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**Proiectul**  
**" The Joint Strategy for the Touristic Development of the Giurgiu-Ruse Area, TourDev**  
**Giurgiu-Ruse "**  
**ROBG-501**  
**Finanțat de Programul Interreg V-A**  
**România-Bulgaria**



**The Joint Strategy for the Touristic Development of the**  
**Giurgiu-Ruse Area**

## CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .....	4
Chapter I. ELEMENTS OF STRATEGY FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT A OF THE RUSSIAN DISTRICT .....	5
1.1 RESEARCHING THE POTENTIAL OF THE REGION .....	6
1.2 EXPLORING QUALITY LOCAL BRANDING POSSIBILITIES THROUGH THE EXPERIENCES AND PRODUCTS OFFERED .....	34
1.3 PROPOSAL FOR ACTION TO ENSURE STORAGE THESE PLACES AND OBJECTIVES .....	42
1.4 ANALYSIS OF THE DEGREE AND HOW RISKS AND THREATS MAY BE LIMITED TO MAKE THESE PLACES TOURISM DESTINATIONS INDIVIDUAL .....	45
1.5 OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES OF THE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM OF TOURISM IN THE RUSSIAN REGION .....	54
1.6 RECOMMENDATIONS AND GUIDELINES IN THE SHORT AND MEDIUM TERM .....	67
1.7 AN ANALYSIS OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH INTERESTED PARTIES ARE READY TO TAKE PART OF THE PROPOSED ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STRATEGY .....	71
Chapter II. ELEMENTS OF STRATEGY FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT GIURGIU COUNTY .....	73
2.1 TRENDS IN INTERNATIONAL TOURISM .....	74
2.2 ADMINISTRATIVE-ECONOMIC, GEOGRAPHICAL AND TOURIST OF GIURGIU COUNTY .....	80
2.3 CULTURAL HERITAGE - TILTING PLATE FOR TOURISM IN THE REGION .....	87
2.4 THE MAIN ANTHROPIC AND NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE TERRITORY OF GIURGIU COUNTY .....	91
2.5 OPINIONS OF THE INTERESTED PARTIES AGAINST ASPECTS FROM THE TOURIST DEVELOPMENT OF GIURGIU COUNTY .....	116

2.6 SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE TOURIST POTENTIAL AL GIURGIU COUNTY AND THE CROSS-BORDER REGION AIMED .....	119
2.7 BRANDING PROPOSAL AS A RESULT OF FIELD ANALYSIS .....	126
2.8 PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE AND RESPONSIBLE TOURISM FOR TOURIST DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF GIURGIU COUNTY .....	130
Chapter III. JOINT DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF THE GIURGIU-RUSE REGION .....	135
3.1 BASIS OF THE FOUNDATION OF THE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF THE GIURGIU-RUSE REGION .....	148
3.2 DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY: CONSTRUCTION AND IMPLEMENTATION COORDINATES .....	142
CONCLUSIONS .....	149
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	150

# INTRODUCTION

The project "Joint Strategy for Tourism Development in the Giurgiu-Ruse Region, TourDev Giurgiu-Ruse", project code: ROBG-501, funded by the Interreg VA Romania-Bulgaria Program, generated the opportunity to develop a strategy for tourism development in the cross-border area on both banks of the Danube, at a time particularly necessary for the economic and tourist evolution of the region concerned, in the context in which no similar actions have been initiated in the past.

A first strategic objective of the project is to raise awareness of the development opportunities in the region, the strengths of anthropogenic and natural resources, but also to identify the weaknesses and risks facing the region in terms of tourism development, in order to implement the long-term strategy, with the permanent possibility of revision, adaptation and improvement compared to the dynamic reality. Another strategic objective is to provide - through the current strategy - to stakeholders, all actors in the hospitality industry and local administrative forums in the region an information tool that generates interest and determines their involvement in its adoption, remodeling and implementation.

Each of the two teams of specialists participating in the project - Bulgarian and Romanian - came up with its own approach to analyzing the tourism potential of Ruse and Giurgiu districts, respectively, depending on the specifics of the areas, the degree of development and the vision on future developments. . At the same time, the common working methodology and common guidelines outlined by the structure and objectives of the project were respected. In the proposals made, a careful collaboration between the partners from both sides of the Danube was permanently taken into account for the success of the common perspective approach. Based on the identification of the most valuable elements of cultural and natural heritage in the two areas, analyzing the openness of local communities in receiving tourists and the availability of local administrations in carrying out strategic development plans, we propose elements of medium and long term tourism development program. a new concept of tourism strategy for the entire Giurgiu-Ruse cross-border area.

**Capitolul I.**  
**ELEMENTS OF STRATEGY**  
**FOR THE TOURIST DEVELOPMENT OF RUSE DISTRICT**

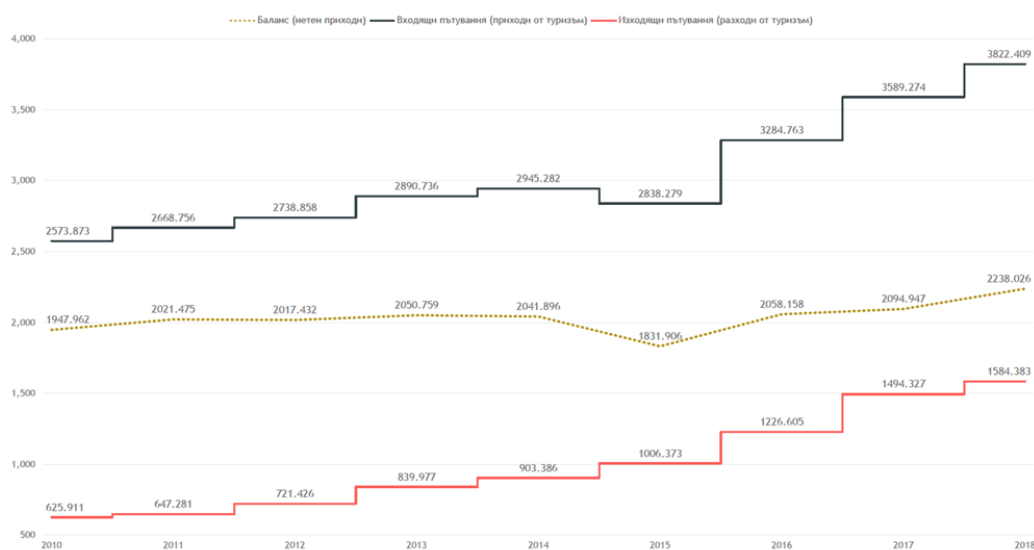
## 1.1 RESEARCH OF THE REGION'S POTENTIAL

### 1. ECONOMIC CONTEXT OF TOURISM

Tourism is an extremely important engine for Bulgaria's economy, with a significant contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) and employment in the country.

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), in 2017 the sector directly contributes 3,1% to the GDP and generates 2,9% of the total employment. The overall impact of tourism (including indirectly) is estimated at 11.5% of GDP (at constant prices) and 10.7% of employment. For 2018, the net revenue from tourism is 2.238 bln. euro , as the sector contributes 44,9% to the export of services and 10,7% to Bulgaria's general export for the year.

**Figure 1 - Share of the tourism in the Balance of payment of the Republic of Bulgaria, in million euro**



Sursă: Banca Națională a Bulgariei (BNB)

The direct contribution of tourism in 2028 is expected to reach 3.6% of the GDP (3.8% average annual growth) and the overall impact to reach 13.3% of the GDP and 13.4% of the total employment<sup>1</sup>.

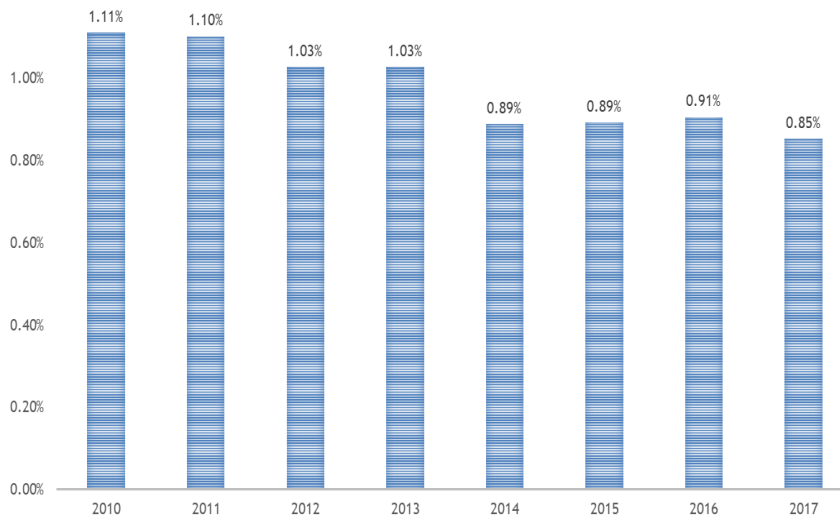
<sup>1</sup> World Travel & Tourism Council, *Travel & Tourism Economic impact 2018 Bulgaria*

For the last seven years, the generated revenues from tourism have increased by 10%, but the contribution of the sector towards GDP has decreased with over 25%. For 2017 the tourist sector in the region contributes 0.85% of the GDP and generates over 3% of the total employment. This is the lowest value since 2010. Here are some of the other highlights:

- One of every 33 jobs is supported by the visitor's expenses. This is an increase of approximately 42%;
- 43% of the people staying overnight are directly supporting one job in the region – an increase of 52%.

This data shows, that tourism lags behind in comparison to other economic sectors. Even though there is growth, it is lower and its contribution in the development of the local economy is decreasing.

Figure 1 - Direct contribution of the tourist sector towards GDP in the Ruse region 2010-2018, in percentage



All economic sectors in the region are taking advantage from the tourism directly:

- by increasing sales for local companies, which deliver goods and services to the tourist industry (for example, delivery of food to the hotel); and
- by increasing sales for local enterprises through local expenses from revenues

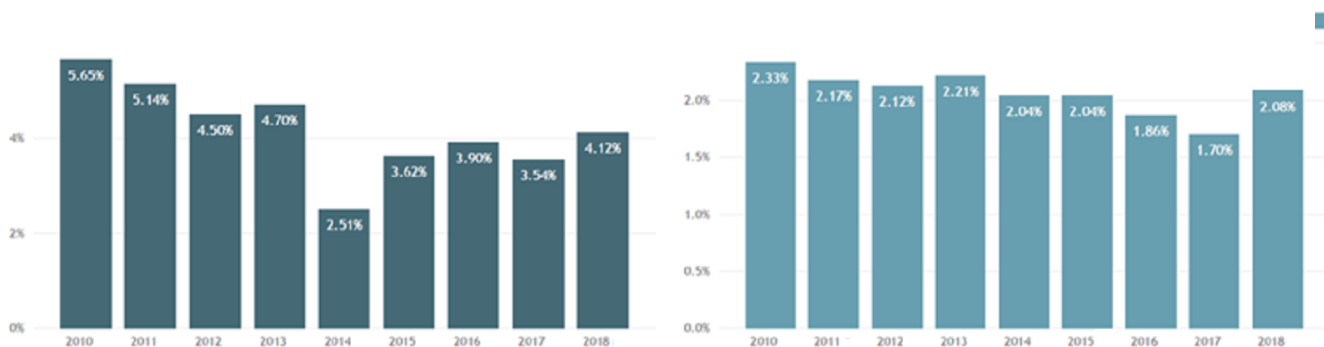
received in tourism and its support sectors (for example, the employees of the hotel's delivery company, which purchase goods and services on a household level etc.).

## 2. MARKET SHARE

The last tourist year was a record one for the Ruse region. Despite of this, the average growth rate during the last eight years is significantly behind the growth registered in the cross-border region Romania-Bulgaria<sup>2</sup>, in which the people staying overnight have increased by close to 76%, (9% average annual growth), and the overnight stays - with 72%. The main regions, which generate growth in the area are Constanta county (Romania), Dobrich, Veliko Tarnovo (Bulgaria).

In this situation of constant growth in the cross-border region, the Ruse province is slightly lagging behind. Despite the achieved record growth in the last year, the province's market share is still below its performance from 2010. The province is facing a serious challenge. To regain its market share, attractiveness and image tourist products need to be improved and developed.

Figure 2 - Market share of the tourist sector in the Ruse province in the cross-border region



Source: NSI, National Statistical Institute, own calculations

<sup>2</sup> The cross-border region Romania-Bulgaria includes: seven counties in Romania: Mehedinti, Dolj, Olt, Teleorman, Giurgiu, Calarasi, Constanta and eight districts in Bulgaria: Vidin, Vratza, Montana, Plevan, Veliko Tarnovo, Ruse, Silistra, Dobrich



### 3. TOURIST RESOURCES

The Ruse province offers protected cultural, historical and natural landmarks, which, together with the development of new attractions, are a basic prerequisite for the development of tourism. You could see historical monuments from different ages, visit national and international festivals and events, discover the diversity of flora and fauna while getting close to the nature, as well as practicing active and sporting activities both indoors and outdoors. Part of these tourist resources remain relatively unknown to local and foreign tourists, but they can make the visit to the region more interesting and increase the satisfaction from the experiences.

On the other hand, the close distance between the individual tourist landmarks allows for the creation of thematic tours for visitors with different interests and tastes. Among the more important natural and cultural-historical resources are:

#### Natural resources

- Nature park „Rusenski Lom” – provides a living environment for 197 types of birds, 90% of which are endangered in Europe. The park is a site of great worldwide importance in the list of UNESCO World Heritage Tourist landmarks;
- The cave „Orlova Chuka” – the second longest in Bulgaria
- The „Kalimok – Brashlen” protected area;
- Nature reserve „Beli Lom”;
- Rock formations near the village of Nisovo etc.

#### Architectural and cultural-historical resources

- The Dohodno Zdanie (Profitable Building);
- Vienna house;
- The Mediaeval city of Cherven;
- House-museum "Ruse's city life" (the House of Calliope);
- Roman fortress Sexaginta Prista;
- Religious and cultural heritage in the archeological reserve „Rock-hewn Churches of Ivanovo” included in the UNESCO heritage;
- Archeological reserve „Basarbovo Rock Monastery”;
- Pantheon of National Revival Heroes;
- Kastel „Yatrus”;
- Transport museum;
- Regional Historical Museum;
- House-museum of Zahari Stoyanov;
- House-museum of Toma Kardzhiev etc.

In proximity to the tourist landmarks or on the tourist landmarks themselves, which are situated in the city, different events from the municipality's cultural calendar are taking place, there is an opportunity for recreation in a park environment and the events are helping diversify the visitors' experience. These are live events and they often offer a taste of the musical, dance, culinary traditions in the region – for example the international music festival - March Music Days, tourist fair Weekend Tourism Ruse, National Jazz Meeting etc. The city of Ruse has good conditions for the development of congress tourism.

For tourist landmarks located outside the urbanized area, adjacent attractions are related to the natural heritage.

There are many different activities that can also be done in Ruse, ranging from sport tourism (canoeing, cycling), riding, fishing tourism, walking tours, etc.

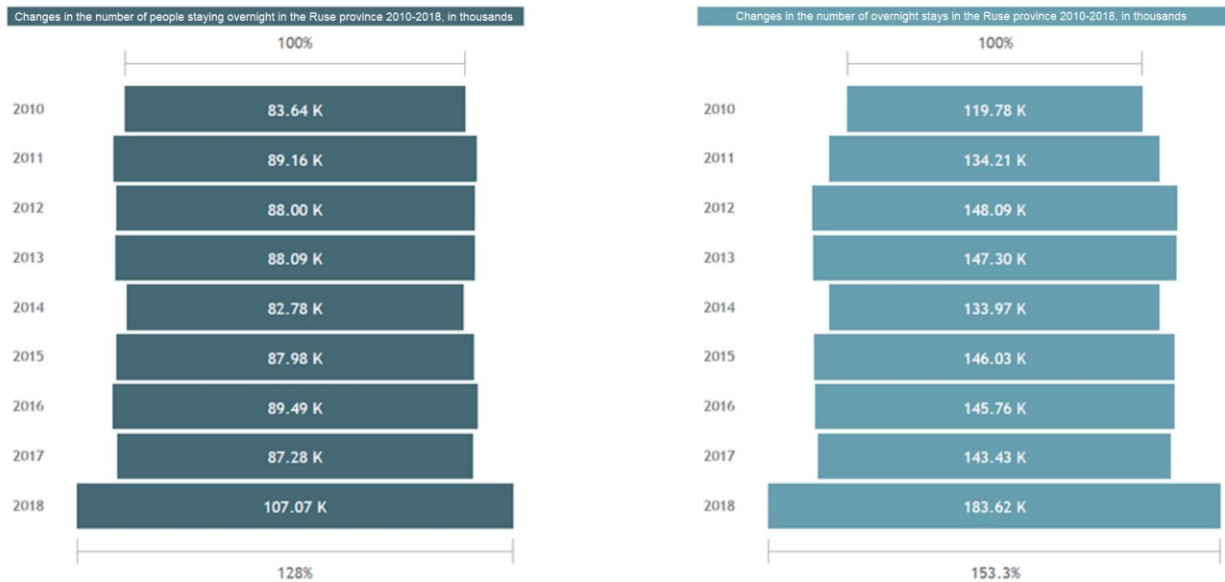
All of this completes the tourist profile of the region as a destination for practicing alternative forms of tourism - ecotourism, cultural, religious, rural and adventure tourism throughout all seasons. There are suitable paths for walking, cycling and horse riding. People can practice water sports or explore different natural and cultural-historical sights. There are suitable spots for hunting and fishing. With its various cultural and natural landmarks, the Ruse region allows the tourists to immerse themselves in the local community and get close to the nature. Even so, the region needs to focus on additional tourist services - building an infrastructure for bad weather or the so-called soft activities (special programs for market support etc.).

## 4. DEMAND FOR TOURIST SERVICES

### 4.1. Tourist flows

2018 was a record year for the tourist sector in the Ruse province for the last eight years. The number of visitors has increased significantly by 28% (19.7 thousand additional tourists compared to 2017), and the overnight stays - by 53% (over 40 thousand additional overnight stays). The main tourist flows are concentrated in the Ruse province with their share being 90-92% of all visitors in the region.

Figure 3 - Number of people staying overnight and overnight stays in the Ruse province 2010-2018, in thousands

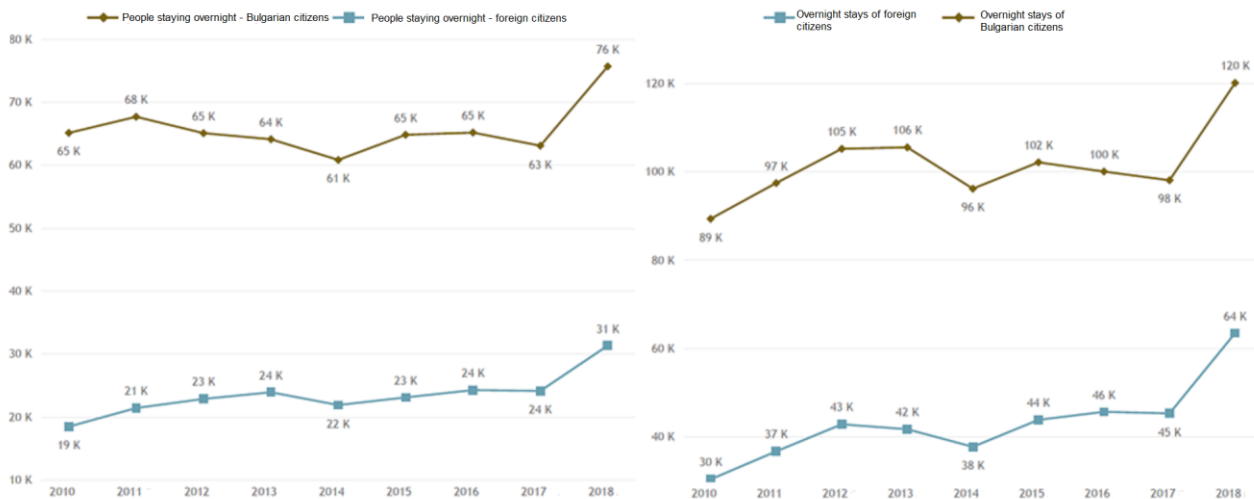


Source: NSI

It is important to maintain the current trend of growth and to identify opportunities for improvement.

For the first four months of 2019, the people staying overnight are over 1.1 thousand (+4%), while the overnight stays are -1.1 thousand (-2%), compared to the same period for 2018. The expectations are to report a growth within 2-3% for the current year as well. The main challenge in the next years is related to attaining moderate growth and maintaining the number of people staying overnight to over 105 thousand annually, as well as keeping the number of overnight stays to be over 180 thousand. In order to reach these goals, work must be done both on the domestic market, as well as on targeted international markets.

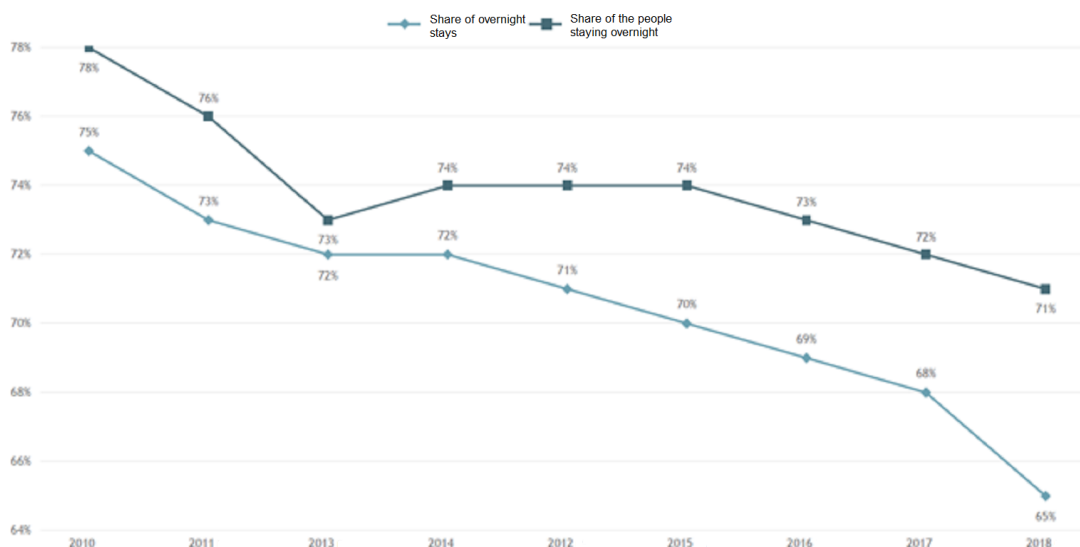
Figure 4 - Number of people staying overnight and overnight stays of Bulgarian and foreign citizens during 2010-2018, in thousands



Source: NSI

The internal market is a main generating market. During 2018, growth of approximately 20% more Bulgarian visitors in the region is observed in comparison to last year. Despite of that, their relative share has been declining for the last eight years – from 78% (2010) to 71% (2018). There is an even more pronounced trend when it comes to the share of overnight stays by Bulgarian citizens, which declines from 75% to 65% for the same period.

Figure 5 - Share of the Bulgarian tourists staying overnight and overnight stays in the Ruse province 2010-2018, percentage



Source: NSI

This is one of the challenges standing before the province and a major opportunity for growth in the coming years. The province needs to direct the necessary resources in order to claim their share of the domestic tourism market through effectively targeted marketing channels and messages.

The foreign visitors are essential for the revenue from tourism in the Ruse province. Although they have a lower share, on average they stay longer and spend more per person. The last year was a record one for the Ruse province in terms of foreign tourists. Over 31 thousand were the registered visitors in the places of accommodation (growth of 30% compared to 2017), who did close to 63.5 thousand overnight stays (growth of 40% compared to 2017). The revenue

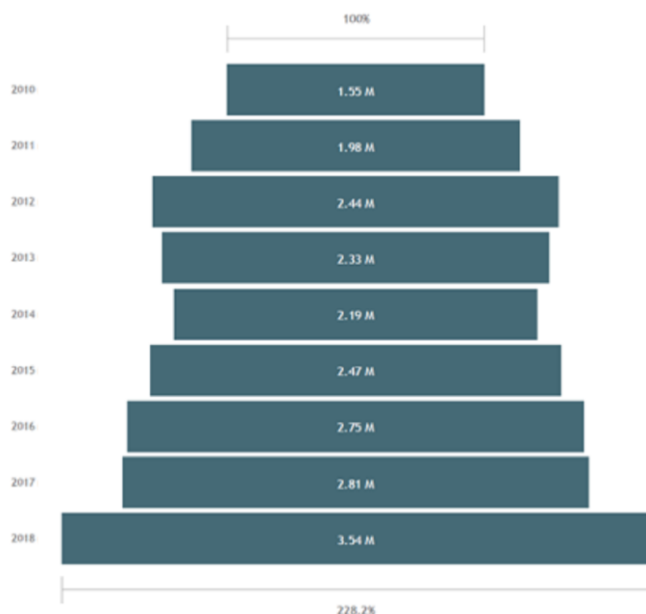
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Figure 6 - Received revenues from overnight stays of foreign citizens in the Ruse province 2010-2018, in million BGN



growth is 26% on an annual basis, reaching more than BGN 3.5 mln. (1.8 mln. euro), which represents 40% of the total revenue in the places of accommodation.

For 2018, the biggest share (49%) of the total number of overnight stays for foreigners in all



places of accommodation on the territory of the Ruse province belongs to tourists from EU member-states. The most overnight stays have been made by guests from Romania (8.5 thousand), Germany (over 4.3 thousand), Italy (over 2 thousand) and France (over 2 thousand). Among foreign guests from European countries outside the EU, tourists from Ukraine have registered the highest number of overnight stays (over 4 thousand). Visitors from Turkey and the Russian Federation are also one of the leading markets for the region<sup>3</sup>. This also defines the main target markets, which the province should focus on. Outside Europe, other markets include visitors from the US, Australia, Israel, Japan and others.

The majority of foreign tourists in the area come to visit cultural and natural landmarks, on business trips, and a not-so-small number of them are just passing by (particularly pronounced among tourists from Ukraine, the Russian Federation and Turkey). There are also trips with the intention to visit friends and relatives.

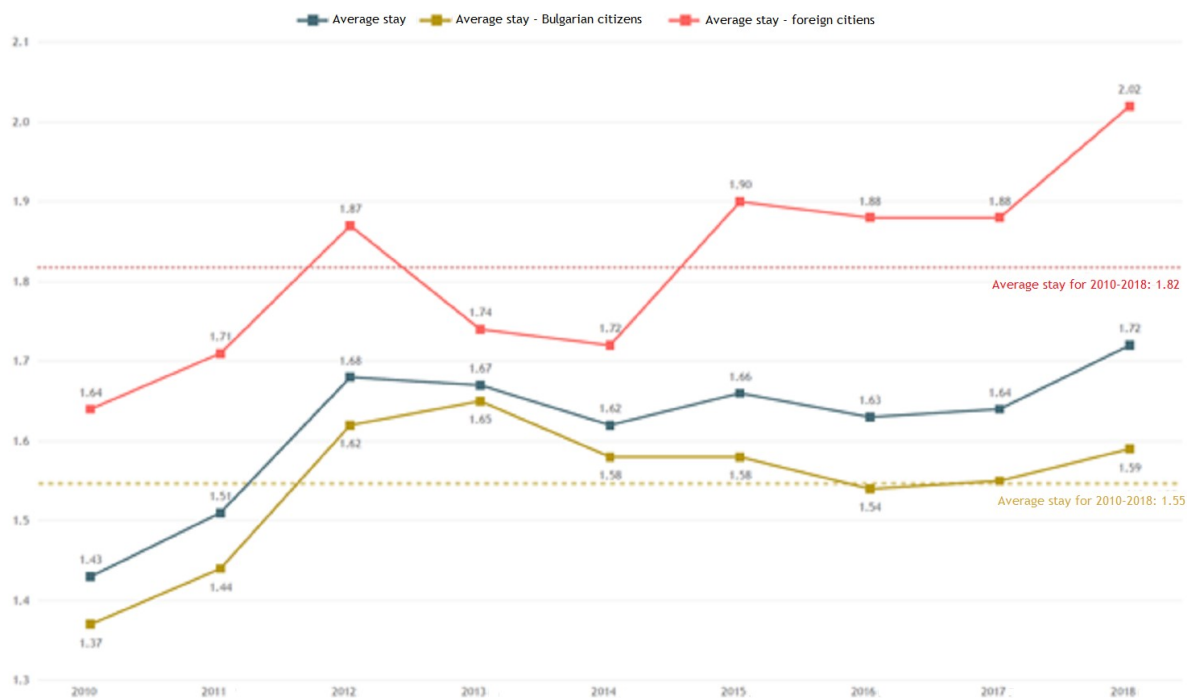
The province attracts tourists with middle income and of older age. In 2018, the average age of the Bulgarian population is 43.8 and the trend is for the age of the internal tourists to increase in the future. Unofficial data shows that the international tourists are also becoming older. This is mainly due to the fact, that the offered tourist products are predominantly cheaper and attract both retirees and people with incomes around the average and below them. All of this makes the visitors more vulnerable in terms of accessibility of tourist attractions and climate changes.

#### 4.2. Stay, revenues and seasonality

<sup>3</sup> Source: Territorial Statistical Bureau - Ruse

The serious growth of people staying overnight and overnight stays also has a positive effect on the average length of stay. In 2018, the people staying overnight did, on average, 1.7 overnight stays, which is a growth of 20% compared to 2010. This is a record high for the last eight years.

Figure 7 - Average duration of stay 2010-2018, in days



Source: NSI, own calculations

The revenues from overnight stays amount to BGN 44.72 (22.6 euro) in 2018 for all tourists. That's a growth of 12% compared to 2010, but a decrease of 4.8% compared to 2017. As far as foreign tourists go, revenues from overnight stays during the last year amount to BGN 55.8 (28.57 euro) or a decrease of 10% compared to 2017.

Table 1 - Average revenues from overnight stays 2010-2018, in BGN\*

Year	Average revenue from overnight stays	Average revenue from overnight stays - Bulgarian citizens	Average revenue from overnight stays - foreign citizens	Average revenue according to the category of the accommodation facilities		
				Category 1 and 2	Category 3	Category 4 and 5
2010	43.38	40.76	51.08	35.32	39.18	75.35
2011	43.60	39.77	53.76	33.40	39.09	84.66
2012	44.58	39.53	56.99	29.95	42.96	72.35
2013	43.88	39.13	55.91	30.98	45.10	81.76
2014	46.73	42.28	58.06	32.54	53.72	64.20
2015	47.53	43.72	56.39	32.94	55.11	61.52
2016	50.13	45.53	60.22	35.47	55.97	60.76
2017	50.98	45.90	61.99	35.79	57.37	64.48
2018	48.56	44.72	55.81	35.87	57.45	58.61
Change 2018/2017	-4.8%	-2.6%	-10.0%	0.2%	0.1%	-9.1%

Source: NSI, own calculations

\*Note: The data includes accommodations with more than 10 beds

The low average length of stays is due to the high percentage of transit passengers, and the reason for the relatively low daily expenses is the lack of quality additional services in the tourist offers.

Table 2 - Difference between the weakest and strongest season when it comes to people staying overnight and overnight stays 2010-2018

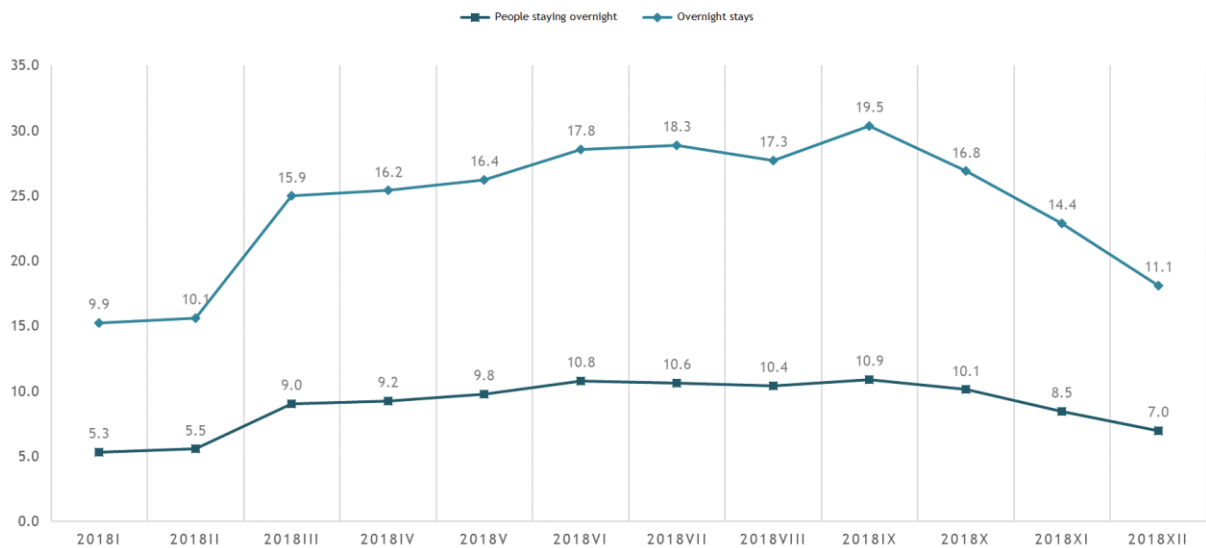
Year	People staying overnight	Overnight stays
2010	9%	7%
2011	7%	6%
2012	7%	7%
2013	8%	8%
2014	6%	6%
2015	9%	9%
2016	8%	6%
2017	11%	12%
2018	11%	10%

Source: NSI, own calculation

The seasonality is relatively weak, as the number of visits and overnight stays is highest during May-September (Figure 9). The main reasons lie in the offered tourist products and the climate prerequisites that create the conditions for the development of a year-round tourism. As a whole, the end of spring and summer are the busiest seasons regarding overnight stays and the number of people staying overnight. The province's performance during the winter months is the weakest due to the climate factors, which makes it difficult to visit the tourist landmarks and relax while outside. Demand during this period is generally oriented towards places that offer conditions for the development of winter sports and the opportunity to spend more time indoors. Over the last two years, there has been an

increase in the difference between high and low seasons, which is more pronounced in terms of overnight stays - an increase of the difference from four to six percent.

Figure 8 - Seasonality of the tourism in the Ruse province (2018), in thousands



Source: NSI

### 4.3. River cruise tourism

River cruises in Europe along the Danube River are growing fast and generate a large number of passengers for river ports. They focus on the presentation of the destination and travelers usually do not exceed 200 people, which is why they are considered a non-invasive type of tourism with few travelers, which the cities welcome. The main cities to board and/or get off

the ship are Budapest, Vienna, Prague, Passau, Nuremberg, Basel, Paris and Amsterdam, with the last tour spanning three European rivers - the Danube, the Main and the Rhine. Most of the Danube cruises last from 9 to 25 days. About 170 ships operate along the Danube. Of these, 85 percent sail between Passau and Budapest.

The focus of river cruises is culture. The main tourist profile includes tourists of over 50 years of age (although there is a trend of decreasing age of travelers) with medium socio-cultural and purchasing power. Among their interests are gastronomy, classical music or art. Most tourists are Germans and Americans. Cruises are especially sought after for occasions and as gifts for loved ones - anniversaries etc. There is a strong interest in themed cruises - music, food and wine, culture and art, alternative lifestyles, etc.

For many providers of river cruises, travel agencies represent 100% of the bookings. These are tour groups from the US, Japan and Western Europe. The peak season in Europe is from June to September, but cruise travels in the transitional seasons (late March to May or late September to late October) are also popular because of their lower cost. The price includes all accommodations on land and during the voyage along the river, the majority of the meals, entertainment, sightseeing and more.

What is changing in river tourism is that there are more and more traveling tourists, who want to explore not only the standard sights, but also be outside the traditional program, which requires tour operators to be flexible and offer more interesting things - meetings with local people, wine tourism and more.

The province needs to take advantage of these opportunities. During the last few years, the average number of passengers is above 25 thousand. For the first half of 2019, the number of passengers is more than 29 thousand. For the same period in 2018, they were more than 25 thousand, and during 2017 – close to 19 thousand. Since the beginning of 2019, there were 207 cruise ship visits at the port of Ruse. For the first half of 2018 they were 179, while for 2017 – 143<sup>4</sup>. The tour operators that serve the tourists are Balkantours and Danube Tours.

Since very few ships spend the night, practice shows that many of the visitors visit the city within half a day, while part of the passengers, through a pre-arranged bus transport, depart directly for a one-day trip to Veliko Tarnovo and Arbanassi. This determines the main challenge standing before the province and representatives of the tourist sector – how to keep the travelers for a longer stay.

Excursions on the shore are most often included in the package price and depend on the following criteria:

- Availability of tourist attractions – interesting and preserved natural and cultural sights, local events etc.;
- Availability of tourist infrastructure – variety of eating and entertainment facilities, additional services, trained staff and quality of service, price level, etc.;
- Accessibility - transport network in proper condition.

The tourist products and services offered in the region of Ruse largely meet these requirements, but they must be packaged and presented to tour operators organizing cruises. Providing information at or near the place of berth for tourist sights, accommodations, food places and other tourist activities, which are offered in the area, may provoke the tourists to visit them.

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<sup>4</sup> Source: Directorate „River Supervision - Ruse“ under Executive Agency „Maritime Administration“





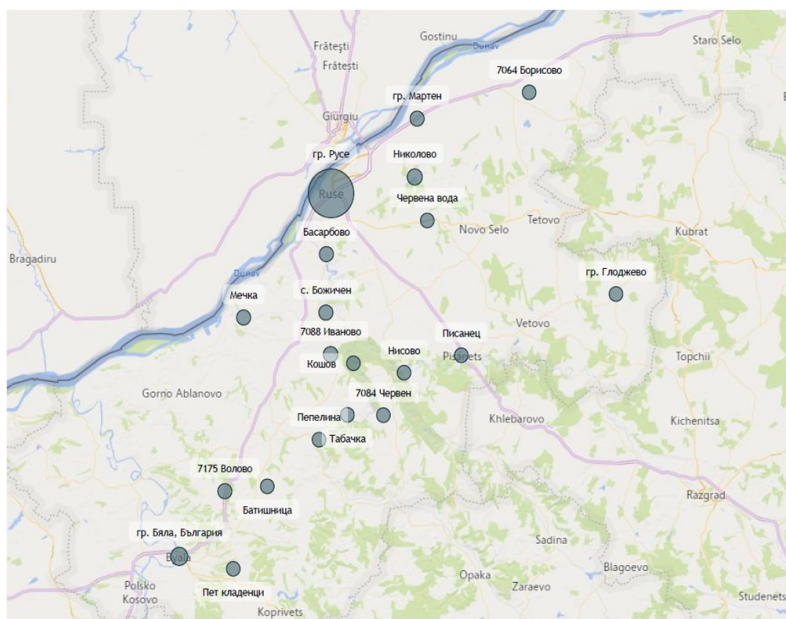
## 5. OFFERING OF TOURIST SERVICES

There are 106 officially registered facilities in the region (hotels, guest houses, bungalows, hostels etc.) with a total capacity of 2 715. 65% of all accommodations are concentrated in the city of Ruse.

Type	Number	Bed capacity
Guest apartment	6	89
Bungalow	2	50
Guest house	21	279
Motel	4	106
Boarding house	1	19
Family hotel	27	707
Guest room	25	132
Tourist hut	3	112
Hostel	4	174
Hotel	13	1 047

Table 3 - Accommodations according to type

Map 1 - Territorial distribution of accommodations in the Ruse province, 2019



Source: Register of Accommodations, Ministry of Tourism

Ruse province with a capacity of more than 10) to 49 in 2018, but the accommodation capacity<sup>5</sup>. This development is due to two main

for hotels - by 150% and 198% respectively over

and second category accommodations with 30%.

stars (86%), 9% are three stars and 5% (fully

accommodation spots are used by visitors, who since are budget-oriented, spending little on the last eight years was recorded in the is due to a decrease of the average prices category 4 to increase from 14% to 42%. A establishments, whose share in overnight stays the price increase. This development is

indicative of the competition in the region and is still being executed mainly based on room prices and not so much because of the increase of quality of the offered service.

<sup>5</sup> Source: NSI

Despite this, the difficulty of successfully introducing appropriate hotel rates is also prevalent at an international level: the region is clearly lagging behind in terms of both revenue and average cost for an overnight stay. Raising these benchmarks is essential for the tourism industry and the development of the province.

These findings are also confirmed by the choices of the visitors. 50% of the foreign tourists have done 64% of the overnight stays in four-star hotels, which is an increase of over 400% for the last eight years. For the Bulgarian tourists this growth is over 250%, as 32% of them have chosen to spend the night in four-star hotels. This significant increase was entirely at the expense of third-category accommodations, which registered a decrease of 57% in overnight stays and 53% in the number of people staying overnight.

Table 4 - Capacity, share and average revenue from an overnight stay according to the accommodation category, 2018

Category	Number of accommodation spots	Accommodation capacity	Share in the overnight stays	Growth in the overnight stays 2018/2010	Average revenue from an overnight stay, BGN
One and two stars	91	1846	43%	111%	35.87
Three stars	10	298	15%	-57%	57.45
Four stars	5	571	42%	327%	58.61
Total	109	2715	100%	53 %	48.56

Source. Register of Accommodations, NSI, own calculations

Apart from basic services (parking, Wi-Fi, television etc.), the establishments of higher category offer additional services – transfer to and from an airport, room service, rental cars and bicycles, spa, provision of tourist information etc. This is a positive element for the participants in tours related to cultural and historical heritage, as they prefer accommodation in a hotel base.

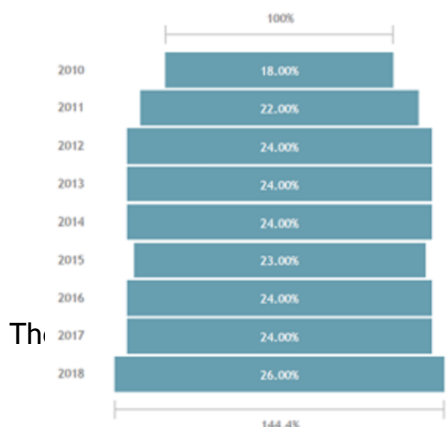
A survey of opinions regarding the incentivizing of sales opportunities has shown that most commonly used are:

- seasonal discount;
- duration of stay;
- groups;
- others.

From the tourists' point of view, there is no clear differentiation in their opinions, and they use all mentioned methods.

Internet advertising definitely stands out as a main method of communication, most commonly used when choosing a hotel. Printed advertising is lagging behind and recommendations from friends and acquaintances are among the other most frequently used means of communication. It is a recognized fact that in the hospitality industry, the recommendation ("word of mouth") remains among the most credible and influential promotional tools.

The provision of tourist services is very spatially concentrated. 79% of the total accommodation capacity in the province is concentrated in Ruse, which can put pressure on the



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city's infrastructure.

The average monthly number of occupied beds has been increasing during the last eight years, reaching 26%, the level being 8% higher than that in 2010. The observed upward trend from 2010 onward can be expected to continue in the next years.

There is a trend of increased employment in the four-star hotels, reaching 41%, which was achieved in the context of a nearly 200% increase in bed capacity. Above average employment rates are also reported for third category accommodation establishments - 30% in the last year, but this is due to a serious decrease of 68% in the bed capacity. The lowest employment levels are in establishments from the first and second category - 19%, despite the growth of 7% for the last eight years, which is due to the growth of more than 34% of the bed capacity.

## 6. Accessibility

With a territory of 2 803 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 218 thousand people<sup>6</sup>, the Ruse province is situated in the northern part of Bulgaria, in the cross-border region Romania-Bulgaria. There are eight municipalities within the province.

Having good accessibility to the area is an important element in the development of tourism. The only successful destinations are easy-to-reach destinations.

There is no accurate data on how visitors (local and foreign) arrive in the Ruse region. Estimates show that the majority of passengers arrive by land (car and bus) and a small percentage - by railway. Here are the main transport challenges - the road network is not well developed - the Hemus highway, as well as the highway between Ruse and Veliko Tarnovo, are under construction. The transport connection with Romania is carried out through the Ruse-Giurgiu bridge.

Currently there is no direct access to the province by air, with the closest international airports located in Bucharest - 70 km away and Varna - about 200 km. The only airport, that has a license for small airplanes, is in the Shtraklevo village area. The main medium-term development opportunities are related to the idea of the airport serving domestic flights to Sofia (between 800-1000 people travel daily between Ruse and Sofia) and international cargo flights.

The location of the Ruse region is relatively favorable to foreign tourists, as it is located on the banks of the Danube and this makes it more easily accessible by passenger ships. The river tourist traffic is carried out along the Danube River, mainly by cruise ships. More than 11 cruise companies organize trips across the Danube, some of them include a crossing through the province in their programs.

The relatively favorable location is also determined by the proximity of the province to major tourist destinations on both sides of the border - Bucharest, Veliko Turnovo and Varna. This makes it possible to attract additional tourist flows.

## 7. Specific tourist resources

Visitors have specific interests during their visits, but most of all, they want to go back with satisfying memories to share. They want to have fun, experience and learn something different, immerse themselves in the local culture or just enjoy the tranquility of the environment. The tourist needs additional services and attractions, which would diversify and enrich his experiences that he shares.

As a whole, it seems that in most tourist companies, which operate in the cross-border region, there is a balanced number of indirect and direct tourism providers.

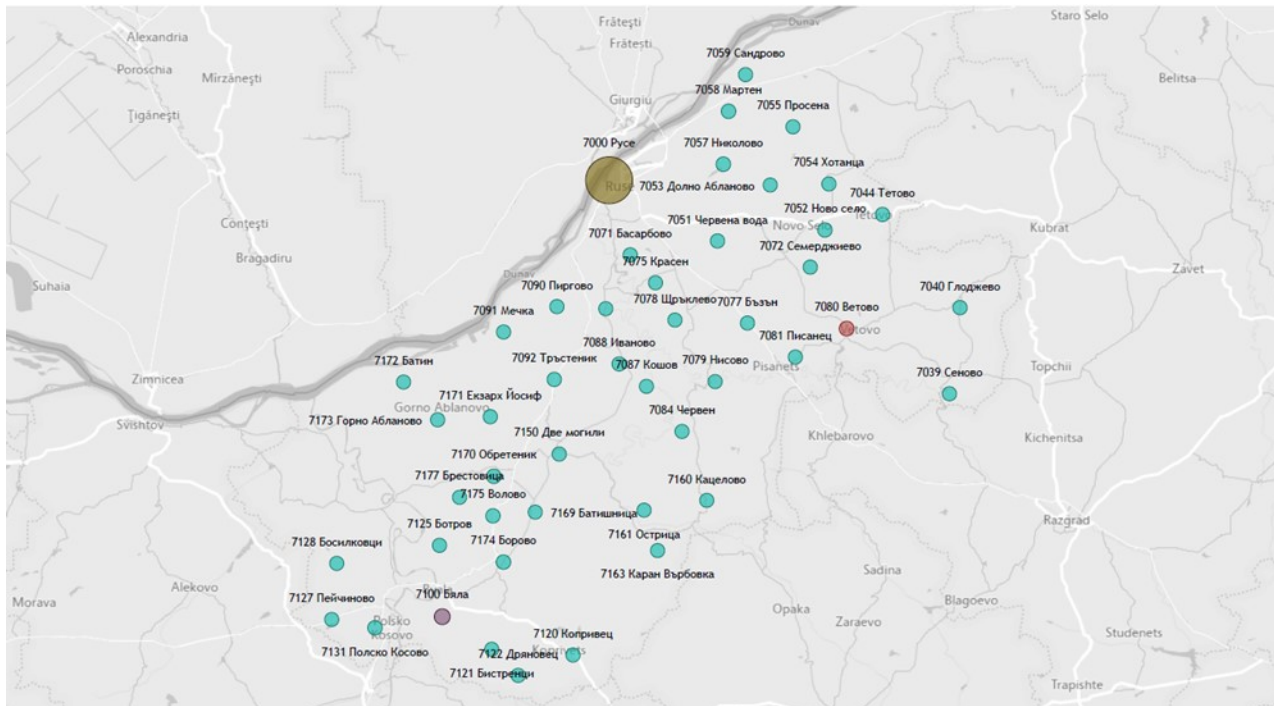
<sup>6</sup> According to data from the NSI for 2018

## Food places

A total of 711 food establishments have been registered in the region, with a capacity of more than 54 thousand places. There is a wide variety of restaurants, fast food restaurants, cafes, day and night bars, pastry shops and more. Visitors can enjoy authentic food experiences, classic and modern cuisine according to their own tastes.

The tourist landmarks, situated in the city of Ruse, have the biggest number of food places near them – close to 77% of all food establishments and 83% of their capacity.

Map 2 - Territorial distribution of the food establishments in the Ruse province 2019



Source: Register of the food establishments

## Human resources

In the human resources field, the industry is already facing the challenges of high turnover of personnel, competition with other industrial sectors in search of the most qualified people and, in some cases, unfavorable demographic trends - population decline and aging. The tourism sector in the Ruse province consists mainly of micro and small enterprises with staff of up to 25 people. In 2017, 2 194 people were hired in the hotel and restaurant structures in the area (a decrease of 17% compared to 2010), with another 1 108 employed in the culture, sports and entertainment sector - an increase of 19% compared to 2010.

The qualification system is mainly managed by the state. There are also private licensed providers of qualification services, which mainly offer services aimed at improving the qualifications. On the other hand, businesses often take up a significant part of the education themselves, filling in the gaps, left from high school and/or university education.

A survey among travel companies shows that their experience in hiring staff is difficult, with the biggest challenge being related to more skilled people and more professional positions. Major difficulties are encountered in finding chefs, receptionists, food and beverage managers, sales and marketing managers, as well as some technical positions.

## Tour operators and travel agents

A total of 52 tour operators and travel agencies are licensed in the Ruse region<sup>7</sup>. Most of them are situated in Ruse. The main part of the offered tourist services is offline (provided on the spot). Tour operators and travel agencies mainly offer excursions and holidays abroad and in the more famous Bulgarian resorts. At the same time, tourists from the country and abroad come in an unorganized manner via different routes, both for weekend tourism and for longer stays. There is an increase in the number of tourists visiting the region for work and leisure. For some forms of tourism (eg adventure) there is relatively limited supply by tour operators.

## Tour guides and mountain guides

The main resources are concentrated in Ruse. There is a total of 60 registered tour guides and two mountain guides. The proposed tours cover the province center, the Basarbovo Rock Monastery and the Rock-hewn Churches of Ivanovo as a priority. The main languages are English, German, French and Russian.

## 8. TOURIST PRODUCTS

Several products are offered in the district, based on regional specificity and resources. Taking into account the potential and development opportunities and market shares, the analysis highlights 9 strategic products (Table 5).

Table 5 - Map of the strategic tourist products in the Ruse province

Product	In development	Developing	Additional	Not expressed
City tourism			★	
Business tourism			★	
Festivals, concerts, performances			★	
Nature tourism		★		
Culture tourism	★			
Cruise tourism		★		
Religious tourism	★			
Rural tourism		★		
Adventure tourism				★

The analysis of the offered tourist products shows that, at present, there is no fully consolidated product. Cultural and religious tourism are showing the best results. Opportunities are associated with creating new experiences, as well as enriching us with experience and content. This includes building new destinations and marketing them to target markets and segments.

Nature tourism is developing, it is a subject of individual trips and is less popular in the region. Its combination with cultural tourism is the most preferred option among tourists, as the product needs to be value-oriented, information for the visitors needs to be elaborated, the experience

<sup>7</sup> Source: Register of the Registered Tour Operators and Travel Agents



needs to be promoted and diversified and best practices for sustainability must be developed.

Another emerging product is related to the increasing popularity of river cruises along the Danube. The strategy should aim at maximizing passenger retention and directing them towards tourist landmarks and locations in the province. This task entails a strong marketing concept, coupled with the need to work closely with river cruise organizers.

Rural tourism requires diversification of experience, provision of additional services of value, the practicing of active tourism, promotion and commercialization of the offer and the provision of authentic culinary experiences.

The urban and business tourism are complementary and can provide additional visitors to the developed and developing tourist products. It requires the development of infrastructure, additional equipment, specialized services and product placement on the market.

The tourist product named „Festivals, concerts and performances“ has value-oriented resources that help with the diversification of the experience.

The analysis shows, that the province has opportunities for the development of adventure tourism. However, there are very few direct suppliers for it - very few tour operators, who organize adventure tourism activities. The efforts in that direction should be oriented towards the value of the product, encouragement for tour operators to organize it and to advertise their offers.

## **9. INFRASTRUCTURE, RELATED TO ENTERTAINMENT ACTIVITIES**

The availability of regional infrastructure related to entertainment activities significantly improves the tourism potential and affects the final choice of destination.

Well-preserved and authentic cultural and natural tourist landmarks are a magnet for visitors. However, in order for the visitors to stay in the province longer and to have an increased satisfaction, additional services and attractions should be provided to them. Visitors want more than just to see something interesting, they want unforgettable experiences and memories from the vacation. Oftentimes the small things make the difference and turn a good product into a great experience for the visitor.

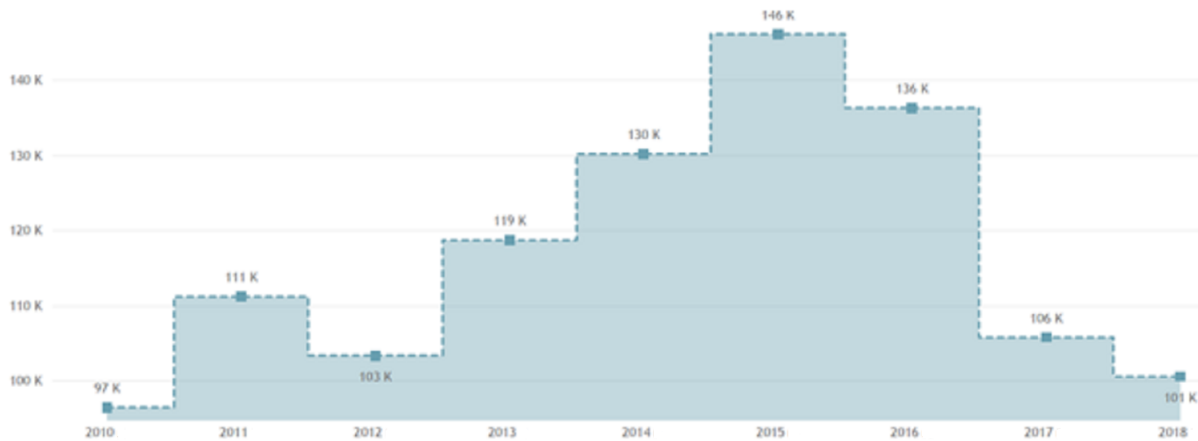
### **Cultural, social and sporting events**

Cultural, social and sporting events are part of tourism and have a tradition of engaging the attention of many visitors. Some of them, on their own, have become a reason for visiting the region. Such events are: the festival „March Music Days“, National Jazz Meeting, folklore festival „Living Water“, Apple Festival, international festival „Living Statues“, National Mushroom Festival, Children's Art Festival etc. There are many en plain air events organized in the region (artistic, photographic etc.), as well as outdoor concerts.

Although the number of cultural events offered within the region is relatively high, they have a highly pronounced seasonality. Compared to the spring and summer, when there is a relatively wide selection of cultural events, there are no organized cultural events during the winter months, with the exception of traditional celebrations. Another problem is the lack of coordination regarding specific cultural events in the villages and cities. There are periods that are full of events, followed by periods with no events at all.

Stage performances at theaters and the State Opera in Ruse provide opportunities for visits by

Figure 10 - Visits to theatres and stage performances in the Ruse province, 2010-2018, in thousands



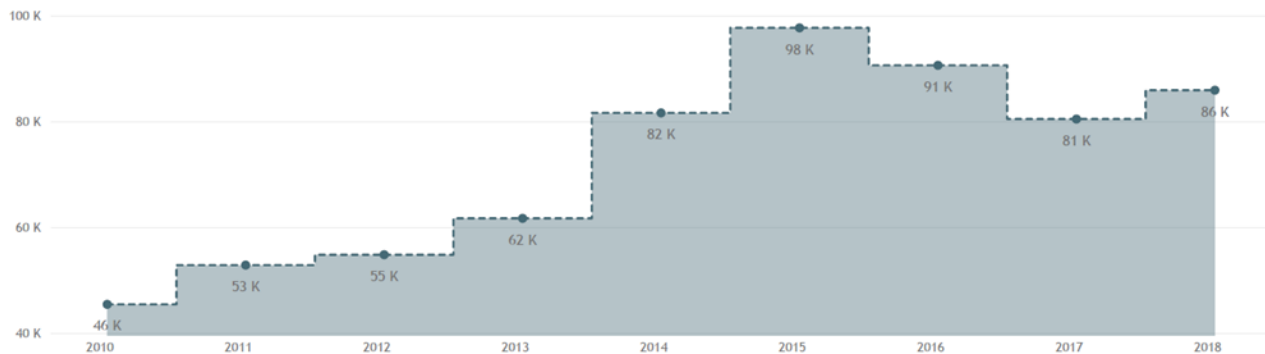
both locals and guests of the province.

Source: NSI

## Museums

According to official data, there are 4 functioning museums in the Ruse province, which were visited by slightly more than 86 thousand people during 2018. That is an increase of 89% for the last eight years, but also a decline of 12% compared to the record high in 2015.

Figure 11 - Visitors to museum exhibitions in the Ruse province - 2010-2018, in thousands



Source: NSI

## Additional tourist attractions and services

Entertainment facilities become very important when the climate conditions do not allow for outdoor recreation. When it comes to choosing outdoor recreational activities, there is not a big supply of them. There are no permanent attractions to be offered to visitors in their spare time. That is the case not only in the summer months when it is raining, but also in the winter months. The main facilities are indoor pools, billiard halls and gyms.

Additional variety can be found in creative workshops and interactive exhibitions, where people can learn more about the history of crafts and/or participate in activities and create their own art, organization of culinary trainings with typical dishes from the area etc. which would diversify



the offered tourist products and provide an opportunity to practice different activities during bad weather.

### **Provision of tourist information**

The provision of information about the tourist landmarks and attractions intended for tourist is an important prerequisite for the development of tourism. Tourist information centers are the main starting point for most visitors. There are only two such centers in the region, included in the National Network of Tourist Information Centers of the Ministry of Tourism - one in Ruse, one in Ivanovo and the Visitors' Center Lomovete in Nisovo.

The tourist landmarks, located outside the populated areas, do not have free internet access. The possibility of renting a car (rent-a-car) from the populated areas in/near the tourist landmarks, with the exception of the town of Ruse, is very small.

There is video surveillance on the tourist landmarks, including the historical museums, located in an urban area.

## 10. KEY MARKET ANALYSIS OF THE REGION'S VISITORS

People travel for a variety of reasons: to escape, to explore, to understand and to participate. But at the heart of the experience lies the destination - the place that gives something to the traveler in order to make him/her stay forever and share it with others.

Each market and segment has different market requirements and specific characteristics, requiring the use of specific information and communication channels to provoke interest and undertake travel. The current segmentation is done by geographical, demographic and psychological factors (attitudes, beliefs and values). This approach aims to help the tourism industry in the province properly target specific groups of consumers, inclined to purchase tourist products based on cultural and natural heritage.

The culture and nature tourism market depends on the product being offered and its use, but is characterized by a clear trend of rapid development with an estimated 35-42% of all global tourist travels and an annual growth rate of 15% in the past few years. Often, the two forms of tourism are combined by travelers. Local involvement plays a key role, providing authenticity, breathing life into the local culture and creating an emotional experience for visitors.

Modern tourists have different requirements from the tourist destinations. Currently, most international tourists want to have an enriching experience while on vacation and return back to the nature and unique culture. This can be provided by the province, since it has the prerequisites to provide a diverse range of rural, environmental, adventure and thematic (culture, traditions, cuisine, history, crafts) tourism opportunities.

It is important to note that there are several key trends regarding the change in tourist perceptions and behaviours.

Topic	International context
<b>Urban vs Rural areas</b>	This is somewhat related to the trend of "more frequent but short vacations", but also reflects the concentration of cultural products and infrastructure in urban centers.
<b>Activities vs relaxation</b>	Cultural and natural tourists want to "catch up" through active consumption and fill their time with hobbies and interests.
<b>Experiences vs Tourist landmarks</b>	Visitors seek to experience, interact and participate in cultural life instead of passively observing and visiting sights.
<b>"Authentic" vs "Modern"</b>	People who perform culture and nature tourism, generally have a higher standard of authenticity than others and appreciate the aspects of culture and nature that are maintained by the local population. For them, being authentic is more than a "packaged" form of cultural and natural experience.
<b>Tradition vs Infrastructure</b>	Local traditions are more and more important for the tourist, they combine their trip to a given site in one whole package.
<b>Searching for new</b>	With positive effects on the development of new areas, with the

Topic	International context
destinations	tourist potential and with lower level of popularity.
Increase of short vacations	This allows for the development of several tourist destinations, for satisfying the demand, for opportunity to offer facilities and tourist activities during all seasons.

### 10.1. Main markets

Tourism in the region is geared towards the markets that are most likely to adopt tourism products based on cultural and natural resources. In order to increase touristic presence, we are targeting markets with opportunity and potential for growth.



#### **WHICH ARE THE MAIN MARKETS?**

The following markets, which would be most inclined to accept the proposed tourist offers, have been identified:

- Strategic markets – Bulgaria and Romania
- Priority markets – Germany, Italy, France

The main factors that attract tourists to the region are nature, landmarks and tranquility. The three main reasons for visiting the region as a Bulgarian tourist are excursion with the family, ●●●

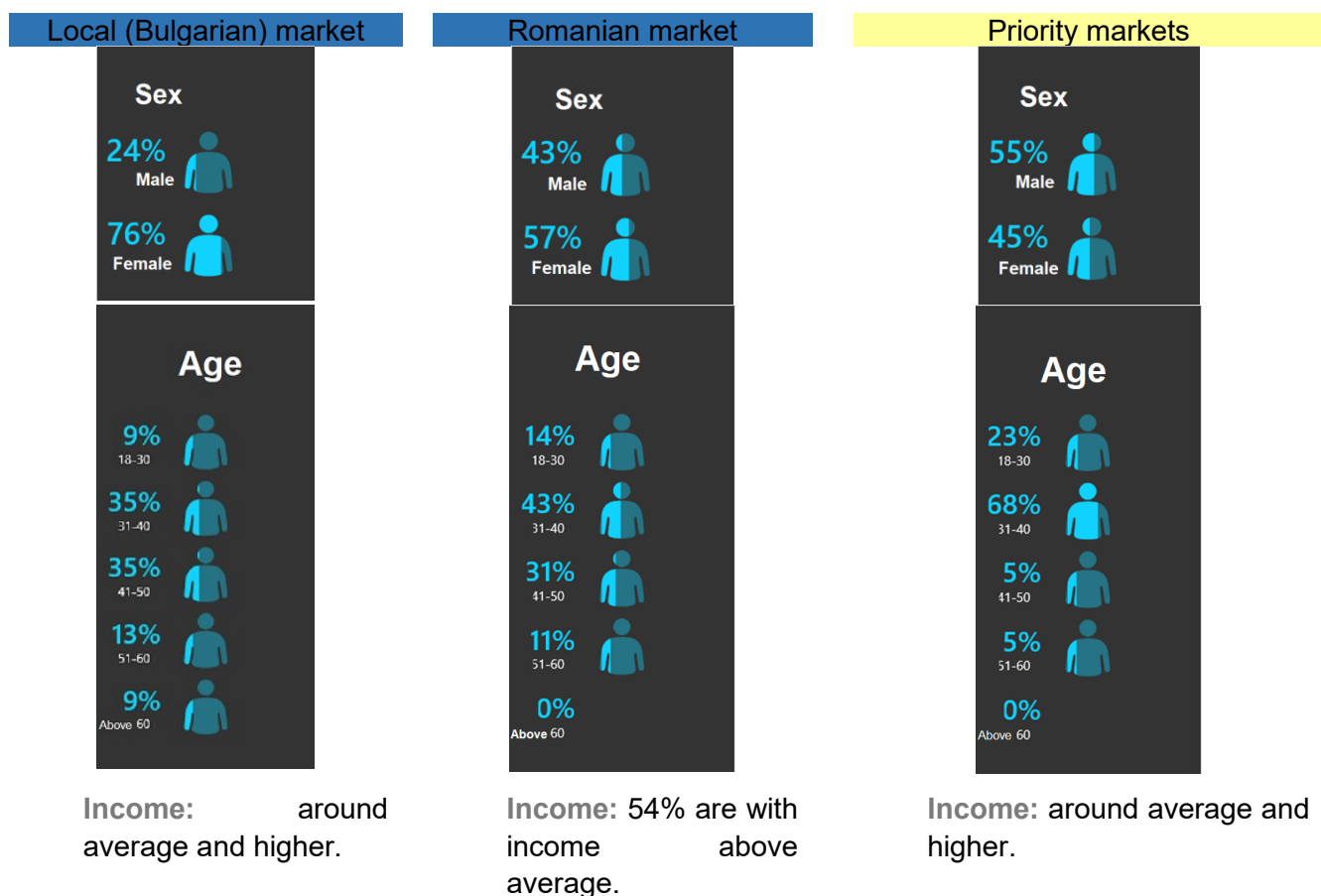
vacation and visiting friends and relatives.

Identifying specific markets is especially important because travelers from different places may have different motivations for travelling, interests and behavior. Tourist perceptions are influenced by the tourists' knowledge of the destination, the distance they need to travel to their destination, media coverage, advertising, their free time and whether it is their first or second visit. For example, for the visitors from the local market and part of the potential European markets, the region is an achievable destination. They can travel more than once and take more frequent and shorter trips. With knowledge comes the confidence to plan their own trip and travel in a less structured, more independent style.

Despite some fluctuations recorded in recent years, the internal market is the main one. It generates 65% of the overnight stays and 61% of the revenue in the tourism sector. At the same time, the fact that the province is situated at the border, coupled with the good connectivity to Romania via the Danube Bridge, determines the importance of the Romanian market. Residents of Bulgaria and Romania are of essential importance to achieving the goals, not only because of the size of the target group, but also because of their tendency to take short, but frequent, trips. These are mostly residents of larger urban centers located relatively close to the region.

Priority markets for the region are the European market, as well as those travelling with cruise ships along the Danube for one-day visits to the region.

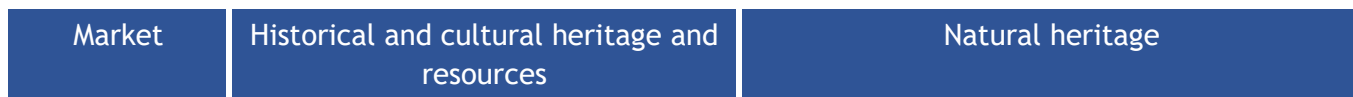
Which are the visitors to the region coming from strategic and priority markets?



Local (Bulgarian) market	Romanian market	Priority markets
<p><b>Education:</b> higher than average.</p>	<p><b>Education:</b> higher than average.</p>	<p><b>Education:</b> higher than average.</p>
<p><b>Organization of the trip:</b> 52% use online reservation platforms, 27% use direct contact with the accommodation establishment.</p>	<p><b>Organization of the trip:</b> 71% use online reservation platforms, while 19% use direct contact with the accommodation establishment.</p>	<p><b>Organization of the trip:</b> 81% use online reservation platforms, while 11% use direct contact with the accommodation establishment.</p>
<p><b>Travel method:</b> Travelling with the family is a priority for the Bulgarian tourists.</p>	<p><b>Travel method:</b> Even though travelling with the family takes priority (43%), Romanian tourists often travel with friends (29%) or alone (23%).</p>	<p><b>Travel method:</b> Outside the borders of their own country, foreign tourists most often travel with friends (50%) and with their family (32%).</p>
<p><b>Information source:</b> This type of tourists rely on the recommendations of friends and relatives (34%) as well as opinions from clients and visitors (21%), as leading sources.</p>	<p><b>Information source:</b> Recommendations from friends, acquaintances and relatives (24%) and opinions of clients (22%) are essential when making a travelling decision.</p>	<p><b>Information source:</b> These types of tourists are more readers than TV watchers or radio listeners.</p>

## 10.2. Visitor profile

Defining a tourist profile for the tourists in the region is necessary, in order to define a narrower target approach when implementing marketing initiatives, rather than a non-differentiated approach. This approach is based on the view that tourist products and destinations should be "sold" to consumers who are known to be interested in the area. We are targeting narrow segments of the target markets that are most likely to accept tourist products based on the cultural and natural heritage, instead of the whole markets.



Profile of the Bulgarian tourist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attractive for both men and women (in the active season women are more active);</li> <li>Attracts people of all ages;</li> <li>Readers (newspapers/magazines) rather than TV/radio watchers/listeners;</li> <li>It's a priority mainly for people of higher education (16% of them), but also for people with primary and lower education;</li> <li>Practiced by middle- and high-income household members;</li> <li>Active users of internet and electronic services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specific experience for typical groups;</li> <li>Highest share of managers among ecotourism practitioners (about 20%) and among higher income earners (11%);</li> <li>Practitioners are more listeners than readers – they get informed more often by the electronic media than by the print media;</li> <li>Trips are relatively short, but frequent;</li> <li>Only a small part of these tourists buy tourist packages;</li> <li>For accommodation spots they prefer mainly private rental apartments and three-star hotels, with the relative share of people using the homes of friends and relatives being big;</li> <li>Active users of internet and e-services, people with interests in arts and culture.</li> </ul>
Profile of the foreign tourist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Division by sex – men 54% and women 46%;</li> <li>Age – the predominant age group is 36-55 (close to 50%), 36% are between 15-35 years of age;</li> <li>Professional and education status – working – 73%, in a management position – 20%, with higher education – 68%;</li> <li>Wealthier and, consequently, with a tendency to spend more;</li> <li>Longer stays;</li> <li>Complemented by other, shorter trips;</li> <li>Stronger and more positive perceptions, interests and attitudes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Division by sex – men 58%, women 42%;</li> <li>Age – – the predominant age group is 36-55 (close to 50%), 43% are between 15-35 years of age;</li> <li>Professional and education status – working – 78%, in a management position – 18%, with higher education – 70%;</li> <li>Family status – couples and families</li> <li>13% prefer to travel alone;</li> <li>50% of experienced ecotourists spend longer on these excursions compared to mass tourists;</li> <li>Expenses – they spend more money on excursions;</li> <li>Travel motives: pure nature, wildlife watching, mountain hiking route;</li> <li>Motivation for upcoming excursions - experienced joy of the natural landscapes, new experiences in new places.</li> </ul>

In addition, specific types of users (with specific tourism interests) are identified in each segment. Three types of users are identified, whose focus is on priority markets - Germany, Italy and France.

Cultural explorers	Tourists with creative interests	Nature lovers
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Cultural explorers are defined by their love of constant travelling and the continuous opportunity to accept, discover and immerse themselves in the

These travelers can be seen as a subset of cultural explorer, but are more motivated by cultural activities. They will be focused largely on the

These travelers are passionate about nature. They are interested in new and authentic experiences, as well as in non-traditional destinations. They search for

culture, people and local environment they visit. They are particularly interested in unique and authentic experiences that include the opportunity to participate in local cultures and lifestyles, rather than being limited to group trips and schedules.

creative industries, which include museums, symphonies and theaters, festivals, concerts, etc. They are more oriented towards recreation, rather than exploring the cultural potential. They relax in a given place and would be willing to diversify their stay with a visit to a cultural-historical attraction

natural landscapes, interaction with locals and active experiences. This is often more important than the level of the facilities.

Adventurous in spirit, they like to actively enjoy the nature and culture by, for example, going on walks or riding a bike.

Safety and sustainability are important to them.

In addition to the priority markets, the additional analysis also includes key segments for the strategic markets. These are:

#### „People searching for experiences“

They represent 16% of the Bulgarian market and 14% of the Romanian market

They travel with their family and friends, looking for an opportunity to spend some time together, sharing new experiences. They want to find new places, further away from the known tourist routes, which would help them break away from their busy daily routine and take time for themselves and their loved ones. They tend to take short-term but more frequent trips to short-distance destinations.

#### „Organized tourist groups“

They represent 5% of the Bulgarian market and 7% of the Romanian market

They don't have a highly preferred style of vacation or are of certain age. They are sociable and seek and enjoy authentic personal experiences that they can talk about and share. They want to learn more about the places they visit.

These people are usually open-minded and interested in historic places and sites.

We should also include "the Students" in these two segments as a separate group because of the nature of the attractions and services that will be offered. They take group trips, mainly offered by travel agents and / or tour operators, focused on history and nature. The trips are usually short ones, outside the tourist season.

Each segment has its own preferences not only in terms of travelling, but also in terms of media usage and how they plan their vacations. This information should be used to market individual destinations in the region and to shape marketing activities for the respective segments at a later stage.



## 11. SWOT – ANALYSIS

### Strengths

- Provision of additional services;
- Beds available - in accommodation spots;
- Growth of foreign tourists;
- Proximity to other cultural attractions;
- Small distances between the main attractions and sites in the region, allowing for a higher mobility of the tourists;
- Authentic historical resources and traditions;
- Preserved nature heritage;
- Balanced seasonal demand.

### Weaknesses

- Decrease of the local tourists;
- Weak promotional policy;
- Predominant share of day trips;
- There is no agreed upon, common marketing strategy for the region;
- Insignificant and not very effective tourist offer;
- Insufficient knowledge of the tourist demand;
- Lack of strategic vision and management of the tourist destinations;
- Lack of good cooperation between key stakeholders.

### Opportunities

- Development of the local cultural identity in relation to the principles of responsible tourism;
- Joint efforts between the major players in the field of tourism for the promotion of tourist sites;
- Family vacations, vacations with friends, adults;
- Coordination and integration with neighboring regions;
- Supply of complete tourist offers;
- More efficient use of modern information technologies for advertising, reservations and more through the Internet;
- Opportunity for the development of the domestic and foreign tourism market.

### Threats

- Destinations-competitors;
- Conflicts and unstable political environment;
- An economic crisis;
- Environmental degradation and climate changes;
- Lack of cooperation with tour operators and travel agents.





## 1.2 EXPLORING THE WAY LESS KNOWN AND LESS PROMOTED, BUT VALUABLE, PLACES CAN DEVELOP A HIGH QUALITY LOCAL BRAND, THROUGH THE EXPERIENCES AND PRODUCTS, WHICH THEY OFFER

This section is based on the results of the study and description of the most attractive cultural and natural resources in the Ruse-Giurgiu region, whose main task is to identify less known and poorly promoted, but valuable, sites capable of developing as tourist sites.

The attractiveness of natural and cultural-historical resources is considered in terms of their conversion into tourist sites. The results are based on a series of criteria including:

- a) Assessment of the cultural and natural value - physical condition, attractiveness and authenticity, the level of risk associated with the site (attraction), its management policy and the official level of site's protection;
- b) Assessment of the exploitation value - opportunities for visits and development, accessibility and infrastructure availability, as well as level of popularity.

The selected criteria are also in line with the expected trends in the development of tourist behavior, expressed in:

- increase in the requirements of tourists towards quality, specificity, attractiveness and diversity of the offered tourist products;
- increase in the requirements of tourists towards the quality of the country's technical infrastructure and the material and technical base of the tourism; the provision of specific services, which are in line with people's interests and needs;
- On one hand, tourists will have a preference for destinations and countries, which guarantee security, tranquility and on the other - for specific forms of tourism - cultural and historical tourism, eco and rural tourism, adventure tourism, etc.;
- increase in the share of children and youth trips, especially for students involved in cultural and educational tourism, study trips in other countries, etc.;
- Expanding the role of information and communication systems in the hotel and tour operator activities in terms of searching, planning and executing travels;
- increasing the travels of older people.

The evaluation highlighted a total of 24 sites that are less popular and promoted in four categories:

- c) Historical resources and heritage
- d) Cultural resources
- e) Religion
- f) Natural resources

Each site / place and resource is also valued in terms of their ability to build a brand that distinguishes them. The idea is that we must show the available potential and customize the resource, the tourism product and/or service. The brand has to combine different aspects and instruments: tourist attractions, infrastructure, price, quality, safety.

The branding of destinations can improve results on all levels, but it requires different skills

and disciplines in order to create destinations that meet the needs of different people in different geographical and cultural locations. Creating a brand is not a panacea for tourist destinations. The key question is how to engage all key stakeholders in the region in creating and promoting the brand.

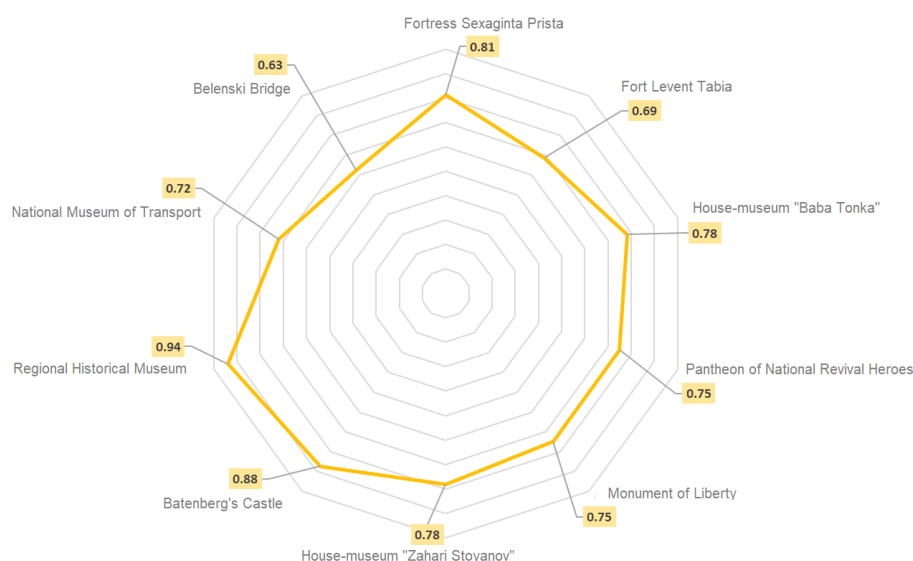
When branding a place, site or resource, there are some common characteristics that should be respected. The branding and the related tools need to convey the spirit of the place, helping people understand what makes it different so that it becomes a magnet for visitors. Marketing needs to be tactful, bring the strategy to life through short-term activations and long-term campaigns.

The current trends in branding don't include only architecture, infrastructure and physical attractions, but also emphasizes values and the local community. The brand must show the authentic spirit and values that the supported sites, places or resources carry. In some respects, the creation of tactical brands for individual products or markets may be justified on the basis of specific initiatives related to tourism, products or resources.

### Historical resources and heritage

A total of 10 sites have been identified that have potential for development. With the exception of one site, the rest are located entirely in Ruse. The total cultural and operational value for each site is shown in the following figure.

Figure 12 - Total cultural and operational value of the historical resources and heritage



Historic heritage tourism often requires originality and a continuous link between its supply and its historical background. Even when reproductions are included, they usually include real artifacts (such as antique furniture in a new building) or are located at the exact location of each related historical event. The offer is understood to be true and historically accurate.

The branding of the site here directly uses the assets of the heritage, images and historical associations, especially in cases where, for example, its status and significance are indicated. In these cases, the heritage is a more clear element of the place than branding and management, often used by destination marketing organizations (DMOs) in their advertising and marketing materials and place strategies. The brand focuses in particular on the relationship between hosts and guests - ie whose identity and history/heritage are presented and interpreted - and

the role of / influence on residents and management in this "branding" process.

Considering the fact that four out of the ten historical resources are managed and maintained by the Regional Museum of History (RIM - Ruse) and six of the sites can be combined into one brand, it is not appropriate to build a separate brand for each site at this stage. After an assessment of the historical resources and heritage, the main opportunities and recommendations are to build a brand for three sites – the Roman fortress Sexaginta Prista, the National Museum of Transport and RIM-Ruse. For each of the resources proposed, maximum cooperation between all stakeholders should be sought.

### ***Branding of the Roman Fortress Sexaginta Prista***

Main Guidelines: must be targeted at Cultural Explorers, People searching for experiences and Students. The elements of authenticity should be emphasized, the history of its relation to the Roman Empire should be told, and its value should be stated. Emphasis may be placed on the name - the Port of Sixty Ships, which makes it unique compared to competing tourist sites. Taking advantage of the name, the primary colors can be associated with the Danube River (soft tones of blue and green). Serif fonts are appropriate. Music and sounds can be related to the movement of ships on water.

### ***Branding of the National Museum of Transport***

Main guidelines: The specificity of the site and its uniqueness - one of a kind in the country - should be underlined. Colours, which attract the attention, could be used. The sounds can be associated with the museum's theme. The typography for the logo may be "Segoe print", which looks like handwriting.

### ***Branding of the Regional Historical Museum***

Main guidelines: Creating the essential message that makes RIM - Ruse unique is not easy, especially since its overall mission is so broad. In general, the museum has experience in branding its products (exhibits, events, programs, etc.). In this case, it is appropriate to build a thematic sub-brand, which includes the other sites related to a common narrative - the Liberation of Bulgaria. This is the unifying element, on which the thematic brand should be concentrated. The story needs to be told.

### **Cultural resources**

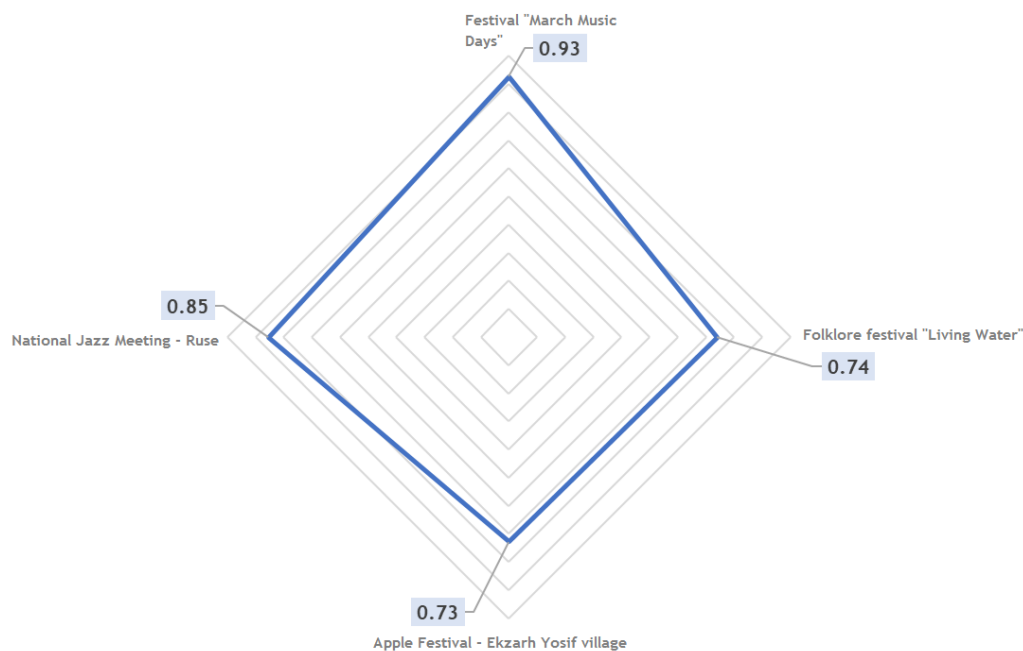
The analysis is focused on special events - festivals, concerts, etc., which have the potential to increase visitors and a possibility to be attractive for visits. Five events have been identified:

- 1) Festival „March Music Days“- one of the oldest and most renowned festival scenes in Bulgaria for classical music. Traditionally, the festival's concert programme is performed in halls, situated in the Dohodno Zdanie (Profitable Building) and the State Opera - Ruse. These are iconic buildings for the city, which further contributes to the unique atmosphere of the festival.
- 2) National Jazz Meeting - It is traditionally held at the end of November, with concerts taking place in the Dohodno Zdanie (Profitable Building). The forum is also open to musicians and jazz formations - guests from other countries. It is included in the cultural calendar of the Ministry of Culture.
- 3) Folklore festival „Zhiva Voda“ (Living Water) - takes place at the Ayazmoto locality, next to the healing spring in the monastery "St. Marina", near the village of Karan Varbovka. The main goals of the festival are to help preserve the traditions and customs, to provide an opportunity for an expression and cultural exchange to the different formations and individual performers, to foster love for the Bulgarian folklore.

- 4) Apple Festival – Ekzarh Yosif village - The Apple Festival is an annual event and is considered one of the attractions in this region. It is traditionally held around August 28. As part of a culinary exhibition in the center of the village, guests and locals can see and taste different strudels, pies, and cakes with different varieties of apples.

The total cultural and operational value for each event highlighted in the study "Documenting the cultural and natural heritage in the Ruse-Giurgiu region and the existing tourism potential in the Ruse province" is shown in the figure below.

Figure 13 - Total cultural and operational value of cultural resources



Cultural events (music and culinary festivals, concerts, etc.) around the world have increased in popularity over the last decade. This shows a seemingly insatiable public appetite for attending cultural events. With the wide range of festivals already offered, they are simultaneously becoming more nuanced. In this intense competition, the brand must ensure that it is fully in place.

The very idea of branding festivals, concerts and cultural events is full of problems. Many events claim to be strongly against the idea that brands play a role in their cultural events, and thus oppose the idea of being considered a "brand".

The stunning variety of festivals is a constant, but so far the trends in the identity of cultural events adhere to established styles and conventions. Event brands, trying to stand out from their peers, will always have to deal with some uniformity, mainly because of the content. People want to know the date and place of the event, who will attend, where tickets can be purchased (if sold), etc. Colors, typography and figurative elements tend to stick to the larger goal of readability and understanding – that way, event brands will try to differentiate themselves by their distinctive features.

## Colour

Most color palettes should remain small, with two to five colors serving the whole identity. Color choices themselves can span the whole spectrum - from dazzling and boldly warm colors to cooling and softening pastel gradients to traditional and conservative blacks or grays with an accent.

### Fonts and typography

They are the most important element in branding cultural festivals, be it on websites, posters or social media. Narrow, non-sans-serif fonts will continue to dominate, especially fonts that remain legible at small sizes (from free ones like Oswald to paid ones like Tungsten). Typography will continue to be dominated by colors with the highest contrast in their background (often white or black, but there is still a lot of variety out there).

### Images

The old way of photography is still strong in branding festivals, with captivating images of lights or green countryside, covered with monochrome festival identity (usually black or white logo/type/elements), which does not interfere with the color images below them. Illustrations, icons, and other images will continue to be modular - used as a set of different interchangeable combinations.

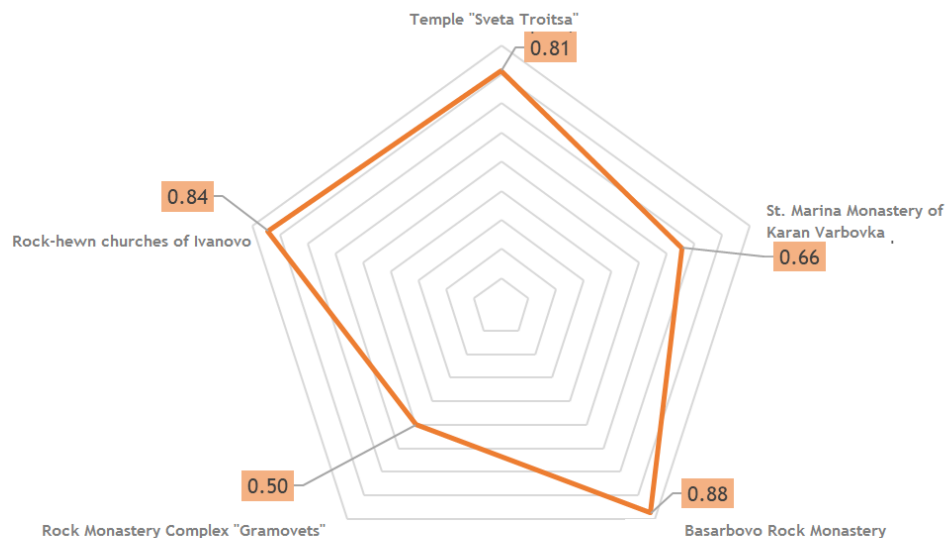
### Religion

The analysis identified five sites that can be included in both mass and closely targeted tourist destinations and/or developed as a stand-alone tourist attraction. These are:

- 1) The Holy Trinity Temple - located in the town of Ruse. The temple was built in 1632. It was declared a Cultural Monument of National Importance.
- 2) St. Marina Monastery of Karan Varbovka - located near the village of Karan Varbovka, Dve Mogili Municipality. The Karanverbovsky Virgin Monastery is a permanent establishment and inhabited by four elderly nuns. The monastery church was built in 1890, when the water source was shaped like a well.
- 3) Basarbovo Rock Monastery „St. Dimitriy Basarbovski” - located in the valley of the river Rusenski Lom, near the village of Basarbovo and 10 km from the town of Ruse. It dates back to the Second Bulgarian Kingdom, but for the first time its name was mentioned in the Ottoman tax register from 1431. The monastery is the only operating rock monastery in Bulgaria.
- 4) Rock Monastery Complex "Gramovets" - located 4.5 km north of the village of Koshov. An eco-trail is built next to the complex, which starts from the base of the rock. Due to its location, the rock complex is accessible only via a path, which makes the site difficult to access. The site is not managed and maintained in an organized manner.
- 5) Rock-hewn Churches of Ivanovo – located near the village of Ivanovo. It was established in the 1220s. Graffiti and inscriptions with important historical information are read on the walls of the monastery's premises. The site is on the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites.

The results of the evaluation are shown in the following figure.

Figure 14 - Total cultural and operational value of the religious sites



Religion and brands have much in common. In fact, most of the terms are interrelated. They are not only targeted at a particular group of masses, but they also have their own sacred emblems and features that make up their true identity. In its purest form, religious tourism is motivated by faith and involves an emotional travel. This kind of tourism also undergoes various types of marketing strategies, including branding. Famous fan destinations such as Lourdes and Santiago de Compostela, for example, have been successfully branded through promotional campaigns, among other strategies.

The development of these specific tourist resources in recent years has also added new elements related to architecture, history, legends and mysticism.

The evaluation of the branding opportunities for religious sites outlines two approaches - a brand of a complete destination related to religious tourism or of individual sites (single or composite). The choice of an approach should be carefully considered, further planned and discussed with stakeholders, including with representatives of the Metropolitanate of Ruse, since it is responsible for the maintenance and management of three of the five religious sites.

Based on the evaluation and information we have carried out, we would recommend the brand to be focused around the rock monasteries - Basarbovo Rock Monastery, Rock-hewn Churches of Ivanovo and Rock Monastery Complex "Gramovets" (though initially considered as complementary). Their authenticity is the key that the brand must be built on. The story they are hiding must be used and associated with the brand. Visitors to such places don't only look for a place, but also for a "spiritual experience". In this regard, their importance must also be emphasized. These objects carry a sense of tranquility, far from the hectic everyday life. These are places of seclusion. In this regard, the brand must be emotional and impactful, bearing the elements of faith, holiness and a dose of mysticism.

### Natural resources

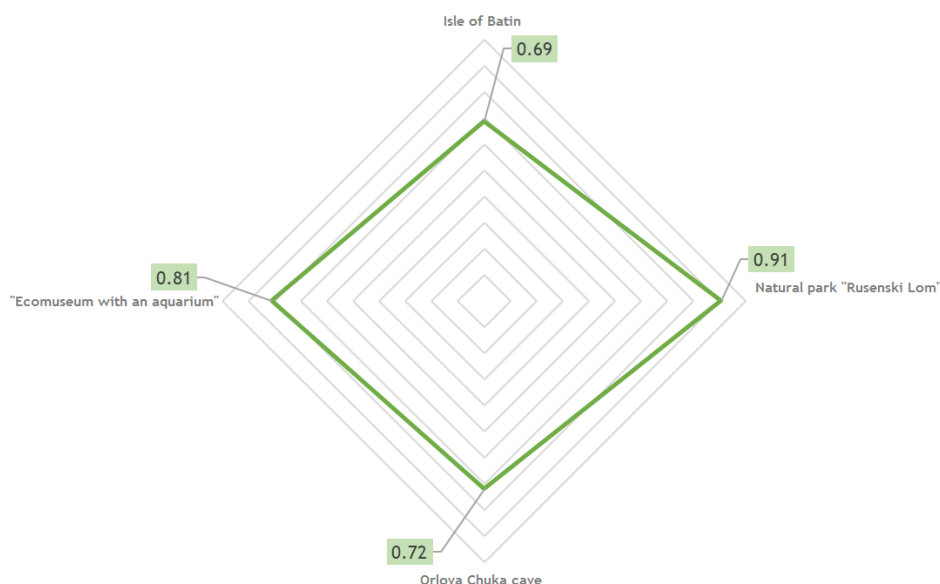
Four sites with the necessary qualities and development opportunities are highlighted in the Ruse region. These are:

- 1) The Isle of Batin – situated north of Batin village. It is managed by State Hunting Company



- “Danube”. The built Batin hunting lodge can accommodate 13 visitors in one apartment and five double rooms. The island is reached by boats available to guests at home.
- 2) Natural park „Rusenski Lom“ – situated about 20 km. south of Ruse. The park is a World Heritage Site in UNESCO’s World Heritage List. A large number of rare and endangered species are found there. The number of plants present in the Red Book of Bulgaria is significant. Specially designated routes allow tourists to get acquainted with the diversity of the park.
  - 3) Orlova Chuka Cave – situated on the territory of municipality Dve Mogili. The remains of prehistoric people and bears were found there. The cave is electrified and accessible for visitors. There is a hut next to Orlova Chuka cave that provides shelter for 27 people.
  - 4) „Ecomuseum with aquarium“ – located in the Museum of Natural History in Ruse. There is a small aquarium on the ground floor of the museum, which is the only one in Bulgaria representing the diversity of the Danube fish - sturgeons, carp, grass carp, silver carp, pike, catfish, etc.

Figure 15 - Overall assessment of the natural and operational value of the natural resources



In recent years, new types of travelers have emerged, seeking a different, smaller and greater contact with the nature and local communities from different regions. For them, the natural environment is like a magnet. Travelers are drawn to the simplicity of nature, its abundance and diversity. For them, the authentic natural environment is important, it recharges them.

The research of the region outlined four natural resources, which have the potential to create and establish their own brand. Further research and evaluation of their potential highlighted one of them, which could be branded in a way that would allow other ones to benefit. This is Natural park „Rusenski Lom“. Orlova Chuka cave, Rock Monastery Complex “Gramovets”, the archaeological reserve "Mediaeval city of Cherven" and the rock monastery near Basarbovo - "St. Dimitar Basarbovski" are located on its territory. Near it is also the archeological reserve Rock-hewn Churches of Ivanovo. This allows the natural park to be developed as an independent tourist destination with high development potential.

**The essence of our brand:** The brand must carry a promise to the travelers, that our nature will give them an unforgettable experience and its diversity will be emphasized. It must be a reminder of what is real and what really matters, it must show the beauty of true nature and the freedom it gives.

**Visual presentation:** The essence of the environment must be shown and photographs are a good way of doing this - "A photo is worth more than a thousand words". The focus should be on creating an impression; an inspiring and engaging visual introduction with the most iconic natural features. These images should create emotional action among potential visitors. They must be authentic, present the natural environment as it is.

**Typography:** Two types of fonts can be used. Basic: A font that provides the brand with a distinctive and recognizable look. Additional: with a more legible profile to use for longer text and auxiliary materials (eg graphs, charts).

**Colour:** It is recommended to use three categories. Basic palette: should dominate - e.g. white can be used for the inscription and logo, and black for the background. Secondary palette: they are the first colours to reach beyond black and white. Tertiary palette: emphasizes the use of earth tones.

The reason to divide the whole palette into three groups is to narrow the color spectrum in which the brand is visible. This is a strategic practice for all successful brands, especially in the first few years of launch, as the brand creates a recognizable model in the minds of the targeted visitors.

## **1.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR PRESERVATION ACTIVITIES OF THESE PLACES AND DESTINATIONS.**

Tourists nowadays are looking not only for pristine nature, peace and quiet, but more and more often – for a new and different way to enrich their travels. Whenever tourists visit a certain destination there are always positive and negative effects, which they cause. The main challenge lies in finding ways to stimulate the positive effects while limiting the rest.

Some of the positive effects include: increase in the tourist's education level and a widening of their general and specialized culture; encouragement of cultural and natural heritage preservation; stimulating economic development, exchange and cooperation; revival of arts, local traditions and crafts etc.

Negative effects are determined most often in relation to: changes in the look of the cultural and nature environment; excessive exploitation of natural ecosystems; destruction of cultural monuments, relics and traditions; the occurrence of "imitation effects" in mass tourism and others. It should be noted that the efficient and proper management of cultural and natural heritage tourism is crucial, due to the need to control excessive exploitation and degradation of natural resources, cultural norms and traditions.

Weather and climate are also of significant importance for tourism. Climate is a crucial factor which determines the destination's attractiveness, the suitable time of year for vacationing as well as the choice and expenses for tourist activities. During a holiday the destination's weather conditions determine the satisfaction of the whole experience. Unfavorable atmospheric events including heat waves, cold weather fronts, strong precipitation and storms might have a negative effect for the tourists' perception of a specific destination and their willingness for a second visit.

So far, no in-depth observations have been made on the consequences of tourist visits or the effects of climate change on cultural and natural sites. The study of tourist visits needs to be analyzed in such a manner that allows the destination to be sustainably preserved.

## **12. THREATS FOR HISTORICAL RESOURCES AND HERITAGE, RELIGIOUS SPACES AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

The quality, authenticity and preservation of the cultural-historical resources and heritage are factors for the validation of tourist sites. The development of modern cultural tourism raises, on the one hand, the problematics of reducing the negative consequences of mass visits to tourist sites and, on the other, the expectations of climate change and the way in which they can affect the potential of tourist sites and objects.

## Historic resources and religious sites' heritage

They are part of the historical environment, preserve the history and spirit of the area, define its appearance and have the potential to become not only a symbolic object but also to contribute to the well-being of the local community. Once destroyed, they can not be restored in a way to recreate the authentic spirit of the site and / or place. By maintaining and preserving their historical resources, people support the community in which they live, enrich their own lives, enable the change, development and improvement of their knowledge and skills. Not only do they increase the significant value of the settlements in the area but also have a significant impact on their inhabitants. Attracting visitors brings economic benefits also through direct engagement of workforce in places with cultural and historical sites.

Alongside the positive aspects there are also several threats directly linked with the preservation of the identified historic resources. These threats are more or less characteristic for all identified sites and objects.

First of all, this includes the footprint that tourists would leave behind when leaving a location and/or site. Regardless of the tourists' increased awareness some of them still practice the so called "hit and run", which causes negative effects due to the accumulation of waste, water consumption, traffic etc., while yet contributing to insignificant local income from accommodation, entertainment and others. Alongside these negative effects other deconstructive activities include vandalism, hooliganism, graffiti etc.

When it comes to the magnitude of the consequences fire threats can be considered one of the biggest threats. In general, the causes of a fire may be classified into three groups.

- Natural phenomena – they occur despite the human's will;
- Deliberate misconduct by an individual or misconduct due to negligence or ignorance;
- Infringement of public laws and regulations (such as the smoking ban), which are to a different extent objectified as customary norms, traditions, religious dogmas and canons, norms of law.

Drastic examples of the dangers and damage that fires can cause for historical and religious resources are the destruction of Tobacco warehouses in the city of Plovdiv and the partially destroyed „Notre-Dame de Paris“ cathedral.

Climate change and natural disasters can also have catastrophic effects on historical and religious sites, and may lead to their destruction or serious damage. These include torrential rains, floods<sup>9</sup> and earthquakes<sup>10</sup>.

Other dangers are related to sinking and self-jamming. Dangers as a result of moisture spreading and deterioration of sites and sites due to biological pests are also abundant.

The last set of factors which are related to the preservation of historic and religious resources are connected to their management. The following threats can be identified:

- Deterioration of the maintenance of historic and religious objects mostly due to lack of funding;
- Direct actions / work on cultural and religious sites related to their maintenance, including the use of inadequate building materials for restorative and / or conservation-restoration actions;
- A change in urban planning, architectural suggestions which can affect historic and religious sites and objects.

### Cultural Resources

Overall prominent threats connected to historical resources and religious sites preservation are characteristic of cultural resources as well. After all, they too have their own specific

characteristics. The allocation of necessary funds by the responsible institutions and organizations can be considered as a main common threat for their preservation.

When it comes to the folklore festival “Live water” and the Apple Festival which takes place in the village of Ekzarch Yosif the specific threats that they face lie within the authenticity they present in relation to folklore, traditions and cuisine.

### 13. THREATS TO NATURAL RESOURCES

Tourism is an important factor which has a positive effect of the economics of the Ruse region. On another hand its development can pose a threat for the quality of the natural environment, including biodiversity. It is therefore reasonable to analyze the impact of the future planned activities and to seek their potential to provide sustainable forms of tourism that will not harm the natural environment on the identified natural resources.

Four natural resource sites have been identified in the region. They are less known and poorly promoted but are valuable sites nonetheless and hide quite some tourist potential. Their preservation will be among the biggest threats in the region. Insofar as the “Ecomuseum and aquarium” is concerned – the biggest challenges there are identical to those for the historical resources and heritage.

The “Ruse Lom” natural park, Batin island and the Orlova Chuka cave are attractive sites which are not negatively affected by human activities and possess valuable and attractive natural landscape potential. These are preconditions that create wonderful opportunities for the development of different types of nature-friendly tourism. Through the appropriate eco-friendly management and preservation, they can be the foundations of a niche natural heritage-based tourism. Apart from tourist sites, they also contribute to the preservation and conservation of natural assets. These places and sites have a different degree of protection, which is why by encouraging their development as tourist sites, it is possible to reach their natural boundaries for tourist load. This element has been measured for the Rusenski Lom Nature Park and has shown that eight people can visit a certain part of the park without harming it.

The increase of visitor’s density of the most vulnerable natural areas might lead to a deterioration of flora and fauna. Even positive activities like cycling can be a threat to the local natural resources if the tourist density reaches a certain limit. As I was pointed out some tourists practice the so-called “hit and run” tourism which causes negative effects due to waste generation, water consumption, traffic and others. In order to be saved, it is necessary to measure the capacity of the natural resources - that is, the maximum number of people who can visit the same place without causing any damage.

Individual automobile transportation poses another serious risk on the landscape. This tendency is very difficult to manage despite the developed and functional bus transportation system. Over 80% of visitors come by cars and thus create negative preconditions in relation to the environment due to automobile gases, parking in grass areas, violation of the ban to enter certain areas etc.

Another factor, which poses a threat to the biodiversity is the lack of long term monitoring of tourist-related activities. This condition lowers the quality of the decision-making process on tourism issues by substituting the investors' views, which underline the economic contributions and sometimes come into conflict with the requirements for nature's conservation. In such cases long term monitoring cannot be completely overtaken by ad hoc<sup>9</sup> research.

Some additional negative phenomena such as erosion, disturbances caused by unregulated

visits in the most vulnerable territories, noise, fire hazards, increased waste, distribution of non-autochthonous species on paths, poaching and others are frequently connected to the development of tourism. They can be overcome through means like general planning, careful execution of these plans and adequate tourist flow management.

Climate change can also directly or indirectly cause a negative effect on the preservation of natural resources. It can significantly affect the health condition of many tree species and forests and to lead to death due to various reasons: disturbances such as fires, strong winds, insects' outbreaks, massive deaths due to droughts, etc.

#### **14. ACTIONS WHICH CAN ASSIST IN THE PRESERVATION OF THESE PLACES AND OBJECTS**

Particularly due to the threats connected with the utilization of natural and cultural-historic resources for tourism development it is necessary to implement a suitable, efficient and rational approach to the preservation efforts of these resources.

At an international level the following good management practices have been identified:

- Monitoring of the tourist flow in these destinations;
- Implementation of taxes for visitors;
- Implementation of tourist behavior's guidelines;
- Implementation of tour operator's practices.

In view of the development and preservation of the identified historical, cultural and natural resources and religious sites, it is necessary to define special rules for the management of the tourist flow, the aim being to prevent disruption of the integrity of the sites and resources. There are four basic approaches that can be used to reduce the negative impact of visitors on objects.

- Managing the provision of tourist services or visiting opportunities, for example by increasing the space or the time the site is open so that it can handle the increased tourist interest;
- Managing the demand for services related to visits to sites and attractions, such as traveling in small groups of up to 12-14 people, mandatory with a guide (thus restricting the number of tourists and the driver can control their behavior);
- Management of the site's ability to take on the increased tourist interest: through fortification of the object or its elements or through the construction of additional facilities;
- Managing the usage impact, for example by modifying the use or lowering the frequency of use.

##### *Management guidelines:*

- Creating an integrated database with information on the tourist flows the sites' conditions etc.;
- Research on the effects of climate change on historic and religious resources and sites;
- Observation and monitoring the tourist flow, implementation of tourist entrance fees;
- Development of the human resources in the tourist area which would help with increasing the number of visitors and popularizing the site;
- Setting up visitor guidelines for historic, religious, cultural and natural sites;
- Monitoring, prevention and conservation;
- Periodic surveys (including constructive) on the state of historical resources and heritage and religious sites;
- Building video surveillance systems;

- Research on additional attractions – natural and historic;
- Sustainable management;
- Fundraising.

*Recommendations related to the opportunities that the tourism sector offers.*

- Advertising the region and organizing advertising visits;
- Tour operators' management practices and the creation of historic, cultural and natural resources tourism;
- Creating sustainable tourist services and products;
- Participation in tourist fairs.

## 1.4 Analysis of the extent and methodology in which the threats can be limited, in order to turn these sites in places of individual tourist destinations.

Tourism is an industry which is very difficult to control and plan due to the numerous parties that are involved: tourists (who often have unrealistic expectations about cultural or historic heritage), tourist agencies (more often they are not focused exclusively on increasing tourist flow) and the local communities, who are mostly affected by the tourist activities.

Local communities are predisposed to adapting to the demands of tourist and tourist agencies in order to ensure income and local welfare. Often they do not take into consideration the variety of effects which tourism has on the community. Without strict planning the local physical and human context, which was the initial reason for the tourist interest, can get destroyed.

### 15. ANALYSIS OF THE MAIN RISKS FOR TOURIST DESTINATIONS IN THE REGION

The research that was carried out concluded that the region has very good conditions for developing tourist destinations and their accompanying activities. Some resources were identified whose potential can be more efficiently used and more active offering can be implemented for tourists. At the same time when evaluating the tourism potential several risks were determined, which also pose threats and can end up being a limiting factor for the development of the identified tourist routes. Some of these include:

#### A. Insufficient and ineffective tourist offering

The research that was conducted and the review of the leading tourist resources in the region as well as the dialogue that was carried out with all stakeholders has unambiguously proved that the tourist offering is with a very low intensity. There is virtually no comprehensive and purposeful supply of tourism products, and even more so of specific destinations, including packages of tourist attractions and experiences. Investments in new tourism products and services and the development of the offered ones is extremely limited and is carried out mainly on a project basis. This leads to the conclusion that there seems to be a lack of a long term approach to the offering of regional tourist products which leads to a low interest on behalf of potential users. Essentially the problem with tourist offering in the Ruse-



Guirgevo region has not been entirely encompassed in any regional strategic document.

#### **B. Insufficient knowledge of tourist demand**

Insufficient understanding of tourist demand, the demographic and social profile of tourists who are looking for cultural and tourist products, their preferences and attitudes towards travelling are among the main threats for tourist destinations. This makes it impossible to define the communication channels and adequate call to action messages. The insufficient understanding of tourist demand in the region is proven by the dynamics of the visits in the past 8 years. This proves that the region has available tourist offering and with a more detailed study of the demand and the implementation of a quality marketing strategy the Ruse-Giurgu region can significantly increase the tourist flow.

#### **C. Lack of information on all levels**

The main risk lies within the lack of a clear concept for the condition of the available resource as well as the related assessment and reassessment of the tourism sector development opportunities. Planning requires good understanding of the resource's potential and mostly a quality information back-up. The lack of detailed, adequate and current information for the condition of tourism on a national level (by municipalities and also in the whole region) presents one of the fundamental risks for the development of tourist destinations in the Ruse-Giurgu region. This clearly defined information deficit is problem which has been discussed multiple times in the context of sustainable development, destination management and the need for specific actions in relation to the regional tourist policy. The lack of information for the condition of tourism at a regional level is a result of insufficient and sometimes lacking altogether local capacity for regular gathering, processing, synthesizing and analysis of the information needed. The problem with information supply is especially severe in the smaller settlements and areas with tourist potential which do not have a strongly fragmented tourist offering. The lack of quality information often leads to making ill informed and badly motivated management decisions in the tourism sector.

#### **D. Lack of strategic vision for tourist destination management**

Tourism development opportunities in the region relate primarily to local natural and cultural potential, historical heritage and opportunities to create cross-border tourist destinations. The availability of tourism potential alone is not a sufficient factor for the successful development of tourism and for establishing the region as a tourist destination. The competitiveness of destinations is directly linked to the way in which this potential is managed, developed and the attitude and involvement of local communities. The tourism development of the studied resources in the region is related to many, and often interrelated problems, some of which are clearly visible - the state of the physical environment, accessibility to the tourist attractions, information security of the industry, good marketing policy and others. Others are not as clear, but certainly more important from a strategic point of view - policies, real interaction, cooperation, including between municipal authorities, local communities and business, problems related to the overall management of the regional tourism industry. If the former require first and foremost financial resources, the latter primarily require initiative, communication and organization.

Surveys show that there is a lack of understanding amongst stakeholders in the sector about the need for wider regional cooperation and, ultimately, a lack of unanimity and one-way action. This is an indisputable weakness of the regional tourism industry, which hinders its development.

Currently the strategic management of regional tourism is weak and consists mostly of mid-



term strategies for some municipalities. The management for potential tourist destinations is stretched out between different institutions and organizations responsible for their management and support.

This limits the opportunities for carrying out a targeted and focused marketing campaign, based on a common vision and logic, thus leading to wasting more resources (financial, human and material). In order to formulate clear needs and as a consequence long term aims for the sector a much more active cooperation between local authorities, tourist associations and educational centers is needed. This requires the sector's stakeholders (public, NGOs and private) to unite in the management of regional tourism. Even though this need has been realized a vision for a unified tourism management in the region is currently limited.

#### **E. The available local environment in which the tourism product is developed**

The quality of the local environment is particularly important for the successful development of a tourist destination. This includes the degree of welfare and the conditions of the general infrastructure (water supply, sewerage, electricity supply, street network, cleanliness and solid waste, road network, parking lots, etc.), the accessibility to the relevant tourist sites, public services (health and safety), social and living conditions in the accommodation establishments, the surrounding natural environment. All these elements of the local environment have a key impact on the development of the tourism industry. Research and studies on these issues define their status are unsatisfactory. The main weaknesses include:

- Uneven development of the transportation system, large share of settlements with limited access to public transport;
- Insufficient healthcare supply in regions with a prominent tourism function, lack of healthcare in remote areas;
- A concentration of accommodation options and restaurants in the bigger city centers in the region;
- Problems with air, water and soil pollution, which change the anthropogenic resources needed for tourism;
- Inadequate conditions of the main technical infrastructure in the different settlements with tourist potential;
- Bad conditions of some of the historic houses and monuments in the region and others.

#### **F. Poor marketing policy in the tourism sector**

Tourism is a very competitive sector which can be characterized by a vast and versatile offering. The main issue is how to attract proactive activities, how to retain and satisfy visitors without overlooking the fact that they often change their demands, attitudes and values.

In this regard popularizing the region as a destination in the tourism market requires not only the presence of the available and appropriate resources, but also carrying out of a promotional marketing campaign.

Investments in increasing the supply quality, the diversification of tourist products, improving the material and technical base, optimal price-quality ratio, overcoming the seasonal variations in demand and development of tourist services would undoubtedly lead to an increase of tourist flow. Conducting effective marketing requires, first and foremost, a good understanding of the features and trends in the available tourist demand and behavior, identifying potential new markets for the products and services offered, as well as constant monitoring of the news and trends in the competitive environment. At this stage, however, as it has been established, there is a lack of up to date information and research as well as a long-term vision on how to

execute the available tourist resources. Furthermore, the potential market segments to which efforts should be addressed and in relation to which pricing policies should be adapted, have not been defined. This deficit of strategic marketing has its limiting effects on the local tourist industry.

#### **G. Lack of readiness for adaptation to climate changes**

Weather and climate have a huge impact on tourism. Climate is a crucial factor which determines the destination's attractiveness, the suitable time of year for vacationing as well as the choice and expenses for tourist activities. During a vacation the weather conditions at the destination contribute to the satisfaction of the trip altogether. Extreme conditions which have been observed in the past are expected to become more frequent considering climate change. These include heatwaves, intensive precipitation, floods and storms. Unfavorable atmospheric events including heat waves, cold weather fronts, strong precipitation and storms might have a negative effect for the tourists' perception of a specific destination and their willingness for a second visit. Climate change can also have an indirect effect on tourism like for example the availability of fresh water might become limited – prognosis shows that the Ruse region has a medium risk of draught. Climate change in this way can create various short term and long term threats to tourism although the warmer periods in the beginning and towards the end of the year might make the region more attractive in the intermediate seasons.

Poor awareness hinders the goal of making sound management decisions based on official information. Lack of awareness can lead to an inability to choose and implement effective adaptation measures. This delay puts the competitiveness of tourism activities within the risk of climate change threats. The readiness for adaptation to climate change is alarmingly low.

Even though climate change is identified as a risk it is unclear as of this moment the type and extent of climate change effects on tourism. It can be speculated that the highest degree of preparation for adaptation to climate change can be observed among tourists. They are very sensitive to all sorts of changes and taking into consideration the vast offering of tourist services in Bulgaria and abroad, they are able to change their travel models both temporarily and permanently.

Each of the analyzed risks has been evaluated in light of its likelihood and potential consequences. Their mix gives a clarification for the level of risk for each separate site/destination and for a group of similar sites/destinations. The evaluation has been presented in annex 1.

## **16. MAIN THREATS ARISING FROM THE RISKS WHICH TOURIST DESTINATIONS IN THE REGION FACE**

Based on the analysis of the main risks, the identified threats which tourist destinations face are linked to:

- Smaller number of tourists;
- Shorter average stay;
- Tourists' health issues;
- Worse conditions for outdoors recreation;
- Damage to the tourist infrastructure;
- Worse access to tourist destinations;

- Water shortages.

Below the links between the identified risks and the threats they bring for tourism development in the region are presented.

The conclusion which can be drawn as a result of the presented impact of risks and the opportunities for their minimization is that close cooperation and mutual efforts must be sought by all stakeholders. A clear strategic approach is necessary in order to organize and create cross-border tourist products which are competitive and appropriately marketed. The understanding that a tourist product is a common effort of many stakeholders in the process should be the main leading principle of work. In this context, consolidation of the processes of managing and marketing tourist resources needs to be achieved.



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GOVERNMENT OF BULGARIA



Risk	Threat	Opportunity	Expected effect
Insufficient and weak effective tourist offering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Smaller number of tourists;</li> <li>▪ Shorter average stay;</li> <li>▪ Worse access to tourist destinations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reorganizing tourist offering and pointing out the main tourist resources, respectively types of tourism which have potential in the region;</li> <li>▪ An evaluation of the tourist sites, the supporting infrastructure, available accommodation, opportunities for combined tourist packages etc.;</li> <li>▪ Information dissemination - encouraging organizations and institutions which have a direct connection to the offering and popularizing in the region;</li> <li>▪ Active and purposeful work with tour operators to increase their knowledge for opportunities in the region;</li> <li>▪ Interacting with tourism specialized journalists in priority countries to improve the region's image;</li> <li>▪ Diversification and commercializing the available offers;</li> <li>▪ Improvement of online offering and the opportunities to use online services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Adapting to the new conditions and achieving sustainable development of the tourist destinations;</li> <li>▪ Diversification of the tourist product;</li> <li>▪ Support for popularizing the region;</li> <li>▪ Increase of income generated by the tourist industry.</li> </ul>
Insufficient understanding of tourist demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Smaller number of tourists;</li> <li>▪ Shorter average stay;</li> <li>▪ Worse access to tourist destinations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Organizing periodic research and analysis on tourist demand - determining the strategic markets and segments and current tendencies in the development of tourist offering in the region.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understanding of visitors in the region - preferences, means of travel, information channels used etc.;</li> <li>▪ Appropriate definition of targeted market segments;</li> <li>▪ A specifically targeted marketing policy.</li> </ul>

Risk	Threat	Opportunity	Expected effect
Weak information supply at all levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Smaller number of tourists;</li> <li>Damage to the tourist infrastructure;</li> <li>Worse access to tourist destinations;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cooperation between all stakeholders in the region;</li> <li>Creating an information map containing systemized information about the population, economy, infrastructure, tourist resources and local authorities' engagement with tourism development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Structuring the process of gathering, processing, analysis and creating an information database for tourism in the targeted territory;</li> <li>Presenting unified information, appropriate for comparative analysis and awareness increase.</li> </ul>
Lack of a strategic vision and tourist destination management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Smaller number of tourists;</li> <li>Shorter average stay;</li> <li>damage to the tourist infrastructure;</li> <li>Worse access to tourist destinations;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encouraging the cooperation between active tourist information centers;</li> <li>Creating a permanent forum for cooperation between local businesses and business organizations with regional and local authorities;</li> <li>Development of partnerships with educational institutions;</li> <li>Establishing adequate organizations for tourist destination management (f.e. a local tourism board).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determining the strategic guidelines for tourism destination development in the region;</li> <li>Lowering the deficits in relation to information supply, strategic management and opportunities for local environment improvements;</li> <li>Creating sustainable and competitive tourist destinations.</li> </ul>
Available local environment in which the tourist product is developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Smaller number of tourists;</li> <li>Shorter average stay;</li> <li>Healthcare problems with tourists;</li> <li>Worse outdoor recreation conditions;</li> <li>Damage to the tourist infrastructure;</li> <li>Worse access to tourist destinations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interinstitutional interaction and a high degree of stakeholder engagement;</li> <li>Providing the necessary conditions - improving accessibility, maintaining the public environment, landscaping adjacent areas around tourist destinations (parking lots, water areas, waste, etc.).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased visitor satisfaction;</li> <li>Providing opportunities for safe visits to tourist destinations.</li> </ul>
Weak marketing policy in the tourism sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Smaller number of tourists;</li> <li>Shorter average stay;</li> <li>Worse outdoor recreation conditions;</li> <li>Worse access to tourist destinations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating a partnership network;</li> <li>Visitor research;</li> <li>Development of a regional tourism brand;</li> <li>Developing a marketing concept for popularizing the tourist region and destinations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing the region's recognition;</li> <li>Image validation;</li> <li>Increasing visitors' satisfaction;</li> <li>Attracting new prospective tourist markets.</li> </ul>

Risk	Threat	Opportunity	Expected effect
Lack of responsibility and readiness to adapt to climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Smaller number of tourists;</li> <li>▪ Shorter average stay;</li> <li>▪ Healthcare problems with tourists;</li> <li>▪ Worse conditions for outdoors recreation;</li> <li>▪ Damage to the tourist infrastructure;</li> <li>▪ Worse access to tourist destinations;</li> <li>▪ Water shortage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monitoring of tourist flow - number of arrivals by various transportation means, as well national differences in the vacationing period, length of stay, expenditure and the flexibility of these factors;</li> <li>▪ Enriching the tourist products and services</li> <li>▪ Identifying new tourist sectors (segmenting);</li> <li>▪ Development and implementation of new marketing strategies and approaches.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conservation of cultural and natural resources.</li> <li>▪ Image validation;</li> <li>▪ Increasing visitor's satisfaction;</li> <li>▪ Attracting new prospective tourist markets.</li> </ul>



ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ СЪЮЗ  
ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ ФОНД ЗА  
РЕГИОНАЛНО РАЗВИТИЕ  
ИНВЕСТИРАМЕ ВЪВ ВАШЕТО БЪДЕЩЕ!



БЪЛГАРСКО ПРАВИТЕЛСТВО







## 1.5 GOALS AND PROJECT PRIORITIES FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE RUSE REGION

### 17. **PRINCIPLES**

#### **Focus on tourist destinations**

This strategy is devoted to the “bottoms up” approach, based on tourist destinations. The end goal of the development strategy will be the positive effects for a destination both as an individual site and as a combination of several sites and destinations. All stakeholders and partners should work in cooperation and integrated in order to develop the tourist destinations and to achieve the desired impact at an industry level.

#### **Focus on visitors**

Along with the target focus placed on the destination, the strategy will also focus on visitors. This means that they need to be at its center to determine what is worth financing. Efforts should be focused on specific actions only if the messages reach the visitors and the infrastructure facilitates their visits. We need to generate genuine positive feedback that informs and inspires potential visitors.

#### **Focus on positioning of tourist destinations**

The destination needs to have a clear differentiated position. Different positions will support the increase of visits and visitor spending both within a separate site/destination, as well as within the region as a whole. This requires a close cooperation between separate destinations and stakeholders in order to guarantee that each one of them is appropriately positioned within the market and offers exactly what the visitor is interested in and demands.

#### **Focus on cooperation**

Gradually all stakeholders should join the phases of development, decision making and financing tourist destinations through coordinated activities and defining strategic partnerships.

### 18. **TENDENCIES AT FOCUS**

Tourism is one of the most quickly changing sectors. In order to be relevant, we need constantly observe and take into consideration the main global tendencies. Here are some of them which have a mid-term and long-term importance.

#### **Climate change**

Climate change can have a significant effect on tourism. All indicators show that air temperatures will likely increase between 1 to 3,5 degrees Celsius within the next century, which will have immediate effects on the vitality of certain destinations. In some areas water shortages will become tangible. It suffices to say that climate change will

have a significant impact on the desire and ability to travel as well as on the physical environment of many destinations. As a result there is no doubt that destinations which are considered “green” will have a bigger likelihood of remaining attractive.

### **The green moment**

There can be no doubt that the increased support and concern for the environment will have an effect on travel. What is less certain is the exact essence of this effect because there have only been a few studies which clearly and confidently prove that at equal other conditions people will choose green activities. More research will be required, but there is no doubt that the eco-movement is something to be considered when developing tourism products and can become an important part of positioning an attraction, facility or entire destination.

### **Demographic changes**

The changing demographic profile of potential visitors forces traders to leave behind their traditional understanding for markets and to develop new approaches when developing their strategies. For example, generation Y and the ones that follow it have very different expectations and loyalty levels for a destination which often changes their opinions and ways of thinking. Other main tourist markets like Europe have an aging population which offers other opportunities when it comes to tourism such as longer vacations for example.

### **Fast changing consumer preferences and behavior**

Fast changing consumer preferences require destination to constantly change their products and packages. This reality forces destinations to have a shorter product cycle and the necessary access to resources for creating new experiences and memories. Visitors nowadays accept their travels as an experience and not as a series of visits to tourist destinations. This entails tourist wandering off the regular tourist routes to participate in outdoor adventures, to eat at restaurants that offer local authentic cuisine etc. part of the current popularity of this type of travel nowadays is the tourists' need to get away from their natural habitat. This tendency obviously leads to the question what do tourists look for in this region and what will motivate them to visit it.

### **Growth and influence of social media**

Social media as a marketing and promotion instrument lower the costs of distribution and allow for much more focused efforts. This also means that destinations with creative marketing campaigns can have a significant competitive edge to traditional destinations which still count on old school strategies for distribution and promotion. While social media are well known for their ability to raise awareness there are still some problems which need to be solved in relation to their ability to transform interest into action.

### **Technology's influence**

People buy emotions and the best way to supply them is to offer them information and excitement. Technology and virtual reality allow people to check and review their accommodation before even they start their travel. It can convince more people to decide to visit a certain destination.

On the other hand, the widened reality entails a widened physical reality for the person. It allows the person to learn about the location, building, sightseeing opportunities in real time. This opportunity to get information on the go allows for an improved tourist user experience.

### Increased influence of partnerships

Partnerships between the public and private sector as well between both sectors and NGOs are more and more accepted as a crucial element in the development of a certain tourist destination. The old paradigm that the private and public sectors pay and are responsible for the development of the destination and its marketing should be left behind. The future of tourism lies within cooperation and the efforts of all stakeholders.

## 19. VISION AND DEVELOPMENT GOALS

### 19.1. Vision

Ruse is a region where a variety of picturesque natural landscapes and authentic environment and traditions are combined in harmony which allows visitors to experience unique personal experiences. Stepping on this prerequisite the call to visitors is:

*„ALWAYS A NEW EXPERIENCE AND FEELING! FIND THEM!“*

The region's desire is aimed at the opportunity to offer visitor's a chance to escape from their everyday lives, to feel "welcomed" and to experience something different. We want to support that segment of visitors which requires more from their trip than just a vacation. The quality of the experience reflects: a feeling of authenticity, opportunities for having fun, human factors, unique historic meaning and variety in the experience. As a result, the call to visitors reflects: a unique welcoming, submersion into the authentic environment, picturesque views and at the same time a traditional, romantic and spiritual experience.

### 19.2. Strategic goals

The strategic goals, defined in the Regional tourism development strategy are meant to encourage the tourist attractiveness in the region and to stimulate the development and offering of new tourist products and services.

In their essence they aim to popularize the region as one of the leading destinations in the country in relation to cultural, historic and natural heritage and to establish its rational exploitation to create value. The strategic goals are within 3 sector development areas: increasing the number of visitors and the added value of the sector, upgrading tourists' experiences and increasing awareness of the destination.

#### **Strategic goal 1. Increasing the number of visitors and the visitor value**

Increasing the number of visitors from traditional and newly emerging markets to optimize the sector's value.

In order to increase the number of visitors and to maximize the value received by the supported tourist destination, the strategy is targeted to key markets and segments whilst the goal needs to be directed towards adapting the suggestions in line with the profile and preferences of each market and segment.

We need to direct our efforts to foreign markets and segments with the biggest purchasing power while the cross sales between different tourist products and services need to be optimized.

Main guidelines:

- Attracting the main outgoing markets and segments with a higher income level;
- Attracting visitors by implementing loyalty strategies and client communication;
- Ensuring a higher visitor satisfaction rate and transposing the idea that there is still something new to be found;
- Increasing the average stay through cross selling between different tourist services offered by the destinations as well as offering additional services which bring added value to the experience and guarantee satisfaction for visitors of targeted markets and segments;
- Developing new and updating old tourist programs and services suitable for all seasons.

### **Strategic goal 2: Building on visitors' experiences**

Improving the visitor experience and their impressions from tourist attractions through development and offering of various products and services, based on their expectations and preferences. This will help with:

- Tourist loyalty towards the destinations and attractions through encouraging follow up visits;
- Increasing the popularity of the destination through “word of mouth” promotion;

Achieving the goal needs to be based on knowledge increase regarding the visitor's profile from different markets and segments so that the products and services offered can be adapted to the visitor's preferences. The offering (infrastructure, tourist attractions, services etc.) needs to aim to satisfy visitors by providing them with the information they need and leaving them with a sense that they are welcomed.

Main guidelines:

- Increasing the knowledge of the entire value chain regarding the visitors' profile from different markets and tourist segments;
- Providing complex solutions at tourist destinations and attractions and guaranteeing a service level which corresponds to the demands of various tourist markets and segments;
- Ensuring permanent and trustworthy information in support of visitors so that everyone of them feels like a local.

### **Strategic goal 3. Managing the information about tourist attractions and entertainment opportunities**



The region and its tourist destinations need to be recognizable among tourists by increasing their awareness within the local market as well as within the group of outgoing tourists.

Tourist destinations need to build an image, to inspire curiosity to visit and to create a sense of awareness of the overall appearance of the region. We need to focus on the main distinctive elements of destinations when presenting their innovative aspects, combined with their attractive prices. The choice of communication channels is essential to ensure the efficiency and adaptation to a particular segment. Increasing publicity requires the creation of partnerships between institutional, private and non-governmental entities operating in the sector so that they know more about the sites and their capabilities and as a result this acts as a means of promoting tourist attractions.

Main guidelines:

- Promoting the main distinctive elements of tourist destinations according to the target markets and segments, by providing an innovative proposal that creates a greater willingness to travel.
- Definition of innovative communication strategies which are appropriate for the preferences of the current and potential visitors.
- Establishing partnerships between institutional and private subjects and tourism stakeholders which allows for a wider and more thorough understanding of the destination and the presence of personalized tourist programs.



### 19.3. Programme Priorities

1. MANAGEMENT					
<p><b>Goal:</b> Establishment of a tourist destination management center in the region through coordination and involvement of the stakeholders</p>					
Of relevance to:	Number of tourists	Average stay	Access to tourist destinations	Conditions for outdoor recreation	Tourist infrastructure
	V	V			V
Description	<p>Tourism is managed. Successful tourist destinations need the combined efforts of all tourism actors - local authorities, non-government and private organizations, as well as the local community. The overall management of tourism makes it possible to set strategic directions for development, for the financial, human and marketing efforts to be properly directed towards establishing the region as an attractive tourist destination.</p>				
	Events / work meetings, discussions, forums	<p>Surveys show that there is a lack of understanding amongst stakeholders in the sector about the need for wider regional cooperation and, ultimately, lack of unanimity and purposeful actions. This is an indisputable weakness of the regional tourism industry, which hinders its development. To overcome this weakness, cooperation between the various tourism actors in the region must first be strengthened. The organization of workshops and discussions between the various institutions and organizations with an interest in tourism development should be encouraged.</p> <p>Creating a permanent forum for cooperation between local businesses and business organizations with regional and local authorities can create an environment for coordinating tourism development policies, as well as discussing and co-developing them with the private sector and social and community actors in the region, but an open participation mechanism should also be provided.</p>			
	Designing a destination management center	<p>The practice around the world shows that the effective and efficient management of tourist destinations requires a specific destination management organization. Often they are the sole advocates of the entire tourism industry on site; and in this role, they ensure the mitigation of the negative impact of tourism on the environment and local communities, as well as sharing opportunities for dynamic human exchange. Indeed, such organizations help facilitate the dialogue between the private sector, the public sector and other stakeholders, who otherwise would never be able to cooperate or understand how their decisions reflect the long term value chain of tourism.</p> <p>The region should strive to find ways and forms of dialogue and to pool the efforts of all stakeholders, who are interested in purposefully managing the tourism in the</p>			



		region. This way, tourism development will be subordinated to the strategic management of the regional tourism industry and a real marketing policy can be pursued.
	Reasearches	<p>In order to be successful, the tourist region should carry out periodic studies and researches, related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tourism demand - defining strategic markets and segments and current trends in the development of tourism in the region, incl. surveys for the level of satisfaction;</li> <li>▪ Assessment of tourist sites, auxiliary infrastructure, available accommodation facilities, opportunities for combined tourist packages, etc.</li> </ul>

## 2. BRAND

### Goal: Creating a brand for the tourist destinations

Of relevance to:	Number of tourists	Average stay	Access to tourist destinations	Conditions for outdoor recreation	Tourist infrastructure
	V	V			
Description	<p>The program strategy involves exploring and monitoring different destinations and building a brand/s based on research into the motivation of individual market segments and their perception of the value of attractions.</p> <p>Creating a brand/s of tourist attractions will be encouraged by involving stakeholders (locals and tourists) in order to maximize performance.</p> <p>Within the framework of Program Priority 2, the following actions are recommended:</p>				
	Research and events	<p>The first step involves analyzing and observing different destinations and research on the motivation of individual market segments and their perception of the value of tourism products.</p> <p>In parallel, the history of individual places, historical, economic, cultural, social backgrounds will be explored. Information will be collected on tourist destinations located near the site/location.</p> <p>This can also be done by identifying local target groups (who will be interested in participation and partnership), interviews with local stakeholders, tour operators, tourism managers and other stakeholders.</p>			
	Defining and creating brands of tourist destinations	<p>After the evaluation of the resources, it is necessary to proceed with the definition of the brand or individual brands, which should serve to promote and build the image of the specific tourist destinations. Concrete companies, which can make the design, logo etc. may be used for its professional creation. Following its production and before its launch, it is recommended for the developed brand/s to be discussed with the stakeholders and users, in order to assess their impact.</p>			





	Development of a visual reference book and a guide for using the developed brand	We need to ensure that market and tourist performance is consistent and the brand is used in the development of all tourism products. In order for the brand to convey its values, attributes and characteristics, a visual reference book for its use and implementation will need to be developed. This will lead to consistency in marketing and communication activities.
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### 3. DEVELOPING A SET OF MARKETING TOOLS FOR THE PARTNERS IN THE INDUSTRY

**Goal:** Creating opportunities for development of the partners in the tourism industry

Of relevance to:	Number of tourists	Average stay	Access to tourist destinations	Conditions for outdoor recreation	Tourist infrastructure
	<b>V</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>V</b>		<b>V</b>
Description	This program priority outlines the goal of creating marketing opportunities for large and small industry partners across the region, including rural and tourism-dependent areas, allowing them access to programs that go beyond what they could achieve on their own.				
	Events	<p>This is an area where partners in the tourism industry can easily come together to share their experiences, participate in trade missions and partner with other associations to create unique events. If the respective resource is available, the recommendations are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Creation of a joint experimental booth that presents the main tourist products and services in the region and participation in tourist exhibitions in the target markets. Partners can participate with their own materials and presentations. These participations can target both individual travelers and the tourism business or specific segments, such as cruises, so the booth must be designed to work for all audiences.</li> <li>▪ Creating opportunities to visit tourist/trade shows and trade missions in Italy, France, Germany and Romania. As much as technology has changed the way business is conducted, many cultures still require face-to-face interaction through business meetings. Valuable partnerships can be started from these trade missions.</li> </ul>			
	Researches	<p>Primary research is very expensive. Research is also important in measuring the impact of marketing efforts and keeping up with trends and changes in passenger behavior. The following actions may be recommended in order to facilitate access by partners to these resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Creating a methodology for the provision of information to destinations in the region;</li> <li>▪ Conducting an annual online quantitative analysis of tourism indicators and providing the results to the tourism partners. Partners may be allowed to add their own questions for a fee. This pooling of quantitative researches makes the efforts of different regions consistent and provides a way for a smaller tourism organization to benefit from a larger study.</li> </ul>			



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creation of an information map, containing systematic information on the population, economy, infrastructure, tourism resources and the involvement of local authorities in the development of tourism.</li> </ul>
	Training	<p>Rediscovering the wheel does not help anyone. A centralized source of good tourism marketing practices can increase the capacity of each tourism partner to the same high standard and can provide smaller tourism organizations, especially those in rural areas, with the same capabilities as those with larger budgets. This is especially important when trying to attract foreign visitors who may require additional infrastructure and services. The specific services for supporting training and education, which are recommended as part of the industry support strategy, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of training kits for small tourism enterprises in target marketing sectors.</li> <li>Creating a personal marketing campaign. Consultations may also be provided to attract new visitors from additional markets, including through support for the development of infrastructure in culinary areas, translation services, etc.</li> </ul>
	Plan for adapting to climate changes	<p>Climate change, natural disasters and the risks they provoke are inevitable, but often unpredictable. They have a significant impact on tourism in the affected areas from an environmental, financial, social and economic point of view. In order all stakeholders to be well prepared, it is recommended to draw up a climate change adaptation plan and the effects and impact climate change will have on tourism development in the region.</p>

#### 4. DEVELOPING ONLINE RESOURCES

**Goal:** Creating resources to attract visitors during the decision-making and planning stages of the trip and to assist travel partners in attracting tourists.

Of relevance to:	Number of tourists	Average stay	Access to tourist destinations	Conditions for outdoor recreation	Tourist infrastructure
	V	V	V	V	V
Description	In order to assist travel partners and visitors in planning their trips, a single regional internet portal should be set up.				
	Tourist website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear, simple and modern design;</li> <li>Providing an easy way for visitors to explore the region, an opportunity to book their trips and their favourite activities;</li> <li>Explore the possibility of including a reservation system for hotels, excursions, rental cars and more;</li> <li>Include a mobile version, as many visitors use their smartphones to plan and book their</li> </ul>			



		<p>trips;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Providing opportunities for seeking additional information regarding establishments, accommodation, attractions, outdoor recreation opportunities in the area, etc.;</li> <li>▪ Opportunity for a virtual walk and sightseeing of key tourist destinations in the region;</li> <li>▪ Keeping an up-to-date online calendar with various events held in the region - sports, concerts, festivals, etc.;</li> <li>▪ A gallery of pictures and videos of the region;</li> <li>▪ A section of seasonal promotions, partnerships and routes;</li> <li>▪ Continuous updates, opportunity for feedback and travel planning assistance;</li> <li>▪ The website must be in Bulgarian, Romanian, English and German at an early stage and, if possible, in Italian, French and Russian at a later stage;</li> </ul>
	Digital assets	<p>Assets that need to be created include videos (often too expensive for individual industry partners), photos (to provide high quality images of the region's natural and cultural assets), and a search engine optimization strategy. In particular, the recommendations cover the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Development of mobile apps - We will develop a mobile application that will help tourists plan their trip, find information and provide an opportunity for reservations on site.</li> <li>▪ Multimedia database - creating systematic high quality multimedia content that will generate a desire to visit tourist sites and places and which can be used for online channels through various media: web, catalogs, online guides, etc.</li> </ul>
	Advertisement	<p>Although the region does not devote significant funds to advertising, some expenses on traditional and online media may be recommended in order to raise awareness among travelers. Recommendations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensuring media presence in national media. Both print and digital publications are recommended.</li> <li>▪ Many visitors to the region use TripAdvisor to plan their trips. It is recommended that ads and sponsored content be displayed on this site.</li> </ul>

## 5. ENCOURAGING THE PROMOTION OF THE TOURIST DESTINATIONS

**Goal:** To generate an interest, preferences and ultimately - a visit to the destinations

Of relevance to:	Number of tourists	Average stay	Access to tourist destinations	Conditions for outdoor recreation	Tourist infrastructure
	<b>V</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>V</b>



Description	<p>Awareness, interest and preferences for travelling to tourist destinations in the region need to be raised. In order for the area to compete with destinations that have more resources for advertising and attracting visitors, an innovative campaign and effort is needed. Specific recommendations for promoting the region include the following:</p>	
	Creative campaign	<p>In order to be more effective and efficient, a marketing campaign must focus on what sets the region apart from the rest. It should be designed to be regionally specific and targeted to specific visitors.</p> <p>Content:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Creating content based on the experience and feel that a visit to the region gives you. The focus will be on the use of photographic assets, video content, infographics and more. Distribution may be done through sponsored content on sites such as TripAdvisor, outdoorproject.com, theculturetrip.com, iLoveBulgaria, bulgariatravel.org, Opoznai.bg, etc. in partnership with the regional tourism industry;</li> <li>▪ Online advertising and marketing campaigns - efforts should be focused online, with a highly segmented approach through the channels most commonly used by the target audience. Preferences will be given to strategic product categories and markets. This communication will take various forms - sponsored ads and banners, sponsored content, attracting influencers on social networks with a focus on travel and tourism, etc., and will be a constant and comprehensive incentive for other actions.</li> <li>▪ Regular announcements in national and electronic media will be broadcast when planning events of interest in the region. We will look for an opportunity to reach an agreement with a reference public relations agency, especially at European level, to gain access to and ensure the participation of public opinion leaders and influencers, both offline and online.</li> <li>▪ If the budget allows it, put information booths in larger cities and more popular destinations.</li> </ul>
	Events	<p>Organization of national and international events, festivals and outdoor concerts that are able to attract many visitors with different interests. You may find events outside the traditional ones in the region - e.g. kayaking, sport fishing, food festival and more.</p>
	Promotions and partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Development of inter-regional routes and promotions: eg. package tickets for visits to more than one site, drawing up a booklet of sites in the region, receiving a special reward (a walk along the Danube River), etc.</li> <li>▪ Digital coupons that include at least one adventure in the region can be sent to visitors who are the main target group.</li> <li>▪ Developing partnerships with tour operators, accommodation spots, dining establishments, bloggers, vloggers and influencers on social networks is essential for the attractions to benefit from synergies and promote visits and access to high-potential market niches.</li> </ul>



	Social media	<p>Social media is another cost-effective way to get messages from the region to targeted markets and visitors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create Instagram and Facebook campaigns by showing the quality of the destinations;</li> <li>▪ Photos of the region and destinations may be published on Pinterest and Flickr in order to show the diversity that the area has;</li> <li>▪ Creating a GoPro Vimeo user-generated adventure channel and presence on Youtube;</li> <li>▪ Publishing advertising messages on Facebook, Instagram and Youtube;</li> </ul>
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## 6. INVESTMENTS

**Goal:** Promotion, strengthening and infrastructure development of the destinations

Of relevance to:	Number of tourists	Average stay	Access to tourist destinations	Conditions for outdoor recreation	Tourist infrastructure
	<b>V</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>V</b>
Description	<p>This is an area that requires more research, analysis and ideas to steer investments in the right direction. However, surveys and discussions identified five major needs for the region in terms of the actual development of tourist destinations.</p>				
	Tourist supply	<p>The high concentration of accommodation and dining facilities in Ruse were identified during the meetings. This is a deterrent to attracting visitors to tourist attractions, which are far from the city center. Key recommendations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Building a camp and budget-oriented accommodations for young people and lone travelers;</li> <li>▪ Development of tourist sites through improvement of the adjacent infrastructure - separation of parking areas, recreation areas, provision of water, etc.;</li> <li>▪ Restoration and maintenance of historic buildings in populated areas;</li> <li>▪ Cleaning and maintenance of eco paths;</li> <li>▪ Improvement of the information infrastructure - providing free internet on the tourist sites, information panels and terminals, virtual reality, etc.</li> </ul>			



## 1.6 SHORT-TERM / MID-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS.

This section provides a clear timeframe for the execution of the individual recommendations.

Priorități / acțiuni / recomandări ale programului	Pe termen scurt				Pe termen mediu			
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
<b>Prioritatea nr. 1 a programului: MANAGEMENT</b>	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
1.1. Organizarea de ateliere, discuții și deliberări cu părțile interesate	V	V						
1.2. Crearea unui forum permanent	V	V						
1.3. Proiectarea unui centru de management al destinației		V						
1.4. Studii		V			V			V
Evaluarea obiectivelor turistice, infrastructurii auxiliare, facilităților de cazare disponibile, oportunităților de pachete turistice combinate și multe altele. (recomandare orizontală)	V	V					V	V
Definirea piețelor și segmentelor strategice		V			V			V
Studiul tendințelor actuale în dezvoltarea turismului în regiune (recomandare orizontală)	V		V			V		V
Sondaje referitoare la satisfacție		V	V	V	V	V	V	V



Priorități / acțiuni / recomandări ale programului	Pe termen scurt				Pe termen mediu			
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
<b>Prioritatea nr. 2 a programului: BRANDUL</b>								
<b>2.1. Studiu și evenimente</b>	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
Observarea diferitelor destinații și studii privind motivația diferitelor segmente de piață		V	V	V	V	V	V	V
Evaluarea obiectivelor turistice, infrastructurii auxiliare, facilităților de cazare disponibile, oportunităților de pachete turistice combinate și altele.	V	V						
<b>2.2. Definirea și realizarea brandurilor de destinații turistice</b>	V	V						
Design, logo, slogan și altele.	V	V						
Consultarea cu părțile interesate și cu utilizatorii.		V						
<b>2.3. Elaborarea unui ghid vizual și a unui ghid de utilizare a brandului dezvoltat</b>		V						
<b>Prioritatea nr. 3 a programului: DEZVOLTAREA UNUI SET DE INSTRUMENTE DE MARKETING PENTRU PARTENERII DIN INDUSTRIE</b>	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
<b>3.1. Evenimente</b>	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
Crearea unui stand experimental comun			V	V				
Crearea oportunității de vizitare a târgurilor turistice / comerciale și misiunilor comerciale				V	V			
<b>3.2. Studiu</b>	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
Crearea unei metodologii pentru furnizarea de informații despre destinațiile din regiune	V	V						
Efectuarea de analize cantitative anuale online a indicatorilor de turism	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
Crearea unei hărți informaționale	V	V						





Priorități / acțiuni / recomandări ale programului	Pe termen scurt				Pe termen mediu			
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
3.3. Formare	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
Dezvoltarea de seturi de instruire pentru întreprinderile mici din turism	V	V					V	V
Crearea unei campanii de marketing personal		V	V				V	V
3.4. Planul de adaptare la schimbările climatice		V	V					
<b>Prioritatea nr. 4 a programului: CREARE DE RESURSE ONLINE</b>	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
4.1. Website turistic	V	V						
4.2. Active digitale		V	V	V	V	V	V	V
Dezvoltare de aplicații mobile			V	V				V
Bază de date multimedia	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
4.3. Publicitate	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
<b>Prioritatea nr. 5 a programului: ÎNCURAJAREA PROMOVĂRII DESTINAȚIILOR TURISTICE</b>	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
5.1. Campanii creative	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
Crearea de conținut bazat pe experiența și sentimentele, oferite de vizita în regiune	V	V	V				V	V
Campanii de publicitate și marketing online	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
Instalarea pavilioanelor de informare			V	V				
5.2. Evenimente	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
5.3. Promoții și parteneriate	V	V						
5.4. Social media	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
<b>Prioritatea nr. 6 a programului: INVESTIȚII</b>	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
6.1. Oferta turistică	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
Crearea de camping-uri și cazare orientate bugetar			V				V	
Dezvoltarea de obiective turistice prin îmbunătățirea infrastructurii adiacente - separarea zonelor de		V	V		V	V		V



Priorități / acțiuni / recomandări ale programului	Pe termen scurt				Pe termen mediu			
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
parcare, zonele de agrement, asigurarea apei, etc.								
Restaurarea și întreținerea clădirilor istorice din zonele populate	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
Curățirea și întreținerea rutele ecologice	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
Îmbunătățirea infrastructurii informaționale		V	V				V	V



## 1.7 ANALYSIS OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE INTERESTED PARTIES ARE READY TO TAKE ON PART OF THE PROPOSED ACTIONS IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STRATEGY

The development of tourist destinations is directly linked to the state of the environment, cultural identity, social interaction, as well as the safety and well-being of local communities. The competitiveness of the tourism sector is directly linked to its sustainability, as the quality of tourist destinations is influenced by the natural and cultural environment and the attitude of the local communities.

The main conclusion of the meetings and discussions on the topic is that the attitude of the local population to tourism development is mostly positive. Expectations for the development of the tourism business by the local population are mostly optimistic in light of the improvement of the economic conditions in the populated areas. Most respondents agree that tourism development would have a beneficial effect on the growth of the economy, which shows hope that the local population will improve its social status as a result of the development of tourism.

Involvement and real collaboration with local communities in order to develop a sustainable tourist destination is crucial. The most important reason for this is that they would be most appreciative of the cost of tourism development in the region. In light of the possible negative effects of visitor impact and overexploitation of resources, according to local communities, tourism development has more positive than negative impacts - the majority shares that there are more positive impacts, which proves once again that the community is favorable towards tourism development in the region of Ruse-Giurgiu. It is evident that attracting investments for the execution of sustainable and balanced tourism development projects at regional and local level will lead to the renewal and development of local technical infrastructure. The understanding is that new resources and social well-being for the local communities will be created. In light of this information, it can be argued that the willingness of local communities to engage and cooperate in developing a sustainable tourist destination is very good.

Obviously, the importance of tourism for the local economy and the desire of



local communities for tourism development is great, but on the other hand, the current capacity for their full participation in the process must also be taken into account. The real risks to future co-operation and possible points of conflict and tension between local people and outsiders and entrepreneurs, between businesses and local authorities involved in the various stages of the creation and supply of tourism products and services must also be considered. Currently, there is a clear lack of understanding of the need for wider regional cooperation and, ultimately, a lack of unanimity and agreed-upon actions. When analyzing the opportunities for the involvement of local communities, it is emphasized that "internal" (own) problems are not identified, only in some cases is the inaction and lack of initiative among local entrepreneurs and local population mentioned, as well as the low linguistic culture of the people employed in tourism (mentioned mainly by representatives of local authorities). Similarly, there is a lack of "self-criticism" on the part of local authorities (their problems are indicated by the business). This, in turn, is an indication of a typical weakness - focusing on external problems and limitations and underestimating one's own weaknesses. In this regard, specific actions will be needed in order to change these attitudes. Creating a tourist culture in the local area should be an integral part of the common policy for the development of tourist destinations in the region. This will support the diversification of the tourist product and stimulate the development of the local economies.

There is a high level of initiative from the local communities regarding the tourist product itself. They have ideas and practical readiness to build on the value of tourism resources by adding various events related to local holidays, fairs, festivals, customs and rituals related to the lifestyle of the local people.

In conclusion, the analysis shows that local communities in the region have a positive attitude towards the possibility of developing specific tourist destinations. Local communities are highly motivated to work together and enrich the tourist services in the areas. There is a clear desire to participate in this process, which provides an opportunity for a direct dialogue with them. In this context, all future actions in the field of regional tourism should include representatives of local communities.

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## **Capitolul II. ELEMENTS OF STRATEGY FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT GIURGIU COUNTY**

## 2.1 TRENDS IN INTERNATIONAL TOURISM

Sustainable development involves, at the local level, simultaneously achieving three objectives: increasing local socio-economic well-being, equitable distribution of local wealth and increased integrity of local ecosystems. Tourism is one of the many external forces that influence the direction and options for local development.

Urban and rural tourism depend on the availability and quality of the natural and cultural heritage of such destinations and the quality of the services offered. However, the uncontrolled development of tourism can lead to the degradation of these resources, ultimately eroding the potential for sustaining tourism activity.

Therefore, we must approach tourism as a center of interest in the pursuit of sustainability and as a priority area in the development of policies at local, regional and national level.

The cross-border region from the north and south of the Danube has two cities - Giurgiu and Ruse - which have the potential for evolution and influence throughout the adjacent area of the region.

The panoramic map of the Romanian-Bulgarian cross-border region (Figure 1) shows us the central position occupied by the Giurgiu-Ruse area in the tourist framework, with the possibility of being developed in the following years (see blue line).

Figure 1. The Danube area that includes the Giurgiu-Ruse region

Source: "Joint Strategy for Sustainable Territorial Development of the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border Area"

All over the world, urbanization is an ongoing process, with more and more people moving to cities. According to UN forecasts, by 2050 about 70% of the world's population will live in cities. This change will bring a new set of challenges for city authorities on providing sufficient water, sufficient energy, transportation services, waste management and infrastructure management in a sustainable way.

Urban tourism has become one of the fastest growing tourism sectors. Tourists are attracted to an increasing number of vitality, cultural richness and diversity offered by cities. Regardless of the reason for the visit - for spending leisure time, business, visits to relatives and friends - tourists, however, contribute indirectly to the economic development of the destination, to increasing the number of jobs, reducing poverty. Understanding the consequences of the increased demand for urban tourism, the pressures on the natural, social and economic environment and the associated problems is essential for the management of local tourism and for ensuring its sustainable development.

Rural regions, on the other hand, are still largely dependent on traditional economic activities (exploitation of natural resources, agriculture, livestock farming, etc.), which remain the main source of income and employment opportunities. Being vulnerable to climate instability, rural areas are often dependent on government financial aid. These areas, however, have a rich, diverse cultural heritage and highly attractive natural resources. Above all, cultural values are an important resource for rural tourism. And generating responsible tourism activities can lead to the sustainable socio-economic development of rural communities and contribute, at the same time, to the conservation and perpetuation of cultural heritage.

Over the last six decades, tourism has experienced amazing expansion and diversification, becoming, globally, one of the fastest growing sectors.

Despite the occasional shocks, over time, the tourism industry has recorded an almost uninterrupted growth. Thus, in 1950, worldwide, there were only 25 million international tourist arrivals. This number increased to 166 million in 1970 and to over 436 million tourists in 1990 (UNWTO, 2009). And the number of international tourist arrivals has continued to grow steadily over the last three decades, exceeding one billion in 2012, reaching in 2014 at 1138 million international arrivals, up 4.7% from the previous year (UNWTO, 2015)

And, according to UNWTO, long-term trends, up to 2030, regarding the number of international tourist arrivals are increasing by 3.3%, on average, annually. This means that, by 2030, the number of international tourist arrivals will approach 2 billion.

According to data published by UNWTO, Europe has recorded, over many years, more than half of the total tourist arrivals worldwide (attracting, for example, in 2013, 534 million visitors, that is 52% of the total).

As can be seen (see Table 1), in Romania there was the same tendency to increase the number of tourists arriving from other countries, although, with the installation of the last global financial crisis, there was a decrease in the number of foreign visitors, and the increase what followed was much slower than in the pre-crisis period (2006-2008). Also, from the figure below, it is noted that most tourists arrived from Europe (UNWTO, 2015).

And from the table below, it can be noted that most foreign visitors to Romania come from neighboring countries: Hungary, Moldova, Bulgaria and Ukraine - to be considered for the perspective of the current tourism strategy.

Table 1. Arrivals of foreign visitors to Romania by continent and country of origin



Thousands People

Provenance 2004

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	
Europe	7526	7815	6306	5522	5690	7289	8410	7203	7098	7180	7473
E.U.	3847	2868	2803	4811	5566	4799	4456	4391	4673	4719	4996
Austria	202	90	129	151	218	210	180	177	193	218	200
Belgium	55	24	27	27	43	44	37	42	50	47	48
Bulgaria	1136	1209	375	389	399	818	1115	877	786	797	944
Cyprus	7	9	9	13	11	8	8	10	9	7	9
Denmark	15	11	15	17	18	17	13	11	14	14	12
Estonia	7	2	1	2	4	6	4	4	4	4	5
France	93	110	129	184	183	150	131	153	150	136	147
Finland	7	4	4	7	10	10	9	8	11	7	7
Germany	470	296	354	343	473	522	443	395	381	439	448
Greece	72	46	61	64	104	118	90	71	83	77	76
Ireland	17	5	6	11	14	15	11	10	13	13	11
Italy	231	271	278	398	433	375	331	352	340	332	355
Luxembourg	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
Latvia	2	3	2	3	4	4	4	4	4	6	6
Lithuania	12	5	4	4	7	10	10	9	9	11	10
Malta	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	3	2	3
Netherlands	78	39	53	50	79	80	67	66	78	76	71
Poland	133	62	75	191	277	223	238	250	301	300	308
Portugal	62	4	6	9	16	16	20	47	47	41	53
UK	55	77	90	118	128	104	92	109	113	104	140





Czech Rep.	61	50	52	10	135	101	80	80	96	90
84										
Slovakia	89	48	41	120	148	114	98	84	100	100
97										
Slovenia	11	9	12	29	37	35	23	17	19	23
21										
Spain	29	43	70	71	67	63	77	74	64	76
Sweden	14	16	18	25	24	19	24	26	255	22
25										
Hungary	2603	1522	1367	1743	1950	1836	1735	1546	1547	
1443	1495									
Croatia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12
22										
The Russian Federation			53	49	54	54	63	73	92	120
159	176	73								
Belarus	25	34	43	47	37	43	57	57	96	143
58										
Yugoslavia	220	148	167	171	184	170	244	251	-	322
315										
Rep. Of Moldova		1213	1435	1490	1110	1429	1043	1216	1330	
1120	995	1277								
Turkey	195	201	219	284	303	258	265	271	267	254
255										
Ukraine	310	328	433	720	730	724	672	648	740	794
716										
Africa	12	12	14	16	18	17	21	22	24	25
28										
Egypt	5	4	4	5	6	4	6	6	7	7
7										
America	139	154	172	189	192	169	171	182	207	209
294										
USA	111	120	130	139	137	119	117	123	144	142
221										
Asia	135	142	151	212	224	171	195	211	216	241
285										
Israel	55	59	62	105	96	76	81	83	80	95
136										
Australia, Oceania and other territories	7					8	9	14	16	14
13	15	16	17	19						

Over the past few years, tourism has proven to be a surprisingly strong and resilient economic activity and a factor that contributes fundamentally to the economic recovery by generating billions of dollars in exports and creating millions of jobs. This has been true for destinations around the world, but especially for Europe, which is struggling to consolidate its way out of one of the worst economic

periods in its history.

Tourism seems to make an important contribution to the economic recovery of most European regions. It is worth noting this aspect for the importance of the present project.

From the macro-economic point of view, the expenses incurred by international visitors are considered exports to the country of destination and imports into the country of residence of the visitors. For many countries, domestic tourism is thus a vital source of foreign exchange income, employment opportunities and opportunities for development. This is how things should be viewed at the county level.

Of course, tourism also generates export revenues through international passenger transport services, provided to non-residents. International tourism (including tourist services and passenger transport) accounts for 30% of world services exports and 6% of total exports of goods and services. As a global export category, tourism ranks fourth, after fuels, chemicals and food.

In 2017, the tourism industry registered a growth of 4.6%, compared to the global economy - where the growth was 3%. One in five new jobs was created by the tourism industry (WTTC, 2018).

Tourism remains one of the largest and most dynamic industries in the world, with the fastest development at the beginning of the third millennium (Naisbitt, 1990, p.52), making it one of ten jobs worldwide (313 million. people) and generating 10.4% of world GDP.

In some regions of the world, tourism is a real boom. But, as is well known, every boom is a two-sided coin that comes with its rewards, but also with bespoke challenges.

To prevent difficult challenges and create benefits in the tourism development of the region we are analyzing, we propose the following approaches.



## 2.2 ADMINISTRATIVE-ECONOMIC AND GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT OF GIURGIU COUNTY

Giurgiu County, with a total area of 3,526 km<sup>2</sup>, is part of the South-Muntenia Development Region of Romania, along with Argeş, Calarasi, Dambovita, Ialomița, Prahova and Teleorman counties.



Source: "<https://www.ocpigiurgiu.ro/judetul-giurgiu/>"

Giurgiu county is neighboring with Călărași county in the east, Teleorman county in the west, Ilfov county and Argeş county in the northwest and Dâmbovița county in the north. The county's surface represents 1.5% of the country's surface. In Giurgiu area, there are crossing points of the road and railway border between Giurgiu and Ruse.

The county is located in the Romanian Plain, where the rivers Argeş, Neajlov and Sabar meet. From north to south, the county extends 94 km long, and from

west to east, measures 79 km. The Danube is contiguous with the county for a distance of 72 km.

The South Muntenia region, as a whole, comprises three major forms of relief, distributed as follows: 9.5% mountain, 19.8% hill, plain and 70.7% meadow. The surface of Giurgiu County is characterized by flat relief shapes. The relief consists of five main subunits of the Romanian Plain: Burnas, Vlășia, Găvanu-Burdea, the Titu-Potlogi Subsidy Plain and the Danube Plain. The maximum altitudes reach the north-western extremity, with values of 140 m - 142 m, on the territory of the Vânătorii Mici commune. The minimum altitude is recorded in the southeastern extremity: 14.6 m, on the Danube, south of the village of Greaca.

Also, on the territory of the county we find, to a significant extent, forests and arable land. In the northern part of the county, there are oil deposits and oil fields that are exploited, but also sands and gravel, which are extracted from the Danube riverbed and from the other rivers nearby.

From a geomorphological point of view, within the Giurgiu county, two types of relief forms are identified, namely: fluvio - lacustrine plain covered with loessoid deposits, tabular, unfragmented, specific to most of the county surface; and alluvial, holocene, subsidence plains, with major riverbed appearance, representing the meadows developed along the rivers and in particular along the Danube. The first terrace, located only 3-4 m above the Danube Plain, is followed by a second altitude, which rises by 13-14 m above the meadow, culminating with the highest, the Burnas Plain, 60-65 m, which dominates river meadow. The Danube meadow, influenced by the direct action of the river, with widths that can reach in some places up to 10 km, is embanked and channeled on large areas, being transformed into agricultural land. Subsequent intense flooding and clogging of the meadow led to the development of a varied micro-relief and to raising the level of the Danube. The type of soil that predominates is the chernozem (located in the fertility zone I and located in the south of the county, while in the second fertility zone the center and the east of the county are found), respectively reddish brown and brown forest soil (in area a III of fertility in the north of the county).

As a hydrographic network, out of the total area of 3,526 km<sup>2</sup>, 2.72% of this area represents the water slides, with a total length of the hydrographic network of 837 km, the Danube river being present on the county territory for 75 km long, respectively the entire southern border. Giurgiu County has a thermal regime without significant territorial differences, but which determines drought periods that affect the evolution of the crop plants. The Danube is embanked throughout

its plains region in order to limit the overflows by increasing the flow. The river of the Danube river, by the almost complete embankment for the Romanian shore, can carry on the section related to the Giurgiu county annual maximum debts between 13,400 m<sup>3</sup> / s - 17,100 m<sup>3</sup> / s. The control of the maximum natural flows is achieved through the two accumulations of the Iron Gates. The Danube River, with an average stock entering the country of 170 billion m<sup>3</sup> / year, could be the richest source of water, but its international character imposes certain limitations on the use of its waters, so it is considered as a resource only half the volume multiannual average flowed on the Danube (85 billion m<sup>3</sup> / year). The Arges River runs 113 km in the territory of Giurgiu County and is regulated and regularized, in the case of its upper course, by creating retention basins with a hydropower function, which limits the floods. Upstream, the Arges river presents complex hydrotechnical arrangements, regularization downstream of the Mihăilești dam, as well as dams and reservoirs.

The main tributaries of the Argeș river from Giurgiu county are: Neajlovul with Câlniștea and Dâmbovcicul; Sabarul with Ciorogârla (which in fact means Dâmbovița, as a result of the Brezoaiele-Dâmbovița county derivation). Neajlovul, with a lower flow (6.4 m<sup>3</sup> / s in Călugăreni - annual average flow) and with a drainage slope, especially after the confluence with Câlniștea, measures 100 km on the county territory, its hydrological regime being influenced by the climatic conditions. of the Romanian Plain. Its most important tributary is Câlniștea, which has water especially during the rainy periods, during the dry summers presenting the character of a marshy valley. The tributaries of Câlniștei have the same hydrological regime (Glavaciocul together with Milcovățul, Porumbeni and Izmar), so that on their valleys numerous retention basins of fish importance have been built. The Sabar, called Răstoaca in its upper course, carries its waters, rich in the days with abundant rainfall, but poor in the dry periods, through a gentle and winding course, on a length of 85 km. It limits the Argeș-Sabar meadow over 50 km in length and has an average annual flow, at Bolintin Vale, of 2.13 m<sup>3</sup> / s. Its tributary, Ciorogârla, a former homestead, which became a hydrographic artery by joining it with Dâmbovița, is more like a range of small lakes or marshy areas, activated by rain or spills from Dâmbovița. The average density of the hydrographic network in the territory of Giurgiu county is 0.24 km / km<sup>2</sup>.

The lakes in Giurgiu County are natural (meadow and valley) and artificial. The largest meadow lake is Balta Comana, with an area of 1,180 hectares, and by its location in a region of large deciduous forests and with an important hunting background, this meadow lake presents a valuable tourism potential. The other ponds on the Argeș meadow, with reduced depths and depths, are invaded by



aquatic vegetation (with areas of 10-40 ha: in Herăști, Zăgaz and near Valea Dragului village), and during the floods there are activated ponds that do not exceed 10 ha. (at Moarta-near Tîntava, Moarta-near Colibași, Balti Dărăști and Drăgănescu). Valley lakes are common on Milcovăț and Ciorogârlei valleys, but they greatly reduce their size with drought, by limiting the supply of rivers, precipitation and deep springs (part of groundwater). Artificial lakes or ponds are made by blocking the valleys with temporary or low flow valleys, in order to regulate and maintain a volume of water needed for agriculture and fish farming.

There are 86 ponds on the valleys of the Bălăria, Câlniștea, Izmar, Zboiu, Damian Valley, Porumbenilor Valley, Parapanca, Ciuvica and nine other watercourses. These accumulations are administered by different economic agents or by the municipalities of the respective localities.

The fishing fund in Giurgiu county is an impressive and diverse one (for example: carp, caras, hail, pike) and covers 2,444 ha of water luster. In Giurgiu county area, there are 28 production units in aquaculture, with an area of 2,383 ha, three sport fishing associations and a professional fishermen's association for commercial fishing practiced in the Danube river waters.

The basement of the county was surveyed and it was highlighted that the following resources exist: oil and gas deposits (throughout the subsidence plains and in the Neajlov Plain).

The air quality in the urban environment is severely affected by the noises generated by the road traffic, by the thermal power plants, respectively by the industrial activities. The pollution due to the intense traffic on all categories of roads is not mitigated by a fair value of the surface of green spaces (70 ha in the three urban UATs of Giurgiu): in Giurgiu 54 ha, in Mihăilești 15 ha and only one hectare in Bolintin-Vale. At regional level, the average is 316 ha of green spaces per county, that is 4.5 times more than in Giurgiu county. Among the factors that favor the accumulation and maintenance of pollutants in the atmosphere are the narrow and poorly ventilated streets, the large agglomeration of buildings, the absence of green spaces.

From an administrative-territorial point of view, Giurgiu county comprises: Giurgiu municipality, Mihăilești and Bolintin Vale cities and 51 communes. Of the 54 administrative-territorial units (UATs) 167 villages belong.

Giurgiu is among the counties with the smallest number of people living as a stable population, 281,422 inhabitants. In Giurgiu, the communes have over two

thirds of the stable population, the rural area accounting for 70.8% of the total. The stable population of its three cities is divided as follows: Giurgiu - 61,400 inhabitants, Bolintin Vale - 12,900 inhabitants and Mihăilești - 7,900 inhabitants. Ethnic information was available for 263,800 people, of which Romanians were 248,400 (94.1%), 15,200 (5.8%) Roma and other ethnic groups below 1%.

At regional level, Giurgiu County is the least urbanized, with a percentage of 5.55% urban UATs. The city of Giurgiu has 4,761ha, the city of Mihăilești has an area of 6,812ha, and the city of Bolintin Vale has 3,900ha. The urban environment in Giurgiu county includes the city of Giurgiu - the county residence, which is a metropolitan pole with limited regional potential (county), being one of the 5 poles of this type at regional level and 18 at national level, while the cities of Bolintin-Vale and Mihăilești are urban centers of local importance, with 13 cities of this type in the South-Muntenia Region and 96 nationally. According to the OECD, Giurgiu County is a predominantly rural county, respectively with agricultural function (EDORA, 2012), with characteristics of rural-peri-urban region, with about 50% of the population employed in the agricultural sector. Its economy mainly consists of agriculture, industry and trade - as significant activities.

The Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration (MDRAP) defines the general characteristics that the different categories of urban poles meet, this hierarchy being useful in the corresponding relationship between the types of measures, including tourism, the categories of poles and the European objectives (objectives related to the Territorial Agenda 2020, The Europe 2020 Strategy, the Leipzig Charter, respectively objectives according to the legislative package 2014-2020).

Through PUG 2010, the city of Giurgiu presents an area of peri-urban influence for the neighboring communes: Gostinu, Oinacu, Frătești, Stănești, Slobozia, Malu, Vedea (from East to West). The communes that are located at the upper limit of this area are defined as part of an area with periodic and constant functionality, area of which the communes belong: Prundu, Băneasa, Daia, Izvoarele, Răsuceni, Toporu, Putineiu, Gogoșari, Găujani. Half of the county territory is considered, according to the mentioned urban planning documentation, as an area of exceptional influence, quality assured by the proximity to the capital.<sup>8</sup> The territory of the municipality is surrounded by industrial areas in the south (a significant area being abandoned), north and west.

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<sup>8</sup> "The Strategy for Socio-Economic Development of Giurgiu County 2014-2020" - Giurgiu County Council

Moreover, the city of Giurgiu is one of the most important Romanian ports on the Danube. The county residence is located on the routes Bucharest-Sofia-Athens and Bucharest-Istanbul. The city of Giurgiu is an intermodal hub for three traffic systems: road, rail and naval, being located both on the east-west and north-south European connection for road and rail transport, as well as on the North Sea-Black Sea, for shipping. . As a port on the Danube, it has 2 km of docks arranged on the Danube and 1.5 km on the Sf. Gheorghe canal, and the port activities and the establishment of the Free Zone make it necessary to reorganize this activity by the appearance of specialized ports: passengers, goods, tourist, for sports and recreational craft, similar to CFR stations in the municipality.<sup>9</sup>

The National Company of the Ports of the Danube River Ports (APDF) fulfills the function of port authority for 18 ports and places of operation from Baziaş to Cernavoda. The APDF uses both the shipping infrastructure that was granted to it and the assets in its own patrimony. In the activity area of the APDF Giurgiu, there are 7 Romanian river ports, which are part of the European transport network TEN-T, respectively: Moldova Nouă, Drobeta Turnu-Severin, Calafat, Giurgiu, Oltenița, Călărași and Cernavoda.

The road access to the port network is made from the street network of the municipality, having connections with DJ 504, DJ 507, DN 5, DN 5B, DN 5C, and rail links provided through re-supply lines to all 4 sectors, from Giurgiu station to the network. of zonal railways. Giurgiu port is located in km 494-491 area, being developed in three sites, according to the information published by the National Company of the Ports of the Danube River Ports S.A. Giurgiu.<sup>10</sup>

Giurgiu county has a system of public roads consisting of national roads (311,128 km), county roads (537,543 km), communal roads (308,772 km), respectively 34 bridges on county road routes (with a length of 2,210 m) and 20 bridges on communal roads (1,054.81 m). The road infrastructure on the county territory is composed of: DN 5 (E70, E85) Bucharest - Giurgiu-customs - Bulgaria, DN 6 Bucharest - Alexandria - Craiova - Timisoara, E 81 (A 1) Bucharest - Pitești, DN 5B Giurgiu - Ghimpați, DN 61 Găești - Ghimpați, DN 5C Giurgiu - Zimnicea, DN 41 (Giurgiu) - Ploșoru - Oltenița, DN 5 A DN 5 - Copăceni - Grădiștea - Mironcești - Hotarele - DN 41 (Greek).

The proximity to Bucharest ensures quick access to Otopeni and Baneasa airports.

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<sup>9</sup> IDEM 3

<sup>10</sup> [www.apdf.ro](http://www.apdf.ro)



In the county, only public transport services operate in the city of Giurgiu. All in all, the network of roads and bridges in Giurgiu county needs modernization, repairs, rehabilitation.

According to the obligations assumed by the Government of Romania, the central TEN-T road network in Romania will have to be completed at the level of motorway or express road by the end of 2030, this being constituted in the field of infrastructure and the relationship between the Romania-Ukraine border crossing points, respectively of Romania with Bulgaria: (PTF RO / UA) - Siret - Măreșești - Buzău - Ploiești - Bucharest - Giurgiu (PTF RO / BG).<sup>11</sup>

The city of Giurgiu is crossed by the pan-European railway line that starts from Ostend (Belgium), passes through Berlin, Prague, Budapest, Bucharest, Giurgiu, Ruse, Sofia, Istanbul or Thessaloniki and connects with Athens.

It has been found that the rail transport in Giurgiu county is registering an increasingly low traffic. Among the factors that influence the values of the railway transport of Giurgiuvean are to be mentioned: the temporary absence of direct rail transport routes Giurgiu-Bucharest, as well as the relatively short distance between the capital and the municipality, distance that drives the road transport by buses and minibuses. The railway system in Giurgiu county has a length of 47 km, of which only 24 km of rail is electrified, the rail transport realizing the connection between the county and Bucharest, the city of Ruse (Bulgaria) by bridge and Videle (Teleorman county). The railways are: Bucharest-Giurgiu, Giurgiu - Videle. The railway network in the city of Giurgiu comprises two specialized stations: the Giurgiu City Railway Station (the main passenger station on the Bucharest - Videle directions) and the Giurgiu Nord Railway Station (passenger and freight transport and control of the liners crossing the border with Bulgaria).

According to the World Bank Report<sup>8</sup>, the administrative-territorial units of Giurgiu county are accessible, due to traveling a distance until entering Bucharest within 40 minutes for 5 UATs located in the vicinity of Ilfov and up to one hour - one hour and 20 minutes for two thirds of the UATs from Giurgiuvene - which is beneficial for tourism. This accessibility advantage is associated with shuttle routes between Giurgiu and Bucharest-Ilfov, highlighting here the evolution of the cities of Mihăilești and Bolintin Vale located adjacent to the border with Ilfov.

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<sup>11</sup> "The Strategy for Socio-Economic Development of Giurgiu County 2014-2020" - Giurgiu County Council

In principle, the urban functional area of the city of Bucharest extends far beyond the limits of Ilfov county. In particular, the area in Giurgiu county located in the western part of Bucharest could benefit from improved infrastructure connections. This is one of the most densely populated regions of Romania, but also one of the most developed.

Essentially, the South-Muntenia Region gravitates around Bucharest, and the Bucharest-Pitesti, Bucharest-Ploiesti and Bucharest-Constanța highways have contributed to transforming this region into one of the most connected in Romania, attributing to the development of tourism in the county and the area. cross-border Giurgiu-Ruse.

From the point of view of the tourist movement in the region, progress is expected in the future compared to the modest results so far.

Thus, as types of tourist reception structures <sup>12</sup> In the city of Giurgiu, in 2014 there were a total of 11, and in 2018 they increased to 17, of which: from 4 hotels in 2014 reached 7 hotels in 2018; there was a hostel and only one was built in 2018; motels had 6 locations in 2014 and 2 more were canceled in 2018; tourist pensions did not exist in 2014, we find two, in 2018.

In terms of tourist accommodation capacities by types <sup>13</sup> of tourist reception structures, in 2014 there were, in total, 570 places and increased to 809, in 2018. The highest increase was registered in hotels, from 286 to 439 places and hostels, from 20 to 72 places, keeping the proportions, of course. The tourist pensions have appeared since 2016, maintaining with a constant number of accommodation places: 45, and the year 2017 registered the functioning of some agro-tourist pensions, with a number of 57 available places, which decreased to 25, however, last year.

**Overnight** stays in tourist accommodation structures <sup>14</sup> by types of accommodation registered a total number of 41,906 tourists in 2014, which increased insignificantly to 48,048 tourists in 2018. The most requested were the motels, with 20,692 tourists staying in 2014 and 19,678, in 2018; then, the hotels, with 17,010 in 2014 and 17,735 in 2018, an unsatisfactory situation from the tourist and economic point of view. In the hostels, where more young tourists were accommodated, there were 4,204 overnight stays in 2014 and 4,908, in 2018, also minor increases. The only year in which visitors were registered in tourist cottages

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<sup>12</sup> Giurgiu County Statistics Department

<sup>13</sup> IDEM 7

<sup>14</sup> IDEM 7



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DEVELOPMENT FUND  
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GUVERNUL ROMÂNIEI



was 2017. In tourist pensions, 4,710 tourists were accommodated in 2018, which shows the interest for this type of location - on the one hand, lower costs, per on the other hand, the desire to relax in a rustic atmosphere.

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## 2.3 CULTURAL HERITAGE - TURNING PLATE FOR TOURISM IN THE REGION

Giurgiu County and Ruse district are part of a less developed region of Europe, although they have a very valuable cultural heritage - an immense treasure trove of archaeological remains, historical monuments, art and architecture, an invaluable ethno-folkloric heritage, a fortress and novels, monuments of art and medieval religious and secular architecture, fortified buildings, museums and memorial houses, villages of cultural-historical interest, ethno-folkloric villages and artistic and craft creation, cultural manifestations, traditions of great diversity, uniqueness gastronomic etc. - but which is little emphasized.

Therefore, the cultural heritage with tourism potential of the analyzed area is extremely rich and varied, having components of which some, by their specificity, are unique worldwide, demonstrating the necessity and viability of its valorization through tourism, especially through cultural tourism.

In view of the cultural valences of the two areas (Giurgiu and Ruse) under investigation, it is appropriate to make a plea for knowing the positive effects among the population of the importance of the cultural heritage they have, especially by its economic valorization through the cultural tourism vector. Also, the tourism development strategy in the researched area deserves to emphasize the type of cultural tourism.

The cultural heritage of a region or area can become and must become an important tourist objective, both due to the particularities and intrinsic interest it presents, as well as due to the continuous growth of tourism for cultural purposes, related to the knowledge of one's own past or heritage. other cultures / civilizations. In many situations, the tourist trip has as its main motivation the recreation, but tourists can take advantage of the stay in a certain destination and to train themselves, to satisfy cultural curiosities by visiting historical vestiges, museums and archaeological sites, participating in different festivals. and cultural events, taking part in the traditional life of a community, experiencing a life

experience. This situation makes it *cultural heritage to become an important tourist resource, a turning point for increasing the tourist potential of an area.*<sup>15</sup>

*Tourist motivations* for this specific form of tourism there are multiple:

- personal or family education;
  - satisfying curiosity;
  - the search for the new;
  - living cultural experiences;
- search for stimuli for intellectual experiences;
- the desire to see a similar community or to have completely different experiences from daily life;
  - cultural interaction;
  - relaxation.

Their satisfaction is made by resorting to various forms of cultural tourism. Most of them have as a resource the regional cultural heritage, as well as programs that integrate components of the material patrimony. However, in order to become a major attraction, the cultural heritage must be properly arranged, both from the perspective of sustainable development (keeping it in good condition, enriching and transmitting the next generations), and that of the tourist. The valorization of the cultural heritage as a tourist resource, its proper arrangement implies cultural, scientific, moral responsibility and respect for ethics. The significance of the different components of the cultural heritage could be increased through a proper arrangement of it.

*The cultural heritage as a tourist resource would not bring benefits only to the tourist agent or the nearby population, through the receipts that would be made or the different logistical arrangements needed, arrangements that could be used by the locals. Also, the benefits of tourists would not only be limited to cultural and spiritual enrichment. But the well-managed patrimony and presented to the public can fulfill different important social functions: education, research, social-cultural enrichment of the community by finding and knowing its own history, preserving,*

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<sup>15</sup> As is the case for the Ruse - Giurgiu cross-border region.



reconditioning and developing the vestiges of the past. Ideally, these actions of a spiritual nature are combined with economic performance that is likely to lead, in many cases, to self-financing, to sustainable development. The potential of the analyzed area has all the conditions for achieving this goal.

In order to become a tourist resource with a significant impact on a diverse range of tourists, the heritage must be properly arranged. The development of the "leisure society" as well as other social and mental factors have led to the growth of cultural tourism in the world, to its transformation into a mass phenomenon. It is even considered that a significant increase, perhaps the largest, has been recorded by the public of historical monuments. Their attraction increases by arranging them, both in accordance with the demands of the public, but also with those of the specialists in the field, in order not to damage or even destroy the respective monument. If these basic principles are respected, the economic, cultural and social value of the respective objectives will increase, and in some cases the objective or destination in question may be saved. Given the precarious state of most historical monuments, the fact that in most cases they have not received the necessary attention for a long time, such an approach becomes an incentive for engaging in the protection and reconditioning of historical monuments, but also a signal of alarm for local authorities in Giurgiu County and the entire area concerned.

The restoration, preservation and presentation to the public must be done with maximum responsibility, "respecting the old substance and authentic documents". This must overcome a series of obstacles, such as: the existence / absence of the necessary specialists, the preservation of authenticity, problems related to the existing technologies and the available materials, without taking into account also the important financial resources that would be needed even for maintenance works current, urgent rescue or only smaller.

*The value of the national cultural heritage* it does not reside, for the most part, in the financial quantification of the respective goods, but in the financial and spiritual-cultural evaluation of some intangible elements that determine its usefulness for the contemporary society. We consider, in particular, a series of immaterial elements, such as: the uniqueness of the product, the cultural symbols that can be attached to it, its history and those who produced it, the prestige offered to the community, etc. In order to be evaluated, each heritage element must, on the one hand, be carefully restored and preserved so as not to deteriorate and lose its value, but on the other, studied from different and complementary perspectives. in order to be able to know better the valences and its historical, artistic, cultural and spiritual importance.



At Giurgiu municipality, several historical monuments with problems have been identified, but seven of them are actually abandoned. These are:

- The Commercial School or the former Design Institute (on Mircea cel Bătrân street, an old street full of monument buildings left in comparison); it is today on the List of Historical Monuments, the associated code being GR-II-m-B-14889;
- Vasile Dorobanțu house (on Constantin Dobrogeanu Gherea street);
- The building from number 7 (on Vasile Alecsandri street);
- House of Dr. A. Vianu (also on Vasile Alecsandri street);
- Vârbănescu House (on Mihail Sadoveanu street);
- House I. Răcășanu (today, inn) and
- former Meteor Restaurant.

In order for the cultural heritage to be preserved under optimal conditions, to be presented properly to the general public, to be studied, there must be adequate human resources such as training and numbers. They have to be prepared and permanently activate numerous specialists who deal with different aspects. These experts must work in and be supported by appropriate organizations and consistent legislation aimed at the interests of society and heritage.

The way in which a local community manages to use its anthropic and natural heritage - wise and in moderation, is essential for ensuring future development options. This is where responsible tourism comes in.

Economic activities, which capitalize on heritage and natural resources, have a direct impact on them. This impact can be beneficial, such as the development of the tourism component, or harmful, such as pollution, depletion of resources, the creation of unattractive landscapes or the reduction of biodiversity.

Giurgiu County has an important treasure trove of archaeological remains, historical monuments, art or architecture, as well as of an invaluable ethnofolchloric heritage, which attests to the evolution and permanence on these lands, the development of culture and art. All this cultural-historical background forms a significant part of the tourist offer and a component of the tourist image of the Giurgiu-Ruse area in the Danube region on the international market.





## 2.4 THE MAIN ANTHROPIC AND NATURAL RESOURCES IN TERRITORY OF GIURGIU COUNTY

According to the information from the MRDPA from SDTR 2014-2020 Foundation Studies, including the National Territorial Administrative Plan (approved by Law no. 190 / May 2009), the areas, but also their accessibility, identified with tourist, anthropic and natural resources, with potential, where the resources are considered as high concentration and very high in the territory are the following:

problems	Dominant resources		Infrastructure	
	anthropic	natural	turistic	
Destination technical				
-----				
Giurgiu Municipality	X			
Comana Commune	X	X	X	
Greaca Commune		X	X	X
Mihăilești City		X	X	
Ghimpați Commune		X	X	
Prundu Commune		X	X	X
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Presentation adaptation, according to source information

It is found that the most valuable areas to visit in the county are the city-residence of Giurgiu county and Comana commune, in which elements of cultural heritage, but also resources of bio-diversity are concentrated. Another aspect found is that in almost all destinations there are malfunctions in the tourist infrastructure, and transport is precarious in several areas.



## 2.4.1 ANTHROPIC RESOURCES WITH TOURIST POTENTIAL IN GIURGIU COUNTY

### Elements of architectural heritage, historical-religious

In Giurgiu County there are 540 historical monuments, registered with the National Institute of Heritage, which belongs to the Ministry of Culture and are found in both urban and rural areas.

The county has historical monuments, art and medieval architecture, religious and secular, built in the most diverse architectural styles and spread throughout the territory, constituting a valuable cultural potential.

In some religious buildings, raised in stages, a combination of different styles can be observed, depending on the time in which they were continued.

**Museums and memorial houses** are significant cultural components for tourism, they present a great variety according to the content and the importance of the exhibition fund.

The numerous museums have a rich factual material regarding the history and civilization of the Romanian people and their permanent residence on these lands.

**The monuments of plastic art**, numerous as achievements of the genre, evoke the memory of our ancestors, of the fighters for the freedom of the homeland and the people or of the great social and political events of the time.

**The most representative cultural and art institutions** are located in Giurgiu. Their importance for tourism is given both by their architectural and artistic value, as well as by their cultural concerns or by the specificity of the scientific and instructive - educational activities.

### Elements of ethnography and folklore

Giurgiu County is one of the areas where the testimonies of civilization and culture continue to be rich and vigorous today. In this part of the Danube region, the popular creation in various fields of folk art, crafts and gastronomy, of literary, musical and choreographic folklore has a special development, and, with the strong background of traditions, it has received a multitude of new artistic forms and expressions. features of originality.

**The fundamental features of Romanian popular culture are authenticity,**



**originality**, unity in variety of phenomena and continuity. These traits are closely interwoven with the ingenuity and inventiveness reflected in creations of material civilization, in customs and customs, in oral literary creation, in folk song and dance.

A rich, varied ethnographic and folklore tourism potential, with specificity notes, is also held today, especially certain ethnographic areas and rural communities in the county, which we identified through an on-site analysis, on some communes with potential for tourism development, possessing resources that can make visitors attractive.

The ethnographic vestiges of the material and spiritual culture, which by their trait of permanence have reached to the present day in many and various forms, are very helpful in terms of the multimillennial age of the roots of the Romanian popular culture, some of its phenomena leading us to the Thracian-Dacian-Gothic era or even in later times.

### Personalities of the Romanian culture

In Giurgiu county, personalities of the Romanian literature were born, such as: **Dimitrie Bolintineanu**, **Petre Ghelmez**.

Other cultural people performed activities in the city of Giurgiu, such as: **Tudor Vianu**, **Ion Barbu (Dan Barbilian)** or they settled in the little "bargain", as did the brilliant Romanian national poet, **Mihai Eminescu**.

### CITY OF GIURGIU - bouquet of history and culture

"Whether Trimamius was told during the Romans, or that the Genoese, in their passing, baptized him in Santo Giorgio, no matter how barbarous the hordes passed, how many deserts they suffered, whenever they resided, in part or the whole, in the same place, or a few hundred meters more to the east or to the west, his life has exceeded a greater number of years than anyone can imagine and it has never been interrupted for so long could believe. A people can undergo a preface, a mixture with other peoples, the change of grain, the change of the port, it can even change its name, but it never dies" - said, in 1935, **Scarlat Stancescu**, the then mayor of the Jury.

Archaeological research has brought to light evidence of stable human settlements in the area, dating back to the Neolithic period. The research findings confirmed the continuity of the inhabitants' presence in the immediate vicinity of the river

and the connection between their duties and the living conditions in the Danube plain.

The first documentary attestations of the **Giurgiu Fortress** can be found only in the second half of the 14th century and are made by foreign authors, namely: "Itinerary from Bruges" (a list of places that western pilgrims had as landmarks and stalls in their way to the Holy Land) and "Codex Latinus Parisinus" (where the citadel is referred to as Zorio, meaning a "desert place"). These documents mention the beginning of the existence of the city and of the city of Giurgiu before 1396, the year when the walls of the fortress of the Island were erected, under the order of the ruler Mircea cel Bătrân (1386 - 1418). Moreover, the years of the reign of Mircea cel Bătrân seem to have been one of the most intense periods for Giurgiu.

It seems that the derivation of the name comes from a state founder whose name was **Jurj, Giurge or Giurgiu**. The name Giurgiu is frequently encountered in Transylvanian onomastics, which makes plausible the hypothesis of the establishment of the settlement by a shepherd who came through transhumanity, such as the legendary Shepherd Bucur, the founder of the city of Bucharest.

The birth certificate of the city is considered the first of the two alliance treaties concluded by Mircea cel Bătrân, the lord of the Romanian Country, with the king of Poland Vladislav Jagello, documents drafted at the Royal Chancellery and signed in the Cetatea Giurgiului, on September 23, 1403, respectively on May 17 1411. In the year 1427, Dan II regains the fortress, but it remains only two decades under the rule of the earthly rulers, because, in 1438, the Ottoman Empire took over again. Until 1574, when, during the reign of Alexander II Mihnea, the territory of Raia Giurgiu is decided, the fortress survives several sieges, wars and even the fire ordered by Vlad Țepeș, in 1462, after the Turkish garrison was destroyed and the fort was reoccupied. Mihai Viteazu also links his name to the Giurgiu Fortress, which he recovers from under the rule of the Ottoman Empire in 1595. The fortress is set afire again. The Turks return as rulers to Giurgiu, in 1597, and restore and strengthen the fortress of the Danube, giving it up only in 1659, to the ruler Mihnea III Radu.

After the conquest by the Turks, the territory was included in the Ottoman administrative system, becoming part of the village of Rumelia, the blood of the Nicopolis and the Kazurgi Giurgiu (Yerköükü). Outpost of the Empire, the city on the left bank of the Danube becomes a military, administrative, judicial, customs and commercial headquarters, almost permanent intermediary of the relations between the High Gate and the Romanian Country. Belonging to the Empire, the

presence of permanent troops confined within the locality determined a way of life influenced by the Eastern world. Like all the territories conquered and incorporated within the borders of the Ottoman Empire and Giurgiu, the Christian population was allowed to practice their own religion, while they had rights and obligations similar to those of Muslims. Over time, the city has been known under various names, all of which have a common root that sends one way or another to Giurgiu. In the documents of the western chancellors the city is mentioned as **Zorio, Georgevio, Georgevo, Giorgewo, Jeorgie, Giurdcsov**, and in the Ottoman ones it appears with the name of **Yer-Köki, Yerkökü, lörkövi, lerköy**.

A century later, in 1770, the Russians attacked and burned the city, so that, after 1771, the Turks regained the new city Giurgiu (Tabia). At that time, the Clock Tower was built, with the role of observation point in the Turkish garrison. The Austrians also besieged Giurgiu, but without success, in 1790, so that, during the Russian-Turkish war, from 1806 to 1812, the city would again suffer. Great destruction caused the city and the second Russian-Turkish war (1828-1829), but the peace from Adrianopole marked the definitive passage of the city to the Romanian Country. The former "kaza" of the Giurgiului is retreated to the Romanian Country, the fortifications are demolished, and the garrison and the overwhelming majority of the Muslim population retreat south of the Danube. The administrative residence of Vlaşca county moves from Găeşti to Giurgiu the following year, the locality then benefiting from the systematic plan of the Austrian engineer Moritz von Otto (like Braila and the new cities Alexandria and Turnu Severin).

Giurgiu became the residence of Vlaşca County in 1830, and in January 1831, he becomes the first magistrate (mayor) of the city. From the same year, the first public garden - "Aleiu" - is today the oldest park in the city.<sup>16</sup>

In 1834, from the Naval Workshops was launched the first commercial vessel under the Romanian flag - "Mariţa", the public lighting with lanterns was inaugurated and the fire service of the city was established. The first hospital in Giurgiu was opened in 1835 (the Giurgiu County Hospital is still operating today) and the systemization plan of the city of Giurgiu was commissioned and executed by the architect Moritz von Otto, also known as the "parent" of the radial model of the streets. city. The city was conceived before 1900 in the "estrellas" (star) system, following the Paris model, as "the city-plate".

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<sup>16</sup> "Strategy for local development 2014-2020", Giurgiu City Hall.



The modern systemization of the city of Giurgiu, tailored to the plans of the Russian polycovician Nilson and of the Austrian engineer Moritz von Otto, considered the enhancement of the tower. "The Russian commanders, as well as the Austrian engineers who had seen how a city is organized in Western Europe, also started modernizing Giurgiu. The system in the stars seen in Paris was fashionable. So the tower is taken as a landmark and streets are opened from which all the arteries of the city started. We have first the circular market around the tower, which over time has had different names - Carol 1 Square, Carol II Square, Unirii Square, which had the small plate as a promenade. There was a circle for cars and the commercial promenade, where all the commercial spaces were. The modernization is put into practice around 1877, so on the eve of the First World War we have photos of the city organized by "star model".

**The radial model** was strictly respected until the communist regime decided, at the beginning of the 1960s, to break the past, including in the area of urbanism.

Decades of peace and economic prosperity were followed by a new turbulent period. In 1848, the Ottoman army crossed the Danube, to Giurgiu, to suppress the Revolution, and the heads of the Romanian revolutionaries, led by Nicolae Bălcescu, were imprisoned in Giurgiu. In the years of the Crimean War, Giurgiu was occupied first by the Russian army (1853), then by the Turkish army (1854), but the war brought a good thing, in the sense that, for military reasons, Giurgiu was put into service first telegraph line from the Romanian Principalities.

The population of the city participated actively and enthusiastically in the creation of the Union from 1859, and, in the following years, the city experienced a new period of flowering, in which it is worth noting the launch of the first Romanian warship - "Romania" (1862), the appearance of the first local newspaper - "Faith - the truth sheet" (1867), the inauguration of the first railway line in the Principalities, Bucharest Filaret - Giurgiu, the opening of the courses at the first gymnasium in the city (1869), as well as the establishment of the first branch of the "Romanian Athenaeum" Society".

The intense bombardments of the Turkish artillery during the War of Independence (1877 - 1878) caused great damage, but the city was reborn again, with an even stronger desire for progress. In the decades of peace and prosperity that followed until 1916 (when Giurgiu is almost completely destroyed by the bombings of the armies of the Central Powers), the economic, social and cultural life of the city experienced a special development, being opened and given economic objectives. as: Shipyard (1897), Sugar Factory (1914), Bizetz Bridge (1905), relocation of the

port on the Smârda arm (1906), introduction of telephony (1890), as well as the establishment of the "Lyra" Philharmonic Society (1905).

However, the settlement was not exempt from the effects of natural cataclysms, such as earthquakes or floods (the most serious in 1942).

The First World War represented the most difficult moment in the millennial history of these places, the martyr-city Giurgiu being decorated with the highest distinction of the French Army - "Cross of War with Palmettes" (the distinction was handed over to the local authorities, on October 18, 1922, in the presence of the Prime Minister of Romania, Ion C. Brătianu, by an official Mission led by Marshal Foch). The life of the local community then experienced a new period of effervescence, temporarily interrupted by the economic crisis of 1929-1933 and permanently terminated by the Second World War and the installation of the communist regime. With the Bolshevik dictatorship brought with the Red Army tanks, Giurgiu entered a shadow cone from which, late and hardly managed to emerge, as follows:

In 1950, Vlaşca County was abolished, therefore the city lost the quality of county residence, but also the prestige of a fortress-port on the Danube. The construction of the Friendship Bridge (1954), the re-allocation of the rank of municipality (1968) or the re-establishment of Giurgiu county with the residence in the municipality of the same name (1981) are among the few "consolations" of the local community during the communist period, in the context in which the urban architecture was destroyed in the center of the city, the quality of the cultural act was affected and an industrial mammoth was created - the Chemical Combined (1975) (structure that has poisoned the air, soil and water in the area for years).<sup>17</sup>

The revolution of December 1989 represented a turning point in Giurgiu's life. Even if the first years of democracy were not economically favorable - the vast majority of industrial units partially or completely closing their gates, with the entry into the third millennium, the dawn of a new phase, of sustained development, was delayed, of modernization and reinvention, including in the tourist plan, of the Danube fortress. The development of the city of Giurgiu started again by using the pre-accession financial instruments to the European Union, and after the accession of Romania, in 2007, through the post-accession instruments. For the tourism promotion of the city of Giurgiu, at local level, financed through the Regional Operational Program 2007 - 2013, the National Center for Tourism Information and Promotion (CNIPT) was set up.

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<sup>17</sup> "Strategy for local development 2014-2020", Giurgiu City Hall.



## The anthropic potential of the city of Giurgiu

The city of Giurgiu is an important Danube port on the route of the transport corridor no. VII Danube - Rinn Canal - Mein-Dunau, being connected by the waterway of 9 countries, as well as the Black Sea and the North Sea. The pan-European railway line, which runs from Ostend (Belgium), passes through Berlin, Prague, Budapest, Bucharest, Giurgiu, Ruse, Sofia, Istanbul and, via Thessaloniki, connects with Athens.

Between Giurgiu and Ruse is the only bridge over the Danube between Romania and Bulgaria, a bridge that was built between 1952-1954 and was symbolically called the "Friendship Bridge". This is the longest bridge across the Danube. It is built on two levels, railway and road (with two lanes and sidewalk for pedestrians). It is the only movable bridge, with the possibility of rising if, below it, a higher craft is required to pass. It is made of steel, and the project was realized by V. Andreev. The construction has a length of 2.8 km and lasted 2 years, the inauguration taking place on June 20, 1954.

The Bizetz Bridge is the first curved bridge on a horizontal plane, built in Europe. It was inaugurated in 1905, to make the connection between the city of Giurgiu and the Port of Ramadan, with access over the St. George canal. The bridge was designed and built by engineers Anghel Saligny and Ion Ionescu-Bizetz. The bridge was built for double, road and rail and at the time of its construction represented a European technical premiere. The bridge has become a historical monument and is currently only open to pedestrian traffic, as a result of the construction of a new bridge, a work that was completed in 2005-2007.



## Podul Bizetz



### A. The cultural-historical heritage

In Giurgiu, there are:<sup>18</sup>

81 objectives - as historical monuments of different categories, in the following classification:

- 6 NATIONAL objectives, of which:

2 are archaeological sites:

Giurgiu Fortress (14th-18th century) - west of the Port Road, which is also an architectural monument and

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<sup>18</sup> According Wikipedia.





The site "Malu Roșu" (with settlements from the Upper Paleolithic and Lower Paleolithic)

2 are classified as architectural monuments:

Turkish fortress (XVIII century) - fragments behind the lots on the Danube street

Ceasornic Tower (1771) - from Unirii Square, construction based on a minaret of an old window

2 are public monuments:

Statue "Diana" (19th century) - from Piața Garii

The statue "Apollo Belvedere" (19th century) - from Str. Park, corner with Str. Călugăreni

- 75 LOCAL level objectives, of which:

69 classified as architectural monuments

6 are public monuments.

Here are some representative historical and religious objectives, with potential and tourist perspectives, of the municipality of Giurgiu:<sup>19</sup>

-The clock tower,

- The Medieval Fortress of Mircea cel Bătrân (Giurgiului Fortress),

-History Museum,

- The Heroes' Mausoleum,

- The monuments dedicated to the heroes of the War of Independence and to the French soldiers killed in Giurgiu during the First World War,

- The Cathedral "The Assumption of the Virgin Mary",

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<sup>19</sup> Details about objectives in ANNEX 1.



- The Church of the "Ascension of the Lord"

- The church "Buna Vestire" (where the original interior painting by Gheorghe Tătăărăscu is kept).

One of the most representative tourist objectives of the city of Giurgiu is the Mausoleum of Heroes. It was built between 1926-1934, at the initiative of the branch of the "Cult of Heroes" Society in the city of Giurgiu, following a plan of the architect Baloşin State.

Currently, the cultural activity of the city of Giurgiu is carried out in the following cultural institutions:

- The county museum "Teohari Antonescu" (with sections of: archeology, ethnography, plastic art, numismatics and memorialistic history, rare book and bibliophile goods);

- County Center for the Conservation and Capitalization of Cultural Traditions;

- Border Police Museum (with specific military history);

- The "Nicolae Bălănescu" Athenaeum;

- Valah Giurgiu Theater;

- Mihai Eminescu school museum (with a specific local history);

- "Victor Karpis" School of Arts and Music (within which a People's University and a Methodological Center for Adult Education operate);

-House of culture "Ion Vinea";

- Border Police Culture House;

-Philharmonic;

- Students' palate;

- The County Library „I.A. Bassarabescu ”.

B. Museum artifacts



The first museum concerns in Giurgiu are related to the multivalent personality of Nicolae Droc - Barcian, the director of the first Giurgiuvean gymnasium. It established, in 1876, a botanical garden, and in 1883, a school museum of natural sciences. Successively enriched with archaeological pieces and documents, the accumulated heritage was lost, however, as a result of the destruction of the city, in 1916.

The archaeological exhibition of the County Museum "Teohari Antonescu" reflects almost all the epochs, from Prehistory to the Middle Ages. The prehistoric archaeological remains, which attest to the presence of man from the lower Palaeolithic, are testimonies about the Carpatho-Danubian area and the large geographical area of anthropogenesis.

#### Muzeul județean „Teohari Antonescu”



The segment dedicated to the Prehistory contains significant pieces for the Paleolithic (Aurignacian period), discovered on the Giurgiu-Malu Rosu site.

The next historical period, the Neolithic, especially its final part, is presented through the Dudești, Boian and Gumelnita cultures, illustrated with the artifacts discovered following the archaeological excavations from Tangâru, Petru Rareș, Pietrele, Sultana-Malu Rosu and Bucșani.

The exhibition section dedicated to the Bronze Age includes pieces discovered at the sites in Zimnicea, Mogoșești and Popești-Mihăilești, specific to Zimnicea and Tei cultures.



For the Iron Age, the most important settlement presented in the exhibition is that of Popești-Mihăilești (possibly Argedava). The period is further illustrated by the evidence brought to light following the excavations from Zimnicea, Greece, Giurgiu-Malu Roșu and Adunații Copăceni.

The pieces discovered in the necropolis of Oinacu and Izvoru (Cacaleți) sec. III-IV AD, presents the beginning of the Romanian ethnogenesis, influenced by the Slavic migrations.

The vestiges of antiquity are numerous and of great value for the history of human culture and civilization.

### C.Patrimoniu religios

#### C. Religious heritage

Regarding the religion and the cults, it should be mentioned that the city of Giurgiu has a great diversity, coexisting the Orthodox Christian worship, the Roman-Catholic worship, the Baptist worship, the Jehovah's Witness worship, the Pentecostal worship, as well as the evangelical worship.

The majority places of worship are those belonging to the Romanian Orthodox Church, respectively: the Episcopal Cathedral - "The Assumption of the Virgin Mary", the Church "Good Annunciation", the Church "Ascension of the Lord", the Church "Sfântul Gheorghe", the Church "Sfantul Haralambie", Biser Treime Smârda ", Church" Sfântul Gheorghe Nou ", Church" Sfânta Maria "and Church" Saints Martyrs Brâncoveni ", as well as two monasteries, respectively:" Sfântul Ierarh Nicolae "and" Sfântul Mare Mucenic Gheorghe "Monastery.



## Episcopal Cathedral - "The Assumption of the Virgin Mary"



The majority places of worship are those belonging to the Romanian Orthodox Church, respectively: the Episcopal Cathedral - "The Assumption of the Virgin Mary", the Church "Good Annunciation", the Church "Ascension of the Lord", the Church "Sfântul Gheorghe", the Church "Sfantul Haralambie", Biser Treime Smârda ", Church" Sfântul Gheorghe Nou ", Church" Sfânta Maria "and Church" Saints Martyrs Brâncoveni ", as well as two monasteries, respectively:" Sfântul Ierarh Nicolae "and" Sfântul Mare Mucenic Gheorghe "Monastery.

In the municipality, the administrative headquarters of the Bishopric of Giurgiuului and Protoieriei Giurgiu are located. Other places of worship are also to be mentioned, such as: the Church "Visit of the Holy Virgin Mary" belonging to the Roman Catholic Church, the Pentecostal Church "Philadelphia" belonging to the Pentecostal Church, the "Holy Trinity" Baptist Church belonging to the Christian Baptist Church, the Adventist Adventist Church. on the seventh day, the Romanian Evangelical Church and the Hall of the Kingdom of Jehovah's Witnesses.

### D. Ethnography, traditional and modern art

The city of Giurgiu hosts annually, in September, the Festival of Popular Music Competition "On the Danube Border". This event is attended by a large number of competitors, vocal soloists and instrumentalists, from almost all the folklore areas of the country, the appreciation of the competitors being made by a jury made up of personalities in the field.

Annually, in April, the City Hall of Giurgiu organizes the event "Days of the City of Giurgiu" which includes multiple cultural and artistic events. Among the events, there are music, dance and theater shows at the "Nicolae Bălănescu" Athenaeum.

The cultural-artistic activity takes place in theaters and cultural halls, as follows: "Tudor Vianu" Theater, "Nicolae Bălănescu" Athenaeum, "Ion Vinea" Local Cultural Center, County Center for the Conservation and Promotion of Traditional Culture, School of Music and Fine Arts "Victor Karpis" and Children's Palace.

An example is the Local Cultural Center "Ion Vinea" - a public institution, under the authority of the Local Council and the City Hall of Giurgiu. Within the local Cultural Center "Ion Vinea" cultural - artistic and educational activities are carried out, through two professional ensembles, namely the "Valahia Brass" orchestra and the "Doina Danarii" folk songs and dances ensemble. Also, there are extracurricular activities, such as: singing, easy music, popular music, through the chorus "Amedeo", through the vocal group "Cantabile", choreography (modern dances, folk dances), painting "Constantin Artachino", literature and theater "Ex toto strings".

#### E.Eco-tourism, recreation and leisure

Outside the administrative territory of the city, there are five forest areas, with an area of 1067 ha, of which only one has an arrangement that can be used as a tourism endowment (children's camp). Three of these forests (Bălanu - 72 ha, Guțu - 169 ha, Turbatu - 289 ha) can perform recreational and recreational functions, being less than 25 km from the municipality (according to the forest rules). The riverside forests of the Danube, with the ecosystem in balance, fall under the subgroup "forests for the protection of genofond and forest ecofund" and can be used partially in the ecotourism activity.





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The only recreational arrangement of the city is the Municipal Beach (1.73 ha), located in the harbor, on the Danube bank, in the existing area and the Beach in the Bălănoaia forest, 5 km away from Giurgiu.

The lakes, ponds and river in the immediate vicinity of the town favored the practice of sport fishing. However, there is a shortage of sports areas throughout the city, imposing the construction of sports facilities, halls and sports grounds to promote the sports culture, but also services for adventure sports, which can attract tourists.

The tourist accommodation infrastructure in the town is provided by three hotels, a motel and a campsite.

## RURAL COMMUNITIES IN GIURGIU COUNTY

**- a mosaic of history, religion, traditions and relaxation -**

The Romanian material and immaterial cultural heritage of the rural area is of great diversity, containing both elements common to most European cultures, as well as specific Balkan elements and specific elements expressed in an intercultural synthesis in unique artistic forms. Highly attractive vein, which is found throughout the cross-border region of the Danube, with interesting aspects identified in the Bulgarian localities.

Significant rural destinations from Giurgiu county, which offer heritage elements of tourist interest through their special cultural value, some of which are in great need of rehabilitation and conservation, are:





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COMANA  
DRĂGĂNESCU

GOȘTINARI  
CLEJANI

HEREȘTI

GĂISENI

CRUCEA DE PIATRĂ

SLOBOZIA

IZVOARELE

LETCA NOUĂ

OINACU

GOSTINU

We present in detail some objectives of religious, historical and artistic heritage:

### **1 / Comana Monastery - located in Comana commune**

It is a place built by the ruler Vlad Țepeș, in 1461, on an island surrounded by marshes at that time, which was reached by crossing a wooden bridge. At present, the surroundings have been redesigned in a spectacular way, from the inner courtyard it goes out towards the water to a veranda of rest and recreation.

Originally built of wood, it did not stand in time, it was restored by the ruler Radu banerban, in 1588. It was plastered and painted on the inside, surrounded by the cells on the outside. The newly built monastery has the appearance of a fortress, in the form of a regular quadrilateral, with exterior walls and five towers that go outside the defense walls. Inside the church, there was erected a church dedicated to St. Nicholas.

It is believed that here is the tomb of Vlad Țepeș, a remarkable ruler of the Romanian Country, who was killed on the road between Bucharest and Giurgiu. Also here was the backrest Draghici Cantacuzino, who died in Constantinople and his son, Constantin Drăghici - so a long-term connection was created between the Comana area and the Cantacuzino family.



During the reign of Matei Basarab, the monastery had become one of the largest religious centers in Romania, where he was apprenticed and the Metropolitan of Transylvania. And the wealth of the estates owned gave him this grandeur.

During the anti-Ottoman battles of 1657-1662 and of the Russian-Austro-Turkish war of 1768-1774, the monastery was in the center of the attention of the society since then. However, the years that followed and the poor management put their mark on him, leading to ruin, degradation and dissipation of the assets and estates he owned.

In 1728, the prince Nicolae Mavrocordat consecrates the place of the Patriarchate of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem.

According to the writings of the historian Nicolae Iorga from 1919, we find that the Mausoleum of the Heroes fallen in the First World War in the defense battles on the Neajlov River was built in the monastery, in their memory, in 1932.

Let us think of this place of worship as described in the inscriptions of the time: "a large and lively monastery, enclosed with large stone walls, set like an island, surrounded by lakes and ponds."

## 2 / St. Jerome Nicolae Church - Dragănescu commune



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The church of Drăgănescu Parish, with the dedication of Saint Nicholas, is among the hundreds of churches in the Danube lands that held among the people the flame of the Orthodox faith lit over the centuries.

The parish is located on the county road between the town of Mihăilești and the commune of Malu Spart.



The village of Drăgănescu was founded by the painter Fotache Știrbei Drăgănescu, founder of the “Sf. Ilie Rahova ”from Bucharest, who owned land in this area.

The church on the right bank of Argeș was founded in 1870 by Petre Dănescu and Ioan Dumitrescu, on the site of the present church.



The invaluable value of the place is given by the painting on the interior walls realized by Father Arsenie Boca, beloved soul pastor and painter, "Saint Transylvania", the exceptional being with whom the Romanian land was given and who created here between 1967-1989. Father Savian Bunescu - the parish priest with the longest and most prolific pastorate in Drăgănescu, between 1937 and 1999 - was the one who called on Father Arsenie to paint the church, assuring him the necessary conditions for the exceptional work that was going to materialize - painting of great theological, spiritual and catechetical importance, which also includes prophetic messages. His arrival also generated an exceptional pilgrimage of believers from areas such as Braşov, Făgăraş, Sibiu, Bucharest, etc., helped to carry out new endowment and beautification works, by adding the bell tower, catapetasma, porch, etc.

At that time, Father Arsenie lived alternately in Drăgănescu, but also in Bucharest or Sinaia, often commuting daily. 15 years of events, including the visit of the Metropolitan of Transylvania, Nicolae Mladin, in 1980, which he received to advise him on current issues.<sup>20</sup>

A moment of crossroads in the history of the parish was in 1987, when part of the village Drăgănescu was demolished in order to build the Mihăileşti dam for the creation of the artificial lake on the Argeş river. Many villagers lost their homes being relocated to Mihăileşti, and the church was on the demolition list. Two factors intervened in the rescue of the building. On the one hand, the director of the Giurgiu County Museum of History, Vasile Barbu, impressively being of the mural paintings, decided to introduce the church on the list of category B historical monuments. to stand up.<sup>21</sup>

After the writer Nichifor Crainic visited the Father in 1971, impressed by the paintings, he later wrote to the great spiritual: "Your Holiness, you understood to make a painting transfigured in clear and light shades, paradise to suggest the enchanting lemma from beyond. The church from Drăgănescu radiates the light of heaven ”.

The painting is crossed by divine genius and a fantastic personal touch, in which Arsenie Boca's own face is found.

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. pr. Ioan Peană, „The secret of the mystery”, Accent Print Publishing, Suceava, 2014, p. 163

<sup>21</sup> Pr. Paroh Răzvan-Lucian Petcu, „The Church of St. Jerome Nicolae - Drăgănescu”, Episcopiei Giurgiului Publishing, 2018, p.29





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### 3 / Udriște Năsturel Mansion - Hereesti village

The mansion is on the bank of Argeș, 15 km from the Danube and 36 km from Bucharest. It was built in sec. XVII by the boyar Udriște Năsturel together with his brother, Cazan, on a high plateau of the Argeș valley, having a garden that abounds in vegetation and from the windows which open a fascinating panorama of the surroundings.



It is the only monument of Romanian civil architecture of that period built entirely of polished stone, both inside and outside. It is raised on three levels: cellar, ground floor and first floor. In the courtyard of the mansion, there are exposed some amphorae and old anchors, handmade and left from the vessels that carried the construction stone on the Danube and on Arges.

The originality of this construction, called "stone house" or "museum" or "palace", is given by the structure of the rooms, the organization of the interior stairs, the design of the small rooms, the ingenuity of the cellar placement, the techniques and the quality of the materials used in the construction.



#### 4 / The Monastery of St. Ioan Rusul - Slobozia commune

It is a monastery of monks, built on the site of a military unit, one kilometer away from Slobozia.



The Church of the Monastery houses part of the relics of Saint John the Russian and the fragments of the relics of several saints, such as: St. Ioan Gura de Aur, St. Ierarch Nicolae, St. Elefterie, St. Polycarp of Izmir, but also the parts of Holy Cross.

#### 5 / The stone cross - Călugăreni commune, the village of Crucea de Piedra

The monument from Călugăreni reminds of the famous battle of August 13-23, 1595, when the mountain army led by the ruler of the Romanian Country, Mihai Viteazul, overcame the Ottoman army, twice more numerous, led by the great vizier Sinan Pasa, who intended to turn the territory into pascal.



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In 1682, the ruler banerban Cantacuzino erected an imposing stone cross, right on the spot where the battle was won.

With the passage of time, near the monument, a village was born, now called the Stone Cross, being part of the commune of Calugareni.

In 1862, for protection, the monument was framed in a chapel, with side windows and a leaded steel roof.

The stone cross that can be seen today on the top of the hill overlooking the valley was erected in 1913, later at the 1977 earthquake, it crashed to the ground. It can be seen near the road, at the entrance to the bridge.

In 1993, on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of Mihai Viteazul's ascension to the throne of the Romanian Country, the old inter-war cross was replaced by a new one, of large dimensions.

Besides these cultural heritage objectives, it is worth mentioning other anthropic resources with valuable tourist potential:

- ethnographic and artistic heritage:

*The “Șezătoarea” County Festival* - Romanian customs and traditions - in the villages Oinacu, Gostinu, Vedea

*The Festival of Peony* - organized every year in May-June, in the commune of Comana





*Taraf Clejani, with the oldest authentic jeweler - Caliu from Clejani and the mature Master - Cristian ștefan - in the village of Clejani*

*The folk craftsman, wood carving - Ion Sima; folk crafts, traditional seams - Marian Țîru and Gherghina Cimpoiaru - in the villages Gostinu and Oinacu*

*"Caprița" pie - a gastronomic product specific to Giurgiu villages*

**- religious heritage:**

*The monastery of the nuns, with the miracle-making icon of the Virgin Mary the church, painted inside by the great Romanian painter Gheorghe Tattarescu - in the village of Letca Nouă*

*"Barbu Bellu" - in Goștinari commune*

*"Strâmbu-Găiseni" - in Găiseni commune*

*The "Cover of the Virgin Mary" - in the village of Izvoarele*

**- objectives of agreement and recreation:**

*Greek domain - in the area of the Greek village*

*Comana Adventure Park - in Comana village*

*The beach at the "sea without waves" - in the village of Gostinu*

*The Inn of Cosmin - in the village of Bălănoaia*

*The kingdom of horses - in the village of Varlaam*



## 2.4.2 MAIN NATURAL RESOURCES OF GIURGIU COUNTY

The **protected natural areas** represent a wealth of the county, with the potential for inclusion in tourist circuits insofar as they will be managed intelligently and consistently through administrative and tourism development programs.

In the Southern Muntenia Region, there are 72 protected areas of national interest.

**The natural reserves** in Giurgiu county are:

Padina Tatar (in Comana Natural Park) designated for the protection of the species *Paeonia peregrina* ssp. *Romanica-Bujor românesc*, with an area of 231.40 ha;

Oloaga-Gardeners (in Comana Natural Park) designated for the protection of the species *Ruscus aculeatus*-Ghimpe, with an area of 249.40 ha;

Balta Comana (in Comana Natural Park) characteristic habitat for waterfowl - wetland, with an area of 1,206.40 ha;

Manafu Forest - located about 36 km southwest of Bucharest, in Izvoarele commune, the area of 278 ha is declared forest reserve.

*Comana Natural Park*, a protected area of national interest, with an area of 24,963 ha, was established by Government Decision no. 2151/2004. The purpose of its declaration is, as a whole, the protection of the floristic and faunal diversity described in the area, of the habitats characteristic of vulnerable, endangered and / or rare species, plants and animals, of special areas of scientific, historical or landscape interest.<sup>22</sup>

In the Comana Natural Park, there are currently recognized three natural areas with protection status: I. Oloaga Gardens (249.40 ha), delimited to protect the species *Ruscus aculeatus* and the forest habitat; II. Padina Tatar (231.40 ha), designated for the protection of the *Paeonia romana* species; III. Balta Comana (1,206.40 ha), characteristic habitat for aquatic birds-wetland.

<sup>22</sup> "The Strategy for Socio-Economic Development of Giurgiu County 2014-2020" - Giurgiu County Council

In addition to the three natural areas mentioned, there are seven further protected areas, considered to be of landscape, floristic and faunal importance. These are: Fountain - 163.60 ha (forest), Măgura-Zboiu - 106.50 ha (forest and stream valley), Puieni - 15.30 ha, Creeds - 117.20 ha (forest), - Valley of Thieves - 25 , 60 ha (forest), Gurban Valley - 110.40 ha (forest and stream valley) and ComanGrădiștea Salt - 99.60 ha. These forests where oak, lime, elm, predominate shelter a varied fauna, attractive for hunters: deer, wild boars, rabbits, foxes. Starting with 2006, the structure of its administration was established, based in Comana.

*Manafu Forest* is a forest reserve made of natural mixtures of brumari oak, garni. Here the pheasants and deer were colonized, thus becoming an important hunting center. The Manafu forest, located on the territory of the town of Ghimpați, with an area of 28 ha, is a reservation for the protection of the Romanian peony - *Paeonia peregrina romanica* variant. This area was taken into custody by the Forestry Directorate Giurgiu in 2006.

*The Teșila forest* in Vlașin village, Schitu commune, with an area of 52.20 ha, was also set up as a reserve for the protection of the Romanian peony (*Paeonia peregrina romanica* variant). This area was taken into custody by the Directorate of Forestry Giurgiu in 2004.

*The Cama-Dinu-Pășărică* nature reserve covers an area of 2,400 ha and received the Notice of the Romanian Academy to be declared a nature reserve in February 2006. Currently, there is a draft decision on the website of the Ministry of Environment for the declaration of new natural areas protected in which the Cama-Dinu-Pășărică area is included. The area includes typical elements of floodplain meadow, where there are plantations of American walnut and barrel, curtains of wild vines and hops, secular oak forests with elm and black poplar. At the same time, plant species have been identified, including aquatic plant species, moss species and fungi. Also, the reservation is home to the largest mixed colony of cobblers and large cormorants in the Giurgiu area. Of the bird populations identified in the area, many species account for significant percentages of the bird populations nesting in Romania, such as: rooster, yellow, gray, night, small egret,

big egret, large cormorant.

In the category "Sites of special avifaunistic protection" (according to the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change), whose surface is mostly in the territory of Giurgiu county, are:

ROSPA0022 Comana - Total area = 24,956 ha

It covers the territory of the communities from: Baneasa (20%), Colibași (<1%), Comana (83%), Călugareni (33%), Gostinari (17%), Greek (2%), Borders (14%), Izvoarele (<1%), Mihai Bravu (66%), Prundu (18%), Singureni (18%)

In the neighboring counties - Calarasi County: in Căscioarele (<1%)

ROSPA0090 Ostrovu LungGostinu - Total area = 2,489 ha

It covers the territory of the communities from: Giurgiu (<1%), Găujani (36%), Malu (56%), Slobozia (42%), Vedea (46%)

In the neighboring counties - Teleorman County: in Bragadiru (13%), Bujoru (16%), Cervenia (15%), Contești (9%), Beautiful (3%), Năsturelu (6%), Pietroșani (54%), Spicy (<1%)

ROSPA0146 Câlniștei Valley - Total area = 2,538 ha

It covers the territory of the communities from: Ghimpați (5%), Izvoarele (<1%), Răsuceni (7%), Schitu (11%)

In the neighboring counties - Teleorman County: in Bujoreni (7%), Drăgănești-Vlașca (1%)

ROSPA0038 Danube-Oltenita - Total area = 6,022 ha

It covers the territory of the communities from: Prundu (2%)

In the neighboring counties - Calarasi County: in Chirnogi (27%), Oltenita (1%)

Giurgiu county includes one of the 11 wetlands of international interest RAMSAR (Convention on wetlands of international importance, especially as a habitat for aquatic birds) in Romania: Comana Natural Park, designated RAMSAR site on October 25, 2011 and which is evaluated with a surface of 24,963 ha, according to the National Environmental Protection Agency. Because the boundaries of the natural park and other Natura 2000 sites are partially different, the area is defined by the phrase "Comana protected natural area".



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Nature reserves and monuments, according to Law no. 5 of March 6, 2000, regarding the approval of the National Territory Planning Plan - Section III - Protected areas, are the following areas: Oloaga-Garden Gardens (Comana Commune) - 248 ha, Padina Tătarului Forest (Comana Commune) - 230 ha , Manafu Forest (Izvoarele Commune) - 28 ha, Teșila Reservation (Schitu Commune) - 52.50 ha.

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## 2.5 OPINIONS OF INTERESTED PARTIES TO ASPECTS FROM TOURIST DEVELOPMENT OF GIURGIU COUNTY

From the analyzes and the attitude of the actors of the HORECA industry and of the local government institutions, from the discussions with representatives of the private sector, the following aspects emerge:

- The priorities defined by the PUG developers for the city of Giurgiu were: development, modernization and expansion of the infrastructure, taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the geostrategic position of the municipality; supporting the emergence of new economic activities, closely related to local resources and tradition, the development and modernization of existing activities, the improvement of the local economic environment and the improvement of living conditions.
- The municipality enjoys, according to PUG 2010, an important number of development opportunities due to the role of intermodal node for the IX Pan-European corridors (road and rail transport) and VII Pan-European (river transport through the fourth sector of the corridor - the Danube route) from Kelheim to the Black Sea). However, there is an inefficient use of the railway transport system and a restriction of the specific economic activities, thus limiting the weight of the area used for railway activities in favor of facilitating road connectivity.
- The city of Giurgiu needs to reconfigure its system of collaborations in all economic fields with the cities located along the Danube, thus offering new jobs to the locals by increasing the port, naval and industrial activities. In this sense, the local economic evolution can be ascending in the fields defined by the commercial and tourism activities.<sup>23</sup>
- Regarding the accessibility of the objects of tourist interest, the main

<sup>23</sup> "Giurgiu Municipal Development Strategy for 2014-2020", Giurgiu City Hall



tourist objectives of the county consist of the bush areas and oysters along the Danube (near the city of Giurgiu), the Comana Natural Park, the Comana Monastery and the Museum Complex from Călugăreni - which are easy accessible through DN5 and river tour operators in the Giurgiu port area.

- Comana - Călugăreni area has some objectives of great historical and natural importance and benefits from a good tourist structure. The area is located at a short distance from Bucharest, about 35-40 km, having the character of a location for weekend tourism. Comana is 38 km from Bucharest and 43 km from Giurgiu, a favorable distance that attracts tourists from both cities. The commune is at a distance of 15 km from the Bucharest - Giurgiu road (DN 5), on DJ 411.
- In Călugăreni, in the middle of the distance between Giurgiu and Bucharest on DN 5, more precisely 33 km from the county residence, you can visit the Museum Complex dedicated to the battle from 1595, led by Mihai Viteazul against Sinan Pasa, consisting of: the museum dedicated to the battle, the statue of Michael the Brave and the stone cross, which marks the place of battle.
- To get to Călugăreni or Comana there are numerous direct or indirect car transport routes, which start from the Bucharest barrier and have as final destination the city of Vlad Țepeș (the direct ones) or the city of Giurgiu (the indirect ones).
- Between Bucharest - Giurgiu, an intense traffic developed mainly due to the transit provided by the Giurgiu - Ruse bridge and the quality of the customs point and port on the Danube that the city has.
- In addition to transit tourism, there are also natural tourist attractions, represented mainly by river oysters, some of them wild and populated by rare species of birds. Access to these is done by boats that carry out short pleasure trips on the Danube, leaving from the port area.
- Giurgiu port is also a point of call for large cruise ships and





transshipment of passengers, for short trips in the territory.

- The road network that connects the municipality with the rest of the country is dense, radially starting towards the surrounding cities, DN 5 being the main artery of the county, while the railway network is poorly developed.
- The tourist objectives can be visited by a limited number of tourists due to the lack of adequate tourist circuits, which will enhance them. For a better connection with the city-pair on the other side of the Danube, it is recommended to set up a regular minibus race linking the city of Giurgiu with its Bulgarian correspondent, Ruse - a large and attractive city, as well as a ferry line.

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## 2.6 ANALIZA SWOT A POTENȚIALULUI TURISTIC AL JUDEȚULUI GIURGIU

The SWOT analysis is the result of processing and filtering the conclusions resulting from the analysis of the tourism potential of Giurgiu County. It functions as an x-ray of all the analyzed areas, evaluating the main factors of influence, in order to highlight the strengths and weaknesses in relation to the opportunities and threats existing. Giurgiu County was analyzed from the perspective of the tourism potential, the main factors of influence being the cultural and natural resources, enhanced by infrastructure and economy, the thinking being done and facing the entire Giurgiu-Ruse cross-border region.

PUNTE FORTE	PUNCTE SLABE
<p>1. The geographical position, the climatic variety and the relief determine the uniqueness of the biodiversity in both regions;</p> <p>2. The existence of the bridge over the Danube river that connects the province of Ruse and Giurgiu county. The bridge crossing taxes are for the budgets of the two regions. Being an important transit area between the two countries, the tourist circulation is above average in similar areas.</p> <p>3. The tourism potential is remarkable due to the geological and biological diversity. The existence of a very rich and varied natural heritage and a large concentration of anthropic resources in the cross-border area, starting from archaeological sites of over 2000 years, architectural monuments, religious buildings, museums and public collections, shows and concerts, but also cultural festivals and events;</p> <p>4. Complementarity between</p>	<p>1. Depopulation of the area represents a serious impediment in providing the human resource for the provision of quality tourist services;</p> <p>2. The still difficult access to some tourist attractions due to the poor quality infrastructure, not maintained;</p> <p>3. Poor organization in the field of transport;</p> <p>4. The lack of accommodation spaces at the level of requirements during the summer season, near the areas of tourist interest;</p> <p>5. Secondary services in tourism, such as recreation or guidance at a modest level;</p> <p>6. Lack of availability of information in the languages of the region and languages of international circulation, except for the services provided through the tourism centers;</p> <p>7. Modest collaboration between local and regional authorities, economic and tourism actors and local communities.</p> <p>8. Slave involvement of the owners</p>



<p>the natural and cultural tourism objectives in the cross-border region;</p> <p>5. Existence of tourist information centers in localities with tourist potential;</p> <p>6. Both regions benefit from cultural heritage protection legislation harmonized with the international and European framework. The laws regulate the main instrument of management of the protected areas (Comana Natural Park in Giurgiu county), namely the management plan, which is an official document that establishes the framework for an efficient, productive and adequate management of the protected areas;</p> <p>7. The experiential acquisitions acquired in the cross-border cooperation between Bulgaria and Romania constitute a powerful base that can be built in the future;</p> <p>8. IT technologies offer solutions to solve the problem of preserving the heritage with potential, but also a rational management of the tourist resources;</p> <p>9. For the community, the collateral economic activities created on the basis of tourism development generate jobs, maintain the tourist resources, attract other investors encouraged by the success of the former, stimulate an entire value chain on the vertical of the industry;</p> <p>10. In the cross-border area there is a potential latent entrepreneurial spirit, which can be enhanced by the development of tourism;</p>	<p>/ administrators / custodians, especially the key ones, in the projects / initiatives of the business environment, from the beginning stages;</p> <p>9. Insufficient technical and financial resources to protect the natural heritage and to stimulate tourism;</p> <p>10. Insufficiency of specialized personnel in the field of project management or management for the service of companies (rehabilitation, reorientation, refinancing);</p> <p>11. Poor knowledge of foreign languages by the population in the analyzed area (including the staff of the service providers);</p> <p>12. The modest level of income of the population in the area.</p> <p>13. Fluffy legislation for start-ups.</p> <p>14. The predominant share of day trips;</p> <p>15. Non-significant and inefficient tourism offer;</p> <p>16. Appropriation towards Bucharest favors the exodus of young people and "brains";</p> <p>17. Low population rate with higher education and a high level of illiteracy. These are due in part to the structure of the population's residence (a high level of rural residence);</p> <p>18 Insufficient specialized human resources in the field of RDI;</p> <p>19. The lack of stable social protection legislation and for the stimulation of the graduates of higher studies with national and international performances, by granting benefits, contributes to the migration of the labor force abroad.</p>
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<p>11. Facilities for the tourism sector by reducing VAT.</p>	<p>20. Low level of employment of the population in the sectors of activity with high added value;</p> <p>21. Low indicators regarding the use of computers or the Internet in households;</p> <p>22. Lack of specialized human resources in the public and private areas, with a high level of qualification;</p> <p>23. Insufficient valuation of the existing natural resources, of the Danube tourist potential, due to the reduced accessibility to the natural and cultural tourist objectives;</p> <p>24. The urban cultural landscape is not exploited in comparison with other regions;</p> <p>25. Water transport potential offered by the Danube insufficiently exploited;</p> <p>26. Poorly developed railway network;</p> <p>27. Tourism and access infrastructure to areas with potential for tourism deficiencies;</p> <p>28. The insufficiently developed border area limits economic, social and cultural exchanges.</p> <p>29. Compared with the European landmarks, the whole South Muntenia region (including Giurgiu County) is a less developed one, with a GDP per capita less than 50% of the European level;</p> <p>30. Giurgiu is a predominantly agricultural county, with a low level of industrial activities;</p> <p>31. Reduced collaboration between the business environment and higher education, research and development units; reduced technology transfer,</p>
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	<p>including training in tourism;</p> <p>32. The salary level is not attractive for attracting qualified human resources, especially in the advanced and technological fields such as RDI.</p> <p>33. Lack of a stable legislative package that will stimulate and enhance the activities of RDI, technology transfer, public-private partnerships.</p>
<p><b>OPORTUNITĂȚI</b></p>	<p><b>AMENINȚĂRI</b></p>
<p>1. The area is crossed by the Braşov-Ploieşti-Bucharest-Giurgiu Development axis, from north to south, the main development corridor of Romania;</p> <p>2. The existence of the navigable Danube and the possibilities of economic development, including tourism (cruises, sport fishing, etc.).</p> <p>3. The border area is characterized by common multicultural traditions and ethnic diversity, which leads to the increase of the integrity of the entire border area and lays the foundations for cooperation in other areas;</p> <p>4. Stakeholders are concerned about ensuring sufficient space for tourism development so that the protected natural heritage is not affected;</p> <p>5. A sustainable, well-preserved natural heritage, associated with the cultural one, can reduce the risk factors for social exclusion and discrimination, strengthen the resilience of a community and find sources of financing that will better protect it;</p> <p>4. Existence at EU level of</p>	<p>1. Natural and erosion phenomena that may inadvertently or in the long term affect measures to protect the cultural heritage (resulting in reduced attractiveness, productivity, etc.);</p> <p>2. Migration of qualified personnel in various countries of the European Union;</p> <p>4. The decrease of the budgetary allocations and, implicitly, of the financing possibilities;</p> <p>5. The proximity of industrial platforms, waterways and commercial ports is an important risk factor that contributes to environmental degradation and generates continuous air and water pollution;</p> <p>6. Cross-border pollution;</p> <p>7. Difficulty of jointly managing the areas affected by natural and technological risks;</p> <p>8. Limited availability of funds allocated for heritage protection and capitalization interventions.</p> <p>9. Maintaining the trend regarding the migration of highly qualified personnel, in the absence of policies to reduce this phenomenon, will have a long-term negative effect on the economy and, in particular, the RDI</p>



<p>complex programs to sensitize and involve tourists in activities to protect the natural heritage and the possibility of their adoption by the two member countries, Romania and Bulgaria;</p> <p>5. Tourists are increasingly interested in the conservation and protection of natural heritage;</p> <p>6. The concept of sustainable development of tourism is promoted through strategies and development plans, including at the level of each European project, there is a framework for dialogue on the topic of sustainability and the concrete possibilities of moving to the sustainable use of the natural and anthropic heritage.</p> <p>7. The existence of European funds for investment and cooperation in the field of tourism, as well as the existence of European and national funds accessible to the private sector and dedicated to cooperation between stakeholders, other institutional actors, the private sector, etc. in the sustainable use of the natural and anthropic heritage. (SUERD, Cross-Border Cooperation Programs 2014-2020, etc.);</p> <p>8. Promoting in local, international official documents, strategies and punctual projects the cooperation between central and local authorities, between the public and private sectors, but also between specialists and ordinary citizens;</p> <p>9. Establishing national and cross-border strategies to promote the sustainable use of tourism; Embracing</p>	<p>sector;</p> <p>10. The trend of the natural increase is descending and results in the aging of the population, the decrease of the critical mass of the active and productive population, in comparison with the inactive - aging population;</p> <p>11. Emphasizing the phenomenon of external migration, especially of the young and above-average population; Poor development of social infrastructure (it is below the country average in terms of number of associations), an unfavorable factor for the use of human resources in significant social innovation activities.</p> <p>12. The establishment of the metropolitan area of Bucharest will have a negative influence on the region, following part of the administrative-territorial units to be transferred from Giurgiu county to the metropolitan area, thus increasing the influence and degree of polarization of Bucharest.</p> <p>13. The high dependence on agriculture of most rural localities in the county, correlated with the low level of agricultural technology and the aging workforce;</p> <p>14. The lack of entrepreneurship culture and social fear are barriers against potential social reconstruction projects in the area.</p>
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the concept of responsible tourism and increasing the number of followers of these principles in Romania;

10. Coordination and integration with neighboring regions;

11. Both areas in the cross-border area - Romanian and Bulgarian, have unused tourism potential;

12. Approaching Bucharest, the largest university and research centers could facilitate access to qualified human resources, in the context of functional policies for attracting them, both at public and private level;

13. Significant European funds available for the horizon 2014 - 2020 for the infrastructure or environment sectors;

14. Climate zone suitable for optimum efficiency in the use of solar energy;

15. The proximity to Bucharest and the access to the Danube has a high potential for easy identification of the markets of sale;

16. Implement the European Union strategy for the Danube Region and stimulate cooperation with the Bulgarian neighbors through transnational and cross-border cooperation programs;

17. The development of the Bucharest metropolitan area and the creation of the 2 ring road will transform part of the region into a transit area with the potential of locating active units, due to lower production costs and more generous state aid.





## 2.7 BRANDING PROPOSAL AS A RESULT OF THE LAND ANALYSIS

### THE BRAND OF THE CITY OF GIURGIU

The symbol of Giurgiu municipality is the **Clock Tower**, located in the center of the city. As a settlement on the Danube, the city of Giurgiu was and is strongly influenced, from all points of view, by the Danube river - an inspiration source for poets, pros, composers, painters and other people of culture and art. Let's not forget the Blue Danube waltz suite, composed by Johann Strauss Son.

The characteristic elements that contribute to the proposal of elaborating the brand of the city of Giurgiu are the following:

**a. The city was built in a star system (the "style" architecture style)**

The city was conceived in the system "the stars" (star), according to the Paris model, as "the city-plate".



The modern systemization of the city of Giurgiu envisaged the enhancement of the Clock Tower.

The tower was taken as a landmark, from which streets open from where all the



arteries of the city start. We have first the circular market around the tower, which over time has had different names - Carol 1 Square, Carol II Square, Unirii Square and which had the small plate as a promenade. There was a circle for cars and the commercial promenade, where all the commercial spaces were. Therefore, the city of Giurgiu has the peculiarity of being organized according to the "star model" - "the stars", and the name of the proposed brand can be: Giurgiu - the stars.

### **b. The clock tower**

The Clock Tower or the Clock Tower is the symbol of the city of Giurgiu, this monument being present on the county coat of arms.

The construction of the tower is characterized by its hexagonal shape, a construction that surrounds the base.



The tower has a few degrees inclination, imitating the famous Pisa Tower. The Clock Tower is the landmark of the modern urbanization system in Giurgiu. The Clock Tower was built around 1770 and is listed as a class heritage monument. The tower, unique in the country and in the south-east of Europe, measures over 22 meters. Over time it has had military (observation point of the fortifications) and civilian (firehouse) utility. The third destination is as a watch carrier. The symbolism of the flow of time, by taking into account a clock, is very plastic put into action by the genius painter Salvador Dali, in the work Persistence of memory, which is one of the most famous and easily identifiable artistic works in the world. In "Persistence of Memory", the extinguishing clocks have already become an image-symbol of Dali's creation, known for its undeniable originality, unique in the history of painting. Made in 1931, in oil on canvas, the surrealist painting depicts a gloomy shore sprinkled with clocks that melt and flow,



symbolizing the irreversible flow of time.

The flowing dalian clock can be taken as part of the brand's graphics.

**c. Located on the banks of the Danube, port and city, Giurgiu was strongly influenced by the Danube river.**

Cruise tourism can be stimulated as part of tourism participating in the economic and social development of the area. The Danube region holds a huge treasure trove of archaeological remains, historical monuments, art or architecture, as well as an invaluable ethnofolcloric heritage, attesting to the evolution and permanence on these lands, the development of culture and art. All this cultural-historical background forms a significant part of the tourist offer and a component of the tourist image of the Danube region on the international market.

The Danube was brilliantly sung in the Blue Danube waltz suite, composed by Johann Strauss Son. This musical creation can be another component of Giurgiu's brand.

The flow of the clock and the Danube river (symbolized by wavy lines) may represent parts of the Giurgiu brand. The blue wavy lines also represent a floating notebook with musical notes (allusion to the blue Danube waltz suite by Johann Strauss Son or to the song The Danube Waves by Iosif Ivanovici).

The logo of the brand will be a clock, which symbolizes the passage of time (taken from the painting Persistence of memory of Salvador Dali) and flows into the Danube river (symbolized by the wavy lines of the waves), to which are added musical notes reminiscent of the Danube's hymn. (Blue Danube waltz suite by Johann Strauss Son):



Taking into consideration the three mentioned elements (Clock Tower, Danube River and Blue Danube music creation) can lead to the proposal as a slogan of the city of Giurgiu brand:

***Giurgiu - Blue Danube Clock***

Therefore, the proposal of a complete brand of the city of Giurgiu is as follows:

BRAND NAME:

***GIURGIU - ÉTOILE***



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**BRANDLING ARMY: *A stylized drawing with a clock flowing in the blue Danube waves (in the form of a notebook with musical notes).***



**THE SLOGAN OF THE BRAND:**

**THE CITY OF GIURGIU - THE BLUE DANUARY HOUSE**

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## 2.8 THE PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE AND RESPONSIBLE TOURISM FOR THE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF GIURGIU COUNTY

In managing local and regional tourism activities, we recommend firstly the principles of sustainable development (Throsby, 2001). These principles are:

The principle of equity between generations. It refers to equity in the distribution of welfare, utility or resources between generations. It is used in the economic, psychological and sociological context and designates the concept or idea of fairness or justice in the relations between children, young people, adults and the elderly, especially regarding the treatment and the interaction. In accordance with this principle, development must have a long-term vision and not compromise the ability of future generations to access cultural resources and meet their cultural needs. This requires particular concern for the protection and consolidation of natural and cultural heritage, as heritage represents "a future for the past" (Peacock, 1994).

The principle of equity within a generation. This principle upholds the rights of the current generation to fairness in terms of access to natural and cultural resources and the benefits that derive from it in terms of social class, income group, gender, ethnicity. The idea of fairness or fairness continues to play an important role in economic and social policy, although it has been left in the shadows in recent years due to concerns about economic efficiency. It can be suggested that aspects such as: the distribution of natural and / or cultural resources, access to cultural participation, the provision of cultural services for minority groups or disadvantaged groups, etc. are all aspects of fairness or fairness, which can be overlooked if the aim is to obtain results related only to efficiency. The principle of equity within a generation thus requires focusing on these issues if it is desired to achieve a sustainable use of resources.

The principle of maintaining cultural diversity. Cultural diversity is very important in maintaining cultural systems. The diversity of ideas, beliefs, traditions and values produces a flow of cultural services that is quite different from the services offered by the individual components. For example, to the extent that creative works are inspired by the existing stock of cultural resources, a greater diversity of resources will lead to the creation of a greater and more valuable variety of art works in the future.

The precautionary principle. This principle takes into account the fact that



decisions that can lead to irreversible changes should be approached with extreme caution and from a very refractory position vis-à-vis the risk, because of the weight of the consequences of such decisions. Thus, the destruction or depletion of a resource (natural or cultural) can lead to irreversible losses if the respective element is unique and irreplaceable. In this situation, the precautionary principle could be applied especially if it is considered that the natural or cultural element in question has sufficient value to justify it. The principle does not state that irrevocable decisions regarding natural and / or cultural resources should never be taken, but rather that a higher level of prudence should be exercised if irreversibility is involved, taking into account account for the other principles of sustainability in establishing the decision.

The principle of interconnection. Economic, social, cultural and environmental systems should not be treated in isolation, but rather a holistic approach is needed, namely one that recognizes the interconnection, especially between economic and cultural development. This principle offers the opportunity to identify the role of any resource (natural or cultural) as a component of what could be called the specific infrastructure of a destination where it is located and draws attention, both on economic and cultural benefits, as well as on costs. which could generate them as a result of this role.

The specific principles of sustainable development of tourism reside in the characteristics of natural and cultural resources:

- both types of resources represent an inheritance that imposes a care tax for the current generation;
- there are similarities between the functions of the natural ecosystems for sustaining and maintaining the natural balance and the functions of the cultural systems regarding the support and maintenance of the cultural identity and life and the vitality of the human civilization. On the one hand, the notion of "diversity", so important in the natural world, has an undeniable role in cultural systems, and, on the other hand, "uniqueness" is a feature of most cultural goods.

Obviously, sustainable development is the central challenge of our times. This gives rise to a question and a challenge: How can we capitalize on tourism to support sustainability?

Concern for the natural environment has generated debates on the tourism-environment relationship since the last century. The first signs of concern regarding the idea of responsible tourism were highlighted in issues related to access to the rural environment and the impact of the demand on the rural landscape, but not in the development of tourist resorts. Then, in the early 1960s,



perceptions about tourism in some areas changed. This was a time when the main constraints on demand - namely: time, disposable income and transport - decreased, thus allowing a substantial increase in tourism consumption. This has led to the development of new destinations, particularly in the case of Northern and Central Europe, to the northern coast of the Mediterranean, particularly in Spain (Leslie, 2012). The 1960s represented a period of increasing concern for environmental protection (Hardy et al, 2002), but also for the impact of tourism development. Debates on this topic were accentuated in the early 1970s, when George Young argued that the impact of tourism is both a blessing and a scourge (Young, 1973), and Claude Kaspar spoke of a new "dimension of tourism," which called it the "ecology of the environment" (Kaspar, 1973, p. 139). Questions continued to arise regarding the future development of tourism. As Romeril and Hughes-Evans argued, "tourism has now reached that inevitable point at which it begins to destroy the beauty it seeks" (1979, p. 1).

Later, the idea of responsibility came up. The interest in "more responsibility" has led to the so-called alternative forms and concepts of tourism that have acquired various names, such as: alternative tourism, ecotourism, soft tourism, green tourism, etc., representing an alternative to mass tourism, which became intolerable. from an ecological, social, ethical and political point of view.

In August / September 2002, South Africa hosted the "World Summit on Sustainable Development". The "Cape Town Declaration" contains seven points that characterize responsible tourism (water resource conservation, energy efficiency, integrated waste management, preferential procurement, business development, skills development and social development) and which defines it as "tourism that creates better places to live and visit, for those who host and for those who are hosted. " (Www.capetown.gov.za).

And in 2005, based on the "Cape Town Declaration", the European Alliance for Responsible Tourism and Hospitality (EARTH) defined it as "tourism that respects the principles of social and economic justice and exercises full respect for the environment and culture. It recognizes the centrality of the host local community and its right to act as a protagonist in the development of sustainable and responsible tourism "having" the role of encouraging a positive interaction between the tourism industry, local communities and travelers ".

Celebration and respect for diversity are fundamental to responsible tourism. Article 1 of the "Global Code of Ethics in Tourism" (www. World-tourism.org) supports the importance of an "attitude of tolerance and respect for the diversity of religious, philosophical and moral beliefs", as "the foundation and consequence of responsible tourism". It calls on tourists, but also all other stakeholders, to "respect the traditions and social and cultural practices of all peoples."



The destination, in the vision of a leading pioneer of the concept of responsible tourism in the world, Harold Goodwin, is "a fantastic place for the community, without vulnerabilities from all points of view, which thus becomes attractive and for visitors, motivating them to travel there" <sup>24</sup>. Let's look at the Giurgiu County area and the Danube cross-border region with the potential to become such destinations.

The obligation of tourism responsible for creating better places for living and visiting requires that the priority be given to the locals. Tourism is a cultural process, and the destination is a social product, because "the visible structure of a place expresses the emotional attachments held by both its inhabitants and its visitors" (Ringer, 1998, p.10), the destinations create and form attachments . Tourism plays an important role in the social construction of a place, through the commercial activities that take place, but also as a consequence of the interactions that arise there. As Squire points out, "destinations are not just a leitmotif for a geographical place. Rather, there are also social and cultural constructions whose meanings and values are negotiated and redefined by different people and mediated only tangentially to a certain tourist setting "(Squire, 1998, p.82).

The territory of Giurgiu County and the area of the entire Giurgiu-Ruse cross-border region is the appropriate place to launch tourism activities in the vision of responsible tourism practices.

**The principles of responsible tourism**, recommended to be followed, are:

- ❖ 1. Understanding and respect for the values of the host community; direct communication between the visitor and the host; mutual influence.
- ❖ 2. Protection and conservation of natural heritage; adopting ecological measures to prevent and limit aggression on the environment.
- ❖ 3. Respect for the environment and society; identifying a balance between the economic and the ecological-social approach.
- ❖ 4. The local community, with all its characteristics and customs - is the core of the tourist activities.
- ❖ 5. Informed and correct programming of the tourist activity to combat the adverse influences on the areas and communities.
- ❖ 6. Collective actions are preferable to individual actions; cooperation and respect for others; partnerships and the exchange of good practices - a common purpose to enrich the tourism offer for major benefits to both

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<sup>24</sup> H. Goodwin, International Forum for Responsible Tourism, Edition a 6-a, 10-11 May 2018, Bucharest



tourism providers and tourists.

- ❖ 7. Appropriation between human communities; identifying together the methods of preserving and restoring the historical, cultural and natural heritage.
- ❖ 8. Transmission of an intact legacy to future generations; perpetuation of local customs and traditions, but also of the unaltered beauty of the environment.
- ❖ 9. Complex, complete and positive experience for the tourist; interaction and exchange of information between tourists and locals; deep process of direct learning through experience.
- ❖ 10. The human resource must support the natural resource in the context where sustainable development is a necessity.

The purpose of responsible tourism is sustainability. Responsible tourism attaches importance to all three pillars of sustainable development - economic, social and environmental - and accepts that priorities differ from one place to another. By taking responsibility and acting accordingly, sustainability can be achieved.

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## **Chapter III.**

# **COMMON TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF THE GIURGIU-RUSE REGION**

### 3.1 THE BASIS OF THE BASIS OF THE TOURIST DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF THE GIURGIU-RUSSIAN REGION

A first aspect refers to the already existing opening and the successful cooperation started with the Bulgarian partners in order to develop overall the Danubius Euroregion, the cross-border area on both sides of the Danube. Through the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Program, the "Marketing Strategy for promoting the advantages of the Giurgiu - Russian cross-border area for investors" was developed. The objectives of revealing the potential productive links in the form of a single cross-border region were, according to the mentioned document: information exchange, technology transfer, development of medium and long term partnerships between the corresponding local administrative authorities, conservation and regeneration of natural resources, promotion of resources of interest for tourism (traditional products, local customs), the development of the labor market and the increase of economic security, limiting major disparities in the standard of living. The study of the dynamics of the Giurgiu-Ruse relationship showed the availability of the two urban administrative-territorial units to increase investor confidence in the development opportunities of the territory of the localities, but also of the euroregion as a whole, and the option of timely development of both territories was the creation of an environment of business based on ecological fields of activity, supported by local, regional authorities and European institutions. The integrative treatment of the potential of the euroregion proposed the creation of a business center in the Giurgiu-Ruse region, generating a sustainable cooperation at European cross-border level, with concrete benefits for the local communities.<sup>25</sup>

From the plan aimed at the socio-economic development of the European region Ruse-Giurgiu, we specify a set of objectives and priorities for both territories, which are constituted in support elements for the foundation of the tourism development strategy we propose:

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<sup>25</sup> According to "Giurgiu County Development Strategy for 2014 - 2020"



1. Competitive economic development through the implementation of technologies based on advanced knowledge, with the development of the capacity of the existing centers and the establishment of consultancy, information and business centers and incubators, the creation of industrial areas and parks, including those with advanced technologies, the organization of promotion events; building logistics centers for trade and transport, ensuring modern standards of exchange and transport of goods;
2. A functional intermodal transport system and generator of significant increase in the volume of goods transported and processed, with the alignment of the technical and performance parameters of the main roads and railways in both areas of the region with the EU regulations for strengthening the Giurgiu-Ruse transporter function. Pan-European. Increased traffic services can become a source of employment and high income;
3. Tourism is the sphere in which the city of Ruse and the city of Giurgiu have already set similar goals - sustainable use of rich natural resources and cultural heritage, diversification of different forms of tourism;
4. In the social sphere, the development of human resources is a central aspect for both sides of the Danube: generating prosperity and improving the quality of life, overcoming the burdensome development of the level of education, implementing training programs;
5. General modernization of urban neighborhoods with old housing, restructuring of residential areas, provision of developed lots for small and medium-sized enterprises, functional conversion of the land of former production areas for housing to high standards and renovation and improvement of energy efficiency of housing built before 1990 ;
6. Conservation of the environment through resolute steps towards the final elimination of air pollution, effective protection against noise generated by traffic, greater coverage of different types of waste recycling. Conservation of

biodiversity, development of green areas and improvement of their maintenance is a common priority;

7. The construction of the technical infrastructure systems involves wastewater treatment systems from industrial plants and stopping the discharge of untreated sewage into the Danube, the development of gas supply systems, the greater use of renewable energy sources is one of the priorities of the energy sector, according to ERGO MasterPlan (operations of the European region Giurgiu-Ruse through integrated opportunity management through the framework plan).

Within the "Danubius" Euroregion, Giurgiu County and Ruse district have the potential of paired regions, on the Danube route, which can, through sustained cooperation, evolve into urban systems developed at the level of development regions and even at national level.

The second aspect concerns the idea of intelligent specialization.

The South Muntenia region, which includes Giurgiu county, focuses on making the most of the natural potential of the region, especially the tourist one, where it has unique competitive advantages at the level of Romania and Europe. Economic innovation is enhanced by innovation in the protection and valorisation of eco-systems. In our research, we were at a border between different sciences and close fields: geography, history, architecture, religion, ethnography, economics, statistics, management, marketing, etc.

In the Strategy for Intelligent Specialization of the South Muntenia Region, "Tourism and cultural identity" is the 4th area of intelligent specialization in the 6 (six) areas of intelligent specialization, with the highest potential for innovation, development and training of the other domains. of activity in the region. Each domain can be capitalized through several economic, technological or scientific activities.

Among the six areas of intelligent specialization, vertical priorities at the level of the Southern Region Local Muntenia is the main pillar, on which responsible and modern tourism develops, capitalizing on some emergencies that will know a strong development in the next strategic programming horizon.



# 3.2 TOURIST DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF THE GIURGIU-RUSE REGION

## CONSTRUCTION AND IMPLEMENTATION COORDINATES

### - PROPOSAL -

## Concept

Introducerea și dezvoltarea unui turism responsabil în destinațiile cheie din cele două județe prin revigorarea sentimentului de identitate culturală locală și regională.

Figura 3. Dimensiunile turismului responsabil

Introducing and developing responsible tourism in the key destinations in the two counties by reinvigorating the feeling of local and regional cultural identity.

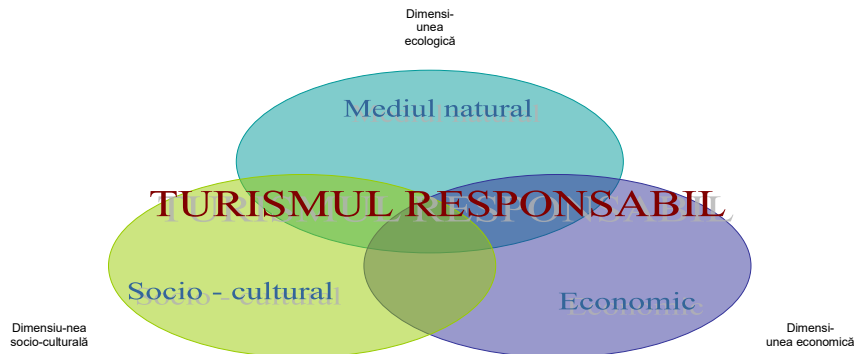


Figure 1. The dimensions of responsible tourism

## Strategic development axes

Local and national cultural heritage and natural sites.

## The key to the process





The experience lived by the tourist tired of modernity and the classic patterns of mass tourism - experience unfolded both on the background of the hospitality of the hosts and of the unique local as well as in a natural context of relaxation.

## The motivation of the concept

1 / The feeling of national identity and direct active involvement in the elaboration of the tourism development plan and in the implementation of the specific activities will determine the officials, stakeholders and the general public to come to this endeavor in the medium and long term.

2 / The tourism successes with already achieved results, even if on a small scale, will determine the inhabitants of the region to engage in tourism services from which they will also expect profits and from which they will notify the local welfare in time.

3 / Foreign tourists who have already visited the area have expressed their interest and satisfaction with the beauty, uniqueness and tranquility of the destinations in the region in the proximity of a river such as the Danube - elements that hang more seriously in the balance than the shortcomings related to the precariousness of the transport infrastructure and from the HORECA system.

4 / The two situations in which the destinations with tourist potential in the region are found: a) Either, the objectives and the communities of tourist interest are not well known, they do not offer well crystallized tourist services or the areas confer a natural value untouched by the dynamics of coarse mass tourism (the situation of most objectives in Giurgiu county); b) Either, many objectives and communities of tourist interest have encountered a greater tourist demand, inflows of visitors and unfriendly behavior to the destination, in which the tourism service providers did not know how to cope more efficiently (situations encountered more especially in the district of Ruse).

## Context and challenges

Lack of a common plan for tourism development in the cross-border region  
The absence of an integrated approach in the activities of the region in the past  
No major action to highlight the consistent cultural heritage of the region.



## Major objective

Increasing local and regional well-being through tourism, through joint efforts, Romanian-Bulgarian, to increase the tourist attractiveness of the region around the Danube.

## Secondary objective

Outlining and promoting the Romanian cultural identity of Giurgiu county and respectively of the Bulgarian one in the district of Ruse - pillars of attractiveness to the south-east of Europe for visitors from all over the world.

## Target groups

Local and national public administration authorities  
Companies in the HORECA system  
Travel agencies  
NGOs, associations, profile organizations  
Operators of entertainment, spa, sports services  
University, research institutions, personnel trainers in tourism  
Structures with investment potential  
Mass media, opinion leaders  
Local people, artists and craftsmen

## Tactics

- Practicing tourism with the face of the local communities, whether in urban, rural or regional level
- Implementation of a destination management policy in tourism programs
- Integration of tourists in the spirit and life of the host community to meet the need for novelty, relaxation, good disposition
- The use of communication specialists throughout the strategy development and the establishment of public relations structures at the level of the tourist town halls
- Construction and brand promotion of the place



- A permanent connection, flow of information and collaboration with Bulgarian partners for the implementation of the common vision for the development of the Giurgiu-Ruse cross-border area
- Constant dissemination of tourist messages to local and national press with feedback monitoring
- Periodic monitoring and control of the completion of the proposed actions according to the terms and the content proposed
- Transparency, flexibility and adaptability to changes in the immediate reality, to the evolution of the local and international market
- Great attention paid to the representatives of local administrations, with an essential role in boosting the tourism phenomenon.
- The favorable geographical situation - also specified by "Strategy for the development of Giurgiu county on 1014-2020" - of "transit place between the Danube and the Capital. ... with "indisputable attributes that can bring added value to the tourism image of the county".

## Working tools

### Partnerships

- Formation of local, public-private partnerships, between structures interested in finding integrated solutions for the community, financing, design and implementations.
- Formation of partnerships and development of projects and programs together with the Bulgarian representatives for the Giurgiu-Ruse cross-border area.
- Twinning between localities with similar heritage features, which can develop circuits and common tourist products.

### Meetings of national and international character

- Collaboration with officials at national level for consultancy and assistance.
- Exchange of information and collaborations with international experts who have achieved similar tourism successes.

### Field trips

- Organizing info trip with media and opinion leaders, influences from abroad, but also from Romania and Bulgaria, in the key areas of tourist attraction of the region.



- Documentation visits offered to representatives of the hospitality industry, the university environment, NGOs.

#### Marketing formats

- Conducting market studies, opinion polls, organizing focus groups, round tables to gather the necessary field information from the actors in the hospitality industry and the communities concerned.
- Use of digital platforms, online communication, creation of specific websites, applied to projects, actions and events.

### Communication channels

- Mass media (print media, television, radio, documentary film)
- Events (meetings, conferences, festivals, fairs)
- Online networks and platforms, specific sites
- Printed productions (tour guides, brochures, leaflets, albums)

### Directions of action

- ❖ Reconstruction, restoration and protection of sites, monuments, cultural-religious, historical and art assemblies in the city of Giurgiu and the identified communes
- ❖ Rehabilitation of urban buildings and spaces with environmental and artistic value
- ❖ The rehabilitation, the arrangement of the objectives with natural tourist potential, from the patrimony of the national and international notoriety reserves protected
- ❖ Arrangement of recreational areas and centers along the Danube and in identified natural areas
- ❖ Restoration, extension of access infrastructure to areas of tourist interest
- ❖ Construction, rehabilitation and modernization of accommodation and public catering structures, extension and diversification of the offer according to the destination and cultural or natural attractiveness
- ❖ Initiation of programs for the training of HORECA personnel, support of worker mobility, stimulation of entrepreneurial and collaborative spirit,



cooperation with prestigious universities and companies in the field of tourism services, offering internship internships, counseling, assistance, mentoring in the field of tourism. the work

- ❖ Promoting the cultural and natural heritage, with emphasis on the tourist brands and on the potential objectives with tourism potential, identified
- ❖ Creation of common thematic cultural circuits, Romanian-Bulgarian and their constant adaptation to market requirements.

### Priority for Giurgiu Municipality

Development of cultural tourism

### Priorities for Giurgiu county as a whole and the Giurgiu-Ruse cross-border region

Development of the ethnographic and artistic, historical-religious and artistic side ecological tourism

### Expected results

Sustainable capitalization of the anthropic and natural heritage by applying responsible tourism will generate:

- connecting tourists and tourism service providers with the fundamental values of a cultural and natural environment rendered to the host communities at the level of destination, county and cross-border region;
  - a chain of business opportunities at micro and macro level;
  - blocking some of the risks and risks faced by the region;
  - attracting investors;
- social opportunities for employment and the development of an inclusive society;



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- attracting talent and creative industries that will bring the community together in cultural and nature exploration.

The strategy developed aims to provide direction for the development of competitive tourist destinations that can attract new tourist flows. Thus, to contribute to the creation of new jobs, to the increase of tourism incomes, and to the increase of the opportunities for sustainable development of the Giurgiu-Ruse region.

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## CONCLUSIONS

The concept of tourism is considered by many as a way of thinking about leisure as a possibility to travel and accumulate new knowledge. Human history has been an endless series of journeys and journeys - from the beginning of the world, human existence has been a journey to others and to ourselves.

Tourism is an industry of friendship, exploration and closeness, which in its own way removes the boundaries and barriers of human communication. It allows people to reach different cultures, to understand spirituality and different ways of life.

"The common strategy for tourism development in the Giurgiu-Ruse region, TourDev Giurgiu-Ruse" was designed to increase the visibility of both areas as visiting destinations for tourists in the region and internationally. We hope to form a network of stakeholders to contribute to the development of this strategy.

The recommended proposals provide direction for the development of competitive tourist destinations so that they can attract new tourist flows and thus contribute to increasing tourism revenues, creating new jobs and increasing opportunities for sustainable development of the cross-border region.

The key to success lies in a visionary conception, strategy, sustainability and capacity for innovation and, last but not least, responsibility on the part of all actors involved in the tourism phenomenon. Through the consistency, complexity and variety of our strategy, we will allow users to discover the unknown side of destinations that can give them unique sensations and special memories.

This goal cannot be achieved in a single year. Positioning the region will require concentrated and sustained efforts, investments and commitments from the hospitality industry and stakeholders. The aim is to gradually strengthen the attractiveness of the destination at regional level and to strengthen the representation of the tourism sector. Thus we can obtain in this area "better places





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to live and visit", so local and regional prosperity and competitive tourist advantage.

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