



“Via Militaris-A Corridor for Sustainable Tourism Development”; Ref. No.CB007.2.12.032.
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JOINT VIA MILITARIS TOURISM CONCEPT AND ACTION PLAN

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Introduction

The Agency for Regional Development South in partnership with the Agency for Economic Development Kostinbrod is implementing the Project CBo07.2.12.032 "Via Militaris – A Corridor for a Sustainable Development of Tourism" co-financed by the EU through the INTERREG-IPA CBC Bulgaria-Serbia Program to develop a strategic frame for the joint Via Militaris Tourism Concept and to define the purpose, integration, and focusing of the communication tactics to achieve high efficiency in increasing the attractiveness (appeal) of the Via Militaris tourist destination.

Via Militaris Project is a joint initiative (venture) for a sustainable tourism in the cross-border region Serbia-Bulgaria. Initial analysis of the common tourist potential in the Via Militaris area and of de facto capabilities as well as the direct mutual action of those involved during workshops and actual visits of the sites has been followed by the experimental Living Lab methodology in cooperation with the consumers to create a new concept of tourism and sustainable Via Militaris action plan. The expected result will be creation of new theme branded products (travel packages, tours, and programs), conducting consistent marketing policy and following the marketing plan in order to position firmly and to sell the tourist product on the domestic and foreign tourist markets.

The targeted groups and beneficiaries in our project were the providers of tourist services and those working in the travel business as travel agencies and tour operators, tourist transport, accommodation, food, recreation, promotions, organizers of cultural events, etc. regional and national, public and private institutions and organizations responsible for tourism and culture (ministries, tourist organizations, institutions dealing with protected areas, etc.), regional authorities in Nis, Pirot and Zajecar Districts in Serbia and in Sofia, Montana and Pernik in Bulgaria and other participants connected with culture and tourism like associations, institutions, working groups and networks, agencies for development, etc.

Methodology for assessment of tourist resources and their potential along the way of Via Militaris, Bulgaria – Serbia

This methodology has been developed in execution of “Via Militaris-A Corridor for Sustainable Tourism Development”; Ref. No.CB007.2.12.032. The project is co-funded by EU through the Interreg-IPA CBC Bulgaria–Serbia Programme. Its purpose is to support the analysis and evaluation of the collected information in the implementation of the selection of the attractions with the greatest potential for attracting tourists to the region of the cities of Niš, Svrlijig, Bela palanka, Pirot and Dimitrovgrad from the Serbian side of Via Militaris and Sofia, Pernik and Montana from the Bulgarian side of Via Militaris and Niš, Svrlijig, Bela Palanka, Pirot and Dimitrovgrad on the Serbian side of Via Militaris .

The tourist resources and the potential for development of tourism in separate regions of Serbia and Bulgaria have been the subject of many analyses and studies during different periods. Regardless of the differences in approaches, criteria and assessments, all studies reaffirm the fact that there is a rich and diverse potential of tourism resources in many places of the country. In relation to their territorial location for the development of tourism, it is important to note that:

- along with the concentration the tourism development along the Black Sea coast and in mountainous areas more than half of Bulgaria has valuable tourist resources, whose potential is used partially or not at all;
- tourist sites related to the ancient Roman history of Serbia and Bulgaria, or along the ancient Roman roads, is distinguished by an exceptional variety of tourist resources, for which it is true that the majority of them are related to the cultural and historical heritage;
- there are a number of problems and weaknesses, retaining the development of tourism in a large part of the regions concerned – Niš, Svrlijig, Bela Palanka, Pirot, Dimitrovgrad,



Sofia, Pernik, Montana, including: disproportion in the construction and concentration of the tourist establishments and resources;

- lagging behind in the development of national and regional infrastructure and the use of modern technologies, information and reservation systems;
- underdeveloped activities related to marketing and advertising of TR and destinations;
- insufficient political coordination at national, regional and local level, between the private and public tourism sectors and industry associations and societies.

The assessment of the potential for tourism development should also help to achieve a unified position and unite the efforts of stakeholders and actors of regional tourism policy for the development of sustainable tourism, based on the diverse tourism resources with a focus on cultural and historical heritage, local conditions and the opportunities of cross-border cooperation.

Fundamentals related to the methodology

Assignment restrictions

The effective development of the tourist potential of sites related to Via Militaris requires the application of relevant approaches and methods to examine the current and potential state of the resources in the areas foreseen in this project, where the tourist sites and attractions are located.

For the purpose of this methodology to assess the potential of tourism resources, as the main subject of the study shall be predominantly limited to cultural and historical. The assessment of their other aspects – natural, material, labor, financial, capital and part of the anthropogenic are not included in the specific subject of this development.

Regardless of the restrictions set, in practice it is extremely difficult to separate the cultural and historical from the other anthropogenic (and even from the natural) tourism resources. This is

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explained by the fact that very often they are located in one territory, have both simultaneous and integral participation in shaping the attractiveness of the tourist destination and participate jointly in the process of formation and utilization of the regional tourist product. In addition, most of the elements of the methodology developed are mostly universally used, i.e. for both cultural and historical and all other anthropogenic and natural resources.

The potential of the cultural and historical tourism resources selected from the above mentioned areas according to the stipulated requirements of the assignment shall be assessed according to the following criteria:

- capacity (potential, capability) for development (CfD) – aligned with the factors and conditions for resource development;
- degree of impact/influence – the level of attractiveness/ appeal assessed;
- degree of change (as a result of tourism) – evaluation of the usefulness/value/importance of the tourist attraction;

The selected assessment criteria apply not only for scientific purposes but also to take into account the position (viewpoint) of the specific tourist site/attraction and the possibilities for practical use of the results of the study.

The above criteria shall also be reconciled with the expected trends and dynamics in the behavior of tourists, namely:

- increasing demand from tourists to the quality, authenticity, attractiveness and diversity/assortment of tourist services;
- increasing requirements of tourists to the quality of the technical infrastructure of the country, the tourist location and the facilities of tourism, the provision of specific services, the interests and needs of the population/people;



- directing the preferences of tourists in the country to destinations and places that offer safety, security and on the other hand to specialized forms of tourism - cultural, eco - and rural tourism, adventure tourism, etc.;
- increasing the share of children and young people, especially students, in cultural and educational tourism, travel to explore other countries, communities and people;
- increasing the role of the information and communication systems in hotels and tourist business in connection with the search, planning and conduct of tourist trips;
- increasing the share of the adult population in tourism/ participation of people from the "third age" in tourist trips.

Working concepts and fundamentals

For the needs of the methodology basic working concepts are defined and clarification of those necessary for the project. The basic concepts are associated with the general term **tourist resources**. Its broad meaning encompasses all the features and man-made material and other conditions that are necessary for the creation of tourism services, goods and products.

In the narrow sense of the term, only two groups are included – natural and anthropogenic tourist resources. These are externally determined elements of the natural and social (anthropogenic) environment, which, as a rule, determine the purpose and motivation of tourism consumption. These include both individual sites and piling up of natural or man-made conditions and circumstances. Quite often, in a specific territory, they are in combination and interaction, but in their entirety have a significant impact on the parameters of tourism management and consumption.

The natural and anthropogenic tourist resources form the core of the tourist product. The different types of tourist services are called upon to create the necessary conditions for their use and consumption. For the tourist they are important for the formation of motivation and



decision for tourist travel. With their choice the tourists also determine the means of transport, the way of travel, the place of residence, the period and the length of stay, etc.

The tourist resources concerned have a significant impact and play a decisive role in determining:

- the attractiveness of the tourist place;
- the quantitative and qualitative parameters of material elements (facilities of tourism);
- the quantity and quality of the tourist product;
- the manner of operation and effectiveness of the business activities of tourism enterprises;
- the quantity and structure of staff;
- the number of workers and employees in tourist enterprises;
- the method of selection, structuring and use of staff;
- the organization and management of labor, etc.

The utilization of the resources in question is realized in practice through the design and construction of tourist super- and infrastructure in the tourist place, which is subject to some basic requirements:

- correspondence between the resource's carrying capacity and the capacity of the accommodation establishments in the adjacent area of the resource;
- adaptation of building structures and other characteristics of buildings and facilities with the type of the resource and the peculiarities of the type of tourism based on it (mountain, sea, rural, urban, etc.);
- complexity and integration of the tourist super- and infrastructure with natural and anthropogenic resources (in the case of ski tourism, for example, the ski runs are connected to the hotels with lifts and other communications);
- sustainability or the possibility of long-term use of the relevant type of resource.

A serious problem in this connection can be the oversaturation of the territory with facilities and sites that exceed its carrying capacity. This leads to permanent damage to the resources and irreparable consequences for the environment and the opportunities for long-term development.

Theoretical foundations of the methodology

General characteristics and typology of assessment methods

Any methodology considered as a set of pathways, ways and means to achieve a given objective in the various studies shall be implemented by developing certain principles, approaches and methods (means) for the realization of the objective pursued. The main attention and emphasis in it, as a rule, is directed to the methods.

Any method, whether common or with a more private application, is a unified system of methods and research operations applied to solve one or other task. In the present case they are associated with a complex assessment of a certain type of tourist resources and their potential for future effective utilization for the needs of tourism. This assessment concerns the different characteristics (quantitative, qualitative, temporal, spatial) of the selected tourist resource. In this respect, appropriate criteria and indicators shall be used to clarify the ways of measurement (by physical or contingent values, resp. point evaluations). If we disregard the contentious questions about the typology of methods, we could distinguish them in two main groups: objective (quantifiable) and heuristic (or subjective).

The negative consequences of tourism for the resources and their protection

In recent decades, tourism-related environmental and social issues have intensified the criticism against it and have imposed more global reporting on its negative effects. The latter are mainly determined by expansiveness, strong concentration, expanding consumer lifestyle, where the



cultural tourism product is regarded as an object of consumption, which is purchased and consumed.

The ecologically clean areas, the preserved social and cultural environment, are valued as an important modern condition for preserving the cultural and historical resources and increasing the tourists' interest in them. Territories and individual tourist sites, whose promotional and informational materials contain specially marked environmental characteristics attract the most visitors. Increasingly, this advantage tips the balance when choosing a tourist destination or site. In addition, the preservation of cultural and historical resources is becoming an increasingly serious problem in areas with a high concentration of tourist visits. In particular, what is meant is the impact of tourism on the natural environment - air, land, water, flora and fauna and the culture of the local population.

Decisions for the practical implementation of the policy for protection of cultural and historical resources are sought primarily in the development and realization of the idea of the carrying capacity. Tourism should be developed within the boundaries of the existing capacity of the specific resource through management of tourist flows and realization of planned economic effects.

The carrying capacity is expressed by the maximum number of persons who have the possibility to use a place without causing unacceptable changes to the physical environment or deterioration of the quality experience of the visitors.

The problems related to the carrying capacity have an important role for determining the methods for evaluating the potential of tourism resources and the related criteria and indicators.

Examples of indicators for the threshold of carrying capacity

Indicator	Examples
Size	Number of visitors of different kind and on different occasions for 1 hour, 1 day, 1 week, 1 year or any nights, tour days they have realized, etc.
Density	Number of persons per 1 sq m or ha for different activities and in different places (in the museum, the cultural site, the park, etc.)
Proportion	Number of visitors or beds to the number of populations; number of visitors to the number of locals who used facilities in the tourist place, etc.

The successful resolution of the problems related to the threshold of the carrying capacity of the TR can be achieved by the correct identification of its main types and by the determination and accurate measurement of its indicators.

Examples of criteria for determining the maximum carrying capacity for a cultural and historical monument could, for example, be: the degree of security associated with its protection; preserving the quality of the environment near the monument; improving the visitors' quality of experience; preserving or enhancing the quality of life of the local population; preservation and sustainable maintenance of the attractiveness/appeal and economic profitability of the tourist destination.

Methodological problems of measurability of assessment

The measurability of tourist resources is not only methodical but mostly a problem of the practical activity related to their effective use and protection. Any entity (political or business) that carries out supervision in this direction must decide not only on what criteria, but also on

how to make the assessment. The distinction between objective and subjective measurability is particularly important.

The objective measurability refers to signs measurable by methods independent of the monitoring person and the use of the achievements of natural sciences, mathematics, statistics, etc. These include: spatial signs (area, height, length); temporal signs (time of use, travel time, age), physical signs (weight, color, resistance, temperature), chemical signs (chemical composition, purity), production and technical signs (accuracy, precision, power) and formal accuracy (e.g. of data presented by the tour operator).

The application of all measurement methods is confronted with the problems of subjectivity, validity and reliability.

Subjectivity consists in the independence of the results of measurements and evaluations of the individual monitoring person and occurs when more independent assessors reach the same results.

The validity is associated with the answer to the question "is it measured the thing that needs to be measured", which affects both the theoretical definition of the assessment and its operationalization (transformation into real indicators);

The reliability (accuracy of measurement) is associated with the answer to the question "whether what is measured is accurate". The means by which the measurements are carried out shall give an accurate and comparable result under the same conditions and in multiple measurements. Otherwise, the reliability is not guaranteed.

In this regard, it is important to take into account the evaluations of the different actors in:

(a) the supply of the tourist product including the resource: hoteliers, carriers, restaurateurs, tour organizers (tour operators) and intermediaries (tour agents); from their point of view,

compliance with, or the existence of, pre-established requirements and standards (e.g. for securing the use of the tourist resource) can be assessed;

(b) the demand where for tour operators, tour agents and end-users (tourists) belong.

Other (external) evaluators (non-users) of the tourist resource may be relevant if their assessment affects the other two groups. In tourism, important external evaluators are the residents of the tourist place (directly or indirectly affected by the development of tourism); NGOs (environmental, industry tourism, etc.), organizations for protection of consumer rights, media, legislative bodies and courts, political entities, etc.

Possibilities to objectify the assessment

In relation to the precise assessment of the potential of tourism resources, it is of particular importance to seek and uncover real opportunities for its objectification. This is due to the fact that the assessment is carried out in different ways and has different results depending on the position of the different participants in tourism. This determines the need to combine, juxtapose, compare and co-measure individual evaluations in order to objectify the final assessment of the resource or object with which it is linked.

Specific content aspects of the methodology

Requirements/criteria, properties and assessment procedure for tourist resources (TR)

At the heart of the derivation of the criteria for evaluation of tourist resources (TR) in a given destination, it is necessary to take account simultaneously:

- the requirements which they must meet to be defined as tourist;
- their properties and characteristics. TR are required to meet the following requirements:



- a) be accessible:** both in terms of transport and finance, in order to provide opportunities for their use, irrespective of their uniqueness or importance;
- b) be complex:** single resources (with certain exceptions and under equal other conditions) are more difficult to become attractive for visits than a group of resources, and their complex location helps attract tourists and stimulates the long-term development of the territory through the system of tourism activities in it;
- c) be attractive to tourists:** they can attract with their beauty and exotism or their uniqueness (dimensions, singularity, rare resource, etc.), but without observing the requirement of attractiveness it is practically impossible to be attributed to the category of tourist resources;
- d) be safe:** important in this case is the extent of their preservation – the higher, with equal other conditions, the more the resources will be more attractive (the ruins of a medieval castle which are not preserved attract less visitors than a well-preserved castle building);
- e) have a good geographical location:** their location is favorable if it is in combination with diverse landscape, natural and cultural and historical characteristics.

The main properties of tourist resources should include attractiveness (appeal), accessibility, degree of study; significance (spectacle); socio-demographic characteristics; potential stock and method of use. The following are defined as their specific properties:

- integrity (indivisibility) and elements in their existence in interrelation;
- carrying capacity – number of tourists who can be received in the territory in which the TR is located;
- reliability – determined by all social, economic and political conditions within the boundaries of the tourist territory;
- uniqueness (rarity, exclusivity) or probability of occurrence and originality;
- educational value – it is associated with specific historical facts, personalities, life path and creativity of famous people;
- fame – popularity among tourists;



- exotism – the degree of contrast of the object to the conditions of the permanent residence of the tourists, through which the so-called singularity of the tourist site is examined;
- expressiveness – degree of interaction with the environment, the infrastructure and the nature;
- preservation – readiness for organized admission of tourists;
- safety – absence of possible negative consequences of the use of TR by tourists and local population.

The assessment procedure for TR includes the following main stages:

1. Make a distinction between the objects that are to be evaluated with their components and properties.
2. Differentiation of the individuals from whose position's assessment will be carried out. Formulation of assessment criteria that define the objectives and scale of the study.
3. Development of indicators (benchmarks) showing the assessment relationship between the object and the individual.

Practical and applied aspects of the methodology

Selection of methods and approaches for assessment of TR

A basic requirement for the current assessment methodology for TR is to be as objective as possible and be based on easily verifiable criteria and indicators. The selection of indicators is based on a study and consideration of a significant number of options that were described in the previous part of the methodology. From them can be selected a limited number of the most relevant and best supported by information for the purposes of this development.



To achieve greater credibility and transparency, criteria and indicators should be defined that are widespread, verified and used in other analytical materials exploring tourism resources and the potential of a given area.

Subject to assessment and analysis in the present study are 20 TRs, falling within the scope of 3 municipalities along the way of Via Militaris. The identification of the overall potential for tourism development on the basis of TPs is carried out in successive steps, taking into account:

1. The level of development of the tourist function: on the basis of statistical data on the condition of facilities and attendance of tourist sites;
2. Tourist resource potential:
 - degree of utilization and ability of TRs to form completed tourist products, assessed by analysis of secondary data (office study) of the attractiveness and usability of the various resources and the conditions for the formation of tourist products;
 - qualitative and quantitative characteristics of the selected TRs and their assessment;
3. The assessment of infrastructure (transport accessibility) and staffing and marketing of destinations as factors attracting tourist flow;

Ranking and grouping of TRs by:

- degree of utilization;
- potential for tourism development;
- maximum carrying capacity;
- territorial location and spatial concentration; - degree of attractiveness;
- degree of suitability for the formation of tourist products.

Without underestimating the importance of the tourism facilities, the transport accessibility and staffing resources, in identifying indicators and carrying out the assessment of the overall

potential of TRs, greater weight is given to cultural and historical potential, as a factor for the development of different types of tourism (formation of new tourism products) and a source of revenue for local communities. This is related to the need to build suitable accommodation facilities and their corresponding general technical and specific tourist infrastructure (including for ease of accessibility).

The impact of these factors is the reason for the higher number of indicators to assess TRs. Special attention deserves duplication of the same sites and resources for tourism in a given territory (museums, reserve and monuments) in calculating their potential in more than one category. Part of the TRs are subject to visits and a base for development of various types of tourism (e.g. cultural, eco- and rural tourism). At the same time, they are the basis for development of other types of tourism (cultural and educational and adventure, for example). This further requires their integration and marketing as a complex tourist product, which is also related to the construction of the necessary facilities and infrastructure.

Selection of indicators to assess the potential of TR

After reviewing a large number of possible indicators and in line with the defined objectives and approaches, indicators and criteria (some of them complex) are selected, which are sufficient to demonstrate and describe the different dimensions of the potential of TRs.

- Indicators for assessing the level of development of the tourist function.

According to the provisions of the Bulgarian Law on Tourism (Art. 3, para. 2) and other normative acts, the statistical data on tourism and tourist information are: accommodation establishments, including: class A - hotels, motels, apartment tourist complexes, holiday villages, tourist villages and villas; class B - family hotels, hostels, boarding houses, holiday homes, guest houses, guest rooms, guest apartments, bungalows and camp sites. The official BG statistical information is by the indicators:

- a) number of accommodation establishments;
- b) number of beds in accommodation establishments;
- c) number of nights spent- in total, by Bulgarians and foreigners;
- d) number of the persons used accommodation, in total, by Bulgarians and foreigners;
- e) number of bed/nights;
- f) duration of stay in days, in total, by Bulgarians and foreigners;
- g) income from accommodation and additional services in the accommodation facilities - in total, by Bulgarians and foreigners;

A major problem of the structure of statistical information is that there is no official differentiation of data by type of tourism and by municipalities (in terms of territory it is the smallest territorial unit in the area). In the present study the indicators of the official statistics are used for accommodation facilities, number of beds, number of nights and number of visitors and level of employment. "Number of beds" and "number of nights spent" are shown as key indicators. The latest available data for the period 2017-2019 year have been used in order to present up-to-date information.

- Indicators for assessment of the potential of tourist resources, the degree of utilization and the possibility to form completed tourist products.

The review of the legal framework and the main strategic documents formulating the country's tourism policy supports the assessment of the degree of development of tourism and the TRs used for this purpose. The Tourism Act of 2013 explicitly lists the types of tourism (Art. 3 para. 4). For the purpose of this methodology, when take into account the specifics of the territory and its tourist resources, we define as characteristic the cultural, historical, environmental and rural tourism. The law also details the tourist sites, including resources (those defining tourist interest in certain places), of which the following are of greater importance for the present development: visitors' centers for presenting and exhibiting the local natural and cultural heritage; museums and public and private collections of cultural treasures and art galleries; arts



and crafts centers and tourist temporary exhibition centers; adventure parks, entertainment and thematic parks; wildlife observation sites.

The main objective in evaluating the potential of the selected TRs is establishing their attractiveness, the opportunities for their inclusion in tourist routes, peculiarities and problems related to their use and protection.

TRs are described in detail and studied, but their characteristics is too general and is not directed directly to the needs of tourism. It is necessary to choose only those peculiarities of the sites that are relevant to the tourist use. The selection of the parameters for description and analysis is determined by the type of site, but some of them are obligatory for all.

For the cultural and historical monuments and places it is necessary to specify name and type;

- location and transport accessibility;
- historical period or the particular event or person with whom it is linked;
- physical condition and adjacent space;
- organization of visits (if the site is used);
- availability of service personnel;
- national origin of tourists visiting tourist sites (real and potential);
- types of routes in which the site is or may be included;
- availability of special security status;
- Information sources for the site, etc.

Based on the above information, which is not always available or correct, a comparison can be made with other sites and conclusions can be drawn about the attractiveness, significance, uniqueness and probability of future use of the resource (site). The correlation between the indicators to assess cultural and historical significance and the indicators determining the possibilities for the use of sites (most of which are variables) is of particular importance.

The availability of developed tourist sites and localizations is one of the indicators to carry greater weight in evaluating the tourist potential with the following arguments:

- provides a good picture of the resources with particularly high potential;
- it is directly linked to the available or feasible tourist utilization and the overall structure of larger spaces, and not only in the resource's territory;
- it includes not only existing but also potential resources, with the help of which tourism development is possible in the future.

The disadvantage of the indicator concerned is that the data for the individual tourist localizations are not officially announced or are often compromised or confidential.

Based on the analysis and assessment of individual TRs and their territorial location, conclusions can be drawn, and recommendations made to improve their use, for the formation of complex or specialized routes. The highly expressed subjectivity of the preferences of visitors with different nationality, age, education, occupation, etc., determines the need for a differentiated assessment of TRs for the different groups of tourists, whenever possible.

From the point of view of this methodology it is important that the assessment of TRs to reflect their regional specificity and the potential for socio-economic development, improvement of living standards, etc.

Assessment of TRs and their potential

Fundamentals

- the ultimate aim of the complex assessment of TRs and their potential is: selection of the most significant ones to identify opportunities for their inclusion in tourist routes and reveal the peculiarities and problems of their use and protection;



- TRs and their potential are assessed by using the methodology developed according to the project assignment and the criteria, requirements and indicators defined therein;
- the assessment of TRs and their potential is primarily based on objective measures, taking into account the aggregate views of the participants in working groups and the expert opinions of the assessment developers;
- for the assessment of TRs and their potential the point method (method of ratings) is used, the result of which is the awarding of a certain number of points on selected characteristics of the TRs, specific indicators for their measurement and aggregated subjective opinions;
- the sum of the points awarded forms the overall rating of the given site (TR) and assigns it a corresponding place (rank) in the list of the rated sites;
- the selected characteristics and their corresponding indicators have different participation (value, weight) in the assessment of TRs, which is determined in the number of points (from 1 to 100);
- the total maximum number of points for each cultural and historical tourist resource (CHTR) or site is 100 and is formed as the sum of the points on each of the selected and evaluated characteristics and indicators;
- the main characteristics (qualities, properties) of the CHTR used in measuring and assessing them, together with their inherent indicators, significance and weight (share participation) are presented in Table. 1

Assessment of TR

- a matrix for assessment of resources (see Table 2) is used for the purpose of the assessment and for its clearer presentation and visualization;
- on the horizontal rows of the table are displayed the individual sites (TRs), arranged by rank according to the total maximum points assigned to them, and on the vertical rows (columns) - the number of points of the selected specific characteristics and indicators;

- of the total number of assessed sites - 20, after completion of the evaluation and selection, their final number according to the requirements of the project assignment had to be set at 5.

Main characteristics and indicators for assessment of the selected TRs and sites:

Determining characteristics (association to the main criteria)	Indicators and measures	Weight (number of points)	
		For indicator	Total
Accessibility (Criterion 1)	By all motor vehicles (including wide body) /buses	5	11
	By car only	3	
	By SUV only	2	
	By foot only	1	
Carrying capacity (Criterion 1)	Carrying capacity (number of visitors – per week, per day, per hour)	3	13
	Carrying capacity of facilities	3	
	Ecosystems load degree	3	
	Possible number of visitors at 1 m ²	2	
	Number of visitors to number of beds	2	
Attractiveness/appeal (Criterion 2)	Popularity /fame	5	25
	Combination with an attractive and varied landscape	3	
	Authenticity / degree of conservation	4	
	Uniqueness	5	
	Exotism	4	
	Educational / scientific value	4	
Significance (Criterion 2)	Global (included in UNESCO list or a candidate)	8	18
	National (included in the 100. tourist sites)	5	
	Local	2	
	As an ensemble	2	

	"For information"	1	
Utilization for the needs of tourism (Criterion 3)	Safe for use	4	13
	Degree of study	2	
	Guaranteed period of operation	4	
	Capital intensity	3	
Readiness to receive and service tourists (Criterion 3)	Availability of tourist infrastructure and superstructure	7	20
	Degree of staff availability	5	
	Availability/absence of tourist guide services	3	
	Degree of suitability to form tourist product	5	
Total number of points:			100

Selected TRs and sites – Bulgarian side of Via Militaris:

Site / Attraction		Location	Type of TR	Criterion 1		Criterion 2		Criterion 3		Total number of points
				Access ibility	Carryi ng capac ity	attracti veness	Signi fican ce	Utilizat ion for the needs of touris m	Readin ess to receive and service tourist s	
1	Roman residence and road station "Skretiska" -Kostinbrod	Town of Kostinbrod	site	11	13	21	10	11	12	78
2	Church in the locality "Sveti Spas"	Town of Pernik	site	11	8	11	5	9	8	49
3	Chiprovski Monastery "Sveti Ivan Rilski"	Town of Chiprovtsi	site	11	8	11	5	9	8	49
4	"Katerininata Kashta" [Katerina's House] - Chiprovtsi	Town of Chiprovtsi	site	11	8	17	5	10	10	58
5	Ancient and Medieval fortress "Kaleto" – Berkovitsa	Town of Berkovitsa	site	11	13	20	10	13	12	79



6	Fortress Castra ad Montanezium - Montana	Town of Montana	site	11	13	16	10	13	13	76
7	The sunken church "Sveto Vaznesenie" (Ogosta Dam)	Ogosta Dam	site	6	3	7	5	4	0	25
8	Underground Museum of Mining - Pernik	Town of Pernik	site	11	8	13	3	13	15	63
9	Church "Sveta Petka" Breznik	Town of Breznik	site	11	8	7	4	8	3	41
10	Temple-Well near the village of Garla	Pernik Province	site	6	6	16	5	4	0	37
11	Festival "Surva" - Pernik	Town of Pernik	event	11	13	14	17	4	5	60
12	Triangular Tower of Serdica	City of Sofia	site	11	11	25	10	13	20	90
13	Bilinski Monastery „Sveti Arhangel Mihail“	Town of Breznik	site	11	8	7	5	6	8	45
14	Fortress "Borovets"	Locality Borovets, village of Razliv	site	3	8	7	5	8	5	36
15	Slatina Neolithic settlement	City of Sofia	site	11	11	10	4	3	0	31
16	Fortress "Bozhenishki Urvich"	Village of Bozhenitsa, Botevgrad Municipality, Sofia Province	site	11	13	25	10	13	20	91
17	Ruins of Roman villa – Kralev Dol	Village of Kralev Dol, Pernik Province	site	11	13	20	3	11	17	75
18	Church "Sveti Yoan Letni"	Pchelina Dam, village of Pozarnentsi, Pernik Province	site	3	3	7	3	8	0	24
19	Roman fortress - Montanezium – Serdica	Municipality Varshets, Montana Province	site	11	8	11	5	6	0	41
20	Almus – Roman fortress and road station	Town of Lom, Montana Province	site	11	5	4	5	4	0	29

1. Roman residence and road station "Skretiska" -Kostinbrod

2. Ancient and Medieval fortress "Kaleto" – Berkovitsa
3. Fortress Castra ad Montanezum – Montana
4. Fortress "Bozhenishki Urvich"
5. Ruins of Roman villa – Kralevo Dol

Detailed presentation of the tourist attractions from the Bulgarian side of Via Militaris -

Appendix 1

Selected TRs and sites – Serbian side of Via Militaris:

Site / Attraction	Location	Type of TR	Criterion 1		Criterion 2		Criterion 3		Total number of points
			Accessibility	Carrying capacity	Attractiveness	Significance	Utilization for the needs of tourism	Readiness to receive and service tourists	
1 Niš Fortress - Turkish fortification, 17th century	Town of Niš	site	11	13	25	18	13	15	95
2 Mediana - archeological site from Roman times (3rd - 4th century)	Town of Niš	site	11	10	25	18	13	10	87
3 Scull tower - a unique 19th century monument with the skulls of Serbian uprisings from the Battle of Cegar, built into the tower	Town of Niš	site	11	10	25	18	13	15	92
4 Sićevo Gorge	Town of Niš	site	11	10	25	15	10	15	86
5 Nisevac Gorge	Municipality of Svrlijig	site	11	13	20	15	10	12	81
6 Early Byzantine-Medieval Churches	Municipality of Svrlijig	site	11	13	16	10	13	13	76
7 Old town of Svrlijig	Municipality of Svrlijig	site	8	5	5	15	0	0	33



8	Church "Sveta Petka" Breznik	Municipality of Svrljig	site	11	8	13	3	13	15	63
9	Monument dating from 202, which was erected and dedicated to Emperor Septimius Severus	Municipality of Bela palanka	site	11	13	20	12	10	15	81
10	Mileage, a kilometer reader that dates from the beginning of the third century of a new era.	Municipality of Bela palanka	site	11	13	20	12	10	15	81
11	Church of the Ascension of the Lord	Municipality of Bela palanka	event	11	13	20	12	10	15	81
12	Days of traditional cheese pie	Municipality of Bela palanka	site	11	11	25	10	13	20	90
13	Monastery Sv. John the Theologian (Pagan)	Town of Pirot	site	11	8	25	18	8	8	88
14	Ponisavlje Museum	Town of Pirot	site	11	8	25	18	10	10	92
15	The Greek military cemetery from the First World War	Town of Pirot	site	11	11	10	4	3	0	31
16	Momčil's (Pirot) town or Kale fortress	Town of Pirot	site	11	13	25	18	13	15	95
17	Road intersection - Via Militaris	Municipality of Dimitrovgrad	site	5	5	25	18	0	0	53
18	Jerma Special Nature Reserve (SRP), city of Dimitrovgrad	Municipality of Dimitrovgrad	site	11	13	25	15	10	18	92
19	Church of the Blessed Virgin	Municipality of Dimitrovgrad	site	11	8	25	18	8	8	88
20	Petrliška cave	Municipality of Dimitrovgrad	site	8	5	20	15	0	0	48

1. Niš Fortress - Turkish fortification, 17th century
2. Niševac Gorge-Municipality of Svrljig
3. Days of traditional cheese pie and old Remesiana monuments-Municipality of Bela Palanka
4. Momčil's (Pirot) town or Kale fortress, City of Pirot

5. Jerma Special Nature Reserve (SRP), city of Dimitrovgrad

Detailed presentation of the tourist attractions from the Serbian side of Via Militaris -

Appendix 2

Tourist product "Via Militaris " – pilot tourist packages

On June 23-24th and July 6th-8th 2020, a workshops regarding development of the tourist product "Via Militaris" and action plan took place in Pirot and Pernik, respectively. As a result of in-depth assessment of identified touristic potentials and their capacities and direct interaction between stakeholders during the workshops and field visits examples of Via Militaris tourist packages were developed.

For Example:

Via Militaris – 4 days - Nis, Mediana, Sicevo, Jeep tour Via Militaris, Monastery, Bela Palanka, Remiziana, Pirot, Erma – Sofia, visit local festivals

Day 1 Nis – Turdava, Muzej, Cele Kula, Mediana, Town, Kazandjisko sokace

Day 2 Sicevo, Bela Palanka, Pirot – Jeep tour/Via Militaris, Monastery Sv.Petka, Remiziana, Pirot

Day 3 Pirot, Jerma, Sofia – Kale Turdava, Museum, Jerma, Poganovski Monastery, Sofia

Day 4 Sofia city sightseeing tour

The eagle wings over the Balkans – 6 days – Sofia, Kostinbrod, Pirot, Nis, Beograd

Day 1 arrival Sofia airport, sightseeing tour – Sveta Sofia & necropolis, Eastern & Western, Gates of Serdica, roman time ruins & city center, opera performance

Day 2 National Historical Museum, Boyana Church, folklore dinner & fire dances

Day 3 Kostinbrod, Pirot, Nis – Sicevacka klisura, Cele Kula, Mediana

Day 4 Nis – Castle, Niska banja

Day 5 Nis, Beograd – sightseeing, Scadarlia dinner

Roman fortresses on the Via Militaris road – 5 days – Nis, Montana, Mezdra, Belogradchik, Pirot, Bela Palanka

Day 1 Nis - Montana, Nis fortress, Mediana, Castra ad Monatanesium, Lapidarium

Day 2 Montana – Mezdra, Kaleto, Medieval festival, Ledenika cave, Belogradchik

Day 3 Belogradchik – Pirot, Belogradchik fortress, Momchilova fortress, Kale fest

Day 4 Pirot – Bela Palanka, Sukovski and Poganovski monasteries, Remeziana

Day 5 Bela Palanka – Nis, Banitsa festival, Sicevacka gorge, Nisvile Jazz Festival

Via Militaris route – 3 days- Nis-Bela Palanka-Pirot-Pernik

Day 1 Nis – Nis fortress, Mediana, Winery Malca

Day 2 Pirot – Sicevo gorge, Remeziana B.Palanka, Jerma monasteries,

Day 3 Sofia – Pernik Mining museum, Ethnographic museum, Sofia square

In those packages the participants included a framework of the activities that tourists can pursue in Via Militaris tourist destination: natural attractions, traditional products, tangible and intangible heritage of Via Militaris cross border region, natural, cultural and human resources of the targeted locations, as well as data on the types and quantities of services that can be offered and networked with responsible tourist service providers.

Other possibilities can be created as follows:

- Constantine's road (City of Niš and City of Kostinbrod related to Scretisca and Mediana, two villas of Constantine the Great)
- Museum tour (Botevgrad, Pernik, Pirot, Niš)
- Cross-border adventure tour (cave and gorge exploring, rock climbing...Niševac, Sićevo, Erma)
- Eco trails in the cross-border region



- Cross-border cycle tours
- Taste of traditional cuisine tour (banica, peglana kobasica, pirotski sir, dimitovgradska sušenica, šopska salata,)

Based on the suggested tourist concept, the sustainable action plan for long-term development of Via Militaris as a tourist destination was developed, as the project stakeholders selected priorities, analysed financing sources and identified potential partners between each other with the potential for future joint initiatives.

Marketing research

Process of marketing management

Performing marketing activities implies their constant adaptation to changes in the environment and the tourism itself. The business success of a tourism is increasingly conditioned by its ability to actively influence the market situation and create change. Establishing an optimal balance between the identified challenges in the environment and the ability of companies to exploit them profitably requires a well-thought-out management and decision-making process. Marketing management implies directing the marketing activities of the tourism in order to more effectively meet the identified needs in the market. The marketing management process is an ongoing process of striking a balance between a touristic capabilities and market needs. Frequent changes in market conditions make the marketing management process dynamic. It is necessary to identify market opportunities, determine appropriate ways of reacting and ensure the implementation of the decisions made.

Marketing management is a process that includes different phases and activities. In this sense, it is necessary to identify market segments, determine market potential, sales potential and select target segments. The real situation on the market must be harmonized with the distinctive abilities of the tourism. Selected market performance is the result of goals and



resources, its strengths and weaknesses, as well as variable options on the market. Market dynamics requires a modern tourism to react proactively, to anticipate events and create changes.

Marketing management is a dynamic and continuous process. Planning decisions regulate marketing activities and direct them towards established goals. Marketing management is a process that includes the following stages:

- planning,
- implementation and
- control.

Analysis of the internal and external environment is a key activity that precedes planning. The main purpose of strategic analysis is to identify the challenges that a tourism can turn into its market opportunities. Planning is a phase of the management process in which goals, strategies, programs and plans are formulated, by the application of which they can be achieved. The implementation phase involves implementing strategies and programs and designing the organizational structure of marketing. By organizing, the marketing sector is trained to effectively implement planning decisions. The evaluation and control of the made planning decisions and the undertaking of appropriate corrective actions are performed in the control phase. The control examines the rationality of the actions taken on the market. The marketing management process should be set up in such a way that the individual phases give a synergetic effect, that they complement and support each other. Appropriate marketing decisions are made at all stages of the management process. The decision-making process permeates the entire marketing management process. The goal of managing marketing activities, and above all the choice of an adequate marketing strategy and creating the optimal combination of marketing programs is the long-term acquisition of a competitive advantage of the tourism.



Marketing activity planning

Marketing activity planning is a phase of the marketing management process in which planning decisions are made about the goals, policies, strategies, programs and plans of marketing activities. Marketing planning is part of the overall planning of the entire organization. Complex business systems plan their activities for the organization as a whole, for strategic business units and for appropriate functional areas. The role of marketing is important at every level of planning.

Marketing planning is based on a defined mission or purpose of the touristic existence and includes a process of several interrelated phases. These include marketing analysis, identifying market opportunities, identifying strategic options, developing marketing strategies, and organizing marketing activities. The process begins with an analysis of the internal environment (strengths and weaknesses) and the external environment (opportunities and dangers). Marketing analysis is the basis for obtaining relevant information that is necessary to define specific marketing goals on the basis of which the choice of tourism strategy is made. Marketing strategies are developed in part from broader corporate strategy, corporate mission, and corporate goals.

Marketing strategy serves as the foundation of a marketing plan. The marketing plan ensures the implementation of the strategy by defining the sequence of activities and marketing budget. The marketing plan contains a set of specific actions required for the successful implementation of a specific - adopted marketing strategy. Marketing strategy serves as a fundamental support, the bearer of marketing plans designed to achieve marketing goals and objectives. It is very important that these goals have measurable results.



Defining marketing activities

The evolution of the concept of strategy concept shows that there have been many attempts to precisely define the concept itself. Etymologically speaking, the term strategy is derived from the Greek word "strategos", which means military leader. The term strategy itself is borrowed from military terminology, which reflects the skill and ability to find the right ways to achieve a goal. The views of the authors are different depending on the time of creation and the approach to the strategy. The military, for years, has used the word strategy to denote a grand plan made in light of what it believes the enemy could or could not do. The definition of the strategy was based on different bases: purpose, mission, goals of competitive advantage. Strategy is developed as a plan, process and cause of behavior. Approaches to perceptions conditioned the emphasis on different dimensions of the strategy, which was reflected in the results of its implementation.

Strategy is the management activity of a tourism or other organizational system, which refers to the choice of directions, methods and instruments for achieving the set goals. Formulating a strategy includes determining the mission and long-term goals, analyzing the opportunities and threats generated by the general environment, determining the attractiveness of the branch by analyzing competitive forces, identifying sources of competitive advantage based on internal environment analysis and determining feasible options. The purpose of strategies is to identify and make known through a system of main goals and policies an imaginary image of the tourism. The strategy does not seek to determine exactly how companies will meet their goals, it is the task of countless major and minor tourism programs. It establishes a framework that directs thinking and action. Its usefulness in practice and importance in directing planning justifies, for the purposes of analysis, the separation of strategy as a special type of plan.

The role of marketing in formulating a strategy is reflected in a reliable analysis of product-markets, consideration and evaluation of strategic alternatives and proposals for the most



favorable strategy for each market. Taking a leading role in the development and implementation of strategy, the role of marketing is threefold. The first and most important task of marketing is to determine the requirements of consumers and to effectively acquaint the entire organization with them. This includes conducting relevant research to find out who consumers are and what they want. It is not always clear who the consumers are. In some cases, customers do not have to be consumers or users. An organization that can provide consumers with something that is closer to what they want than what they expect has the ability not only to satisfy, but also to delight its consumers. Consumer expectations wishes and needs must be understood and clearly communicated to those in charge of designing products or services, to those in charge of their creation and production, as well as to those responsible for their delivery. The second task of marketing is to decide on the competitive positioning to be adopted. Understanding that markets are heterogeneous and made up of different segments, each with different requirements, from essentially the same offerings, leads to the need to clearly decide which target market or markets the organization wants to serve. Such a decision is made on the basis of two groups of factors. First, how attractive the alternative potential targets are. Second, how much tourism can meet each potential goal relative to competitors. In long words, how much appropriate strength or competence tourism can put into serving the market. The third important task of marketing is to gather all the relevant resources of the organization to plan and implement ensuring customer satisfaction. This includes ensuring that all members of the organization carry out coordinated work to satisfy consumers and that there is no existing or potential omission between the design, production and delivery of the offer. There is a lot of work to be done in the service sector in order to identify the factors that can lead to failures in the process of designing and offering to consumers. The central role of marketing is to lead the project in such a way as to minimize omissions and thus ensure consumer satisfaction through the delivery of high-quality services.

Numerous definitions indicate the author's attempt to define the term marketing strategy as precisely as possible. Their analysis makes it possible to conclude that there are no essential



differences. Marketing strategy is a marketing way of thinking, according to which each business unit is expected to achieve its marketing goals. The marketing strategy consists of making decisions about expenditures for marketing plans, marketing mix and marketing allocations in relation to the expected conditions of the environment and competitors. Marketing strategy is a rational response of companies to developments in the domestic and international markets. It is defined starting from marketing as a business concept whose elements are needs, the integrality of the effort to satisfy and the satisfaction of the bearer of needs while achieving business goals.

Problems in understanding and different approaches to marketing strategy arise as a consequence of the place and role of marketing in the strategic mix of business functions. Marketing activities consist of various strategic and operational activities that cover the area of the touristic overall business. Problems arise as a result of overlapping competencies and responsibilities for strategy development and implementation. Complex organizational structures are more pronounced in companies, in which the strategy is defined for the level of the tourism as a whole, individual jobs and the function itself.

Marketing strategy encompasses much more than advertising and promotion, it is the whole strategy of entering the market - starting from the desired positioning, product or service characteristics, price positioning, distribution strategy, and communication with target customers. The marketing strategy is based on the business goals of the organization and determines all the marketing activities that it will implement.

Marketing strategy development process

Creating marketing strategies is a complex process, which includes a careful analysis of the tourism environment, competition and internal forces in order to develop a sustainable action plan that will develop the touristic competitive advantage and maximize the results obtained

with available resources. When developing a marketing strategy, a tourism must consider several important factors:

- values and purpose,
- time,
- market analysis,
- level of market orientation,
- availability of resources,
- performance measure,
- degree of turbulence,
- product, market and industry sectors.

The process of strategic planning can be defined as the process of developing and maintaining strategic consistency between the goals and capabilities of a tourism and changing its marketing capabilities. According to Smith, strategic marketing planning involves understanding the market, choosing a strategy, and deciding on actions (Figure 1).

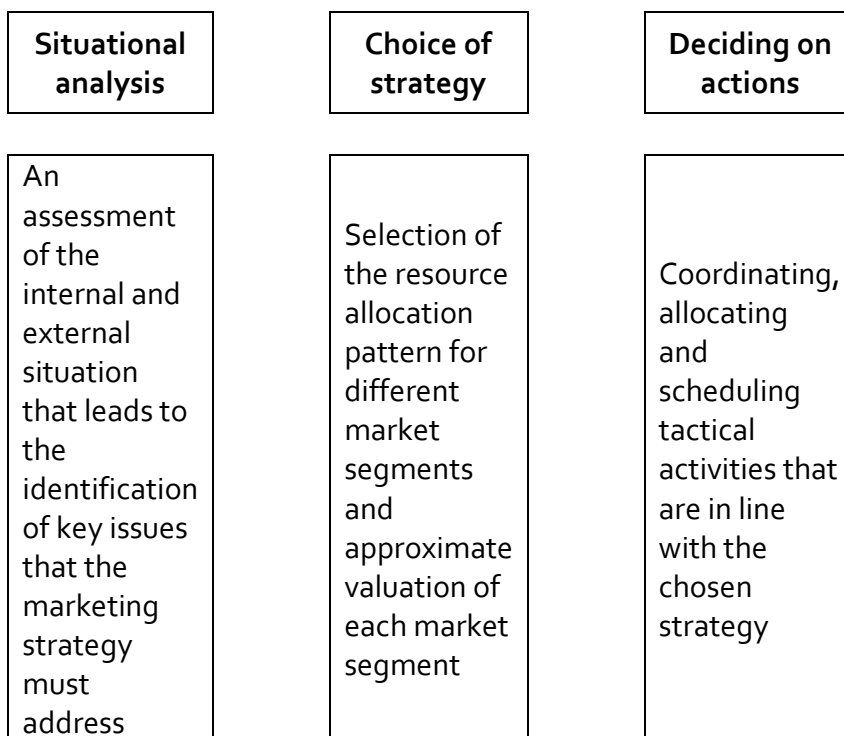




Figure 1: The essence of the process of creating a marketing strategy

The formulation of a marketing strategy, in the conditions of increasingly pronounced influences and interests of various individuals and groups, should enable the harmonization of the tourist capabilities with the opportunities and threats from the environment. Strategic marketing starts from a clear idea of where the tourism is located and which strategic options it can use to realize the desired directions of action. The strategic choice is conditioned by the ability of management to harmonize goals and desires with the needs of consumers and obligations to society. The process of strategic marketing consists of four basic interrelated elements: environmental analysis, strategy formulation, strategy implementation, evaluation and control. According to Dramond and associates, the strategic marketing process consists of three phases:

- strategic analysis,
- strategic choice and
- strategy implementation.

Strategic analysis

Strategic analysis is a phase of the process of developing a marketing strategy, the goal of which is to understand the strategic position of the tourism. The purpose of strategic analysis is to provide relevant information that is necessary to assess the competitive advantage of the tourism and identify critical factors of business success. These are information about the sources and capabilities of the tourism, market opportunities, challenges and dangers of the environment.

Analysis of internal and external environment

Strategic analysis includes two key segments:

- internal environment analysis - analysis of sources and capabilities of the tourism and

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- external environment analysis - environmental analysis, competition analysis, customer analysis.

An important area of strategic analysis is the analysis of the sources and capabilities of the tourism, ie. internal analysis. Internal analysis provides the information necessary to identify the touristic key assets and capabilities, on the basis of which it is possible to build its strategy, aimed at meeting market needs. It includes consideration of tangible and intangible sources, which are extremely difficult to estimate reliably.

Customer Analysis

The first step in customer analysis is to identify current and potential customers of the tourism, after which it is necessary to determine their dominant needs, analyze the tourist products and competitors that could meet those needs, and anticipate possible changes in their needs.

Economic and social changes in the 80's and 90's influenced the emergence of the so-called "new customer". As a consequence, there is a need for a better understanding of the motives and specific behavior of the customer. New customers are distinguished by:

- development of a new value system,
- emphasizing the value of money,
- higher level of price awareness and price sensitivity,
- increased demand and willingness to accept more new interesting products,
- less technophobia,
- less loyalty to brands and sellers,
- greater willingness to experiment with new products, ideas and delivery methods,
- generally, a much more critical attitude towards government, large corporations and brands,
- awareness of the need for environmental protection,
- fundamental changes in family structure and relationships,

- the changed roles of men and women that continue to change.

The new customer is more demanding than the customer in the past, notices more differences in the offer, is less loyal to the brand and is more willing to complain. The emergence of a new type of customer is one of the biggest challenges for marketing managers, who must recognize changes in the expectations of the tourism, as well as changes in the nature of the relationship, which customers require. Although elements are known for constant and detailed customer analysis, many organizations fall into the trap of believing that they fully understand their needs and motives because they have daily contact with their customers. The reality is often different, indicating the need to constantly review customer preferences, satisfaction levels, and needs for new products and services that existing customers would like to purchase.

The answers to these questions provide an understanding of how customers are most likely to respond to marketing actions. The companies that make the best use of the information contained in these responses will be in a position to gain a competitive advantage. Ferel and Hartlin adapted the 5W model (Who - who, What - what, Where - where, When - when and Why - why), adding another Why. This model can help gather information when understanding customer behavior:

The "stimulus-reaction" model can also help in understanding customer behavior (Figure 2).

External incentives		Customer's " black box "		Deciding on purchases
Environmental factors	Marketing factors	Customer characteristics	The adoption process decisions	The choice
Economically	Product	Cultural	Problem identification	Product
Social	The price	Social	Informing	Brenda
Politically	Promotion	Personal	Evaluation	The seller
Technological	Distribution	Psychological	Decision Behavior	Amounts
				Shopping times



Figure 2: Model of customer behavior "incentive-reaction"

Incentives that come from the environment and from the elements of the marketing mix, enter the customer's "black box", where together with the characteristics of the customer through decision-making processes, produce a set of outputs in the form of a purchase decision. The purchase decision contains answers to the questions of whether to buy and if so, which product and brand, from which seller, when and in what quantity. One of the important tasks in marketing planning is to understand how the "black box" works, ie two key components: the factors that an individual carry with him when shopping and the decision-making process.

Cultural factors refer to culture, subculture and social class. Culture is a system of interpretation, used in understanding every day or exceptional events in the environment. It represents a basic and lasting influence on behavior through socialization, first with the family, and then with a number of institutions such as schools, groups of friends, clubs, etc. In that way, a system of values, a way of perceiving different things, inclinations and a way of behaving are created. This broad set of values is then influenced by the subcultures to which people belong, and in which they develop. Subcultures such as national, religious, racial groups and geographical areas, to some extent, influence people and create differences in ethnic taste, cultural preferences, taboos, attitudes and lifestyles. The influence of the subculture is subsequently influenced by a third set of factors - the social class.

Social factors include reference groups, family, social role, and status. The reference group represents a real or imaginary person, or a group of people, that has a significant influence on the assessment of a person's aspirations and behavior. This influence can be informative, utilitarian and valuable. There are four types of reference groups:

- primary groups are informative, individuals belong to them and interact with them. These include family, neighbors, colleagues and friends;



- secondary groups tend to be more formal than primary ones and are characterized by a lower degree of interaction between members. Such are trade unions, religious groups and professional associations;
- aspiration groups are groups to which an individual wants to belong;
- dissociative groups are groups whose values and activities reject the individual.

The influence of the reference group changes during the product life cycle. In the initial phase, for example, the decision on whether to buy a certain product is strongly influenced by others, while the influence on the choice of brand is not particularly significant. In the growth phase, the reference group influences both the choice of products and the choice of brand. Furthermore, in the phase of maturity, the subject of influence is the brand, and to a much lesser extent the type of product. The influence of reference groups on product and brand choice is almost always weak in the declining phase.

The family has the greatest influence on an individual's behavior in the buying process. The research in the USA identified three patterns of family purchasing decisions in relation to the product category:

- domination of the husband - life insurance, cars, electronic devices,
- female domination - washing machines, carpets, kitchen and other furniture, except living room furniture,
- equally - furniture for living room, rest, house, furnishing the house and entertainment.

Personal factors are attributed to the mental state, including a number of personal characteristics of the customer such as age, life cycle stage, occupation, economic circumstances, lifestyle and personality. Personality refers to a unique psychological profile that consistently affects the way a person reacts to the environment, while lifestyle refers to a person's consumption pattern, which reflects the choice of the way they will spend their time and money. Personal factors are manifested individually but are strongly influenced by external factors. It is harder to explain and understand them, and therefore to predict them.



Psychological factors are motivation, perception, learning, and beliefs and attitudes. One of the models of motivation, which largely contributes to the understanding of customer behavior, is the Marshall Model, according to which each customer acts in accordance with personal interests. The model is normative because it provides the basis for deciding on a purchase, that is, how a person should decide, and not how he actually decides. Also, the model suggests a number of useful behavioral hypotheses, such as:

- lower price, higher sales volume;
- lower price of substitute products, lower sales volume;
- lower price of complementary products, higher sales volume;
- higher average salary, higher sales volume, provided that it is not an "inferior" good;
- higher allocations for promotion, higher sales.

Freud's work suggests that the psychological factors that influence behavior are mostly unconscious, so the real motives are rarely understood. In marketing, this concept would mean that the customer's motive for buying a certain product may be different from the basic motive. Maslow's model of motivation suggests that behavior can be explained by a hierarchy of needs. The model indicates that the person first concentrates on satisfying the most important, basic, ie physiological needs. After satisfying this set of needs, attention is redirected to the following levels: security, social needs, respect, and self-affirmation.

After identifying the factors that influence customer behavior, marketing managers are in a position to review the purchase process, through the analysis of the following elements:

- purchase roles,
- type of shopping behavior,
- decision-making process.

In creating marketing strategies, and especially in decision-making related to the promotion of products or services, it is very important to determine who are the participants in the buying

process and what are their roles. When a purchase decision involves more people, the following roles can be singled out:

- the initiator, who first proposes the purchase of a product or service,
- a person of influence, whose comments influence the decision,
- the person who forms the decision, ie. the person who decides on the purchase,
- the buyer, the person who physically makes the purchase,
- the user, who uses the product or service,
- a gatekeeper, who controls information or access, or both, to decision-makers and influencers.

The types of buying behaviors differ in relation to the costs, complexity, risks and chances, which arise as a result of the purchase decision. Differences between types of purchasing behavior are based on the degree of customer involvement in the procurement, and on differences between brands. This is illustrated in Figure 3.

Degree of customer involvement	
Low	High
Usually behavior at shopping (eg coffee)	The tendency to by reduction indecision (eg furniture)
Need for diversity (eg chocolates)	Complex behavior when shopping (eg computers)

Figure 3: Four types of shopping behavior

The process of making a purchase decision begins with the recognition of the problem, ie the need by the consumer. Recognition of a need can be the result of an internal stimulus, such as hunger or thirst, or an external one, for example in the form of an advertisement or a colleague's recommendation. Identifying a need leads to a search for information, which can be passive (simple), such as paying attention to advertisements, or active (more complex) searching for



information. By gathering information, customers develop awareness, knowledge and understanding of different products and brands in the market. This means moving a product or brand from a set of available, to a set of products that are in the mind of the customer, as well as from a set of acceptable alternatives, to a set of choices, from which the customer finally chooses or makes a purchase decision. After the purchase, the customer also compares his product with other products, which affects his satisfaction with the product, so it is necessary to continue marketing communication in the direction of providing assurance to the customer, which supports the choice he made.

Strategic analysis models

Strategic analysis allows you to choose an option that means maximizing the chances and strengths of the tourism and minimizing threats and weaknesses. Strategic analysis can be performed using different methods. In the practice of modern companies are most often used:

- SWOT analysis,
- BCG matrix,
- McKinsey / General Electric i
- ADL matrix.

SWOT analysis

A useful tool for understanding the position of the tourism has SWOT analysis (Strengths - strengths, Weaknesses - weaknesses, Opportunities - chances, Treats - threats) which confronts the internal strengths and weaknesses of the organization with external opportunities and threats. SWOT analysis is a key activity in the situational network. The tourism needs to mobilize strengths, overcome weaknesses, seize opportunities and defend itself from threats. The SWOT analysis raises questions that allow us to see if the tourism can implement a specific strategy.



SWOT analysis can be realized for the level of the organization as a whole, for the strategic business unit, products, as well as for different geographical areas and market segments. The application of SWOT analysis is relevant for assessing the strategic position of a particular business and considering the current and potential future position.

The analysis of strengths and weaknesses enables the perception of the characteristics of the organization (elements of the formal structure and structure of power, culture and value of the organization) and their contribution to achieving the goals of a particular organization. The analysis should show whether the tourism has the resources and capabilities to manage change, and what those capabilities are. Different criteria are used in assessing strengths and weaknesses. One of the criteria is based on the potential effects on profit, that is, the possible effects on the occurrence of losses in the coming years. Comparison with the competition is another important criterion, because it enables the identification of strengths and weaknesses that are significantly greater than the competition. Also, the position of companies in the past period is considered, because it has been shown that companies with satisfactory growth and profitability show more strengths than weaknesses and vice versa. Three criteria are recommended for classifying a particular force as strategic: that it has had an important impact on past performance, that it may have a major impact on the future, and that it differentiates the firm from the competition.

Opportunities and threats refer, above all, to the attractiveness of the market, technology, economic conditions, social changes, legal regulations. Chances are something that can be used as an advantage of the organization. Threats may be current, or potential at some point in the future. It is important to keep in mind that the assessment of external circumstances as opportunities or threats often depends on the organization's ability to use them.

BCG Matrix

A commonly used portfolio model is the BCG matrix. The model was developed by the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) and has two dimensions: relative market share and market growth.

The relative market share of the tourism in a given market segment is shown on the X axis. The market growth rate shows the attractiveness of a particular industry or branch and is shown on the Y axis. Using the BCG matrix, it is possible to identify four different strategic product / job positions. The product / jobs that belong to the first quadrant of the matrix represent "market leaders", ie "stars". These product / jobs have a large market share that has a high growth rate and are the main drivers of development. Products in the II quadrant of the matrix have a low market share but are in an attractive market. They are known as "promising" or "problematic" products. They are promising because of the opportunity to develop into leaders in products, because they are in an attractive market. However, if the potential for growth is not used in the right way, they can become problematic products. The products in the III quadrant of the matrix generate cash. These are the so-called "Mature products", ie "milking cows". Their sale achieves a large market share, in mature markets. They are important because of the liquidity and money they create, which can be successfully used for the development of promising products, and their translation into product leaders. "Stagnant products" or "dog products" are located in the IV quadrant of the matrix. Given that they have a low market share, in a slowly growing market, it is necessary to eliminate them from the production program.

It is desirable that the tourism has a balanced portfolio of products / jobs. This means that significant investments in leader products and mature products are necessary, in order to provide funds for selective investment in promising products. Stagnant products should be eliminated from the portfolio, ie. go for disinvestment.

McKinsey / General Electric model

The McKinsey / General Electric portfolio matrix is based on the application of two criteria: the attractiveness of the branch and the strength of the tourism. The attractiveness of a branch can be assessed using the following variables: market growth, industry size, profitability, competitiveness, industrial cycles, economies of scale, general environmental variables, and the like. The strength of a tourism is determined by: market participation, production efficiency, level of technology, managerial skills, image, etc. Based on the weight (significance) and rating (relative importance) of the individual variable and their summation, the result for both groups of factors was obtained. The product / job can have one of nine positions.

The power of enterprise

	High	Medium	Small
High	1	2	3
Medium	4	5	6
Small	7	8	9

Figure 5: McKinsey / General Electric model

Products in positions 1, 2 and 4 are considered growth potentials, because they are characterized by high and medium strength companies in an attractive industry. Products in positions 6, 8 and 9 do not have the potential for growth, because the strength of the tourism is medium or low, and the industry is characterized by low attractiveness. These businesses are likely to continue to generate revenue, but no additional investment is justified. Products in positions 3, 5 and 7 can be a source of growth based on careful selection.

ADL matrix

The ADL (Arthur D. Little - ADL) approach is based on the concept of market segmentation. The stages in the analysis process are: defining the strategic business unit, classifying the strategic business unit, creating a strategy, setting priorities in the portfolio and selecting goals.

Branch maturity is assessed based on the maturity of the functions or needs that are being met, and the products that meet those needs. The following indicators are used in the analysis: market growth rate, product age, branch potential, number of competitors, ease of entering and leaving the branch, etc.

By applying the above indicators, it is possible to distinguish the following types of branches: emerging, growing, mature and obsolete. The second dimension, the competitive position, is determined based on the position of the strategic business unit, or tourism in relation to the competition. The assessment is performed on the basis of indicators such as: market share, product breadth, degree of consumer concentration, brand value, etc. By applying the above indicators, it is possible to identify the following competitive positions:

- dominant - strategic business unit has a large number of strategic options and can choose independently of competitors,
- strong - a strategic business unit can maintain its competitive advantage regardless of competitors,
- favorable - strategic business unit has more than average opportunities needed to improve the position in the branch,
- sustainable - a strategic business unit has the potential to operate continuously, but can hardly improve its position,
- weak - the strategic business unit achieves unsatisfactory performance, but still has the potential to improve its position,



- unsustainable - the strategic business unit achieves poor business performance and lacks the potential to improve its position.

Tourist needs and tourist consumption

In order for the tourism market to be defined and its characteristics studied, it is necessary to start from the fact that tourism is considered an economic category based on the economic effects that arise from its development. The creation of a tourist market and the establishment of market relations in the field of tourism is a precondition for the emergence of tourism as an economic category.

In the literature, the tourist market is most often defined as a market of a special kind, ie a "sui generis" market. According to this approach, it does not differ from other markets in its constitutive elements, but in the process of its functioning and in the relations between these elements there are certain features that make the tourism market significantly different from other markets, ie sui generis market.

The definition of the tourist market derives from the definition of the market in a general sense - the tourist market is a set of supply and demand relations in the sphere of services and goods that serve to meet tourist needs in a certain area, ie a set of supply and demand relations.

The constitutive elements of the tourist market, as well as all other markets, are:

- supply and demand (market entities);
- services and goods, as a subject of exchange (market objects);
- price (monetary expression of value in exchange).



In connection with the definition of the concept of the tourist market, we should also keep in mind the fact that from the marketing point of view, the market is primarily defined as a set of buyers, ie includes demand, while sellers make up the industry or supply.

One of the basic preconditions for the emergence of demand in the tourism market is the existence of a tourist need. In the most general sense of the word, a need can be defined as a feeling of discomfort related to the awareness that there is a means by which that discomfort can be removed. There are several approaches to the classification of human needs. A. Maslow grouped the basic needs within a hierarchical approach, emphasizing that the basic (existential) needs should be met first so that the individual can direct his interest towards meeting the needs at a "higher" level.

The following classification of human needs views them as:

- necessary needs (their satisfaction maintains the existence of the individual);
- additional needs (general cultural and luxury needs).

The order and manner of satisfying the needs primarily depends on the level of national income, ie on the living standard of the population.

The tourist need belongs to the category of additional needs, which are not necessary from the point of view of maintaining a person's personality. Taking into account the importance of restoring psychophysical condition for labor productivity, it can be said that the tourist need is approaching, to a certain extent, existential needs. However, it is firmly grounded in the group of secondary-supplementary needs due to the existence of significant possibilities of substitution for other types of needs.

A tourist need could, therefore, denote a set of individual needs that jointly satisfy an individual or a group of consumers in their intention to rest and recreate in a tourist way in order to restore



their mental and physical condition. The complex of tourist needs can be observed through two basic groups of needs:

- "Necessary" tourist needs - related to the very nature of tourism and inclusion in tourist movements (accommodation, food, transportation);
- additional tourist needs - condition a certain way of using free time for tourist purposes (vacation, entertainment, shopping, etc.).

Closely related to the notion of need is the notion of motive. Motives represent a sufficiently stimulated need that directs the individual towards the goal, ie. meeting the need. Based on that, motivation can be marked as a state of imbalance in the organism that leads to performing an action in order to restore balance. Although motives can be considered only one of the variables that explain the behavior of tourists, their detailed acquaintance is necessary because they represent, in that context, a critical variable. Defining motives related to tourist trips is the subject of consideration by a large number of theorists, where, depending on the starting points, very different views come to the fore.

Determining and classifying these motives is also connected with methodological and practical difficulties due to the impossibility or refusal of tourists to explain the reasons and factors that underlie their behavior on the tourist market. Therefore, the classifications of motives related to tourist trips are in most cases the result of theoretical generalizations, rather than concrete research. According to one of the researches, it was determined that all motives, according to the answers of the respondents, can be divided into two basic groups: socio-psychological motives and cultural motives.

Socio-psychological motives are not related to the characteristics of a certain tourist destination, but to social and psychological factors characteristic of a certain individual or group. This group of motives includes a) escape from the place of everyday living, b)



research and evaluation of one's own personality, c) rest, e) prestige, e) enrichment of family relations.

Cultural motives are more related to a particular tourist destination and include a) new experiences and b) education.

Motives or motivation are very important because they are one of the key factors that influence the behavior of tourists, along with the effects of culture, age and gender, social class, lifestyle, life cycle and reference groups. The explanation of the motive, related to the notion of needs, points to the existence of two groups of factors that influence travel decisions: one is the incentive factors ("push" factors) that make us want to travel to a certain tourist destination (climate, sea) and the other are the factors that attract ("pull" factors) that influence the decision where to travel (escape, nostalgia). Wanting to find the basis of theories that deal with motives related to tourist travel, J. Krippendorf stated, first, that travel is motivated by "going from" rather than "traveling to" and, second, that motives and behavior tourists are primarily directed towards the person who wants to travel.

In addition to needs and motives, important terms related to marketing activities are the desires of consumers. Under the wishes of consumers is meant the form that acquires human needs when they are affected and shaped by culture as well as the personality of the individual. In that sense, desires can mean the ways in which people express their needs to others. As one of the marketing problems, in connection with the understanding of the terms "need" and "desire" is "marketing short-sightedness" which was introduced as a term by T. Levit. It means that manufacturers often lose the line between the terms "desires" and "needs", focusing on the product itself, i.e. focusing only on existing desires and neglecting the basic needs of customers.

Ability to satisfy tourist needs is directly related to the scope and structure of available funds and purchasing of sleep sidebar potential tourist consumer. The size of these funds is especially important given the additional nature of tourist needs, the possibility of their substitution and



the practical impossibility of saturation of tourist needs. With funding available, the following factor affecting the creation of the conditions for satisfying tourist needs is the amount of free time, which contributed to an increase in the special paid holidays and shorter working hours.

One of the most important factors that indicates a certain degree of peculiarity of the tourist market, in relation to other markets, is the orientation of tourist demand towards supply, and not the other way around. This shows the great importance of space as an element of the tourist offer and tourist trends - travel, as the basic precondition for meeting the touristic needs. The most significant specificity of the tourist market refers, however, to the peculiarities of the essential economic category in tourism - tourist consumption.

Consumption, as a process of consumption, i.e. the use of material goods and services in order to meet human needs, can take the form of productive and non-productive consumption. In the process of meeting the needs of consumers in the tourism market, there are forms of both productive and non-productive consumption. The growth and development of tourism can be most impressively monitored by determining changes in the volume and structure of tourist spending. The basic specifics of tourist consumption, in relation to other forms of consumption, could be marked as follows:

- tourist consumption is a very heterogeneous economic category, because it includes spending and use of various material goods and services, which is a consequence of the characteristics of the tourist need;
- through tourist consumption, free natural goods and natural elements are included in economic relations, which without tourism would not be able to achieve this type of valorization on the market (this primarily refers to attractive natural and cultural factors of the tourist offer);
- tourism consumption redistributes national income, in case of domestic tourism, and overflowing national income in the near tourism between receptive and outbound tourist areas;



- the place of consumption in connection with the satisfaction of tourist needs is not firmly related only to specific tourist destinations, but also includes consumption in places of permanent residence (purchase of goods related to tourism) and during tourist movements (various costs related to travel).

Tourist consumption, with its characteristics and features, represents the very essence of tourism, ie the backbone and common direction of coordinated activities of all entities within the tourist offer, and thus an important subject and goal of overall marketing activities in tourism.

Characteristics of tourist demand and tourist offer

Tourist needs, available financial resources and leisure fund, in specific socio-economic conditions, with the action of psychological factors, significantly determine the characteristics of tourist demand and make it the dominant entity in the tourist market.

The most important characteristics of tourist demand are:

- **Heterogeneity** - structure of tourist needs and differences in the characteristics of tourist needs (economic, demographic, psychological, etc.). Conditionality to tourist demand basically can be very diverse. On the other hand, each carrier (tourist) of such differentiated tourist demand acts uniquely in relation to the required complex of tourist services - tourist product (transport, accommodation, food, entertainment, etc.). This has the consequence of the need for differentiated treatment - division (segmentation) of demand, as well as for spatial and temporal harmonization of activities of all participants on the side of the tourist offer;
- **Elasticity** - is expressed, first of all, through changes in tourist demand in relation to the income of the bearers of tourist needs, prices of tourist services and non-economic factors (psychological factors and factors from the social and natural environment). The elasticity of tourist demand in relation to the economic categories that condition



it represents the primary elasticity, while the secondary elasticity means its variability in relation to changes in the tourist offer;

- Seasonal character - the concentration of tourist demand at a certain time of the year, primarily the summer months, is conditioned by the interaction between the factors of tourist demand and natural factors of tourist supply.

The concentration of tourist demand is especially evident in relation to the business of tourism companies, as well as the realization of the overall effects of tourism development.

These characteristics of tourist demand, primarily its heterogeneity, condition your need to create a complex of services by the tourist offer in relation to each carrier of tourist needs. The basic factors that make up the tourist offer are attractive, communicative and receptive. Attractive factors (cultural-historical monuments, natural factors, etc.) are included in market relations as part of the tourist offer and as intangible assets.

The main characteristic of the tourist offer is its inelasticity, which arises from the action of the following factors:

- factors of tourist offer, especially attractive, cannot be changed, except in a longer period, which is emphasized by the attachment to a certain area;
- the construction of tourist facilities requires significant investments, which results in burdening the tourist service with a large amount of fixed costs and the inability to adapt to short-term changes in the tourist market;
- a large share of personal work in the provision of tourist services significantly reduces the opportunities for improving the work process.

The pronounced inelasticity of the tourist offers, primarily in relation to changes in the factors of tourist demand, affects the inappropriate use of capacity, especially in the off-season and business results.



Peculiarities in the functioning of the tourist market

The subject of exchange on the tourist market, the tourist service or product, has features that arise from the stated characteristics of supply and demand. Its basic characteristic is significant complexity and diversity, because it consists of a large number of services and products that are directed towards a common goal - satisfying tourist needs. In addition, it is always tied to a certain area / area, which is conditioned by the characteristics of attractive factors of the tourist offer. Accepting the stated basic characteristics of the market and its constitutive elements, the question arises whether the tourist market is a market of a special kind, as many authors emphasize, or is it an overemphasis on some of its characteristics that are inherent in all service markets? Usually in the literature, as the basic specifics of the tourist market, which separate it from other markets, its following characteristics are stated:

- opposite the uniqueness requirement tourism demand, compared to the complex services, there must be a spatial and temporal coherence of action participants in the tourist offer;
- there is a seasonal concentration of tourist traffic that affects the uneven measurement of the capacity of the tourist offer, causing a number of accompanying negative effects, which is emphasized by the impossibility of storing tourist services, due to the simultaneous process of their creation and consumption;
- tourist demand is moving towards the tourist offer, and not the other way around, as in the commodity market, which indicates the connection of the tourist service to a certain area and its characteristics;
- the influence of non-economic functions of tourism on directing tourist demand is significant;
- the effect of the law of value on the tourist market is limited; f) less susceptibility to various economic barriers;
- the elasticity of tourist demand in relation to the incomes of tourism needs is relatively high;



The role of all forms of mediation is becoming more and more important due to the distance between producers and consumers.

Service, as the basic subject of exchange in the tourist market and the service character of most activities that are involved in meeting the needs of tourists require that the tourist market must be treated primarily as a market of services. By analyzing the stated characteristics of the tourist market, which are considered to be the preconditions for determining it as a market of a special kind, it can be concluded that most of these characteristics are common to all services markets. This refers to most of the characteristics of tourist demand and supply, as well as to the consumption of tourist service at the place of origin and the impossibility of its storage.

Respecting the stated importance and peculiarities of tourist consumption, it can be said that the study of the tourist market and tourism cannot be based exclusively on tourist consumption, as the central economic category in tourism, and on the relationship between tourist needs and consumption. In addition, it is necessary to USC ships by not believing the relationship between the production process or the creation of tourist services, and tourist spending. It should be borne in mind that despite the undoubted importance of the volume and structure of tourist needs and tourist consumption, which arises from it, the possibilities for production - the creation of tourist services affect the volume and structure of tourist consumption. In this regard, the question arises of the formation of a complete tourist service - a tourist product, as a complex and diverse result of the activities of all factors of the tourist offer. In this complex, attractive factor of the tourist offer (natural and social) are of special importance, which are only included in the market relations and the economic process in general through tourism.

In most studies of the character of the tourist market, its uniqueness was overemphasized, which led to a one-sided view of the tourist market as a sui generis market, ie a market of a special kind. Such a determination was based primarily on the characteristics of the tourism



market that are common to all services markets. The main features of the tourist market can be related to the characteristics of the market facility, tourist services, ie products, and tourist consumption, which is in a specific relationship with him. In addition, the tourist market combines the effects of economic and non-economic functions of tourism, which further complicates the study of market relations in tourism.

The stated characteristics and peculiarities of the constitutive elements of the tourist market, which condition that the approach to doing business on the tourist market is subordinated to that. The characteristics of tourist demand, which make it a stronger subject on the market, require business and tourism policy makers to pay special attention to the needs, requirements and wishes of current and potential tourists. These factors, as well as the others, which will be discussed in the next part of the paper, make it necessary to apply the marketing concept at all levels of tourism organization. The characteristics of the tourist market and, in particular, the type of connection between tourism and the economy, point to the need for a more detailed analysis of attitudes and precise definition of the concept, meaning and possibilities of marketing, as the basis of market business in tourism.

Marketing as a market-oriented business concept in tourism

Theoretical elaboration and practical application of the marketing concept in the field of tourism began later in comparison to other branches and activities. This delay, in part, arises from the impact of factors that are unique to all service activities, while some factors are specific to the field of tourism.

The main factors that influenced subsequent application of marketing in tourism are:

- A subsequent application of marketing in all service activities;



- The tourist market was a relatively young market, which started spreading in the fifties of the past century. Demand exceeded supply for a long period significantly, which contributed to the sales orientation of companies in the tourism economy;
- In terms of supply, tourism was characterized by the existence of a large number of smaller companies which, due to lack of resources and knowledge, were not ready to apply the marketing concept;
- The specificity and complexity of the subject of exchange in the tourism market and the characteristics of that market in general have caused the marketing approach to solving market problems in tourism to require special efforts;
- The traditional approach to business in tourism limited inventiveness in market business and it represented an obstacle to the application of the marketing concept.

From the very beginning of the consideration of the connection between marketing and tourism, a special problem arose - the definition of a term that would denote this relationship. One group of authors, especially the foreign ones, talked about the existence of the so-called tourism marketing. Within that approach, tourism as a whole is approached as a special phenomenon and activity, while not taking into account the fact that economic and non-economic activities participate in satisfying the needs of consumers on the tourism market. However, certain authors believe that there is no special tourism marketing, but only the marketing activities of various participants – economic and non-economic branches and activities – in satisfying to. Their marketing efforts are directed to the tourism market, that is, ultimately to the holders of the tourism needs and the tourism product, as a specific case of exchange on the tourism market, is the object of marketing activities in tourism.

The interest of the state in the development of tourism, due to its multiple economic and non-economic effects, presents an additional element for the inclusion of the activities of organizations at the level of the tourist destination or tourism policy makers in the marketing approach to relations in the tourism market. Therefore, marketing in tourism is a specific



combination of marketing activities of certain industries and activities (hospitality, traffic, travel agencies, travel organizers, shops, etc.) and organizations at all levels of the tourist destination. Only on that basis, which implies the acceptance of all important characteristics of the tourist market and tourism as a whole, it is possible to adequately define the relationship between marketing and tourism, and to create the assumptions for an adequate market approach to business operations in tourism.

Due to all the above stated, the term "marketing in tourism" determines the essence and the nature of the application of the marketing concept in the tourism market more correctly. It implies that the application of some special activities and the marketing method is not in question, but rather the use of general marketing principles, especially in relation to service activities, with the aim of more efficient market business in tourism. The application of marketing in tourism is the result of very strong changes in the economy and the society, the evolution of marketing in the direction of its application, and in the service activities, as well as the tendency in the tourism market and tourism as a whole.

The main reasons for accepting the marketing concept in tourism were as follows:

- Tourism, especially international tourism, was characterized by extremely high growth rates, which, when observed over a longer period, showed a tendency of relative decrease. This was particularly dominant in the 1980s as the result of the relatively high level of demand in the international market on the one hand, and the influence of factors resulting from changes in the wider economic and social environment on the other hand.
- The relative slowdown in the growth rate of international tourism also indicates its entry into the maturity phase, which is characterized by strong competition and, consequently, by a more significant role of marketing. Therefore, changes in the relationship between the supply and the demand in the tourism market caused the need



for abandoning the sales orientation of the holders of the tourist offer and the acceptance of the marketing orientation;

- The tourism market is a relatively young market, which has not been fully stabilized and, consequently, there has been plenty of room for innovation in the market;
- There is a significant degree of competition in the market, which is especially important due to the expressed elasticity of the tourism demand;
- The large share of fixed costs in basic economic organizations in the tourism market highlights the issue of capacity utilization;
- As activities, the elasticity of demand, the inelasticity of supply and a primarily service-oriented character of tourism emphasize the importance of ensuring a long-term stable demand;
- Heterogeneity of tourism demand and the influence of social and psychological factors on consumer behavior in tourism.

In addition to the above factors, the acceptance of the marketing concept was strongly indicated by the following factors:

- An extensive application of the marketing concept by the tourism economic organizations and organizations at the level of tourist destinations in competing tourism countries, and
- An efficient use of the marketing concept in the planning and the organization of activities by foreign business partners of our tourism companies (primarily travel organizers).
- The application of marketing in tourism is based on the general characteristics of using marketing in service activities, but its essence arises from certain features of the tourism market and tourism in general. In this sense, the following stand out:
 - The direct, indirect and multiplied effects of tourism on the economy;
 - The social significance and influence of tourism, which is particularly manifested in relation to the population of the receptive tourist areas;



- Space, as an attractive factor and an important component of the tourist product (natural and anthropogenic factors) and one of the important factors in making decisions about the choice of a specific tourist destination;
- The protection and improvement of the environment, as one of the basic preconditions for the development of tourism and meeting the needs of tourists;
- Tourist demand, as a very heterogeneous and elastic market entity, requires special treatment in order to adjust the tourist offer to specific segments of demand;

Tourism has certain specificities which have very important consequences and, therefore, the standard principles of marketing must be significantly adapted in order to achieve success in the application of the marketing concept in tourism. In this regard, the author believes that the characteristics of supply and demand determine the following basic assumptions regarding the application of marketing in tourism, regardless of its form:

- Tourist products are created, adapted and promoted in order to meet long term needs and requests of potential buyers. This is common to all other forms of marketing and it is the basis of the entire marketing theory;
- In practice, marketing of services differs from the marketing of goods, which arises from the special characteristics of services, which require a different application of the instruments of the marketing mix;
- Marketing in tourism is conditioned and shaped by the nature of demand, and by the characteristics of supply, as well as the forms of promotion and distribution.

According to other definition, marketing in tourism is an orientation towards the consumer that permeates all organizational functions and processes that are directed towards:

- Formulating promises relating to products and services required when traveling for the purpose of staying in places outside the usual place of residence for less than one year for the purpose of leisure, work or for other reasons;



- Enabling the fulfillment of individual expectations created on the basis of such promises;
- Meeting such expectations by supporting the formation of the consumer value, which also supports the creation of value at the level of an enterprise.

This definition implies the following:

- Value is not created by the organization/enterprise, but rather the consumer is the creator of value and the enterprise gets the opportunity to jointly create value with its consumers;
- Consumers do not always want to get involved in the relationship with the company, but the marketing that is not based on that relationship is also important;
- Marketing cannot function effectively as one of the organizational units, but rather the orientation towards consumers should direct the activities of the entire organization;
- The marketing process of the organization consists of giving promises to consumers, fulfilling those promises and fulfilling the expectations of consumers which they formed on the basis of the given promises.

The above definitions correctly indicate the basic characteristics and meanings of marketing in tourism, but they insufficiently emphasize the special impact that tourism has on the natural and social environment. Accordingly, meeting the aims of marketing in tourism requires the extension of the definition in accordance with those important functions and meanings of tourism. A particular aspect of the issue concerns the place and the role of marketing within the concept of sustainable tourism development, which will be discussed separately.

The characteristics of tourism as an economic activity, the characteristics of the tourist market and the interest of the society in its development point to two basic and related forms of marketing activities in tourism:



- Marketing as the basis for setting and conducting the business policy of enterprises in the tourism industry;
- Marketing as the basis for setting and conducting tourism policy at all levels (tourist destination, municipality, district, republic and/or state).

In both cases, the application of marketing in tourism must respect its exceptional social significance and impact, as well as the role of the spatial component and the environmental protection in relation to the development of tourism.

Having in mind the already mentioned general definition of marketing, which certainly refers to the field of tourism and hospitality, as well as the key elements of the concept of marketing and social marketing, marketing in tourism and hospitality can be considered to be a coordinated activity of private and public sector organizations, with the aim of determining the needs and the desires of the target markets and the delivery of the desires to consumers more effectively than the competitor, and in the manner that maintains or improves the well-being of the consumers and the society.

The presented assumptions and advantages of applying marketing in tourism indicates its importance for the market approach to business. The dynamism of marketing presupposes constant adjustment to turbulent changes in the economy and the society. Large tourism providers do not only make decisions in tourism, but they also shape the opinions and, accordingly, their business policy and marketing significantly influence the characteristics of tourism development. In this regard, the opinion of J. Krippendorf should be singled out, that honest and responsible marketing should be one of the basic preconditions for the development of "human tourism". According to this same author, marketing in tourism in the future must be environmentally oriented and socially responsible.

That is, only an ecologically oriented tourism economy can meet the preconditions for growth in the 21st century. The need for a new concept of tourism and a new approach to marketing in tourism stems from the impact of new forces in the tourism market:



- “a new consumer/tourist” and his role in assessing value in relation to the producer, which will condition a more comprehensive consideration of consumer needs by producers, and
- New attitudes and awareness of the local population in tourist regions and their attitude towards tourism which is more restrictive.

The commitment of companies and other stakeholders to the implementation of marketing activities in tourism implies the acceptance of most or all of the following approaches:

- a clearly defined access to the existing, potential and long-term markets;
- policies and actions should reflect the concern for consumer needs in relation to the social and environmental requirements;
- implementation should imply internal marketing, orientation towards the customer and the consideration of all participants, including the local population;
- studying the market environment that includes short term and long term scenarios;
- the marketing planning process is part of the organization culture and it includes a comprehensive assessment of internal resources;
- the structure and the culture should lead to a long term vision.

Marketing in tourism will continue to change according to the changes in the assumptions on which its application is based. The forthcoming period will be characterized by significant and turbulent changes, primarily in the environment, the manifestations of which are already noticeable. The ability of marketing activities holders to be oriented towards achieving long term goals, while at the same time being flexible in solving current tasks and accepting new opportunities, will be crucial for achieving marketing goals in tourism.

In this regard, the treatment of the following contemporary tendencies will be of particular importance:

- Growing application of the marketing philosophy and practice within non-profit and non- governmental organizations;



- Connection of marketing with quality and total quality management and
- Increasing interest in ethical issues and social responsibility.

The changes under the influence of the development of information and communication technologies should be added, particularly mobile technologies and social networks, which jointly have a significant impact on the scope, the structure and the intensity of marketing activities in tourism.

The application of marketing in tourism economy companies

The application of marketing in tourism is based on the harmonization of the marketing activities between the carriers of the business (the private sector) and the tourism policy (the public sector). The holders of the tourism policy are considered to be organizations and bodies (state, para-state and social) that coordinate and direct the development of tourism at different levels (from the national to the local). Economic organizations (tourism economy companies) appear as the holders of the business policy on the tourism market, the business activity of which is directed towards satisfying the needs and desires of tourists as consumers. In this regard, the basic doubts and controversies arise in relation to the definition of the concept of tourism economy. All considerations on this issue can be classified into "two essentially different theoretical and principled points of view":

- Tourism is a separate and heterogeneous economic branch, the economic units of which are given a common meaning and an economic basis by tourism. Therefore, they can be treated as the "tourism economy" or the "tourism industry";
- The connection between tourism and the economy, is realized exclusively in the existing independent economic areas and branches that exist, which have existed and which will certainly always exist regardless of tourism "per definition".

The stated classification is based, however, on the identification of extreme viewpoints about the nature of economic organizations that operate on the tourism market. Economic activities, which are included in meeting the needs of tourists, are also aimed at meeting the needs of the



local population and the economy in the tourist regions. On the other hand, the size and the relative importance of tourist consumption in certain economic activities determines the place and the role of these activities in the formation of a unique tourist offer, that is, from the point of view of marketing, a tourist product. Therefore, the degree of participation of certain industries and activities in meeting the needs of tourists and the relative scope of their focus on tourists as consumers determines the framework for defining and studying the tourism industry. The impact of the characteristics of the tourist demand on the manner and the results of business in the tourism industry, primarily elasticity, can be considered to be an additional criterion.

Based on the aforesaid, it can be concluded that the tourism economy consists of all the economic activities that are aimed at meeting the needs of tourists. This view of the tourism industry implies the following facts:

- it is still difficult to define the tourism industry precisely, i.e. to fit it into the official classification of branches and activities;
- hospitality, travel agencies, travel organizers and traffic are most directly related to meeting the needs of tourists, in terms of business operations;
- the characteristics of the tourist demand, primarily the elasticity, directly affect the characteristics of the business operations in the tourism industry;
- other companies, which comprise the tourism economy, have an important but supplementary significance, which is different in terms of individual activities and in terms of different spatial units (trade, entertainment and leisure, etc.);
- catering companies, travel agencies/travel organizers and transport companies are primarily considered to be contractors of marketing activities at the level of business policy holders in the tourism market;
- the effects of the marketing activities of these companies will depend, primarily, on the harmonization of these activities within the entire tourism industry, and in relation to tourism policy holders.



The basic purpose of applying marketing in tourism economy companies is to determine the needs and desires of the target markets and to deliver the desired consumer satisfaction more effectively in comparison to the competitors, and in the manner that maintains or improves the welfare of consumers and the society, i.e. providing urgent business operations in the tourism market, with adequate adjustments with the social and natural environment.

The basic determinant of economic organizations operating in the tourism market is related to knowing, analyzing, adapting and meeting the needs and desires of the existing and the potential customers and consumers. This is the basis of marketing as a business concept. Therefore, it can be concluded that successful adaptation to the turbulent changes in the tourism market and achieving adequate results must be based on the application of the marketing concept by tourism companies, as well as by the holders of tourism development.

Application of marketing at the level of tourist destinations

There is a desire in the essence of tourism for tourist movement towards places (destinations), which due to their specific characteristics attract demand, i.e. tourists. Destinations attract the attention because they stimulate and motivate the movement of tourists and they represent the areas in which most tourist products are created. Therefore, a large part of the total tourism economy can be found in destinations and most of the positive and negative effects of tourism development are manifested in them.

Considering the fact that a tourist destination is, in essence, a geographical area that attracts visitors, A. Morrison believes that in order to fully understand and define this concept, it is necessary to keep in mind the key characteristics of a tourist destination:

- destination is a geographical area with a defined border - it includes countries, as well as cities, districts, regions, provinces;
- destinations are spaces within which tourists can spend the night using different types of accommodation facilities;



- the destination mix is available for visitors/tourists - in addition to accommodation and catering facilities, this mix consists primarily of attractions, events, transport and the entire infrastructure;
- there are activities in the field of marketing in tourism - especially promotional, with the aim of attracting tourists and for the purpose of market positioning;
- an organizational structure for coordination is created - a destination management organization, i.e. a tourist organization, which leads and coordinates efforts related to the development of tourism;
- there is an image of the area in the minds of tourists - tourists have an insight of what the area offers to tourists and which may be true or false;
- governmental bodies have adopted laws and regulations in order to control various aspects of tourism;
- There are different interest groups/stakeholders - private sector companies, the public sector (government bodies), non-profit organizations, individuals and other entities having interest in tourism.

Having in mind the economic, that is the marketing approach, a tourist destination is much more than just a geographical area or place. It implies diverse products, services, natural resources, created elements and information, which can attract a certain number of visitors in one place. Current and potential tourists, public administration, local private tourism companies, off-site tourism companies, and the local community typically have conflicting goals and needs. According to the above mentioned authors, from the point of view of tourist demand, tourists may have different ideas about the destination and the benefits that they can gain, in accordance with their culture, the system of values and their social and economic status. Different tourism components are linked in accordance with the priorities of tourists, their motives and expectations. Based on that, a tourist destination can be defined as a "set of experiences gained by a tourist" and it can be understood as a package of products and services created in part by the public and in part by the private sector. The essence is not a single attraction in itself, but their combination created through the experience of tourist



consumption. One of the basic specificities of the application of marketing in tourism and hospitality arises from the existence of several holders of marketing activities. The basic holders are tourist economy companies (the micro level) and organizations at the level of the tourist destination (the macro level - state, region, tourist place).

The division of competencies and the specific organization of tourism at the macro and micro level are an important precondition for the division of responsibilities in the management of tourism development. Activities at the macro level, which can be performed through appropriate bodies and institutions, make a consistent marketing framework for a tourist destination. Bearing in mind the fact that most tourists are affected by the characteristics of a tourist destination when purchasing, which will be discussed in the following parts of the book, it is clear that marketing activities, organized at the macro level, significantly affect the activities of companies in the area of tourism.

Harmonization of marketing activities in tourism

Given the existence of holders of marketing activities in tourism at the micro and macro levels, the marketing concept can be accepted as the basis for successful delineation and harmonization of different interests and competencies in tourism development at various levels, i.e. as the basis for observing and implementing the tourism policy, i.e. the business policy of the tourism industry. The starting point for using this approach is the application of integrated marketing, both horizontally and vertically. It is possible only on this basis to ensure the appropriate organization of tourism companies and organizations at the level of tourist destinations, which is one of the important prerequisites for successful business operations in the tourism market.

The main goal of using the concept of integrated marketing, within the tourism industry, is to adequately organize business functions, in order to achieve the basic goal - to adequately meet the needs and desires of tourists as consumers and, on that basis, to realize



adequate profits. Such organization of business functions implies that the marketing function is referential in relation to all other business functions (financial, personnel, production – services delivery system, etc.). In this context, it is important that the function of market research, that is of marketing, and the overall marketing information system are in the forefront. The issue of locating certain marketing activities in certain organizational units and organizational levels of the company is of particular importance. The basic rule is that marketing activities should be located in those organizational units and levels that will allow taking into account the needs, requests and wishes of tourists as consumers, or selected market segments.

Integrity, in the application of marketing in the companies of the tourism industry, is also ensured by connecting with related companies in the tourism industry. This is achieved through appropriate forms of connections primarily between catering companies and travel agencies, or travel organizers, as well as with companies with all other activities that participate in meeting the needs of tourists. The specific forms of connection will depend on the overall business goals and marketing goals of a particular tourism company.

A particularly important aspect of integration concerns the marketing activities of organizations at the level of the tourist destination and their connection with the activities of business policy makers, i.e. tourism companies. The basic criterion for the rationality of marketing activities and the overall organization of tourism at the macro and micro levels should derive from the basic development planning document at the macro level, which is, in the case of Serbia, the Tourism Development Strategy. It determines the basic goals of tourism development and ways for achieving the defined goals. Based on that, the bases for the implementation of the activities of business and tourism policy makers are determined, in order to achieve the defined general development goals.

Modern approaches emphasize the importance of marketing as an integrating function in a company, which is the basis for the application of integrated marketing. It implies that



marketing is the only operational function in the company, while other functions are advisory in nature. The main purpose of the concept of integrated marketing in the organization of companies in the tourism industry and tourism in general is in a strong orientation towards meeting the needs of existing and potential consumers, through connecting and coordinating the overall business activity.

On the other hand, the integrity of the application of marketing in tourism is ensured by the following approach:

- integral coverage of creative marketing activities (research of the tourist, product planning, markets and marketing activities, promotional activity, development affairs related to the improvement of the technological process of providing services, etc.) and operational marketing activities (procurement, sales, transport, storage), crediting tourist trips, public relations and promotion);
- horizontal organization, which would ensure that the marketing function directs other business functions in order to adequately meet the needs of selected segments of tourists;
- connecting between catering companies and travel agencies, as well as connecting them with transport, trade, agricultural and industrial companies;
- harmonizing the marketing activities of tourism companies with the marketing activities of organizations at the level of tourist destinations.

Orientation towards the needs of current and potential target groups of tourists, and the realization of appropriate business goals on that basis, respect for the social and natural environment and adequate organization are the basic assumptions for the application of the marketing concept in tourism and hospitality. In that complex, the orientation towards the needs and desires of tourists as consumers is primary. Meeting these needs in a particular environment is a prerequisite for achieving the goals of marketing activities.



Tourism non-economic functions

Non-economic functions act primarily - and in different ways - on the tourist as an individual. However, when taking into account the above mentioned data about the number of such individuals who seek recreation of their working and living abilities in modern tourism and who give tourism the character of a broad social phenomenon, then it is obvious that these functions no longer affect only the individual but also the society as a whole. Moreover, tourist recreation is no longer considered only an individual need and an individual's thing nowadays, but it is recognized as a social need in all advanced countries, and the community makes significant efforts to make the recreational functions of tourism as large and favorable as possible.

Those non-economic functions performed by tourism for satisfying the recreational needs of people are considered to be functions with direct action. They exist and act regardless of whether the tourist is aware of it or not, and as a rule they act to a greater extent if the behavior of tourists is harmonized with the functions and if such functions are influenced by appropriate community measures.

Among the non-economic functions of modern tourism that have a direct effect on tourists are the following:

- health,
- entertainment and
- cultural.

All these three functions are usually combined and intertwined in such a way that it is hard to determine where one ends and the other begins. However, in addition to these, tourism regularly performs indirect non-economic functions, which are not directly related to recreation,



but are derived from travel and vacation, and they affect tourists. The indirect functions of tourism are considered to be:

- social, and
- political functions.

Indirect functions are often intertwined, and they are also connected with the action of direct functions, from which they are derived. In tourism, the most important and widespread is its health function, and that is the one that directly affects the health and fitness of a person, and thus the social community. This function is performed by tourism in most normal cases, regardless of whether the tourist is aware of it, and in very different ways. Some people achieve their health function by walking, others by swimming, hiking or other sports, and some by resting in a deck chair or in some other way.

As already mentioned, tourism, as a rule, is not a means for the treatment of diseases, but for prevention. In this case, the health function is a reflection of tourist recreation, and not of special medical procedures. But apart from such cases, which are the most common, tourism also has certain connections with curative medicine. These connections are as old as spas, but in recent times they have acquired different, broader forms and conditioned the creation of a special type of tourism, which is called health tourism. Such development was greatly influenced by the introduction of methods of treatment with natural remedies, the socialization of the health service also played a major role and in the modern society. Modern living conditions have led to the fact that a person falls into various states that range between fatigue and illness or that represent a disease in its true sense, and such conditions can mostly be cured through rest and leisure in favorable natural environments.

In many countries, there are health institutions in tourist places that receive such patients for treatment, recovery or rehabilitation who must follow certain instructions and are under medical supervision, but in everything else they behave like tourists. These are people with exhausted nerves or who suffer from respiratory organs, then from minor heart defects or some



other diseases that do not require treatment in a strict hospital sense. The health care institutions in question often develop a polyclinic service, which is also used by hotel guests. Tourism that develops in this way is organized health tourism, and can, in addition to the great social benefits provided by the health function, lead to very favorable results in the economic field. An example is the numerous spas in which guests often do not use only strictly hospital or similar facilities, but live in hotels or private rooms, eat in restaurants, spend rainy periods in a cafe, and are used - as well as all other tourists - promenades and tourist offices, and often go on excursions.

However, with such examples, medical centers are increasingly being formed in coastal tourist places, which mainly use treatment through the influence of the sea (swimming, sunbathing) and the sea climate, and this method of treatment is called thalassotherapy (from the Greek word "thalata" = sea). Health function of tourism particularly affects sports activities during holidays, excursions and the like. However, it should be noted that sport, in addition to its health function, often has an entertaining and even cultural function, and many believe that its influence reaches further. Thus, it is given a social function, which arises on the basis of a developed sense of friendship. Sport can also lead to the strengthening of the defensive power of society, i.e. to a political function. However, the political function of sport in regular life is much less expressed through tourism, because sport is not regularly cared for systematically during holidays, but as a social sport.

The entertainment function of tourism has a strong effect on the mental state and mood of a person. It has a very wide range due to the already pronounced difference between people in understanding the notion of entertainment. Entertainment is most often understood as a form of entertainment that causes a cheerful and pleasant mood, but this also includes very different cases, e.g. an evening spent dancing, walking, playing cards or a pleasant trip. Attending theater performances can also be a pastime, but this is usually connected with the cultural and other functions of tourism.



Nevertheless, there is a certain clear opinion about what is considered normal entertainment or - as it is usually called - cultural entertainment, unlike cultural experience of a serious nature, such as e.g. a museum tour, classical music concert or a play performance.

Such experiences are the basis of a cultural function in the narrow sense that provides mental recreation of higher quality. But this function must also be observed on a much wider scale than that given by individual recreation. Just as sports recreation contributes to the strengthening of friendship and other broader purposes, so does the cultural function of tourism influence the creation of contacts with tourists - and along the way, with the population of tourist places - with cultural achievements and even habits and needs, which people then also transfer into their daily lives.

The cultural function of tourism also includes the consequences of tourist influence on cultural and scientific interventions, such as some archaeological, architectural or urban endeavors. Thus, for example, the excavation and adaptation of Mediana in Niš or Pompeii in Italy and the pyramids in Egypt, which have a huge cultural and historical significance, can be largely attributed to the influence of tourism. This is also true for the restoration of certain sacral monuments (monasteries and churches in Serbia and Bulgaria etc.). Today, in addition, a series of important paintings would be unknown if tourism did not bring many visitors to the numerous galleries in all tourist countries.

The cultural functions of tourism are not only manifested within tourism but they also have their effect outside it. Getting acquainted with the customs, habits and achievements of other people and taking over cultural heritage from others is a further manifestation of this function, which significantly exceeds the framework of individuals and interventions in the cultural standard, whether it is penetrated through tourists themselves or the population of tourist areas.

The following functions are indirect non-economic functions:



- social function, which is very important, especially in some countries. Its role is to reduce social disparities between particular human groups, classes, peoples or races;
- political function, which has an educational effect by developing a sense of patriotism towards one's own country and people. Namely, tourism enables the most direct contacts with certain regions, provides the opportunity to get to know their past, strives to create better living conditions, social relations, economic achievements, cultural treasures. It develops a sense of connection and belonging to these landscapes, pride in the results achieved, understanding of unresolved issues, commitment and willingness to make efforts to preserve that heritage in people. On a broader scale, the political function improves relations between nations, strengthens people's desire for peace and thus directly contributes to better international understanding. Indirect non-economic functions are usually derived from the direct ones: people do not become tourists in order to make a choice or grow socially or politically, but often such choices are consequences of tourism, either spontaneously or on the basis of psychological or organizational preparations carried out by other factors.

Tourism economic functions

Tourism became broader phenomena when the majority of people became unable to meet their recreational needs, so tourism developed more complex forms. This higher development level, as it was already previously stated, is characterized by the larger number of people that travel and stay for the sake of recreation, seeking the services of others, and pay for their services. At this stage of tourism development, when you have the tourists, who seek services, and others who offer such a service for payment, two new categories enter the arena of tourism- tourist demand and tourist offer.



Tourism received its new features, which altered the quantitative and the qualitative sense, and those characteristics reflected in its economic functions. With the emergence of demand and supply in tourism, this was turned into a kind of market mechanism, but through the time has got character of economic categories. The development of tourism shows that the demand for tourism services is preceded by the offer and that led to its formation. Such an offer led to a greater development only then when the tourists have become so numerous, and possessed all time and resources, therefore many people become involved and new occupations were created based existence on this new phenomena. Without back up and significant metamorphosis tourism did not possessed tangible assets for which are tourists were inclined to spend on. Thus, the consumption was one factor that is from the beginning gave decisive and permanent seal to the tourism and the market determined the relationship in which the demand got predominant role. These concerns are still present and there is no sign that they could essentially change.

Travel industry operates significantly different than those economic sectors in the field of production and those which its functions performed primarily in the field of trade and distribution. Due to its particular dependence on the consumer possibilities and preferences of tourists, having in mind the consequence that occurred out of that, the economy ranks tourism in the broader category of spending. According to it, the basic economic characteristic of tourism is not to produce certain products or enable their exchange or distribution, although to tourism does it the certain limits. Seen from the standpoint of the economy, tourism as a category of spending, does not create new value, but in first place creates the possibility to spend and consume the value created in other activities. Precisely from this fact one of the most important economic functions of tourism arises: tourism performs redistribution of already created value. This means that tourism enables redistribution of income, in the first place from production in the direction of the tourist areas and cities. Therefore, the redistribution of income, goes from economically developed to the underdeveloped areas, but also tourism becomes an important factor in the development of underdeveloped areas.



This important feature can be excellent base to mitigate the uneven arrangement of natural resources on Earth. Very often, in fact, the spatial conditions for tourism - at least according to today's knowledge of science – are distributed where there is no other abundant raw material resources and related economic activities for the population, while on the contrary the most industrial and other economically developed areas regularly lacks attractive natural beauties and conditions for tourism recreation based on natural conditions.

Tourism, furthermore, carries an important economic function by activating a number of business, but often the non-economic activity, which itself by itself have a tourist character. By stimulating example agriculture, food and processing industry, textile industry, porcelain, glass, electrical industry and many others, as a buyer of their products, tourism with these activities expands the market, encourages and accelerates their production and development.

This is the function of tourism particularly important for the economy of the country as a continent, because the tourist consumption very quickly overflow from tourism activities in many other, multiplying their initial operation (function of tourism as a multiplier). Such overflowed tourist consumption often causes significant positive changes, which result from increased and improved production and which can increase income (inductive function of tourism). When you are in such a process include a significant part of the economy of some country, through tourism accelerates the overall development (function of tourism as an economic accelerator) is not only a tourist area than the country as a continent.

One of the important economic functions of tourism, but at the same time and such that performs only tourism, the fact is that he turns (the conversion function) of the economic resources of a number of otherwise non-economic goods and activities that without tourism not to do, or in significantly smaller extent , exercised the income . Here primarily includes many consumable natural good, for example sea, mountains, sun, air, medicinal resources, further it good that would be no tourism was very often dead monuments of culture and art. As it is



already mentioned, tourism perform the economic function of activating and some non-economic activities, for example health, culture, that through tourism, strengthen its financial base in order for the existence of a certain number of people, so for himself the development of these activities.

On the basis of their economic function, tourism performed and some special functions, associated with the exchange. Sharing that causes Tourism has a specific shape. In other business areas range between production and consumption eliminates the so that the edge goes to the consumer, but the tourism industry is the other way around: the customer comes like consumption of tourist goods, or services, the place where are they located and where formed, which is a consequence of the inseparability of basic tourist goods from the place where they are located. Such is the way of business, which allows tourism, called placement or export the face of the city. With this, the economic development of certain areas, very important characteristics, should be added and inconsumability many tourist resources (sun, sea, relief, climate), which gives special importance to economic development of the country.

Strengthening of other activities, tourism performed very decisive economic function in the field of employment, by opening the working places, or directly in the tourism industry, or indirectly, with the increasing demand and the consumption in the other areas and thus allows the creation or increase in the income of the population. In this way it also contributes to reducing the migratory phenomenon, in particular economic emigration, but it and with that aspect of tourism in many countries got character especially important developmental factors.

Of special is the economic importance of function of tourism in the area of foreign - economic relations some soil. The consumption of foreign tourists brings the country a big favor, because foreign tourism brings parties purchasing assets (foreign currency) without export of appropriate equivalents of the country. Therefore, to such a way of exercising foreign exchange funds called invisible exports, the difference from commodity exports, where goods can be seen



coming across the border. Smaller quantities of items for personal consumption, which tourist amounts during his return, not considered to be commodity exports, because they are not intended for further trade.

In this way, tourism affects the balance of payments, and this is usually one of the most important economic functions of tourism for less developed countries. Its foreign exchange contribution of tourism improving payment balance, facilitates country procurement in the international news, necessary for the development of industry and other activities. Such are for example some recently still middle or less developed countries managed to cover all, or almost all of their imports of necessary raw materials, semi- finished products and other goods with revenues from foreign tourism. This is a feature of tourism is more important that page visitors need for their consumption to bear more and transport and other additional costs, but to increase foreign currency income from tourism . Furthermore, the advantage is invisible exports from the trade exports which is tourism the only form of exports where the goods that tourists spend Sales at retail, a time to achieve the best export sales price. In the commodity exports of goods are difficult places, and this only if the first-class quality, but tourism is marketed and goods which are not to otherwise unable to perform (e.g. meat, eggs, vegetables, fruit, wine and the like). Export the face of the city reduced to or mitigate the costs of packaging as well as the transport.

It is especially important for all receptive tourist countries that they are most easily involved in international exchange and division of labor through tourism. They find it difficult to export goods due to strong competition, due to the existence of economic blocs, customs and other obstacles, which least hinder the tourist market. In fact, tourism allows that a large part realized income in convertible currency, because the majority of foreign tourists come from the economically most developed countries whose currencies by generally most appropriate for international payments.



According to this, tourism to their economic function has a only a specific role in consumption and redistribute income, performed and significant economic impacts and the exchange and distribution, but even and the production, as the initiator of many production activities and services or as a factor reinforcements already existing production. Thus, the closed circle of economic functions of tourism, with a team that is spending his most important factor. Tourism is not only a category of consumption, but from the consumer's point of view it is the most complete and ideal type of economically unproductive consumption.

Tourism factors

The functions of contemporary tourism are a reflection of its role in the human society and economic life and the reason why this phenomenon has gained such great importance today. But this whole phenomenon would not have developed if it had not been based on human needs from which motives, desires and aspirations for its satisfaction arise.

The realization of these wishes and aspirations is possible only when certain objective and subjective conditions occur and when these conditions begin to act in the direction of tourism development. At that time, these conditions take on the role of factors or tourism factors. Bearing in mind the dual character of contemporary tourism, it is easy to clarify the fact that there are factors that drive people to become tourists. These factors are called the driving factors. In the conditions of the existence of the tourist market, these are at the same time the factors that form the tourist demand or, in short, the demand factors.

In addition to them, supply factors appear on the tourist market that directly enable tourists to travel and stay for recreation. At the same time, these are the factors that attract them to tourism, which technically allow them only to travel and which accept them and provide them with various services, from accommodation and food to leisure, sports, cultural and entertainment contents, etc. In addition to these factors, there is also an intermediary factor,



which connects the demand factors and the supply factors and which includes travel or travel agencies.

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Tourist factors of demand

Factors influencing the formation of tourist demand may be independent of an individual's behavior, in which case they are considered to be objective factors, and may be a reflection of his/her individual capabilities or preferences, and are then called subjective demand factors. As a rule, all demand factors occur in the narrower or wider environment in which the average person involved in tourism resides.

The most important objective demand factors are those that arise from a person's personal standard of living, which includes various social and economic, biological and psychological



moments and conditions in which people live and work in an era of increasing industrial and urban concentration. Due to its many components, the living standard is a very complex concept, extremely sensitive to numerous economic and non-economic influences. It is also a summary indicator of all these influences on the formation of various human needs, as well as on the manner and possibilities of their satisfaction.

Although people contribute to their standards in a certain way, an individual effort would not give great effects if it were not combined with the efforts of others. Therefore, the standard of living must primarily be treated as a social category, which is of crucial importance when it comes to the formation of tourist needs and opportunities to meet them.

Observing the standard of living in this way, it can be concluded that the social conditions and the foundation on which they are created are also the framework in which tourist needs can be met. These social conditions are created and dictated by the level of development of productive forces, the character of production relations, the mode of production and the dependent way of life, and then the size and distribution of income, the ratio of working and leisure time and the life style.

Among all these social conditions, some act more on the formation of tourist needs, and others on the creation of opportunities for their satisfaction. Those that influence the creation of needs can be generally reduced to two groups, which are, however, very related: one stems from the volume and intensity of modern production, which is based primarily on a strong process of industrialization, and the other group is a way of everyday urbanized life, which is directly related to the character of production. In that sense, the factors that create the need for tourist recreation arise primarily from the work and living environment.

However, in order to meet these needs, certain factors are needed, which are also a product of the environment, but are also direct factors that allow people to become tourists. Among a



number of such factors, two are important and basic: free time and free resources. Each of them arises from a number of other causes and causes further reflections, all of which affect the creation of tourist demand. Therefore, there are other objective factors of tourist demand, which are upgraded to the above in order to increase the possibilities of meeting tourist needs. Among them, various achievements established by the community or the product of some other associations stand out.

This resulted in search for solutions in a variety of ways that are easier and can improve people's life, especially related to a man's contact with nature through tourism and associated with wide campaign for the protection of nature. But besides the negative moments, which include modern working and living conditions of the urbanized man, there are positive impacts of the environment, which contribute to the people to fully exploit their free time to travel. This is the one of the general levels of civilization and culture, which includes the need and habit in relation to recreation, and that also in the social, and not only individual scale.

Beside to this mainly cultural moment there is an increasing positive impact of technical resources to the people's decision to become a tourists. Here are, in the first place, the means of communication, that inform people and raise their interest for tourism, and secondly, the ones that provide transport between places of permanent residence and tourist destinations. The special importance in the recent development has individual motorization. It can be said that the level of technical culture has a huge influence on the development of tourism.

In connection with the conditions in social environment in tourism it is important to mention that the political situation in the country can be an important factor in tourism demand, especially when there are good political, international and especially tourist relations with other countries. On the contrary, the political situation can become a negative factor in tourism when it comes to internal unrest, crises, epidemics (such as Covid 19 pandemic), strikes, restriction of



freedom of movement and even the war. It is normal for the people in the unsettled conditions to decide to travel or to leave for a long time their homes or land.

If the impact of free time was determined as an important factor for the initial development of tourism, it is clear that its impact is more significant for the modern tourism. The struggle of modern man for the free time and for the paid holiday is related to the existential need to rest and resist fatigue that are results of various forms of exploitation at work and outside of it. Gradually fight expands for paid free time and for schedule of working hours in a day in which the exhausting pace of work changes with periods of rest. Request for paid free time is necessary and normal reaction to the changed and difficult conditions of work and life.

Apart from the already mentioned, some other factors also influence the formation of tourist demand. Among them are certain social and tourist achievements, which will eventually become not only a constant companion to tourism but the factors without which other objective factors could not function. These are influenced by different bodies, state organs, large enterprises and organizations, and among them are counted variety of special privileges and amenities.

In addition to this there is the specific group of factors which are in the first place created by tourism stakeholders. These are special organizations and institutions with the aim is to engage in tourism greater number of people, but mostly those who for psychological or physical reasons otherwise could not travel.

Among these are the different social organizations of the initiative character, which encourages people to travel out of the city of permanent residence, and often are involved in organization of such travels.



In some countries there are, however, a special organizations and institutions that has large impact on the creation of tourist demand, based to the combined interests of the tourists itself and other interested parties. These are organizations that are engaged in less expensive tourism and have a great impact on the development of tourism, primarily of the domestic tourism.

Tourism subjective factors

Factors that boost tourism are composed of subjective behaviors of individuals, enhancing the operation of objective factors. Subjective factors can regularly come into operation only after the goals are defined. Often, there are objective conditions and the factors of tourism that always depend on the people decisions on how to use their free time, on available funds for the travel or on the way of spending. Such decisions depend mostly on their subjective views.

In this respect can a man act rationally, especially when deliberately decides on what to spend free time or how to allocate free resources of the budget for his secondary needs to enjoy himself in the annual vacation?

However, the man occasionally acts and without a reason and unconscious, but it is very often reflecting just in tourism. This way his actions should be taken as a fact that it works very intensively as the startup factor to many areas, however, and in tourism. Such methods make irrational factors, because it is usually not be clarified reason, or logic. This includes a fashion and imitation as important driving factors of tourism.

Such is the phenomenon observed, however, and on a much wider plan of entire regions or countries. There was a period of "thirst" for tourism for France, Italy, Austria, Spain or Greece. And also Serbia in past couple of years has become a fashionable tourist country, from which we have benefits today. In any case, fashion is an important factor that often affects even the broadest layers of tourists.



Imitation is carried out similarly as the fashion, but in the more closed circles. For example, imitation starts when one goes on vacation, so its neighbors or office colleagues do the same, but also can divert from tourism if neighbors decide to purchase the TV or any other items of household and spend funds intended for vacation. But imitation very often takes on wider dimensions and grows into fashion. This happened in the certain sense with camping movement, when caravanning and other phenomena have emerged in the context of tourism, becoming progressively mass actuating factor. Interesting is that in many of such cases in the beginning, it worked for the individuals from totally logical reasons, but later when others started to do this to imitate, it became often irrational and against reasons that are in the beginning caused the occurrence of such cases.

All this shows that the fashion and imitation, and other related human reaction, for example prestige, snobbery, etc., are important driving factors in tourism. Among the irrational factors of demand is sometimes love, and also in some countries, the religious pilgrimages, which inspire masses to travel and stay with distinctly tourist consequence.

All these and other subjective factors of the tourist demand are based on the psychological moments, but they essentially contribute to the formation of wider tourism awareness, of course under the condition that there are favorable objective factors of demand. The fact that the code of subjective factors is about psychological moments, allows the man consciously influence the direction of this or the way of behavior or decision. This is especially related to education, and in particular custom propaganda and advertising. Marketing and advertising at the beginning will serve more to tourist offer than to demand.

It must be noted that supply and demand works in close relation to each other, but it is often said that the entire tourist offer works on demand, as well as the demand for works on offer,



no matter the different strength of these influences. But despite the correlation tourist can divert from the rule by single offer.

Tourism offer factors

While the factors of tourist demand influence a person to temporarily change his place of residence for recreation, i.e. to become a tourist, the factors of supply impact the creation and strengthening of tourism by attracting people to tourist places, areas or countries, then by transporting them, and finally by accepting these tourists by providing them with appropriate recreational content at the place of their tourist stay.

In this sense, a complex of tourist supply is created, which consists of three basic groups of factors:

- attractive,
- traffic or communication,
- receptive or receptive factors.

Tourism is a dynamic phenomenon that always manifests itself in a space, which must have an attractive force for people eager for recreation. Therefore, the quality of the space largely depends on whether tourists will visit a certain area, to what extent, at what time, and with what economic effects.

The influence of space on the economic effects of the tourist economy is very important, and most often crucial, which proves that the concept of tourist space is the most closely related economic character. Although most of the areas where tourists move do not, in fact, have for tourism as the character of goods with direct traffic value, i.e. goods that would be sold in physical form as land, mountains, sea or waterfall, the overall economic effects of tourism will be greater and more favorable the better and more intense the attractive factors of space



nevertheless. Therefore, space and related attractive factors are treated as one of the supply factors, i.e. as one of the market factors. In that sense, the attractive factors are those on which the tourist quality of the space depends, and therefore the degree of its attractiveness, as well as the possibility of economic valorization through tourism.

These factors can be a reflection of the geographical environment or human activity, so in this sense there is a difference between:

- natural (biotrophic) and
- social (anthropic) factors.

Natural attractive factors are a reflection of the geographical environment, which consists of the following physical-geographical elements:

- the climate,
- hydrographic elements,
- relief,
- flora and fauna.

Usually, several of the listed elements can be found in one area, and the more of them there are and the more diverse and high-quality they are, the more attractive the space is to the tourist. Such natural elements, which appear in exceptional forms, give a special quality to the space and, therefore, from a general point of view, they represent natural rarities. If natural factors meet social ones in a certain area, and if other supply factors are still harmonized with them, then the conditions and possibilities for achieving favorable economic results have been achieved. When economic effects are achieved in a certain area with the help of natural factors, then it is also a sign that the natural properties of that area have a value that can be - speaking in economic terms - valorized.



Climate is one of the main natural attractive factors of tourism. Human's body is very susceptible to the influence of different atmospheric elements, which make up the climate of a particular area, and after that to the different individual types of climate. Some types of climate have a positive effect on the human body and mood, on his physical and mental activity and productivity, while others have a disincentive and negative effect. That is why a person looking for a vacation chooses those landscapes that suit his climate, and these are most often either areas with a Mediterranean climate or those with a mountainous climate and their variants.

Although the climate characteristics of the Mediterranean countries, as well as the one mountain areas, with many attractive operations on tourism, one to each bit different. Differences are reflected in insolation, precipitation, humidity, air, sea or water temperature, barometric pressure and wind strength. These elements are not in every year span represented the same intensity, but some areas have, thanks to the optimal trends of individual climate elements, favorable conditions for recreation in one period, but some again in the second.

Within the above basic types of air attractive for tourism let's annual span distinguished, namely, the differences and special features, which create a greater or lesser attractiveness in certain periods, from where comes the division of tourism year on seasonal, non-seasonal and non-seasonal periods. In the countries of the Mediterranean climate, the main concentration of tourist traffic, and thus the main season, resulting in a year, a tourist's turnover in the preseason or postseason significantly lower.

From the point of view of the tourist attractiveness of the climate of a certain area, the barometric pressure is also important. The stability of the air pressure without sudden and frequent fluctuations contributes to feel the benefits and good mood, but it is greater continuity in barometric pressure, this is the operation of the climate on the human organism is favorable. In addition to the above climatic elements for the evaluation of the mountainous climate is an important moment is above sea level.



The movement of a relatively largest number of tourists indicates that hydrographic elements make with the climate of the most appealing factor of modern tourism, and this is how the people who travel on annual vacation so i for hikers. Therefore, the spaces that are with greater or less water surfaces are very attractive areas.

From the point of view of tourist attractiveness, of all hydrographic factors, the largest number of people visit the sea, which attracts them with its special features, providing favorable conditions for rest and recreation. In all the tourism favorable climatic belts not have in certain periods of the characteristics that are particularly suitable for human health, but usually and for their leisure. That goes for the oceans and the closed sea.

The most visited and most famous tourist areas are located either on the sea coastal stretches or on the islands.

More has a dominant meaning of the domestic tourism countries that you have, but what is even more prominent and attractive factor in international here ream. Characteristics that he gives basic attractive note are the favorable temperature of water, large salinity, transparency and attractive colors and stillness of the water, no matter on to what some of these characteristics are differ in some areas, which are often called seas.

The average annual sea temperature not only affects the possibility of swimming but is especially important from the point of view of the length of the season, and it grows from north to south. However, medium summer and medium winter temperatures are much more important for tourism, because they create favorable conditions for recreation.

Along with the sea and lakes, attractive factors of tourism are important. The lakes are already before the end of the last century - a must - attracted many tourists, but today, when the tourist



attraction hydrographic factors get even a lot more on the importance, she has become prominent centers of certain tourist areas. Tourists especially visit those lakes that lie in mountainous areas and with the climate and vegetation create favorable opportunities for organizing quality recreation.

And at us have lake sensible value in tourism. Most are visiting the lake in the mountains. Rivers and valleys along their streams provide either because of the waters, rapids and cascades, or because of the beauty of the surrounding landscape an attractive environment in which people find sports recreation (rowing, swimming, fishing) or mental rest. In connection with river flows, the importance of canyons as very prominent natural beauties and tourist attractions should be especially emphasized.

Among the phenomena in nature which are directly linked to the river and creek flows fall and waterfalls, which are very beloved target of tourist visits. Although it is at first glance it seems that humanity has for their recreational need's sufficient quantities of quality water content, the reality is that the right condition significantly worse. When you are, in fact, excluded from consideration areas in climatically unfavorable areas and those who are traffic inaccessible to large groups of tourists, it remains significantly smaller part of the recreation area with water.

More is less favorable to that is that space also attacked and broke that good work has qualities which requires tourist recreation.

The healing springs are from ancient times known as a factor of health tourism because the exploitation of medicinal water manifold and diverse. And the water may be used in medical purposes, the drinking in the site, and in the form of individual or group bath with a variety of medical procedures (hydrotherapy). But besides exploitation of sources in an extremely medical purposes, in which are regularly still use the medicinal mud as byproduct of thermal springs, there is the much broader way tourist recreation with this healing water.



To the beaches and massive swimming pools, based on the warm springs and built mostly in the form of open or closed pools, at which the following needed a strong healing water diluted by adding plain water. Mineral, and thermal sources very are widespread in most countries. Only Serbia has over 400 of these sources, of which the organized exploit around 50, and have countries that have and more sources. It should be noted that the thermal springs serve as attractive factors in the first place in domestic tourism.

Natural are conditions regularly the main factor that attracts tourists in a space, a lot of the cities and regions began its tourist development, but and today tourism develop, relying is almost exclusively on the attractiveness of natural factors. But is soon noticed by that tourism is based only on natural attractiveness, no matter how they were quality, regularly still not returns harsh effects of what is achieved there were other than natural conditions tourists attracted and some other factors.

On finding new factors that would attract tourists affected by the additional fact that the many cities and regions, which are not possessed special natural qualities, trying to find or create other factors that could have caused the attention of tourists and draw them to himself. They are especially sought to tourists who have sought refuge on the passing at least a little retain or that of business visitors' ways also and tourists. All is these factors that attract tourists in greater numbers, and are not a reflection of natural conditions, referred to as social attractive factors, because they create people to their physical or mental work, and this is usually as a general social good. Such factors, skillfully blended to offer, enhancing its attractiveness in the continent and often cause the interest of people not just to a particular factor or a place that they dispose of care and for much wider area.

Time, however, is not told that people are not and previously attracted particular cultural or other sites, rather than the wishes to emphasize that they are in modern tourism



However, very little has visitors who come to a place only for certain sites, except if it has extremely significance. But many will be attracted to this place if there are many individual sights in the respective area or country, which as a whole promise an interesting and meaningful stay. According to what the role of these , as well as the all attractive factors , twofold : in the first row to attract tourists , but then , and that they give you a richer content of stay , as would be those which long held in the city or country , and , of course , that more spending . In some of the factors , when viewed individually , more accentuated first , but at some yet another role , but it is important to be in the attractive factors include those who in the first row are used to attracting tourists and make the city , area or country known , but one at which the important moment of direct economic and accomplishing your Rivanj revenue should be considered mainly receptive factors .

However, without attractive factors - natural or social - other supply factors cannot work. Socially attractive factors are classified into these basic groups;

- cultural and historical monuments,
- cultural institutions and cultural events,
- entertainment, sports, economic and other attractive events and institutions.

It is already different from such distributed groups that the possibility of taking advantage of socially attractive factors is very diverse and that they can satisfy very different tastes of tourists.

In terms of greater attractiveness and profitability of tourism, a special role is played by cultural and historical monuments and their inclusion in the tourism industry. Cultural and historical monuments are immovable and movable material objects preserved from the past, which - regardless of the material and dimensions - manifest the culture of an individual nation and interpret a certain period of development of society. However, as objects of greater tourist attractiveness, material monuments from the field of architecture, urbanism, sculpture and painting come are considered, which, as the inherited heritage of certain countries, make a part of their cultural inventory.



By including the cultural and historical monuments in tourism, a double benefit can, in fact, be achieved. First, it was shown that the possibilities of valorization of these monuments through tourism are large and diverse, and that most often monuments are not destroyed or degraded or damaged due to tourism, but are better maintained and easier to clean. It is certain, of course, that the greatest care is needed when carrying out some actions or interventions related to these objects or ambiances, and especially with architectural monuments, not to ruin the spatial relationship, rhythm of elements or atmosphere, because it creates a certain whole and inner harmony, so it gives them a basic value. But respect for their cultural and historical significance - except in exceptional cases - does not exclude that these facilities are given appropriate modern functions and contents.

From the tourist point of view, architectural works stand out the most as an interesting cultural heritage, either as individual buildings (buildings, churches), or as urban ambiances, i.e. urban wholes. As tourist attractions, such works from almost all epochs of human development are regularly accompanied by other artistic achievements, especially sculpture and painting, so they also represent cultural and historical objects of considerable interest for tourism.

From the point of view of epochs, most of the cultural and historical objects that attract tourists belong to antiquity, feudalism and the earlier epoch of capitalism. However, tourist interest is attracted - although much less often - by some objects from recent history, as well as some modern achievements, but such objects theoretically do not yet fall into the category of cultural and historical monuments.

The period of Antiquity left behind numerous monuments, especially in the Mediterranean countries. With their external impression, style and construction technique, inner meaning and content, they symbolize the human efforts of their time and are not only interesting and



valuable as a document and product of a certain era, but these ambiances still attract and ennoble people with their harmony.

In addition, it should be noted that there is another type of modern buildings that do not belong explicitly to cultural attractions, but have the character of social and political landmarks. These are particularly places and facilities from recent history, which evoke the memory of contemporaries of the persons and past events in which they directly or indirectly participated. Most of them are considered monuments or memorials, and many are protected by the law.

It should be mentioned that most of the mentioned special monuments or their larger groups often carry the features of several epochs, because they were created over a long period of time. This is especially true for urban units, which are given charm and tourist attraction by mixing the syllables of the past, and sometimes the present.

The attractiveness of an institution, for example a museum, manifests itself regularly in one way, and the appeal of an event in another, so their influences on tourism are different. However, distinguishing institutions from events cannot be carried out everywhere and consistently, because there are many institutions that manifest their cultural activity mainly through events, and most large events, due to their artistic, technical and organizational complexity, require a special cultural institution that organizes them.

The term cultural institution encompasses a wide range of diverse institutions that have very different tasks, and only one part has such connections with tourism that could be included among the significant attractive factors. First of all, it should be borne in mind that, as a rule, cultural institutions are not established for the purpose of tourism. Their general purpose is to preserve, study, systematize and make accessible to wider layers of artistic, ethnographic and



historical - in a word - cultural values of a certain environment or humanity, according to their narrower expertise and purpose.

Although Serbia and Bulgaria can be cited as a suitable example for a country rich not only in monuments but also in cultural institutions that are very successfully related to tourism, it should be emphasized that today almost all countries have many cultural institutions visited by tourists. However, there are few of them that attract tourists in large numbers, but they are rather mostly those that complement the content of the tourist stay. Of course, the same rule applies to institutions - as to monuments - that individual institutions, which alone are not a sufficiently attractive factor, become a significant attraction if there are many of them, and especially if they are also valuable.

Today, a number of cultural institutions in many countries have found a common interest with tourism. Namely, these institutions contribute to drawing the attention of tourists to certain places, cities or countries, and also, thanks to tourism, expand the range of their visitors, become more popular and to a greater extent perform their educational function. According to the possibility and intensity of connecting with tourism, cultural institutions can be classified into these groups:

- the first group includes those institutions whose attractions for tourism consist of collected, systematized and exhibited objects of cultural value, and these are primarily museums and similar galleries, special collections, archives and libraries, then zoos, botanical collections, ethno-parks, etc.;
- the second group consists of institutions that base their tourist attractiveness on live performances, namely theaters of all kinds, concerts, folklore and other similar institutions;
- the third group includes some special educational institutions which, through special educational methods, attract those who use the period of their vacation or school holidays to connect the recreational moment with the educational one.



The basic representatives of the first group are museums. They represent the cultural institutions which adequately allow average people to be in an easily accessible way acquainted with the achievements of some cultural legacy or epoch. Only the most important ones can be considered as tourist attractions capable of attracting tourists to a place or country.

However, the tourist attractiveness of these institutions, and this also applies to all other cultural institutions, is largely a reflection of curiosity, imitation, fashion, snobbery and other irrational factors, which have already been touched upon as drivers of tourism. These factors have significantly contributed to the wide popularity of these institutions, and the popularity itself already has an attractive power in tourism. Although mass visits to museums in most cases have a positive impact on the gradual raising of the cultural standard of the broad strata, they are largely related to psychological and irrational factors of tourism, which also influence the formation of certain strong hotspots of tourist gatherings.

Similar to museums, theaters become attractive factors of tourism if their reproductive performances gain popularity for their high artistic reach.

The reasons for such behavior of tourists have already been stated, but the fact remains that some theaters, concerts and other similar institutions are gradually becoming attractive, and sometimes very attractive factors of tourism. We also have institutions of this type, but their tourist attractiveness is significantly limited, but it is not without significance in narrow circles.

Among educational institutions, which in addition to their basic function have a pronounced tourist-attractive character, those that have a scientific reputation should be mentioned, and most often during their holiday period - which coincides with the tourist season - organized shorter specialized language or professional seminars, symposia and colloquia, which very



skillfully connect tourist visits with the desire of tourists for new knowledge, and at the same time skillfully contribute to increasing tourist traffic.

Along with the institutions, they have a very strong effect on attracting tourists to various large cultural events because they, in addition to enriching the content of the stay, give the tourist place greater value and attractive power, and at the same time enable higher consumption. Only large cultural events can be treated as an attractive factor, although this does not dispute the value of those smaller events, which do not attract guests on their own, but they make their stay more meaningful and affect the profitability of tourism as a whole. Similar to cultural institutions, it should be pointed out here that the first need and the idea of their organization did not arise from tourism, but over time, tourism gained a significant impact on the emergence of numerous events. Today, many of them are closely related to tourism and contribute to the attractiveness of the place, and even the country where they are held. Owing to them, many places and cities have come to the forefront as the most developed tourist places.

Festivals may have a variety of content and scope, but today it has a great deal not only in distinctly tourist areas rather than and outside them. Only festivals with a serious program and a longer tradition can be included in large cultural events. By the quality of their performances, not all of them reach the same artistic height. Many, in fact, the city of desire for rapid tourism development and increase earnings from tourism idea and importance of the festival, in which he ignored or underestimated artistic value and the seriousness of the organization, which makes the damage not only to them than the others. The same is also the name of the festival compromise when is the name given individual events, because the festivals are considered manifestations of the greater number of events which are repeated in certain periods.

Organizers of the festivals must have in mind that organization of the serious festival requires a certain environment, e.g. a cultural or other tradition that don't exists in many other places, but often, the larger cities, which that are involved in founding of the new festivals filled with



enthusiasm and unrealistic expectations, quickly encountered the insurmountable difficulties. Festivals are usually very sensible on the cost issues (where the rule is that in first year costs cannot be covered), but they also can become serious events that after several years start directly and indirectly to return the investment with a large cultural prestige and economic results.

Folk art, as a factor of tourist attractiveness, is best expressed in folklore performances and in other forms of exploitation of folk treasures. One of the special features of our country is that there is an extremely lively, rich and diverse folklore in it, while in most industrialized countries it has already died out. This attractive wealth of folklore consists - apart from architectural elements - primarily of games, songs, customs, costumes and handicrafts. Many of our institutions have taken measures so that folklore does not have the same fate in our country as in industrialized countries and that it is not forgotten, so they organize the collection of everything related to folk art in museums, and there are special institutions and many amateur societies that maintain and nurture that kind of art.

Congress events, large scientific and other similar gatherings, which are often classified as "congress tourism", can have a very attractive effect on the tourist place or country where they are held although congressmen very often do not want to be called tourists, so as not to question the seriousness of the scientific gathering or meeting, they are really most of the time when they do not participate in the work itself - distinct tourists. In addition, a large number of congressmen travel with family members, and they are tourists in the narrowest sense of the word.

The importance of the congress as an attractive factor is that most of the participants would not even come to a certain place if there was no congress. That is why many famous tourist places in the world, and in our country, are constantly struggling to obtain such gatherings, especially since experience has shown that a good part of the participants, if their stay was pleasant and if



they liked the place, later come again for holidays. It should be emphasized that nowadays there is a great competition of tourist places, and even cities, to reach the congress and their participants. But at the same time, efforts are being made to offer the most attractive opportunities for their organization, which is becoming more and more complex and for which specialized experts are needed. So, special congress buildings with the most perfect devices are being built or large hotels that also have congress halls and devices.

Nowadays, it is almost impossible to imagine tourism without numerous events, which contribute to the entertainment of tourists, so in all tourist places there are such events, institutions or organizations which organize them, in various forms and sizes and at various levels. Those events and institutions for the most part serve only for the guests' entertainment or other ways of enjoying, not its attraction. Exceptionally, there are those that attract more tourists.

Sports can also be an important attractive factor for tourism, but in assessing its role, two forms should be distinguished, which are differentiated by the behavior of the tourists themselves. Those are:

- active engaging in sports and practicing certain sports disciplines for the sake of recreation, without striving to achieve sports records,
- and watching sports events in which certain competitors perform, and the tourists participate only as spectators.

Conditions for being active in sports for tourism are important from the point of view of the content of the stay, and only exceptionally as an attractiveness. This is the case when a place has special sports facilities that can attract more tourists, such as golf courses, racetracks, yachts (marinas), artificial ice courts that can be used in summer, swimming pools for the winter (especially with warm sea water), facilities for hunting, fishing, cable cars, special mountaineering facilities, etc.



Sports as an attractive social factor - natural conditions are not discussed here - usually works more often when tourists participate as spectators at interesting sports events. Special attractive sports and leisure events can also attract a significant number of visitors with the specific type of mass attractive events that are of great importance for the tourism of some countries.

Digital marketing in tourism

The tourist market can be characterized as specific in terms of intertwining information relevant to the conduct of marketing activities. The value of information derives from their systematic nature, comprehensiveness, completeness, objectivity and specificity. Tourism is, in essence, an information-intensive activity, in which a high risk in the exchange of information between sellers and buyers exists.

The action of these factors conditions that tourism is directly affected by technological changes, which are related to the entire process of information transfer at all levels. A key technological breakthrough in this area has been made with the development of telecommunications and computer technology. Their combination has created opportunities for remote transmission and processing of information that, by definition, has a large "consumption" in tourism.

It can be said that it is the development of information computer technology (ICT) that helps to collect, store, analyze, transmit and disseminate information. The main benefit is, above all, the facilitation of the decision-making process by the management of the company or the tourist destination. Information and communication technology was initially used to speed up the processing and transmission of information within the company, then between the company and its business partners and, as a logical continuation, between the company and the end users – consumers, and it is now widely used to exchange information between consumers themselves. This is particularly important for the services sector and, within that, for tourism as



an activity that deals with the creation and sale of intangible experiences related to tourism and travel.

Remote processing of information, between individual companies and between companies and consumers as well as between consumers themselves in connection with the market exchange issues, is performed continuously more efficiently at an ever lower price. In this case as well, the competitive advantage in the market is achieved by those companies and destinations that use technological changes in order to formulate marketing strategies and combine marketing mix instruments that focus on the requirements, wishes and needs of consumers. It is, in essence, about creating a "magnified" product for the consumer, that is, about using technology in order to facilitate the consumer's decision to undertake tourist trips. This is achieved, in essence, by providing relevant information and improving the quality of services, i.e. the tourist product itself.

This area is one of the most susceptible to turbulent changes, which is in line with the rapid development of information technology. This development has conditioned that we can talk about the increasing direction of marketing, especially promotional activities, towards the so-called "electronic" or "digital" marketing. The basis for this redirection is the increasing use of the Internet for the needs of marketing activities of both tourist companies and tourist destinations. As a consequence of the use of information technology in tourism, the approach to the use of marketing has also changed:

- a) from mass to data-base marketing - marketing must use database technology in order to more precisely target, especially promotional activities, in priority market segments, especially by adapting messages to the needs of the target audience;
- b) from mass media to interactive media - allowing clients to choose when, where and how to meet with bidders - targeting the individual needs of clients;



- c) from market participation to enriching relationships - enriching relationships with consumers will be a more important measure of marketing success than market participation;
- d) from sales to customer service - marketing no longer means just conveying a message to the widest possible audience, but is imbued with customer care;
- e) from the most creative to the most technologically sophisticated - the best marketing experts are no longer the most creative, although this feature is still important, but the most technologically sophisticated.

The globalization of information systems is also noticeable, which is related to the globalization of the market, i.e. the need to collect and distribute global information. Typical examples of this type of use of technological advances are global distribution systems such as Amadeus and Galileo. Also, there were noticeable tendencies towards the creation of tourist information systems, i.e. destination databases in order to help in making decisions at all levels.

During the creation of these systems, which are very important for the promotion of tourist destinations, certain problems have arisen because the owners of the existing information, primarily reservation systems, are not adequately interested in the promotion of destinations. Therefore, the development of destination databases and their connection with large computer reservation systems started. The key role in these activities was played by the public sector, i.e. the national, as well as the regional and local tourism organizations.

More destination databases have been developed in the world so far. Their development involved connecting product databases with the database of consumers (tourists), as well as with the reservation system of a given destination. Destination databases were expected to affect the following:

- providing tourists with complete information on the total offer, i.e. on the tourist product of the destination (attractiveness, conditions for staying and accessibility), and



- enabling the reservation and sale of specific (partial) products of a given destination (hotels, etc.).

Information systems in tourism, primarily computer reservation systems connected to destination databases, make it easier to overcome an important problem related to the marketing of a tourist product - its intangibility. As it is known, potential consumers in tourism cannot be convinced in advance and on the spot of the quality and characteristics of the tourist product. On the other hand, potential tourists are interested in obtaining the desired information on the quality and characteristics of the tourist product in order to increase its tangibility. A certain part of that type of information is provided by the holders of marketing activities at the level of tourist companies and destinations through the process of market communication, i.e. promotion.

The main impacts of information and communication technology (ICT) on marketing activities in tourism and hospitality can be summarized as follows:

- a) long term effects of ICT are expressed through the increased power of consumers in the market. The possibility of using the Internet in order to search for the most favorable alternatives with a constantly growing offer of options for choosing the most suitable alternative has had a special impact on increasing the individual power of consumers, especially in relation to travel organizers and travel agencies. These factors, along with the changes in the tourist offer (deregulation of air traffic, the importance of low-cost airlines, political changes and the opening of new markets, the process of abolishing visas) have increased the possibility of choosing tourist destinations by "new" tourists;
- b) strategic changes in the field of tourism - the possibility for customers to compare online prices of all important parts of the tourism product, harmonization of regulations and standards, removal of restrictions in the services sector and introduction of a single European currency, consumer protection and widespread application of service quality management;



c) the movement from a service-based economy to an experience-based economy, supported by data on the greater economic importance of experience-based products (wine routes, gastronomic delights, adventure and various activities, arts and cultural events) compared to those for service-based;

e) in the new conditions, new opportunities appear for small companies in the field of tourism and hospitality, related to products intended for niche markets. This is primarily due to the fact that creating a website does not require significant resources and to the fact that potential guests are willing to search the Internet in order to find an acceptable solution. In this sense, ICT helps small and medium enterprises in joint performance and in cooperation with destination marketing organizations in creating portals and links in order to better expose their own websites;

e) support of the public sector in the field of tourism and associations of local tourism enterprises to small and medium enterprises is crucial for their strategic use of the Internet as well as for creating destination management systems that would be used as a source of information and place for reserving and purchasing tourism products.

The use of ICT may have certain but decreasing restrictions, primarily related to the security of transactions that take place on the Internet (use of credit cards and entry of personal data) and the issue of trust in companies that are known only through the Internet or have no broader roots in the domestic and international markets. It is also important to point out that the existence of many alternatives and bases for choice can sometimes be confusing and stressful. Many opportunities can lead potential tourists to choose to search for information off-line to "simplify" the decision-making process (friends, a local travel agency, or referral to major well-known brands, especially tour operators).

The Internet is considered to be the most important innovation since the development of the press which, as such, has completely redefined the way of life of modern consumers, influencing all forms of activities of people and economic organizations. It combines many features of



existing media with new possibilities of interactivity and connectivity; therefore, the Internet is not only transforming the way individuals connect their businesses with each other, but also the very essence of what it means to be a human being in society. Since the advent of the Internet, travel planning (e.g., seeking travel information and booking) has always been one of the important reasons why people use the Internet. The creation and availability of the Internet has fundamentally changed the way tourists access information, how they plan and book a trip, and how they share their travel experience.

The use and impact of the Internet on society and the economy can be considered one of the key factors for global transformation at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century. In this regard, the use of the Internet and technologies based on it for marketing purposes is one of the important shifts in the performance of overall marketing activities, especially promotional.

The basic benefits that the Internet provides to potential users can be summarized as:

- constant availability under affordable conditions;
- a global character;
- providing special value by enabling comparisons of prices and products;
- facilitating the purchasing decision-making process based on the evaluation of alternative products and the offer of service organizations.

The Internet has an impact on the use of all marketing tools by providing product improvements, reducing the cost of seeking information about new products and services and as a new channel for market access or sales, which has led to a significant elimination of mediation, which is especially characteristic of tourism. The influence of the Internet on promotional activities through the use of e-mail, presentations on the Internet, social networks and other modern forms of Internet use is special.



Changes related to information and communication technologies have made it possible for consumers to provide a large amount of information relevant to decision making, i.e. to reduce uncertainty in this regard. It could be said that the era in which we live is characterized by a greater scope of opportunities for the use of the media and, perhaps more importantly, for deciding on the consent and manner of receiving commercial content. Holders of marketing activities adapt to this by using more diverse forms of marketing communication (e.g. the use of virtual reality, as a way to present unique tourist experiences, presents such a form of approach).

Technological advances have made the impact of the Internet and its associated technological advances extend to the field of marketing. Four special forces can be singled out that significantly affect the characteristics of the digital age:

- a) digitization and connectivity;
- b) Internet explosion;
- c) new types of intermediaries and
- d) adjustment to clients and clients' wishes.

Digitization is the conversion of text, data, sound and images into a stream of bits that can be sent at very high speeds between places. Connectivity refers to the creation of network systems that connect people and companies (intranet/internal network, extranet/external network and the Internet).

The Internet is a revolutionary technology that is spreading unstoppably and entering all spheres of life and work. Acceptance of the Internet by companies in the field of tourism and hospitality is a necessary prerequisite for doing business in the modern tourism market.



The creation of new intermediaries, whose business is primarily based on the Internet, has affected the way of doing business, especially in the hotel industry, and has influenced the relations between important participants in sales channels.

Improving the Internet, as the means of collecting and processing information, especially about clients, created the possibility of directing the marketing offer, i.e. the appropriate combination of the marketing mix instruments, to each individual client, in accordance with their wishes and needs, in order to create a competitive advantage.

The importance of the Internet in the overall marketing activities can be summarized in the following way:

- it is faster because it removes barriers to communication with current and potential consumers, suppliers and partners regarding distance, time zones and location;
- it is cheaper because it lowers marketing costs, especially promotions and business costs required for direct access to end users regardless of location;
- it is more global because it facilitates access to potential consumers around the world, while increasing price standardization regardless of borders;
- it is more two-way in terms of focus because it allows overall communication and marketing activities to become two-way in terms of communication which can lead to improved customer relations and relationship marketing;
- it is more informative because it provides broader and deeper information that provides organizations and individuals with a wider range of information sources;
- it is more substantial because it provides an opportunity to collect information on the total marketing offer for their comparison with the competition;
- it is more environmentally friendly because all information is sent electronically, reducing the need for distribution of brochures, letters, etc .;



- it is more competitive internationally because all the above characteristics enable the creation of marketing supply in accordance with demand and improve the effectiveness of marketing and promotion strategies.

In essence, the principles of marketing remain the same, but the ways in which these principles are realized in the immediate economic practice in such a dynamic area as tourism and hospitality are changing.

Tourism and the tourism industry are in the process of strong change and restructuring. The basis of the changes stems from the action of factors that condition the appearance and characteristic forms of manifestation of the tourist demand, as well as from the influence of environmental factors, in which the technological environment stands out. In that sense, changes in tourism are especially related to the development of new technologies with the action of organizational and structural innovations.

The following drivers can, in principle, encourage innovation in tourism: technology, research, price, employees, users (tourists), legislation, and suppliers). Usually, special attention is paid to market factors, i.e. the influence of tourists as users of services on the innovations in tourism (needs, wishes and requirements of tourists). This impact is shaped by innovations in products or services that tourists themselves consider new or that can be considered new within a particular company or a tourist destination.

Globalization has had and still has a special impact on the overall area of innovation as well as on increasing the acceleration of change. In this sense, a particularly indicative opinion, expressed more than twenty-five years ago, which is still essentially valid, is that tourism is in a crisis of change and uncertainty that has occurred due to rapid changes in the nature of the tourism industry itself, technology, increasingly experienced consumers, global economic restructuring and growth frontiers related to environmental issues.



The nature of innovation in tourism should be understood in the context of broader economic and political changes in relation to which four groups of key factors can be identified: first, changes in the disposable income, leisure and consumption characteristics have had a significant impact on overall tourism market characteristics related to the predominant forms of tourism products, which was especially evident through the expansion of the market (example of BRIC countries); second, the incentives for innovation in tourism often stem from the environment, especially the technological one, which is particularly pronounced through the development of air transport and the impact of information and communication technology; third, tourism itself emerges as a creator of innovation both within tourism enterprises and through the influence of government policies; and fourth, tourism is at the same time a transmitter of new ideas and innovations, especially in relation to the expansion of demand.

Having in mind the indicated changes that take place in the environment in which business organizations operate, as well as other carriers of marketing activities in tourism and hospitality, it can be assessed that they are significantly characterized by disruptive action or based on the so-called disruptive innovations. Innovations in general can be divided into two basic groups:

- a) common (traditional) innovations - gradual improvements of existing products or processes;
- b) disruptive innovations - technological innovations that launch new products, innovations that bring a real revolution, as well as innovations that launch completely unexpected products, significantly cheaper or those that have a different target group.

If we talk about the course of technological disruptive innovations, we could, in principle, divide them into the following four phases:



a) Internet (World Wide Web) - its introduction and use, which is identified with the so-called Web 1.0, has dramatically changed the degree of availability and value of information by influencing the communication process to take on a whole new meaning and it drastically changed the entire advertising system. This has led to consequences both at the level of companies in the field of tourism and hospitality and, to a greater extent, at the level of tourist destinations. The Internet and everything that is the consequence of its use makes the business of destination marketing organizations (tourist organizations) lose its basis to a certain extent. This wave of disruptive innovations is characterized, above all, by the use of websites (websites) in order to provide information, as well as to conduct promotional activities;

b) Social networks - their development is encouraged by the use of Web 2.0 technologies and has resulted in an exceptional degree of acceptance on a global scale. The key consequence is the fact that people have the opportunity, through the use of social networks, to access data, especially from people whose opinion they trust, about all the factors that are important for making a purchase decision. This has had and still has a special impact on tourism and hospitality where potential buyers are able to obtain information on product quality from those who have used or are currently using the product, as well as to share their experiences with others and thus influence the attitudes of others in relation to a specific tourism product. On the other hand, these customers are not able to experience the tourist product in any other way before the direct contact that takes place in tourist destinations.

Forms of interaction related to social media can be classified as follows:

c) Mobile technologies - the use of smart phones and tablets, has made significant changes in the way of maintaining links between marketing activities in tourism and hospitality and potential and current customers of their products and services. The use of mobile technology and, therefore, mobile marketing implies the fulfillment of three assumptions: first, the existence of a "ubiquitous" network, which means that everyone is in a position to have the opportunity to use the network to maintain a connection, second, maintaining a constant



presence on the Internet, which is implied for mobile phones (permanently active mobile phone) but not for tablets, and, thirdly, the use of a personal mobile device that is not shared with anyone and, as such, can be identified. The use of mobile technology implies decision-making by marketing activities on the adaptation of the website to mobile devices as well as the creation of applications adapted to mobile devices, which requires special costs. In relation to the use of mobile applications, two groups can be distinguished based on the level of consumer knowledge and the driving forces of communication. According to the level of consumer knowledge, the use of personal mobile devices allows companies to tailor messages to each user and implies knowledge of the network operator, as well as the initiator of the mobile marketing campaign, which are usually two different organizations. According to the initiator of the communication process, we can distinguish what is initiated by the holder of marketing activities ("push" communication) or by the consumer ("pull" communication);

d) Wearable technologies and visual changes in the social media - this is an increasingly important use of small but high-quality video cameras that are increasingly used in the creation of video content during travel and stay at a certain destination. The connection of these cameras to the Internet and the possibility of direct sharing of these contents allow tourists to post instantly/in real time these contents on social media. Tourist companies and destinations can use the above by creating an ambience and atmosphere for creating such content and using them to achieve their own marketing goals. In that sense, the use of drones can be singled out, i.e. the possibility for tourists to use their own recordings provided in that way and post them on the social media. Also, marketing activities should focus on the use of special platforms, such as Instagram and YouTube, which are primarily dedicated to sharing photos and videos, in order to find the best approach to use them for their own marketing purposes.

Digital media differs significantly from the traditional media, and the following differences can be highlighted as the most important:



- Targeting - the ability of marketers to identify potential customers before making a purchase. So, the vast majority of websites use the so-called cookies, i.e. small files that are stored within the clients' Internet search engines and which contain information about their preferences, as well as their basic data. This allows companies to identify customers to provide them with an experience that will increase customers' willingness to buy;
- Interactivity - the ability of clients to express their wishes and needs directly to the company, in response to marketing communication of companies. To that end, companies use social media to communicate with their customers in real time, to respond to inquiries and to publish news;
- Accessibility - the ability of marketers to obtain digital information about customers. This is the advantage of companies that are related to highly used search engines (e.g. Google) because, according to the queries on the Internet, the search engine can get a lot of information about the interests of potential customers;
- Connectivity - the ability of clients to be connected with companies, as well as with other clients. Clients of companies have the opportunity to exchange information and experiences with other clients on the social media or on the websites of these companies, as well as to strengthen the ties with the company itself.
- Control - the ability of clients to regulate the information they collect, as well as the extent and the manner of exposure to that information. In this regard, consumers use, for example, the website kayak.com to choose the most favorable of the many travel suggestions.

The application of digital marketing is based on the acceptance of technological changes by consumers, which, in turn, affects changes in consumer behavior, which are expressed as follows:



- a) interconnection - digital technology allows consumers to connect more easily and simply using different techniques: instant messaging (SMS), email, Internet platforms (Facebook and others) creating virtual communities;
- b) technology determines the scope and the manner of use of information - digital technology allows content to be created and published, accessed and used very quickly and easily, which expands and deepens the scope and structure of information available to consumers. This leads to a key change in the market - the consumer becomes a market player that is stronger than other actors, primarily producers/service providers;
- c) the filtering of information according to their importance is increased - due to the abundance of information, consumers try to separate important from irrelevant information and to prevent the delivery of information that they consider inappropriate;
- d) the collection of information related to narrower areas (niches) is growing - it is information related to the special interests and special needs of consumers on the basis of which consumers associate online;
- e) micro-publishing of personal content is extremely increasing - the nature of digital media allows consumers to express themselves online or to express their opinion and to consult the opinions of others, especially in connection with making a purchase decision;
- f) an increase in the number of "prosumers" (persons who use and create the product - producers + consumers) - this leads to a redirection of market power from producers to consumers based on the ability of consumers to clearly and accurately convey their opinion to producers. At the same time, consumers have the opportunity to tailor products to their needs as well as to shape the experiences and communication messages they receive from manufacturers;



g) on the basis of the requirements, always and everywhere - the ubiquity of digital technology allows consumers to more quickly, easily and with fewer obstacles, almost "instantly" meet their needs and do it and want more and more "now and immediately".

Having in mind the above about the essence of digital marketing, it can be stated that the content of the term itself has changed over time, ranging from explaining that it is marketing products and services using digital channels to the umbrella term describing the use of digital technologies to attract customers and shaping their preferences, promoting products, retaining consumers and increasing sales. If we want to define the concept of digital marketing in more detail, one of the appropriate approaches explains it as a flexible process based on technology through which marketing operators cooperate with consumers and partners to jointly create, communicate, deliver and provide value for all participants.

Understanding the application of marketing, whether digital or "traditional" marketing, is based on the acceptance of the importance of the decision-making process for the purchase of a tourist product by consumers. It is important for the holders of marketing activities in tourism to understand the behavior of consumers in the shopping process, as well as the course of the shopping process. Having in mind the primary importance of choosing a tourist destination, it should be emphasized that the decision to purchase a tourist product, i.e. participation in tourist trips, is not primarily influenced by specific qualities of a particular tourist destination but, above all, matching basic attributes/characteristics of the destination with psychological and other features of tourists.

The decision to buy a tourist product is based on the specific motives of tourists and is a very complex system of relationships that tries to present the so-called micro-models of consumer behavior in tourism.



The process of tourists deciding to buy a tourist product is unusual due to the action of several factors:

- there is no tangible return on investment in a tourism product - using a tourism product results in experience rather than owning something - goods (except souvenirs and gifts);
- expenditures are often very significant - large in comparison to other consumer goods;
- purchases are usually not spontaneous but are carefully planned, especially in relation to costs. This applies in particular to the choice of destination, type of accommodation and mode of transport;
- unlike most other products, in the case of a tourist product, tourists visit the place of production (creation of services), i.e. the product is not transported to the consumer.

The decision to undertake tourist travel includes a number of sub-decisions and choices, which affect its complexity.

The complexity of making this decision is further influenced by the following factors:

- a) Heterogeneous elements for decision-making - decision-making is usually directed towards the selection of an appropriate mix of different products, ie services of different companies;
- b) Risk and uncertainty - are caused by the inability to test the product, the difficulty of correcting possible errors in the selection, as well as comparing the selected alternatives;
- c) Financial consequences - the need to invest significant financial resources in tourist trips from various sources (savings, loans);
- d) Planning - the trip needs to be prepared in advance due to the action of all factors that usually affect the seasonal concentration of tourist traffic (school holidays, vacations, climatic factors, etc.);
- e) Availability and completeness of information - there is a large amount of information that needs to be processed in order to make a decision.



The whole process, which describes the basic stages of consumer behavior in the tourism market before, during and after tourist trips, can be observed in relation to the following basic parts:

- a) making a basic decision (to travel or not to travel), based on the existence of the desire and need to travel;
- b) requesting information;
- c) making a specific travel decision;
- e) activities during the tourist trip, and
- e) satisfaction, i.e. complaints after the trip.

Having in mind the previously mentioned peculiarities of the process of making a decision on tourist trips, it is necessary to point out that one of the consequences of the significant role of the Internet in market activities concerns the attitude of consumers towards products, especially considering the possibilities of connecting consumers with products beyond control. This refers to the experience of consumers after the purchase of a product in which consumers remain attached to the product, promoting it or criticizing it, thus cooperating in the process of product development. In this regard, a model of decision-making by consumers has been formed that describes this new "journey" of consumers within this process. The model was developed based on a study of the purchasing decision-making process of more than 20,000 consumers in three industries on three continents. The basic phases of the model are:

1. Consideration - related to a set of products that is in the focus of consumers when considering and through recent points of contact between consumers and producers;
2. Evaluation - Consumers add or remove products during the evaluation process of what they really want to gain by using the product;
3. Purchase - The consumer chooses the product at the place of purchase, and
4. Enjoyment, support and attachment - after the purchase, the consumer formulates his expectations based on experiences in order to facilitate his next "journey" within the purchase



decision-making process and enters into a special kind of relationship with the product by sharing his experiences with the product through social media/networks.

Summarizing the analysis of consumer behavior, especially in relation to the decision-making on the purchase of a tourist product and in connection with the development of technology, we can single out ten key trends:

- a) communication is increasingly mobile, as well as more immediate, shorter, faster and in real time, as well as in a multi-connected environment in which consumers can access information anytime and anywhere;
- b) consumers have 24/7 conversations based on advances in technology, especially mobile devices that allow consumers to have endless conversations within the real and virtual world as well as personal and professional world, using SMS, WhatsApp, iMessage, and photo sharing applications such as and real-time video;
- c) consumers are offered an increasing amount of information at an increasing rate, which is why they can be altered information, which is why they try to check the information in some way, in relation to its timeliness, usefulness and correctness, which can help other consumers;
- d) visual information takes precedence (photos, videos, infographics) which is obvious from the popularity of applications such as Instagram and Pinterest;
- e) consumers trust other consumers, especially their peers, more than traditional institutions, i.e. they use technology to interact with each other, provide the things they need to do so through traditional institutions such as corporations. Traditional media continue to enjoy considerable popularity but the expansion of consumer-trusted media sources continues, and in particular includes social media/networks;
- f) the consumer controls on the basis of multiple connections combined with the possibility of selecting information and obtaining advice from other consumers. In essence, it is no longer possible to approach the consumer with ads, e.g. about the tourist destination, the consumer is already able to decide whether to read, listen, see the ad and determine the destination,



reserving the right to determine whether, when and how to contact the holders of marketing activities of the destination;

g) large groups of consumers online form groups to shop together and receive significant discounts provided that a minimum number of product buyers are met (collective or social shopping, e.g. Groupon.com);

h) assists consumers in the development of search engines that constantly expand and improve the way they search, including social content and indicators of social behavior (browsing, "likes", etc.);

i) location-based services are becoming increasingly popular as a result of the increased use of mobile devices and the expansion of related capabilities. Search engines add local information to search results and recommend location-based apps to provide notifications of local events, help form temporary groups, and recommend location-based offers;

j) consumers strive for personalization and affiliation based on the contradiction between the fact that the Internet has made the world more transparent and larger but also smaller, having a role in the new process of individualization and tribalization (creation of small groups / "tribes"). Consumers demand individual attention, personalized communication, customized products and services in the creation of which they participate. They are increasingly abandoning one-way communications, marketing messages and paid media. Authenticity, transparency and added value have become more important while at the same time consumers want to find like-minded people. They want to talk and share, to build relationships, to socialize, to belong, to form their "tribe". Technological development strengthens people to create their own personal experiences and find like-minded people, thus encouraging them to feel that they have the right to be what they are: unique individuals.

The use of digital media, i.e. the application of digital marketing in tourism and hospitality, has introduced a number of changes in the way of using marketing activities that are primarily related to changes in consumer behavior under the influence of social media and digital media in general. A concrete presentation of the way of using certain forms of digital marketing will be



specially treated in the part that deals with promotional activities, i.e. marketing communications in tourism and hospitality.

Strategic frame for marketing communication activities

The necessity of planning hence of integral concept for sustainable development of tourism in the common trans-border Via Militaris destination is imposed by different factors both domestic and external. Such concept will benefit the sustainable policies and practices in the management of the destination and on the other hand will contribute to the development of a prosperous local tourist industry.

The external factors are related to many aspects of the development of tourist industry not only on the Balkans but in the World in general. These are factors not to be influenced directly: the behavior of the tourists, factors that relate to the interests of those involved in the tourist activities – outer suppliers and distributors of travel services and products as well as the tendencies in the management and marketing of the destinations.

On International scale the following main factors are observed to influence the choice of a travel destination:

- More trips shorter stay
- More trips outside the country
- Tendency to practice more than one type of tourism during the trip in order to benefit more of it.
- Individualizing of the tourist services what brings less tourist groups
- Avoiding intermediaries when buying the trip
- Requirement to have 'good time' and to socialize during the trip and not just product and services (hotels, tours, restaurants). The 'good experience' economics.



- Increase in the number of the mass tourist products with global distribution and they compete in terms of price and exerted pressure on the providers.
- Cutting down and optimizing the budget on the traditional advertising in the travel industry because of some technical achievements.
- Increase in the number and variety of the affordable travel destinations offering comparable products.
- More competition and counting on the planned and focused marketing of the destinations considering the demand to have unique and exclusive image that makes them recognizable on the global market.
- Increasing the importance of the brand of the destinations as a main prerequisite to yield more competitiveness.

Internal factors are those that reflect the need of strategic tourist planning at the destination. They are related not only to the local self-governing but to the needs of the local people, as well as those of the tourist and other local businesses.

- Defining tourism as the main factor for the economic development of the destination.
- Employing local people to provide for competitive tourist industry.
- Willingness to provide stability of the tourist development at the destination.
- Highly active local public providing for intensive development of various tourist activities.
- Interested parties in the cultural field and the non-government sector willing to back up in the creation and development of the image of the Via Militaris destination.

The concept gives priorities and measures to achieve long lasting competitiveness of Via Militaris as a tourist destination. The work on the concept takes into account the ideas, expectations, intentions of all concerned as well as the directives of the best European and global practices in the creation of the strategic documentation in the field of tourism and marketing of the destinations.

There are five key factors defining the development of tourism:

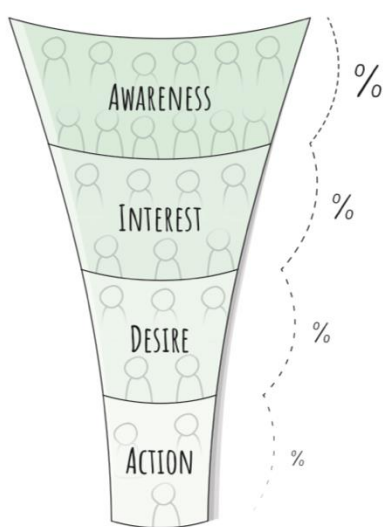
- Tourism is a powerful instrument for social and economic development and decreasing of poverty through the creation of jobs, businesses, infrastructure and export because of tourism.
- To make use of this potential and to turn tourism into a political priority it is important to create interest, more information on the benefits of the tourist industry.
- Stability (social, economic, and of the natural environment) is more important than ever addressing spheres as energy diversity, climate changes, green economy, risk management.
- Monitoring and considering the constantly changing customer: more experienced and demanding now, demographic changes, aging population, migration, changing values and way of life, changes because of 'Economics of Services' and 'Economics of Experiences'.
- Enhancing the competitiveness through adequate business environment: innovations, diversification of the products, markets and their segments, developing of the products, IT technologies, marketing and advertisement, scientific research, human resources.

The strategies, targets, visions and purposes in most of the concepts for the development of tourism are based on these five factors.

Defining of the marketing and communication goals

To work out the strategic frame of marketing communication activities - targeting, integrating and focusing of the communication tactics to achieve high efficiency in the promotion of tourist destination VIA MILITARIS WITHOUT BORDERS, the fundamental marketing application AIDA was used. Known also as a 'funnel of sales' this application is used in all kinds of businesses to trace the different stages the client passes through. There are number of variations of this instrument in 4-5-7 steps etc. and it aims to trace the sales, to identify the stages the client goes through, and to provide the business with the chance to manage the "getting new customer" process.

For that purpose, AIDA funnel classic concept is applied in order to identify the stages the parties



concerned, and the potential tourists pass through.

Awareness – is the stage when those concerned get acquainted with the tourist destination Via Militaris. From the analysis of our study we came to conclusion that interest to experience tourist attractions along Via Militaris in Bulgaria and Serbia as a potential tourist destination appears when people needing a holiday look for options for educational, cultural and alternative tourism or their combination.

Here *need* is considered as recognized necessity to make a choice for a potential tourist travel.

Interest – is a stage when the choice is getting more meaningful. At this stage it is very important the content presented to satisfy the demand of detailed information. The conversion rate between the current and previous stage is quite low and the main efforts are addressed towards those seeking destinations to understand and learn more.

Desire – here for the first time, the interested parties evaluate the destination from viewpoint of their tourist needs. They look for additional information when they are not sure about something, and they refuse if they don't find such or in case, they are not satisfied with the information found.

Action – The decision to choose and to order the tourist experience along Via Militaris shouldn't be underestimated. In this stage most important is the convenience to find ample and relevant information about the accommodation, catering, related tourism infrastructure and communications as well as close sightseeing sites and possibility for their combinations not to ignore factors influenced by the local self-government.

The following basic marketing and communication strategic goals are taken into consideration in this strategic plan' elaboration:

1. Creation of *knowledge* about travel destination Via Militaris
2. Increase of the popularity of the sights listed in tourism destination Via Militaris on territory of Bulgaria and Serbia
3. Increase of the awareness of those possibly interested about the travel experiences along Via Militaris destination
4. Expansion of the *interest* about experience potential of the sights included in destination VIA MILITARIS
5. Improvement of tourist attitude to visit not very popular sights like those included in Via Militaris project.



Marketing techniques and tactics for goals' achievements

Taking into account the strategic marketing goals defined the marketing communications should emphasize onto presentation of value of Via Militaris destination in regards of the following three major pillars:

Understanding – In the times of current insecurity about Governments' and local authorities' abilities to support domestic travel and international trips between countries of similar epidemic status like Serbia and Bulgaria. Because of that and due to the proximity and unity of the sights along Via Militaris destination it is essential to carefully consider possibilities, perspectives and stability of travel experiences – it is a challenge that encompasses set of others inside it. Because people are so different sometimes it might happen one the same information to bring different messages to different people.

Consistency and ease – in 21st century the time is the most valuable asset for people. Everyone devotes limited time and cognitive capacity to comprehend certain information and to reflect on it.

Tour operators, tourists, travelers are loaded with various information from different sources. Numerous places are struggling to catch the attention of any possible tourist. If a communication to parties concerned and to tourists contradicts with another one most likely it will bring negative result. The potential and current tourists enter a state of cognitive dissonance and should take a decision, that requires certain cognitive capacity. The reaction in such case might be inconsistent. In order to save cognitive efforts needed to reflect on the specific information, tourists usually quarantine it and the brand is loaded with negative emotion – it's associated with the necessity of additional efforts. On the other hand, if the information is consistent and involves taking small decisions in favor of the destination then the customer could be an ambassador of the destination.



Identifying the nature of the information they search for and its presentation in a reliable form would facilitate decision making. This is a powerful weapon that we can use but sometimes it goes with high risk.

Marketing and communication activities should be directed towards facilitating the decision-making process to travel along Via Militaris destination, regardless as individual trip or organized group, using various and easy to follow information about destination potential for interesting, comfortable and unforgettable travel experiences.

Authenticity – The active tourists search for information from more and more communication channels aiming to get maximum reliable information in order to organize effective, efficient, convenient and economical travel. The authenticity of the information conveyed to tourists should be always kept in mind. A tiny bit of misleading information could ruin all the confidence achieved before. The main goal is to achieve stronger influence and faster comprehension of information by the potential customers in order to form positive attitude towards sights of Via Militaris project emphasizing onto key ones that would attract tourists.

Strategic frame of marketing and communication activities – target definition, integration and focussing of communication tactics to efficiently upsurge the attractiveness of Via Militaris tourist destination is elaborated on the following 4 main pillars – focused, efficient, integrated and innovative, as illustrated below.



- **Focused:** To bring together significant, well considered and precisely formulated goals to achieve synergetic result compliant with the actual positioning of the tourist products and their recognisability in the context of Via Militaris project. Focused to attract tourists from Bulgaria and Serbia. Focused on the communications – one of the main tasks is directing of specific and relevant data to the targeted customers. Personalized communication activities with integrated skills of marketing practices will show the possibilities of tourism referring to the interests of the public and this will result in deeper interest and greater popularity of the sights in Via Militaris destination.

- **Integrated:** Synergetic approach to various marketing instruments to accomplish better efficiency of the results achieved. The integrity of the marketing strategy is mostly visible at strategic marketing communications and at the upgrading of communication campaigns already realized.

- **Innovative:** Innovations in marketing strategy will be expressed by the choice of marketing instruments and the creation of new types of marketing communication platforms and actions to attract, to interest and finally to provoke actual travel. Use of innovative practices of direct marketing in order to attract tourists from different target groups.



- **Efficient:** The following indicators will be traced to estimate the efficiency of marketing strategy:

Adaptivity – the creation of flexible marketing concepts that can be applied to attract interest of different target audiences with minimal alterations.

Acceptability – it can be measured considering the level of awareness, the attitude, the feedback, and the actions taken by the members of different targeted groups as a result of the accomplished marketing plan.

Real changes in direction of the settled goals.

Setting of priorities

The promotion of a new tourism product that introduces 10 emblematic but mostly not very popular sights is both a challenge and benefit. The sights of destination Via Militaris are situated on the territory of two neighboring but different countries; they are managed by different local authorities and have different status. Common marketing of those sights for their communication positioning onto Via Militaris tourism map depends on joint efforts of all interested parties and is ground on understanding that tourists don't admit borders nor culture does.

The following five main elements present in all marketing communications and they are valid for the communications aimed to attracting tourists to the identified ten tourist sights of Via Militaris destination:

1. Persuasion and informing – all marketing communications aim to provide certain information and to bring change of attitude or behavior.



2. Place of contacts – for successful market positioning one tourism should spread its marketing messages wherever the contact with the targeted clientele is probable.
3. Participants in the marketing process – the targeted audience includes not only potential customers. A participant in the marketing process is any person who contributes to successful achievement of the goals. Thus, the participants in the marketing process could be all institutions and people who are related directly or indirectly to the activities.
4. Marketing communication messages – it's of particular importance to use them at every possible place and to express the main competitive advantages and communication appeals to attract the attention of tourists to the 10 sights.

The marketing of tourism is based to a greater extend on what would motivate people to travel on specific destinations.

Formation and choice of priority marketing and communication activities (event marketing, advertisement, public relations, influence marketing, content marketing, online media marketing). Definition of indicators for evaluation of goals achievement.

Formation of strategic frame for marketing and communication activities gives guidelines for creation of comprehensive strategic plan taking into consideration time resources needed for communications development and introduction of innovative marketing practices.

Creation of strategic frame for the marketing communication activities is based on the conception of development of integral and large-scale marketing activities that fully correspond to the state and tendencies in the development of the marketing factors as well as the goals specified.

Out of the whole scope of possible integrated marketing communications for achievement of the goals defined in Via Militaris project and the concrete strategic targets to popularize the 10 sights in destination the following key and mutually complementary practices have been chosen in order to create synergetic effect of the marketing communication efforts.

Information campaigns

Proactive information campaign that will introduce themes and stories related to the project's sights to demonstrate their connection and interrelation. In the development of information campaigns attention should be paid on the fact that there are many parties involved and it will be a challenge not only to unify the presentations' format but also to present connection between sights included. It's necessary to pay efforts to involve the tourist information centers in starting and coordination work of the information campaigns.

Direct communication



The focus is relocated from PR campaigns to stimulation of discussions and participation of the interested parties in promotion of tourism possibilities in the regions where the sights of Via Militaries are located.

In addition to the planned informative initiatives local tourist forums are provided with opportunity to share experiences and to present the sights “an block” not only individually.

This suggests active approach including the organization of meetings with representatives of different communities and other parties involved as well as engaging medias for the purpose of direct communication.

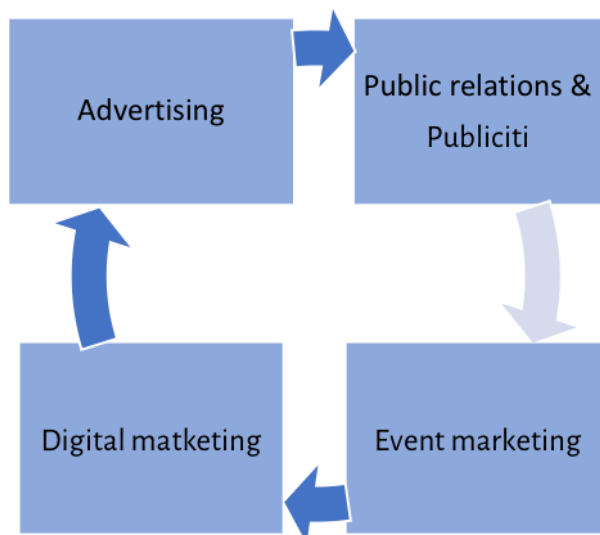
Communication via mass medias – it involves events like travel fairs, organizing and participating in press conferences, briefings and press releases; informal meetings and information distribution via different media platforms to reach maximum number of interested parties.

Active advertising campaign

The communication strategy should be backed by active advertising campaign with printed, audiovisual and interactive promotional materials. Creation of multimedia advertisement focused on modern presentation of the sights in the destination and other connected objects in Via Militaris region.

Digital marketing communications

Maintaining of active online advertising campaign, relevant use of specialized online media.



Action Plan. Development of integrated marketing communication plan, concretization of specific activities in accordance with the marketing communication mix, argumentation.

1. Selection of communication channels;
2. Promotional campaigns;
3. Advertisement backup;
4. Selection of specialized events.

As it was shown the current document aims to represent guidelines for elaboration of common concept for a marketing communication strategy for visual communication impact and main steps in the realization of communication activities for the popularization of the 10 key sights in Via Militaris project uniting two regions in two different countries in a common tourist destination.

The main tasks of the development of the current guidelines for marketing communications of Via Militaris as a tourist destination are to be addressed towards the identified target groups: tourists (regardless their nationality) are identified as main target group and interested parties - as secondary target. The parties involved play the role of presenters of the communication



activities – acceptance, understanding and approval of matters by the parties involved will add extra value to the communication activities.

Tasks submitted to the goals

Tasks:

1. The audience to be acquainted with the tourism potential of Via Militaris destination and the adjacent communities, as well as with the possibilities it offers for a travel experience, everyone to discover its attractiveness personally.
2. To present synergic image of travel destination Via Militaris.
3. To elaborate guidelines for production of useful and usable informative and promotional materials, relevant to the contemporary market demand.
4. To offer action plan for on-line activities and presence in the social media through various content that should be interactive, informative and containing enough information not only about tourism possibilities but also to present all other useful information for the trip.

Target Segments & Tourist profile

The selected segments have different channels of influence and will be subject of relevant communication activities. Segment whose market share is less or equal to 2,5% are excluded.

Tourist profile

Present-day tourist is looking for a diverse tourist product which combines several types of tourism even if some type dominants: for instance, journey designed mainly as cultural-historical trip might be combined with culinary or/and recreational activities. Tourists gather information mostly from Internet using stationary or mobile device, have multiple interests and are curious to discover new information and experiences.



They are travel experienced and this makes them more demanding and critical, with - based on the advertising materials and online publications - anticipations for comfort, convenience and easy-to-use information. This imposes creation of realistic expectations, discrepancies between the presentation and real situation must be avoided. Even if it's not among the most attractive options the tourist should make its well-informed choice.

Nowadays tourists demand more because they have more information at hand, they are critical and realize that they can be creators of content to be shared in social media and thus - to influence common perception of the region, the destination, the tourist object, product or service. The easy access to the travel products especially to budgetary ones makes contemporary tourists unpredictable when it comes to the criteria and taking decisions. They are thriving on the modern and they are looking for attractive tourist experience. Tourists are active and will associate with the tourist offers received or chosen and they value the opportunity to choose the elements of their own tourist experience. Trying to satisfy more of their spiritual, intellectual, educational interests nowadays tourists are considering additional offers as well.

They are using greater number and various information sources in making decisions for their travel. Dominating sources for foreigners are the travel agencies, on-line platforms, social nets - it implies conclusion that the most suitable communication channel is Internet. Printed advertising informational materials shouldn't be neglected though, as they are not only addressed to the customer but represent important supplementary element of tourist offers.

Foreign tourists:

- Young people and families (age 25-45 years) who travel on holidays and want to learn more about Bulgaria enriching their stay with additional experience;
- Transit travelers;



- Tourists emotionally connected to Bulgaria (Bulgarians living abroad) who value the cultural and historical sights, natural beauty, additional experiences and authentic events;
- Tourist groups with educational orientation;
- Individual tourists who create their own personalized tourist product, carefully organized in advance, including small friendly groups sharing travel experiences;
- Tourists that may practice several types of tourism.

Bulgarian and Serbian tourists:

- Tourists interested in the region and tourism possibilities in proximity of the two countries;
- Local people traveling during the weekends and curious to get familiarized with the region;
- Individuals, combining by their own different type of tourism activities;
- People who travel in destination for other reason but having time to visit cultural historical sights visits;
- out-of-active season tourists – weekends and public holiday's travelers;
- Tourists who travel for short periods but more often and year-round;
- Actively searching tourists with own vision and flexible in their choice;
- Tourists organizing their trip by themselves and willing to combine several types of tourism activities;
- Highly educated and intelligent tourists travelling to meet specific additional needs who demand additional products in different tourism segments;
- Tourists active in the global network and using e-services and new mobile technologies.

Tour operators and travel agencies:

- offering various travel packages;
- specialized travel operators;
- organizers of student travels and trips.

Involved parties identified during project work meetings:

- Mayors of the neighboring counties;



- Scientific and cultural institutions (historical and archeological museums, community centres, cultural clubs);
- Institutions responsible for cultural-historical heritage management (museums, local communities);
- Small and medium size enterprises – hotels, restaurants, suppliers of auxiliary services;
- Tourist information centers;
- Organizations for destination marketing, national tourist organizations;
- Consulting companies, NGO;
- Local associations (folklore, craftsmen, sports, travel, etc.);
- Artists, leading scientists, entrepreneurs;
- Craftsmen – woodcarvers, honey producers etc.
- Teachers, tourist guides and animators.

Messages

The key messages should be connected with characteristic and recognizable by the public and the local population symbols.

As a result of the working meetings several main trends emerged – unknown historical heritage, beautiful nature, religious monuments with history, and places with history, legends and myths. Based on the generated common characteristics of the destination the following suggested messages are formed.

- Via Militaris - people, nature and traditions
- Via Militaris - an adventure worth living through
- Via Militaris - adventure on the road

These suggestions are based on the complete idea to combine the possibilities of different types of tourism considering the specifics of the ten sights of the tourist destination Via Militaris such as educational, cultural-historical, religious, culinary, eventful etc. The objective is the suggested messages to be common (universal), to show variety, to connect travel with



experience and discovery, as well as with learning, to offer common tourist services and events, to contribute to the development of the local communities.

Messages are directed to provoke curiosity, urge to know, and adventure spirit among tourists to stimulate their interest to investigate and learn more about this not popular tourist destination.

Sub messages that supplement the development of the communication of the main ones through secondary methods:

- Variety of experiences
- Via Militaries – well-kept secret
- Wild nature and ancient culture
- Authentic and alternative

The additional communication elements (sub messaging) will support the impact of the main message and will contribute to the communication action.

Content – voice and tone of the communication

Obviously, the identity and recognizability of Via Militaris tourist destination is due to the entire value including cultural and tourism elements, tourism potential and human resources.

All these help potential tourists to identify and recognize the options and to figure out what the destination is all about. These elements are directly connected to the presentation of the values and the experiences as a motivation for the travel.

There are substantial aspects, neglected or ignored sometimes, these are the words both written and spoken. Those that are written often are in need of a design in order to express synergetic effect. This design, structure, order and presentation bring life to the words on the screen, on the advertising materials and elsewhere. Vividness of the words bring also people,



the way presents them, the attitude and the content they put in. All has direct influence on our perceptions, attitude and response.

Here we pay attention to the importance and the value of harmonious tone in marketing communication regardless of the content and how communication is to be delivered.

Tone of the communication, style of the marketing communication activities.

The common voice, tone and style give the direction for development of the communication processes both in terms of content and presentation. To attain full experience at every stage consistent communication is of essential importance. That means regardless of the communication channel the customer should see, read, hear and understand the information in one the same way.

The voice and tone of presenting the tourist destination Via Militaris, introducing the main motives important to the tourists to start the trip, are essential. Introducing the communication message is the starting point in creation of unified and consistent tone of communication.

These strategic purposes require persistence and repetition. If the messages and the way of their presentation are changing frequently it might be confusing to the potential customers even to the current tourists.

Figuratively speaking, the voice is the content while the tone is the way in which the content was adapted to the customer. Till the voice remains constant the tone may vary according to the context of the message.



General concept for development of communication activities to popularize Via Militaris travel destination

The main purpose is to have common vision and to structure the basis for creating steady recognizability of the sights included in the tourist destination Via Militaris. In that relation we can list the main architectural characteristics of building of identity that should be considered in creating a unified image as well as in the sequence of activities in the synergetic tone of the communication.

In the choice of a common communication concept the following goals have been considered:

- to identify and recognize at an instant;
- to connect them to specific symbols;
- to have characteristics directly connected to Via Militaris;
- to contribute to more successful popularizing of tourism in the communities where the sights of Via Militaris are located;
- to announce all needed for a tourist travel to their audiences.

The suggested concept for the creation of common identity of the tourist destination Via Militaris and its popularizing among the target groups as well as being recognized, accepted and popularized by the local communities is taking into consideration the following scheme for efficiency of the advertising communications.

The way the community and the region are regarded and their positioning in the common perception is in the core of the communication-advertising identity.

Directions for common visual presentation of Via Militaris destination and its sights – connecting elements.



▪ ***Creation of recognizable graphic symbol – logo***

The logo should be simplified down up to three recognizable elements, the colors used should not exceed that number as well. It is important to contain the name of travel destination Via Militaris. The possible symbols and colors should be selected after a due discussion among parties concerned in the communities where the sights are located in Bulgaria and Serbia.

The name of the tourist destination should be written in Latin to be recognizable not only by local but also by foreign public. The script should be non-serif easy to read to avoid fonts that can be confusing. Satisfactory and innovative option is font Adys – the first recommended for people suffering dyslexia in Bulgaria. This font is easy to read for people with light or medium form of dyslexia. This suggestion is innovative as there are not so many fonts available providing for easy reading. The font is applicable both for printed materials as well as on-line – <http://www.adysfont.com>.

Use of common font for all printed informational materials will provide common thread and way of perception of the information.

▪ ***Creation of information advertising materials***

Development and offering of tourist products and introducing of tourist destinations is adherent to their availability and affordability as well as to their adequate presentation and popularization. The first and basic informational materials that we suggest being provided are:

- informational boards to all tourist sites;
- informational flyers with the important information;
- map of destination with listed sights, recommended eateries, calendar of events;
- comprehensive brochure with rich photo material and detailed info for the ten key tourist sights to be used for more official purposes;
- post cards – promotional material customers are ready to pay for especially if the images are carefully selected. They can show nature, history, culture, local traditions;



- souvenirs - local craftsmen can be encouraged to make unique souvenirs to be available at the local tourist centers and for official purposes, all of these with the official logo of destination; The common visual identity should relate to local perceptions (better after an appropriate study).

▪ ***PR activities***

The effort in PR communications should be directed at generating more publicity of the community not only in the regional media, what is the current practice, but also using the national media.

1. Creating partnership with medias;
2. Creating partnership with leading bloggers and influencers on-line;
3. Positioning of the policies for development of the destination not just in the local media;
4. Generating of substantial information campaigns
5. Active use of self-on-line platforms – official website of Via Militaris destination, Facebook page, Instagram profile;
6. Work with ambassadors – representatives of the parties' concerned, local influential people – sportsmen, business leaders, artists, cultural figures. Formal and non-formal local opinion leaders would be a good supplement to the communication activities.

▪ ***Events***

Here the activities to popularize tourist destination Via Militaris divide in two categories – local events taking place on the territory of the community where the sights are, and specialized travel events.

- The events of the community calendar are of key importance to popularize the Via Militaris destination and can be used as a means to promote and declare.

Selection of appropriate events - active promotion of those will contribute to affirm the destination but on the other hand if too much of it especially when the events are not appealing



enough or not well organized a negative result may appear in the communication, the public will become resistant and reject some of the messages and there is the risk of an informational balloon that leads to non-realistic expectations and disappointment.

Recommended is a careful selection of 3 to 6 events of public importance annually that relate to the sight on the territory of the community and which should meet the following criteria:

- Being unique – special reason connected to the history and culture not to be met elsewhere or unique interpretation/program of nationally important festivity;
- Attractive program containing innovative attractions, interactive performances involving the audiences and leaving lasting memory of the experience
- Excellent organization – providing easy and convenient access – transportation, parking, services.

- National and International Specialized Tourist Events

Participation and presentation of the destination in national and international events is of particular importance for the positioning and establishment of a tourist destination and the tourist products in it. International Tourist Fair Holiday and Spa Expo in Sofia, International Tourist Exhibition IFT in Belgrade, International Tourist Fair Cultural Tourism in Veliko Turnovo are annual events appropriate for presentation of Via Militaris to the interested public.

The promotion of the key events involves mix of PR and advertising activities before, during and after the event.

Before:

- Press announcements to local, regional and national medias: (1) With general info on the forthcoming event and accents at least 10-15 days before the event; (2) With main emphasis, piece of news, information for something unique that will draw the attention of the media to the event and photos are a must.



- Social medias campaign and intense publications that will rise the curtain on the planned events and will provoke interest to the event plus advertising.
- On-line advertising – display campaign with banners in local nets and Google.
- Outdoor advertising – banners, posters, flyers
- E-mail campaign.

During the event:

- placing an information stand with current info about the event and for the tourist attractions and services in the area. It's a good practice this counter to cater to some sort of free entertainment darts, basketball net with merchandising wins that will keep the tourists around.
- Options for interviews with key figures to the event - performers, executives etc.

After the event:

- Press announcement with info to the public on the emotions and surprises during the event;
- Coverage in the social media with emphasis on the visual content shoeing emotions, experiences, entertainment.
- Encouraging the feedback in the social nets.

▪ **Online Communications**

Online communications are of substantial importance to the effective presence of the tourist destination Via Militaris and are the easiest and more convenient way to approach the target groups. Online communications basically depend on the activities to maintain the controlled communication channels such as official websites and profiles in the social nets as well as on availability of interesting and attractive tourist blog.

Tourist website for the tourist destination Via Militaris

Nowadays tourists search info on where, how, when and how much the trip will cost. To be popular certain tourist site or cluster of such it's necessary to have a powerful, impressive,



informative and up to date online presence. The most important of such presence in the field of tourist is the website. Being the face and most frequent communication channel, it should meet the contemporary technological, graphic and content requirements and trends.

Objectives:

The tourist website of Via Militaris destination should act as a tool for achieving the purpose of maximal accessibility to correct, up to date and relevant information referring to the promotion of its sights. It should be intuitive, easy to use, with well-developed UX, reachable and functional on all types of devices and to deliver detailed info on all tourist attractions, services and experiences along Via Militaris destination such as their accessibility, specifics, and main assets.

The website should meet the following criteria:

1. Accessibility – easy domain
2. Easy navigation – simplified navigation, structuring that will assist the customer to get acquainted with the main info about the tourist sites as well as being useful when consulted.
3. Up to date structure of the site in order to have easier visual acceptance of the info and better-quality and useful information.
4. Content that will keep the customer longer on the site and will provoke him to share it on the net. Possibility to load video content, and files – tourist brochure for example.
5. Connection with the social nets.
6. English, Serbian, and Bulgarian language versions.

Main customers:

- Active citizens (age 19-60) who enjoy traveling and are looking for options for one day- or weekend travel;
- Schools and other educational institutions;
- Foreign tourists – transit from Western or Central Europe to Asia, Turkey and Greece.



Main guidelines:

- Simplified navigation with minimal pages on the main menu;
- Pages organized in subcategories with a scroll in the page that will direct to the last pages;
- Focus on the visual content – attractive photos giving realistic picture of the sights;
- Detailed articles on the tourist attractions with adjoining info on accessibility, type of experience, options to combine with other attractions.
- Complete list of accommodation availabilities and food options plus contacts, access, distances, and other key items like included services, prices, etc.
- Map of travel destination Via Militaris with listed attractions and services – visible and accessible from every page of the website.
- Publishing info for services not directly related to tourism – pharmacies, hospitals, beauty parlors, shopping venues, etc.

Promoting of the site:

- Investing in SEO of the site to be easily retrievable with key words and good Google indexing;
- Campaigns in social nets;
- Banner advertising on the sites of local Medias (barter options);
- On brochures, flyers and tourist materials;
- Outdoor advertising – billboards in the communities with Via Militaris sights, posters etc. in the tourist information centers and partners, and in community events.

▪ **Social nets**

Social nets are among the basic referents to info and source of recommendations among customers when it comes to finding and comparing tourist attractions and experiences. Social nets allow in a solid way to demonstrate how vivid and active certain destination or service is.



Due to the social nets we can rely on references and share among people who visit the tourist destination or the community events. They are also an instrument, a channel to encourage trends and direct reach among clients.

It is important to know that they are a quick channel to spread negative feedback. Management of the communication channels on the net and the online reputation of the brand in general, requires high level of understanding of the requirements and the motivation of the customer, empathy, and readiness to minimize the negative effect out of unpleasant experience with compensating good attitude and even real reimbursement.

Which ones to choose and why?

Facebook is a universal communication channel with abundance of communication opportunities to reflect on products and services with a mix of types of content. It allows the customer to create oneself a multi layered and realistic expectation of what is going to get. Universal platform, used by great number of customers, strongly recommended.

Creation of a website of Via Militaries destination

Good practices:

- Publishing of content with predictable time regularity (every day, every other day or 2-3 times weekly) with peak activities when events in the calendar of the region are taking place;
- Creating events to all events connected in some way to Via Militaries destination as well as adding to page other events from related pages;
- Defining of promotional period before, during and immediately after every event and use of the page to encourage more entries because of its attractive visual and informative content;
- Creating contests and games to popularize the 10 sights of Via Militaris destination;



- Campaigns to popularize specific sight – for instance when the road to the sight is upgraded or in connection with anniversary or some other reason even without a particular reason if the sight is with underdeveloped potential.
- Cross-promotion of events and a chosen tourist sight
- Active use of requests for action like welcome, come to discover, come to learn more, learn more here, bring your friends, share with friends, etc.

Trip Advisor is a specialized social platform to share insights and advice on tourist experience. It is used mostly by foreign tourists and has extremely high degree of trust.

It doesn't require much of daily resource rather than initial impetus to create information for sights and services and support if there are current changes in circumstances or in case of feedback from tourists. We recommend active use – creating pages for tourist sights and services visited by foreign tourists, or such used by transit tourists, etc.

Local entrepreneurs should be encouraged to create profiles in Trip Advisor. When creating a profile, they can request free sticker that can be placed at the entrance of their venue and thus to demonstrate they are active and have the trust of world acknowledged brand.

Trip Advisor is used by active tourists with high demands who leave constructive feedback. And it can be used by the managers of the tourist enterprises to correct any mistakes pointed in the feedback concerning the quality of their services. High quality of services and good relationship with the tourist are decisive to get the approval of Trip Adviser and social nets in general.

Instagram is another platform to share attractive visual content, but requires high quality resource of it, without many options for direct suggestions and exchange of information that will stimulate the customer to act (purchase or visit). We recommend encouragement of customer activities in the net through popularizing hashtags in Facebook for instance.



- ***Online Advertising***

The investment in Internet is a good way to reach lots of people in short time.

Display advertising improves the brand awareness and helps promoting the content of the tourist site and also local events. It's important that the site is completely ready and to meet the banner expectations. Local online media are good option for display advertising.

Google AdWords – positions the destination among appropriate offers to the customers that have already decided that they want to travel, explore, and relax.

Advertisements in social nets – the main advantages of the advertising campaigns in Facebook are specific targeting and opportunity for detailed analysis of the results regardless of the budget. By its type, social net advertising is display advertising - positions visually (in most cases) a message in the media where the customers already are and provokes them figuring out an idea. This type of advertising should provoke an emotion, too.

The current guidelines in developing the communication activities of Via Militaris tourist destination want to popularize the policies, actions, and the actual projects to stimulate the development of the tourist destination and its declaration as a modern and interesting tourist brand. No doubt this requires systematic long-term work. In this respect we can give the following essential recommendations related mostly to the tuition of the personnel involved in the development of tourism in spheres like public speaking and presentation, working with media, writing of press messages, informational backup of online channels, attractive Facebook profile, advertisement and communication with the public.

Activities – AIDA tasks

In the previous part the strategy frame was introduced that it is based on several frame pillars and in this part, we will describe their connection with specific measures and expected results.

According to the processes of influence we can shape the following activities:

	Awareness	Interest	Desire	Action
Public Relations Publicity	Interviews and presentation of the project, results and selected sights for Via Militaris Publications presenting the sights on Via Militaris	Stimulating local tourist organizations, NPO, communal and public to offer and speak about the sights and project - tourist destination Via Militaris Involving opinion leaders to promote the sights.	Information about the sights of Via Militaris Content marketing for the sights, stimulating publications on the net.	Development and offer of real travel itineraries Via Militaris Information about all available and possible to combine tourist experiences with local partners
Choice of specialized events	Organizing of the participation and presentation of Via Militaris on international and local for Bulgaria and Serbia tourist events; Participation in partner events in Bulgaria and Serbia and abroad	Participation in events organized by partner and local organizations to promote Via Militaris.	Organizing and conducting media tours to present the sights of Via Militaris.	

	to represent the project; Organizing press conferences to announce activities on the project – developments and achievements.			
Advertising backup (online animated, multimedia clips, information movies)	Banners to promote the Via Militaris sights; Multimedia advertisements to represent Via Militaris tourist destination.	Advertising materials; Online animated banners to promote international events; Presentations, printed materials representing Via Militaris travel destination.	Information movies for Tourist destination Via Militaris; Online animated banners for promoting Via Militaris on international events;	Information movies for Tourist destination Via Militaris; Online animated banners for promoting Via Militaris on international events; Printed and online informational materials, souvenir advertising;
Promotional Campaigns		Presenting the project results	Presenting the identity of Via Militaris travel destination	Connecting with local partners and creating working net
Choice of communication channels	Website Exhibitions	Website Exhibitions	Website Exhibitions	Website Exhibitions

	Advertising materials Multimedia advertising materials Mass Media Channels Profiles in Facebook and Instagram	Advertising materials Multimedia advertising materials Mass Media Channels Profiles in Facebook and Instagram	Advertising materials Multimedia advertising materials Mass Media Channels Profiles in Facebook and Instagram	Advertising materials Multimedia advertising materials Mass Media Channels Profiles in Facebook and Instagram
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Activities to feed the communication & Activities to fulfill the communication

The chart below lists the activities needed to fulfill the marketing plan. They are divided into two groups: activities to feed the communication, and activities to execute the communication itself.

Activities to feed the communication	Activities to fulfill the communication
Creating information data bases for the sights of Via Militaris tourist destination;	Media campaign for the tourist destination Via Militaris to create and get recognition followed by choice
Identifying opinion leaders to be engaged in the creation and presentation of information	Introducing Via Militaris on working meetings, professional and/or community seminars;
Developing on data bases with Bulgarian and Serbian potential partners and interested parties that can be part of the promotion activity;	Conducting media tours to introduce the tourist destination Via Militaris.
Creating data bases with key contacts with the media and their members in order to have lasting relations;	
Developing a program to work with Journalists from corresponding Medias (radio, TV, periodicals, online) with travel orientation;	
Supporting monthly information bulletin;	



Producing PR movies to present Via Militaris travel destination;	
To create and maintain profiles on Facebook and Instagram.	

Via Militaris project and touristic product action plan



VIA MILITARIS PROJECT ACTION PLAN

GOAL

Creation of virtual tour of Constantine the Great residence Median and Scretisca. Luxurious residence palace of Mediana, erected by Constantine I near his birth town of Naissus is important historical monument as well as Palatium Scretisca, a residence of Constantine the Great.

OBJECTIVE

Improvement of touristic abilities and recognition of residence Median and Palatium Scretisca as important historical monuments as well as valuable touristic resource

STRATEGIC ACTION DESCRIPTION	PARTY / DEPT RESPONSIBLE	DATE TO BEGIN	DATE DUE	RESOURCES REQUIRED	DESIRED OUTCOME	EVALUATION PLAN
Detailed description of residence Median	IPA CBC partner in Serbia	01.01.2021	01.12.2021	Equipment VR expert team	Created detailed description of residence Median	IPA CBC FLC
3D modeling and 360 view of residence Median	IPA CBC partner in Serbia	01.01.2021	01.12.2021	Equipment	Created 3D modeling and 360 view of residence Median	IPA CBC FLC
Detailed description of residence Palatium Scretisca	IPA CBC partner in Bulgaria	01.01.2021	01.12.2021	VR expert team	Created detailed description of residence Palatium Scretisca	IPA CBC FLC
3D modeling and 360 view of residence Scretisca	IPA CBC partner in Bulgaria	01.01.2021	01.12.2021	Equipment	Created 3D modeling and 360 view of residence Scretisca	IPA CBC FLC



Creation of web site with 3D modeling and 360 view of residence Median and Palatium Scretisca	IPA CBC partners	01.01.2021	01.12.2021	VR expert team	Created of web site with 3D modeling and 360 view of residence Median and Palatium Scretisca	IPA CBC FLC
<p>Different implementation modalities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Partnerships between local government/local municipalities and argumentative reality Software Company • Project and Programme Support – IPA CBC program and ADRION project <p>Potentials for joint public and private partnerships between local municipalities and NGS's dedicated to a promotion of historical heritage and preservation of monuments form Roman era.</p> <p>Approximate budget for a project is 100.000,00 euros</p>						



VIA MILITARIS PROJECT ACTION PLAN

GOAL

Improvement of environmental protection, in order to preserve remaining of Via Militaris road as well as late Roman history monuments along Via Militaris road.

OBJECTIVE

Creation of LoRa infrastructure to provide sensor based air quality control. LoRa infrastructure on Via Militaris road will be utilized to obtain critical information regarding air quality in the spots of historical monuments.

STRATEGIC ACTION DESCRIPTION	PARTY / DEPT RESPONSIBLE	DATE TO BEGIN	DATE DUE	RESOURCES REQUIRED	DESIRED OUTCOME	EVALUATION PLAN
Creation of LoRa infrastructure at 5 touristic sites along Via Militaris road in Serbia	IPA CBC partner in Serbia	01.01.2021	01.12.2023	LoRa infrastructure	Created LoRa infrastructure at 5 touristic sites along Via Militaris road in Serbia	IPA CBC FLC
Creation of LoRa air quality sensor net at 5 touristic sites along Via Militaris road in Serbia	IPA CBC partner in Serbia	01.01.2021	01.12.2023	Air quality sensor	Created LoRa air quality sensor net at 5 touristic sites along Via Militaris road in Serbia	IPA CBC FLC
Creation of LoRa infrastructure at 5	IPA CBC partner in Bulgaria	01.01.2021	01.12.2023	LoRa infrastructure	Created LoRa infrastructure at 5	IPA CBC FLC



touristic sites along Via Militaris road in Bulgaria					touristic sites along Via Militaris road in Bulgaria	
Creation of LoRa air quality sensor net at 5 touristic sites along Via Militaris road in Bulgaria	IPA CBC partner in Bulgaria	01.01.2021	01.12.2023	Air quality sensor	Created LoRa air quality sensor net at 5 touristic sites along Via Militaris road in Bulgaria	IPA CBC FLC
Creation of web site with information about air quality along Via Militaris road	IPA CBC partners	01.01.2021	01.12.2023	Web design expert team	Created of web site with information about air quality along Via Militaris road	IPA CBC FLC
<p>Different implementation modalities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Partnerships between local government/local municipalities and ICT Company • Project and Programme Support – IPA CBC program and ADRION project <p>Potentials for joint public and private partnerships between local museums dedicated to a promotion of historical heritage and preservation of monuments form Roman era and ICT Company.</p> <p>Approximate budget for a project is 200.000,00 euros</p>						



3D reconstruction and virtual tours of King Ivaylo fortresses Nisevac (Serbia) and Tsarevets (Bulgaria)

VIA MILITARIS PROJECT ACTION PLAN

GOAL						
3D reconstruction of King Ivaylo fortresses in Nisevac in Serbia and Tsarevets in Veliko Trnovo Bulgaria in order to create virtual tours as part of preservation history figures and facts.						
OBJECTIVE						
Improvement of touristic abilities and recognition of King Ivaylo fortresses in Nisevac in Serbia and Tsarevets in Veliko Trnovo Bulgaria						
STRATEGIC ACTION DESCRIPTION	PARTY / DEPT RESPONSIBLE	DATE TO BEGIN	DATE DUE	RESOURCES REQUIRED	DESIRED OUTCOME	EVALUATION PLAN
Detailed description of fortresses in Nisevac	IPA CBC partner in Serbia	01.01.2023	01.12.2025	Equipment VR expert team	Created detailed description of fortresses in Nisevac	IPA CBC FLC
3D modeling and 360 view of fortresses in Nisevac	IPA CBC partner in Serbia	01.01.2023	01.12.2025	Equipment	Created 3D modeling and 360 view of fortresses in Nisevac	IPA CBC FLC



Detailed description of Tsarevets in Veliko Trnovo	IPA CBC partner in Bulgaria	01.01.2023	01.12.2025	VR expert team	Created detailed description of Tsarevets in Veliko Trnovo	IPA CBC FLC
3D modeling and 360 view of Tsarevets in Veliko Trnovo	IPA CBC partner in Bulgaria	01.01.2023	01.12.2025	Equipment	Created 3D modeling and 360 view of Tsarevets in Veliko Trnovo	IPA CBC FLC
Creation of web site with 3D modeling and 360 view of fortresses in Nisevac in Serbia and Tsarevets in Veliko Trnovo	IPA CBC partners	01.01.2023	01.12.2025	VR expert team	Created of web site with 3D modeling and 360 view fortresses in Nisevac in Serbia and Tsarevets in Veliko Trnovo	IPA CBC FLC

Different implementation modalities:

- Strategic Partnerships between local government/local municipalities and argumentative reality Software Company
- Project and Programme Support – IPA CBC program and ADRION project

Potentials for joint public and private partnerships between local municipalities and NGS's dedicated to a promotion of historical heritage and preservation of monuments form Roman era.

Approximate budget for a project is 150.000,00 euros



VIA MILITARIS TOURISTIC PRODUCT ACTION PLAN

Constantine the great trail

GOAL

Creation of unique selling proposition named Constantine the great trail as cross-border tourist product

OBJECTIVE

Constantine the great trail will consist of 5 tourist points in Serbia (Niš Fortress - Turkish fortification, 17th century, Old town of Svrljig Early Byzantine-Medieval Churches, Bela Palanka milestone, Momčil's (Piot) town or fortress Kale fortress near Bistrica, Dimitrovgrad Road intersection - Via Militaris) and 5 tourist points in Bulgaria (Roman residence and road station "Skretisca"-Kostinbrod, Ancient and medieval Fortress 'Kaleto' – Berkovitsa, Castra ad Montanesium fortress – Montana, Bozhenishki Urvich castle – Botevgrad, Remains of a Roman villa "Kralev Dol") .

STRATEGIC ACTION DESCRIPTION	PARTY / DEPT RESPONSIBLE	DATE TO BEGIN	DATE DUE	RESOURCES REQUIRED	DESIRED OUTCOME	EVALUATION PLAN
Creation of public private partnership for realization of Constantine the great trail in Serbia	IPA CBC partner in Serbia	01.01.2021	01.12.2023	Public private partnership expert team	Created private partnership for realization of Constantine the great trail in Serbia	IPA CBC FLC
Defining unique selling propositions	IPA CBC partner in Serbia	01.01.2021	01.12.2023	Marketing expert team	Created unique selling propositions product	IPA CBC FLC



product properties of 5 tourist points in Serbia					properties of 5 tourist points in Serbia	
Creation of public private partnership for realization of Constantine the great trail in Bulgaria	IPA CBC partner in Bulgaria	01.01.2021	01.12.2023	Public private partnership expert team	Created public private partnership for realization of Constantine the great trail in Bulgaria	IPA CBC FLC
Defining unique selling propositions product properties of 5 tourist points in Bulgaria	IPA CBC partner in Bulgaria	01.01.2021	01.12.2023	Marketing expert team	Created unique selling propositions product properties of 5 tourist points in Bulgaria	IPA CBC FLC
Promotion of unique selling proposition named Constantine the great trail	IPA CBC partners	01.01.2021	01.12.2023	Marketing expert team	Created promotion material of unique selling proposition named Constantine the great trail	IPA CBC FLC

Different implementation modalities:

- Strategic Partnerships between local tourist organisations/local municipalities and Tourist Company
- Project and Programme Support – IPA CBC program and ADRION project

Potentials for joint public and private partnerships between local tourist organisations and tourist companies.

Approximate budget for a project is 150.000,00 euros



VIA MILITARIS TOURISTIC PRODUCT ACTION PLAN

Gastronomic tour of Constantine the great

GOAL

Creation of unique selling proposition gastronomic tour of Constantine the great as cross-border tourist product

OBJECTIVE

Gastronomic tour of Constantine the great as cross-border tourist product will consist of 5 tourist points in Serbia (Niš, Svrlijig Bela Palanka, Pirot, Dimitrovgrad) and 5 tourist points in Bulgaria (Kostinbrod, Berkovitsa Montana, Botevgrad, Krlev Dol) .

STRATEGIC ACTION DESCRIPTION	PARTY / DEPT RESPONSIBLE	DATE TO BEGIN	DATE DUE	RESOURCES REQUIRED	DESIRED OUTCOME	EVALUATION PLAN
Creation of gastronomy tour offer of national dishes and specialties 5 tourist points in Serbia	IPA CBC partner in Serbia	01.01.2021	01.12.2021	Gastronomy expert team	Created gastronomy tour offer of national dishes and specialties 5 tourist points in Serbia	IPA CBC FLC
Creation of gastronomy tour offer of national dishes and specialties 5 tourist points in Bugaria	IPA CBC partner in Serbia	01.01.2021	01.12.2021	Gastronomy expert team	Created gastronomy tour offer of national dishes and specialties 5 tourist points in Bulgaria	IPA CBC FLC



Promotion of gastronomic tour of Constantine the great as cross-border tourist product that consist of 5 tourist points in Serbia and 5 in Bulgaria	IPA CBC partners	01.01.2021	01.12.2021	Marketing expert team	Created promotion material of gastronomic tour of Constantine the great as cross-border tourist product that consist of 5 touristic points in Serbia and 5 in Bulgaria	IPA CBC FLC
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Different implementation modalities:

- Strategic Partnerships between local tourist organisations/local municipalities and Tourist Company
- Project and Programme Support – IPA CBC program and ADRION project

Potentials for joint public and private partnerships between local tourist organisations and tourist companies.

Approximate budget for a project is 150.000,00 euros



VIA MILITARIS TOURISTIC PRODUCT ACTION PLAN

Adventure tour of Constantine the great

GOAL

Creation of unique selling proposition, adventure tour of Constantine the great as cross-border tourist product

OBJECTIVE

Adventure tour of Constantine the great as cross-border tourist product will consist of 3 tourist points in Serbia (mountain climbing, gorge safari driving, hiking, hors riding) and 3 tourist points in Bulgaria (quad racing, rafting, mushroom collecting) .

STRATEGIC ACTION DESCRIPTION	PARTY / DEPT RESPONSIBLE	DATE TO BEGIN	DATE DUE	RESOURCES REQUIRED	DESIRED OUTCOME	EVALUATION PLAN
Creation of adventure tour offer of 3 touristic points in Serbia	IPA CBC partner in Serbia	01.01.2021	01.12.2022	Gastronomy expert team	Created adventure tour offer of 3 touristic points in Serbia	IPA CBC FLC
Creation of adventure tour offer 3 touristic points in Bulgaria	IPA CBC partner in Serbia	01.01.2021	01.12.2022	Adventure expert team	Created adventure tour offer of 3 touristic points in Bulgaria	IPA CBC FLC
Promotion of adventure tour of	IPA CBC partners	01.01.2021	01.12.2022	Marketing expert team	Created promotion material of adventure	IPA CBC FLC



Constantine the great as cross-border tourist product that consist of 3 touristic points in Serbia and 3 in Bulgaria

tour of Constantine the great as cross-border tourist product that consist of 3 touristic points in Serbia and 3 in Bulgaria

Different implementation modalities:

- Strategic Partnerships between local tourist organisations/local municipalities and NGO`s that promote adventure sports
- Project and Programme Support – IPA CBC program and ADRION project

Potentials for joint public and private partnerships between local tourist organisations and NGO`s that promote adventure sports.

Approximate budget for a project is 150.000,00 euros

Marketing communication action plan for 5 years

The detailed 5-year strategic plan to an action marketing plan will be based on the adaptability of communication mechanisms and pre-set positivism regarding the launched nature of the messages.

All previous activities are united in this activity and it is a complete and detailed strategic plan fully compliant with the results, goals, and priorities of the updated marketing plan. It is a strategic action plan with specific activities and activities with marketing and communication orientation.

The communication type of strategy is based on the understanding that the media are equal participants in the communication process, and they are assigned the role of mediators.

The main method will be the AIDA model. The following tools were used to apply this method: database analyzes derived from the empirical ones derived from the update of the medium-term marketing program.

Marketing communication action plan:	1 st year	2 nd year	3 rd year	4 th year	5 th year
Creating information data bases for the sights of Via Militaris tourist destination;					
Identifying opinion leaders to be engaged in the creation and presentation of information					
Developing on data bases with Bulgarian and Serbian potential partners and interested parties that can be part of the promotion activity;					
Creating data bases with key contacts with the media and their members in order to have lasting relations;					
Developing a program to work with Journalists from corresponding Medias (radio,					

TV, periodicals, online) with travel orientation;					
Supporting monthly information bulletin;					
Producing PR movies to present Via Militaris travel destination;					
To create and maintain profiles on Facebook and Instagram;					
Media campaign for the tourist destination Via Militaris to create and get recognition followed by choice;					
Introducing Via Militaris on working meetings, professional and/or community seminars;					
Conducting media tours to introduce the tourist destination Via Militaris;					
Public relations:					
Interviews and presentation of the project, results and selected sights for Via Militaris;					
Publications presenting the sights on Via Militaris;					
Stimulating local tourist organizations, NPO, communal and public to offer and speak about the sights and project - tourist destination Via Militaris;					
Involving opinion leaders to promote the sights;					
Information / promotional content/ about the sights of Via Militaris;					
Content marketing for the sights, stimulating publications on the net;					

Development and offer of real travel itineraries Via Militaris;					
Information about all available and possible to combine tourist experiences with local partners;					
Special event marketing:					
Organizing of the participation and presentation of Via Militaris on international and local for Bulgaria and Serbia tourist events;					
Participation in partner events in Bulgaria and Serbia and abroad to represent the project;					
Organizing press conferences to announce activities on the project – developments and achievements;					
Participation in events organized by partner and local organizations to promote Via Militaris;					
Organizing and conducting media tours to present the sights of Via Militaris;					
Advertising backup (online animated, multimedia clips, information movies)					
Banners to promote the Via Militaris sights;					
Multimedia advertisements to represent Via Militaris tourist destination;					
Advertising materials;					
Online animated banners to promote international events;					
Presentations, printed materials representing Via Militaris travel destination.					

Information movies for Tourist destination Via Militaris;					
Online animated banners for promoting Via Militaris on international events;					
Information movies for Tourist destination Via Militaris;					
Online animated banners for promoting Via Militaris on international events;					
Printed and online informational materials, souvenir advertising;					
Promotional Campaigns:					
Presenting the project results;					
Presenting the identity of Via Militaris travel destination;					
Connecting with local partners and creating working net.					

The strategy and the detailed implementation plan need resources and they cannot be implemented without investing in human capital, financial security, and analytical support. The social, political, and economic situation is essential, it is one of the uncontrollable factors on a global scale.

Appendix 1

Tourist attractions from the Bulgarian side of Via Militaris

Ancient and medieval Fortress "Kaleto" – Berkovitsa

Location	West of Berkovitsa, Montana District
Contacts	-
Parking places	yes
Accessibility for disabled	no
Guide / Tour guide	no (there are signboards)
Working hours	no
Price / Entrance	free
How to get there?	The property can be reached by car or bus, and Berkovitsa by train too.

"Kaleto" is a wooded hill. It rises to the north as a wind wall and a natural park of Berkovitsa. Through a wide avenue the greenery of the hill enters the city centre. From the main street along the marble Bridge of Berkovska Reka and near hotel-restaurant "Marble", asphalted promenade and natural paths are leading to the meadow where the hunting house is.

Ancient and medieval Fortress "Kaleto" – Berkovitsa is a Thracian, ancient, Late antiquity, medieval and Ottoman fortress. Kaleto is a cultural monument of historical significance. The architectural excavations began in 1961 and an external and internal fortress wall of the late Antiquity was discovered, with separate rooms between them. Two basilicas are included in the outer fortress wall. The southeast slope reveals archaeological materials from a Thracian settlement. After that during the Roman period there was a life supported with mining and gold processing. The fortification of Kaleto and its reconstruction from a settlement into fortification facility appears in IV-V century. A variety of materials were

collected-ceramics, bricks, tools, weapons, coins.

The outer fortress wall from the late antiquity was discovered almost entirely. Situated along one of the horizontals of the hill, it is made of stone and a white choral solder with added gravel. It is 1.3 m thick. At different distances from it it's built a second, inner wall, which has the same characters and thickness.

There are separate rooms between the two walls. The fortified gate has not yet been discovered. Perhaps it's from the north side where the fortress wall is completely destroyed. This destruction was probably in 1876-1877, when the Ottomans mobilized the population in Berkovitsa to build a way to



the fortress and a shaft on the second fortress wall. On the shaft were put cannons.

The two churches included in the outer fortress wall also belong to the Late antiquity. One - on the south slope is three-nave, one-apse, with an open narthex. The apse (altar space) outside is three-sided, and inside is semicircular, with a sintron and a place for the throne. Individual naves of the basilica are separated by masonry poles. The natural connection between the basilica with the fortified wall, as well as the found fragment of an inscription, give reason (according to Dimitrina Joinova) to refer to the time of Honorius and Theodosius II (408-421).

The architectural sculpture - marble bases, capitals, pieces of columns, fragments of cantenn, etc., speaks of a rich interior. Of interest is the baptistery, built as a separate baptismal building with original solution and fulfillment of the denomination. At the eastern end of the fortress was completely revealed another early Christian basilica. She's also a three-naved. Its central nave has

a wide semicircular conch, the northern nave is divided into two parts, and the south one was probably open. From the west all three rooms of the church have narthex. The date of construction of this church is determined by its constructive connection with the outer fortress wall, which refers to the beginning of V century.

An architectural complex of late Antiquity was cleared in the western part. From the northeast and northern side, where the fortress is the easily accessible, are found remains of a fortified moat. After the destruction of the stronghold during the Late antiquity (perhaps after Justinian), fortification facilities were erected later - during the second Bulgarian state. From this period are found only separate walls in the western sector of Kaleto and a fortification facility in the third terrace on the highest part of the hill. It has rectangular shape with up to 2 m thick walls made from masonry stone and mud with wooden belts. The materials and coins from Ivan Srasimir found here suggest that they are from XIV C.

Curious fact:

Kaleto in Berkovitsa has a visual connection with many of the fortresses along the valley of Ogosta, Burzia, Botunya and Zlatitsa and with good signaling it was easily turned in defensive actions.

Nearby attractions:

- Klisura Monastery "St. Constantine and Helena" St. Cyril and Methodius "
<https://klisurskimanastir.com/местоположение-и-контакты>
- Haidushki Waterfalls
- Church "Virgin Birth"
- Church "St. Nikolay Miracle Worker "
- "Nativity of the Theotokos" church
- "Otets Paisiy" City Art Gallery
- House-Museum "Ivan Vazov"
- Marble Cave
- Reserve "Gornata Korja"
- Clock tower in Berkovitsa
- Ethnographic Museum (Sarbinskata House) – Town of Berkovitsa

What else?

Cycling:

Belogradchik – Berkovitsa

Riding a bicycle on road 102 in the valley of the Ogosta River before it flows into the homonymous dam is a pleasure remembered for a long time. Quiet, almost deserted road almost all the time, unforgettable views and old rural architecture.

Eco tourism

Peak Kom

Kom Peak – the highest in western Stara Planina. From Kom Peak begins the route "Kom-Emine" - the Bulgarian segment of the European tourist route E-3.

You can reach Kom peak via an asphalt road or ecotrail

Short eco-trails

From the center to the Hunting house-the trail is on a flat paved terrain. Begins from the fountains in the center of the city, crosses the river and climbs to the hunting house, where you can enjoy a beautiful view of the city. On the way there are gazebos which make it convenient for picnics. Length-approx. 30 min

Route Ashiklar- starts from the Stara Planina quarter, length 30 min. At the end there is a picturesque view of the city, Todorini dolls, Mt Kom.

Haidushki waterfalls - The road goes along the picturesque Berkovska River and provides numerous picnic opportunities. It takes about 1.5 hours on an old asphalt road or eco path. Descending down the water in places runs slowly then suddenly with thunder throws from the cliffs. The area is beautiful not only with its waterfalls, but also with the unique nature

„Siniat vir“ – Located in the valley of Shabhovitsa River, 3 km south of the city, is Siniat vir. Here in the rocks the water has made a deep pond. The clear jets of the river descend from the high cliffs into the pool. The water appears blue because it's more than 1 m deep and the light blue sky is reflecting in it.

Map of the location



Pictures:



Source:google.com

Bozhenishki Urvich – Botevgrad

Location	3km away from Bozhenitsa village, Botevgrad
Contacts	Historical Museum Botevgrad: 072 366 828
Parking places	yes
Accessibility for disabled	yes
Guide / Tour guide	Yes – from Botevgrad Historical Museum
Working hours	no
Price / Entrance	free
How to get there?	There is an asphalt road (4km) from Bozhenitsa village that ends at a holiday base. From there to the fortress is built a promenade.

Bozhenashki Urvich is a medieval stone fortification, today an archaeological monument of national importance. The secrets of this old fortress began to come to life in 1918, when at the roots of the fallen after a storm centuries-old tree was discovered medieval rock inscription of Sebastos Ognyan.

According to archaeological research conducted in 1972, the place was inhabited as early as the prehistoric era, but the first fortress facilities date back to V-VI century as a unit of the early Byzantine defense system. Its heyday the fortress Bozeniki Urvich reached through the XIII-XIV c., when the outermost fortress wall was built, building from the north the only accessible place from Bozhenitsa. At the end of the XIV C. it was the residence of boyar Ognyan – chieftain during Ivan Shishman emperor of Bulgaria in Tarnovo.

Since 1966 the medieval fortress has been declared a site of national importance. In 1971 the first excavations of the expedition called "Sebastos Ognyan" started. It was carried out under the direction of Pavel Dishev and with the help of Vasil Dimitrov, Patriarch Velev (chief editor of the newspaper Botevgradski Flame) and architect Yordan Yordanov. The first

discovered objects were ceramics and early Byzantine coins from Justin (518 – 527) and Justinian I (527 – 565), which show that the fortress was built in this period.

The full reveal of the fortress take eight years, after which the efforts are focused on conservation and restoration of the revealed architecture. Initially, three fortress belts were uncovered, two of which were built at the end of the V century, the beginning of the VI century, and one of the XIV century, during the time of Ivan Shishman. The inner fortress Wall is 200 m long and has a width of 2.70 m seats, the exterior wall has a height of 4 – 6 m and has four counterform. The Citadel is 80 m² and the area of the entire fortification is 1600 m². The deep 10 m water tank is impressive with a water layer of 4 m, as well as a chapel carved into a rock inside the fortress.

Near the gate, at a depth of 0.2 – 1.5 m, was discovered a very valuable treasure trove of



1327 silver pennies and halfpennies with the image of Tsar Ivan Alexander, but rebranded with the name of his heir Tsar Ivan Shishman, and with the picture of Virgin Mary with the little Christ at the obverse. According to Hristo Matanov, the coins of this treasure are cut along the edges in order to save valuable metal, which points to inflationary pressures on the Bulgarian coinage and the strain of the state's finances in relation to the military-actions.

The southwest corner tower maintains an observation link with the surrounding Panitza kale fortifications above the present village of Lipnitsa, Valcigrad over Litakovo, Cheskovgrad over the Vratsa Monastery and Bodilovgrad in front of

Vitinya. The tower has a secret exit with a length of 7.40 m and a hideout for eight people which is currently filled with soil. In the northeastern part are found tower, rock dwelling and rock Church with demolished rock icon of St. George the Victorious. A necropolis with 48 graves and the monastery complex under the fortress was also discovered. The hundreds of arrowheads and spears, stone fighting balls and skeletons of fighters found near the fortress walls confirm the legend of the fight between Sebastos Ognyan and the Ottomans in 1395. According to Dishev the burial place of Sebastos Ognyan is located on the rock massif in front of the revealed Voyvodov Stone, the main observation post of the fortress.

Curious fact:

The fortress became known to the scientific community in the winter of 1918 – 1919, when under the roots of the centuries-old sycamore in Gradishteto region, a unique medieval memorial with the cherished words of the governor of Sofia Sebastos Ognyan was revealed. He was discovered by the bozhenitsa goatherd Nedyalko Umenkovsk. The Bozhenishki inscription was first read and interpreted by Academician Petar Mutaftchiev. He noted that the author (the hewer) of the inscription "has not thought about the size of the surface. He started with large letters and started decreasing the size of the letters and increasing the length of the rows as he noticed there is not enough space...". The inscription reads:

„I, Dragomir, had written. I, sevast Ognyan, was a kephale of Emperor Shishman and took a great evil. At the same time Turks were fighting. I kept my faith in Emperor Shishman."

Nearby attractions:

- The clock tower in Botevgrad
- The monument-ossuary of the Botev revolutionists – Skravena
- Cheotinski Monastery "St. Archangel Michael "
- Historical Museum Botevgrad
- Monastery "St. Nikolay "– Skravena
- Vratsa Monastery "Holy Forty Martyrs "
- Borovets Fortress

What else?

Cycling tourism:

Downhill route, Botevgrad

"Downhill" is a discipline in mountain biking, practiced on steep and technical terrain, filled with natural and artificial obstacles – jumps, kickers and others. In 2016 in Botevgrad was built a professional route for downhill with a length of 2.2 km. The route has unique characteristics for Bulgaria, filled with very challenging elements that make it one of the most difficult trails in the country. Because of its proximity to Sofia it gathers many enthusiasts.

Eco tourism

Bozhenitsa-Skravena

The starting point is southwest about 500 meters from the center of the village Bozhenitsa. The route starts with a pleasant climb through a shady beech forest and runs parallel to the Bebrash River until the moment it crosses. Just before the ridge, the trail is covered by dense vegetation. At the end of the climb you reach a meadow with panoramic views of the village of Skravena. From there begins descending along the pebbly forest roads, which leads to the center of the Skravena.

Botevgrad – Ruinata chalet

The route is circular mountain/part of it on the road. Suitable for trekking. Traveling on the highway "Hemus" from Sofia to Varna, you turn right before the fork to Botevgrad before the petrol station "Ivoni". There is a narrow asphalt road passing over it, parallel on the motorway and it leads to the Echemishka tunnel. The tunnel turns east on a dirt road through the valley of the River Echemishka. The valley of the river Echemishka climbs the mountain "Bilo" at the Ravno Bouche saddle. From the saddle it turns north, passes by the hut "Ruinata" and climbs peak "Ruinata". On the way back is the descent to Botevgrad going through the area "Stubelya" and the Villa Zone "Zelin".

Vrachesh – Murgash peak

The trail begins from the turnout for the Vratsa monastery. In the beginning, you walk along a sloping road through the valley. It's a steep climb to the ridge. When it comes to the meadow in front of the top there is a triple fork, but only the road to hut Murgash is clearly visible. The descent is much easier, goes on a "classic" route through Gozarnika region. There's a steep descent through the forest. Murgash is the highest peak of the Murgash in western Stara Planina. Its altitude is 1687 meters. It is developed from Paleozoic rocks and has a domed shape with steep slopes.

Cave „Vodnata pesht“, Lipnitsa

The cave is a winding ascending gallery with a total length of 1016 m and a constant river flow through. Its entrance is at the foot of a rock wreath that has a width of 2.5 m and a height of 7 m. Frost weathering was developed, which extends to 10 m. The overlays on the floor are from gravel, rock pieces and clay.

Map of the area



Photos



Source: eliivanova.com

Castra ad Montanesium fortress - Montana

Location	The southwest part of Montana on the Kaleto Hill, on the way to Ogosta Dam and near the dam's wall
Contacts	-
Parking places	yes
Accessibility for disabled	no
Guide / Tour guide	no
Working hours	no
Price / Entrance	free
How to get there?	Can be reached by car or bus

Castra ad Montanesium Fortress is located in the southwest part of Montana on the Kaleto Hill, on the way to Ogosta Dam and near the dam wall. The site is still under investigation, but can be visited by the public. At the beginning of the walk in the ruins of the fortress can be seen a large basilica. The built tourist path passes along it and leads to the fortress walls, behind which there is another, smaller church

Castra ad Montanesium Fortress is located in the northwestern corner of the town of Montana, on Kaleto Hill, which is why the hill is preserved as a monument of ancient history. The settlement dates back to prehistoric times. Its first inhabitants lived in the Chalcolithic age. In a later period, the village was inhabited by the Thracian tribe Tribali, which built a fortress for protection against attackers. During the Roman Empire there were built and maintained roads connecting Montana with the rest of the empire, as a result of which the city flourished. The town and the fortress were demolished in the 6th century by the Avars and the Slavs. Walking through the fortress up the hill you can see authentic walls from a very old time. Gradually the path reaches the upper edge of the fortress, where is a massive tower and gate. Hill Kaleto and the remains of the fortress have several periods of habitation. The first one dates back to the 4th millennium BC.

During the Chalcolithic age. Then there is a Thracian settlement. Next is the Roman period, dating from the beginning of the new era. After 161 the local Roman settlement received the status of a town under the name Castra ad Montanenzium (fortress in the mountain). The fortress was demolished in the 6-7 century during the Avaro-Slavonian invasions. The Slavs created in their place a settlement under the name of Kutlovitsa, which later fell within the boundaries of medieval Bulgaria.

Over time the town changed several more names – after the liberation it was called Ferdinand, in 1945 – Hristo Mihaylov, and in 1946 the town was renamed to Mihaylovgrad, with which name was known until 1993, when the ancient name Montana was returned.

Although small in size, Castra ad Montanesium Fortress is an interesting object, given its ancient origin.

Curious fact:

So far, several early Christian basilicas have been found in the ancient town of Monttanesium. Basilicas date back in the period II-VI century. The excavations have established the architecture and construction materials from which the temples were made. Marble Roman statues were found near them. Although only ruins are left today, the Basilicas are an architectural and historical monument of national importance.

Nearby attractions:

- The Holy Ascension Church
- Historical Museum – Montana
- Lapidarium (Archaeological Exposition)
- Mihailova House-Montana
- The old public bath - Montana
- Train composition
- Jeravitsa Square
- Lipovets Dam
- Chernila Dam

What else?

The Holy Ascension Church

At about 7-8 kilometers after the fortress, the submerged church was part of the village of Jivovtsi which together with the neighboring village of Kalimanitsa remained at the bottom of one of the largest dams in Bulgaria – Ogosta Dam. It was a monument of the Bulgarian Renaissance architecture. It was built in 1858 by master Lilo, the founder of one of the most significant Renaissance construction schools – the Slavinska. After the construction of the Ogosta Dam, the church of Jivovtsi village is submerged and periodically surfaced at low waters.

Fishing in the area:

Ogosta Dom

Ogosta Dam is the fourth in the area of artificial water reservoir in Bulgaria. The waters of the dam are used to produce electricity and replenish two hydroelectric power plants. There are legends about the abundance of aquatic inhabitants and their impressive size!

Fishing enthusiasts must haul their way here and try their luck.

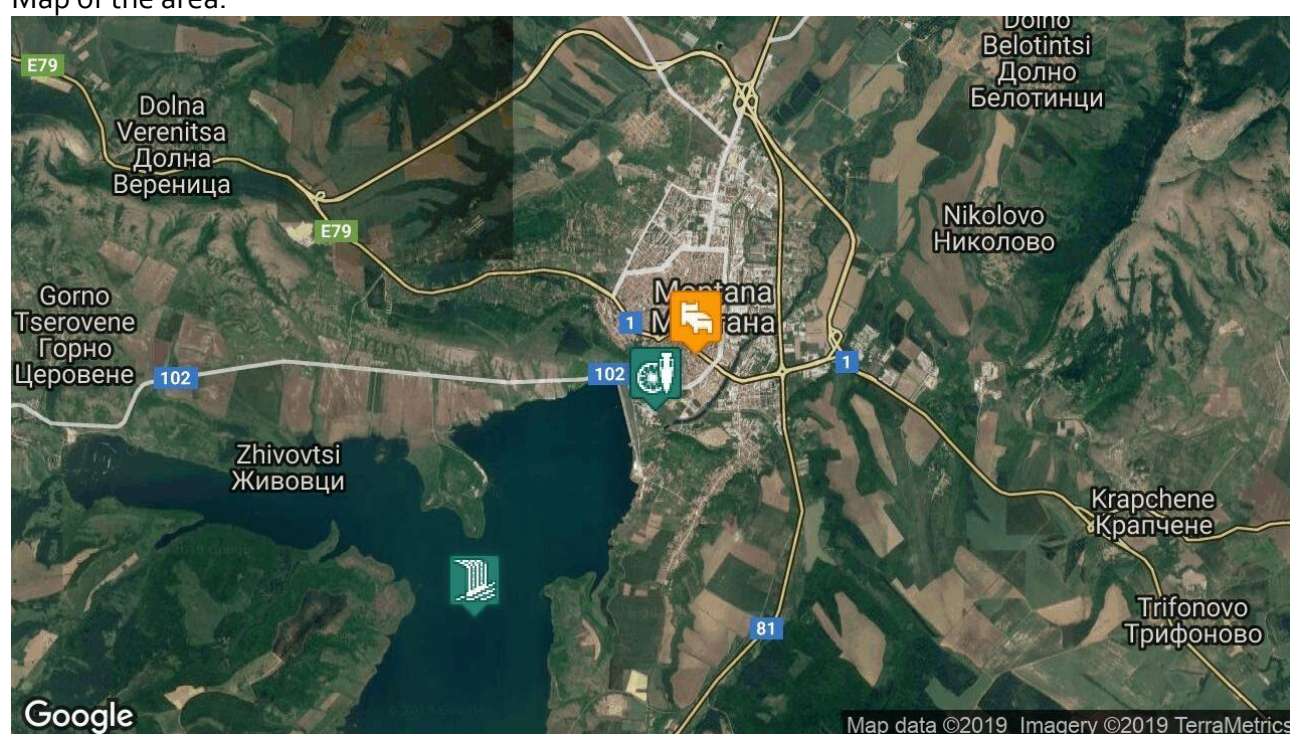
Lipovets Dom

The Lipovets Dam offers an easily accessible place from which you can find beautiful views along the whole dam, it is located on the River Lipovets, in the valley of the River Shugabica. It is used for commercial fishing and fish farming. Its volume is 0.342 million. Cube. M and its flooded area is 88 decares. The height of the wall is 13.2 m. The dam is located at an approximate altitude of about 160 m.

Chernila Dom

The Chernila Dam is situated on the Chernila river, in the valley of the Ogosta River. It is a public municipal property. It is intended for fish farming. Its volume is 1.600 million. Cube. M, with a flooded area of 280 acres. The height of the wall is 18.3 m. It is rich in white carp, solar fish, white carp, Rudd, bream, carp, perch and meekness.

Map of the area:



Photos:



Source: Google.com

Remains of a Roman villa "Kralev Dol"

Location	In the center of Kralev Dol Village, 12km away from Pernik
Contacts	Town Hall Kralev Dol - 076/670891
Parking places	Yes – on the streets around the houses
Accessibility for disabled	-
Guide / Tour guide	no
Working hours	no
Price / Entrance	free
How to get there?	By car or interurban bus line #19 Pernik – Kralev Dol

In the 1960s, during excavation activities for the foundations of the community center in the village of Kralev Dol, were found remains of a Roman villa (Villa Rustica) of II-IV C. The foundations of the villa were restored and can still be seen in the center of the village. Today the finds from the excavations are exhibited in the Historical Museum of Pernik.

The village of Kralev Dol is situated at the southern end of a high hilly plain, known as Graovo, which covers the southwest part of the valley. The excavations carried out in Kralev Dol are a significant part of a Roman villa Rustica. The building occupied a small river terrace and at that time the river during was more full-bodied. According to the plan the villa is rectangular, elongated in the northeast-southwest direction. There are four wings that surround a large quad yard. Its external dimensions are: Length 65 m and width 42.5 m. The south and the west wings are fully preserved, unlike the north and the east wings who are only partly conserved. There is not much data about the northeast corner, which was destroyed by the modern building.

The villa was two-storey all built with the same material. The villa belonged to the medium-sized land estates, which were inhabited by their owners. In addition to the homeowners, some of the workers (slaves),

who were employed to do the housework and to process the production on the holding, also lived there. It can be assumed that part of them lived in the premises on the second floor of the south wing or in buildings, outside the investigated site, which were irrevocably destroyed.

The agricultural tools found lead to thinking that this have been the seat of an agricultural mansion. It is made of stone and adobe bricks with mortar and mud soldering, and the floors are of rammed ground. According to found archaeological materials, including a coin treasure with 58 coins from Emperor Septimius Severus (193 – 211) to Trajan Decius (249 – 251), the construction of the villa refers to the middle of II c. It existed until the end of IV c., when it experienced serious demolition and rebuilding. Its end can be connected with the massive barbarian invasions from the north, increased from Vc. onwards.

One of the reasons for the occurrence of the villa in this place is the proximity of the main Roman road connecting Serdika with



Macedonia and the Aegean Sea. This road, known to the local population as "Druma",

continues to function in the Middle Ages and even to the XIX.

Curious fact:

The area of the present-day village of Krlev Dol has interesting centuries-long history, which traces its origins far back in time. The first known inhabitants of these lands were the Thracians. It is thought that the slopes of the Golo Bardo were inhabited by the Thracian tribe of Agriani, who were in the north bordering the Serdi, and in the West and south with the Dentelets.

Nearby attractions:

- Kladnitsa Monastery "St. Nikolay"
- "St. Panteleimon" Monastery - Pernik
- Underground Mining Museum Pernik
- Krakra Fortress
- Church in "St. Spas" area
- "St. Petka" Monastery
- Ranchovo Gradishte Fortress
- Vitoanovo Monastery "Sveta Nedelya"
- Buchaloto waterfall
- Krakra Fortress

What else?

Cycling tourism:

Chuipectlovo – Asslan Hill

A short but difficult route with the ascent of Asslan Hill over Chuipectlovo. It is recommended for advanced mountain bikers with special for the purpose bicycles. Time to pass the route 1-2 hours.

Kladnitsa – Chuipectlovo – Bosnek

A long but pleasant biking route around the lower part of South Vitosha. It is marked for advanced bikers, but it should not be a problem for beginners in good physical form, especially if you do it counter-clockwise.

Nearby landmarks

Cave „Duhlata“

Dulata is the longest cave in Bulgaria with a total length of over 18 km. It is located in the southwest part of Vitosha Mountain, near the village of Bosnek, Pernik municipality. It is a complex cave system on six floors with multiple entrances. The name of the cave comes from the sound that the wind makes at its entrance.

Spring „Zhivata voda“

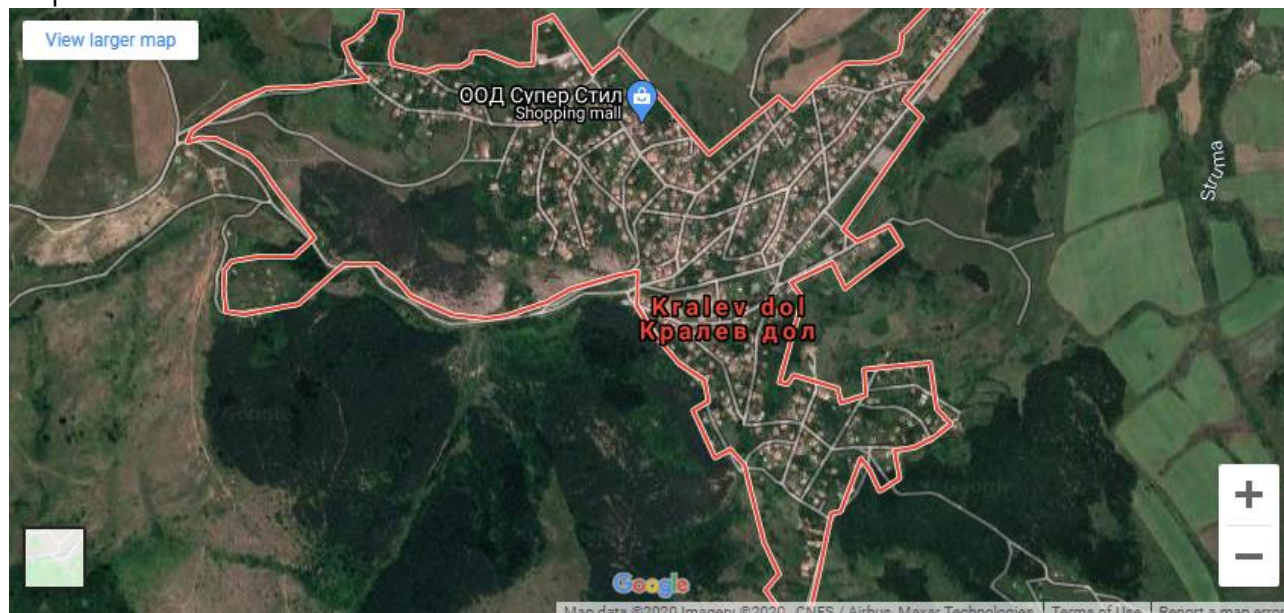
Tales, legends and traditions tell the myth of Aqua Vitae. The one that protects against all evil and heals all diseases. Such water flows from the whimsical well with a head of dragon, in the village of Bosnek, according to the local folklore. It is said that the "Living water" recognizes sinners. If an unrighteous man is in front of the spring, it dries up, but if he is with a pure soul, the water runs with great power.

Attractions

Outdoor swimming pool „Rudartsi“

Swimming complex Rudartsi was renovated and modernized in 2001. The Rudartsi beach is situated amidst the beautiful hills and green mountain slopes of southwestern Vitosha, literally 30 minutes away from the citycenters of Sofia and Pernik. A large fountain with spring mineral water is located right next to the beach.

Map of the area



Photos:



Source: google.com

Roman residence and road station "Skretisca"- Kostinbrod

Location	On the territory of the "Coca-Cola" factory and part of the strawberry farm in Kostinbrod
Contacts	Municipality Administration Kostinbrod: Tel. 0721 68 722, 68 723, E-mail: kostinbrod.bg@gmail.com
Parking places	-
Accessibility for disabled	-
Guide / Tour guide	no
Working hours	-
Price / Entrance	-
How to get there?	5.06 km south-west of the city center. Accessible for all vehicles

The town of Kostinbrod is a special historical place. It is about the archaeological remains that were discovered in 1973 on territory of the municipality. They include the Skretisca road station along the ancient "via Militaris" line, passing from Belgrade through Sofia/Serdika/to Istanbul/Constantinople/As well as the later established Roman residence, called most probably by the name – Skretisca.

The late-Roman residence near the town of Kostinbrod is an architectural complex whose components are grouped into four wings around a large peristyle with an almost trapezoid-like shape. The architectural complex of the residence is the most significant among the famous synchronic and related complexes of today's Bulgarian territory. It is one of the largest residential complexes known from the territory of the Roman Empire in general. Its length, i.e. the distance between the outer facades of the west and east wing, amounts to about 141 m, and its maximum width (North-south) is not less than 110 m. The total area certainly exceeds 10 decares and perhaps reaches up to 14/15 decares. The area of the port-fenced courtyard alone reaches almost 5 decares. The late Roman residence near Kostinbrod was a non-urban residence. It should also be pointed out that it was the center of a

significant villa complex and the center of a significant mansion. The remains of a round-planned facility with a pillar structure, that reaches 32 meters, are explored from the villa complex. in diameter and which is provisionally marked in the accounts as the "rotunda". It is about 100 meters south of the architectural complex of the residence with alleged representative, memorial or cult functions. Remains of other buildings and facilities have not been thoroughly studied by excavations, but the data from field tours in the area and information from local informants allows localizing at least four more special units of the late Roman residence villa complex. The architectural complex of the residence is the most significant among the well-known related complexes on the current Bulgarian territory. Moreover, it is one of the largest residential complexes known in the Roman Empire. Its



length is about 140 m and its maximum width is not any less than 110 m. The great bloom of Serdika, including the adjoining Skretisca, is during the time of Emperor Galerius/293 -311 g/. The story of Skretisca begins as a place of an ancient cult with a place for prophets and a temple connected in different eras with the Great Mother Goddess, Dionysus, Helios – the Invincible Sun, and finally with the Eternal King Christ, born of Virgo. For the fame and popularity of the sacred place a decisive role played the passage of the Trayanovi Road, traveling on which, everyone could be wean to the temple at the "Skretisca" stop.". Soon emperor Adrian erected the place and the imposing to this day the size of a Roman

temple of Cybele, following the done round form of the Thracian sanctuary. The emperors, who paid particular attention to Serdika after Aurelian from Serdika, began to take special care for the area of the Skretisca temple. As a result, the architectural ensemble near the temple unfolds in a huge and lavish palace complex. The natural connection between Serdika and the palace's suburb of Skretisca creates extremely favorable conditions, to be realized a number of political and ecclesiastical acts with a significance for the entire empire that predispose simultaneous demonstration of unity and distinction of the involved countries.

Curious fact:

In the Late Antiquity Skretisca are located three significant ancient sites of the world historical heritage within the boundaries of Bulgaria-these are the residence of Constantine the Great, Roman bath-balneum (opposite the Coca-Cola factory) and the Road Military Station (Mutatio). It is assumed that the name of the station bears the name of the nearby thermal spring, with the reconstructed name Skretescus, whose waters formed a circular lake.

Nearby attractions:

- National Folklore Festival "Shopski Naniz"
- Shiakov Monastery "St. Archangel Michael "
- Church "St.Cyril and Methodius "
- Tsarichina Dupka
- Iljentsi Monastery St. Elijah the Prophet
- Kutinski Pyramids
- Balshenski Monastery St. Theodore Stratilat

What else?

National Folklore Festival "Shopski Naniz"

National Folklore Festival "Shopski Naniz" will be held on 24, 25 and 26 April 2020 in the town of Koynebrod. The purpose of the event is to popularize the Bulgarian folklore, to protect and preserve folklore traditions and customs, to promote the development of amateur folk art, as well as to encourage the study of folklore from the Shopski folklore region. Amateur collectives and individual performers represent authentic and processed dance, song and/or verbal and ritual folklore can take part.



Tsarichina dupka

With the name of this Sofia Village - Tsarichina is related one of the greatest mysteries of our modern history. Initially the excavations began because of the claim that the treasure of Samuel was hidden there. From 1990 to 1992, there are also classified excavations by the military, which reportedly were looking for a phenomenon, a spaceship, an alien civilization, evidence of extraterrestrial intelligence and even deception and draining millions from the military budget. This share has never been completed and has been terminated by the military because of provocations that the hole will collapse. The concrete entrance to the tunnel is known under the name Tsarichinska phenomenon or Tsarichina dupka.

Horse riding:

Equestrian base, Gen. Krum Lekarski

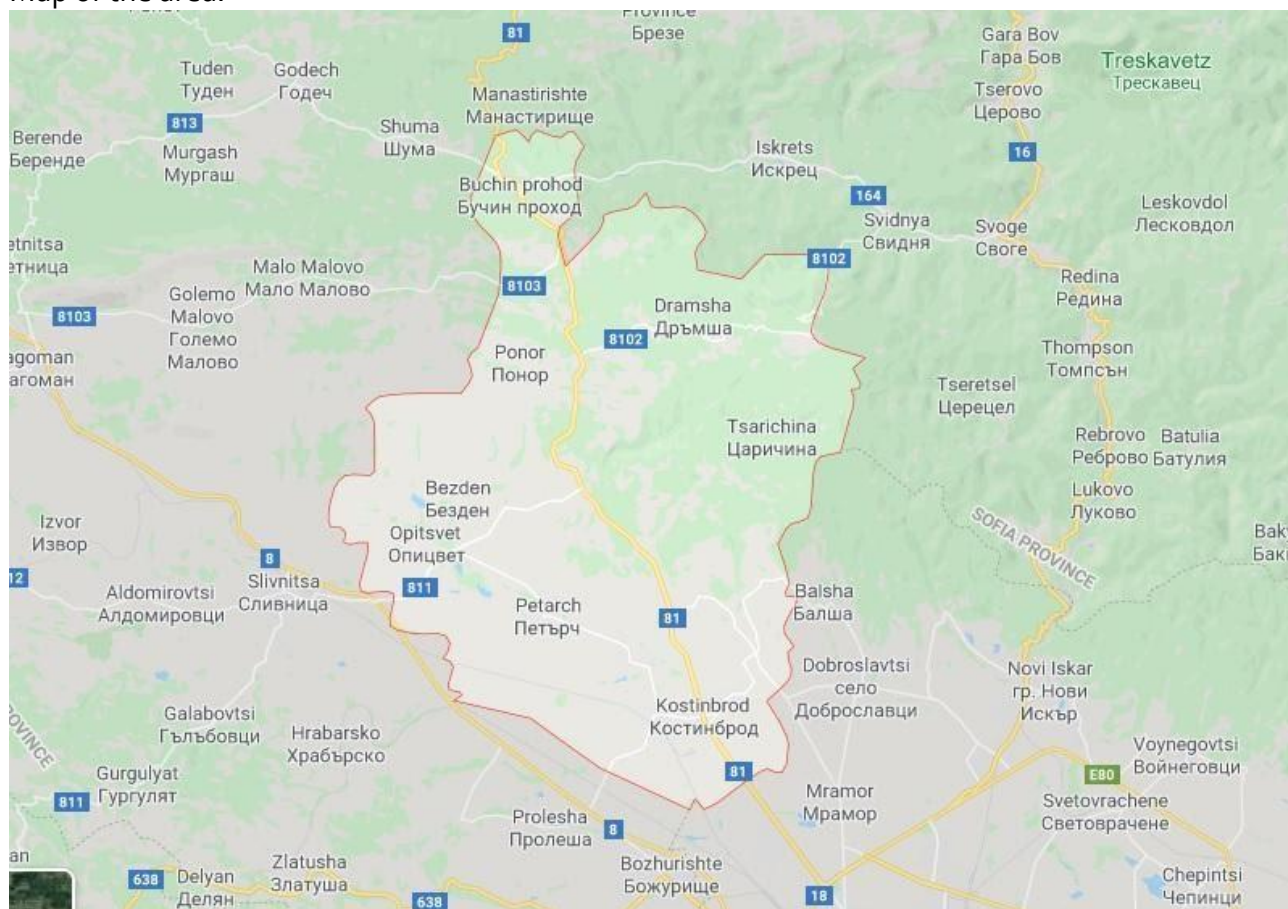
Horse base, Gen. Krum Lekarski is situated in the town of Bozhurishte. It is one of the most modern riding centers on the Balkans. The equestrian base is divided into several parts. The "boarding house" is where the horses live and are taking care of. Another part of the base is the "riding school", where lessons are offered. The horse base also has a "pony club", where children from the age of 4 to 14 years can train. Horse races are often held in the base and are free for everyone to visit.

Eco tourism:

Kutinski Pyramids

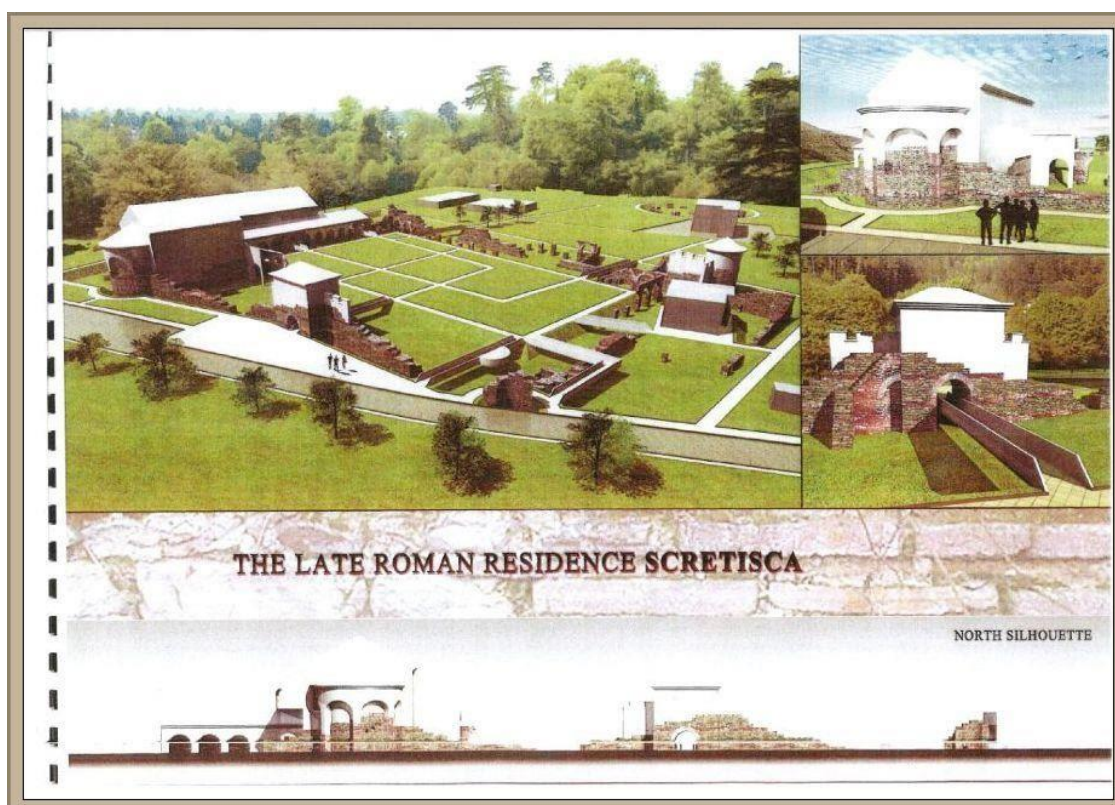
are rock formations – ground pyramids, near Sofia, in the Western Balkan Mountain. They are located on a rocky slope with about 5-10 m tall and the pyramids themselves are around 2 m high. They are distributed in several groups. They have a reddish-brown color and a tapered shape. They were formed as a result of erosion, and for millions of years the rains have shaped them.

Map of the area:



Photos:





Source: www.kostinbrod.bg

Appendix 2

Tourist attractions from the Serbian side of Via Militaris

Fortress - Turkish fortification, 17th century, city of Niš

Location	City of Nis
Contacts	http://visitnis.com/
Parking places	Public parking space
Accessibility for disabled	All infrastructure is accessible for disabled
Guide / Tour guide	City touristic guide
Working hours	Non stop
Price / Entrance	No fee
How to get there?	Airplane, car, bus

Niš Fortress is one of the most beautiful and preserved buildings of Turkish military architecture in the central Balkans. The fortress has situated many monuments and buildings from different periods: The building of the Historical Archives, Lapidarijum with funerary monuments, Memorial of the ossuaries, Turkish Bath (Hamam), Stambol gate, Arsenal of weapons and ammunition, Bali - beg mosque, Art Gallery " Salon 77", Monument to Prince Milan Obrenovic and the Liberationists of Nis, Pasha's konak .

Niš fortress it is a favorite promenade of citizens and their guests, a space suitable for sports activities and cultural events. Fortress was declared a cultural good of great importance. Fortress has following monuments:

STAMBOL KAPIJA (1723) is a symbol of the Fortress and the city of Niš. It was built between 1719 and 1723 by the project of the builders of the Fort Mehmed-age and Mustafa-age of Sofia. The marble slab, located above the massive wooden gate, was erected in 1723 and marks the completion of the main works on the fort. In addition to the rich oriental ornamentation, in the upper

part of the gate there are serrated loopholes and circular openings for cannons used to defend the fort and the city. In the vaulted passageway there were guard rooms and prison cells.

HAMAM (Turkish Bath, 1498) Hamam is located at the entrance to the Fortress, on the left. According to the Ottoman census books, it has existed since 1498 and is the oldest preserved object in the Fortress from the period of the Ottoman Empire. It was built as a single bathroom, which could only be used by women (usually during the day) or only by men (at night). Water was supplied to the hammam by clay pipes from



the river, where it was filtered and heated before use.

ARSENAL (1857) Located to the right of the entrance to the Fort, the arsenal used to be a warehouse where cannons, gunpowder, cannon balls and other weapons and ammunition were stored. It is specially constructed and masonry for the purpose of preserving such sensitive material. It was built by Ismail Pasha in 1857. Arsenal is today the exhibition space of the Gallery of Contemporary Fine Art.

ANCIENT TERMS (4th century). Located at the very entrance of the former Naissus city, the spas were part of the procedure that anyone wishing to enter the city must bathe beforehand. This building dates from the 4th century and until today almost all the rooms that made up the complex of the ancient bathroom have been preserved: two central rooms that represented the changing room, the cold (frigidarium) and the warm bathroom (tepidarium).

MONUMENT TO MILAN OBRENOVIC (1902) A monument to the Prince and later King Milan Obrenovic was erected in 1902 in gratitude to him and the army that freed Nis from the five hundred years of the Ottoman Empire occupation. The monument was symbolically unveiled on the twenty-fifth anniversary of liberation and the first anniversary of the death of King Milan Obrenovic. Italian stone-cutter Vincenzo Kaliterna has created a unique monument in the form of a bullet, which with its surrounding composition highlights the symbolism of the liberation war.

Bali Bey's Mosque - The mosque is the endowment of the Bali Janissary commander from Jedren and is the only preserved mosque in the Fort. With its arches and vaults, as well as lavishly decorated windows, it is a true pearl of oriental architecture. It was first mentioned in 1521 as a minor religious place of worship, only as a mosque

in the 1710 censuses. Today, this interesting part of Nis's past is called "Salon 77" and is an exhibition space of the Gallery of Contemporary Fine Arts.

LAPIDARIUM (1-4th century). Lapidarium is a unique collection of tombstones that belongs to the oldest ancient monuments in Serbia. It was first mentioned in 1887 by Austrian travel writer Felix Kanic, so it could be considered the first exhibition of museum exhibits in Niš. It is located on the central plateau of the Fortress and consists of 41 monuments from the 1st to the 4th century. The setting consists of tombstones and votive monuments, altars, sarcophagi and sculptures that are mostly found in the Fortress, but also in the vicinity of Nis and Knjazevac.

ANCIENT STREET WITH THE BASILIC (2nd - 4th century) Ancient Naissus became a "municipality" in one period of its development (3rd century). Not every city could have such a status, but only cities of greater importance to the Roman Empire in a particular territory. Because of this, it was lavishly built and decorated. Part of the late antique architecture is also found in the preserved part of the street with the basilica (II-IV century), which along with the "vaulted building" formed the central, most magnificent part of Naissus.

GUNPOWDER ROOM (1723) Gunpowder room dates from the period of the fortress itself (1723). The "Jebane", as the Ottomans called it, were intended for the storage of gunpowder and ammunition in remote parts of the fort. There were five in total, and four can be seen today, located along the northern and eastern parts of the ramparts. These are rectangular ground-floor structures with massive, double walls. Exterior walls have openings through which soldiers could shoot and defend the fort.

THE OCTAGON PALACE (4th century) is certainly the most luxurious building



inherited from the 4th century. According to the method of construction, ornaments and objects found therein, it is believed that she belonged to a very influential figure of ancient Naissus, perhaps to Emperor Constantine himself. The researched part about the splendor of the former palace is told by the fact that it was equipped with floor and wall heating, which all the walls of the rooms were decorated with murals and the central octagon-shaped room had richly decorated floor mosaics.

Ancient Fortress - Roman city of Naissus dates more than 2000 years ago, in the 1st century AD, when Roman legions penetrated from the south and formed a military camp on the river bank. Along with a military camp located in the central part of today's Fortress, a settlement began to develop, which soon grew into a "Roman municipality" - Naissus, as evidenced by the

records of Greek geographer Claudius Ptolemy from the 2nd century.

One of the greatest statesmen in the history of Europe, Constantine the Great, was born in Naissus on 27 February 274. In the period when the story of Constantine the Great begins, the ancient Naissus (present-day Nis) was the central place of the Roman province of Upper Moesia. Small in population (20000), but significant as a trading, military, and administrative center, Naissus grew rapidly and spread beyond the walls of the Fort.

The central city center, which was located in the area of today's Fortress, was built according to the rules of Roman urbanism. The central part was a sumptuous square (forum) decorated with statues of Roman deities, surrounded by administrative buildings, military buildings, workshops and a basilica.

Curios fact:

For over twenty years, every summer, the Niš Fortress has become the center of performances by top musicians from all over the world. From the very beginning, Nishville was a community event that managed to blend "traditional" forms of jazz with ethno sounds. Popular American jazz magazine "Downbeat" rated Nishville as the only festival to promote music produced on the American continent, tunes to the Balkans, and a combination of the two. Every August, beginning in 1966, the mayor symbolically hands over the keys to the city to the actors and Niš becomes "the city of actors and film." For seven days, the Stone Amphitheater of the Fortress, an open-air cinema, is dedicated to presenting the best of Serbian cinematography. "Film Encounters" is the only festival in Serbia that extols and honors film actors.

Nearby attractions:

- Mediana - archeological site from Roman times (3rd - 4th century),
- Red Cross concentration camp - one of the rarely preserved World War II camps,
- Bubanj - a memorial park on the site of the victims of citizens in World War II,
- Scull tower - a unique 19th century monument with the skulls of Serbian uprisings from the Battle of Cegar, built into the tower,
- Cegar - the hill on which the battlefield at Cegar was located, May 10, 1809 . years,
- Nis Liberation Monument - A monument dedicated to the liberation of Nis from the Turks and patriots of World War I ,
- Ancient Christian Basilica with Martyrium in Jagodin-mala, 4th Century,



- Early Christian tomb with frescoes from the end of the 6th century ,
- Memorial Chapel - erected to victims of the 1999 NATO bombing . years,
- Prehistoric site Bubanj - archeological site from the Neolithic period .

What else?

Sightseeing bus:

"Open Roof Coach for Panoramic City Tours"

Panoramic sightseeing of the city will be organized three times a day, in the periods of 11, 13 and 17 hours.

The place of departure and arrival of the panoramic bus is in Sindjelic Square, in the parking lot behind the National Theater.

Sightseeing according to the program takes 80 minutes, and the bus will follow the following route: Sindjelic Square (behind the National Theater) - Nikola Pasic Street - around King Alexander Square, ul. Princes Ljubice - ul. General Milojko Lesjanin, ul. Vozdara Karadjordja - ul. King Stefan the Firstborn - Nikola Tesla Boulevard - ul. Aleksandra Medvedeva - Boulevard February 12 to TEMPA (Hypermarket) - back Boulevard February 12 - Mike Paligoric Pier - Adriatic Street - Nisava Street - ul. Vojvode Misica - Nemanjica Boulevard - Boulevard of Saint Emperor Constantine - ul. Serbian Heroes (Niska Banja) - Republic Square (Niska Banja) - Serbian Heroes (Niska Banja) - Boulevard of Saint Emperor Constantine - Boulevard of Dr Zoran Djindjic - ul. Vozdara Karadjordja - Sindjelic Square (behind National Theater), total of 28 kilometers.

Travelers are able to see from the open platform of the tourist bus all the significant monuments of turbulent Niš history, such as the World War II Concentration Camp, Cele Kulu and Mediana, Banovina Building, Officers' Home, central city center, spacious boulevards, as well as the natural beauties of Niska Banja with a convenient accompanying text that is broadcast on the headset while driving in several languages.

Speleology - Wild caving

Popšica Cave is 45 km away from Niš and is located 2 km south of the village of Popšica, in the northern sub-mountain of Calafat, at the very bottom of the limestone elevation section Jezdin vrh (606.m). aperture 20 meters lower. At one time, pesticides could be approached by rural carts, which were exported by the peasants as guano, as fertilizer for arable land. Now the space is overgrown and only on foot can be reached. The cave has 4 entrances that are hard to find without a face - a guide who knows the location. The Popšica Cave stretches along the Zagodin creek, which is also a sinkhole and the surface village stream. The aforementioned waters belong to the Toponička River basin.

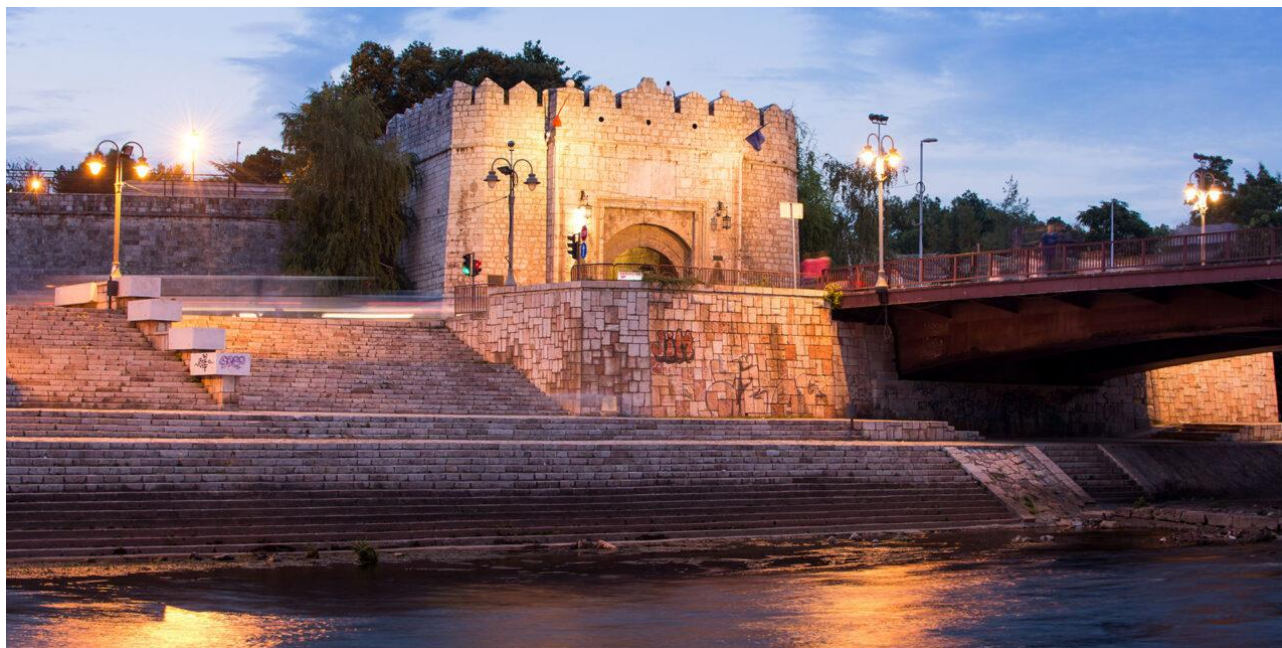
The cave consists of a main, and a series of smaller passageways. Two channels lead to the hall from which the cave divides into two channels. The right duct narrows gradually, and is less significant. The left gallery is more spacious and is the main channel of the cave. The total length of the cave is 620 meters. The cave is full of beautiful and varied cave jewelry, especially in the halls. Beneath the high ceilings, huge amounts of guano have been accumulated over thousands of years by a large group of diverse bats. Even today, on the floor of the cave, one can see traces of village carriages, used by the locals to export guano, using it as fertilizer for fertilizing fields.

Map of the location:



Source: Google maps

Pictures:





Source: www.viamilitaris.net

Niševac Gorge, municipality of Svrljig

Location	Svrljig
Contacts	http://kcsvrljig.rs/
Parking places	Open space for parking
Accessibility for disabled	Semi accessible for disabled
Guide / Tour guide	Touristic guide in Center for tourism, culture and sports
Working hours	Non stop
Price / Entrance	No fee
How to get there?	Car, bus

Just 6 kilometers from Svrljig with rich cultural and historical heritage and relief, is one of the most beautiful gorges in eastern Serbia. With a length of 1.5 kilometers, it is an integral part of the 15 km long Svrljig Gorge, which, with its curved meanders and beauty, pairs with the most beautiful parts of our country. Carved into the calcium carbonate rocks of Mesozoic age, it represented a lake in the Neogene. It has layers of zoogenic calcium carbonate rich in fossil remains from the Neogene period.

Because of its perfect natural predisposition, Niševac gorge has always been inhabited by humans. In the gorge were found traces of Thracian civilization from the Neolithic period, namely the Timahi tribe, which inhabited these areas and by which the river Timok itself was named.

During the Romans, the first watchtower was erected on vertical cliffs, which was used to control one of the most important Roman roads during that period. The route led from the mouth of the Drima into the Adriatic Sea (Lissus) to Archar (Ratiaria), an important Roman river port on the Danube (present-day Bulgaria). The fort was also used to protect the Roman city of Timacum Maius, which was located between present-day settlements Niševac and Svrljig, along the Niševac Gorge. In the medieval period, the Niševac Gorge was the center of literacy and spirituality of the entire region, and the fortress and civilian settlement itself, which was located on the northern side of the fort near the present-day village of Varos, is called Svrljig.

During the rule of the Turks, the entire area around the town of Svrljig was known as the Svrljiska Spa. The sources of thermo-mineral waters probably disappeared during the great earthquakes that shook the region in the eighteenth century. An important fact is that at the beginning of the 20th century, the construction of a railway began, which today connects the regional center of eastern Serbia - Nis with the pier in Prahovo, on the Danube. The narrow gauge railway began to be built in 1907 and was commissioned in 1915, while the wide gauge railway began operating on 15 August 1922. Following this event, the press then called the move of the entire Svrljiska Gorge "our Switzerland".

Today, the Niševac Gorge is not on the tourist map of Serbia as much as it deserves, but only because of that it remains unchanged, intact and preserves the primordial beauty that has always attracted people.

Within the Nisevac Gorge, an attractive excursion site is the Banjica Bath on Svrljiški Timok, which has attracted a large number of tourists since ancient times.



Protected from the wind, with plenty of sources of drinking water, the entire Banjica area has always been a place of habitation, gathering and life for people. In ancient times and later in the Turkish period it was known as a rich spa and a place on Svrljiš Timok where a Roman highway crossed the river. The favorite bathhouse in the XX and XXI centuries still exudes a primordial splendor.

In addition to the Roman altar (located in the lapidarium of the Nis fortress), there are also a number of material archeological remains in the Banjica area, from Roman ramparts from the 5th century, through medieval fortified walls from the 12th century (found in 2017), to the remains of canal systems that are provided the operation of watermills and rolling mills for twisting cloth in the 19th and 20th centuries. The remains of the Turkish Bridge, or the supporting pillars over the river Svrljiški Timok, support the fact that in ancient times the Banjica also had a magnificent Roman bridge with the entire

supporting infrastructure. Today, Banjica, with its unique forests, drinking spring waters and a swimming pool, is an exceptional place for rest and recreation.

The real natural rarity in the Republic of Serbia is represented by three series of evacuation pots (boilers, mecidol and plunge pots) which the Belica River, the left tributary of the Svrljiš Timok, has carved out during its course.

Boilers - the longest series of 16 evacuation pots carved under the section of the old town of Svrljig, are located in the Niševac Gorge 7 km away from the present administrative center of the Municipality. During the summer months, their cold, drinking water is a true cure for both body and soul. Formed by the vortex movement of water, boilers are one of the biggest tourist motives for visiting the Nisava Gorge. Thanks to its inaccessibility, the canyon retained its cleanliness and beauty.

Curios fact:

Svrljig Gospel passages, one of the most significant monuments of Serbian and Serbian literacy, were created in the town of Svrljig in 1279, transcribed by the hand of Constantine Chatz, nicknamed Vojsil Gramatik, who noted at the end of the scripture: In the name of Father and Son and Holy Spirit, I am a servant of the Holy Spirit Konstantin Cacac, aka Vojsil Gramatik, wrote these books to the priest George, called Pope Radoslav, in the town of Svrljig, during the reign of Emperor Ivailo, and during the reign of Nicodemus bishop of Nis in 6787 (= 1279), the seventh, when the Greeks besieged the town of Trnovo. Please, Fathers and brethren, to whom these books come, read correcting them, and do not reprove me of the sinner, but bless you before, that God may forgive you and His Most Holy Mother, Amen Amen Amen.

Nearby attractions:

- Early Byzantine-Medieval Churches, the remains of the walls of the early Byzantine-medieval churches: the Lower Church, the Church of St. Stephen, the Upper Church and the Church of Luke are located on the plateau of Jeničište in the Nisava Gorge.
- A medieval church from the period from the 5th to the 15th centuries of the new era, built of stone, bricks and bigar.



- The church of St. Stephen with a tomb dates from the late antique period (IV-V century AD). The old Christian church was built of broken stone and Roman bricks, and the roof was covered with tiles.
- The lower church, a medieval church (5th-15th centuries AD) built of carved stone, bricks and bigar carvings.

What else?

Speleology

- There are several caves in the Municipality, of which the Prekonoška Cave, Popšička Cave and Samar Cave stand out with their beauties, where there is also an outgrowth - a natural stone bridge.
- Prekonog cave is located in the western part of the Svrljiš Mountains, 5 kilometers southeast of Svrljig, in the area of the village of Prekonog and is a dry cave where the first professional archeological excavation was done in modern Serbia and the presence of a Paleolithic man was proved. The richness of this cave is immeasurable in stalactites and stalagmites, underground rivers and lakes, halls whose vaults are about 30 meters high. During the last century it was an unavoidable destination for speleologists, but also for numerous student excursions. The cave was explored at the end of the 19th century by famous Serbian and European scientists. The first cave was officially established on the territory of Serbia for tourist visits as far back as 1888, when by decision of King Milan it became a tourist destination. The remains of a cave bear, a capricorn, a cave lion, a cave hyena and a cave fox were found in the cave. Also, tools and blades were found to indicate that this speleological object was inhabited during the Paleolithic period. Exploring this cave, Jovan Cvijic singles it out as one of the most beautiful and longest in Serbia. It was first protected in 1949. Following the procedure for protection review, in 2005, the Municipality of Svrljig made the Decision on the Protection of the Monument of Nature of Prekonoška Cave. Occupied by the Paleolithic, with its canal lengths of about 400 meters, it is still a dazzling tourist attraction.
- Popšica Cave is about 40 km away from Niš and is located 2 km south of the village of Popšice, on the north side of Calafat, at the very bottom of the limestone elevation section Jezdin vrh (606 m). The total length of the cave is 620 meters. The cave has two main entrances and two more mines nearby. It abounds in beautiful and varied cave jewelry, especially in the halls. It was thoroughly explored by Jovan Cvijic in 1889 and Jovan Zujovic in 1893, and in 1923 the cave was explored by the European International Expedition. The cave, which is protected by the state as a speleological monument of nature of the third category, in addition to rich jewelry, is recognizable by its bats. Researcher Branislav Grubac published a paper in 1998 stating that there were 4 species of bats living in the cave and that fossil remains and five species were found - a sharp-eyed bat.
- Samar Cave is located in pristine nature in the area of Kopajkošara village, in the northeastern branch of Calafat and lies in the basin of Toponička river. It was tested at a length of about 3 km and is a type of tunnel cave. It is walkable from the Samara Abyss to the Kopaykosar River source. The cave has great speleological significance. It is rich in resources and cascades. Of cave jewelry, stalactites and stalagmites are less prevalent,

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while saliva and bogs have sufficient quantities. It is one of the most beautiful and significant caves in eastern Serbia. It is also significant for its biological characteristics. The diversity of the animal world, bats, insects, provide great opportunities to examine and study the cave world of the area. Below the entrance to the canal, there is the Samar outgrowth, a unique karst form - a natural stone bridge, 15 meters high and 25 meters wide. An abyss emerges at the other end of the cave making a waterfall about 5 meters high.

- Milutin's Cave is named after Milutin Veljkovic, a famous Serbian speleologist who spent 464 days there (from June 24, 1969 to September 29, 1970). In doing so, he broke the world record of being underground and entered the Guinness Book of Records. In his book, *Under the Stone Sky*, he described in detail all the scientific research he conducted during his stay in the cave. The habitat where Veljkovic was staying is about 900 meters from the entrance. The cave is also significant for finding paleontological findings of the largest skull of a cave lion, cave bear bones and a cabaloid horse. With other caves in the surrounding area, it forms a unique cave system that is protected by the state. Nearby is the cave system of the Jezava, which is also protected by the state as a natural monumen

Churches and monasteries:

- Monastery Sv. Archangel Gabriel in the village of Pirkovac is the center of religious tourism in this area. It is located in the Karst Cove at an altitude of 383 m in the area of the village of Pirkovac, in the municipality of Svrljig, on the right bank of the Monastery River. The monastery can be reached by asphalt road through the valley of the White River towards Pirkovac (Popšica-Labukovo road). From the direction of Niš you can reach the monastery via Gornja Toponica and the villages Berčinac, Paljina, Miljkovac, Velepoltje, Kravlje and Popšica. It is about 20 kilometers from Gornja Toponica and about 30 kilometers from Nis. The monastery, in its seven-year existence, synthesizes all the historical and cultural events and creations of the Serbian people. During the five centuries of slavery under the Turks, the monastery was rebuilt several times. From its foundation until 1837 it had the status of a monastery. After the liberation from the Turks, the monastery was a parish church from 1837 to 2002. The arrival of the monk Varnava in 2002 restored the monastic life and began the restoration of all the monastery buildings. The relics of several saints and martyrs are kept in the monastery. A special relic is made of St. Peter's Rice, given as a gift to the monastery of St. Peter's Day in Iasi (Romania). Believers who come to the temple can worship and heal the Holy Friday dress, which is what makes this monastery special. In the monastery, there is sanctified, healing water flowing beneath the altar and appears as a powerful spring right next to the church on the bank of the Monastery River. In 1986, the monastery was placed under state protection.
- Church of St. Emperor Constantine and Empress Jelena in Svrljig, built and consecrated in 1928. It was painted in 1933, and the iconostasis was erected the same year. It was renovated and upgraded in 2009.
- Church of St. Nikola in Lalinac, was built in 1925 on the foundations of an older sacral building. It was built in a style characteristic of the period between the two world wars, when churches in Serbia had to be erected with "distinctive Serbian features".
- Church of St. Elijah in Niševac, was built in 1890 on the site and ancient remains of a previously existing religious building. The church bells on the bell tower were made in 1902 in the smelter in Kragujevac.



- Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Crnoljevica, was built in 1926, on the site of the old temple. It was built during the Nemanjic period, which is confirmed by the existence of a village in the 15th century. Until the early 20th century, it was the spiritual center of nearby settlements.
- Church of St. Paraskeva in Izvor (Venerable Mothers of Paraskeva) was erected in 1866 on the site of an older church, where the oldest preserved written monument of this part of Serbia, today known as Svrljiski Gospel passages, written in the town of Svrljig in 1279, was found. The church was rebuilt in 1989.
- Church of St. Emperor Constantine and Empress Jelena in Manojlica, was built in the early nineteenth century. According to the record in the yearbook of the temple in the village of Gulian, the temple of Saint Emperor Constantine and Empress Jelena in Manojlica in 1848 is mentioned.
- Church of St. The Apostle Peter and Paul in Gullian with the archeological site Gradac was built and painted in 1933. The temple bell is written in 1894.
- Church of St. Nikola in Drajinac, was built in 1938 and the same year it is colorful.
- An old cross was carved at the port of the Temple, to the left of the front door, carved from stone in 1829 and restored in 1908.
- Church of St. Three in Rumenjak - Prekonoga (on an archeological site, a rustic villa from the 4th century), was erected and consecrated in 2005.
- At the place where the new temple was built there are two stone monuments buried, one with carved ornaments; the other is a stone cross on which it is written: ... "raised the village of the Transfiguration to the Holy Trinity in 1926."
- Church of St. Trinity in Grbavc, with the archeological site Gradac, was built on the foundations of the old church in 1911. The church was rebuilt in 1990. The villagers erected the temple with voluntary contributions.
- The Ascension of the Lord Monastery in Labukov was built in the 6th century. The temple dates from Justinian's time. The altar area was covered in 2004.
- In addition to the rest of the Savior Monastery, a new church was built on the northwest side.
- Church of St. Mark in Beloinj, erected in 1833, and this is indicated by the 1817 votive stone, which was erected before the building was built.

Archeology

Fortification of the Poljans

The site is located in the village of Grbavce, at the top of Poljana Hill. Numerous fragments of prehistoric and medieval ceramics originate from the site, and on the south side there is a strong, non-drying source. Based on the ceramic fragments, the fortification can be categorized into the Iron Age.

Location Signal 1

At Signal necropolis, archaeological excavations have been carried out in several research campaigns and it can be said that this is one of only a few necropolises discovered during this period in the territory of eastern Serbia. It lies on the left river terrace of Trstenica, the left tributaries of the Svrljiš Timok. Based on ceramic findings and objects made of bronze and iron, the necropolis is



accurately dated to the Early Iron Age, more precisely IX-VII century BC. The necropolis should probably be considered as a whole with the locality Signal 2 and the fortification Form.

Location Signal 2

The site is located on the right river terrace of Trstenica, the left tributaries of the Svrljiški Timok, opposite the necropolis at Signal 1. It is a vast plateau from which numerous findings of prehistoric pottery originate. It is probably a settlement that can be chronologically defined in the period of the older and younger Iron Age.

Locality Shape

It is located next to Svrljig Town, on a vertical rock that slopes down to Timok on all sides. Access to the site is possible only from the west, from the crevice between Form and Zuber, but this approach also requires great effort. Considering the numerous prehistoric findings, the site can be defined between the eighth and the first centuries BC. It was used in ancient, Byzantine and medieval period.

Timacum Maius

It is the first important stop on the Lissus-Naissus-Ratiaria itinerary linking the Adriatic coast, the central Balkan regions of Roman Nais and the Danube region. The site of this ancient city is located in the fertile Timok valley in the area of the village of Niševac, between the two banks of the Kalnica River and the left bank of the Timok. It dates from the second half of the 1st and the beginning of the 2nd century, and it functioned until the 5th century AD. So far, it has been discovered: a facility with tubules and hypocaust heating, segments of one of the main thoroughfares in the settlement, sewage ducts, part of a Roman bath (thermae) and a multitude of significant and diverse moving archeological material, ceramics with specimens of luxury terra sigillata vessels, numismatics, jewelry, weapons and more. The city is also significant in that it is the last settlement found on the territory of Serbia from Poyinger's map or Tabula Peutingerian. As evidence that it was Timacum Maius, it served to find several stamps of the first Christian cohort known to have been stationed at Timacum Maius.

Roman Road

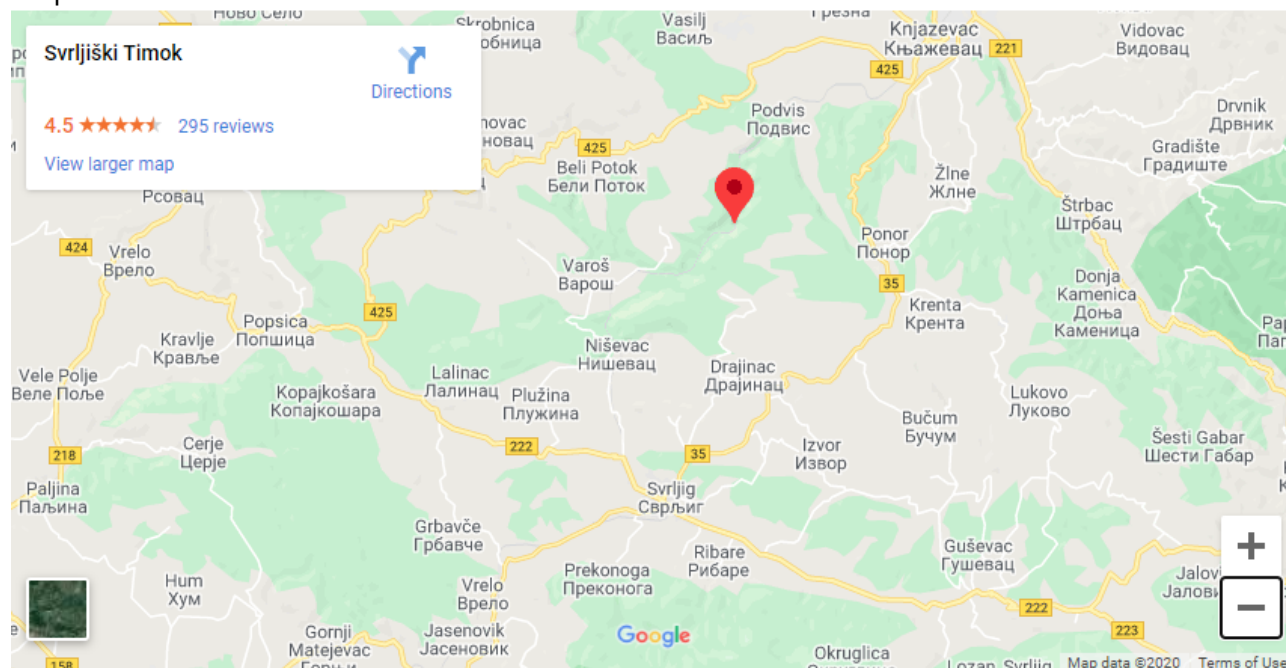
One of the oldest and most important routes of the ancient times in the Balkans, the itinerary thoroughfare Lissus (Lesh, Albania) - Naissus (Nis, Serbia) - Ratiaria (Archar, Bulgaria) was traced in prehistoric times, and expanded in the first century upon the arrival of the Romans on these spaces. It connected the Adriatic coast, the central Balkan regions of Roman Nais and the Danube. It is located on the right side of the river course of Svrljiški Timok, on the mountain Bogdanici and can be followed in the length of about 1500 meters. The road is with natural stone substrate, in places carved to standard width, Roman land communications, about 2 meters. At the entrance of the gorge are several walls of properly laid stone, over which a fine mound and earth are poured. The section ends at Svrljig Timok near the remains of the old bridge in Banjica at the foot of Svrljig-city. An antique milestone dedicated to the Trebonian Gal was found in the area of the village of Pluzine, on a Roman road (period 251-253).

Old town of Svrljig

The old Svrljig fort is located on the left bank of the Timok, on a high rock above the mouth of the river Belica, in the most beautiful and inaccessible part of the gorge. Access to the city is only possible from the direction of the northwest, a narrow path that leads to an artificially extended crack in the natural rock, from where you enter the plateau of the fort. Today's remains of the city date from the Turkish period. Archaeological material and numismatic findings testify to the long-term and continuous use of this space, between the 8th century BC and the 19th century. Traces of

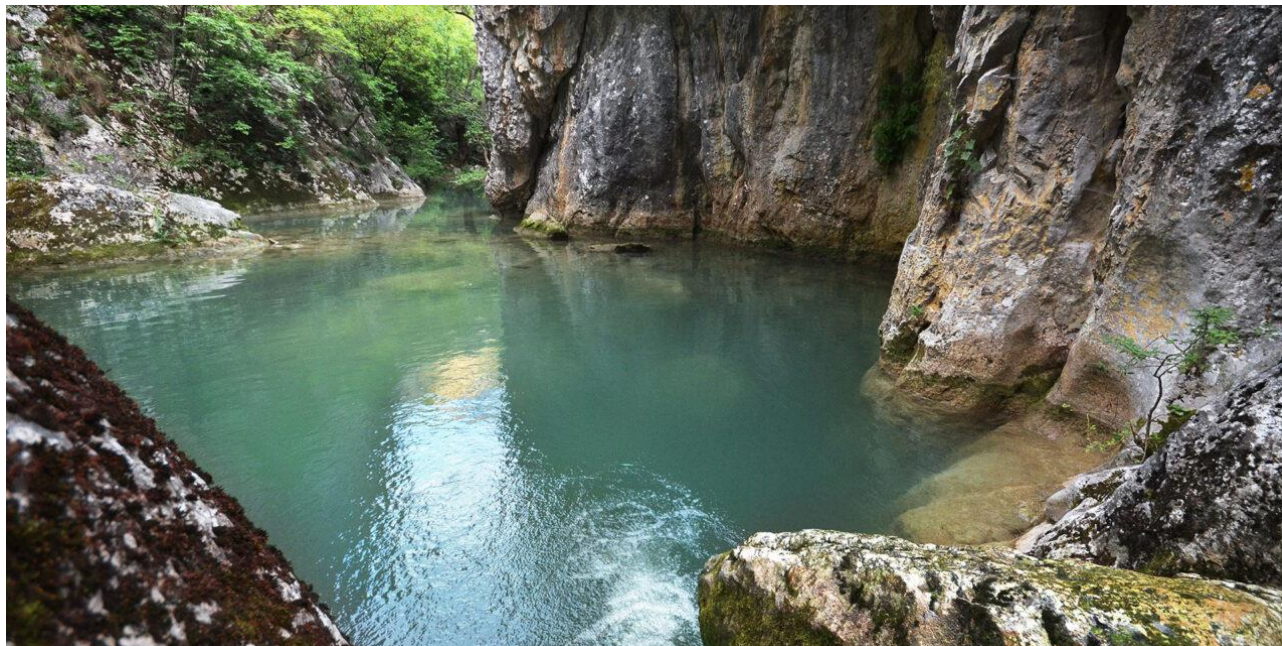
settlement from the Neolithic, ancient and medieval periods, the rule of the Turks, until the liberation of Serbia. The fort was used to protect the important road communication that passed through the gorge of Svrljiški Timok. The votive marble tile dedicated to Hera Sonketena from the middle of the 1st century AD comes from the fort.

Map of the location:



Source: Google maps

Picture:



Source: "Terra Incognita" Svrljig

Banica Days -Days of traditional cheese pie, municipality of Bela Palanka

Location	Bela Palanka
Contacts	http://www.belapalanka.org.rs/taxonomy/term/114
Parking places	Public parking space
Accessibility for disabled	Completely accessibility for disabled
Guide / Tour guide	Not needed
Working hours	Sessional usually 01-15 Augusta
Price / Entrance	Free entrance
How to get there?	Car, bus

Bela Palanka is a town in Serbia in the Pirot District. According to the 2011 census report, there were 8.143 inhabitants. In ancient times, in the area of today's Bela Palanka there was a significant city of Remesiana. Founded around 280 BCE, the Remesian was named either after a Celtic tribe named Remi (whose presence was not confirmed in the area), or by the Thracian personal name Remesis or Romesis.

Bela Palanka - a place with a soul, a small municipality in southeastern Serbia at 42km from Niš and 27km from Pirot, a place worth visiting primarily because of its preserved and untouched nature, rich cultural and historical heritage, numerous events, sports facilities and delicious traditional food.

Bela Palanka - the former Remessiana, a place where emperors, kings and travel writers resided. The urban settlement in the area of today's municipality has existed continuously since 2300, so that Bela Palanka is the oldest settlement in Serbia next to Cuprija and Nis.

Looking back into the distant past and history of Bela Palanka, located on the main military Roman Road Via militaris, we find a huge cultural and historical heritage dating back to the Remessian era, which challenges archaeologists, scientists, organized groups of tourists to visit and feel the spirituality and traces of Christianity in this region.

Today, in the city center, one can see an archeological site, that is, a basilica from the Roman - Byzantine epoch and later, which has been reworked several times and adapted to new functions.

In the town square itself is a monument dating from 202, which was erected and dedicated to Emperor Septimius Severus and his son Karakala who passed through Remisiana on their return from the landmark to Rome.

There is also a well-preserved mileage, a kilometer reader that dates from the beginning of the third century of a new era. The stone pillar is 2.4m high and well preserved. The milestone is the rarest archaeological discovery since they were relatively small and were usually placed at intersections or at places where travelers used to replace tired horses. It was erected in 230 AD on Rome's main military road Via Militaris during the reign of Emperor Alexander Severus, the last emperor from the



Northern Dynasty to rule Rome for 42 years. The milestone shows that, the distance from Nis to is 22 miles, or 35km, which coincides with the present distance of the Bela palanka from Nis.

The first bishop, missionary and church writer Niketa Remesian (330 - 410) was born in Remessiana, who contributed to the city becoming the seat of the diocese in the late 4th and early 5th centuries. He is also the creator of the most famous Christian hymn "TE DEUM LAUDEAMUS", translated by THANK YOU GOD, a hymn that is still sung in churches today. Interestingly enough, inspired by the anthem "Te deum laudeamus", the French composer Charpentier wrote the music for her, which is today the opening song of the Eurovision song. Banca Days are usually are maintained in August in the beautiful setting of Vrelo Park. Cheese pie days have also competitive character in the preparation of traditional dishes of the Bela palanka, Pirot and Old Mountain and also contain music programs.

The organizer is the Bela Palanka Tourist Organization, which promises that visitors will enjoy the rich cultural and artistic program in August.

Banica Days is a manifestation that also nurtures the customs, culture and traditions of this part of Serbia. It tries to preserve the old culinary recipes of predecessors and to pass them on, as they have been passed down "from generation to generation" throughout history. Visitors have the opportunity to try other local specialties besides the Cheese pie, Belmuz, scout beans, pigeon shaker. Foreign cuisines will also be presented (Bulgaria; Slovenia; Malta; Romania; Northern Macedonia...), the Old and Artistic Crafts Fair is organized as well. Children's workshops are organized for the youngest visitors as well as a children's Olympiad. Of course, in the end, the best competitors receive prizes. Folklore ensembles, folk and ethno bands, young talents and pop stars perform, in outdoor concerts at the evenings.

Curios fact:

Bela Palanka - the former Remessiana, a place where emperors, kings and travel writers resided. The urban settlement in the area of today's municipality has existed continuously since 2300 BC, so that Bela Palanka is the oldest settlement in Serbia next to Cuprija and Nis.

Nearby attractions:

- Church of St. Uspenija in Bela Palanka - external appearance of the altar apse
- Monastery of St. Dimitrije in Divljana
- Resurrection monastery of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Veta
- Monastery of St. Nicholas in Sinjac

What else?

Camping and swimming

Divljansko Lake is located near Bela Palanka, the lake is artificial in nature and is designed to regulate the watercourse of Koritnjica River that runs through Bela Palanka and flows into Nisava.



Divjan Lake is a true paradise for fishermen and a well-kept beach is a real pleasure for camping and swimming.

Hiking and biking trails

Across from the Banjica spring, the Banjica Sports Hall was built and opened and opened on July 5, 2012. The hall is equipped with state-of-the-art equipment and every day there are trainings in handball, basketball, mini football, table tennis, martial arts.

The Banjica Ecological and Recreational Center was also built, which includes:

- hiking and biking trails
- outdoor pool
- two tennis courts with stands
- one sand volleyball court with a grandstand
- children's park with accessories
- green areas
- mini golf course

Church of the Ascension of the Lord

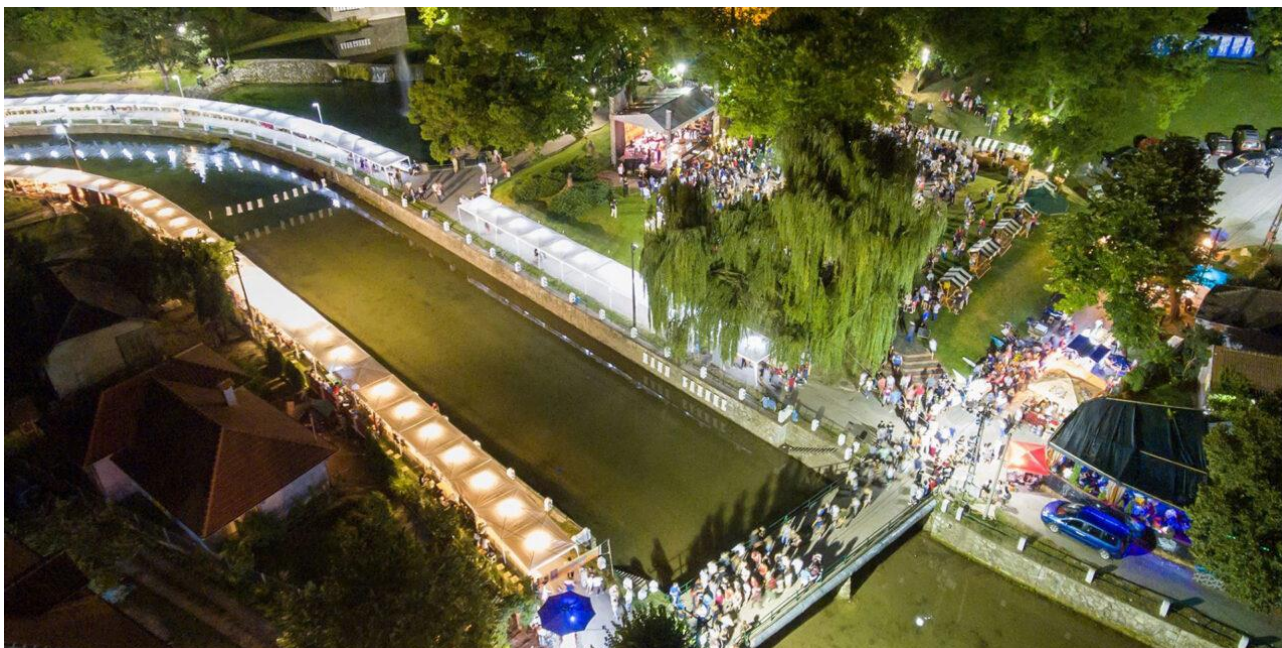
- Jovan Arandjelovic Primary School gathers students from the western part of Bela Palanka Municipality. Established in 1926 in Red River, the school is a large rural school with about 100 students. Within the elementary school there is an "ethno museum" which houses objects transferred from schools from Spay and Vrandol. In the premises of the ethno museum you can see how it used to be taught, you can see: old globe, computer, school bench tkz. a bench, instruments from the old school laboratory, typewriter, map of Serbia, musical instrument harmony, movie projector.
- Church of St. Cyril and Methodius is located next to the ethno museum. It was built as a church - ossuary and the altar of the church contains 54 skeletons of Serbian soldiers who lost their lives in the Serbian - Bulgarian war. In the second part of the parish home - museum there are classes of religious education and one can also see old objects related to church activity, which were collected from the Church of the Holy Virgin and the Assumption of the Holy Virgin in Veta.
- Church of St. Cyril and Methodius is most important cultural and historical monument of the Bela Palanka region belongs to the monastery of Sv. Dimitrije located 5km from Bela Palanka at the foot of the Suva mountain/Suva planina. According to the legend, it is the endowment of the Mrnjavčević brothers and was built in the late 13th and early 14th centuries. It is believed that the monastery existed in the early Christian period. The monastery had a school, education and health function in times past.
- Monastery Sv. Dimitrije. Near the monastery of Sv. Dimitrije is a coveted oak tree that is more than a thousand years old and as such represents the oldest "living creature" in the Balkans. Centuries old, a contemporary of many turbulent historical events that have taken place in these parts, today it is a real attraction for tourists and photographers with a characteristic cavity in its trunk that can fit a table with chairs.

Map of the location:



Source: Google Maps

Pictures:



Source: Tourism Organization Bela Palanka



Source: www.viamilitaris.net



Source: www.viamilitaris.net



Momčil's (Piroć) town or fortress Kale, city of Piroć

Location	Piroć
Contacts	https://www.topiroć.com/
Parking places	Public parking space
Accessibility for disabled	Completely accessibility for disabled
Guide / Tour guide	Local touristic guide
Working hours	Nonstop
Price / Entrance	Free entrance
How to get there?	Car, bus

Momčil's town or fortress Kale is a city fortress near Nisava in today's Piroć. It was erected during the reign of Prince Lazar (1371-1389) in this region. During the first half of the 15th century it was located in the area of the Serbian-Ottoman conflicts, so it was occasionally owned by the Serbian despots Stefan (prince 1389-1402, despot 1402-1456) and Djurdja (1427-1456), after which it was permanently annexed to the Ottoman Empire. The fort was in military use until the first half of the XX century. Today it is largely preserved, and from 1970 to 1986 archaeological excavations were carried out there, followed by restoration and conservation works carried out by the Regional Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments from Niš and the Ponišava Museum from Piroć.

Momčil's (Piroć) town or fortress Kale is a fortress near Bistrica, a tributary of Nišava, at the entrance to the city from the direction of Niš. According to legend, the city was built by Duke Momcilo during the reign of Prince Lazar. After being captured by the Ottomans, the Duke of Dimitria managed to recapture the city in 1386, which was one of the reasons for the Battle of Kosovo three years later. During the first half of the 15th century during the Serbo-Ottoman conflicts, it was occasionally owned by the Serbian despots Stefan and Djurdj, after which it was annexed to the Ottoman Empire. The fort was in military use until the first half of the 20th century, when archaeological research began. The fortress today consists of the Upper Town, on a high rock, irregularly

shaped with four towers on four sides of the world and a fifth at the entrance gate; The lower town, steeply descending towards the base of a rock bounded by 18th century ramparts and towers, with loopholes facing the river. Due to the age of the fort and the number of stormy events, the city walls are well preserved, and several films were made at this location, the most famous of which is "Fighting in Kosovo". Therefore, it is not surprising that the city of Piroć holds the Film Friendly Certificate of the Serbian Film

Association, as a city with a favorable business environment for film and TV series.



The interior, plateaus, paths and green areas in front of the fort are being redecorated to

make Momcilo's city one of the key symbols of Pirot and a souvenir motif.

Curios fact:

Tourist attractiveness of Pirot is based on the richness of natural and cultural resources, long history and tradition, specific identity and hospitality of the hosts, as significant factors of tourist valorisation. Because of 40 churches and monasteries in and around the town, Pirot was popularly called "Little Jerusalem", which was also contributed by Bishop Nikolai Velimirovic, who once served here.

Nearby attractions:

- Vladikina slab cave
- Great cave
- Wind Cave Cave
- Visočica River Canyon
- Gorge of the Temstica River
- Gorge of Rosomach River
- Gorge of the Gradasnica River
- The Gorge of the Vladikina Plate

What else?

Eco tourism

- Lake Zavoj, 17 km from Pirot, in the Stara Planina Nature Park, is a Urvino lake. It was created by plunging the land from the slopes into the Visocica River, creating a natural dam and a reservoir that flooded the village of Zavoj. Namely, due to heavy rainfall and sudden melting of snow in 1963, landslides prevented the flow of the river and created a dam over 40 meters high. The water level soon began to rise, and the lake expanded and flooded the village of Zavoj. People saved themselves and their livestock, but all the houses were flooded. Later, an artificial dam and HPP Pirot were built in order to preserve the lake as it has great hydrological significance for this area. The lake is about 17 km long, up to 70 m deep and up to 300 m wide and is characterized by quality clean and clear water and the preservation of its natural environment. In summer, it is most often visited by excursionists and tourists from southeastern Serbia for swimming, rafting, water sports, walking, hunting and fishing for pike, carp, catfish, woodpecker, perch, chub and whitefish, while brown trout and brook barrels are caught in tributaries of the lake. The most visited beach is near the former village of Mala Lukanja and Belski most. Lake Zavoj has great potential for organizing regattas, water jumps and the like.



- There are several cottages in Stara Planina, camping sites and categorized rural households in the surrounding area offering accommodation. Should more recreational, sporting and entertaining facilities be introduced and the beach mobilizers (deck chairs, tables, umbrellas ...) improved, a children's park with swings, seesaws, slide and kinetic sand would be set up, cafes, restaurants, shops and more would be opened at that part of the lake might be charged a daily ticket.
- The Pirot Diving Club, which has its premises here, organizes dives. School and diving competitions could begin in the coming years. During 2009, several illegally constructed facilities and camps were removed, which should have enabled the development of various forms of tourism that could contribute to the improvement of the overall tourist traffic and income of the area. Around the lake are excursion sites (Mala Lukanja, Velika Lukanja (with a weekend village), Dam, Pakleštic, Belski most, etc. Between Pirot and Zavoj Lake there is a hunting ground known for wild pigs.
- Krupacko Lake near Pirot is located between the village of Krupac and Veliki selo. This only natural lake in this part of Serbia at about 400 m above sea level is 1.5 km long and 50 to 60 m wide. The maximum measured depth of about four meters is along the dam. Hydrophilic vegetation and fish stocks have been declining in recent years and care should be taken to conserve this resource. When swimming in the lake and walking on the shore, there is a great deal of sludge. Pike fishing with a special pattern is an attraction for anglers. There are about 250 species of plants registered in the surrounding area of the lake, some of which are under protection because of their rarity and threat. The lake is visited by the swans in the coldest months because the water does not freeze due to a thermal spring on the shore of the lake. In the next two to three years, the lake should be cleared of silt and equipped with a beach mobil for swimming and recreation on the water and shore.
- The bell tower in the municipality of Babusnica, about 40 km from Pirot, on the slopes of Mount Vlacha, at 670 m above sea level, is characterized by a climate place, due to the wind rose and the large number of negative ions in the air. The spa was used in ancient and medieval times. The mineral water springs at 28 ° C belong to the group of oligomineral, slightly sulfide hypotherms used for bathing and drinking. Two unsuccessful privatizations have led to the devastation of this spa, the Mir Hotel and the slew of visitors and total tourism revenue. Not far away is the gorge of the river Jerma, one of the most picturesque in Serbia, 74 km long and an excursion site for rest, recreation and fishing. The Poganovo and Sukovo monasteries are also close by.
- Above the River Jerma on the Wallachian Mountains, there is the Vetrena dupka Cave, with canals about four kilometers long. In 2017, the cave was cleaned and marked, and access marked, which allowed visits to organized groups, during the "Outdoor" festival of Jerma. The Pirot Tourist Organization, in cooperation with JP Srbijašume, plans to continue with the arrangement of the cave, the organization of the festival, the training of rock climbing, cycling, hiking and hiking within the SRP Jerma. The cave is divided into five halls with cave jewelry and a small lake, named after the very cold air (wind) blowing from it. (The legend of the name of the cave says that a Turkish beg (leader), stared at a girl named Vetrena, who did not want him, and he vowed to buy or abduct her. He offered her father several bags of ducats but was refused. Knowing that the escape would hijack her, Vetrena hid in the cave.



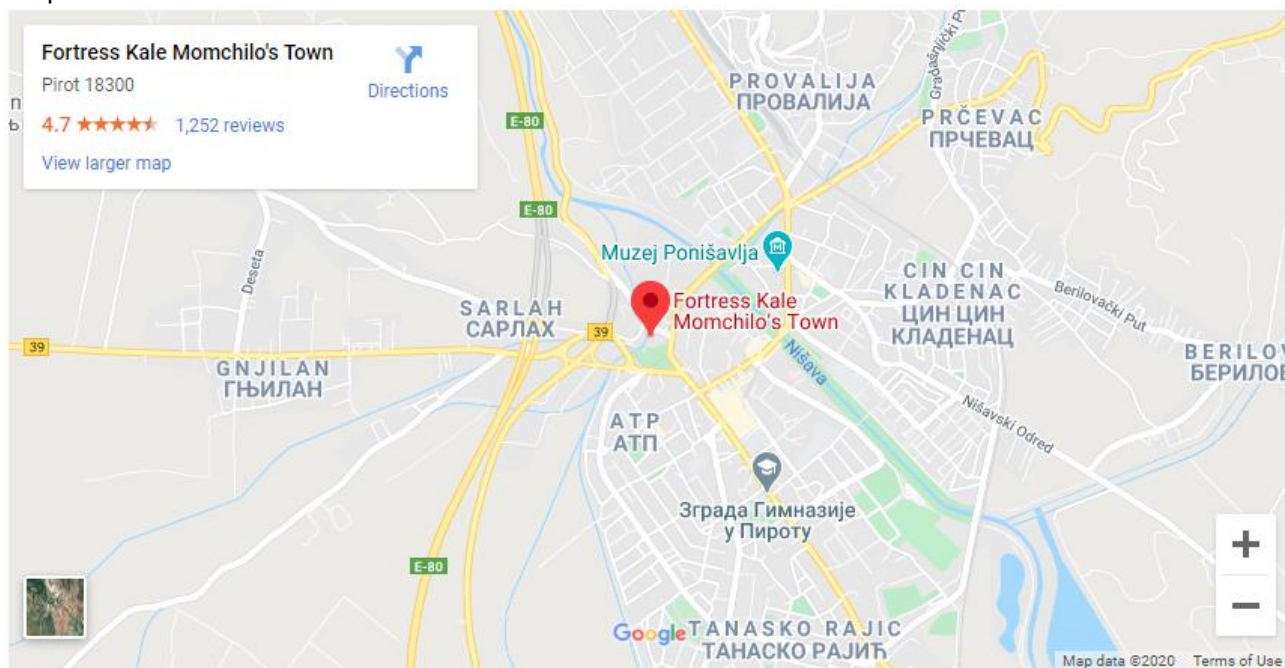
The Turks searched for her with lanterns until the lanterns went off. However, the escape did not give up and remained in the cave to look for a girl. In the dark, he lost himself and never left the cave. , just like Vetrena, which people say still lives there.) Such and similar legends and stories of this region need to be collected and the most interesting "come to life" in practice through simulation of animators, amateur actors, etc., all in the function of development. tourism.

- Otherwise there are several caves, sinkholes and bays near Pirot. The largest cave "Vladikine plates" has a length of 660 m, and there are Mišja, Vosena, Toplica, Lipa, Velika cave near the village of Držina and others. At the Smilov Lakes, about 12 km north of Pirot, on the southern periphery of the Karst Odrovačko Polje, there is a Pertlaška Cave with exceptional cave jewelry, terraces and passages that make up the cave system of this valuable speleological but under-explored natural resource.
- Dag-banjica, with three different thermal-karst sources of radioactive water in the Dobrodolska River valley, is located near the village of Gradašnica, five kilometers from Pirot. The main source of medicinal water has a temperature of 30 degrees. According to the analyzes of the Balneological Institute in Belgrade, the waters of Stari banjica contain uranium and strontium and are radioactive. The springs were used as spas in Roman times and are now partially decorated with two summer swimming pools. However, a large number of patients from Serbia, the region and nearby countries still come here with faith in healing. The name of the source comes from the Turkish period. According to legend, the beautiful Daga from Istanbul found a cure for her serious illness here, and in gratitude she called the name her name. Thermal waters of Dag-banjica should be used for heating of greenhouses and apartments, with additional heating of water, except for the needs of health and Spa & Wellness tourism. Instead of building a complete spa, which is financially and timely demanding, it is proposed to arrange this space and to build a smaller, modern, profitable Spa & Wellness Center with several different therapies, massages, etc.
- The village of Dojkinci, about 38 km northeast of Pirot, lies in the Stara Planina Nature Park, in the Gornji Visok area. Through the village runs the river Dojkinačka rich in trout and river crabs, and above the village passes the so-called. The Latin Road. Four kilometers away, at 1,050 meters above sea level on the Dojkinacka River, is a little "hidden" from the road, Tupavica Waterfall about 15 m high. In severe frosts, the waterfall freezes and resembles large organs. This most accessible of all the waterfalls on Stara Planina is only an hour's walk away from the Dojkinci. On the road from the village of Dojkinci to the waterfall, there is a sports and recreational center Dojkinci, with renovated modern accommodation and 60 beds. In the continuation of the walk from the village of Dojkinci, strict nature reserves are lowered: "Arbinje", "Bratkova strana", "Devil's head", "Three hammers", and "Kopren". There are several active water mills nearby, which need to be trained for tasting meat and dairy products, brandy and wine rehearsals with a local doctor, music, song, game, folklore, etc.
- The resort and resort of Vrelo, at the junction of the Dojkinac and Jelovica Rivers, is 733 meters above sea level, about 33 km away from Pirot. It is suitable for walking (paths of health), rest, recreation, swimming, cycling, hunting and fishing in the Jelovička and

Dojkinačka rivers. The complex has a point of sale for fresh trout in the Vrelo Pond, a traditional Vrelo restaurant and a visitor center of Stara Planina with a presentation of Stara Planina's natural heritage, managed by the Pirot Forestry, PE Srbijašume. The Visitor Center is a gathering place for organized educational and thematic tours of the mountain with the support and cooperation with TO Pirot.

- Vlach Mountain, not far from Pirot, extends north-west-southeast for about six kilometers. In its northwestern part is the highest peak of Panica with 1,443 meters above sea level. The village of Vlasi is named after which the mountain was named. By the way, the noun "vlah" means cattle rancher and refers to the ethnic community of Romance natives in the Balkan Peninsula. Vlach and Reef are separated by a gorge of the river Jerma. The mountain is suitable for hiking and there are marked trails. Tourists visit the monastery of Sv. John the Theologian near the village of Poganovo, on the coast of Jerma, the Vetren Dupka Cave, the Bell Tower and the Monastery of the Most Holy Theotokos in Sukovo. Mountain hiking and biking trails are marked, but the services of a local guide, who knows the terrain and culture of the local population, should be offered.
- The Belava mountain range is 15 km long, from Bela Palanka to Stanicenje and so far, there is no significance in tourism. Formerly, in the cave in the village of Stanicenje, the so-called. "Cheese on ripening", which is told by many Pirocans, and eventually the production of this cheese with special characteristics could be restored with interesting stories. The northern border of the Belava River is the Nisava River, and the southern old Pirot - Bela Palanka Road, on the west is the Dry Mountains, and on the east, it ends with Sarlah. The highest peak is Kardasica with 946 m above sea level. There is no surface water on this mountain, because the water penetrates the limestone and springs at the foot of the mountain. Belava is asymmetrical, and its southern part gradually descends to the Pirot Basin, while the northern one descends steeply towards Nisava.
- The Temska mountain village on the Temštica River, about 15 km from Pirot, was the most populous in the area. It was named after the former medieval town of Temsko. Next to the village there is a bigrene stone divided by a stream, the waterfall "Bukov dol" and the resort of HPP "Temac". The village is most visited during the summer because of the Krivi Vir baths, fishing, camps and cultural events held in the yard of the village school during July and August. Since 2008, the village has hosted the International Science and Research Camp "Stara Planina", which brings together over 200 participants, students and young researchers and the Festival of Old Mountain Meals as part of the camp. It is necessary to intensify the promotion and liaise with other camps of this kind in the region in order to exchange knowledge and skills and increase the number of participants.

Map of the location:



Source: Google Maps

Picture:



Source: www.viamilitaris.net

Jerma Special Nature Reserve (SRP), city of Dimitrovgrad

Location	Dimitrovgrad
Contacts	https://www.udimitrovgradu.rs/
Parking places	Public parking space
Accessibility for disabled	Semi accessibility for disabled
Guide / Tour guide	Local touristic guide
Working hours	Nonstop
Price / Entrance	Free entrance
How to get there?	Car, bus

The Jerma River (Sukovska River) is a left tributary of the Nišava River with a total length of 72 km. It springs east of Vlasina Lake, where its source arm is the Wolf River. After 17 km, it crosses into the Znepolje region of Bulgaria (also known as the Thorn River), then flows through the Bulgarian territory for 27 km, then returns to Serbia near the village of Petachinci in the Dimitrovgrad municipality and flows mainly north for about 28 km near the village of Sukovo.

The Jerma River Gorge was formed during the Tertiary after the regression of the Seine Sea (about 65 million years ago) and the complex long-lasting changes in the initial paleolief. The formation of today's visor occurred in the post-Lake Pliocene-Pleistocene phase as a result of the combined effect of tectonic activities, water erosion, denudation and karst processes. That's when the Jerma River came into being. In the Derekula region, the bed of the Jerma is wide in extension and very narrow in the gorge. The water flows through the gorge with a strong noise, breaks past huge blocks or is crushed, swirled and foamed from them. In the wider part of the riverbed, the depth of clear water in the summer is several tens of centimeters, and in the gorge at least about two meters.

During periods of snow and heavy rainfall, the water level is much higher. Making its way through the Reef Mountain (1,337 m) and Vlaska Mountain (1,442 m), Jerma builds two huge gorges called by the locals Odorovsko

and Vlasko Gorge, with sides 300-400 m high and 10-30 m wide. The ravines were completely impassable until 1927. Then, for the needs of the coal mine "Rakita", a narrow track was cut through the gorge. The mine was closed in the 1960s, and in the 1970s an asphalt road was made instead of the railway. Jerma Special Nature Reserve (SRP) belongs to category I, protected areas of international, national importance, ie. of great importance. The SRP encompasses the massifs of the Reefs and the Vlach Mountains and much of the Jerma River basin. It covers an area of 6,994.5 ha in the municipalities of Babusnica and Dimitrovgrad and the town of Pirot. This unique complex of valleys and limestone gorges with cliffs is characterized by exceptional floristic and phytocenological diversity with a large number of endemic, rare and endangered plant and animal species. Geomorphological forms, speleological objects and hydrographic phenomena and processes contribute to the greater



attractiveness of this area. Specific landscape elements, cultural, ethnological and historical heritage make this area very special. In the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN-WC-PA, 1997) classification of the World Union for Nature Conservation (IUCN-WC-PA, 1997), the Jerma SRP is classified in the fourth category - Category IV - Habitat / Species Management Area. The

SRP is also an internationally significant plant area (IPA) and daily butterflies (PBA). In accordance with the provisions of the Regulation (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 102/2010), part of the ecological network is an area under protection, an Emerald area with classification code RS0000035 and a nationally significant bird area (IBA).

Curios fact:

Traces of the first settlements in the territory of Dimitrovgrad municipality dates back to the Eneolithic period (3300-2200 BC), a transition period from the Stone to the Metal Age. This is evidenced by numerous archeological finds such as stone and copper axes, ceramic vessels, jars and cult objects. There were also settlements in the Bronze and Iron Age (2200 BC) that can be deduced from numerous archeological finds, metal axes, arrows and bronze jewelry.

Nearby attractions:

- Monastery Sv. John the Theologian / Pagan Monastery
- Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin
- Monastery Sv. Dimitrije (Monastery)
- St. Peter's Church
- Church of St. Archangels
- Monastery Sv. Kirik and Julita
- "Smart"
- Boljevdolska tap
- Via Militaris
- Road intersection - Via Militaris

What else?

Eco tourism

- Stara Planina is part of the Balkan system (Turkish mountains), which extends partly in Serbia and mostly in Bulgaria, and is about 600 km long and about 30 - 50 km wide. It stretches from Stara Planina in the west to the Black Sea in the east and is an extension of the Southern Carpathians.
- It is divided into Western (up to Iskra), Middle (up to Rod) and Eastern Balkans (up to Black Sea). The highest peaks are: Botev 2376 m, Vejen 2198 m, Midjor 2169 m, and the most important pass is the Rod 1326 m. Stara Planina is a common name for the northwestern part of the Balkan Mountains. It is a mountain range in the eastern part of the Republic of Serbia, on the Serbian-Bulgarian border and belongs to the Carpathian-Balkan mountain system. The highest peak is Midzhor 2169 m, the other major peaks are Golem hammer 1961 m, Devil's head 1938 m, Silver head 1933 m, etc. ; bandages Kadibogaz 928 m, and Sv.

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Nikola 1380 m, through which roads lead to Bulgaria. Mostly under vegetation, mostly pastures; important livestock region; ore resources (brown coal mines Vrška Čuka and others). The Stara Planina region is gravitated by four municipalities in the Republic of Serbia: Zajecar, Knjazevac, Pirot and Dimitrovgrad. The Stara Planina region is a protected area of the first category and has the status of a nature park. The priority area for tourism development in the Republic of Serbia. The area of Stara Planina in the municipality of Dimitrovgrad is known as Visok. It covers the territory of 113.68 km² with eight villages: Vlkovija, Gornji Krivodol, Donji Krivodol, Izatovci, Kamenica, Senokos, Boljevdol and Braćevci. The Visocica River flows through Visok, which originates in Bulgaria, and is filled with water by the reservoir of Zavoj Lake (Pirot municipality). High has great potential for livestock development and healthy food production. Due to the lush vegetation, clean air, healthy food, great abundance of plant and animal species (many of which are endemic), the Dimitrovgrad part of Stara Planina has great potential for development of mountain, hunting, rural and winter tourism. The Master Plan of the Republic of Serbia for the development of tourism on Stara Planina foresees the construction of ski trails and associated facilities near the villages of Kamenica and Senokos.

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- Smilovska Lakes. The Savat 1 and Savat 2 lakes are artificial reservoirs made in the Zabrdja region, in the karst Odorovo-Smilov basin (at an altitude of 700 m above sea level) near the village of Smilovci, and are known as the Smilov Lakes. They are about 12 km north of Dimitrovgrad and lead to an asphalt road. They are owned by the Stocar Agricultural Cooperatives from Dimitrovgrad. They were made in 1979 and 1985, respectively, for the purpose of amelioration of the aforementioned karst field, ie drainage in spring and irrigation in summer and autumn. The area of Savat 1 is about 5.3 ha, with an accumulation



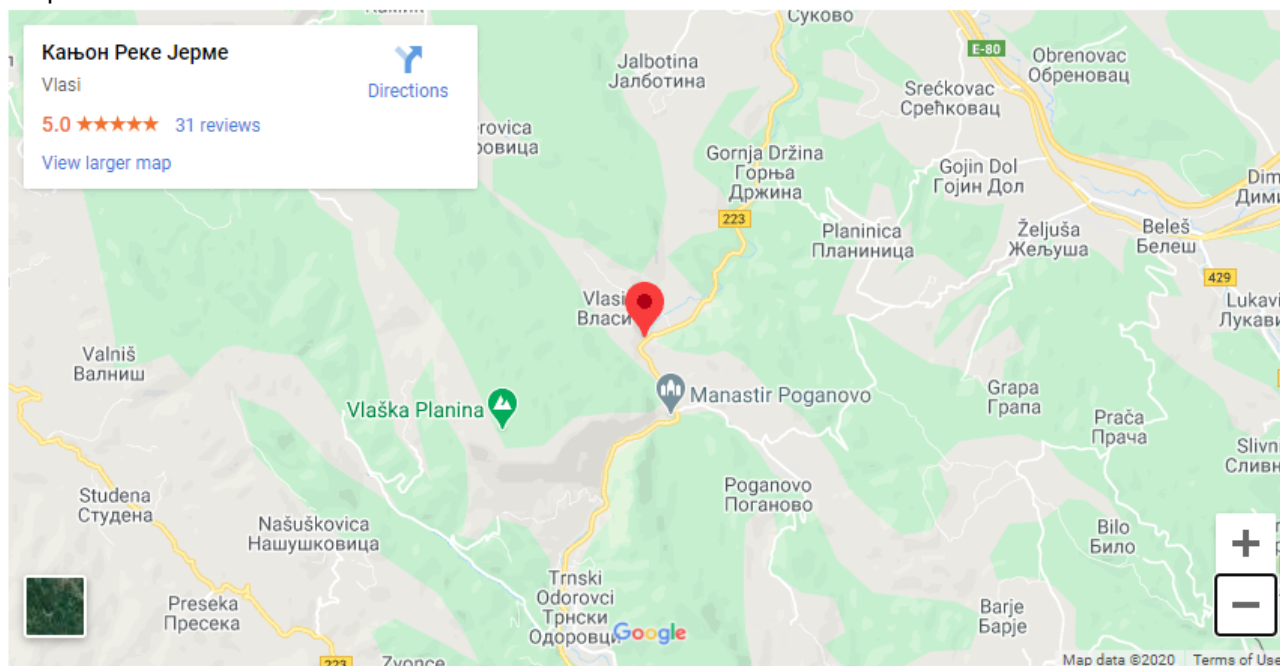
of 83,000 m³ of water and a maximum depth of 6 m, and the surface of Savat 2 is about 22 ha, with an accumulation of 420,000 m³ of water and a maximum depth of 6 m.

Churches and Monasteries

In the vicinity of Dimitrovgrad there are numerous churches and monasteries. They reflect the rich cultural heritage of the area.

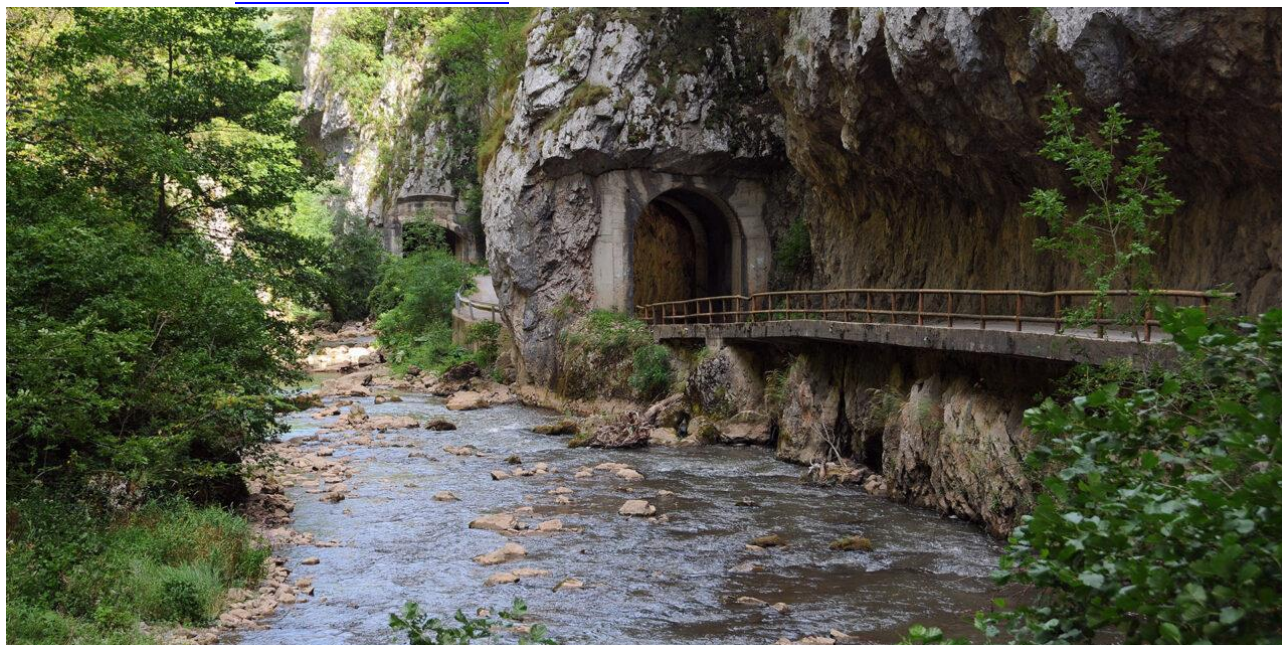
- **Monastery Sv. John the Theologian / Pagan Monastery**
Fifteen kilometers from Dimitrovgrad in the valley of the river Jerma is located the monastery of St. John the Theologian, better known as the Pagan monastery. It was built in the late 14th century and painted in the late 15th century.
- **Church of the Blessed Virgin**
At the initiative of the citizens of Caribrod, it was reconstructed in early 1997
- **Monastery Sv. Dimitrije (Monastery)**
South of Dimitrovgrad near the town is the church of Sv. Dimitria popularly called "Monastery".
- **St. Peter's Church**
Church of St. Petka is located about 3 km southwest of the village of Smilovci near the Smilovski Lakes.
- **Pametnik**
"Pametnik" is a unique anti-war monument - a common memorial to the ossuaries of the participants of the Serbian-Bulgarian War. It was erected in 1887 on Neshko hill above Dimitrovgrad, then Caribrod.

Map of the location:



Source: Google Maps

Pictures: Source: www.viamilitaris.net





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