hundreds of lovers of the nature and rural-tourism.



- **Begendik and Sislioba Villages**

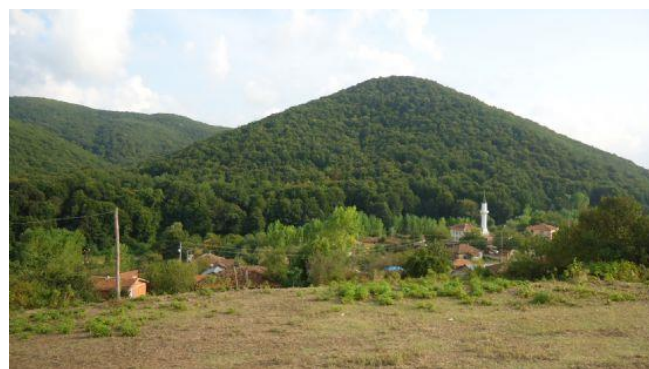
Begendik and Sislioba villages are located a few km from the border with Bulgaria. They present very important opportunities as preferred sea and rural tourism destinations.

Begendik is placed right opposite to the Bulgarian village – Rezovo, on the border with Bulgaria and has a golden and beautiful sea-coast.

Sislioba village presents to its visitors amazing nature, charming houses and the local products made by the women of the village. Tourists could use their visit in the village to make a trekking in the forests or to visit the ancient Fortress placed on the hill near to the village. Also, the visitors in the village are welcomed with the local very famous honey.



A view of Rezovo village from Begendik Village.



Sislioba village with the hill

3.3.Vize Municipality

Vize is a very important ancient center in Thrace. Vize is famous with its history, natural, cultural and architectural beauties. It attracts the attention of many local and foreign visitors with its Thracian, Byzantium, Roman and Ottomans monuments. There are many ancient ruins in Vize that had been the capital of Thracian Kingdom. There are many Thracian tumulus, stone monasteries and natural beauties in Vize.

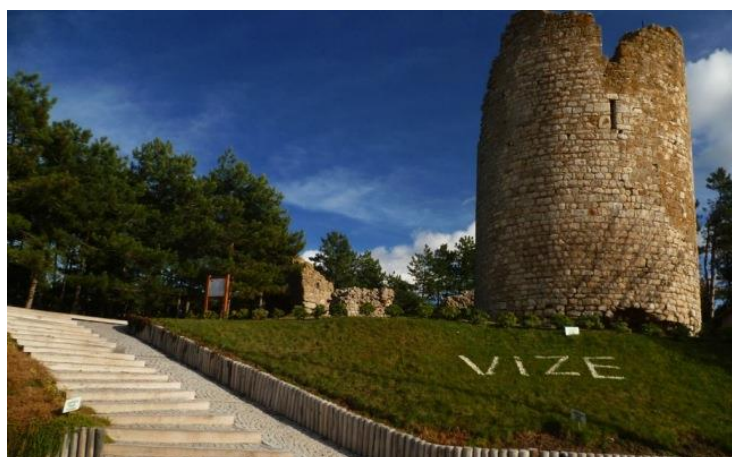
- **Little Hagia Sophia, converted into Gazi Suleyman Pasha Mosque in the Ottoman period.**



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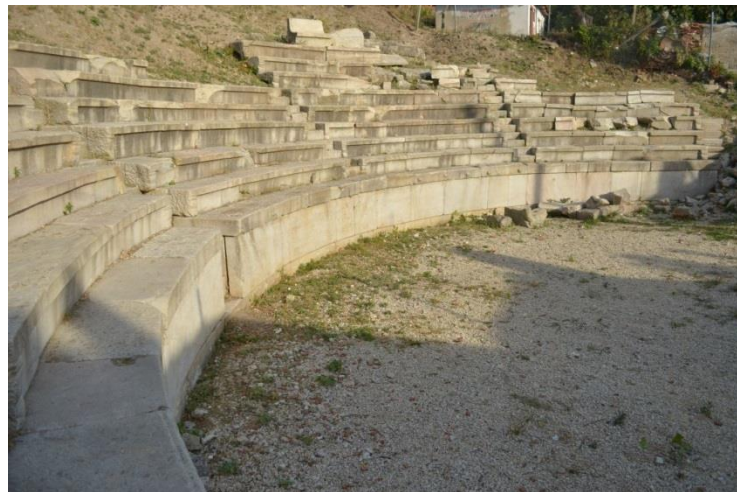
- **Vize Castle and Walls:**

Vize fortress surrounds the northern and western parts of the city. It is believed that it was first built in the year 72-76 AD and Repaired during the Byzantium by Emperor Justinian I. Since 2012 the municipality of Vize made very complex renovations around the castle and now it is one of the preferred places for the tourists.



- **Ancient Theater or ancient meeting hall in Vize:**

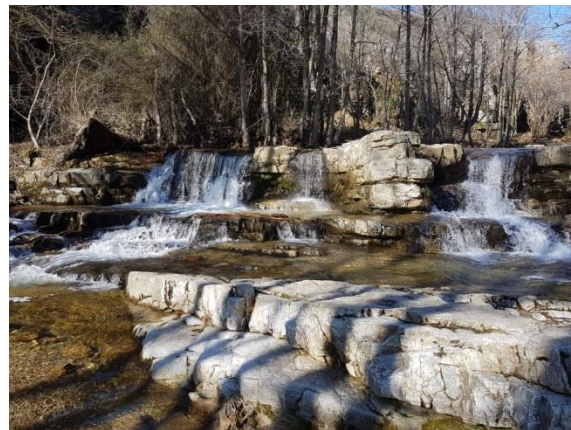
Ancient Theatre Vize dating from the Roman era in 2nd century AD. The theatre is the only one found in Thrace region and is a very important archeological monument. During the last year Kirklareli Directorate of Culture and Tourism has realized a project for the cleaning of the area around the monument by removing the near built homes. The monument is still waiting for its restoration, but the common efforts of the local authorities and NGOs are in this domain.



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- **Cehennem Waterfalls are one of the most beautiful natural areas in Vize**

The amazing view of Strandzha/Yildiz Mountain and its beautiful nature, surrounded all over by the Forest's Rose – Zelenika... the place of Cehennem (Hell) waterfalls actually is a place of heaven. The area is a place that is loved by photographers, eco-tourism and nature lovers.



Cehennem Waterfalls, Vize/ January 2018

- **Kiyikoy – the archeological reserve (ancient Midye port-town)**

Kiyikoy town is an ancient port city, located on the old trade destinations. Now, the old city is registered as archeological reserve and consists from small wood covered houses.

The town is surrounded by fortress walls built over the mouths of the two rivers - Pabuçdere and Kazandere.

Two rivers are very special for the local biodiversity and for the Black sea basin litter, because they are flowing in to the Black sea.

The town of Kiyikoy has been visited mainly in the summer season. The local people are mainly fishers and one of the main economic activities in the town is fishing, and then comes tourism to the second place.



- **Ayanikola Ayazma (Sacred Fountain) and Monastery St. Nikola:**

Located near a rock at Pabuç River Valley, the monastery is one of the oldest stone monasteries of the world. This rock monastery located 700 meters from Kiyikoy is an important Byzantine Age construction and is still in good conditions.

Kirklareli District Directorate of Culture and Tourism is implementing a project funded again by the Interreg-IPA Bulgaria –Turkey for reconstruction of the road leading to the monastery.

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Thus project will ensure increasing of the visitors number in the monastery and in the Kiyikoy at all.



- **Citta Slow Vize – other tourism opportunities for the region**

The town of Vize in Kirklareli province designated is announced for the slow city of Turkey by the international Cittaslow network in 2012, and began to attract more and more visitors. The visitors love to taste the healthy local foods, organic products and traditional cuisine. The town is very popular with its linden trees and products.

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<http://www.goturkeytourism.com/destinations-turkey/cittaslow-vize-in-turkey.html>

3.4. Luleburgaz Municipality

Luleburgaz town always has been the important logistic point, placed in the central part of Turkish Thrace region. Luleburgaz, also has rich historical background which combines successfully with the local inovative inestments.

- **Sokullu Mehmet Paşa Kulliye (Lüleburgaz):**

1570 dated kulliye – social complex is a magnificent Ottoman piece of art with its mosque, hammam- bath, theology school and caravansary. Sokullu Mosque, which is repaired in 1839, has an important place among sing domed mosques. Its minaret has been restored and reopened for worship. The complex includes also a stone bridge which continues to be used to these days.

- **Ertugrulkoy village Ethnographical House**

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The house is restored with the financial support of the IPA CBC BG-TR Programme and is the single house-museum in Luleburgaz Municipality.

The house has been visited by many tourists from Turkey and abroad that can see the local traditional tools used by the local people, can buy from the local weaved products and to participate on the concert of the local amateur folklore group – The Women of the Republic.



3.5. Pinarhisar Municipality

Pinarhisar is a small municipal settlement with long history and interesting architectural monuments. One of the important monuments in the town of Pinarhisar is the tower located ear to the town's centre.



- Ethnographical house Poyrali village

This is the first ethnographical house created in Kirklareli region, after the ethnographical exposition in the Museum of Kirklareli town.

The house is placed in Poyrali village on the cross-road leading to Vize, Demirkoy and Pinarhisar. Ethnographical house is created with the support of the local people and their donations in traditional goods and tools, clothes and customs.

The house-museum is presenting the local culture and ethnography of the people.



3.6. Babaeski Municipality

Babaeski is famous with its architectural monuments built in Ottoman period – Cedit Ali Pasa Mosque and the bridge of Babaeski.

- Cedit Ali Paşa Mosque

The mosque is a piece of art of the famous architecture – Mimar Sinan. The mosque is constructed between 1561 and 1565 and it is suppose that is repaired in 1832. The mosque was a part from the külliye – social complex, but unfortunately the theology school, hammam – bath, caravanserai and library have not preserved.

The mosque is a small model of Suleymanie Mosque in Istanbul.



- **The stone bridge in Babaeski**

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The bridge is built in 1633 year during the 4th Murat period. The main purpose of the bridge at these years was to ensure passing the river by the traders and Ottoman's soldiers from their travel from Anatolia to the Balkans.

The bridge is still used as the bridge located on the main road to the exit of the town in way of Luleburgas.



3.7. Pehlivankoy Municipality

Pehlivankoy is a small municipality located on the costs of Ergene River.

Pehlivankoy is very famous with its cultural festival – Pavli panayir – fair. The fair has over hundred year history, as the first fair was realized in 1910. Each year without any interruption the fair is still realizing in its old charm and characters.

Pavli panayir – fair attracts many photographers, lovers of the good food and the people who want for one day to return with nostalgia to their childhoods.



3.8. Kofcaz Municipality

Kofcaz Municipality is bordering with Yambol District and Bolyarovo Municipality. It has very long traditions in realization of ceremonies relating with the celebration of the day of the Topcu Baba. The tomb of Topcu Baba in located in Topcubaba village in Kofcaz municipality and each year near to the tomb have been organizing remembrance and celebrations.

Many visitors from Kirklareli and the near districts as Tekirdag, Edirne and Istanbul have been participating at the remembrances. At this day the people dancing and many sacrifice has been prepared. This traditional remembrance has more than 600 year history.



IV. PROPOSALS FOR TOURISM TYPES IN KIRKLARELI

4.1. Tourism Trends in the World

Tourism is one of the faster growing sectors on the worldwide base. The tourism sector ensures sustainable economic growth. This sector presents 7% of total world exports and 30% of world services exports and the total value of the sector is more than US\$ 1.5 trillion in exports from international tourism.

According to the data of UN World Travel Organization for 2017 the % of growing of the tourism is 7% and the expected percent for the 2018 is between 4 % -5 %.

According to the data provided by the UNWTO the total number of arrivals for 2017 in Europe is 671 million reached and the percentage of increasing the tourist arrivals in Central and Eastern Europe is +5% which is also recorded robust growth¹. 2017 was characterised by sustained growth in many destinations and a firm recovery in those that suffered decreases in previous years.

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Beyond the economic benefits tourism sector ensures respect of cultural values, diversity and heritage of the different nationalities. The sector helps reviving traditional activities and customs on local level and their popularization, promotes cultural diversity and supports wiring of the value of heritage.

Tourism is an opportunity to all nations to appreciate their peace and ensure security in their regions. The sector breaks down barriers and builds bridges between visitors and local people, provides opportunities for cross-cultural encounters that can build peace and is a tool of soft diplomacy.

Other main important characteristic of the sector is that the tourism ensures social inclusiveness, employment and poverty reduction. One in every eleven jobs globally is in tourism sector and most important almost twice as many women employers as other sectors.

The tourism sector should actively follow the market situation and to adapt to the new requirements and wishes of the tourists although the fast grow and good sectoral stability.

¹ [UNWTO World Tourism Barometer](#)

The rapid growth in international tourism flows, new consumer trends, digitalisation of the economy, security issues, and adaptation to climate change are among the major challenges facing the tourism sector.

These will require active, innovative and integrated policy responses to ensure that tourism remains a competitive sector and continues to deliver economically and sustainably in the years to come.²

Tourism sector consists from the travel activities and trends in its biggest part. Travelling is the main fundamental part of the tourism, that's way monitoring of the active changing traveling trends is very important for the ensuring sustainable tourism in the regions.

The travel sector's experts proposed that the need from discovery of new places, *adventure travel* will continue to be the main engine power of the sector.

New generation and new- travellers along with the explored destinations attracting with their cultural, architectural and historical heritage as Amsterdam, Barcelona, Paris, etc. will be oriented also to the hidden, but growing destinations as Balkans's countries and their Northern neighbour countries, to the Asian and Middle East countries as Iran and Jourdan.

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Also, tourism experts foresee that the new trends of the tourism and travel market will be along with the sustainable tourism – development of *conscious travel*.

What is meaning this new trend? This is a travel tide that will include an added element of community In addition to making a conscious effort to go on eco-friendly tours and buy organic produce at local markets, travelers will be spending their money in ways that benefit the local economy and community, rather than large corporations and foreign investment companies. That includes opting for small boutique hotels over big chain hotels and local shops over international malls³.

As regards to the season that will “count” more visits and ensure more travel activities its proposed that the *winter will become the new peak season*. Development and increasing of a number of winter sports' competitions, promoting of a new and attractive winter festival trips and thematic destinations will make this season really competitive to the other one.

² OECD Tourism Trends and Policies 2016

³ The rising trends in travel and tourism for 2018 – Samantha Fanelli

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2017 was a year of sustainable tourism and as the same time was a year of the millennials, but according to the tourism sector's experts the new 2018 will be a year of *multigenerational vacations*.

Also *Wellness and Medical Vacations, Culinary Tours* will be dominated during the 2018.

4.2. Tourism Trends in Turkey

Tourism sector is one of the top sectors for Republic of Turkey. The country is surrounded from seas in its three parts and is a rich of natural, cultural and historical monuments. Bridging the two continents Turkey, is a gateway to East and West. Turkey is a vast country; its land mass is 814.578 sq km.

The “golden” year of the country’s tourism was 2014 when the sector achieved 41 627 246 arrivals, but unfortunately 2015 and 2016 were two years of massive under-achievement in tourism. After this period of slowdown the sector in 2017 again successfully gets close and almost achieves its previous success.

DISTRIBUTION OF VISITORS ARRIVING IN TURKEY BY YEARS AND MONTHS**					
MONTHS	YEARS			RATE OF CHANGE (%)	
	2015	2 016	2017*	2016/2015	2017/2016
JANUARY	1 594 400	1 521 249	1 384 622	-4,59	-8,98
FEBRUARY	1 751 380	1 631 277	1 494 891	-6,86	-8,36
MARCH	2 269 962	2 034 471	1 944 942	-10,37	-4,40
APRIL	2 768 482	2 219 619	2 498 489	-19,83	12,56
MAY	4 187 786	3 029 374	3 388 560	-27,66	11,86
JUNE	4 482 621	2 902 139	3 962 416	-35,26	36,53
JULY	6 131 213	4 211 530	5 845 934	-31,31	38,81
AUGUST	5 656 083	3 709 503	5 305 838	-34,42	43,03
SEPTEMBER	4 708 032	3 412 154	4 691 972	-27,52	37,51
OCTOBER	3 688 684	2 853 430	3 381 691	-22,64	18,51
NOVEMBER	2 055 549	1 699 949	1 993 329	-17,30	17,26
DECEMBER	1 819 877	1 681 985	2 077 140	-7,58	23,49
TOTAL	41 114 069	30 906 680	37 969 824	-24,83	22,85

(*): Provisional Data.

(**): Compiled by the datas of The Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism and The Turkish Statistical Institute. This table is going to be revised in the end of every quarters following the publishing of Turkish Statistical Institute's News Bulletin.

According to the provisional data acquired from the General Directorate of Security and Turkish Statistical Institute, the number of arriving visitors in Turkey in IV. quarter of 2017 has reached 37 969 641 with 22,85 % increase compared to the same quarter of the previous year.

DISTRIBUTION OF FOREIGNERS ARRIVING IN TURKEY BY YEARS AND MONTHS

MONTHS	YEARS			RATE OF CHANGE (%)	
	2015	2016	2017*	2016/2015	2017/2016
JANUARY	1 250 941	1 170 333	1 055 474	-6,44	-9,81
FEBRUARY	1 383 343	1 240 633	1 159 833	-10,32	-6,51
MARCH	1 895 940	1 652 511	1 587 007	-12,84	-3,96
APRIL	2 437 263	1 753 045	2 070 322	-28,07	18,10
MAY	3 804 158	2 485 411	2 889 873	-34,67	16,27
JUNE	4 123 109	2 438 293	3 486 940	-40,86	43,01
JULY	5 480 502	3 468 202	5 075 961	-36,72	46,36
AUGUST	5 130 967	3 183 003	4 658 463	-37,96	46,35
October	4 251 870	2 855 397	4 076 630	-32,84	42,77
OCTOBER	3 301 194	2 449 948	2 992 947	-25,79	22,16
NOVEMBER	1 720 554	1 353 280	1 652 795	-21,35	22,13
DECEMBER	1 464 791	1 302 157	1 703 789	-11,10	30,84
TOTAL	36 244 632	25 352 213	32 410 034	-30,05	27,84

According to the temporary data obtained from the General Directorate of Security; in the January-December 2017 period the number of foreign visitors arrived increased by 27,84% compared to the previous year.

In January-December 2017 period, top 5 provinces foreign visitors entered Turkey were:

- 1- İstanbul %33,11 (10 730 510)
- 2- Antalya %29,26 (9 482 050)
- 3- Edirne %9,77 (3 165 839)
- 4- Artvin %8,23 (2 666 046)
- 5- Muğla %6,12 (1 982 468)

DISTRIBUTION OF ARRIVING FOREIGN VISITORS - TOP 5 COUNTRIES (2015-2017*) JANUARY-
DECEMBER

ÜLKELER	2017	2017 NAT. RATIO %	2016	2016 NAT. RATIO %	2015	2015 NAT. RATIO %
Russia Fed.	4 715 438	14,55	866 256	3,42	3 649 003	10,07
Germany	3 584 653	11,06	3 890 074	15,34	5 580 792	15,40
Iran	2 501 948	7,72	1 665 160	6,57	1 700 385	4,69
Georgia	2 438 730	7,52	2 206 266	8,70	1 911 832	5,27
Bulgaria	1 852 867	5,72	1 690 766	6,67	1 821 480	5,03
OTHER	17 316 398	53,43	15 033 691	59,30	21 581 140	59,54
GENERAL TOTAL	32 410 034	100,00	25 352 213	100,00	36 244 632	100,00

(*): Provisional Data.

In the January - December 2017 time period , the top tourism markets for Turkey are Russia Fed. with 14,55% (4 715 438) Germany with 11,06% (3 584 653) Iran with 7,72% (2 501 948) share of the total visitors. Iran is followed by Georgia and Bulgaria.

The country in order to reach its 2023 goals in the field of tourism, namely achieving 50 million arrivals and \$50 billion incomes, it is now focusing on three key potential markets - **China, Russia and the Muslim sector** - to attract more tourists and revive one of its core economic drivers.

One of the most significant promotions is to attract 1 million Chinese tourists for 2018. China is still Turkey's second largest importer, and both countries have been working on closer economic ties in the last 12 months.

Now with Sino-Turkish relations much improved, Turkey sees an excellent opportunity to bring Chinese travelers to the country. This was recently reflected in China declaring 2018 as '**Turkey Tourism Year**' as part of a joint promotion of Turkey's best tourist's assets.⁴

The number of Russians coming to Turkey in 2015 was 686,000, but that fell to just 47,778 in 2016. However, of a total 4 715 438 travelers arriving in 2017, Russia topped the charts again with their Russian tourist in Turkey.

With a potential mass market of 120 million holidaying Muslims and a \$156 billion-dollar global trade, Turkey has been developing a strategy to increase its share of visitors in what it calls '**Halal Tourism**'.

⁴ Turkey Homes *Written on: 17 August 2017*

4.3. Tourism trends in Thrace and in Kirklareli

4.3.1. Tourism in Thrace region

Thrace, located on the west of Turkey and in its European part, consists of the provinces which are Edirne, *Kirklareli* and Tekirdag. Thrace, with its fertile soils and costs with three seas is a rich of lush vineyards, sunflower plantations and the beautiful sea- bays.

Thrace is one of the best places to visit in Turkey. The fact that a large part of the people of the region migrated from the Balkan countries and formed of people who settled in the region ensured that Thrace region is not only a physical, but cultural and social crossing point.

The region has the sea ranking in top 3 in the world with the existing of bays which can renew itself – Saroz Bay in Edirne.

With its 8300 year history, Thrace region is the cradle of approximately 8000 thousand years civilization beginning from Thracian civilizations to East Rome, West Rome and the Ottoman Empire.

Thrace is an untouched region in terms of tourism potential. Tourism trend of the Thrace region is increasing, because the travelers want to explore a different tourism concept rather than sun and sea and the Thrace is giving them this experience.

With its middle-sized towns and beautiful old Greek houses' villages, vineyards, natural products and happy and hospitable people the region attracts more nature lovers and travelers who want to learn about the local traditions and to have conversations with the local people.

The tourist visiting Thrace could dive in the sea and see around the forest, or to do camping and see the social life of this region.

Location of the region is one of its main advantages; bordering with metropolitan of Istanbul and with European Union, it presents important logistic and transportation area. Also the new third airport of Istanbul which is in the process of building will be more close to the Thrace region and undoubtedly will provide opportunity to the travelers to rich the region more easily and quickly.

Thrace with its opportunities for alternative tourism attracts more than thousand hundred travellers per each year.

During the last years the region bets a lot of its opportunities for development of alternative tourism and elaboration of alternatives attractive routes. Under the umbrella of Thrace Development Agency the three district centers and local municipalities in Kirklareli, Edirne and Tekirdag have been promoting their tourism opportunities and attractions on important national and international tourism fairs as EMMIT and WTM in London.

With the support of the agency was developed very popular and awarded tour routes as *Thrace Vineyards Route – Trakya Bag Rotasi*⁵



Along with this very famous and preferred by the tourist route the development agency promotes also the *Road of the Sunflower*, which is targeting Asian travellers.

Other promoted destination is the *Road of the UNESCO's monuments* in Thrace. Edirne is a center of the historical tangible monuments listed in UNESCO as Selimiye Mosque and its Social Complex and is in a process of listing the 2nd Beyazit Social Complex and Uzunkopru Stone Bridge as the longest stone bridge in the world.

Also, the intangible heritage listed in the UNESCO is the old traditional *Kirpinar Oil Wrestling Festival* organized in 2017 for its 565 time.

Edirne with its historical and cultural heritage is a district that attracts most tourists in Thrace region. In 2017 it was visited by nearly 3 million local and foreign tourists. Edirne is in the list of top 100 the most visited towns in the world and is in 68th place⁶.

Thrace also has own tourism logo as the branding and promotion activities was funded again by the Trakya Development Agency under the project implemented by Kırklareli University.



⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/Trakya-Ba%C4%9F-Rotas%C4%B1-654598461244854/>

⁶ Ahmet HACIOGLU, Director of Edirne District Directorate of Culture and Tourism

4.3.2. Tourism Trends in Kirklareli District

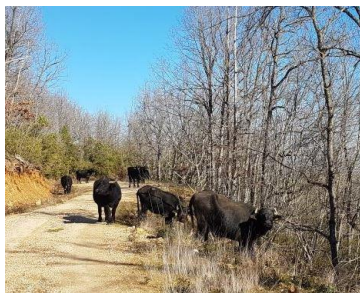
Kirklareli district placed between the most visited town in Turkey (Istanbul) and the third most visited town (Edirne) has a big opportunities to provide to the travellers alternative destinations as *Culinary tours, Cultural Tours, Eco – Tours, Rural destination* and *Summer sea tours*.

4.3.2.1. Culinary tours in Kirklareli:

The most important factors involved in visiting a new place is to see a place that you've never seen before and to be exposed to a new culture. However there is yet another reason that has been quite popular in the recent years and that is; to visit places based on their culinary culture. Recent year's most popular type of tourism, the culinary tourism helps people understand the food culture of the places through many different activities.

Kirklareli is a famous with its delicious specialties as *Hardaliye* – drink made by grape and crushed mustard seeds. This drink is a lactic acid fermented beverage with antioxidant effect in adults. Hardaliye is still producing in homes of the most Kirklareli's citizens.

The town of Kirklareli and some of the small towns in the district as Ahmetbey are very famous with its *meatballs*. The meat in the region is very special, because of the tasty meat of the Kivircik sheep, which is used in the making of the meatballs.



Kirklareli is also preferred because of its *rich natural dairy products* as cheese and yogurt. Here you visit small dairies and taste original buffalo yogurt.

Buffalos in Vize municipality

Kirklareli is a region with a coast of Black Sea and has rich *fish cuisine* as preparation of the turbot (kalkan) fish. It is very tasty fish and could be tasted in restaurants in Igneada and Kiyikoy.

Demirkoy municipality is very famous with its *aromatic strawberries and natural honey* products. Also there and in the other parts of the district the visitors could *taste goat or lamp cevirme*.

Pekmez from beet is still are making by the local women in the district and especially in Poyrali village, Pinrhisar where the traveller could buy this product.

The visitor centres in Hamdibey village and in Sislioba village also ready to treat the guests with Bosnian cuisine and local tastes.



4.3.2.2. Cultural Tours

Turkey has been positioned as more a sun, sea, and sand destination than a cultural destination. According to the State Planning Organization's Five-Year Development Plans, as well as past and current tourism plans for Turkey such as Tourism Vision 2023, cultural tourism is seen more as an alternative and secondary type of tourism for Turkey.

Certainly we can claim that Turkey in general and Kirklareli in special can offer unique, positive and memorable cultural experiences for culture –core and culture-peripheral tourists.

In the last three-four years building of different cultural houses and elaboration of different ethnographical expositions increased the opportunities for successfully promoting of cultural tours in Kirklareli.

The travellers could visit Kirklareli *Yayla quarter* with its cultural houses, to see the model of Atatürk's house, to visit the crafts exhibition in the house-museum of arts and culture and to buy from local hand-made souvenirs presented in the street of arts.

Kirklareli museum also has good ethnographical exposition and is a very rich to historical, cultural and architectural objects.

Also, they could visit Luleburgas Ertugrulkoy Cultural House and the house of Fatma Nine or to see the weaving process in Poyrali village, Pinarhisar.

Cultural tours are very important also for Bulgarian and Greek people whose ancestors had emigrated from these lands nearly 100 years ago and now they comes each year in Thrace to see their old houses and places where were born their parents.

Many villages in the district are visited by Bulgarian and Greek tourists came especially to sea these villages.

Vize and Kiyikoy are in the center of the historical and cultural tours in Kirklareli. They promote the rich historical heritage of the region and provide different attractions in nature and around the ancient *castles, religious and cultural monuments*.

4.3.2.3. Eco – Tourism in Kirklareli:

What is mean *ecotourism*: Ecotourism is now defined as "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education" (TIES, 2015). Education is meant to be inclusive of both staff and guests.⁷ Ecotourism is about *uniting conservation, communities, and sustainable travel*.

Ecotourism is the other strong opportunity of Kirklareli district to develop sustainable tourism and to attract more and more nature lovers in the region.

⁷ The international ecotourism society

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Demirkoy and Vize municipalities are in the center of the eco-tours in Kirklareli.

Dupnisa Cave, the lakes of Igneada National Park, local Longoz forests, Kasatura and Panayir Bays, the Strandza/Yildiz mountain ... all of them are a part from the eco-tourism in Kirklareli.

Here the travellers and nature lovers could make **tracking** in the forests of Yildiz mountain and Longoz forests, could participate in **birds watching** tours around the lakes of Igneada National Park, could **climb** to the top of Strandzha/Yildiz Mountain – Mahya hill and to see the **Zelenika/ Forest's rose / Periwinkle** plant which is stay green in the winter and blooms with amazing purpura / pink flowers.



4.3.2.4. Rural destination – Kirklareli

Rural tourism aims to include and benefit rural communities, while preserving their environmental and cultural assets. It brings rural areas economic development by creating additional income and employment. Tourism development can also improve the social wellbeing in rural areas. For example by stimulating improvements in infrastructure, sanitary and electricity networks as it was done in many local villages in Kirklareli (Hamdibey and Armagan villages).

Rural tourism fits perfectly into the trend that European travellers seek authentic, unique experiences and local lifestyles. European rural travellers want to experience natural, unspoiled landscapes and authentic accommodation.

Rural tourism in Kirklareli is stimulated by the Eco and summer tourism in the region. Local villages as Limankoy, Sislioba and Begendik are very high positively affected from the visits of local and foreign summer – sea tourists coming to the costs of Black sea.

There, especially in Limankoy has a good accommodation infrastructure – many of the local people have turned their houses into motels and provided services as **cycling tours** to the near villages and drinking of local **Turkish coffee** made on hot sand.



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4.3.2.5. *Summer Sea Destination*

Igneada and Kiyikoy have the most beautiful sand costs of the Black Sea. Igneada has nearly 2200 people living permanently in the town and hosts nearly 25 000 people in the summer season.

Kiyikoy is smaller than Igneada, but in the summer season its number of citizens are nearly 20 000 people.

The Black sea cost in kirklareli has very beautiful and virgin bays and Panair Iskele and Kasatura bay. These places are under the special national protection and are preferred for camping.

The new investments in the Black sea cost giving big opportunities for accommodation in 5 stars hotels or in bungalows and camps.

Two cities are also selected and described in the 2023 National Tourism Strategy as the places that should be promoted and developed as tourism cities.



Igneada beach



Kiyikoy with the view of the port and the beach

V. PROPOSALS FOR STRATEGICAL OBJECTIVES AND AIMS

1. **Strategical Aim: Diversification of the tourism types in Kırklareli and Burgas and spreading the tourism of 4 seasons**

1st Strategy: stimulating cooperation of local stakeholders and tour operators for the realization of tourism activities that will bring natural, historical and cultural riches to the forefront,

2nd Strategy: integration of registered cultural assets in the cultural inventory of both provinces into the tourism sector - completion of the survey, restoration, and restitution projects of the related assets and their socialization,

3rd Strategy: Determination of traditions and customs, festivals and events that are realizing in the provinces and establishment of festival tourism routes

4th Strategy: Preparation and presentation of the annual tourism program of Kırklareli and Bourgas with points, places that could be visited in all four seasons and ensuring suitable tourism activities

2nd **Strategical Aim: To increase the quality of tourism services in the province of Kırklareli**

1st Strategy: Establishment of new accommodation facilities that will provide services to the tourism accommodation sector, especially in rural areas - development of pensions in rural areas and increasing the quality of existing ones,

2nd Strategy: Execution of capacity and quality enhancing trainings, seminars and information activities for the stakeholders operating in the tourism sector,

3rd Strategy: Accommodation and food and beverage facilities located in the districts should be included in a specific common classification database,

Strategy 4: Collaboration of local tourism sector representatives with the education institutions as Kırklareli University, Tourism vocational school, tourism high schools, etc.

3rd **Strategical aim: Ensuring joint promotion of the districts of Kırklareli and Bourgas**

1st Strategy: Preparation of Turkish and Bulgarian promotional documents on tourism activities and cultural and historical assets in Kırklareli and Burgas districts

2nd Strategy: Realization of joint promotional trial tours for local and foreign tour operators

3rd Strategy: Promoting the two districts in common fairs, festivals, promotional events as a part from joint tourism destination

4th Strategy: Preparation and promotion of annual joint tourism program of one common cross-border destination, that includes appropriate tourism activities, points proposed to be visited and interesting activities that could be done in Kırklareli and Burgas districts.

Sources:

UNWTO: research of World Tourism Organization

Trakya Turizm Routes: <http://trakyaturizmrotasi.com/>

Kirklareli cultural monuments: www.kirklarelikulturenvanteri.com

Stranca Magic project's web site: www.strancamagic.com

Trakya Bag Rotasi project

TUIK – Statistical data: <http://www.tuik.gov.tr>